Insurgency in the Name of God:
Analyzing Islamic State Strategy in Iraq from 2016-2020

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No religion is responsible for terrorism. People are responsible for violence and terrorism.

—Barack Obama, President of the United States 2008-2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements…….……iv

List of Tables and Figures……...……..vii

Abstract…….……..……ix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION—TERORISM, ITS THEORIES, AND IRAQ……..1

CHAPTER 2: THE BACKGROUND OF IS, THEORIES OF TERRORISM, AND HYPOTHESES…….……..……...20

CHAPTER 3: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC STATE TERRORIST ATTACK CHARACTERISTICS…….……..…..……..46

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: WHAT MAKES THE ISLAMIC STATE DIFFERENT? …….……..81

CHAPTER 5: IS-K ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS…….…..….126

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTERRORISM, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH…….…..…148

Appendix……..……154

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LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

Table 2.0: Predictions for Each Theory…….41

Table 2.1: Religious-Insurgency Theory Predictions……45

Table 2.2: Comparison of Theory Predictions……...45

Table 3.0: Target Type Implications for Theories…….60

Table 3.1: Fatalities Implications for Theories……..65

Table 3.2: Suicide Attack Implications for Theories…….67

Table 3.3: Holiday Implications for Theories……....69

Table 3.4: Summarized Support for Theories……71

Table A.1: Codebook…….……..154

Table A.2: Raw Data……..……..155

FIGURES

Figure 3.0: Terrorist Attack Distribution in Iraq from 2016-2020……53

Figure 3.1: Distribution of IS Attacks vs. Non-IS Attacks in Iraq from 2016-2020…….……53

Figure 3.2: Yearly Terrorist Attacks in Iraq from 2016-2020……..……54

Figure 3.3: Yearly Changes in Distribution of Terrorist Attacks in Iraq from 2016-2020……55

Figure 3.4: Percent Terrorist Targeting of Civilians in Iraq from 2016-2020……...56

Figure 3.5: Percent Terrorist Targeting of Religious Aspects in Iraq from 2016-2020……57

Figure 3.6: Percent Terrorist Targeting of Police in Iraq from 2016-2020…….....57

Figure 3.7: Percent Terrorist Targeting of Government/Infrastructure in Iraq from 2016-2020...58

Figure 3.8: Overall Distribution of Targets in Iraqi Terrorism from 2016-2020……..59

Figure 3.9: Total Fatalities from Terrorist Attacks in Iraq from 2016-2020……..……..61

Figure 3.10: Average Fatalities per Terrorist Attack in Iraq from 2016-2020……..……..……62

Figure 3.11: Yearly Fatalities from Terrorism in Iraq from 2016-2020……..…….……63

Figure 3.12: Yearly Average Fatalities per Terrorist Attack in Iraq from 2016-2020……..64

Figure 3.13: Use of Suicide Attacks in Terrorism in Iraq from 2016-2020……..…….……..66

Figure 3.14: Number of Suicide Attacks in Iraq from 2016-2020……..……...……..66

Figure 3.15: Terrorist Activity on Holidays in Iraq from 2016-2020……..……...…….68

Figure 3.16: Terrorist Activity on IS Symbolic Holidays in Iraq from 2017-2020……..……69

Figure 3.17: Terrorist Violence Towards Women in Iraq from 2016-2020……..……..73

Figure 3.18: Number of Terrorist Attacks with Violence Against Women in Iraq from 2016-2020..……...……...……..……...……...……..……...……73

Figure 3.19: Total Fatalities of Violent Attacks Towards Women in Iraq from 2016-2020…….74

Figure 3.20: Terrorist Attacks with Violence Against IS in Iraq from 2016-2020……..……76

Figure 3.21: Yearly Terrorist Attacks with Violence Against IS in Iraq from 2016-2020……77

Figure 3.22: Total Fatalities in Terrorist Attacks with Violence Against IS in Iraq from 2016-2020..……...……...……..……...……...……..……...……78

Figure 3.23: Average Fatalities per Attack Dependent on Attack Type in Iraq from 2016-2020…..……...……...……..……...……...……..……...……79

Figure 3.24: Average Fatalities per Attack Depending on Attack Type Between Terrorist Groups in Iraq from 2016-2020…..……...……...……..……...……...……..……...…79

ABSTRACT

Scholars, politicians, and commentators often debate the strategies underlying the terrorist attacks of the Islamic State. Many point towards its extreme religious ideology to claim that the group follow a religious theory of terrorism, while others believe the group's stoking of Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict is demonstrative of provocation theory, and still more cite its territorial accumulation as evident of an insurgent strategy. In an attempt to shed light on this debate and reveal the ways the Islamic State diverges from the baseline of terrorism, I examine thousands of terrorist attacks and their characteristics in Iraq between 2016-2020. This study uncovers that IS differs substantially from the non-IS baseline of terrorism in ways that all aforementioned theories fail to encapsulate. A better way to encompass the uniqueness of the Islamic State is through religious-insurgency theory, which proposes, that IS is ultimately, an insurgency in the name of God.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION—TERRORISM, ITS THEORIES, AND IRAQ

1.0 Overview

Time and time again, the Islamic State (IS) illustrates its resolve in maintaining the title of "the world's worst terror group".[1] When the group fully emerged in 2014, its atrocities such as the beheading of James Foley in 2014, the attack on the Bataclan in Paris, France in 2015, the truck attack on the Promenade in Nice, France in 2016, along with numerous massacres of Yezidis, quickly catapulted Islamic State into notoriety. Major news headlines from its homebase in the Middle East recount similar horrific stories, reading "Islamic State jihadists are using water as a weapon in Iraq," "The Islamic State issues guide on when it's okay to beat your sex slave," and "Islamic State militants executed up to 770 Iraqi troops, Human Rights Watch says," among numerous others.[2] IS quickly established a reign of terror.

As Al Qaeda continued to weaken in the Middle East and abroad, IS strengthened, eventually launching an offensive against Iraq and Syria in 2014 and consolidating its lethal reputation in Iraq and abroad. Its attacks have hit Iraq particularly hard. Beheadings, massacres, suicide bombings, shootings, and more by IS occur almost every day in Iraq. Between 2016 and

[1] My references to the Islamic State will take the form of the acronym 'IS', although at times, in quotations from others, the group may be referred to as Daesh, ISIS, or ISIL; Zack Beauchamp. "ISIS, a History: How the World's Worst Terror Group Came to be." Vox. 19 November 2015. (https://www.vox.com/2015/11/19/9760284/isis-history) (20 April 2022)

[2] Erin Cunningham. "Islamic State Jihadists are Using Water as a Weapon in Iraq." Washington Post. 7 October 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/islamic-state-jihadists-are-using-water-as-a-weapon-in-iraq/2014/10/06/aead6792-79ec-4c7c-8f2f-fd7b95765d09_story.html) (23 April 2022); Ishan Tharoor. "The Islamic State Issues Guide on When it's Okay to Beat Your Sex Slave." Washington Post. 12 December 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/12/12/the-islamic-state-issues-guide-on-when-its-okay-to-beat-your-sex-slave/) (23 April 2023); "Islamic State Militants Executed Up to 770 Iraqi Troops, Human Rights Watch Says." The Washington Post. 3 September 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-militants-executed-up-to-770-iraqi-troops-human-rights-watch-says/2014/09/03/4978eca4-33ac-11e4-a723-fa3895a25d02_story.html) (24 April 2022)

2020, data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project reported 6,429 incidents qualifying as terrorism, which, if evenly spread out, amounts to about 3.52 a day.[3] Of those attacks, 2,988 were committed by IS, or 1.64 a day. These attacks frequently result in a high number of fatalities, with an attack on the Northern Iraq's ethnic minority Yezidi population in 2014 incurring over 104 deaths.[4] IS clearly means business.

While IS's violence and brutality are indisputable, commentary on their motivations, goals, and actions vary. For some, the group is clearly motivated by pernicious religious goals that pose a deep threat to the world. Former Speaker of the House John Boehner, in calling for a U.S. military intervention on the ground, claimed "[t]hese are barbarians. They intend to kill us and if we don't destroy them first, we're going to pay the price."[5] The threat believed to be advanced by IS to the West constituted a major campaign point in 2014, with former Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown emphasizing IS's religious nature in his statement that "[r]adical Islamic terrorists are threatening to cause the collapse of our country."[6] Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* refers to the group's religious goals when writing that the Islamic State "is Sunni, so it massacres Shiites. It is radical Sunni, so it eliminates apostates. It is Muslim, so it kills Yazidis, a minority with a religion of its own, and takes as plunder their women as concubines."[7]

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[3] Clionadh Raleigh et al.. "Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data." Journal of Peace Research 47. no. 5 (2010); 651-660.
[4] "Iraq's Yazidi Community Buries 104 Victims of IS Massacre." BBC News. 7 February 2021. (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55968068) (20 April 2022)
[5] Jaime Fuller. "What You Missed on the Sunday Shows this Week." The Washington Post. 28 September 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/09/28/what-you-missed-on-the-sunday-shows-this-week/) (23 April 2022)
[6] Jose DeReal. "The Islamic State Takes Center Stage in Another Attack Ad." The Washington Post. 3 October 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/10/03/the-islamic-state-takes-center-stage-in-another-attack-ad/) (23 April 2022)
[7] Richard Cohen. "The Islamic State is Evil Returned." The Washington Post. 25 August 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/richard-cohen-the-islamic-state-is-evil-returned/2014/08/25/93eccd9c-2c85-11e4-9b98-848790384093_story.html) (23 April 2022)

Not everyone agrees on the role of religion in IS, however, with former U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon arguing that "[a]s Muslim leaders around the world have said, groups like ISIL – or Daesh — have nothing to do with Islam, and they certainly do not represent a state. They should more fittingly be called the 'Un-Islamic Non-State.'"[8] Former U.S. President Barack Obama backed this statement, arguing "ISIL is not 'Islamic.' No religion condones the killing of innocents, and the vast majority of ISIL's victims have been Muslim."[9] Some commentators, such Megan Stewart, an assistant professor at American University, have remarked upon the group's insurgent aspects, particularly its ability to "develop a nascent, state-like governing apparatus" in which IS did things like "provided education, paid municipal salaries, built roads, opened hospitals, maintained electric, trash and sewage services, and even began issuing parking tickets."[10] Terrence McCoy of the *Washington Post* supports this, writing "there appears to be an emergent, sophisticated military strategy that experts have now discerned."[11] In this case, not only is IS not all that religious, but it's more of a military or insurgency.

The range of opinions on IS motives, ideology, and actions varies substantially, prompting the question of where does IS actually fall on these concepts? Is it a deeply religious group focusing on targeting Shias and general 'infidels', is it more of an insurgency, targeting the government and security forces, or does it fall somewhere in between? A quick look at IS

[8] Shadi Hamid and Will McCants. "John Kerry Won't Call the Islamic State By its Name Anymore. Why That's Not a Good Idea." The Washington Post. 29 December 2014 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/29/john-kerry-is-calling-the-islamic-state-by-the-wrong-name-and-its-helping-the-islamic-state/) (23 April 2022)
[9] Ibid.
[10] Megan Stewart. "What's so New About the Islamic State's Governance?" The Washington Post. 7 October 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/07/whats-so-new-about-the-islamic-states-governance/) (23 April 2022)
[11] Terrence McCoy. "The Battle for Kobane and the Islamic State's 'Swarm' War Strategy." The Washington Post. 8 October 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/10/08/the-battle-for-kobane-and-the-islamic-states-swarm-war-strategy/) (23 April 2022)

terrorist attacks in Iraq fails to provide a satisfactory, or even clear, answer to this question. One attack by IS on November 24th, 2016, provides great support for it being a religiously motivated group. In this attack, the group detonated a car bomb near a gas station to target a group of Shia pilgrims, resulting in the death of 80 civilians.[12] Another attack before that one, on March 27th, 2016, instead points to an insurgency motive. In this attack, IS executed 12 individuals for their previous work for the Iraqi government.[13] Other attacks don't point to either, such as one on July 2nd, 2016, when an IS suicide bomber detonated a vehicle in a shopping center in Karada, Baghdad, killing at least 292 people and injuring over 200.[14] IS attacks can be wildly different, illustrating large differences in fatalities, target type, method, and more. It's no wonder why there's so much dissonance in commentary on their goals, motives, and actions.

This thesis hopes to reconcile these differences. I tackle the unresearched puzzle that is variation in IS attacks by asking: *what explains IS's strategy of terrorism and how does it differ from other terrorism?* I will explore this question by looking at the characteristics of IS attacks and use their patterns and divergences from the non-IS baseline to shed light on IS strategy. These characteristics include fatalities, target type, frequency around holidays and symbolic dates, and the use of suicide tactics. The differences between IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism on these characteristics will highlight IS's priorities and enable me to examine how IS strategy fits into different theories of terrorism typically employed to explain its actions and my own theory of IS terrorism, religious-insurgency theory.

2.0 Summary of Findings

[12] Clionadh Raleigh et al.. "Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data." Journal of Peace Research 47. no. 5 (2010); 651-660. ID: 6228595
[13] Ibid. ID: 6229206
[14] Ibid. ID: 7501362

Through a quantitative and qualitative analysis, I found great support for my hypothesis of religious-insurgency theory which posits that IS goals are twofold, rooted in desires of territorial accumulation and the establishment of a religious utopia. IS strategy of maximizing lethality, targeting the police and civilians at significant rates but religious targets at low rates, and using a high rate of suicide attacks illustrates a combination of religious and insurgency tactics and drives. Their strategy notably differs from the non-IS baseline of terrorism, which has been found to not make strategic choices designed at maximizing their lethality, targeting of the police, and targeting of civilians. In a way, many of the commentary on IS is correct, as the group is waging both a religious and insurgent war, a combination of strategies that will be evaluated throughout this entire thesis.

