Hamas and the Arab State:
A Transnational Terrorist Social Movement's Impact on Regimes in the Middle East

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Hamas is a unique actor in Middle Eastern politics: an Islamic movement with a domestic agenda and domestic activities, Hamas is also a transnational actor capable of regional consequences. The impact of its ideology and tactics has inadvertently and indirectly risen to a regional scale. Without intention, Hamas has become a factor in the politics of many Arab states. Hamas is not directly coordinating Arab citizens or confronting Arab governments. There are no established cross-border networks or cells in other countries. Through a number of different channels, however, Hamas is able to achieve a similar level of influence. This paper lays out the various influences that Hamas has on Arab populations and their governments as well as determines the impact that those influences have on the stability of Arab regimes. Due to the contentious nature that Hamas' ideology and violent activities present to a state system, Hamas is more often a destabilizing force for Arab governments than it is reinforcement for their rule. Arab states must be aware of Hamas' indirect ability to influence their security.

Hamas originated in Palestine in 1988 at the beginning of the *Intifada*, the Palestinian popular uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hamas is the Arabic acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement meaning "zeal." The group is an Islamic

organization that believes Islam and *jihad*[1] provide the means to its ultimate goal: an Islamic state in Palestine. Hamas has devoted itself to the destruction of Israel in order to realize this purpose.[2] Hamas is most widely known as a terrorist organization due to its violent attacks, including suicide bombings, on Israeli forces and citizens. However, it also provides needed social services to Palestinians. Hamas runs hospitals, schools, clinics, religious institutions, and other such services that would otherwise not be provided.[3]

From its origins, Hamas has presented itself as an Islamic alternative to the secular PLO government. Its opposition to the PLO has given rise to a fairly persistent conflict between the two groups. A major source of this conflict stems from Hamas' rejection of the peace process and all of its outcomes, including the current form of Palestinian self-governance, the Palestinian Authority (PA). Hamas believes that a Palestinian state should extend from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and that no government has the right to concede any inch of that land to another country.[4]

Hamas was founded as a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic movement with roots in Palestine dating back to 1936.[5] Today, the group is independent of the Brotherhood and boasts its own divisions, including the military branch, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin was the founder of Hamas and headed the group until his assassination by Israel in 2004. Hamas has a minimal level of organized leadership, and on the whole is dispersed

[1] *Jihad* literally means "to strive" or "to struggle". This can be a personal struggle towards a moral end, or it can be carried out at the social and political levels in an effort to spread Islam. The latter form can be peaceful, through "*jihad* of the tongue" or "*jihad* of the pen," or violent, through armed struggle. The violent version of *jihad*, which Hamas implements against Israel, has received the most attention at the international level and has led to the redefinition of *jihad* as "holy war."
"Jihad," Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd Edition, 2005.
[2] "Hamas Profile." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_profile>
[3] Beverley Milton-Edwards, Contemporary Politics in the Middle East (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000) 141.
[4] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. <http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>
[5] Ziad Abu-Amr, "Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and the Origins of Hamas," Spokesmen for the Despised, ed. R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997) 227.

among multiple branches, each carrying out aspects of the social, military or political campaigns

of Hamas. The group is primarily located within the Gaza Strip, but maintains connection with

many branches in the West Bank as well. It is within the Gaza Strip that Hamas carries out the

majority of its social services and terrorist attacks, as well as where its popularity is highest

among Palestinians.[6] Recent events show Hamas adopting a more political approach[7], but the

objectives of resisting Israeli occupation and establishing an Islamic state in Palestine are

unwavering.

On the surface, these goals are confined to the borders of Israel and Palestine. Likewise,

Hamas' actions, both the social services and the terrorist bombings, are carried out within these

same borders. Furthermore, the physical presence of Hamas, its offices and members, resides

almost entirely within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hamas is a local actor undertaking

domestic operations directed toward achieving a domestic goal: the creation of an Islamic state

over the whole of Palestine. One might assume that such an actor's impact would therefore be

limited to its sphere of operation. However, this assumption does not consider a number of

factors that give international dimensions to this domestic movement. The first factor is Hamas'

emergence as a social and political force in Palestine. Hamas' steady rise in power has accorded

it an influential position in Palestinian politics. The actions of an organization with less sway in

Palestine would not receive much attention at a regional level. However, Hamas is a major force

in Palestine, and therefore becomes relevant to states that have interests in the future of that

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[6] A recent poll carried out by Future Researchers Center in the Gaza Strip found that 52.6% of Gaza residents said
they would vote for Hamas in the July 2005 elections.
"Poll: 52.6% of Gaza Strip Residents Would Vote for Hamas in Legislative Elections." HamasOnline. 1 April 2005.
Hamas. <http://www.hamasonline.com/index.php?itemid=1626>
[7] Hamas ran a number of representatives for local council elections in January 2004, and will be running
representatives in the legislative elections in July 2005.
"Big Hamas win in Gaza's Election." BBC News. 28 January 2005.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4214375.stm>
"Hamas Announces Participation in Legislative Elections." HamasOnline. 13 March 2005. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/index.php?itemid=1554>

territory. Today, Palestine is arguably the center of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and therefore

receives attention from all of the Arab states. Hamas' actions therefore have an increased effect

on the region as a whole, due to its undeniable presence in a state of regional importance.

The second factor is the unique qualities of the region itself. Compared to other regions

in the world, the Middle East has a tendency for domestic affairs to have greater impact at the

regional level. The Arabs in the Middle East have shared a history and culture for centuries, and

all but the small minorities of Jews and Christians share a common religion. Additionally,

region-wide movements, such as pan-Arabism and pan-Islam, and regional political issues, such

as the Arab-Israeli conflict, have continuously united Middle Eastern states. These

characteristics and historical conditions facilitate the transfer of domestic issues to other states

due to common identities and interests that concern Arabs and Muslims with their entire

community. While Hamas does affect states beyond the Middle East, this paper supposes that its

transnational effect will be greater within the region. Arab states have to pay heed to Hamas as a

regional actor when evaluating their security position.   For that reason, this paper limits its focus

to the transnational effects of Hamas on Arab states.

The final factor that expands the effect of Hamas' actions to the regional level is the

transnational qualities of the tactics that Hamas uses to pursue its goal. Although the goal itself

is domestic, the implications of Hamas' beliefs and actions extend beyond Palestine. The

remainder of this paper is dedicated to revealing how those beliefs and actions become

transnational and how they affect Arab states. Two models are most important in explaining

Hamas as a transnational actor. The first is the diffusion model, a concept derived from social

movement theory that explains the spread of information, either directly or indirectly, from one

social movement to individuals or a group across state borders. The ideology and tactics of

social movements, particularly successful ones, may be adopted by people with a common identity or purpose. In this way Hamas can operate within Palestine but mobilize Muslims or Arabs across the Middle East who believe in the elimination of Israel or the establishment of Islamic states.

The second model is the result of a synthesis of two theories regarding transnational movements. The concept of Transnational Terrorist Social Movements (TTSMs) combines the work on transnational social movement theory and transnational terrorism theory to most accurately describe the transnational effects of sub-state actors like Hamas. A TTSM is a domestic movement that uses terrorism as its primary course of action but utilizes various components of social movement theory to increase its influence. The dual nature of this model allows an actor to have effects at both the state level and the popular level, hence a direct and indirect effect on the regime, respectively. Terrorism is a concern at the state level. The presence of this volatile form of violence in the region creates inherent instability and is a threat to the norms governing the state system. At the popular level, Hamas' use of Islamic rhetoric and institutions plays into the common identity in the region. This can foster support for Hamas' cause, and it can inspire others to mobilize. The diffusion model enhances both facets of TTSMs to maximize the impact of transnational qualities. A TTSM like Hamas that does not actively organize Islamic groups or supporters in other countries may still achieve the same result due to an adoption of its structure and strategies by movements in other Arab countries. Additionally, the threat of terrorism is increased because of its ability to spread when adopted by oppositional forces in other Arab states.

In addition to its indirect impact on the Arab regime and its population, Hamas directly appeals to both of these levels in order to increase its base of support. It is forced to approach

each separately, due to an institutional and political divide between the governments and publics

that has led to separate interests. However, appealing to the two levels simultaneously is often a

contradictory matter, one which can result in the destabilizing influence on Arab regimes.

Khaled Hroub makes this point highlighting,

> Hamas' attempt to deal with this complex relationship between the official and
> the popular levels by cultivating, in theory, two different sets of policies. The
> first set is public-oriented, aimed at nurturing mobilization, and calls for material
> support and participation in jihad; the second is regime-oriented, characterized by
> appeasement and moderation, and emphasizes noninterference in domestic affairs.
> In fact, these two sets were irreconcilable, because the actions that Hamas
> advocated for adoption by popular Arab grass-roots organizations definitely
> conflict with regime policies. In reality, therefore, Hamas did not pursue strongly
> its public level policies in the Arab countries.[8]

Hroub illustrates the contradiction and problems that arise when attempting to mobilize both

Arab regimes and citizens to support Hamas' cause. He claims that Hamas therefore decided to

forgo the popular level and has instead concentrated its efforts on gaining support at the state

level. This is true in regards to Hamas' direct actions and diplomatic ventures. However,

Hroub's work does not take the models of a transnational terrorist social movement and diffusion

into account. Hamas has passively maintained a popular level policy through communication of

ideals and actions across state borders which then mobilize the populace in other Arab states.

Therefore, the conflict that Hroub sees in enacting these two policies simultaneously still exists.

When considering the diffusion model and Hamas as a TTSM, the potential of Hamas'

transnational qualities to "conflict with regime policies" is quite real. Despite Hamas' actions

being completely domestic, the group possesses the ability to influence politics in other states as

well. Terrorism and popular dissent can both pose threats to the stability of Arab regimes.

How deep and destabilizing that conflict is depends on many variables within individual states,

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[8] Khaled Hroub, <u>Hamas: Political Thought and Practice</u> (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000)
173.

including the pre-existence or absence of opposition movements, the level of popular support for

the government, and the intensity of regional identities over national identities. Challenges or

threats to regime stability, though present, are not necessarily going to succeed. States, even in

the Middle East, are generally quite stable and not easily susceptible to insurgency.[9]

Nevertheless, threats, and the factors that have the potential to increase them, such as Hamas,

must be acknowledged and confronted by Arab governments.

The following chapters explore in greater depth how Hamas achieves transnational

qualities and the extent to which they create a potential threat to Arab regimes. The first chapter

provides the theoretical framework on which the remainder of the paper will rely. Transnational

social movement theory, transnational terrorism theory, and Islam as a transnational religion are

all reviewed and applied to Hamas. This chapter details the concepts of diffusion and TTSMs

and introduces additional methods from each of these spheres that give Hamas transnational

influence. Chapter two focuses on the popularity of Hamas throughout the Middle East. A

certain level of popularity is required if Hamas is to have any significant transnational impact.

Hamas has ingrained itself into Palestinian society as a positive influence, providing much

needed services while charging the secular PLO with corruption and failure. It is also a protector

of Islam and the Arab world, defending the holy sites of Palestine against Israel's aggression.

Chapter three and four examine the two policy levels noted by Hroub. Chapter three is

devoted to Hamas' connection to the citizens of Arab states. The diffusion of Hamas Islamic

rhetoric is most important to creating and strengthening this connection. Although there are few

direct links to the citizens of these states, Hamas is embedded in the identities of Muslims.

Hamas motivates the individual and the Islamic movement to mobilize, often encouraging

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[9] James P Piscatori, Islam in the Political Process (New York: Cambridge UP, 1983) and, Milton-Edwards Contemporary Politics.

(passively, of course) emulation of itself. Chapter four builds on this line of argument, explaining how this mobilization can exert pressure on the regimes of the Arab states. Attention is given to the governmental structure of the Arab state, a citizenry divided from and often disillusioned by its government. This can breed discontent and leave greater opportunity for organized opposition. This chapter also treats the transnational effects of Hamas' terrorism as a threat to states in the entire region.

The conclusion of this paper offers closing thoughts on the present and future of transnational terrorist social movements in the Middle East. These new actors face uncertain fates, ultimately determined by the states that host them. Some suggestions as to how to deal with the "hidden" threat of diffusion-based TTSMs are offered in this final section. On the whole, the state system seems stable in the Middle East, despite the various forms of transnational challenges. The presence of TTSMs should obviously not be ignored or their effect underestimated. Instead, their transnational impact should be evaluated as a factor among many when considering the stability and security of Arab regimes.

Hamas as a Transnational Actor

Chapter 1

Transnational impacts are a well-documented phenomenon, but they are explained in various ways. Various theories emphasize different methods, goals, and structures of transnational organizations. Hamas provides a particularly interesting study because it is not explicitly a transnational organization. Its transnational effects are incidental, not organized or institutionalized, and its influence relies upon a number of different transnational elements. To accurately characterize Hamas, this unique transnational actor, according to transnational theories components of multiple theories must be integrated. This requires a survey of transnational theories to highlight the elements utilized by Hamas. There are three ways in which Hamas may be considered to be transnational: as a social movement, as a terrorist organization, and as an Islamic group. These categories and their respective transnational qualities each have unique elements. However, common features also allow an integration of the three spheres. A synthesis of the three theories will formulate a model to accounts for the methods by which Hamas achieves transnational impact and the effect they may have on the Middle East.

Transnational Social Movement Theory

Scholars of transnational social movement theory focus their studies on the networks that unite actors of various forms: non-governmental, inter-governmental, regional and local

organizations. Sub-state and supra-state actors are emerging as new forces in the international

community. These actors comprise a third sector, parallel to the economic and state sectors,

often designated as transnational civil society (TCS). This term refers to the issues of people and

organizations that are not addressed within, and operate beyond, the state and economic spheres.

TCS creates links across state borders between individuals, groups of citizens, and organizations

with common interests and purposes. The result of this unification is an internationalization of

the issues that TCS wishes to address. TCS has effectively blurred the boundary between

domestic and international affairs. [10] In order to alter or create state policy, TCS must then

engage states at the international level with the issue at hand. International norms are the tools

that TCS utilizes to force such an engagement with states. What were once solely domestic

issues TCS has broadened to the international realm, and states must insure that their domestic

practices abide by international standards. TCS has strengthened the level of international

pressure that can be applied to force policy change in states that fail to conform to the norms.[11]

The networks and links that transnational civil society creates are usually quite formal

and structured. The various organized forms of TCS almost always involve direct transnational

cooperation and coordination. Domestic actors such as Hamas are generally treated as one actor

among a larger transnational actor, rather than transnational actors themselves. For example,

Keck and Sikkink would categorize Hamas as a "local social movement," one piece of their

larger transnational advocacy networks.[12] Therefore, the structures of transnational civil society

are not as relevant to this study as are their methods.

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[10] Richard Price, "Transnational Civil Society," World Politics 55.4 (2003): 579-606.

[11] Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002).