3.0 Importance of Question

Terrorism has undisputable devastating impacts, making the general importance of this thesis clear. Frequent terrorist attacks are economically linked to reductions in foreign direct investment (FDI), diversions of funds away from productive consumption towards nonproductive investments in security and protective measures, costly infrastructure building demands, and declines in industries related to tourism and leisure, which can seriously stunt progress in developing countries.[15] Politically, terrorism can lead to state failure, especially in left-wing governments, and increased positional turnover rates.[16] Psychologically, terrorism often leads to high rates of PTSD, severe depression, and other forms of general psychological

[15] Todd Sandler and Walter Enders. Economic Consequences of Terrorism in Developed and Developing Countries: An Overview. (Cambridge University Press: 2008); Harrison Bardwell and Mohib Iqbal. "The Economic Impact of Terrorism from 2000 to 2018." Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy 27. no. 2 (2020): 227-261
[16] Laron K. Williams, Michael T. Koch and Jason M. Smith. "The Political Consequences of Terrorism: Terror Events, Casualties, and Government Duration." International Studies Perspectives 14. no. 3 (2013): 343-361

distress that greatly reduce an individual's quality of life.[17] These negative effects make combatting terrorism a valiant and worthwhile effort.

However, counterterrorism is also a widely expensive endeavor. While full accounts of the cost of battling IS are unknown, between 2014 and 2017, the US spent $11 billion combatting IS, which breaks down to about $12.5 million a day.[18] While this number is vastly lower than the $200 million the US spent in Afghanistan per day before pulling out of the conflict in mid-2021, it's important that this money improve the situation.[19] To be able to do this, it's essential to be able to accurately predict where and when terrorists will strike and the targets that they prefer. When fighting against a specific terrorist group, understanding how their attacks differ from other groups is important in making reductions against that group. This analysis will reveal information that can be used to bolster counterterrorism policies, allowing for more effective policies.

In addition to the general help that this will provide to counterterrorism measures, this research will help combat IS. While victory against IS was declared on December 9, 2017, in Iraq and December 19, 2018, in Syria, the group is still alive, plotting and carrying out attacks in the Middle East and rest of the world.[20] Additionally, IS appears to be regrouping and resurging. Around January 20th of 2022, IS attacked a prison in Hasaka, Syria, to free thousands of detained

[17] Marion Grenon et al.. "Impact of a Terrorist Attack on the Mental Health of Directly Exposed French Adolescents: Study Protocol for the First Step of the AVAL Cohort Study." Front. Psychiatry 10. (2019): 1-9
[18] Niall McCarthy. "The Cost Of The Air War Against ISIS Has Reached $11 Billion [Infographic]." Forbes. 1 February 2017. (https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2017/02/01/the-cost-of-the-air-war-against-isis-has-reached-11-billion-infographic/?sh=6993efb3b120) (20 April 2022)
[19] Uri Friedman. "$300,000 an Hour: The Cost of Fighting ISIS." The Atlantic. 12 November 2014. (https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/11/300000-an-hour-the-cost-of-fighting-isis/382649/) (20 April 2022)
[20] Cameron Glenn et al.. "Timeline: The Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State." The Wilson Center. 28 October 2019. (https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state) (20 April 2022)

IS fighters, similar to how the group first accumulated fighters.[21] The week prior, in Diyala, Iraq, IS attacked a military outpost and killed ten soldiers, marking the deadliest attack against an Iraqi military base in years.[22] IS killings have increased substantially in prison camps, like Al Hol in Syria, as the ideology lives on through IS wives.[23] The IS territorial caliphate has been destroyed, but commitment to its teachings and goals live on, making a future resurgence inevitable. In this thesis, I hope to provide a better understanding of IS and its attacks, which will be essential in combatting IS's next campaign.

4.0 Definition of Terrorism

The definition of terrorism remains controversial. The U.S. Department of State defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."[24] Although this definition excludes violence against military personnel, non-political motives, and infrastructural targets, this is a relatively well-accepted definition.

The definition of terrorism I employ in this thesis builds upon the US Department of State conceptualization, defining terrorism as the use of violence or force by a non-state actor against civilians or civilian infrastructure (including civilian government infrastructure and assets and off-duty security/military personnel) to further a political, social, economic, or religious goal. This definition lacks a group requirement, applying to violence commitment by both

[21] "Prison Attack in Syria Is Latest Sign of IS Resurgence." The New York Times. 25 January 2022. (https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/01/25/world/syria-news-isis-us) (20 April 2022)
[22] Jane Arraf and Ben Hubbard. "As Islamic State Resurges, U.S. Is Drawn Back Into the Fray." The New York Times. 25 January 2022. (https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/world/middleeast/isis-syria.html) (20 April 2022)
[23] Louisa Loveluck. "Syrian Detention Camp Rocked By Dozens of Killings Blamed on Islamic State Women." The Washington Post. 19 September 2021. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/09/19/syria-isis-al-hol-camp/) (20 April 2022).
[24] Joshua Sinai. "How to Define Terrorism." Perspectives on Terrorism 2. no. 4 (2008): 9-11

groups and individuals acting alone (lone-wolfs), but excludes actions committed for narrow personal motives, such as the repayment of a debt or a personal/familial dispute. To differentiate between terrorism and civil-war violence, this definition excludes attacks committed against military bases and active-duty federal security personnel, although it does include attacks against the police. It also employs the "seeking violence test" to exclude instances where the victimized party sought out the violence, such as an individual dying after they attacked terrorists. This definition also excludes the use of violence by a state against its people. This definition is intentionally broader than others to maximize inclusion of attacks but recognizes the limitations of excluding violence against certain parties, like the military.

5.0 Review of Literature

The goal of this thesis is to analyze variation in characteristics of IS attacks, how they differ from the non-IS baseline of terrorism, and how they fit into theories of terrorism, a motive that fits into the broader question of what drives terrorism and differences in terrorism. The extensive attention dedicated to terrorism has generated a robust literature on the causes of terrorism, but noticeably little on what causes variation in the characteristics of terrorist attacks. There are very few studies that analyze variation in attack characteristics, and none that study changes in the characteristics I'm looking at (fatalities, target type, frequency around holidays and symbolic dates, and use of suicide tactics) between IS and non-IS terrorists in Iraq between 2016-2020. There are no studies that use the entirety of attacks reported in Iraq to explain how IS attacks visibly differ from other terrorist attacks, a gap this research will fill. This literature review will examine the limited attempts to examine patterns of variation in terrorist attacks

across different groups. It will not analyze the theories of terrorism that will be used to explain the variation—this will come in chapter two.

5.1 Literature on the Characteristics of Terrorist Attacks

The literature on variation in the characteristics of terrorist attacks is quite limited. Few scholars have used terrorist attack data to describe variation in attack characteristics. Existing ones suffer from numerous flaws, such as a focus on only a few characteristics—typically spatial location, frequency, or fatalities—to the neglect of other characteristics—such as target type or violence against women—which are important in understanding the full picture of terrorism. Additionally, many studies are relatively dated, having been conducted over 10-15 years ago. While this may not appear to be a long time, studies conducted on terrorism 10-15 years ago predate the emergence of IS, which has dramatically changed the terrorism scene, requiring a necessary update of the literature. Finally, many of these studies offer very limited explanations of what may be driving variation and do not connect it back to the broader terrorism literature, resulting in insufficient analysis.

One of the first analyses of terrorist attack variation was conducted by Berrebi and Lakdawalla in 2007.[25] Their study examined incidents of terrorism in Israel with the goal of explaining time and location fluctuations in the attacks. They found that attacks are most likely to occur in locations that are both symbolic government centers with high Jewish populations and easily accessible from terrorist homebases and international borders. Additionally, they found attack frequency to be important in predicting future attacks. Areas of importance, such as capitals or areas with government centers and high Jewish populations, should expect a relatively

[25] Claude Berrebi and Darius Lakdawalla. "How Does Terrorism Risk Vary Across Space and Time? An Analysis Based on the Israeli Experience." Defense and Peace Economics 18. no. 2 (2007): 113-131

high frequency of attacks, meaning that areas that have not experienced an attack in a long time are overdue for attack. Less important areas should expect a lower frequency of attacks and are at reduced risk of attack as time between attacks increases. Although Berrebi and Lakdawalla do not explain if they believe their findings to be generalizable outside of Israel—a flaw in their research—I would expect to find similar trends in Iraq, especially as it pertains to the government and other areas of importance. As these locations are more important and hold more societal value, they should be of greater interest to terrorists as targets. Still, this research leaves much unstudied, such as characteristics like fatalities, holidays, and other target types, and fails to differentiate between the patterns of different groups. Finally, they do not explain how their findings fit into broader theories of terrorism.

A second analysis of variation was conducted by Siebeneck, Medina, Yamada, and Hepner in 2008.[26] Their study examined terrorist attacks in Iraq from 2004 to 2006 with a similar goal as Berrebi and Lakdawalla—to explain spatial and temporal variation—and an additional focus on the implications of frequency and location on fatalities. Siebeneck, Medina, Yamada, and Hepner found terrorist attacks to be clustered in numerous hotspots around the country—Baghdad, around Baghdad, eastern Iraq, and northern Iraq—but that fatalities (referred to as attack intensity in their article) decrease as frequency increases. They postulate that this stems from recruitment, as new members of terrorist organizations who contribute to the high frequency of attacks may not have the training necessary for high-fatality attacks. Additional theories behind this are that increased Iraqi policing reduces high-fatality attacks and that increased frequency leads to lower resources for terrorists, making it difficult to carry out high-fatality attacks. The study also found an increase in attack frequency around American holidays,

[26] Laura K. Siebeneck et al.. "Spatial and Temporal Analyses of Terrorist Incidents in Iraq, 2004-2006." Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 32. no. 7 (2009): 591-610

with attacks focusing on American or Western targets. Given that this research was conducted based on terrorist attacks in Iraq, I expect that some of these findings may hold in my analysis. However, this is not guaranteed due to the changes that terrorism has undergone in Iraq in recent years. From 2004 to 2006, the period studied in this analysis, IS did not exist, and this group has fundamentally changed the terrorism scene through its competition with Al Qaeda and other smaller or unidentified groups and increased brutality. Additionally, like with the work by Berrebi and Lakdawalla, the characteristics studied by Siebeneck, Medina, Yamada, and Hepner, are limited, do not differentiate between different groups, are not integrated into broader theories of terrorism. My research will address these shortcomings in the context of Iraq's new terrorism atmosphere.

Analyses of terrorism have also occurred outside of the Middle East. Rehman in 2015 conducted another spatial analysis of terrorism attacks, hoping to explain why attacks occur in certain locations and how counterterrorism policies—policies designed to increase opportunity costs and prevent terrorism, such as increased policing or harsher punishments—influence location selection in Pakistan from 2001 to 2012.[27] He delineates between three location theories of terrorism: diffusion theory, which asserts that counterterrorism policies reduce attacks in a region and neighboring regions; displacement theory, which contends that counterterrorism policies push terrorism to neighboring areas with lower levels of enforcement and policing; and vengeance theory, which argues intervention and counterterrorism policies lower the opportunity cost of terrorism and thus escalate attacks and violence. Rehman's research ultimately revealed that counterterrorism policies reduced terrorism in an area, but only by pushing it off to neighboring districts, adhering well to displacement theory. The actual number of attacks did not

[27] Faiz Rehman. "The Spatial Analysis of Terrorism in Pakistan." Asian Journal of Law and Economics 6. no. 2 (2015): 125-165.

decrease, terrorists just moved to areas where it was easier to commit and get away with their attacks. This finding does have some implications for my research, specifically that areas with lower security capacity, especially those near areas with higher security capacity, should expect to see higher rates of terrorism than areas with higher capacity. However, Rehman's limited scope—focus only on the role of opportunity cost policies in location selection—prevents him from painting a broader picture of exactly what could be driving this change. Policies that make terrorism riskier clearly have an impact but may not be the only driving factor. Additionally, he neglects numerous other characteristics of terrorism and does not provide insight in how these findings fit into terrorism theories, issues that my thesis will address.

Rehman's work on terrorism in Pakistan was followed up by Amanat, Syed, Khurram, and Sheikh in 2020.[28] They examined incidents of terrorism across Pakistan from 2009 to 2011 with a similar goal of finding patterns and explanations for the spatial and temporal variation in attacks. They found attack frequency to be associated with poverty; areas with higher levels of poverty see higher numbers of terrorist attacks. They also found attacks to be negatively correlated with regime support, attacks to be clustered in Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP province), and attacks to be adherent to the diffusion theory of attack location. Like other analyses, Amanat, Syed, Khurram, and Sheikh neglect numerous characteristics of terrorism and do not place their findings into conversation with existing theories of terrorism, flaws that will be addressed in this thesis.

The previously examined literature represents no attempt to explain characteristics beyond location and frequency, but there is one study that does. Hegghammer (2013) conducted an analysis of Western jihadists' decisions to fight domestically in their home countries or join

[28] Ali Amanat et al.. "A Spatial Analysis of Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan." Pakistan Economic and Social Review 58. no. 2 (2020): 237-267

international terrorist organizations in the Middle East.[29] He explains that the current literature contends that Western terrorists will travel abroad for terrorist training and then return home to carry out attacks domestically, but that this cannot account for the individuals who choose to remain in their home countries and the large number of terrorists who never return to the West. Hegghammer found that Western terrorists tend to travel abroad—typically to the Middle East—to join groups and carry out attacks. They then tend to stay abroad because they prefer it and find it is easier than conducting attacks in the West. This stems from international counterterrorism policies, a greater perception of legitimacy in foreign causes, and the need for terrorist training. Although this research focuses on variation in different characteristics—group affiliation and location—Hegghammer is specific that his findings only apply to "Western Jihadists" and cannot be generalized beyond these individuals, making it inapplicable to my research. Additionally, this research neglects to study many other important characteristics, like fatalities or use of suicide tactics, that my thesis will study.

These attempts to analyze trends among reported terrorist attacks and explain the variation identified among them present interesting findings that add to the debate over how to best understand and deal with terrorism. However, this literature fails to explain if there are noticeable differences between different groups of terrorists and leaves out many characteristics that are important in understanding and predicting attacks. I seek to fill these missing gaps.

5.2 Why Other Characteristics Matter

In this thesis, I examine numerous of different characteristics of terrorist attacks: fatalities, target type, frequency around holidays and symbolic dates, and the use of suicide

[29] Thomas Hegghammer. "Should I Stay, or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting." American Political Science Review 107. no. 1 (2013): 1-15

tactics. The bulk of the existing literature on terrorism doesn't study all these characteristics, choosing instead to focus on spatial and temporal characteristics, like time, frequency, and location. While spatial and temporal information can reveal important information about when and where terrorist attacks are likely to strike, they say little about what and who these attacks will target. They also fail to explain how deadly the attacks can be expected to be or what weapon terrorists are likely to use. This information is crucial to understanding the motives behind terrorists necessary when planning for counterterrorism endeavors. My research will fill in these gaps for IS.

6.0 Purpose of Study

The goal of this thesis is to first, determine how IS differs from the baseline of terrorism in Iraq and then second, to explain what these findings reveal about IS's strategic motivations in Iraq and outside of Iraq through offshoots. Rather than looking at all attacks conducted by IS around the world, I focus on terrorist attacks conducted in one country—Iraq—as this enables a deep dive into the characteristics of each attack and how the group operates in its home base. Additionally, transnational attacks are expected to have different trends and patterns than attacks within a country due to the higher number of resources and planning required. If these findings can be extrapolated beyond Iraq to IS offshoots or non-IS offshoots, this will be explained as well.

In this thesis, the independent variable is the group affiliation of the terrorist attack. IS is the test variable with non-IS attacks acting as the baseline or control variable. This separation will illustrate if and how IS attacks differ from other groups and individuals. The dependent variables in this relationship are the characteristics of each terrorist attack in Iraq. I specifically

focus on target type, fatalities, the use of suicide tactics, and holidays. Very few terrorist attacks will have the exact same values for all these factors, which will cause variation. If any other characteristics arise that appear important, they will be examined and addressed as they arise .

7.0 Methodology

This thesis studies variation in the characteristics of terrorist attacks between IS and non-IS terrorists in Iraq and compares it against applicable theories of terrorism to discover implications on the strategic motivations behind IS. These characteristics include target type, fatalities, holidays, violence against women, the use of suicide tactics, and violence against IS. I will rely on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to answer this question.

7.1 Terrorist Attacks

Terrorist attack data will come from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) which records and reports incidents of political violence. The database originally began reporting data in Africa, but has expanded to different regions across the world, including the Middle East in 2015. The general information provided about the attack typically includes the number of fatalities, the location/target type, and whether the attack has been claimed by a group or not. Each attack is further classified as a battle, violence against civilians, riots, explosions/remote violence, protests, or strategic developments with the exact coordinates given on a map. As this information is automatically taken from newspaper reports in Iraq—in all languages—, and a description section containing information on the exact events of the attack is also included.

The specific attacks analyzed in my research will be drawn from attacks reported in Iraq between 2016 to 2020. Iraq is the ideal country for this study due to the large number of terrorist groups, terrorist attacks, and information on terrorism, all partially facilitated by the long-lasting US presence in the country. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of active terrorist groups in Iraq with some of the biggest including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or IS), Al Qaeda, Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO), the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF), and the Abu Nidal Organization (Fatah).[30] Other less known groups include Ansar al-Sunna Sharia (AS Shariah), the Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI), the Mujahideen Army (MA), the Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshbandia (JRTN), Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), and Harakat al-Nujaba (HN) among numerous other organizations.[31] Terrorist attacks have also been conducted by individuals unaffiliated with a group. Due to the US presence in Iraq, there is substantial qualitative and quantitative information on terrorist attacks and the neighborhoods that they occur in. Each attack can be pinpointed on a map, making it easy to determine the attack's proximity to important institutions and the characteristics of the location, such as poverty levels. Additionally, the large number of attacks makes it likely that findings would be robust and applicable outside of Iraq.

ACLED reports 27,773 incidents of political violence in Iraq between 2016 to 2020. As ACLED includes incidents that do not qualify as terrorism, all incidents will be tested against my definition of terrorism. Additionally, ACLED reports data through a computerized surveilling of newspaper reports, causing some incidents to be listed more than once, requiring me to go through each attack to verify uniqueness. This will be straightforward, as repeated attacks will reflect similar values in location, attack type, time, and day. After testing incidents against my

[30] President George W. Bush. "Saddam Hussein's Support for International Terrorism." The White House. (https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/decade/sect5.html) (20 April 2022)
[31] Mapping Militants Organization. "Iraq Map." Standford University. 2018 (http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/maps/view/iraq) (20 April 2022)

definition of terrorism and ensuring there are no duplicated events, I was left with 6,429 incidents of terrorism. As this was fewer than 10,000, they were all included in my analysis.

7.2 Characteristics Overview

The characteristics that I will be looking at include fatalities, target type, holidays, and use of suicide tactics. All this data will come directly from the reported ACLED data as each logged incident readily offers this information. I will be using the fatalities section, the actor sections, the dates, and the description to determine it all. The fatalities will directly inform the fatalities characteristic, the dates will directly inform the holidays characteristic, and a combination of the actor and description will inform the remaining characteristics. I will run a Welch Two Sample Test, or t-test, on these characteristics. To run this analysis, characteristics will all be coded as one or more binary variables—except for fatalities. As a t-test will be run on each characteristic, it's likely that at least one null finding will occur. This would be reflected in a non-statistically significant difference between IS attacks and non-IS attacks on a certain characteristic. A null finding is equally as important as another finding because it reveals that IS does not differ from the baseline of terrorism for that characteristic.

7.3 Theories

While greater discussion of the theories will follow in chapter 2, the differences found in the quantitative analysis will be compared to predictions expected of different applicable theories of terrorism. While there are numerous theories that drive terrorism, the most applicable to Iraq and to IS include provocation, religious, and insurgency theory. Provocation theory asserts that terrorism occurs as individuals aim to goad the state or individuals into acting repressively

against citizens or groups of citizens. Religious theory contends that terrorism is the result of individuals trying to revive religious times and enforce proper religious practices. Finally, insurgency theory argues that terrorism occurs as individuals attempt to extract concessions from the state on policy or territory. While there are other theories, such as low-capacity theory, these are the most salient to IS. IS has commonly been described as a religious terrorist organization due to its religious motivations and publicized attacks on mosques and religious minorities, however, when it was still under the branch of Al Qaeda in Iraq, it had a history of launching provocation attacks against Shias to encourage them to act repressively against Sunnis, which would then cause Sunnis to rally behind the group.[32] More explanation for the selection of insurgency theory will follow in the hypothesis section.

8.0 Hypothesis

Although greater discussion of my hypotheses will be addressed in chapter 2 following in-depth explanations of each of the theories, I expect that there will be substantial differences between the characteristics of IS attacks and non-IS attacks. I believe that IS will reflect more of an insurgency theory, targeting the government and symbols of security, at higher rates than non-IS terrorists. I do expect that IS will still have a higher number of attacks with religious targets than non-IS terrorists, but that they will comprise a very small number of attacks, and that they will target civilians at lower levels than non-IS groups. Although provocation attacks have historically been an important part of IS's strategy, I expect to see very few, if any, instances of this. Taking this all into account, I propose a new theory, religious-insurgency theory, which

[32] Beauchamp. 2015.

combines the most successful tenets of insurgency and religious theories. I will go into greater detail about these predictions and their logic in the next chapter.

8.0 Roadmap

The rest of this thesis is geared towards answering the question: *what accounts for variation in the characteristics of Islamic State terrorist attacks?* This will occur in the following four chapters. Chapter two features a background on IS, the group's development, and their understood strategic motivations; an explanation of the three theories of terrorism I will be looking at and their predictions; and an in-depth explanation of my hypothesis of religious-insurgency theory. Chapter three focuses on the statistical analysis, its findings, and how IS attacks stand up against the theories. Chapter four will then feature the qualitative analysis, explaining the findings. Chapter five will then offer a small shadow case on IS offshoot the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K) in Afghanistan and its implications on other offshoots of IS and other terrorist organizations generally. My thesis will close with chapter six with conclusions, implications for counterterrorism and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: THE BACKGROUND OF IS, THEORIES OF TERRORISM, AND HYPOTHESES

1.0 Overview

In this thesis, I analyze characteristics of Islamic State (IS) terrorist attacks and how they differ from the non-IS baseline of terrorism in Iraq from 2016 to 2020. These findings are then compared to the theories of terrorism commonly used to describe IS activity, as well as my hypothesis of religious-insurgency theory. This chapter will feature first an introduction to IS, explaining how it developed and some of the group's core tenets, then pivot to explanations of its applicable theories of terrorism, before finally delving into my hypothesis of religious-insurgency theory.

2.0 Background of the Islamic State

While the Islamic State only won notoriety upon the launch of its offensive against Iraq in Syria in 2014, the roots of IS emerged long before. Its early history reads very similar to Al Qaeda's, in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, which galvanized people around the Arab and Muslim world to fight against the incursion.[33] The Soviets eventually withdrew in 1988, leaving behind a puppet regime in their place, continuing the war.[34] Jordanian Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah eventually travelled to Afghanistan to join the fight, where he adopted the war name Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, met a proponent of a very fundamentalist and violent strain of Islam—Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi—and accumulated a large following of fighters.[35] Upon al-Zarqawi's return to Jordan, he founded Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-

[33] Beauchamp. 2015.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

Jihad (JTWJ), or the Organization of Monotheism and Jihad, which remained a low-level terrorist group until the 2003 US invasion of Iraq destabilized the region.[36] Capitalizing upon the power vacuum created by the United States, al-Zarqawi moved into Iraq, began launching attacks against Shias, and pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda, rebranding itself as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).[37]

In Iraq, al-Zarqawi had two goals, to spark a civil-war between Sunnis and Shias and to establish an Islamic caliphate.[38] These two goals deeply colored AQI's attacks. In addition to targeting Western interests and fighters, AQI launched brutal attacks against Shias, hoping to encourage them to act oppressively against Sunnis, thus rallying Sunnis behind the AQI.[39] Although this deeply angered Al Qaeda, this strategy worked for several years, even igniting a civil war between Sunnis and Shias. The tide turned in 2006, when Sunni tribes in Iraq, frustrated with the AQI's harsh conditions and their increasing loses in the civil war, took up arms against AQI.[40] This, combined with increased US troop presence in Iraq and the death of al-Zarqawi, seemingly spelled the end of the AQI.[41]

The defeat of AQI did not last long, however. As the US withdrew from Iraq, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki once again stoked sectarian tensions between the Sunnis and Shias, privileging Shias and making corrupt political decisions, allowing the AQI to recruit numerous disaffected Sunnis to its ranks.[42] The AQI further capitalized upon instability in neighboring Syria by mobilizing fighters, accumulating donations from abroad to overthrow Bashar al-Assad

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Hassan Hassan. "The True Origins of IS." The Atlantic. 30 November 2018. (https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/11/isis-origins-anbari-zarqawi/577030/) (20 April 2022)
[39] Beauchamp. 2015.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

and breaking into prisons to release disgruntled criminals and fighters.[43] This tactic worked, and in 2013, the leader of AQI—Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi—divorced Al Qaeda to form the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS).[44]

In June 2014, ISIS, which had been operating mostly in Syria, launched an offensive against the Iraqi cities of Mosul and Tikrit.[45] By the end of the month, the two cities fell to ISIS, leading al-Baghdadi to announce the establishment of a caliphate from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq and rename the group the Islamic State (IS).[46] As the Iraqi army stood no chance against IS, a US-led coalition quickly formed and launching its first airstrikes against the group in August 2014.[47] By 2017, IS had lost almost all of its territory due to the US-coalition and local force pushback, which they solidified with the fall of Baghouz—IS's final holdout—in 2019.[48] While IS does not currently hold any territory in Iraq, the group still carries out attacks all over the country and remains a formidable force.