[12] Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink outline the structure and tactics of transnational advocacy networks in their book Activists Beyond Borders. Khagram, Riker and Sikkink's work, Restructuring World Politics, describes four forms that transnational collective action takes: international NGOs, transnational advocacy networks, transnational coalitions, and transnational social movements.

The methods that transnational civil society uses to create, shape, and maintain international norms are a central aspect of transnational social movement theory. Some of these methods have been adopted directly from domestic social movement theory and applied to the international level. Three variables frequently found in social movements are political opportunity structures (POS), social mobilization organizations (SMO), and "framing". Political opportunity structures are political environments that may incite or inhibit the formation of social movements. A POS is an external resource, event, policy or other factor that influences a person or group's decision to in collective action. These factors may be international, such as globalization or unipolarity, or national, such as a regime's policies towards opposition groups. These factors increase or lower the cost of collective action and the potential for success. A shift in the POS, for example when a new government comes to power, can open the door for social movements to begin presenting their cause to the state or international community. Social movements, transnational and domestic, will use favorably changing POSs in order to further their cause.[13]

The second variable, social mobilization organizations, entails structures or institutions through which movements disseminate their ideology and recruit new members. SMOs provide the structure to connect and motivate like-minded individuals and sustain a movement's activity. They may be very formal, political parties for example, or they may be smaller associations that address everyday issues, such as churches, labor unions, or even closely-knit neighborhoods. Institutions used as SMOs, in addition to having an inherent permanence, allow everyday practices and conversations to function as a mobilization technique. Finally, "framing" is the

Margaret A Keck, and Kathryn Sikkink, <u>Activists Without Borders</u> (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1998)
Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink. <u>Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms</u>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
[13] Sidney Tarrow, <u>Power in Movement</u> (New York: Cambridge UP, 1998) 19-20.

application of cultural symbols or language to issues in order to manipulate the public's

interpretation of those issues. Frames are used to relate movements' arguments to culturally

significant issues and to justify collective action. This practice often taps into collective

identities, defining and dividing "us" and "them", and drawing on a group's already existing

grievances to legitimize mobilization. Even the group's actions must connect to cultural norms

or symbols in order to sustain the movement's success.[14]

Social movement scholar Sidney Tarrow lays out these three variable, or methods, in a

series of stages.

> Contentious politics is produced when political opportunities broaden, when they
> demonstrate the potential for alliances, and when they reveal the opponents'
> vulnerability. Contention crystallizes into a social movement when it taps
> embedded social networks and connective structures and produces collective
> action frames and supportive identities able to sustain contention with powerful
> opponents.[15]

Social movements originate when political opportunity structures shift and the cost of collective

action drops to a point where it is beneficial to mobilize. The movement may be organized prior

to an "open" POS, but it will not take, or be able to take, direct and forceful action towards its

objective until the political situation is favorable. In the second stage, Tarrow has connected

social mobilization organizations and framing as methods by which social movements root

themselves in society and are able to build up and sustain the movement.

A third stage of Tarrow's argument takes place after a social movement has embedded

itself in society and made some progress towards its goal. Diffusion is the process by which

domestic social movements influence actors beyond their scope of action. Tarrow describes

diffusion as the communication, direct or indirect, of movements' ideas, tactics, forms of

organization, and other information to different centers of contention where there are similar

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[14] Ibid. p. 20-23
[15] Ibid. p. 23

social movements having similar targets and goals. By observing one social movement's success or failures, other social movements are able to determine advantages and opportunities that may advance their cause. The spread of information to other movements provides new incentives for them to engage in contentious politics.[16]

Another author, Marco Giugni, links three models, diffusion, globalization and "structural affinity," – the similarity of movements' organizational structures – to explain cross-national similarities among social movements.[17] Diffusion, for Giugni, boils down to the adoption of protest and/or protest tactics from foreign social movements. Giugni also points out that diffusion, especially for forms of violent protest, may occur through indirect channels, such as mass media. The success of a movement also dictates how rapidly the diffusion process occurs; a successful approach is more likely to be adopted by other groups or movements as it increases their incentive for taking action. His "three in one" general model connects globalization and structural affinity to diffusion. Globalization, by increasing and intensifying transnational communication and linkages, is responsible for precipitating the diffusion process. Likewise, globalization contributes to similar conflict structures – akin to political opportunity structures – across the globe as similar issues arise in different countries. Diffusion, in turn, is responsible for furthering structural affinities between social movements by spreading certain successful forms of organization and policies.[18]

Keck and Sikkink offer four more methods that social movements use to achieve their goals in their "typology of tactics." The four forms of pressure are information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics. Information politics is the use of

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[16] Ibid. p. 24, 186-187.
[17] Marco Giugni, "Cross-national Similarities among Social Movements," <u>Globalization and Resistance</u>. Eds. Jackie Smith and Hank Johnston (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) 19.
[18] Ibid. 19.

information for political purposes by spreading knowledge about an issue to areas where it is most effective. Keck and Sikkink assert that non-state actors function as alternative sources of information to states. This position not can be used to present potent information to policymakers in a presumably unbiased fashion. Symbolic politics shares some qualities with framing in that both portray events or ideas as relevant and important to their cause. Activists or social movements connect world events with the issues that they are trying to promote in hopes of mobilization. Social movements relate events to people in a culturally meaningful way so as to mobilize support from those far removed from the situation.[19]

The third of the typology, leverage politics, is the ability of social movements to use more powerful actors, often states, to take action in a situation where the movement has very little influence. Social movements have limited resources and capabilities to influence a powerful and ingrained state system. They must sometimes depend on traditional forms of international politics to achieve their purpose. Therefore, these movements have developed ways, such as linking their particular issue to material benefits such as money, to persuade larger actors to bring about their desired change. Finally, accountability politics is the pressure that movements use to hold states to their previously declared positions. Once a state has stated its support of a certain issue, social movements oversee how closely the state is adhering to that position. Social movements broadcast any large disjunction between a state's actions and its stated policy to the attention of the international community or the state's population. These two groups can then place political pressure on the state for failing to maintain its declared position.[20]

It was mentioned earlier that Hamas does not fit the mold of most forms of transnational collective action because it lacks transnational structure. Khagram, Riker and Sikkink do

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[19] Keck and Sikkink 16-22.
[20] Ibid. p. 22-24.

provide one form of transnational collective action that is based on domestic movements, however. A transnational social movement is a group of like-minded activists striving for the same change in many states at once. Similar to domestic social movements, mobilization and disruptive action are the primary strategies for transnational social movements. Khagram, Riker and Sikkink believe these methods make transnational social movements the most effective forms of collective action. They also expect a higher level of collective identity to exist among transnational social movements than in other forms of transnational collective action in order to sustain joint and simultaneous mobilization in multiple countries. However, Khagram, Riker and Sikkink also believe that this is the rarest form of collective action with very few, if any, empirical examples. As opposed to the concerted effort towards joint mobilization, what often happens in practice is a "cross-national diffusion" between domestic social movements, akin to the diffusion model described above.[21]

Transnational Terrorism

Consideration should be given to scholarship on the way that terrorism fits into social movement theory before covering terrorism as a separate body of theory. The continuity between these two concepts, or any potential overlap, will prove useful for synthesizing these theories into one that most accurately portrays Hamas' transnational impact. Some scholars discuss the collective action of international criminal networks which challenge the state's control of politics and the economy and call into question the ability of the state to promote security.[22] These impacts on society and governments are certainly akin to those of terrorist groups. Anthony Oberschall supports the connection between social movements and terrorism,

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[21] Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 6-8.
[22] See Jackie Smith and Hank Johnston, introduction, <u>Globalization and Resistance</u>, eds. Smith and Johnston, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

and states that terrorism is "only one of several modes of confrontation ranging from peaceful and conventional political actions to extremes of group violence. The theory of collective action applied to the political arena is an appropriate tool for explaining the entire spectrum."[23] For Oberschall, terrorism is just another means to achieve a social movement's objective, the extreme end of a spectrum of tactics.

Although Oberschall explains terrorism as a choice of tactic, he does not cover the transnational implications of that method. Terrorism is unique in its transnational effects due to the extreme level of violence employed and fear it instills. Some authors, such as Richard Price, have made this distinction between transnational social movements and terrorist organizations very clear. Price believes that the use of violence as a means toward achieving the movement's goal clearly places terrorism in a separate category.[24] The use of violence as a means has significantly different consequences for states' security and their policies. Terrorism, often a gratuitous and seemingly "senseless" form of violence, directed against civilians and everyday life strikes at the stability of a society. The insecurity that follows these sorts of attacks is extreme and unlike that caused by any other form of action.

Bruce Hoffman highlights the common trend in defining terrorism as carried out by sub-state actors, as opposed to state sponsored terrorism. He uses a "gray area phenomenon" to define terrorism as "threats to the stability of nation states by non-state actors and non-governmental processes and organizations" and to "describe violence affecting immense regions…where control has shifted from legitimate governments to new half-political…powers". [25] Hoffman's "gray area phenomenon" highlights the threat to the international order that

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[23] Anthony Oberschall, "Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Collective Action Theory," Sociological Theory. 22.1 (2004): 26-37.
[24] Richard Price, "Transnational Civil Society," World Politics 55.4 (2003): 579-607.
[25] Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism (New York: Columbia UP, 1998).

terrorism poses. A sub-state actor stealing power, control, or any form of authority from the state is a challenge to that state's sovereignty. The validity of the state system rests upon the sovereignty of the state, and if one state loses its legitimate hold on that sovereignty it can throw all state sovereignty, and hence the state system, into question.

R. J. Vincent supports Hoffman's argument and expands on the ways that transnational terrorism presents a challenge to the international state system. First, terrorism disrupts everyday international life, such as diplomats' visits and international summits. Terrorism has the ability to undermine ordinary political interactions and limit efficiency in dealing with both daily affairs and the terrorist violence. Vincent's second point reiterates the effect of Hoffman's "gray area phenomenon." Terrorism erodes states' monopoly on the legitimate use of force when violence is carried out by non-state actors. This undermines the particular norm of international society that gives states legitimacy, and thereby undermines the system of international norms in general. Third, state-sponsored terrorism eliminates the "system of reciprocal restraint." This system also relies on international norms such as non-interference, sanctity of agreements, and diplomatic immunity to uphold national security. Finally, a network of terrorist groups may develop into a "terror-international" order that could replace the entire state system. Vincent believes that vast terrorist networks could potentially undermine state sovereignty and authority and lead to an upheaval of the international order.[26]

The structure of terrorist organizations plays an important role in its ability to transcend state boundaries. A relatively new body of research has focused on the network-like formation that terrorist groups are assuming. A decentralized leadership characterizes this format. Terrorist groups often lack one main figure and rely instead on semi-independent cells connected through loose communication. The theory, termed "netwar," identifies a proliferation and

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[26] Introduction of <u>Terrorism and International Order</u> (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986) 2-3.

success of these networked terrorist groups, particularly in the Middle East, that are utilizing

advances in information technology to obtain their objectives. This new form of terrorism

presents unique challenges for states attempting to confront it. The lack of a central figure

makes it difficult to eliminate the leadership and organization of these movements, because each

cell may have its own director. Furthermore, netwar groups are very fluid in their exchange of

information and tactics. The network-like organization and the use of technology allow terrorist

groups to rapidly relocate their resources away from threatened branches or towards those facing

favorable circumstances. Finally, netwar groups can readily contribute to the spread of terrorism

due to their organizational structure. The informality of a network allows new members to create

a new branch, or cell, without disrupting the fluidity and structure of the whole organization. A

new branch is not a threat to the power of the principal leader but is rather a welcome extension

and expansion of power and reach.[27]

The ability of terrorism to spread is a defining quality that almost all terrorism scholars

agree on. Hoffman borrows from social movement theory when he describes terrorism's ability

to mobilize "sympathy and support" from people outside of the terrorists' realm of action.[28]

Sympathy may bolster support for the terrorists' cause, but it may also incite the sympathizers to

organize and act. Paul Wilkinson goes so far as to say that terrorism may in fact be

"contagious", crediting easier communications between groups with producing a bandwagon

effect.[29] Philip Windsor acknowledges the particular difficulty of containing terrorism within

states in the Middle East and terrorism's ability to destabilize the entire region.[30] In general,

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[27] Ian O. Lesser, et al., <u>Countering the New Terrorism</u> (Washington, D.C.: RAND, 1999) 41-48, 56-66.

[28] Hoffman 65.

[29] Wilkinson, Paul, "Trends in International Terrorism and the American Response," <u>Terrorism and International Order</u>, Ed. Lawrence Freedman, et al (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

[30] Philip Windsor, "The Middle East and Terrorism," <u>Terrorism and International Order</u> Ed. Lawrence Freedman, et al (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

then, terrorism is never a confined incident. A terrorist group in one state may encourage another movement to implement similar forms of violence. Terrorist groups should therefore always be considered as transnational actors.

Islam

The Islamic religion plays a pivotal role in Hamas' transnational impact on the region. The religious aspect of the movement adds three elements to the transnational quality of Hamas. First is the religion itself, which has inherent transnational qualities. The second is the connection of groups that use the religion as a political force, a practice or belief commonly known as political Islam. Finally, Islam enhances important elements of the previous two theories. It provides the collective identity, symbolic ideas and words, and institutions to mobilize according to social movement theory. Likewise, terrorism based on religious principles is often the most extreme, and Islam offers a term, *jihad*, that is used to legitimize this violence.

Islam's transnational characteristics begin with the religious community, or *umma*, that is a fundamental element of the religion. The u*mma* refers to a bond among all those who submit themselves to Allah, the god of Islam. The *umma* transcends national boundaries to create one Islamic community. In fact, some have insisted that even today there should be no such artificial boundaries that divide and stratify the *umma*.[31] During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, at the founding of Islam, the world was divided into *dar al-Islam*, "the world of Islam", and *dar al-Harb*, "the world of war."[32] This division ostracized those outside of the practice of Islam and unified those within it. Although few Muslims today ascribe to this view of the world, it was an original codification of the Islamic community. What has arisen from the concept of the *umma*

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[31] Syed Abul A'la Maududi, <u>Islamic Law and Constitution</u> (Pakistan: Islamic Publications, 1997).

[32] Majid Khadduri, <u>War and Peace in the Law of Islam</u> (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955).

in today's world is akin to what Susanne Hoeber Rudolph calls a "parallel society." Islam unites believers into a transnational civil society that acts as "an arena of belief, commitment, and practice alternative to the state…without replacing it".[33] The transnational civil society can command authority and shape values across borders without constraint by the structure or norms of the state system.

Islamic law, known as *shari'a*, also adds to the transnationality of the religion. *Shari'a* is the religious law set forth in the Quran and *sunnah*[34] that not only prescribes religious practice and regulations, but also outlines the political realm. There are not separate spheres for religion (*din*) and politics (*dawla*); they exist united as one realm under Islam.[35] Some Islamic movements have the objective of establishing states that adhere to *shari'a*, but are currently subject to various state laws. These groups aim to unite the Muslim community under Islamic law, necessitating the replacement of individual secular state laws with *shari'a*. Inherent in this belief is a threat to the Arab regimes whose secular governments and policies prevent the prevalence of *shari'a* in predominantly Islamic states. Because politics and religion are "inextricably linked," as Beverly Milton-Edwards asserts, Islam requires the spread of the political aspects of *shari'a*, as well as the religious, and the active engagement of Muslims in their community's politics.[36] Hosts of newly emerging political actors in the Middle East ascribing to political Islam are embracing this combination of religion and politics.