3.0 Islamic State Ideology

The ideology of the Islamic State solidifies its status as a religious terrorist group. The group claims to practice Salafism, describing it as the most authentic form of early Islam, and also draws upon Wahhabism, a branch of Salafism invented by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and practiced in Saudi Arabia.[49] As a result, some of IS's most important concepts include "*bidah*" which prohibits the invention of new religious practices and is commonly used to

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Glenn. 2019.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Hassan Hassan. "The Sectarianism of the Islamic State: Ideological Roots and Political Context." The Carnegie Endowment. 13 June 2016. (https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/13/sectarianism-of-islamic-state-ideological-roots-and-political-context-pub-63746) (20 April 2022)

declare sufism and Shiitism polytheistic and heretical, "*wala wal bara*" which requires undying loyalty to Islam and the rejection of un-Islamic ways, and "*tawhid*" which emphasizes God's oneness.[50] A distinction between IS and Wahhabism is the extra caliber of extremeness in which IS requires these traits to be actively enforced—it is not enough to personally believe in the oneness of God (tawhid), a 'good' Muslim must also act hostilely towards those that practice it insufficiently.[51]

IS is also heavily influenced by Qutbism, especially its ideas of "*jahiliyya*" (polytheistic pre-Islamic barbarism) and "*hakimiyya*" (oneness of God).[52] Additionally, they follow the belief that since the Muslim world has deviated so far from true Islam, only a violent and forceful revolution can revive true Islam; there can be no genuine voluntary conversion.[53] This is combined with other ideas surrounding proper religious practice, such as an inability and refusal to deviate from the direct teachings of the Prophet Mohammad, and this is reflected in the numerous actions that can remove an individual from Islam—which includes voting in an election, cutting one's beard or not strongly enough calling someone an apostate.[54] IS subjects Muslims they believe to have removed themselves from true Islam to purification—typically through brutal killings—while Christians are allowed to pay a religious tax (*jizya*) assuming they do not resist IS's rule.[55]

This ideology, clearly deeply rooted in religion and reflecting a commitment to upholding what they believe to be Islam's oldest and truest teachings, seems to make IS undeniably appear to be a religious terrorist organization. Their terrorist attacks do not always reflect this, however,

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid
[53] Ibid.
[54] Graeme Wood. "What ISIS Really Wants." The Atlantic. March 2015. (https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/) (20 April 2022)
[55] Ibid.

which may generate some mild uncertainty in how this translates into their daily activities. On September 23rd, 2016, IS killed two Mosul imams before Asr prayer a representation of a clear religious attack.[56] Religious motives also led to their shelling of Shia village Abu Sayda, which resulted in one civilian death on September 14th, 2017.[57] At the same time, religion appears nowhere to be found in their attack on Hammam al-Alil police on August 13th, 2016, which left sixty members dead.[58] Nor did it seem behind IS's suicide bombing of an Iskandariyah soccer stadium, which killed forty-one civilians, on March 25th, 2016.[59] These attacks demonstrate tremendous variety in characteristics, with target types changing between religious, civilian, and police, and fatalities ranging from one all the way up to sixty. In some attacks, this religious ideology is clear, while in others it's not, making IS a bit of a quagmire in their attacks despite a strong religious ideology.

4.0 Theories

This section examines the theories all used to explain IS activity. The literature on each theory provides information that can be used to make predictions about the characteristics of attacks that fall into each theory. The patterns of IS terrorism revealed in the quantitative analysis in the following chapter will be compared against these predictions to see how well they can describe IS terrorism. Literature on the theories may not always result in concrete predictions about each characteristic, especially the less studied ones—use of suicide tactics and holidays—but there will be enough differences on the major characteristics—fatalities and target type—to differentiate between theories. I don't expect any of the theories to perfectly describe all

[56] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 5649197
[57] Ibid. ID: 7698101
[58] Ibid. ID: 5645329
[59] Ibid. ID: 6030448

individual attacks, as the motives of each attack can vary especially in a large terrorist group like IS, but I do expect analysis to reveal the most effective one to describe IS terrorism along with IS's attack priorities.

4.1 Theory 1: Provocation Theory

Many instances of terrorism are deliberate choices by terrorist organizations that cannot be remedied by increasing resources offered to citizens or better policing. A key example is provocation theory, which posits that terrorists and terrorist organizations commit acts of terrorism to goad the government into repressive action to, in turn, convince citizens that the government is corrupt and unfit to rule. The terrorists don't want the government to respond to their grievances, but rather want the government to increase frustrations among the population. The more repressive a terrorist group can encourage the government to be, the better. This tactic can also be applied to groups of individuals. A terrorist group may attack a group of individuals to encourage them to act violently towards another group of individuals, which rallies this new victimized group behind the terrorist organization. Provocation attacks of terrorism use carefully planned violence for future gains in support.

Blankenship (2016) conducted a cross-national analysis of 160 countries from 1981 to 2011 to determine both the likelihood of individuals employing terrorism to goad a state into repressive action and states succumbing to this antagonization. He found terrorists do often commit large attacks to encourage repression and that states, especially those struggling bureaucratically and administratively, are likely to take this bait, making it more likely that a terrorist group tries again to goad the state.[60] Provocation is real, and for many purposes appears

[60] Brian Blankenship. "When Do States Take the Bait? State Capacity and the Provocation Logic of Terrorism." Journal of Conflict Resolution 62. no. 2 (2016): 381-409

to function well. Kirisci (2020) supports these findings in his analysis of datasets on terrorist attacks and group termination.[61] He found that as governments try to increase their bureaucratic and military/security capacity, terrorist groups are likely to take action to reduce the likelihood of group termination — one major strategy is by launching provocation attacks to remind the government and citizens that they are still there. Terrorist groups perceive increases in capacity as a threat to their operational capabilities and general survival, leading them to launch more attacks, a finding that especially pronounced among ethnic and religious based terrorist organizations. Martin (2019) conducted an analysis of terrorism in West Africa and Southeast Asia with very similar findings—terrorist groups have a vested interest in a population disliking the government and will respond provocatively when this interest is threatened.[62]

While examples of this kind of terrorism may be less readily called to mind than other forms, numerous exist, such as many of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) terrorist attacks in Turkey. The PKK's main motive in conducting attacks is to gain self-determination for the Kurdish people—a motive that better fits into the insurgency theory of terrorism, which will be explained in detail further on—but following a series of accommodation reforms by Turkey in the late 1999s and early 2000s, the group launched attacks to dissuade its constituents and others from backing the government.[63] The government appeared to be increasingly considerate of its Kurdish population, and the PKK wanted to remind the Kurds of how oppressive the Turkish regime can truly be. The Armenians also engaged in provocation attacks against the Ottoman Empire in the 1890s to recruit Armenians to their cause.[64] Armenian rebels wanted the Ottoman

[61]Mustafa Kirisci. "Fighting for Survival: Responding to State Capacity and Terror Group End." Critical Studies on Terrorism 13. no. 2 (2020): 312-336
[62] Coty Martin. "State Capacity and Terrorism in the Developing World." West Virginia University Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports. (2019): 1-289
[63] Kirisci. 2020.
[64] David Carter. "Provocation and the Strategy of Terrorist and Guerrilla Attacks." International Organization 70 (2015): 133-173

Empire to act repressively against Armenians to radicalize citizens and increase the number of citizens willing to support the Armenian separatist movements. Provocation attacks weaponize the state against itself, a phenomenon that requires special planning and results in a visible pattern of characteristics.

When IS was still operating as AQI, it was known for launching provocation attacks, making this theory applicable to this thesis. In his commentary on IS, senior writer for news outlet *Vox*, Zachary Beauchamp explains that AQI "bombed Shia mosques and slaughtered Shia civilians, hoping to provoke mass Shia reprisals against Sunni civilians and thus force the Sunnis to rally behind AQI. It worked, and it's a tactic ISIS still uses today."[65] These provocation tactics were successful for AQI when it started, allowing the group to effectively start a civil war between Sunnis and Shias. These tactics were highly effective until 2006, when Sunni tribes became frustrated with the harsh standards of living under the AQI and rebelled, launching a period known as the Sunni Awakening.[66] This group has been known for these attacks in the past, making it possible that they could still be launching them in Iraq.

4.1.1 Characteristic: Target Type

As provocation attacks focus on triggering repression from the government or a group, these attacks must be directed almost entirely at the government or that specific group. Groups launching these kinds of attacks typically make this explicit to their followers, as attacking normal civilians would make it difficult for the terrorists to convince civilians that they are better than the government.[67] As the Iraqi government is largely Shia and Sunnis have typically been

[65] Beauchamp. 2015.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Carter. 2015.

unsatisfied with Shia governance, provocation attacks will likely target the government rather than individual Shia civilians. The predictions of this theory are that:

- Terrorist organizations that adopt a provocation strategy will be more likely to target the government than terrorists motivated by a religious or insurgent theories.

4.1.2 Characteristic: Fatalities

The number of fatalities incurred by provocation attacks stems from two important ideas: terrorists' need to show governments that they cannot be placated and the more severe an attack, the greater the response. To get the government/group and media's attention, these attacks are likely to kill specific individuals.[68] As these attacks do not happen all the time, attacks falling into this category may appear to have an overall total lower than others. The predictions for this theory are:

- Terrorist organizations that adopt a provocation strategy may appear to incur overall lower fatalities due to the infrequency of attacks, but each individual attack would have higher average fatalities than terrorists adhering to a religious or insurgent theory.

4.1.3 Characteristic: Holidays

While the literature on provocation terrorist attacks do not explicitly discuss holidays, I would expect a group launching provocation terrorist attacks to attack on days of importance, as this would be more psychologically damaging and thus, more likely to trigger a response. If IS were launching provocation attacks against the government, I would expect higher rates of activity on Iraq symbolic holidays. This theory expects:

[68] Blankenship. 2020.

- Terrorists operating under provocation theory should demonstrate more activity on Iraqi symbolic holidays than terrorists following religious or insurgent theories.

4.1.4 Characteristic: Suicide Attacks

Provocation theory literature does not make any predictions about the use of suicide tactics. As provocation theory anticipates more spectacular attacks, terrorists adhering to this strategy could be expected to use higher rates of suicide attacks than other terrorist strategies. However, there is also not enough information to make a prediction based on this logic as there are numerous ways a terrorist group can conduct large, mass casualty attacks. Some of IS's largest attacks, such as on April 21st, 2016, which resulted in the death of two-hundred civilians, have relied on basic execution techniques instead of suicide attacks.[69] Spectacular attacks do not necessarily imply suicide attacks.

4.2 Theory 2: Insurgency Theory

Provocation theory cannot explain all instances of strategic terrorism. Many attacks will fall under the umbrella of insurgency theory, which is also referred to in terrorism literature as attrition or nationalist terrorism. Insurgency theory is like provocation theory, as in both theories, terrorists endeavor to show the government that they are strong and capable. However, there is a clear distinction in the motivation behind this. Terrorists conducting provocation attacks want the government to crack down repressively on citizens, whereas insurgent terrorists want the government, or enemy, to acquiesce on a demand or set of demands. Terrorists hope that by continuously attacking the government, it will ultimately collapse or will have no choice but to

[69] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 6058948

grant concessions to the terrorists. In these attacks, terrorists also tend to refrain from attacks that would encourage a repressive crackdown on the population to prevent the mobilization of the population against them. Negotiations and compromises don't interest provocation terrorists, but insurgency terrorists crave them.

Kydd and Walter (2006) see insurgency terrorism as one of the major theories of terrorism and refer to it as a "battle of wills."[70] In their 2006 article, they analyzed the attacks and motivations of numerous organizations listed as terrorist groups by the United States to determine the situations that predispose a particular kind of terrorism and the best strategies to deal with each kind. They argue that insurgency terrorism is shaped by three aspects: vested interests in the issue, constraints on retaliation by the government, and the cost tolerance of the target. A target, typically the government, is more likely to give into insurgency terrorism when their interest in the issue is low, making sustained attacks more likely when interest in the issue is high, the government cannot retaliate—therefore lowering the costs of this terrorism—and the government's cost tolerance is low. Governments with a high-cost tolerance and/or high retaliatory capabilities are unlikely to attract these kinds of attacks.

Sànchez-Cuenca (2007) refers to insurgency terrorism as nationalist terrorism to focus on the motivations that may generate this type of terrorism. He argues that nationalist motives, specifically the desire to reclaim territory or assert autonomy over a region, are major driving forces behind terrorist uses of an attrition strategy and conducts an analysis and comparison of the Irish Republic Army (IRA) and the Basque Homeland and Freedom movement (ETA) to show this.[71] While he only compares these two organizations, the similarities found by Sanchez

[70]Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter. "The Strategies of Terrorism." International Security 31. no. 1 (2006): 49-80
[71] Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca. "The Dynamics of Nationalist Terrorism: ETA and the IRA." Terrorism and Political Violence 19. no. 3 (2007): 289-306

and Cuenca among these movements and other major terrorist organizations—such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and other groups—makes him confident that his findings apply to the strategy of insurgency terrorism as a whole. He found these organizations hope that subjecting governments to enough fighting and illustrating that they are serious about their demands will force them to the negotiating table. He also discovered that public support for the organizations is crucial to their survival, making these terrorist attacks more selective and specific in their actions than others. Terrorists employing this strategy have little desire to overthrow the government entirely, but rather, carve out a place for themselves in the territory they believe they're entitled to.

There are numerous examples of insurgency terrorism that are often readily called to mind. Two were already mentioned, the IRA and the ETA. The ETA formed under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco in Spain and sought independence for the Basque region—a goal they continuously backed despite repeatedly being granted greater autonomy from the Spanish government.[72] Fatalities from them were generally low—below 1,000 since its founding—with the group only disbanding in 2018.[73] The IRA similarly emerged in 1919 as Ireland was forming and seeks the reunification of Catholic Ireland and Protestant Northern Ireland.[74] Despite a much smaller population, the IRA, and its split-off group the Provisional IRA, have accumulated over double the fatalities of the ETA. The IRA failed to reach its goals, and while it is no longer active, its offshoots continue to operate in Ireland.[75] The Hamas offensive against Israel would also largely fall into the category of insurgency terrorism, as

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Aritz Parra and Angela Charlton. "Facing Terror Charges, Basque Separatist Group ETA's Last Boss Apologizes For Deaths." PBS News Hour. 19 October 2020. (https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/facing-terror-charges-basque-separatist-group-etas-last-boss-apologizes-for-deaths) (20 April 2022)
[74] Sanchez-Cuenca. 2007.
[75]Marisa McGlinchey. "'While There's British Interference, There's Going to Be Action': Why a Hardcore of Dissident Irish Republicans Are Not Giving Up." The Guardian. 22 July 2021. (https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/jul/22/dissident-irish-republicans-new-ira-continuity-belfast-lyra-mckee) (20 April 2022)

Hamas seek the removal of Israel from East Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole.[76] This has so far not been successful and will likely not be successful in the future due to Israel's greater power, but Hamas is unlikely to acquiesce.

Insurgency theory is applicable to IS due to its control of territory and stated aims of establishing a new state in Iraq, Syria, and neighboring states. At the height of the Islamic State caliphate, IS controlled a territory that stretched from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq, seeking to establish concrete rule over the territory. Insurgency theory typically involves disputed territory and the efforts to maintain control over that territory, which IS has tried to do. Many of its attacks target the government or other infrastructural aspects that would facilitate its consolidation of rule over Iraqi territory. Some of these attacks target the actual government of Iraq, like on November 12th, 2016, when IS blew up buildings housing the local council, judiciary, and civil defense in Anah.[77] Some chose to instead target infrastructure and essential services, like on August 3rd, 2017, when IS blew up three transmission towers in the Mansuriya al-Jabal area, cutting off electricity.[78] Others refrain from attacking the actual government and service structures themselves, choosing to instead target government employees, like on May 25th, 2017, when IS planted an IED on the car of a government employee southeast of Baghdad.[79] Attacks like this, in addition to the services IS would establish in territory it governed led many to remark on IS's insurgent state building attempts. Rukmini Callimachi of the *New York Times* writes on IS, "How did a group whose spectacles of violence galvanized the world against it hold onto so much land for so long?"[80] Other commentaries have also recognized IS's

[76] Kydd and Walter. 2006.
[77] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 7216987
[78] Ibid. ID: 6126968
[79] Ibid. ID: 5898109
[80] Rukmini Callimachi. "The IS Files." The New York Times. 4 April 2018. (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-mosul-iraq.html) (24 April 2022)

insurgent side, with Benjamin Bahney and Patrick Johnston of the RAND corporation explaining that the group's status evolved from a "nascent underground jihadist movement to guerrilla insurgency to proto-state to state-like caliphate."[81] IS displays a deep commitment to accumulating territory to govern, an insurgent strategy.

4.2.1 Characteristic: Target Type

Insurgency terrorism has a clear target—the government and government security apparatuses—as targeting the government is the best way to inflict the highest costs on it. Hezbollah's attacks on US military barracks in Lebanon in 1983 and repeated attacks against Israel's military during its occupation of southern Lebanon illustrated this.[82] On some occasions, these terrorists will be forced to target local police, such as in Basque County, due to limited military and national government involvement in the conflict.[83] Insurgency terrorist attacks are always specific in who they target and refrain from large attacks that involve innocent civilians, as this reduces popular support for the group, which is critical to their ability to recruit and survive.[84] While it's unlikely that IS will not target any civilians, this theory would expect a significant targeting of the government and security/police apparatuses, and a relatively low targeting of civilians. This theory would expect:

- Terrorists that adhere to the insurgency strategy of terrorism are more likely to attack the government and security/police apparatuses than terrorists following provocation or religious theories of terrorism.

[81] Benjamin Bahney and Patrick Johnston. "ISIS Could Rise Again." The RAND Corporation. 15 December 2017. (https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/12/isis-could-rise-again.html) (24 April 2022)
[82] Kydd and Walter. 2006.
[83] Sanchez-Cuenca. 2007.
[84] Ibid.

- Terrorists adhering to insurgency strategy of terrorism should target fewer civilians than terrorists adhering to religious or provocation theory.

4.2.2 Characteristic: Fatalities

The literature on insurgency terrorism expects that fatalities will follow a curve, increasing dramatically at the beginning to reflect a high starting fatality rate and then decreasing steadily to a much lower fatality rate reflective of a more protracted conflict.[85] Insurgencies are rarely defeated or successful in the short-term, making them typically longer campaigns. In the beginning of a campaign, insurgent terrorists have the advantage of surprise, but as governments familiarize themselves with the new groups, they become more skilled in counterinsurgent tactics. This drives a reduction overtime in fatalities. Overall, however, fatalities are expected to be lower than in other forms of terrorism as the attacks must be selective and specific towards targets to maximize public support—meaning few civilian casualties allowed, unless they are the enemy. This theory would thus predict:

- Terrorists adhering to an insurgency theory of terrorism should have overall lower fatalities than other forms of terrorism and these fatalities should be higher in the beginning and taper off over time as compared to religious or provocation theories.

4.2.3 Characteristic: Use of Suicide Attacks

Insurgency theory literature pays special attention to the role of suicide attacks in this strategy. Scholars have found that insurgency terrorists tend to use an above average number of suicide attacks, which they postulate may be connected to the mobilizing motive and an idea that

[85] Ibid.

permeates insurgency terrorism—that all peaceful tactics have failed, making violence the only option left.[86] This leaves individuals seemingly more willing to sacrifice themselves for the effort. It is unclear how the number of suicide attacks anticipated by insurgency theory compares to other theories that expect a high number of suicide attacks, such as religious theory, but this likely suggests that insurgency use of suicide attacks is not the highest compared to other theories. This theory predicts:

- Terrorists adhering to an insurgency theory of terrorism should use suicide attacks at a high rate, albeit one lower than religious theories of terrorism.

4.2.4 Characteristic: Holidays

Insurgency theory literature has no discussion about the role of holidays in impacting terrorism and the logic of the theory does not suggest any overt patterns.

4.3 Theory 3: Religious Terrorism

Messages a terrorist organization wants to send to the government or specific groups of people cannot explain all terrorist attacks. Rather, violence and terrorist attacks can come from an ideology that mobilizes and radicalizes a group to act. One such ideology can be religion, especially when a religious doctrine paints life under full adherence to religious laws as the ideal utopia and blames the issues of society on violations of religious tenets. These ideas can lead to violence when in combination with a frustrated population that believes that previous peaceful attempts at improving their quality of life have failed or that bringing back perfect religious practice is the only solution to their issues. These individuals use violence to punish those they

[86] Kydd and Walter. 2006.

believe to be violating or disrespecting the religious theory and convince others to follow it. While this theory of terrorism may appear as more of a mobilizing force, this theory asserts that it is a strategy used by individuals to purify a population and improve the quality of life by conducting religious attacks.

Mainstream—and typically more conservative—scholars of terrorism often assert that religious terrorism is primarily Islamist, and that Islam is inherently violent. This understanding, however, is false and one that this thesis does not subscribe to. Islam is no more violent than any other religious doctrine, and violent understandings of it come from interpretations designed to be violent, not from the religion or its texts themselves. Any ideology, even nonreligious ones like communism, can be used to mobilize a population for violent purposes and attributing terrorism to Islam entirely is not constructive. Still, it's important to understand when religions, such as Islam, contribute to terrorism, which is the goal of studying this theory in this context. In fact, the only reason I'm studying Islamist terrorism in this thesis is due to its focus on the Islamic State in Iraq. A similar study outside of the Middle East or even on another terrorist organization in the Middle East could study other religions or ideologies—such as communist terrorism and Hindu extremism in India or Christian and far-right extremism in the United States.

Wibisono, Louis, and Jetten (2019) conducted an analysis of Indonesian Muslim groups to study the multiple dimensions of Islam and better understand how individuals express their beliefs along the moderate to extreme continuum.[87] They explain that religion can act as a great motivating factor for groups of people, and although an extreme religious ideology is not inherently violent, it can be used to convince people to achieve their goals through violence.

[87] Susilo Wibisono, Winnifred Louis, and Jolanda Jetten. "A Multidimensional Analysis of Religious Extremism." Frontiers of Psychology 10. (2019): 1-12

Moreover, there is no one path to extremism or one main branch of extremism, with religious terrorists often taking issue with very different aspects—some focus on individual incorporation of innovative religious practices while others focus on government corruption. A group may be theologically extreme but politically and socially moderate or the reverse, and these are important in understanding how this form of terrorism plays out.

Badey (2002) further corroborates the idea of how religion can contribute to terrorism in his commentary on terrorism.[88] While he believes the international community does exaggerate the role of religion in terrorism, he also believes that it serves three main ideological functions: polarization and mobilization towards a goal; establishment of a set of norms and values which creates the feeling of community; and justification and rationalization of behavior. Religion doesn't cause these characteristics, but rather steps in when other ideologies fail and is exploited for violent purposes.

There are numerous examples of religious terrorism, with examples dating back thousands of years. One of the earliest instances of religious terrorism occurred during the Roman occupation of Israel between 66 to 73 AD, when a Jewish sect, the Zealots, targeted Romans for killing in Jerusalem.[89] Another early incident occurred during the crusades, when Muslims would target and kill Christian Crusaders attempting to take their land.[90] More modern examples of religious terrorism include the Aryan Nations and their Church of Jesus Christ-Christian, who argue that Jesus was an Aryan, that Jews are "imposters" and children of Satan, and that Aryans are the real chosen people.[91]

[88] Thomas Badey. "The Role of Religion in International Terrorism." Sociological Focus 35. no. 1 (2002): 81-86
[89] Bruce Hoffman. "Holy Terror": The Implications of Terrorism Motivated By a Religious Imperative." Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 18. no. 4 (1995): 271-284
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

IS is commonly cited as the clearest modern example of a religious terrorist group. Its ideology combines Salafism and branches of political Islam—such as Qutbism—and uses their teachings to enforce a strict set of religious beliefs that they believe more closely relate to the authentic Islam present during the time of the Prophet Mohammad. The laws that the group implements in the territories it controls are deeply steeped in religion, making religion clearly an important element of the group. The group's numerous religious attacks also support this. Some attacks illustrate IS's hatred of Shia Muslims, like when IS detonated a car bomb on September 5th, 2016, in a Shia neighborhood of Baghdad, killing twelve individuals.[92] Their dislike for Sufis is also clear, evidenced by their attacks on Sufi shrines and places of worship, like on March 20th, 2018, when IS destroyed two shrines in Daquq.[93] IS has also attacked religious minorities, like it did on January 20th, 2017, when it abducted around 150 Yezidi and Arab children from Tel Afar to use as child soldiers.[94] Despite promises to protect Christians provided they pay a religious tax to IS, IS has also attacked Christian targets, like on April 26th, 2016, when it destroyed a church in Mosul.[95] Attacks designed to kill or wound members of a certain religion or destroy places of worship due to that religion, as can be seen with many IS attacks, are illustrative of a religious motive and strategy.

4.3.1 Characteristic: Target Type

The exact target type of religious terrorists depends on their exact motive and focus but they will all have a religious element. Some religious terrorists focus more on poor practices by individuals claiming to practice the same religion—Shia Muslims are a common victim group

[92] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 7500192
[93] Ibid. ID: 6060585
[94] Ibid. ID: 4765671
[95] Ibid. ID: 5655974

example—while other terrorists may focus on shrines that represent "polytheistic practices" or holy sites. Overall, religious terrorists are most likely to target "infidels", whether this be governments—the initial target of this form of terrorism—or civilians.[96] Civilians may include individuals affiliated with the government or individuals who poorly practice Islam. While religious terrorism may also target western interests, it will focus on what it believes to be poor or wrong adherents of its religion. Attacks may also occur indiscriminately when terrorists believe there will be enough of the targeted or enemy group present.[97] This theory predicts that:

- Terrorists adhering to a religious theory of terrorism will attack religious targets, such as infidels, symbols of heresy, specific religious groups, or disliked practices, at a high rate and much higher than terrorists following provocation or insurgent strategies of terrorism.

4.3.2 Characteristic: Fatalities

Theories of religious terrorism are clear in their expectations of fatalities. Religious terrorism will have the highest number of fatalities, greater than any other type of terrorism.[98] Additionally, the proportion of deaths attributed to this form of terrorism will greatly exceed the number of attacks. This theory expects that:

- Terrorists following a religious strategy of terrorism will incur higher fatalities than terrorists following provocation or insurgent strategy.

4.3.3 Characteristic: Suicide Attacks

[96] Shmuel Bar. "The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism." Policy Review (Jun/Jul 2004): 27-37.
[97] Hoffman. 1995.
[98] Hoffman 1995.

Due to the concept of martyrdom that permeates religious ideologies, there has been a lot of research into the role of suicide attacks in religious terrorism. Among attacks that fall into the theory of religious terrorism, suicide attacks are frequent and represent a significant proportion of attacks.[99] Additionally, these attacks represent a greater number of causalities than non-suicide attacks and tend to be carried out predominately by women, teenagers, or younger children.[100] This theory predicts that:

- Terrorists operating in the religious theory of terrorism will use suicide attacks at a high rate, much higher than terrorists operating under a provocation or insurgent theory of terrorism.