The ideologies of political Islam groups can be understood by acknowledging the "inextricable [link]" between faith and politics in Islam. Their beliefs and demands usually

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[33] Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "Dehomogenizing Religious Formations," <u>Transnational Religion & Fading States</u> Eds. Rudolph and James Piscatori (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) 255.

[34] *Sunnah* is a source of Islamic law, second only to the Quran. It is derived from the beliefs, sayings, and life of the Prophet Muhammad, which are taken as "inspired prophetic example".
"Sunnah." <u>Encyclopedia of Religion,</u> 2nd Edition, 2005.

[35] Piscatori.

[36] Milton-Edwards <u>Contemporary Politics in the Middle East</u> 123.

revolve around the need to unite religion and politics once more. James Piscatori believes these groups fear the modernization and corruption of Islam and seek a return to a more fundamental version of Islam, one that respects the unity between religion and politics.[37] Piscatori also states that the Middle East is witnessing an Islamic revival in which these groups are taking the central role in voicing political opposition to the current secular regimes. Political Islam has been on the rise since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and examples of political Islam groups can been identified in nearly every Arab country. The strategy of political Islam has been to blame any failures within states or the region, with particular focus on economic conditions and quality of life, on the secular nature of the regimes. They claim that only a return to true Islam will free Muslims from the tyranny of their oppressive states.[38,39]

A spreading popularity and expanding influence of these movements within the region have led Arab regimes to be concerned with political Islam. This concern is validated by the many ways in which these groups may present a threat to each regime or to the region as a whole. In Rudolph's description of the "parallel society" that transnational religions create, she argues that religions gain an authority within the parallel society, much like that of transnational civil society. This authority affords them certain autonomous power in various spheres, including influence in politics. Dale Eickelman asserts that Islamic groups hold so much sway within Muslim societies that regimes cannot possibly ignore their demands without undermining

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[37] This desire to return to the fundamentals of Islam, including the unity of religion and politics and the use of *shari'a* as state law, has led political Islam become synonymous with Islamic fundamentalism.

[38] Dale F. Eickelman, "Trans-state Islam and Security," <u>Transnational Religion & Fading States</u>, ed. Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).

[39] There are political Islam groups with differing ideologies than the one presented here. Some political Islam groups believe in gradual reform through state sanctioned avenues, and others believe in modernizing Islam to fit with today's international social norms and the demands of a globalized world. However, the term political Islam most often refers to groups that adhere to a fundamental view of the religion and desire the implementation of *shari'a* at the state level. This paper restricts its coverage of political Islam groups to those with this most common set of beliefs.

For a work on the varied nature of political Islam, see John L. Esposito, <u>Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?</u> (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997).

their own legitimacy.[40]   The ability of political Islam to affect state politics is further affirmed

by Milton-Edwards, but she argues that the perceived impact is even more severe. "Within the

region political Islam, in opposition rather than as a legitimating force, has been identified by the

state as a threat to the prevailing order, designed to topple governments and generate

revolution."[41] This is a sweeping and perhaps exaggerated statement, but does illustrate the

extent of the fear that states with Muslim-majority populations have of such movements.

Milton-Edwards also points out that fundamentalist interpretations of Islam, like those

held by political Islam groups, often go hand in hand with violence and terrorism.[42] Therefore,

one of the threats of fundamentalists and their political groups is in fact the threat posed by their

chosen tactic: terrorism. Finally, Albert Hourani argues that the use of Islamic language by these

movements can limit the actions of governments. Islam is a source of legitimacy for many Arab

governments. Political Islam groups have the ability to use Islamic rhetoric to erode that

legitimacy and popular support. Governments are forced to either make concessions to Islam

rhetorically or through policy, or face a destabilization due to loss of popular support.[43] This

effect exemplifies the use of accountability politics and framing, as described in the social

movement theory section above. Milton-Edwards and Hourani link the threat of Islam to aspects

of terrorism and social movement theory, respectively. This connection requires further

explanation, one that leads to a synthesis of the three theories: transnational social movement

theory, transnational terrorism theory, and Islam as a transnational religion.

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[40] Eickelman.

[41] Milton-Edwards Contemporary Politics 136.

[42] Ibid. p. 134

[43] Hourani, Albert. Conclusion. Islam and the Political Process. By James P. Piscatori. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Hamas' Transnational Characteristics

A description of Hamas using just one of the three spheres mentioned here would not explain the full extent of Hamas' transnational effect. Characteristics of each sphere describe Hamas, and in some cases the spheres even overlap or compliment each other. A proper analysis of Hamas' transnational qualities pieces together these parts of each sphere, emphasizes the parts that overlap, and uses Islam as a medium through which the effects of the other two spheres are maximized. This synthesis will be presented in this chapter, while later chapters will give greater detail as to how Hamas' domestic activities utilize the spheres to have transnational impact.

Social movement theory can be appropriately used to analyze Hamas' methods as transnational, but less so when considering the structure of the organization. The stages presented by Tarrow – the production of contentious politics by political opportunity structures, and then the solidification of a social movement by way of social networks and collective identity frames – have already occurred for Hamas. The *Intifada* created a political opportunity structure that provided Hamas with an activist population in need of organization. Hamas then used its network of social services and anti-Israeli, Islamic rhetoric to rally support and coordinate the Palestinian resistance. Despite already being solidified as a movement, Hamas can still make use of changing POSs. Hamas has capitalized on the failures of the PLO to deliver significant gains in the peace process as a way to build up its popularity. Hamas continues to broaden the reach of its social networks and Islamic ideology through expanded SMOs. Control over mosques and schools allow Hamas to disseminate its interpretation of Islam to the public. Finally, Hamas has introduced its ideology into the public mindset by framing Palestinian concerns around Islamic principles. For example, Hamas asserts that its version of

nationalism, which includes a devotion to Islam, is more authentic than the secular version put

forth by the PLO.[44]

Although all of these examples are domestic forms of social movement methods, they

play a role in the international dimension of Hamas as well. Similar POSs are present across the

Middle East, and Hamas has shown how to benefit from those opportunity structures. The

failure of the PLO to provide for the Palestinians, particularly economically, is mirrored in many

Arab states that are not able to improve the quality of life for their citizens. The SMOs that

Hamas utilizes are found in every Arab country as well. Mosques in other countries can be used

to espouse the same Islamic ideology that Hamas is disseminating in Palestine. The infusion of

Islam into Hamas' language is a cultural frame that all Muslims can understand and draw

inspiration from. In the case of Islam's role in nationalism, Hamas' frames gives authority to

Islamic nationalism as a whole, not just its specific application to Palestine. With the existence

of similar POSs, SMOs, and a collective identity around which to frame issues, the components

of Tarrow's stages to social movement formation are in place. Hamas' use of POSs, SMOs, and

framing strengthen each of these components and provides an example for movements

throughout the region.

Hamas' actions also fit into Keck and Sikkink's "typology of tactics." In regard to the

first tactic, information politics, Hamas has long been a source of information for the Palestinian

people, Muslims across the world, and the casual observer of the Middle East. However, Hamas

is not the unbiased source of information that Keck and Sikkink describe. Instead, Hamas uses

framing to spin information in an advantageous way. For example, Hamas has made its website

a resource for news reports and documenting various "Zionist Crimes" against Palestinians in an

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[44] Glenn Robinson, "Hamas as a Social Movement," Islamic Activism, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2004).

attempt to win the support of Arabs and Muslims.[45] Symbolic politics play a large role for

Hamas as well. For example, Hamas juxtaposes the Palestinian flag with Islamic holy sites in

many of its posters. This combines intense religious beliefs with the nationalist fervor in

Palestine, and portrays the importance of Palestine to the entire faith of Islam. These two tactics,

information politics and symbolic politics, are both used to gain a broader level of support for

Hamas as a movement. Building up support within Palestine and among Arab states gives

Hamas greater political clout at home and in the region, thereby increasing its transnational

influence.

Leverage politics and accountability politics are closely linked by Hamas' in methods.

Hamas expects to have the support of Arab states and organizations in resisting the Israeli

occupation. The expectation is that Arab states will contribute to the cause financially,

materially, or politically. Fulfillment of that expectation would be a form of leverage politics

where Arab states force Israeli concessions or withdrawals that Hamas is not able to do.

Accountability politics then enables criticism of any Arab state that has expressed solidarity with

the Palestinian cause but is not actively addressing the issue in its foreign policy. The criticism

can come from Hamas, but generally the group has restrained from single out individual states.

Instead, Hamas breeds the expectation within the states' populations. Citizens will then place

domestic pressure to hold the state to its declared position. Another tactic or form of politics that

Keck and Sikkink do not address is of central importance to Hamas. Power politics addresses

the direct impact that violence can have on state security. This form of politics recalls

Hoffman's statement that terrorism is quintessentially about power. The reliance on power

politics, undertaken most frequently through violence and terrorism, begins to blur the lines

between a social movement and a terrorist organization.

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[45] "Zionist Crimes." HamasOnline. Hamas. <http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=crimes>

Another area of overlap between transnational social movement theory and transnational terrorism theory is the structure of Hamas. Hamas does appear to reflect the various forms of transnational collective action because it is set up as a network. It is a decentralized organization with many cells combining their resources in a coordinated effort towards one goal. However, Hamas is a domestic network, not a transnational network. Terrorism theory, specifically netwar theory's emphasis on the network structure of terrorist movements, gives a better understanding of how a domestic movement with few, if any, transnational links can affect the region at large. Netwar theory accounts for the potential of domestically networked organizations to have regional implications through terrorist tactics.

One other structure must be mentioned before moving on to how Hamas fits into transnational terrorism theory. Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink's concept of a transnational social movement can be useful in evaluating the various Islamic fundamentalist groups throughout the Middle East as a whole. There are a number of such groups in almost every country in the Middle East. They share similar values and goals and feed off of each other's success. Khagram, Riker and Sikkink do not believe in the existence of a true transnational social movement, and political Islam groups do not make the exception. There is no coordinated effort at joint mobilization by these movements, but there does appear to be a "cross-national diffusion" which can foster political Islam and general resistance in Arab states. Although these groups do not presently constitute a transnational social movement, the resemblance and possibility of one forming plays adds to the fear that Arab states have of oppositional political Islam.

The regional and international effects of terrorism laid out in transnational terrorism theory correspond to the effects of Hamas' violence on the Middle East. Three of R. J. Vincent's

four means by which terrorism disrupts the international state system depict the consequences of

Hamas' actions.[46] First, Hamas' violence has disrupted international daily life by repeatedly

interrupting peace talks between Israel, the PLO, and Arab states. The perpetuation of this

conflict has regional implications that concern all Middle Eastern states. Second, Hamas also

threatens the monopoly on legitimate violence that has been given to the Palestinian Authority.

The ability of the PA to exhibit their control over the West Bank and Gaza strip is necessary to

the advancement of the peace process. The PA has been entrusted with its own monopoly of

legitimate use of violence through international agreements and norms. The erosion of that

monopoly questions the strength of those agreements and norms, as well as the legitimacy of all

states' monopoly on violence. Finally, Hamas and other radical, violent, Islamist groups in the

Middle East would pose a threat to the state system if it were to coalesce and efficiently organize

into a "terror-international."

Islam as a religion and as a political force contributes to Hamas' identity as a

transnational social movement and as a terrorist organization. The concept of the *umma* provides

a transnational collective identity that unites Muslims who share similar values and aspirations.

This satisfies Khagram, Riker and Sikkink's requirement that transnational social movements

have a higher level of transnational collective identity.[47] Furthermore, social mobilization

organizations are integrated into the Islamic faith in the form of mosques, Islamic "NGOs" such

as hospitals and schools, and professional and student associations. These structures are found in

every Muslim society and allow for the dissemination of Islamic principles without directly

confronting the state.[48] Finally, the common language of Islam allows for the "framing" of

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[46] The effect of state-sponsored terrorism is not considered because Hamas is an independent, self-sustaining organization.
[47] Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 8.
[48] Quintan Wiktorowicz, introduction, Islamic Activism, by Wiktorowicz (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2004).

issues in a way that will appeal to all Muslims. This is apparent in Hamas' rhetoric, common to many political Islam movements, identifying Islam as the way to freedom and progress and promoting Islamic nationalism.

The threat of terrorism is increased when it is infused with strong religious principles. The increase in incidents of religious terrorism is well documented and research shows that these acts cause significantly more casualties than non-religious terrorism. This trend is attributed to the fact that radical religious terrorist groups, particularly Islamic ones, view entire societies, not just political officials, as their targets and therefore civilians become legitimate targets.[49] These groups, including Hamas, invoke *jihad* in order to present their violence as a religious duty with great reward. *Jihad* is justified by and even, in some instances and interpretations, required by Islam and results in immediate salvation.[50] Viewed in social movement terms, Islam's transnational community, the *umma*, aids in Hamas' transnational mobilization. When considering Hamas as a terrorist organization, the religion can exacerbate and legitimize violence.

The point of union between transnational social movement theory and transnational terrorism is the way in which each has an impact on other states without direct action against them. Hamas does not actively engage other Arab states or populations and therefore its transnational impact relies on passive means of influence. Diffusion, using the terminology from the social movement sphere, can explain the indirect transnational quality of Hamas as a social movement. Diffusion can also be used to explain a parallel concept in terrorism theory, the "contagious" nature of terrorism mentioned by Wilkinson. As a social movement, Hamas' main impact is not through pressure placed on foreign governments or network-like coordination with

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[49] Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, "Is Transnational Terrorism Becoming More Threatening?" <u>Journal of Conflict Resolution</u> 44.3 (2000): 307-332.

[50] Sayyid Qutb, <u>Milestones</u> (Indianapolis : American Trust, 1990).

other groups. It is through diffusion that other groups may find common ground with and inspiration in Hamas' principles and tactics. As a terrorist organization, Hamas does not attack other Arab countries or sponsor attacks across borders. However, it may inspire others to act in similar fashions, thereby increasing the prevalence of terrorism in the Middle East, which is destabilizing. Hamas' pressure exerted on the region is passive; the spread of Hamas' ideology and tactics (both violent and mobilizing) occurs through increasing communication channels, a result of globalization and mass media, in combinination with the pre-existing Islamic cultural ties. Diffusion accounts for this emulation by other movements. Hamas' succes increases the intensity and speed of diffusion. The greater the success, the more likely that like-minded movements in similar situations will take up the same structures and tactics.