4.3.4 Characteristic: Holidays

As religious terrorism operates with a mobilizing religious ideology, the literature expects that the individuals carrying out the attacks would be religiously devout.[101] As a result, members of a religious terrorist organization should be more likely to observe a religious holiday than conduct a terrorist attack.[102] This should result in a noticeable decrease in terrorist attacks around these dates. The same should not apply to other holidays, if anything, religious terrorists may want to disturb the celebrations of others.[103] In Iraq, IS should be more active on Western holidays, Iraqi symbolic holidays, and IS holidays and less active on Islamic holidays. This theory predicts:

[99]Dominique Reynie et al.. "Islamist Terrorist Attacks in the World." Fondation Pour L'Innovation Politique. September 2021. (https://www.fondapol.org/en/study/islamist-terrorist-attacks-in-the-world-1979-2021/) (20 April 2022)
[100] Ibid.
[101] Siebeneck et al.. (2009)
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

- Terrorists implementing a religious strategy of terrorism should display lower activity on Islamic holidays and higher activity on Western, Iraq, and IS holidays than terrorists adhering to provocation or insurgent strategy.

4.4 What about other theories?

There exists a very rich literature on the causes of terrorism, which means that many theories have inevitably been left out of this analysis. I selected theories for this analysis based on several factors: prominence in literature, ease of identification, and applicability to IS. To be included, a theory needed to have a substantial amount of literature, with at least three major articles written on them. As a result of this requirement, theories including outbidding, spoiling, and intimidation were excluded. Attacks that fall within a theory must also have clear enough characteristics to be easily identifiable. This requires clear targets or clear attack strategies, such as attacks against churches represent a religiously motivated attack. While low-capacity theory—which argues that terrorism occurs as individuals seek to call attention to grievances with the state—is highly represented in the literature, it's difficult to differentiate between these attacks and general crime. Doing so would require information on the motivations or a clear expression of frustration in the attack, which is typically not available. Finally, the theory must also be applicable to Iraq and IS. This resulted in the exclusion of theories such as communist terrorism.

TABLE 2.0 Predictions for Each Theory			
Characteristic	**Provocation Theory**	**Insurgency Theory**	**Religious Theory**
Explanation	Terrorist group launches attacks against government	Terrorist group launches attacks to increase costs to get concessions.	Terrorist group launches attacks to revive old religious times and enforce

	or group to encourage oppressive retaliation.		'proper' religious practices.
Target Type	Government; Targeted groups	Government; Security/Police; few civilians	Religious
Fatalities	Low—specific and targeted	Overall low; high introductory period, low following	High
Suicide Attack	N/A	High	Highest
Holidays	Should focus on Islamic or Iraq symbolic holidays	N/A	Should decrease on Islamic holidays

5.0 Hypothesis: Religious-Insurgency Theory

Although IS is typically seen as solely a religious terrorist organization, I hypothesize that it follows a religious-insurgency path, combining the most successful elements of both strategies of terrorism. From IS's ideology, it's clear that religion is important to IS; however, seeing it as merely a religious terrorist organization neglects the importance of its insurgent aspects. The first is its control of territory. Most terrorist organizations do not endeavor to control territory, and those that do typically only try to control a piece of territory for a base or stronghold.[104] Holding a fixed base or territory subjects a group to numerous vulnerabilities as it creates a clear target for others to attack.[105] However, this doesn't mean that groups will lack a safe haven or an area with increased operations, as poor policing/law enforcement in some states will create conditions necessary for a group to flourish—seen in Afghanistan with Al Qaeda and

[104] Martha Crenshaw. "Rethinking Transnational Terrorism: An Integrated Approach." The United States Institute of Peace. February 2020. (https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/pw_158-rethinking_transnational_terrorism_an_integrated_approach.pdf) (20 April 2022)
[105] Ibid.

the Taliban.[106] IS, however, is different. The group has actively sought out territorial control, seeing it as a necessary part of its caliphate.[107] IS's motivations may be religious, but its insurgent needs to govern a population are equally as important.

Broadly, religious-insurgency theory expects a terrorist organization to act exactly like IS. Terrorist organizations in this theory crave their own state or piece of land in which they can create their religious utopia. Their desire to purify a religion and fix the issues that they see within their society drives their territorial or governmental accumulations. Their goals and strategies cannot be properly explained by religious or insurgency theory, but rather these groups balance both. Religious-insurgent terrorists carry out attacks with the belief that through concessions from the government on territory, it can create a land with its ideal religious makeup.

As religious-insurgency theory combines religious and insurgency theories, I expect a hybrid strategy from IS with clear elements of both. For fatalities, IS should have higher fatalities than other terrorist groups. Due to an emphasis on the killing of infidels, religious terrorism is often one of the deadliest forms of terrorism. Additionally, insurgent terrorist attacks, while potentially having a low overall fatality count, are individually lethal, especially in its earlier periods. Although 2016-2020 does not capture IS's introductory period, it does capture the period of heavy fighting and operations, so I expect to see higher fatalities in 2016-2017 and decreasing fatalities after. Purifying a religion and forcibly taking territory are no easy tasks and IS will likely make deliberate choices to increase its lethality in furtherance of its goals.

For target type, I expect IS to attack religious sites at a slightly higher rate than non-IS terrorists due to IS's religious elements, but at a substantially lower rate than which it attacks

[106] Ibid.
[107] Beauchamp. 2015.

government/infrastructure and police targets, which I expect it to target at a rate that is both high and higher than non-IS terrorists adhering to other theories. To establish its religious rule, IS first needs to accomplish its insurgent goals of territorial accumulation, making it necessary for its government/infrastructure and police attacks to trump its religious ones. IS's targeting of civilians should be high, albeit slightly lower than non-IS terrorism due to the combining of religious and insurgent goals. IS's desire for religious purification drives many of its attacks on civilians, as the group values targeting infidels. However, a high civilian targeting rate is at odds with insurgency theory, which argues for reduced civilian targeting to maximize popular support. IS must balance these drives, which I anticipate will result in a high rate of civilian targeting that falls slightly below that of the non-IS baseline.

For suicide attacks, I expect that IS will use them at a rate substantially higher than non-IS terrorists. Religious theory expects high suicide attacks due to ideas of martyrdom, which when combined with the desperation and commitment displayed by adherents of insurgency theory generate more frequent suicide attacks.

Finally, for holidays, I expect that IS will attack less on Islamic holidays as their religiosity should lead them to observe religious holidays more strictly than the non-IS baseline of terrorism. I also anticipate that IS should attack more on Iraq symbolic and IS symbolic holidays than the non-IS baseline to emphasize their seriousness and inflict more psychological pain on the government. I recognize that insurgency theory does not make predictions about terrorist activity around holidays, but I would expect IS should act this way to maximize their potential for harm and achieve their goals faster.

TABLE 2.1: Religious-Insurgency Theory Predictions	
Characteristic	**Prediction**
Fatalities	High; Highest in introductory period and then lowers
Target Type	Predominantly government and police
Use of Suicide Tactics	High
Holidays	Low around Islamic holidays; high around Iraq and IS symbolic dates

When compared to the other theories already mentioned, the combination of elements from religious and insurgency theories are clear as are its deviations from all the theories.

TABLE 2.2: Comparison of Theory Predictions				
Characteristic	**Provocation Theory**	**Insurgency Theory**	**Religious Theory**	**Religious-Insurgency Theory**
Fatalities	Low	Low overall; high in introductory period	High	High; highest in introductory period
Target Type	Government/ infrastructure	Government/ infrastructure and police	Religious	Government/ infrastructure and police highest
Suicide Tactics	N/A	High	Higher	Highest
Holidays	Higher on Iraq symbolic	N/A	Lower on Islamic	Higher on Iraq and IS symbolic; lower on Islamic

CHAPTER 3: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC STATE TERRORIST ATTACK CHARACTERISTICS

1.0 Overview

The goal of this thesis is to analyze the characteristics of Islamic State (IS) terrorism, how they differ from the non-IS baseline of terrorism, and what these findings divulge about IS's strategic motivations. In the previous chapter, I introduced IS's history, the three theories of terrorism commonly used to describe IS terrorist attacks (provocation, religious, and insurgency) and their predictions for IS behavior, and then offered my own theory to explain IS terrorism—religious-insurgency theory. In this chapter, I build upon the information presented earlier by focusing on a quantitative analysis of IS attack characteristics, a comparison to the non-IS baseline of terrorism, and the implications of these quantitative findings on the theories.

I find that IS diverges from the non-IS baseline of terrorism in many ways, most significantly in fatalities and targeting of the police. IS attacks incur substantially higher fatalities than the non-IS baseline of terrorism and target the police at far greater rates. In addition, when comparing the quantitative findings to the theories commonly used to describe IS terrorism, I find no support for provocation theory and mixed support for both religious and insurgency theories. I find substantial support for my hypothesis of religious-insurgency theory, which combines the most successful and effective characteristics of both religious and insurgency theories. The following chapter, chapter four, will explain the findings of this chapter in greater detail through a qualitative analysis and differentiate between my hypothesis and the other theories.

2.0 General Analytical Design

To examine variation in the characteristics of IS terrorist attacks and their implications on terrorism theories, I analyzed terrorist attack data reported by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) in Iraq from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2020. ACLED collects and reports all incidents of political violence and demonstrations around the world. The organization focused initially on Africa when founded in 2005 but expanded to Yemen in 2015 and the rest of the Middle East from there. Iraq's data begins on January 1, 2016, resulting in the selection of January 1, 2016, as the start date of the analyzed period. As this research began in the fall of 2021, the period ends on December 31, 2020, to utilize the last full year of data. ACLED reports 27,773 incidents of political violence, and as not all forms of political violence qualify as terrorism, each incident was individually tested against my definition of terrorism. Additionally, to avoid potential errors caused by the double-reporting of attacks, I verified the uniqueness of each event. There may be some limitations in terms of underreporting, which cannot be avoided by any terrorism database, but overreporting is not present.

After creating a list of all the terrorist attacks in Iraq between 2016 and 2020, I then identified and coded several characteristics of these attacks. The independent variable is whether the attack was conducted by IS or non-IS terrorists, with IS being the treatment and non-IS attacks acting as the control or baseline. The non-IS baseline of terrorism features attacks conducted by all terrorist groups in Iraq besides IS. This baseline mixes groups with all different sizes of membership, theories or strategies of terrorism, and resources, making it the perfect control to reveal IS deviations from the norm of terrorism. The characteristics of the attacks (fatalities, target type, use of suicide tactics, and presence of a holiday) are the dependent variables. Most of these characteristics were coded as binary variables, and further discussion of them follows.

2.1 IS or Other

The independent variable was coded in a singular binary variable depending on the attack's perpetrator. If IS conducted an attack, it received a 1 in this category. If another terrorist organization or an unidentified group carried out the attack, it received a 0 in this category. This was completed using the "actor1" data reported by the ACLED, which cites the group or individuals responsible for the attack. This information was then checked against the notes reported by ACLED, which describes the attack. Incidents where IS was either known to have carried out the attack or highly suspected of having carried out the attack were considered IS attacks, receiving the 1. Attacks not believed to have been conducted by IS, including attacks by unidentified perpetrators, were coded as non-IS, and received a 0. While there may be some IS attacks listed as unidentified attacks due to IS's refusal to claim them or insufficient information, this number is anticipated to be low due to the high reliability and credibility of the ACLED data and their actor determinations. All attacks known to not have been conducted by IS were considered non-IS and given a 0.

2.2 Fatalities

Fatalities were not coded as a binary variable, but rather as the number of fatalities reported for the incident by ACLED. This ranged from 0 to 293 fatalities. This characteristic was chosen for analysis to determine the lethality of both the attacks and their respective terrorist organizations.

2.3 Target Type

Target type was coded in four binary variables: civilian, government/infrastructure, religious, and police. If an attack targeted a civilian or resulted in injury to or death of a civilian, the attack received a 1 in the civilian category. If the attack targeted some form of infrastructure, such as a house or farmland, without clearly targeting a civilian or injuring/killing a civilian, the attack received a 0. If an attack targeted government employee; government infrastructure; government departments; individuals with the title "official", "mukhtar", "mayor", or "leader"; electricity pylons, transmission towers, or power plants (including generators), it received a 1 in the government/infrastructure category. If an attack targeted a mosque, a shrine, Yazidis/Yezidis, an imam, a Muslim, a church, a cleric, a Shia/Shiite, Christians, Jews, or any "religious" setting, it received a 1 in the religious category. Finally, if an attack targeted a police officer or police station, it received a 1 in the police category. Attacks that did not fall into these criteria were coded as 0 in each of these categories. It was possible for attacks to receive a 1 in multiple categories—for example, an attack that destroyed an electricity tower and killed the individuals working there would have received a 1 in civilian and a 1 in government/infrastructure. Similarly, it was possible for an attack to receive a 0 in all these categories—for example if an IED exploded in an area without causing damage to anything or having a clear targeting motive. The description of each attack was then checked by hand to make sure the correct target was identified. The target type reveals the focus of the attack and was selected to analyze attack priorities.

2.4 Suicide Attacks

An attack receives a 1 in this category if a suicide attack was present and a 0 if not. Suicide attacks included the use of suicide vests or suicide bombs clearly intended to kill the

perpetrator and were found using a keyword search in the notes section. Attacks where a perpetrator was killed but not by themselves are not considered suicide attacks.

I elected to include suicide attacks as a characteristic due to their relevance in the literature on theories of terrorism and apparent relevance to IS. Both insurgency and religious theories discuss the use of suicide tactics in depth, arguing that these forms of terrorism use them at high rates, making it already an important characteristic. Additionally, headlines on IS attacks make frequent references to suicide bombings. One from July 8th, 2016, reads "[a]t least 40 killed as Islamic State suicide bombers attack Shia shrine in Iraq" and another from January 22nd, 2021, reads "Iraq bombing: IS says it was behind deadly suicide attacks in Baghdad."[108] Suicide attacks appear to be important to both terrorism literature and IS, making it an important characteristic.

2.5 Presence of a Holiday or Symbolic Date

Holidays and symbolic dates were coded into four binary variables: the presence of Islamic holidays, western holidays, Iraq symbolic dates, and IS symbolic dates. Six Islamic holidays were coded—Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, Ramadan, Mawlid al-Nabi, Muharram/the Islamic New Year, and Ashura. Each attack that fell within the holiday period ±3 days—except for Ramadan, which was only coded as the first day in accordance with Siebeneck et al. (2008)—received a 1 in the Islamic holidays category. Western holidays included the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's, with each attack on these dates or within 3 days

[108] Mustafa Salim and Loveday Morris. "At Least 40 Killed as Islamic State Suicide Bombers Attack Shiite Shrine in Iraq." The Washington Post. 8 July 2016. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/dozens-killed-as-suicide-bombers-dressed-in-military-uniform-attack-iraq-shrine/2016/07/08/ac0d77ba-44dd-11e6-88d0-6adee48be8bc_story.html) (24 April 2022); "Iraq Bombing: IS Says it Was Behind Deadly Suicide Attacks in Baghdad." BBC News. 22 January 2021. (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55760822) (24 April 2022)

receiving a 1 in the western holidays category. The invasion of Iraq (March 20) and the fall of Baghdad (April 9) were the Iraq symbolic dates, and any attack that fell on these days or within 3 days received a 1 in the category. All these holidays and the period around them were chosen due to their use in other analyses, primarily by Siebeneck et al. (2008). As IS did not exist during the Siebeneck analysis, symbolic dates to this group were not included. I have included attacks that have occurred on or within 3 days of the defeat of IS—December 10—in the category IS symbolic. As the defeat of IS occurred in 2017, this is only applicable to attacks following 2017. While less present in the literature than suicide attacks, I selected to study this characteristic to see if there were any discernable changes in attack frequency on important dates. The literature does make some expectations and information on this characteristic would reveal if special attention to terrorism should be paid around any specific times.

2.6 T-Tests

IS and non-IS attack patterns were then compared using a Welch Two Sample Test (t-test). A t-test is used to assess the hypothesis that two sets of data have different means. Running a t-test in R Studio will produce the means for each sample and show if the differences are statistically significant. This is the ideal statistical analysis for this thesis because it both shows the proportion of attacks that displays the characteristics I'm looking for and how it differs between IS and non-IS groups.

2.7 Potential Limitations

There are numerous limitations to this study, both big and small. The main limitation is the reported data. As this thesis uses ACLED data to determine variation in characteristics, only

terrorist attacks reported to ACLED are considered. If a terrorist conducts an attack and it is not listed by ACLED, it is missing from my analysis. Due to the restraints typically associated with a college-level thesis, it was not possible for me to create my own database of terrorist attacks, making ACLED data the only feasible way to conduct this analysis. ACLED subjects their data to rigorous verification and peer review standards, making it one of the most reliable databases on political violence. While underreporting is a possibility, ACLED data is the best information available on this topic.

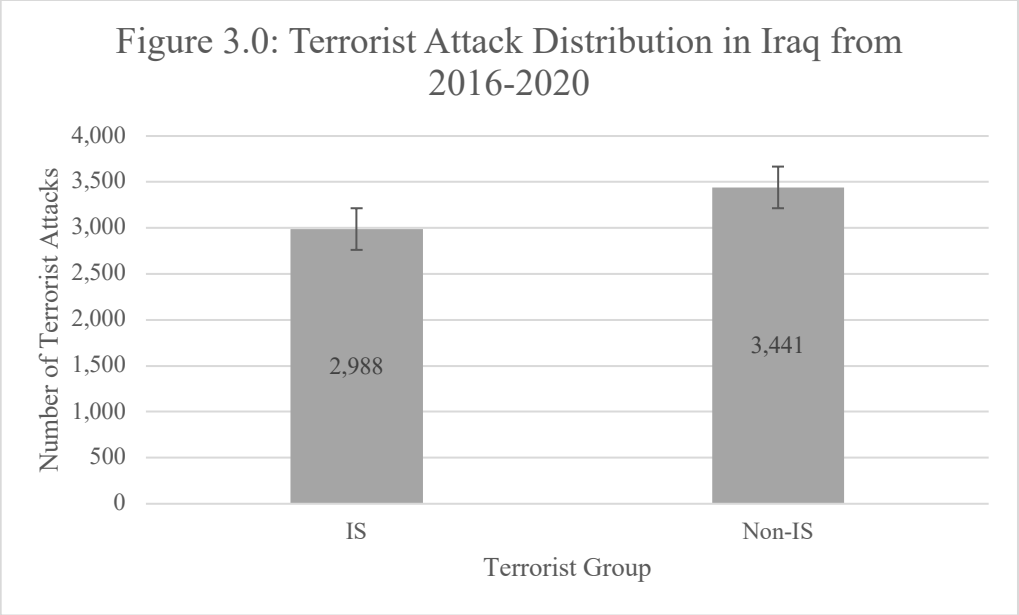
An additional limitation is the applicability of findings beyond IS and Iraq. As this thesis only studies terrorism in Iraq, it is unclear from quantitative or qualitative analysis alone if these findings are applicable to terrorists operating outside of Iraq. Further analysis is required before findings can be applied beyond Iraq.

3.0 Results

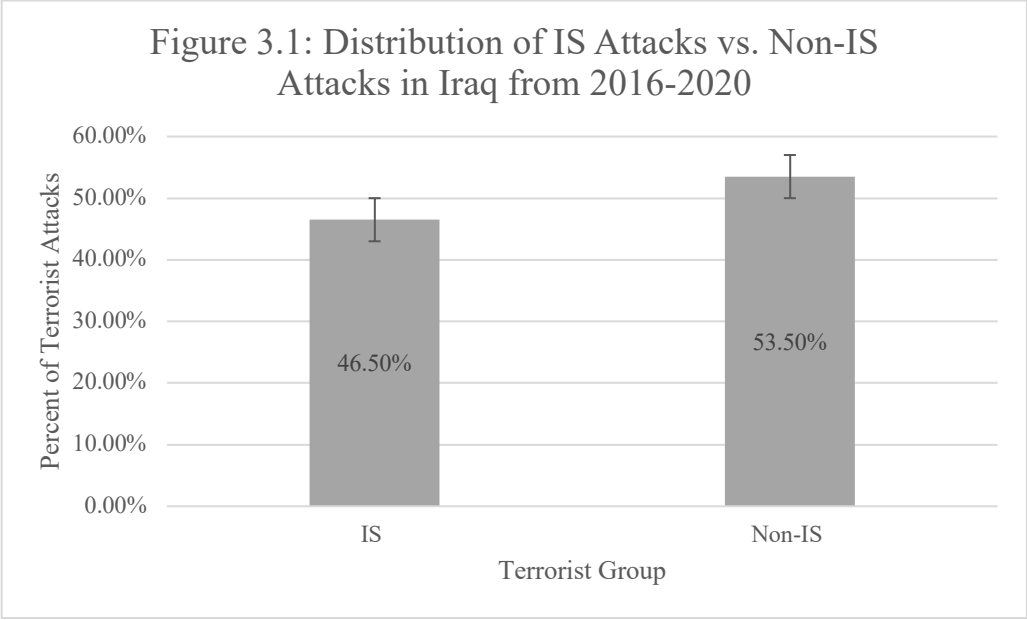
3.1 IS or Other

As the attack being conducted by IS or a non-IS terrorist is the independent variable, this characteristic was primarily used to sort results and variation. It also provides basic information on the terrorist scene in Iraq. Between January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2020, Iraq experienced a total of 6,429 terrorist attacks.[109]

[109] Replication data can be found here: Sorensen, Anya, 2022, "Replication Data for: Anya Sorensen's Thesis: All Terrorist Attacks in Iraq from 2016-2020", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/X1LXVZ, Harvard Dataverse, V1

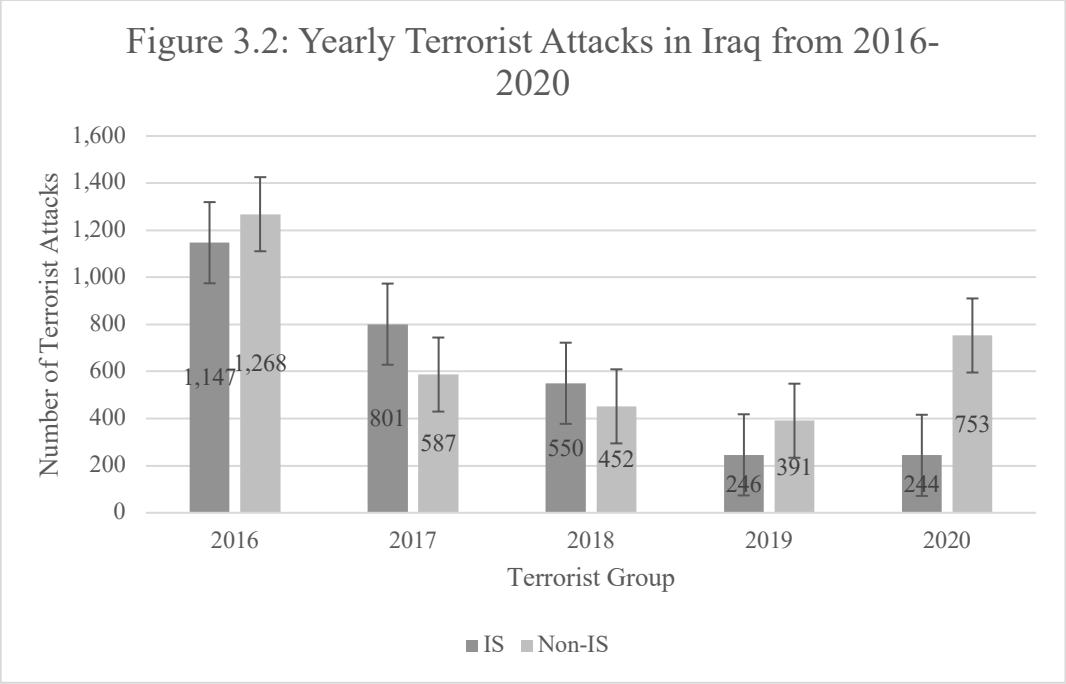


These 6,429 terrorist attacks can be divided into 2,988 IS terrorist attacks and 3,441 non-IS terrorist attacks. Non-IS terrorist attacks include attacks by known and unknown groups that were not IS.



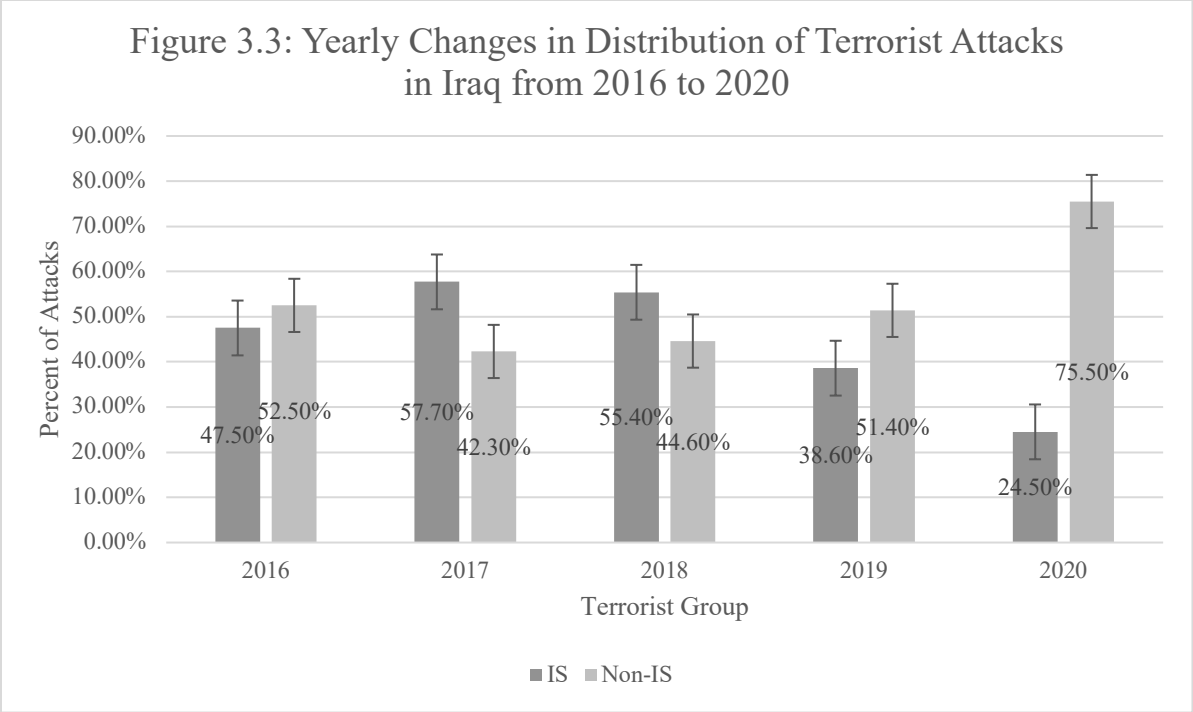
This means that about 46.5% of terrorist attacks were conducted by IS and the remaining 53.5% were conducted by non-IS terrorists.