It is limiting to try to define Hamas as a transnational actor in terms of its social movement capabilities, as a terrorist organization, or as a radical Islamic group. A comprehensive integration of the three is therefore more desirable. The overlap is large enough that the approach should not be "either-or" but rather an acknowledgement that all play interconnecting roles in how Hamas affects the region. No theory currently expects this sort of indirect transnational effect. Therefore, this paper introduces a new term to categorize Hamas and similar actors. The concept of a Transnational Terrorist Social Movement (TTSM) will be used to emphasize the dual nature of a non-state actor that uses the tools of a social movement to mobilize support and uses terrorism as its main course of action. A TTSM exists structurally as a domestic network. It manipulates POSs, SMOs, and framing to its advantage to mobilize domestic support and potentially regional support as well. Furthermore, it allows for a full range of transnational impact. It does not rely only on the "typology of tactics" of social movement theory, but also includes power politics and the unique implications of terrorism on state and

regional stability. Of central importance to this paper is how this model defines the ways in which a domestic movement can have transnational implications through indirect channels. Diffusion and the international effects of terrorism combine to elevate TTSMs from a domestic actor to a transnational actor. The remainder of the paper will examine Hamas' use of the components of a TTSM to affect Arab states in the Middle East and the destabilizing influence Hamas has as a TTSM.

The Popularity of Hamas

Chapter 2

Popularity and success are intimately linked in the efforts of Hamas. The degree of popularity within Palestine and with Muslim communities abroad is a key component to the effectiveness of Hamas as a domestic actor and as a transnational terrorist social movement. Popular support provides Hamas with a base from which to gather resources and a group to mobilize and incite to action. Hamas' ability to increase or draw on of its popularity will heighten the impact it has across the region. Hourani believes that an Islamic group can be popular and effective only if the language of Islam is "combined with two other languages: that of nationalism…and that of social justice."[51] Hamas has adopted both of these languages, as will be shown in this chapter, and has become entirely successful as a result. As Giugni argues in regards to social movements, the more successful they are the more likely their ideas are to spread.[52] A high level of popularity within Palestine would lead one to expect greater influence among Islamists abroad. An examination of Hamas' popularity must take into account the domestic structures, policies, and ideologies that it implements as well as the ways in which it appeals to Muslims beyond the borders of Palestine.

Two factors that explain variations in Hamas' popularity throughout time are useful to keep in mind throughout this paper. The first is the way in which the movement has ingrained itself into the daily life of Muslims. Islamic movements have controlled, almost exclusively,

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[51] Hourani 228.
[52] Giugni 19.

religion and religious services within Palestine dating back to the Muslim Brotherhood's expansion of mosques in the 1980s.[53] Furthermore, the social services that the Brotherhood initiated, including the Islamic University in Gaza, have given Hamas multiple venues in which to espouse ideology while providing popular services. In the Middle East at large, Hamas has used framing tactics to link concern for the Palestinian struggle with the proper practice of the Islamic faith.

The second factor is the influence of external actions and events, beyond Hamas' control, on the movement's popularity. These are in fact political opportunity structures that create or eliminate opportunities for Hamas' popularity to take hold on the public. For example, Hamas has couched much of its popularity in the failures of the PLO to achieve any worthwhile gains for the Palestinian people. Therefore, Hamas' success is at the mercy of how successful the PLO and the peace process are. Likewise, regional events such as the wars in Iraq (1990-1991 and 2002-present) affect the amount of attention and support that Hamas receives from abroad.[54] Hamas is a sub-state actor, viewed as an "alternative" to the PLO, and therefore these external influences tend to have much greater implications for Hamas' popularity and political clout than its own actions or words.

Domestic Support

Hamas demonstrated its popularity, as well as its ongoing shift toward the political realm, in recent local elections in the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip has always been Hamas' domain, the part of Palestine in which most of their attacks are carried out and in which Hamas garners the most support. The election, held in late January, gave Hamas 75 out of a total contested 118

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[53] Abu-Amr "Shaykh Ahmad Yasin" 233.
[54] Beverley Milton-Edwards, Islamic Politics in Palestine (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996) 154-177.

seats. The historically dominant Fatah party received only 26 seats, although it is most popular in the West Bank. The victory for Hamas was explained by the Hamas spokesman, Mushir al-Masri, as a sign that the, "Palestinian people reject corruption".[55]

In this statement, al-Masri identified one of the major components of Hamas' appeal for popularity, the common belief that corruption pervades the PLO. Hamas has leveled accusations at Arafat and other leaders of collaborating behind the scenes with Israel or the United States in order to secure personal advantage at the sacrifice of Palestine.[56] Every step in the peace agreement is criticized for denying the interests of the Palestinian people. Every action of the PA against Hamas is portrayed as collusion with Israel. In a communiqué released in 1999 to commemorate the anniversary of the first *Intifada*, Hamas "call[ed] upon the Palestinian Authority to…release all of the Palestinian detainees from its jails, to end the corruption within it and not to protect the corruptionists, to stop the confiscation of public freedoms, and to release our People and allow them to protect their rights."[57] Any infraction against the Palestinian people is thus spun to deface the Palestinian Authority and raise the stature of Hamas. Hamas has always pointed out the inadequacies of the Palestinian Authority and their inability to achieve practical gains for the Palestinian people. Each time that the peace process stalled during the 1990s, Hamas' claims were given even greater validity.

Further criticism of the PA attacked the government's isolation from the Palestinian people. This highlights the belief that government officials are in power for their benefit alone, but more directly addresses their inability to recognize the struggles and important issues of the

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[55] "Big Hamas Win in Gaza's Election." <u>BBC News</u>. 28 January 2005.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4214375.stm>
[56] Charges of corruption within the PLO and PA are prevalent in Hamas' communiqués and political statements issued throughout the group's history. A large number of these released between 1999 and 2002 can be found in Yonah Alexander, <u>Palestinian Religious Terrorism: Hamas and Islamic Jihad</u> (New York: Transnational, 2002).
[57] Hamas communiqué, released 12/8/1999. Found in Yonah 280.

Palestinian public. Hamas, on the other hand, is intimately intertwined with Palestinian citizens due in large part to its decentralized, underground style of leadership and its social operations that incorporate the organization into everyday life. Pinhas Inbari identifies this difference between Hamas and the PLO as early as the Intifada. "As opposed to the PLO, which tried to lead the Palestinians from the outside, the entire Hamas leadership was on the inside and could claim to be more representative of the Intifada struggle than the PLO."[58] The network structure gave Hamas the personal connections within the country that the PLO could not achieve while holed up in international conferences. The struggles of the PLO and PA in the past weakened the attractiveness of the "outside" style of leadership and strengthened the only viable alternative, Hamas' "inside" approach.

Hamas has prided itself in being the only alternative to the PLO. Since the Intifada, Hamas has presented itself as a parallel force to achieve Palestinian statehood. The largest difference, of course, is the Islamic nature of the organization's pursuit. It is specifically this difference that Hamas has most proudly used to distinguish itself from the secular PLO. Both the PLO and Hamas are working towards a Palestinian state, but Hamas has worked to incorporate Islam into the nationalist struggle. During the founding years of Hamas, the nationalist fervor within Palestine could not be ignored. The decline of pan-Arabism put each state's future in its own hands, and territorial identity sharply increased. Palestinians therefore took their national aspirations into their own hands. In order to maintain their relevance to Palestinian society, Islamic movements had to incorporate their ideology into the nationalist struggle. In 1994, Ziad Abu-Amr noted the need for any alternative to the PLO to carry a

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[58] Pinhas Inbari, The Palestinians Between Terrorism and Statehood (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic, 1996) 44.

nationalist line.

> As long as the Islamic movement does not espouse a defined nationalist program that responds to the aspirations of the Palestinian people and stresses their right to self-determination and statehood, the movement may not be able to become an alternative to the PLO or even a serious contender for the legitimate representation of the Palestinian people.[59]

Even though the founding philosophy of the Muslim Brotherhood viewed nationalism as dividing up the Islamic *umma*, Hamas decided to adopt a nationalist policy in order to secure that representative legitimacy. The organization then undertook an effort to Islamize Palestinian identity by integrating the religion into Palestinian symbols and daily life.[60] In fact, Hamas goes so far as to make Palestinian nationalism a part of the Islamic faith. The Hamas Covenant states that, "Hamas regards Nationalism (Wataniyya) as part and parcel of the religious faith… [T]he nationality of Hamas also carries, in addition to [material, human and territorial considerations], the all important divine factors which lend to it its spirit and life."[61] Hamas makes the fight for a Palestinian state a religious endeavor. This deepens the emotional significance of the struggle on both the religious and nationalist fronts.

Hamas' position as the sole protector of a united Islamic and Palestinian identity affords the movement significant leverage. The strength of Islamic movements had surged since the Iranian revolution in 1979. Likewise, the nationalist cause was receiving greater attention and support at home. By championing both causes in one goal, an Islamic Palestinian state, Hamas maximized its draw while maintaining its Islamic ideology. One effect of an Islamized Palestinian identity is that religious arguments and justifications now carry greater weight with the public. Hamas approaches the Palestine question from two powerful angles, the religious and

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[59] Ziad Abu-Amr, Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994) 131.
[60] Meir Litvak, The Islamization of Palestinian Identity: The Case of Hamas (Tel-Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1996) 5-10.
[61] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>

the political. The interweaving of religious and nationalist ideologies strengthens each as it

supports the other. Political discussions inherently address the religious nature of the conflict,

while religious services offer political advice and guidance. Hamas has unified two of the most

compelling and important topics in Palestinian life and ingrained its ideology into Palestinian

political and religious life.

Another key element of Hamas' popularity is the social services provided to Palestinians.

Hamas is perhaps the largest provider of social services in the Gaza Strip, including medicine,

clinics, sports clubs, vocational training centers, and education. The institutions that offer these

services through schools, hospitals and mosques act as social mobilization organizations to

disseminate Hamas' ideology through everyday activities. This branch of Hamas has roots

reaching back to the Muslim Brotherhood's provision of similar services before the Intifada.

The Brotherhood won over public opinion with their community outreach and simultaneously

infused Islam into Palestinian society through this outlet.[62] Similarly, Hamas is able to espouse

its Islamic principles through religious education in these venues. Hamas believes religious

education will reinforce a "mutual social responsibility," and "the ranks will be solidified to

confront the enemies."[63] Hamas is clearly dedicated to its social responsibility and the creation

of this solidarity. The group allocates approximately 95 percent of its $70 million annual budget

to these social programs. It is widely accepted, even by the PLO, that the Palestinian people

would suffer greatly if Hamas were forced to close down these social institutions.[64]

Hamas has therefore stepped in where the PLO does not have the resources or structure to

provide for its citizens. Hamas has succeeded in another method with which to broaden its

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[62] Milton-Edwards Islamic Politics 104.
[63] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>
[64] Robinson 127

appeal, even reaching those that may not agree with its politics. A Reuters article from 1994

quoted a supporter of Fatah, the main political party of the PLO, who donated to a Hamas-

affiliated charity as saying that politics did not matter when it came to charity and that he would

give his money to the group he felt could be trusted.[65] The monopoly that Hamas has on

charitable social services in Palestine enables it to establish links throughout the community and

win the trust of even political opponents.

Regional Support

The means by which Hamas gains popular support within Palestine also contribute to the

organization's popularity abroad. The ability to win over Palestinians demonstrates an effective

agenda that in fact has appeal at the regional level. As quoted at the outset of this chapter, an

effective political Islam movement will combine the languages of nationalism, social justice, and

Islam. In combining all three, Hamas' agenda and tactics resonate not only with Palestinians, but

also with Muslims across the Middle East. These are issues that are relevant to the lives of all

Muslims. One group effectively promoting nationalism, social justice, and Islam will strike a

chord with Muslims well beyond state borders.

It should be noted that Hamas is not always popular with every Arab in the Middle East.

Many of its regional supporters are Islamic fundamentalists with similar ideologies. However, a

recent poll showed considerable backing for Hamas in the Middle East. According to Al-Arabia,

a media network based out of United Arab Emirates, 73.72% of Arabs wanted to see a Hamas

representative take over Palestinian leadership after the death of Yassir Arafat.[66] This number

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[65] Reuters article cited in Hroub 236.
[66] JPost.com Staff. "Arab World: 73.72% Want Hamas to Replace Arafat." Jerusalem Post. 25 November 2004.
<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull&cid=1101356023257&p=107839770
2269>

seems extremely high, but it nevertheless indicates the importance of Hamas to Arabs in the Middle East.

Arab opinions are often subject to the same changes in political opportunity structures as Palestinians. American intervention in the region builds up support for groups with anti-American positions. The failure of secular governments to provide beneficial economies or living standards can shift opinion towards religious groups. These impressionable supporters are central to Hamas' ability to be a potentially destabilizing force in the Middle East. Overwhelming regional support for Hamas and, transitively, other political Islam groups would seriously undermine support for regimes in power. A popular position increases the impact of every action taken and word spoken by Hamas.

A large part of Hamas' regional popularity hinges on the centrality of Palestine to the Arab and Muslim worlds. Hamas depicts Palestine as a critical, central piece in the Arab world and emphasizes its religious prominence within Islam, for the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven from Jerusalem. [67] Hamas can increase its regional influence by advancing the Palestinian cause, aiding Palestinians in their struggle for rights and a homeland. Success in this endeavor can take many forms, including providing health care and education for Palestinians, putting the Palestine issue on the international community's radar, weakening Israel, and so forth. When Muslims perceive Hamas' actions attaining any of these objectives the group gains respect and stature in the region for its cause and methods. The ideology and tactics of a movement that is achieving its aims while holding popular support will be most convincingly seen as the "right way." Recalling the diffusion model, perceived success increases the attractiveness of the group's cause and method to outside observers. The diffusion model would then expect movements that are in advantageous political opportunity structures to adopt the

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[67] Litvak.

same ideology and/or tactics. As popularity rises for Hamas' ideology, political Islam groups

with similar beliefs in other countries benefit as well. Hamas' successes breed support for a

region-wide philosophy that has witnessed a wave of support since the Iranian revolution.

In addition to promoting the Palestinian cause, Hamas has made a concerted effort to

reinforce the presence of Islam throughout the Middle East. It is a part of the movement's

religious beliefs that every Muslim state should use *shari'a* as the law of the state, but it is also

one way that Hamas manages to increase its support among Muslims. Hamas has tried to deepen

the solidarity of the Islamic community as a way to expand its listening audience that will help in

its objective. However, the group cannot directly encourage the success or growth of political

Islam groups because of its commitment not to interfere in states' internal affairs. The group has

therefore relied on other Islamic groups to mobilize foreign support for political Islam, as well as

the Palestinian cause. Another way in which Hamas has gone about this is by attending

conferences addressing Islamic and Arab popular concerns. Hamas holds seats on the general

secretariats of the Arab Islamic Popular Congress, a meeting of Arab nationalist and Islamic

grassroots movements, and the pan-Arab-Islamic Convention.[68] Hamas' success and leadership

have made it a regional exemplar of Islamic movements and its presence at these conferences

furthers its publicity and popularity.

Hamas has won regional recognition as an influential actor in Palestinian politics. In an

April, 2004 poll, 31% of Palestinians said they would vote for Hamas in popular elections,

compared to the 27.1% who would vote for Fatah.[69] This level of support gives legitimacy to

Hamas as a representative of Palestinian interests and entrenches it in the future of the conflict.

Its popularity and its power make Hamas an important political player within Palestine. States,

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[68] Hroub 173-174.

[69] "Hamas Passes Fatah in Popular Support Poll." Agence France Presse. <u>Media Review Network</u>. 22 April 2004.
<http://www.mediareviewnet.com/hamas%20passes%20fatah%20in%20popular%20support%20poll.htm>

organizations, and even citizens invested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must consider the role that Hamas plays in Palestine. Furthermore, those that support the Palestinian cause now have an alternative group to back. Hamas' popularity garnered a position of authority that attracts supporters wishing to develop positive ties with an influential force in Palestine.

While all political Islam groups with a critical level of power will attract regional attention, Hamas is able to distinguish itself from other political Islam movements. Hamas has greater sway over Muslims in the Middle East than any other Islamic group due merely to its location. The fight against Israel for Palestinian territory grants Hamas two advantages. The first advantage finds its roots in the anti-imperialist sentiment that arose during the 1950s and 1960s. The end of World War II brought about a wave of independence throughout the Middle East. Arab leaders were quick to throw off the reins of their former colonizers. The creation of an Israeli state in 1948 caused great unease in the region, especially as Israel gained support from Western powers. Israel's continued presence and the United State's continued support for Israel are viewed as a constant threat. Israel has proven itself to be unrivaled militarily and its hostile relations with practically all of the Arab states create an ever-present threat to state security.

Hamas' vision of a Palestinian state is one that reaches over "greater Palestine", from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.[70] This area of land requires the removal of the Israeli state. This destruction of an Israeli state would claim the entire Middle East back from what is seen as non-Arab imperialist interference, an attractive idea to many Arabs. Hamas' attacks against Israel weaken the Jewish state, even if only on a symbolic level. Hamas is one of the few actors, state or non-state, that appears to be actively pursuing the elimination of Israel. While the PLO and PA are working towards a two-state solution that would allow the continued presence of Israel, Hamas' rhetoric is focused more on Israel's ultimate expulsion from the Middle East.

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[70] "Hamas Profile." HamasOnline. Hamas. <http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_profile>

For those citizens of the region who are made insecure by the proximity of a major power that is neither Muslim nor Arab, this hard line approach is appealing.

The second way in which Hamas distinguishes itself from other Islamic groups is its defense of Palestine, a land important to the Islamic faith. Hamas is at once attacking Israel, an intruder into the region, while at the same time defending a sacred land in the Middle East. These are interconnected concepts, but each carries its own significance. The defense of Palestine is particularly important to Muslims due to its historical relevance in the Islamic faith. The al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem is said to be where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven. Hamas often invokes this history in its literature, making the centrality of Palestine to the Islamic faith well known to its Muslim followers. References to the holiness of Palestine can be found in the Hamas Covenant. "For Palestine is an Islamic land where the First Qibla and the third holiest site are located. That is also the place whence the Prophet, be Allah's prayer and peace upon him, ascended to Heavens."[71] The first Qibla refers to the direction Muslims prayed in the times of the Prophet. The third holiest site is the al-Aqsa mosque, less sacred than only Mecca and Medina.[72] Therefore, all Muslims feel that the preservation of this land in the face of an aggressive enemy (as Israel is often perceived) is pivotal and admire Hamas for undertaking this role for all Muslims. Defending this territory not only prevents an encroachment on the Arab world, it is protects a centerpiece of the Islamic faith. Hamas is simultaneously a defender of the pan-Arab cultural identity and the pan-Islamic religious identity.

This chapter has provided justification for two aspects of this paper. First, it has explained why Hamas is able to achieve such a high level of regional impact. Hamas has

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[71] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>
[72] Litvak 11.

successfully used social mobilization organizations and framing to gather domestic and regional

support. Likewise, its success within Israel has been inspirational for those that believe in its

cause and won over even more supporters. This level of popularity gives Hamas great leverage

in Palestinian and Middle Eastern politics. Without popular support, Hamas would not be able to

achieve any transnational impact. The second justification provided is why Hamas deserves

particular attention as opposed to its other Islamic counterparts in other countries in the Middle

East. Hamas has used the principles of social movement theory far more effectively than other

Islamic movements, and has survived as an organized actor far longer than most. Furthermore,

its appeals to the Muslim world have significant weight behind them due to its geopolitical

positioning. Palestine as a point of "foreign intrusion" and of religious importance gives Hamas

unique support from other Muslims and Arabs that add to its broad support. The regional

popular level support for Hamas and the connection of its cause to the Muslim identity are

particularly important for Hamas' ability to penetrate other Arab populations. Hamas has created

a receptive audience that is willing, at least, to hear its words and perhaps respect, even imitate,

its structure and methods.

Hamas and the Arab Street

Chapter 3

Hamas has framed its fight for an Islamic Palestinian state in such a way that Muslim citizens in all Arab states can find some common ground with it. Hamas has only made rhetorical appeals to the Muslim masses and has never put great effort into directly mobilizing this group. Nevertheless, the intensity of the region's religious and cultural identity has promotes an easily mobilized collective identity. Additionally, the significance of Palestine to the Arab world makes Hamas' struggle one important to all Muslims. The cross-border political interest of Muslims serves as a favorable political opportunity structure, an external factor or situation that provides incentive to engage in collective action. Hamas has capitalized on this opportunity structure and uses it to build regional support. Through communiqués, the Hamas Covenant, press releases and other public statements, Hamas has united its cause and tactics with the Islamic faith. These forms of communication all serve as examples of framing, using a language that is culturally relevant and important to all Muslims and Arabs. Diffusion spreads these frames throughout the Middle East, creating indirect regional effects from Hamas' localized actions.

This linkage of Hamas' fight to Islam has had two effects. First, Hamas has placed an individual responsibility on all Muslims to work towards the liberation of Palestine. The frames Hamas has used illustrate the Palestine question as a regional issue, and the connection with the Muslim population of Arab states makes Hamas a regional political force. Second, it has inspired Muslims in other Arab states who most closely identify with Hamas' ideology to

organize similar political Islam groups. The diffusion model predicts this proliferation of groups engaged in contentious politics based on the spread of protest and protest tactics to movements in similar situations. These two forms of mobilization are indicative of Hamas' transnational effects on Muslim citizens. How these translate into transnational effects on Arab regimes will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Middle East is an extremely fertile ground for identity-based movements. Historically, the region has been united under one religion, Islam, one language, Arabic, and one ethnicity, Arab. Prior to colonization, the politics in the region were predominantly tribal. The imposition of a state system on the Middle East has arbitrarily defined boundaries, grouping tribes together and dividing some, such as the Kurds, into various states. The pre-modern identities that existed before colonization have generally persisted, despite the creation of a modern state system.[73] The common religion and language of the region both transcended the tribal identities, forming a cohesive Middle East. A common identity, set of values, and similar interests are necessary requirements for effective mobilization. The Middle East provides all of these.

The first portion of this chapter examines how Hamas uses these regional identities to place its cause in the religious and political beliefs of Arabs and Muslims throughout the Middle East. Hamas has presented the liberation of Palestine as a central part of Muslim and Arab identities. A proper practice of Islam requires a mental and material commitment to Hamas' struggle. Linking identity to the Palestinian question has a significant influence on Arab politics. This influence is briefly described at the end of this chapter and is more fully explored in chapter four. The second half of the chapter is concerned with how Hamas has contributed to the spread

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[73] Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Relations (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

of political Islam throughout the region. Groups with similar ideologies are commanding more political weight in their home countries, forcing Arab regimes to deal with their politics. The success of Hamas breeds incentive for political Islam groups to organize and engage in Tarrow's "contentious politics," and may convince some moderate Muslims to join these groups as well. As with the first half of the chapter, the impact of the presence of political Islam groups on their state governments will be examined in greater detail in chapter four.

Hamas and the Muslim World

Tapping into the common identities in the region enables Hamas to broaden the scope of its appeal. It wants to avoid the conflict evolving into purely an Israeli-Palestinian affair.[74] In order to prevent that, Hamas seeks to strengthen its support through frames that involve the entire Middle East in the issue. According to the Covenant, three levels of identity, Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic, are all necessarily intertwined with Hamas' cause. "The question of the liberation of Palestine is bound to three circles: the Palestinian, the Arab and the Islamic. Each one of these circles has a role to play in the struggle against Zionism and it has duties to fulfill. It would be an enormous mistake and an abysmal act of ignorance to disregard anyone of these circles."[75] Each circle is an identity that Hamas appeals to, expanding its audience at every level. The three circles are a common theme in Hamas literature. They represent the various spheres of identity that are affected by and invested in the Palestinian question. A coordinated effort of these three circles, each fulfilling its own responsibilities, is the only way to liberate Palestine from Israel's control.

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[74] Hroub 169.

[75] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>

The Covenant is rife with similar references to grander identities that extend beyond Palestine. In the Covenant, Hamas expresses that its membership is not even exclusively Palestinian. "The basic structure of the Islamic Resistance Movement consists of Muslims who have given their allegiance to Allah and are devoted to Allah and worship Him verily…"[76] The key ingredient to membership is not Palestinian nationalism or *jihad*, but a proper practice of the Islamic faith, a complete surrender to the sovereignty of Allah. This standard of membership makes the movement more universal, as declared in a section of the Covenant, "The Universality of the Islamic Resistance Movement." This section claims that Hamas has support from Muslims around the world for its goals and *jihad* tactics. Hamas believes that it has earned this universal status through its proper interpretation and practice of Islam and its righteous struggle against an oppressor.[77]

The Hamas Covenant presents an earlier, more radical and absolutist rhetoric than the more pragmatic side of Hamas that has emerged since the end of the Intifada.[78] Despite a moderation of policies and rhetoric, the Covenant still represents the ideological basis on which Hamas has depended for its breadth of support. In other words, those elements in the Covenant that claim to make Hamas a universal movement are still used today to inherently involve Arabs and Muslims in this conflict. These appeals to the Arab and Islamic worlds are direct and widely broadcast. Many are issue-specific, while some are periodic general public requests for Arab and Islamic assistance. The first communiqué ever released by Hamas was written as an introduction of the movement into the *Intifada* and Palestinian political life, yet it was addressed to "Our steadfast Muslim masses," and described the "integral part" that the reader had in removing

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Hroub 173.

Jewish occupiers. There is only one reference to the Occupied Territories and no specification of the issue as a Palestinian one. [79]

In 1995, Hamas combined leverage politics and accountability politics by gaining religious authority for the movement from the *'ulama*, religious experts in Islam. As scholars of such an important aspect of Middle Eastern life, the word of the *'ulama* carries significant influence on Muslim opinion. A group of hundreds of *'ulama* and well-known nationalists signed and published a "Statement of Support and Solidarity" that stated their belief in Hamas' cause and the justice of its *jihad*.[80] This document enacted leverage politics, using the power of an outside force to place pressure on the Arab state to support Hamas' cause.

The statement also backed Hamas' claim of being a truly Islamic movement. Islam can play an important legitimizing or delegitimizing role, and in this case Hamas was given significant legitimacy by well respected religious authorities. The consequences for the state were therefore significant, based on accountability politics. The religious authorities in Muslim-majority countries often have greater sway over the masses' opinions than do the governments. In order for regimes to gain or maintain legitimacy, they must pay heed to Islam and act in accordance with the people's religious beliefs, which can be dictated by religious authorities. Put another way, the legitimacy of Arab regimes can rest in the hands of the *'ulama*. The authority of the *'ulama* can hold the state accountable to its declared adherence to Islamic principles. With the release of a document such as the "Statement of Support and Solidarity," pressure is applied to Arab regimes, by the *'ulama* and the public, to act in accordance with those principles. Hamas can exert an outside force on Arab regimes by gathering Islamic legitimacy on which the Arab regimes depend.

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[79] "First Communique of Hamas" released 12/14/1987. Found in Hroub, 265.
[80] Hroub 187.

One of the most powerful ways in which Hamas has connected its struggle to Muslims throughout the Middle East is its sanctification of Islamic Palestine. Hamas uses framing to emphasize the holiness of Palestine in the Islamic faith and portray itself as guardian of its sacred places. The main reason for Palestine's religious place in Islamic history is that the Prophet Muhammad is said to have ascended to heaven from the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Hamas has focused on this event as a way to raise Palestine to the level of the holiness of Mecca and Medina. In a Hamas handbill, Hamas stated that "abandoning Jerusalem is tantamount to abandoning Mecca and Medina."[81] This is a bold statement, one that accords Palestine much weight in Islamic affairs. It can immediately create a common purpose between all Muslims and Hamas.

The entire territory of Palestine is also consecrated in Islamic language. It is referred to as the Holy Land, the Blessed Land, and by some as the heart of the Islamic world, without which "the Islamic nation would be dead historically and culturally."[82] Hamas' concern for Palestine is shared by fellow Islamic movements in other Arab states. They likewise view the protection and sanctification of Palestine as part of their struggle, although they do not go so far as to give it precedence over their own domestic goals.[83] Even as a secondary interest it plays a role in uniting political Islam groups throughout the region and creating solidarity in their cause.

Furthermore, Hamas refers to historical Islamic religious law for its claim that Palestine belongs to all Muslims. The Hamas Covenant claims Palestine as Islamic *waqf*. *Waqf* refers to land conquered by Muslims under Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab to be religiously endowed

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[81] Handbills nos. 8, 10. Cited in Litvak 11.
[82] Ibid. p. 12.
[83] Ibid. p. 12.

territory for all Muslims.[84] When Muslim armies conquered this territory centuries ago it was

not divided among armies but granted to all Muslims. Therefore, Israel's occupation of that land

is not only a transgression against the rights of Palestinians, but all Muslims. The Covenant

emphasizes the everlasting nature of *waqf*, stating that this land is for the use of all generations of

Muslims until Judgment Day.

Hamas uses this endowment to criticize any attempt to concede parts of Palestine, as with

the two-state solution. "[The land of Palestine], or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or

any part of it, should not be given up. Neither a single Arab country nor all Arab countries,

neither any king or president, nor all the kings and presidents, neither any organization nor all of

them, be they Palestinian or Arab, possess the right to do that."[85] This passage amounts to a

challenge to Arab regimes that support the two-state solution by criticizing and delegitimizing

their efforts in the peace process. This presents another conflict of interest for the large

percentage of Arab citizens whose religious and cultural identities are stronger than their national

identity.[86] Believers in the concept of Islamic *waqf* will want to protect that endowment and will

be dissatisfied with a government that relinquishes it in any way.

Finally, Hamas has used Islamic principles to frame its use of violence in a way that is

justifiable to Muslims. It has employed the concept of *jihad* to give religious legitimacy to its

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[84] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>
[85] Ibid.
[86] A poll conducted by the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland and Zogby International in May, 2004 surveyed the primary and secondary identity of citizens in Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt. In Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, respondents most frequently identified themselves as Muslims. The most common secondary identity was Arab in all states except for Egypt, which had a comparable number of respondents say their secondary identity was Arab and Muslim. Found at Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development Website.
Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland and Zogby International. "Arab Attitudes towards Political and Social Issues, Foreign Policy and the Media." Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development. May 2004.
<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/SADAT/pub/Arab%20Attitudes%20Towards%20Political%20and%20Social%20Issues,%20Foreign%20Policy%20and%20the%20Media.htm>

terrorist activities within Israel. Hamas has long held that *jihad* is the way to ridding Palestine of its occupiers, restating this belief as recently as December, 2004.[87] In addition to the effectiveness of *jihad*, Hamas also emphasizes the honor that comes with such sacrifice. "Nothing is loftier or deeper… than waging Jihad against the enemy and confronting him when he sets foot on the land of the Muslims."[88] There is also the salvation that comes with *jihad*. If a Muslim dies while waging *jihad*, he is guaranteed immediate passage into Paradise. This can certainly be a convincing incentive for those ideologically motivated to participate in this form of self-sacrifice. Hamas also accords martyrdom to all those who wage *jihad*, and places those people in extremely high regard within Muslim society. Their literature and website is filled with the lauding of martyrs who have given their lives for the Palestinian cause. That Hamas outwardly holds these people in such high esteem only further encourages others to the same action.

As a result of diffusion, j*ihad* may be adopted as a tactic by other movements that may interpret its appropriate use differently than Hamas. *Jihad* is a term that has existed since the beginning of Islam and it has been interpreted in many ways ever since. While diffusion may extend *jihad* to other groups, the interpretation may not as easily be transferred across state borders. For example, news coverage of Hamas and even Hamas' own literature refers to the group's use of *jihad*, but it does not detail its motivations or beliefs about *jihad*. Hamas uses the concept to legitimize acts of violence against a non-Muslim enemy and occupier. However, in the past it has also been used to legitimize violence against Muslims, particularly rulers of

[87] "Palestinian Resistance Mortars and Missiles Hit Zionist Settlements." <u>HamasOnline</u>. 28 December 2004. Hamas. <http://www.hamasonline.com/index.php?itemid=1361>
[88] "Hamas Covenant." <u>HamasOnline</u>. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>

secular governments, who are not abiding by *shari'a*.[89] Such an interpretation by a political Islam group poses an immediate physical threat to the state's regime. Hamas increases the likelihood of an expansion of *jihad* by advocating this means to an end; the tactic is touted for its success in furthering Hamas' cause and the group reveres those who carry it out. Hamas is again framing its violent actions in Islamic terms. The diffusion model expects the successful use of *jihad* by Hamas to facilitate adoption of violent methods by other political Islam groups.

The examples above illustrate how Hamas has framed its struggle in terms significant to Islam. Hamas has infused itself into Arab society to an extent that its frames can heavily influence the interests of Arab citizens. "Hamas can expect snippets of its ideological worldview to be known and repeated by all of its followers – indeed to permeate the public consciousness at large. In this way, Hamas can shape the public debate and the popular imagination in its own way."[90] Hamas' frames attempt to create a sense of religious duty to join in its struggle. Muslims who wish to attend to this duty have few means to become directly involved because Hamas' structure is limited to the domestic realm. Therefore they place the onus on their governments to carry out this duty. The impact of this duty on the Arab regimes will be elaborated in the next chapter, but a brief introduction to the argument is given here. Through the aforementioned methods, Hamas has ingrained the Palestine question and the group's purpose into the consciences of supportive Muslims across the Middle East. The presence of popular support for Hamas among Arab citizens has made the organization a political force within Arab states. The Arab regimes must give some recognition to Hamas or the Palestine question in order to satisfy the political pressure that this group of citizens possesses. Otherwise, they face dissatisfied citizenries that may question, and challenge, their right to power.

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[89] See, for example, the work of Sayyid Qutb, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt who was executed for plotting to overthrow the state. Qutb, Sayyid. <u>Milestones</u>. Indianapolis : American Trust, 1990.
[90] Robinson 129.

Hamas and Other Islamic Movements

In addition to individual Muslim citizens, Hamas also connects with political Islam groups that have similar ideologies and objectives. The shared objective in this case is not the expulsion of the Jews from Palestine or securing a Palestinian state, but the creation of an Islamic state in place of a secular regime. The connection between Hamas and other political Islam movements does not include any strong structural or institutional links. As mentioned in chapter one, these groups do not resemble traditional forms of transnational collective action because there is no established network. The bond between political Islam groups rests not on direct communication but on a common ideology and interpretation of Islam, and the desire to transfer it into political pressure. Because there is no direct transnational association, Hamas' impact on other political Islam groups occurs through diffusion.

It must be noted here that the "hidden" nature of the diffusion process makes it very difficult to see direct evidence of Hamas' effect on other political Islam groups. In other words, proving that Hamas has actually caused Islamic movements to organize or to adopt militancy is nearly impossible. Instead, a correlation between Hamas' actions and those of other groups in the Middle East can be shown which suggests, but does not prove, the existence of Hamas' transnational effects. The presence of many other political Islam groups in the region, including the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, and al-Qaeda, is a testament to the widespread success of the doctrine in Middle Eastern politics. These, and other political Islam groups that use violent means, as well as sub-state actors such as Iraqi insurgents, suggests diffusion of that tactic across movements and groups. The similarity in ideology and tactics does not prove that Hamas is the source of these movements or their tactics, but it does show that they are spreading. The

emergence of activities and ideas similar to those held by Hamas is reason enough devote

attention to Hamas' ability to spread them.

The lack of organized communication between these groups is intentional. Hamas does

not wish to endanger its relationship with Arab governments by appearing to bolster any form of

political or security threat. It has adopted a policy of universal support for Arab and Islamic

states and movements, not supporting any one over the other or encouraging alliances against

any particular regime.[91] Nevertheless, Hamas does have a bond of fellowship with Islamic

movements, as expressed in the Covenant.

> The Islamic Resistance Movement views other Islamic movements with respect
> and appreciation. If it were at variance with them on one point or opinion, it is in
> agreement with them on other points and understandings. It reads those
> movements as included in the framework of striving [for the sake of Allah], as
> long as they hold sound intentions and abide by their devotion to Allah, and as
> long as their conduct remains within the perimeter of the Islamic circle.[92]

This passage demonstrates a moderate policy in regard to Islamic movements. It shows

camaraderie but also allows for differences in interpretation and action. Hamas does not commit

itself to furthering the cause of every Islamic movement in the Middle East, but rather hopes that

they will aid its cause. Hamas has given public support to political Islam groups only as a form

of solidarity for Hamas' own benefit, but not as an attempt to incite them against their own

governments.

This does not prevent Hamas' rhetoric and tactics from indirectly strengthening political

Islam groups, however. A transfer of ideological and organizational information through

mediums such as informal networks or mass media can still create strong movements across

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[91] Hroub 154.
[92] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>

borders without strong channels of interaction between them.[93] Political Islam groups are well

aware of the activities and successes of Hamas. Through the diffusion of information, these

groups learn those policies and practices most advantageous to their own cause. Whether or not

Hamas intends it, its domestic operations can strengthen the cause of Islamists in other Arab

states.

Hamas can also contribute to the popularity and success of political Islam groups within

their own countries. In addition to emulating a successful movement, groups can bolster their

support by pointing to successful movements with similar ideologies. Stephen Walt uses the

term "ideological solidarity" to describe one form of alliance between states, but it is applicable

to sub-state actors as well. By aligning, even informally, with a strong and successful

organization with a similar ideology, a group can point to the potential benefits of that

ideology.[94] Islamic movements can use Hamas as an example of the powerful effects that

political Islam can have. The power of Hamas can be portrayed to represent the power of

political Islam as a whole, rather than as an individual group's success. Hamas' success is thus

translated into a victory for political Islam as a whole. This is a mobilizing strategy, whether

directly used by organizations or not.

One of Hamas' most common frames, and one central to its ideology, is the phrase,

"Islam is the solution." It has gained enough support and prestige by means of that doctrine that

some Muslims may look to movements within their state that hold to the same principle. Diane

Singerman notes, "The vague call that 'Islam is the solution' resonates on so many levels in the

Muslim world, and as a result it influences multiple social and political fields and builds on the

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[93] Tarrow 186.

[94] Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987).

collective identity."[95] In this way, Hamas has the potential to be a mobilizing force in other countries, increasing popular support for movements it shares no direct connection with, only a set of common ideals.

The similarities in political opportunity structures around the Middle East, generally characterized by repressive secular regimes[96], and the similarities in the structure of domestic Islamic networks create the potential for considerable common ground between political Islam groups.[97] Already present are similar political situations, mobilization structures, and objectives. As Hamas operates within these situations and makes use of those structures, it demonstrates to other Islamic movements how to achieve the common goal while operating within those political structures. Therefore, the emulation of Hamas by foreign political Islam groups is the cause for concern of Arab regimes, rather than Hamas as a political Islam group itself.

For the exact reasons that Hamas presents a threat to the sovereignty and claim to representation of the PLO, so do other political Islam movements present a threat to their governments. Hamas' methods, from its social services to terrorist violence, can be adapted to the specific situations in other states. The more successful a certain method, the more likely it is to be adopted as the effective way to further a similar cause in a similar political environment. Hamas' most visual and well-publicized tactic is certainly terrorism. Arab states that see Hamas employing violence to advance the goal of an Islamic state have to be concerned with the potential diffusion of terrorism. Regime fears are likely moderated because of the large ideological and theological differences between attacking non-Muslim occupiers and fellow Muslims. Nevertheless, the possibility of violence on any scale can be destabilizing to regimes.

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[95] Diane Singerman, "The Networked World of Islamist Social Movements," Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2004) 151.

[96] Singerman.

[97] Eickelman.

Common ideals, values, and beliefs are the central part of the relationship between Hamas and the Arab and Muslim worlds. Hamas has used these commonalities to present its cause as an integral part of the Arab and Muslim identities and of the Muslim faith. To that end, most of Hamas' literature involves not only Palestinians but all Arabs and Muslims. The group's statements directed toward the Muslim community are words of solidarity and unity in purpose. There is no intention of inciting the mobilization of similar movements within other countries. Arab regimes are nevertheless affected by Hamas' influence on their citizenries. Hamas has built up regional support for its cause as well as for the wider ideology of political Islam. Both of these factors, brought about through the spread of framed information, place the reality of Hamas within other Arab states. As Hamas arises as a major actor in the minds of the Arab public, so must Arab governments also give consideration to the organization and its transnational consequences.

Hamas and the Arab State

Chapter 4

On an official level, Hamas' relations with the Arab states are respectful and, on the whole, positive. Hamas initiated its correspondence with Arab governments, in 1991, when it sent an official representative to the Popular Islamic Delegation. This began ongoing diplomatic communications with Middle Eastern states including meetings with state officials and representatives being assigned to each country.[98] Similar to Hamas' relationship with the Arab and Muslim public, this new tactic of regional diplomacy was established to gather wider support for Hamas' own cause, not to intervene in other countries' domestic affairs. Nevertheless, the connection with the Arab and Muslim people, as described in the previous chapter, and the practice of terrorism do make Hamas a domestic issue for Arab states. The transnational qualities of Hamas' words and actions have the potential to destabilize Arab states in two ways. First, Hamas infiltrates states at the popular level through diffusion and other transnational social movement traits. Second, its terrorist actions, though solely directed against Israel, can make states and the region more insecure. This chapter explores the impact of Hamas' transnational qualities on the security of Arab states.

Khaled Hroub identifies two periods in Hamas' relations with Arab states: the first, from the founding of Hamas to 1991, and the second, from 1991 up to the present day. The first period was characterized by spontaneous and unrestrained criticisms of Arab regimes and lacked diplomatic concern for the organization's reputation abroad. The second period began with

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[98] Hroub 145.

participation in the 1991 Popular Islamic Delegation, when Hamas began to establish more

formal contacts with Arab governments. The group sought to gain favor from Arab states, and

from that time on has had to rein in its fiery rhetoric. Hamas now refrains from identifying

particular regimes or leaders with charges of deserting the Palestinian cause or abandoning

Muslims, instead resorting to generalized criticisms. For example, on the eve of the Madrid

Conference in 1991, Hamas condemned the conference and its goals rather than the countries

participating in it.[99]

Hamas does turn to the Arab states for general support, sometimes asking for it, at other

times demanding it, and finally expressing disappointment if it is not given. As at the popular

level, Hamas frames the Palestine question as one of regional importance. The organization

expects Arab governments to fulfill their responsibilities, just as Muslims should fulfill their

individual duty to this cause. For example, Hamas' communiqués released at the beginning of

the al-Aqsa Intifada asked,

> the Arab regimes that maintain any form of relation or normalization with the
> criminal enemy to end dealings with the enemy and halt forms of normalization
> with it and expel its ambassadors and representatives" and to "shoulder their duty
> and responsibility towards Al-Quds and the Aqsa and towards our stationed
> people… to strengthen their steadfastness and Jihad materially and morally…
> [and] to allow freedom of expression to the Arab and Islamic peoples so that they
> would express their opinions and support their brothers in Palestine.[100]

Hamas expects Arab states to sever ties with Israel as well as promote Palestinian rights,

including the right to resist occupation (by means of *jihad*) and the right to independence in the

form of a Palestinian state. Hamas has thus created a set of norms for Arab government policies

based on its own positions. As shown in the previous chapter, Hamas has forged the ties with the

Arab and Muslim worlds that provide popular support for these norms and expectations. Arab

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Communiqué no. 4 and no. 5, 10/1/2000, 10/3/2000. Found in Alexander, 221-229.

governments are often unable or unwilling to fulfill these expectations, however. This division between the state and its citizenry is a common situation in the Middle East, a political opportunity structure that gives Hamas the potential to be a political force in Middle Eastern states.

Arab States and Their Populations

Many Arab states in the Middle East are criticized for their repressive and "closed" governments that often deny their citizens any form of political participation or political voice. The monarchical or dynastic governments divide the regime from the masses. [101] Out of this political separation comes a separation of interests that could potentially lead to conflict between the regime and populace. Regime interests concern the security of the regime's power and the stability of its institutions. Societal interests are those "regarded by a community or its political representatives as important collective interests." These include the "preservation of [society's] basic values, ideology and cultural identity." [102] For Muslim Arab populations, the basic values, ideology and identity all revolve around Islam. When a regime's actions attend to the regime's interests and ignore societal interests, the potential for conflict is increased. Therefore, Arab states have been forced to, at a minimum, pay lip service to Islamic issues.

However, the interpretation and application of Islam differs between state and population as well.

> There is more than one possible view of what Islam really is and what it imposes upon believers, and therefore there can be more than one political language of Islam. It can be used to both justify an existing order and to condemn it, and in a polarized society it will be used for both purposes. [103]

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[101] Singerman 144.

[102] Bahgat Korany, Paul Noble, and Rex Brynen, eds., The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World (New York: St. Martin's, 1993) 26.

[103] Piscatori 229.

Therefore, a competition exists between governmental and popular "framing" of Islam in society. State officials and elites attempt to present "official frames" of Islam in order to legitimize their authority and simultaneously downplay the role of Islam in politics. The "official" version of Islam emphasizes the individual aspects of salvation. This, along with attempted control over Islamic institutions such as mosques and schools, is how Arab states try to limit the collective action potential found within Islam.[104]

On the other hand, the popular version of Islam adopts a "traditional" Islam, an Islam, as Hourani puts it, "potentially of revolution."[105] Central to "popular" Islam is the role of the *umma* as a community of believers bound to each other by faith. Hourani's idea of popular Islam as capable of revolution depends on the collective nature of the *umma*. This community provides the collective identity that organization and mobilization depend on. In fact, many marginalized Muslims have become disaffected with the state's modernization efforts and general repression, and have therefore turned their allegiance to community leaders who preach popular Islam.[106]

Hamas indirectly performs the role of one of those community leaders. Hamas' regional support depends upon the solidarity of the *umma*. Therefore, the group plays up the importance of the *umma* in Islam, referring to it frequently in its literature. To make the Palestine question an Islamic issue, Hamas must overcome the states' influence on the individual practice of Islam and encourage "popular" Islam that will engage all Muslims in its efforts. Therefore, Hamas' calls to the *umma* act to promote the "popular" version of Islam.

The existence of this alternative version of Islam to the one espoused by the state presents an implicit threat to the legitimacy and stability of those in power. Islam is a legitimizing force

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[104] Wiktorowicz 18.
[105] Hourani 229.
[106] Wiktorowicz 18.

in the Middle East, one that Arab governments must depend on. The "official" Islam that the states attempt to use to legitimize their rule is precarious because of its differences from the "popular" Islam. What may be deemed appropriate action in the state's mind may not be legitimate under the beliefs of popular Islam. For example, the monarchical rule operating in many Arab countries today is counter to the need to voice the will of the people, as expressed in the popular Islam.[107] A state that claims to be legitimately protecting Islamic interests by way of its "official" Islam may face charges of hypocrisy if its version of Islam is not fulfilling the needs of "popular" Islam.

Although the state may attempt to legitimize its rule with Islam, if the religion is not properly respected it leaves the government open to criticism. The attempt at legitimization may, therefore, do more harm than good. It can have the effect of widening the gap between society and the government, leaving the government isolated from its people, unstable, and lacking in popular support. Future challenges to the regime could therefore have an even greater impact.[108]

Hamas as Breeder of the Islamic Threat

In the previous chapter, two connections between Hamas and parts of the Arab and Muslim worlds were illustrated. The first was the relationship between Hamas and the citizens of the region, the second between Hamas and political Islam movements. Diffusion has given Hamas influence within both of these relationships. These two groups already posses an ability to place pressure on and destabilize their country's government. Hamas' transnational influence enhances that ability, thereby increasing the threat that Arab regimes face in their own countries.

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[107] Andrea Nusse, <u>Muslim Palestine: The Ideology of Hamas</u> (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1998) 74-75.
[108] Piscatori 232.

The Palestine question has always been a regional concern, but recently Arab states have been less likely to find support for Palestine within their national interest. This is a result of the solidification of states and the state system, replacing the pan-Arab nature of the region.[109] States are now focused on their national interest, which does not always coincide with Hamas' vision of the defense of Palestine. This is particularly true for states such as Jordan and Egypt, both of which have ongoing peace agreements with Israel. Hamas has nevertheless helped to bring the Palestine question to the attention of Arab governments through its connection to the Arab populations. Hamas' transnational influence incites Arab citizens to demand action on behalf of their regional identity. Response to the Palestine question is pushed onto the national stage by Hamas and the Arab societies, despite the fact that it may not coincide with the state's agenda or interests.

The populations of these states have an identity-oriented interest in the protection of Palestinians and the liberation of Palestine, and they wish to see their governments act on that interest. However, the "closed," authoritarian political structures of most Arab states do not allow for much representation of the population's interests; in general, the regime attends to its own interests rather than those of its citizens. The regime is concerned with the balance of power in the region and stabilizing national security in the face of the international state system. On the other hand, societal interests are concerned with the protection of fellow Muslims, without as much thought given to how actions toward this end may affect the national security. If important societal interests are ignored by the government, the level of popular dissension increases. Dissension can reach a critical point at which the overt opposition to the government becomes a threat to the security of those in power. At this point, the regime must incorporate societal interests into its agenda in order to appease the population and quell any uprising. So it

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[109] Michael N. Barnett, <u>Dialogues in Arab Politics</u> (New York: Columbia UP, 1998) 261.

is with the Palestine question as a political issue in Arab states. Hamas has helped to rally popular support for Palestinians in Arab populations throughout the Middle East. Governments that give too little recognition, whether material or rhetorical, to this issue will face political consequences from their populations.

Political challenges, particularly in light of governments overlooking societal demands, may originate from organized Islamic movements. These movements in fact gain some of their prestige from Hamas. The term prestige is used in two senses. The first is the amount of consideration given to these movements by Arab governments, which view them as a potential threat. The second is prestige among the public, which is a measure of popular support. The success of Hamas in Palestine – defined by its position as a legitimate challenger to the PLO, significant public support, and attacks on Israel – has led to an increase in presence and stature of Islamic movements in other Arab states. The diffusion model accounts for the adoption of similar ideology and tactics by these groups that find themselves in similar political structures. Ideological alliances, association based on the success of like-minded groups, then account for the increase in popularity of Islamic movements among Arab populations. The communication of Hamas' actions to the rest of the Islamic movements has bolstered their prestige and therefore created a stronger destabilizing force.

Islamic movements, as the mobilizing and coordinating forces in society, play a major role in challenging the authority and legitimacy of the Arab state. They harness the public's discontent and are able to channel it through more efficient, controlled avenues than the formerly dispersed society. They provide the structure and mobilizing techniques through which public protest can gain strength. Finally, they provide the voice to the government that is often missing in Muslim societies. For example, it is the Islamic movements that outwardly criticize Arab

governments for hypocrisy and condemn them as un-Islamic.[110] Islamic movements sometimes, as in this example, take on a more oppositional position than public support provides them. These groups believe they represent the popular version of the religion, even though their beliefs may be more extreme than the general public's. Their presence may therefore focus and intensify the threat that would otherwise exist at a popular level.

One of the strongest threats to Arab states' authority is the existence of Islamic movements as political actors in a non-governmental sphere. As Milton-Edwards puts it, "A new generation of political players emerged, challenging the legitimacy of the nation-state and its rulers throughout the Middle East and beyond."[111] Much like transnational civil society acts as a parallel and sometimes limiting force on states, so too does Islam and its political forces. In their position outside of the political sphere, political Islam groups are not bound by the same restraints on certain actions as states are. In a similar vein, the state has no political form of response to their actions other than a military recourse. These movements can operate outside of the state apparatus while still having political impacts on the society, such as shaping public opinion or organizing opposition to the government. Organized movements outside of the state sphere can therefore wield enough political influence to force concessions from the state and limit its non-Islamic behavior.

Islamic movements can also undermine the role of the current government by redefining the boundaries of public and private life. The Islamic consideration of the "good life," and therefore "good governance," infuses religion and politics, inseparable in the Islamic faith, into daily life. This is another expression of "popular" Islam, which holds the *umma* over the individual. The proper practice of Islam should bind all Muslims together in an open

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[110] Singerman 150.
[111] Milton-Edwards <u>Contemporary Politics</u> 123.

community. The secular and individualized private sphere that exists should therefore become a public sphere in which "Islamic beliefs and practices should inform daily life, law, morality, the economy, and governance."[112] This redefinition of the role of Islam and government, of public and private spheres, is implicit criticism of secular governments. Current Arab regimes will never achieve the "good life" for their people until they incorporate Islam into their governance. This view entreats the regimes to establish an Islamic state under which the Quran, not a secular government, holds the authority of law. This would require either the Islamizing of the current regime or, more likely, the unseating the current regime to create a new government.

Hamas as Breeder of Terrorism

Hamas' ability to affect regime stability by way of Arab populations is a very roundabout effect. A more direct effect on the regime comes as a result of Hamas' terrorist actions. The presence of terrorism in the region is a threat to all states, regardless of where or at whom the violence is directed. Terrorism poses three problems for Arab states. First is the concern over the recognized ability of terrorism to spread. Terrorism is occurring more frequently and is a particularly popular mode of action with marginalized populations who have no other outlet with which to make their voice heard.[113] Terrorism as a tactic is not connected with any one particular cause and may therefore be used by any disaffected group within any state. Second, terrorism challenges the state's monopoly on the use of violence. Terrorism erodes this norm of state sovereignty. Third, Arab states in the Middle East face persistent international pressure because the primary focus of the "war on terror" is in the Middle East. Arab governments are

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[112] Singerman 150.
[113] Oberschall.

expected to uphold international norms that condemn terrorism while terrorist cells continue to operate underground and out of the reach of the state.

Hamas has attempted to involve Arab states in its *jihad* on some level. There has never been any expectation by Hamas that the Arab states might militarily confront Israel as in the 1967 war. Likewise, Hamas has tried not to forcefully pressure Arab governments into action for fear of damaging its relationship with them. There have been direct calls to these regimes, however, for assistance in the resistance. The Hamas Covenant states

> The Arab states surrounding the Zionist entity are required to open their borders to the Jihad fighters, the sons of the Arab and Islamic peoples, to enable them to play their role and to join their efforts to those of their brothers among the Muslim Brothers in Palestine. The other Arab and Islamic states are required, at the very least, to facilitate the movement of the Jihad fighters from and to them.[114]

This passive cooperation, however, would still not satisfy the demands of international pressure, which expects open efforts at eliminating terrorists and their infrastructures. Hamas continues its appeals to Arab states, though they are more moderated in tone and have fewer references to *jihad*. In a communiqué released in 2000, during the al-Aqsa Intifada, Hamas asked for Arab states "to support struggle in Palestine, recognize its legitimacy, [and] supply it with money and arms…"[115] A voice in support of the Palestinian people is acceptable to the international community, but vocally supporting, financing, or arming Hamas is aiding a terrorist organization. That level of association with Hamas would result in significant political pressure at the international level.

Therefore, states have come out very strongly against terrorism on the whole, and have denied any connection to Hamas. Especially since the beginning of the "war on terrorism," Arab

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[114] "Hamas Covenant." HamasOnline. Hamas.
<http://www.hamasonline.com/indexx.php?page=Hamas/hamas_covenant>
[115] Communiqué no. 14, 11/9/2000. Found in Alexander, 188-191.

governments have been expected to participate in rooting out terrorism. Many of the regimes

have spoken repeatedly about their rejection of terrorism and their efforts to end its effects on

their country and the Middle East. In 2003, President Mubarak of Egypt stated,

> We affirm our position against terror and violence. We will continue to fight the
> scourge of terrorism against humanity and reject the culture of extremism and
> violence in any form or shape, from whatever source or place, regardless of
> justifications or motives, being fully aware of their dangers as a plague that
> threatens the peace and stability of the whole world. We will use all the power of
> the law to prevent support reaching illegal organizations, including terrorist
> groups. [116]

Mubarak recognizes the threat of terrorism to the international state system. He also tries to

discredit any Islamic or Arab link that Hamas may try to present by stating that terrorism does

not have proper or justified motives. Saudi Arabia and Jordan have also commented on the ill

effects of terrorism and their stand against it. King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah addressed

Muslim pilgrims gathered for the *hajj*, the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca, to denounce terrorism

and deny its place in the Islamic faith.[117] Saudi advisors have also publicly denied any

connection to Hamas, stating that their financial support for the Palestinian cause goes through

the PLO, not Hamas.[118] Jordan's US embassy website is more direct in its opinion on Palestinian

terrorism, where it condemns the suicide bombings as "morally and politically" wrong.[119]

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[116] Hosni Mubarak, "Arab Commitment to Peace," Speech, 3 June 2003, Mubarak on International Terrorism,
Egypt State Information Service <http://www.sis.gov.eg/terrorism/html/et108.htm>
[117] Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, "Public Statements by Senior Saudi Officials Condemning Extremism and
Promoting Moderation," Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2 February 2004. 10.
<http://www.saudiembassy.net/ReportLink/Extremism.09.20.04.pdf>
[118] Adel Al-Jubeir, "News Conference with Adel Al-Jubeir, Advisor to the Saudi Crown Prince," Royal Embassy of
Saudi Arabia n.d.
<http://saudiembassy.net/StatementLink/03-ST-Adel-embassy-612-transcript.asp>
[119] "Jordan's Position on Current Conflict between Israel and the Palestinians," Embassy of the Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/index.shtml>

Arab states face strong political pressure from two sides on this issue. The demands placed on the government by the international community can conflict with those placed on it by domestic factions that support Hamas' cause. At the international level, Arab states are expected to denounce terrorism and work towards its elimination. Domestically, supporters of the Palestinian cause are driven, in part by Hamas, to demand assistance for those contributing to the Palestinian cause, which includes Hamas. In the midst of the "war on terror," Arab states are often caught between these two conflicting pressures. Arab states are generally inclined to bow to the greater international pressure, as indicated by the declarations cited above. However, neglecting the societal interest forged by Hamas can create a destabilizing popular dissension.

Jordan sees a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians as the way to end terrorism. This view, common among Middle Eastern heads of state, holds the unresolved Palestine question responsible for much of the tension and conflict in the Middle East, even believed by some to be the region's main origin of terrorism.[120] As the Arab states in the region have individually come to terms with Israel, the Arab-Israeli conflict has evolved into an Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nevertheless, the conflict still involves Arab states. This ongoing conflict has left the region mired in uncertainty and instability. States in the region are determined to see a peaceful end to this conflict resulting in a more stable Middle East. Hamas' terrorist actions, however, hinder the realization of this goal. Terrorism has been, and still is, one of the major hurdles to resolving this conflict. Israeli leadership continually brings up the need to reign in Palestinian terrorist organizations such as Hamas before the Palestinian Authority is granted more autonomy. Until the terrorist violence ceases completely, the peace process will most likely never be fully finalized.

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[120] Windsor 29.

Hamas' terrorism is also a threat to the authority of statehood of Middle Eastern regimes because it questions their monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Some Middle Eastern states are particularly vulnerable to this threat because the government and military are closely linked and the state's authority is often dependent upon military power.[121] Recalling R.J. Vincent's transnational terrorism theory, this threat is one of the ways that terrorism can undermine the entire international state system in addition to the targeted state. Actors within the government's domain have surrendered their right to violence so that the state could be the sole provider of protection for its citizens. The state has the sole right to use force, which it uses to guard the citizens, values, and institutions of the state. Sub-state actors are now using unauthorized violence to further their political causes. This erodes the claim that violence will be used only by the state and only for protective purposes, especially when the sub-state actor is powerful or elusive enough to withstand government efforts to eliminate the group. Hamas has survived deportations, arrests, and assassinations at the hands of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It has entrenched itself in Palestinian society despite its terrorist activities. Therefore, the use of force now resides in two locales, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. One example of the impact of Hamas' use of violence is how it has detracted from the PA's position in negotiations with Israel. The PA must be concerned with and responsible for Hamas' actions as well as its own, even though it has no control over the group. The PA has lost some of its claim as a trustworthy representative and government entity due to the terrorism in its territories.

Terrorism in foreign countries can have the same effect on any government. Any degradation in a state's stature is detrimental to its position in international politics. If sub-state actors usurp the state's monopoly on violence, relations with that state become unstable and the perceived authority of that government becomes tenuous. The inability to eliminate or control

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[121] Singerman 144, 146.

these illegitimate forms of violence can shake the legitimacy of the state itself. In addition to undermining the individual state's authority and legitimacy, terrorist sub-state actors call into question the international norm that gives states that monopoly. If actors under the rule of the state are able to command an aspect of state power, the norm giving the state that power is weakened.

The concept of state's monopoly on violence is no longer relevant because it simply no longer exists. Therefore, sub-state actors now have another avenue by which to achieve their aims, an avenue that was closed to them before the use of terrorism became prevalent. Hamas is one terrorist group that opened up this door for other marginalized actors. Here, diffusion and the indirect effects of Hamas' violence combine to create a greater potential for domestic terrorism to originate in Arab states. Terrorism as a strategy spreads through diffusion to other groups and encourages them to use the same method. At the same time, the first instance of terrorism breaks down norms that would have otherwise prevented other groups from engaging in the violence.

One of the biggest problems in dealing with terrorism is the difficulty in dismantling terrorist organizations. Terrorist organizations are often structured as loose networks without an hierarchical order to the leadership. Terrorist organizations operate as an interconnected network, purposefully delegating decision-making to individual cells.[122] This structure makes it impossible to break down the movement by striking at the leadership. Eliminating one cell does not disrupt the communication and coordination between the remainder of the organization.

Cracking down on terrorist organizations may also reinforce the claims of repression and injustice that many terrorist organizations espouse. "Terrorism is hydra-headed…every act of

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[122] Lesser, et al.

massive retaliation or every demonstration of…determination to stamp out terrorism will only

produce more terrorists."[123] Not only the activities of terrorists, but actions *against* terrorists can

mobilize sympathy for those organizations and their causes. In addition to tracking down

terrorists and eliminating their networks, states also face great difficulties in not inciting further

terrorism.

Hamas has had significant impact within Arab states through its presence in the region as

a catalyst of Islamic activists and as a terrorist organization. The unique political structures of

Middle Eastern states, and the resulting cultural differences between the regime and the people,

make the diffusion principle particularly effective in creating political opposition. A pre-existing

divide between the state and popular levels can be widened by strengthening the interests of the

society. Hamas' rhetoric appeals to the popular level and places pressure on the regimes to

attend to the societal interests. A pan-Islamic cause such as the Palestine question allows Hamas

to shape these societal interests and become, in a way, a disembodied political actor within Arab

states.

Hamas then has an impact on the state level through the transnational effects of its

terrorist activities. Terrorism presents a unique threat that no other social movement tactic can

duplicate. Hamas breaks down the international norms that Arab states depend on for their

sovereignty. Its violence is so extreme and unregulated that it breaks all norms of warfare and it

denies the monopoly on violence that states take for granted. The Middle East is internationally

recognized as home to many terrorist activities, a reputation which Arab states have had to

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[123] Windsor 30.

overcome to establish positive relationships with other countries. Hamas has sunk the region further into ongoing conflict and instability, a burden which all states must bear.

These two forms of transnational impact are serious issues with which Arab states must contend. Addressing these impacts presents a great difficulty, however, as they are achieved in diffusive and indirect ways. On the surface, Hamas maintains positive relationships with most Arab governments. Regimes therefore risk disrupting the external peace and creating popular dissension if they confront Hamas through force or diplomacy. How, then, without direct intervention, can Arab states deal with Hamas, a foreign actor that impinges on their security? A basic policy prescription will be offered to answer this question in the conclusion of this paper.

Conclusion

This paper set out to prove Hamas' capacity for regional impact as an indirect result of its domestic activities. It was shown that many qualities of Hamas can be considered transnational, from its ability to frame the Palestine cause as a pan-Islamic issue to its terrorist attacks on Israel. Rather than limiting this paper's theoretical framework to one field of study, this paper used a comprehensive analysis of Hamas as a transnational actor that incorporated three different areas of scholarship on transnational movements. These three transnational disciplines – transnational social movement theory, transnational terrorism theory, and Islam as a transnational religion – contributed to the understanding of Hamas' regional impact.

This paper then consolidated those three fields into two models that most aptly define Hamas' transnational characteristics. The first was the diffusion model. This model explains the reach of Hamas' domestic social movement characteristics throughout the Middle East, such as its social mobilizing organizations and its Islamic framing of the Palestine question. These mobilizing techniques reach a regional base through a spread of information. Citizens throughout the region may be mobilized to support Hamas or its political Islam ideology in general, or they may be mobilized to take contentious action themselves. Groups that do take action may also adopt Hamas' strategy of using terrorism to achieve their goals, another characteristic of the diffusion model.

The spread of terrorism has a more significant impact than any other form of contentious politics, however. The unique and extremely powerful transnational impact of terrorism is the

justification for creating the second model, a transnational terrorist social movement. Hamas affects Arab states on two fronts. First is the outcome of diffusion on the populations of the states, mobilizing them to demand government support for Hamas or to engage in contentious politics in their own country. The second front comes from Hamas' terrorism. As argued in chapter four, terrorism within a region has destabilizing effects on all of the states. These two fronts form the basis of Hamas' transnational impact. By taking these fronts into account, the concept of a transnational terrorist social movement offers an analytic tool to explain the regional presence of domestic movements.

After establishing this theoretical framework, this paper detailed the way in which Hamas realizes the transnational impacts expected by that framework. Hamas has developed separate relationships with the Arab states and with their populations. Therefore, each relationship was treated in separate detail. Hamas' commitment to not interfere in Arab states' internal affairs has limited the depth and strength of Hamas' relationship with Arab populations. However, communication of Hamas' rhetoric still reaches these societies. Rhetoric is a key factor in Hamas' ability to mobilize those beyond Palestine. Hamas frames its information with ideology and language that connects with all Muslims, making use of and reinforcing regional collective identities. Hamas' religious language, such as its rallying cry, "Islam is the solution," presents its ideology and purpose in a way that citizens in the Middle East will respond to.

One aspect of Hamas' impact on Arab states derives from its connection to their people. The Palestine question can become a central political issue in Arab states as a result of Hamas mustering regional support for its cause. A wide enough base of support can force rhetorical or policy concessions from Arab regimes that might otherwise not consider protection of Palestine, or support of those fighting for Palestine, in their national interest. The political and military

success of Hamas within Palestine may also breed similar oppositional political Islam forces in other states. The diffusion model expects that successful movements will more rapidly spread their information and tactics because other groups will see their strategies as more advantageous to adopt. Hence, Hamas is championing political Islam and terrorism, though not deliberately, as paths towards achieving political and societal influence that other Islamic movements may use to challenge the secular regimes in their states. The similar political opportunity structures in the Middle East, for example the "closed" government structures, increase the likelihood that political Islam groups will see Hamas' tactics as advantageous to their own particular struggle.

The second aspect of Hamas' impact on Arab regimes is a result of its terrorist attacks. Terrorism may be spread, through diffusion, as a tactic used by opposition groups. This presents a direct security threat to states that is more immediate and drastic in its challenge to the state than other forms of contention. However, Hamas' own acts of terrorism also affect Arab regimes by defying the norm that only the state has the right to use violence. If states are no longer able to enforce that norm, oppositional forces have a newly opened avenue through which to engage the state that was unavailable when states had that monopoly. Finally, Hamas' terrorism perpetuates the region's source of instability and tension, the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Arab states are forced to contend with Hamas as a regional actor due to these transnational implications. This non-state actor is achieving a level of regional influence that wields the potential to indirectly interfere with the regime's security in Arab states. These Arab states must incorporate Hamas into their policy considerations if they wish to gain control over these external influences. The explanations in this paper of Hamas' transnational effects are helpful in understanding how to deal with such an external force. Arab states would be wise to consider the notion of a transnational terrorist social movement (TTSM), especially one that

utilizes Islamic values and structures towards its purpose. The model of a TTSM explains the various ways in which domestic actors can achieve regional levels of pressure. A TTSM is a domestic actor that engages in terrorist activities with the potential to mobilize outside groups with similar ideologies through loose and unofficial networks and spread of information. These are important non-state actors to consider in this "new world order" and the "war on terror." The era of globalization is strengthening their transnational ties and facilitating the flow of information, thereby precipitating the effects of the diffusion model. As a result, organizations with similar ideologies and goals will imitate TTSMs that are successful in their domestic operations.

TTSMs are therefore "contagious," as are their component parts, terrorism and social movements. In a TTSM, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, TTSMs may be more influential than either terrorist groups or social movements. They make use of political opportunity structures, social mobilizing organizations, and "framing" to make their cause the most appealing and effective in gathering widespread support. In terrorism, these groups have also found the most destabilizing and threatening tactic used today by non-state actors. The combination of these two traits makes TTSMs particularly potent in their transnational implications.

There are paths to take that could both increase and decrease the presence and effectiveness of TTSMs. The former would require successful operations by TTSMs in carrying out their objectives, gaining some degree of power and/or influence, or weakening their enemies. This could expand the number of TTSMs by inciting other movements to take up similar organization and action towards their causes. Another possibility is the emergence of a truly transnational social movement as described by Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink. As outlined in this

paper's first chapter, a transnational social movement is the organized and structured joint mobilization of domestic movements with similar beliefs and purposes. This form of collective action is suggested to have the most influential effects due to its ability to disrupt the social order in many states at once. Currently, Hamas does not maintain such a high level of coordination with other Islamic movements in Arab states. If the connection between them were to increase, perhaps due to globalization or common interest leading them to joint action, then a transnational social movement could be established. This would only further the potency of a TTSM, giving it direct access to many other like-minded organizations.

On the other hand, Arab states have it in their power to decrease the level of influence that a TTSM such as Hamas has. It is a difficult task to undertake for two reasons, as shown in previous chapters. First, the Arab states must appear to be respectful of Islamic movements' intents and beliefs or they risk stirring dissension within their populations. Therefore they must not be overtly hostile to Hamas or its purpose. Second, Hamas is an acephalous organization with a network-like structure. This makes it particularly hard to crack down on leaders and dismantle the infrastructure of the group. This holds true for many of the Islamic and terrorist groups in Arab states, and all pose difficulty for the state to manage.

Nevertheless, Arab states can take, as some are, certain approaches to limit the destabilizing influence that Hamas has in the region. The first measure is to advance the Israel-Palestine peace process. This conflict is the major source of regional tension and is believed by some to be a source of terrorism throughout the region. Establishing a lasting peace will put an end to many of the grievances of discontented Muslims in the Middle East. A peace with an Israeli and Palestinian state will deny Hamas its ultimate goal of an Islamic state over the entirety of Palestine and discredit its tactics as successful in realizing that goal. Therefore other groups

would be less likely to emulate the organization. It would also place incredible pressure on Hamas to conform to the internationally and regionally accepted legitimacy of Israel and the political process that produces the Palestinian state.

Hamas has already begun to realize the benefits of the political sphere. Recent trends illustrate Hamas' shift from a radical Islamic terrorist organization to a more pragmatic political party. Hamas has already participated in local civil elections and has announced its intent to run representatives in the parliamentary elections in July, 2005. Since Hamas has begun to promote itself as a political party it has needed to broaden its appeal to Palestinians who may not agree with the radical militant line. The politicization of Hamas has therefore coincided with a tempering of Hamas' platform. Dr. Mahmoud Al-Zahhar, member of Hamas political bureau, recently attempted to reaffirm the movement's dedication to the resistance of Israeli occupation, but clearly outlined a new phase of ideology. "Those who said that Hamas would leave resistance to the PLC didn't know that it sought to establish a liberated country. We will turn education, health, Awkaf (religious affairs), … etc. into weapons against occupation in the hands of the Palestinians."[124] Resistance, according to Zahhar, is now taking a peaceful approach based on information politics, rather than power politics. Hamas tries to maintain its oppositional rhetoric but is slowly being co-opted by the Palestinian Authority's political structure.

The Palestinian Authority, Israel, and all Arab states should encourage the entrance of Hamas into Palestinian politics. This leads to a more moderate viewpoint and removes Hamas from the non-state actor sphere, the alternative source of power that can undermine Arab states' legitimacy. A similar approach should be taken by all Arab states in regard to their domestic

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[124] "Zahhar: Hamas' Participation in Legislative Election Doesn't Mean Relinquishing Resistance," HamasOnline, 28 March 2005, Hamas <http://www.hamasonline.com/index.php?itemid=1611>

oppositional Islamic parties. These groups normally challenge the state due to their exclusion from the political avenue which forces them to adopt other means of action.[125] Including them in the political process would legitimize the state as fair and open politically, as well as give it some religious legitimacy by incorporating representatives of the "popular" Islam. Finally, by being forced to operate within the political framework, Islamic movements would be limited in the scope of their actions and have to embrace more politically acceptable means.

A final step in reducing the impact of TTSMs such as Hamas is to continue to eradicate all forms of terrorism in the Middle East. States have given their verbal dedication to the "war on terror" and they must back it up with distinct action against the roots of terrorism. Terrorism often gathers its supporters from disadvantaged and overlooked areas of countries where people are disillusioned with and disaffected by the state and feel they have no other means of relief.[126] Bettering the economic situation, the education, the health, and the voice of these regions and peoples will eliminate their need to criticize the state and support those who act out against it. Terrorism that continues after these problems are addressed will not have the support base that it needs to delegitimize the state. The state will be able to forcefully confront and eradicate those remaining cells without having to fear a public backlash. A continued fight against terrorism and its sources will weaken its infrastructure and its supporters. The more serious and cooperative states are in this effort, the more effective they will be.

In conclusion, Hamas provides a clear example of the regional effects of a new actor emerging in the Middle East and the world today. Arab states must be aware of the influence it has on their populations and their regimes. The properties of the diffusion model must be taken into account when considering the region as a whole. However, Hamas has also begun to leave

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[125] Singerman 144.

[126] Oberschall 27.

some clues as to how to properly mitigate its regional impact. The region has been consistently unstable since decolonization, and the Arab states would like nothing more than to have normalized, peaceful relations with each other and the international community. TTSMs present the threat of prolonging that instability. As the state system becomes increasingly embedded into the region, and non-state actors are absorbed into the political process, that threat shall be significantly reduced.

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