Attacks can also be broken down by years.



In 2016, there were 1,147 IS attacks in Iraq and 1,268 non-IS attacks. In 2017, IS attacks decreased to 801, while non-IS attacks plummeted even further, to 587. In 2018, IS attacks further dropped to 550 with non-IS attacks dropping as well, to 442. In 2019, there were only 246 IS attacks and 391 non-IS attacks. Finally, in 2020, IS attacks remained at a low rate, at 244, with non-IS terrorism resurging to 753.

This fluctuation in attack numbers also caused variation within the percentage of attacks IS and non-IS could claim each year in Iraq.



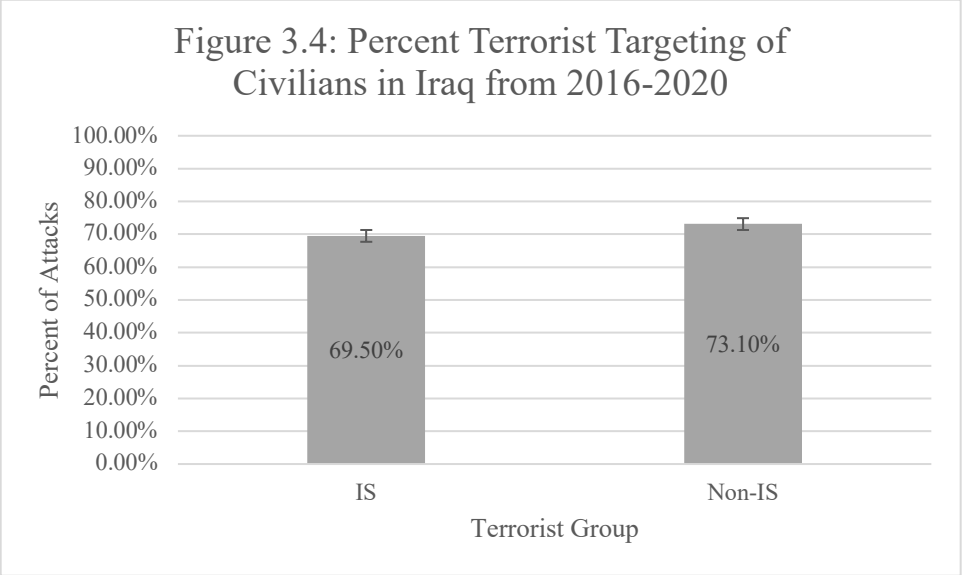
In 2016, IS was responsible for 47.5% of attacks, and the non-IS baseline of terrorism responsible for the remaining 52.5%. IS's share increased to 57.7% in 2017, with the non-IS baseline of terrorism's share dropping to 42.3%. In 2018, IS terrorist attacks decreased to 55.4% of the total, with the non-IS baseline of terrorism claiming the remaining 44.6% of attacks. IS terrorism witnessed a sharp decline in 2019, dropping to 38.6% of terrorist attacks in Iraq. Non-IS terrorism increased, comprising 51.4% of terrorist attacks in 2019. Finally, in 2020, IS terrorism reached its lowest proportion of Iraq's terrorism. IS terrorists claimed only 24.5% of attacks, compared to the non-IS baseline of terrorism, which claimed 75.5% of attacks.

Overall, there were slightly more terrorist attacks conducted by the non-IS baseline of terrorism than IS. However, in 2017 and 2018, IS did claim more terrorist attacks in Iraq than non-IS terrorism. The beginning of the analyzed period also witnessed substantially more IS terrorist attacks than the end, a trend that non-IS largely followed, although it did appear to make a resurgence at the end.

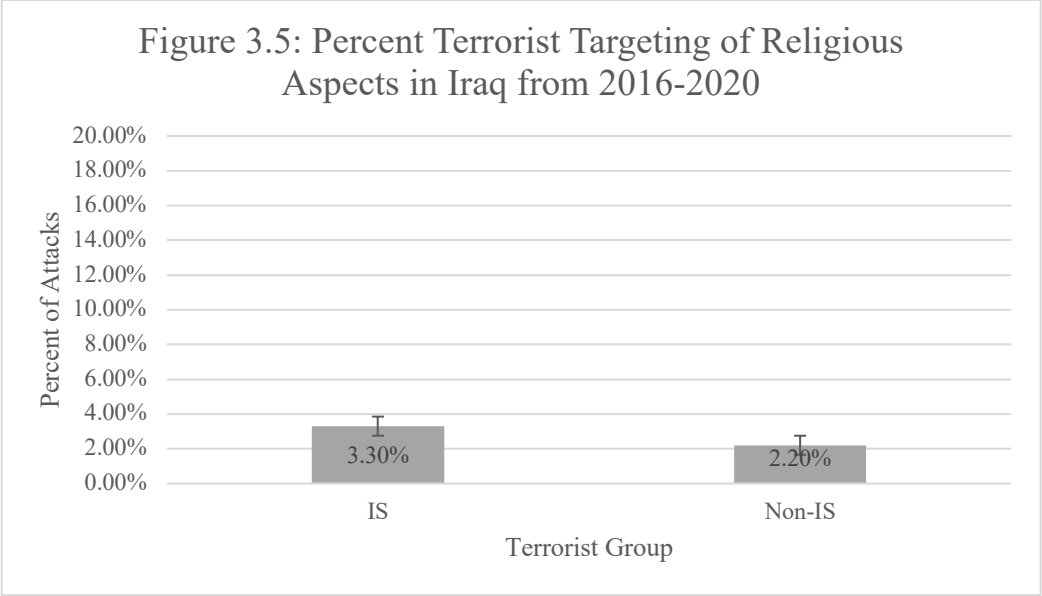
Although not directly related to any of the hypotheses, these findings provide important information on IS and the general scene of terrorism in Iraq. Although just one group, IS was able to almost dominate terrorism in Iraq in the first few years of the studied period, before seriously declining. While strong initially, IS weakened substantially over time.

3.2.0 Target Type

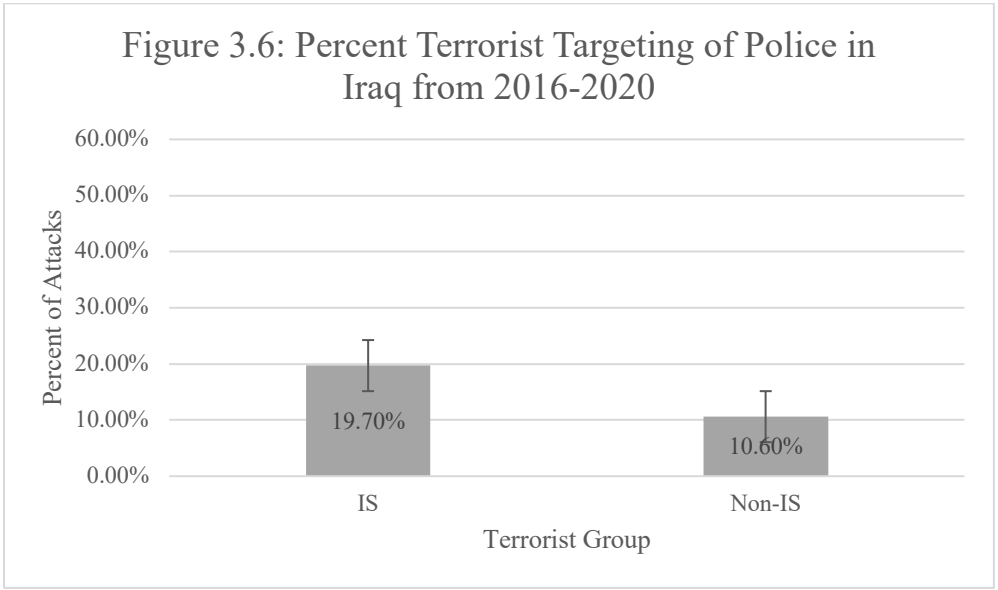
Analysis of most variables resulted in statistically significant findings, although many of the differences were relatively small between IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism.



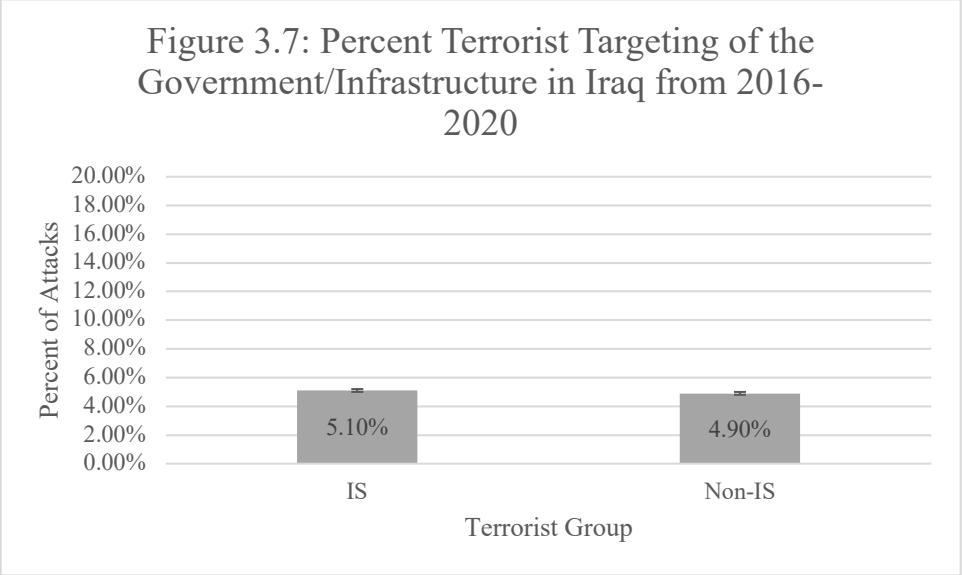
Civilians were targeted at a slightly higher rate by non-IS groups than by IS. The mean for this characteristic for IS was 0.695, compared to 0.731 for the non-IS baseline of terrorism, a finding that was statistically significant. This finding means that approximately 69.5% of IS attacks target or incur civilian casualties, compared to 73.1% of non-IS attacks, a difference of about 3.6%.



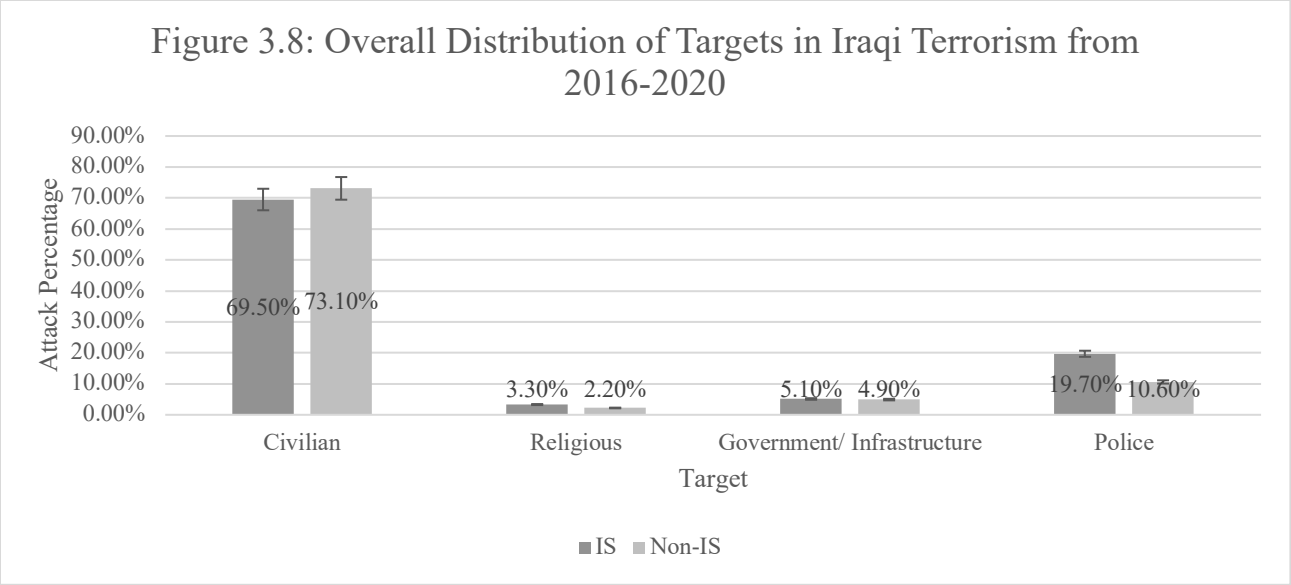
IS attacked religious targets at a rate very slightly above that of the non-IS baseline of terrorism. The mean for IS was 0.033, compared to 0.022 for the non-IS baseline of terrorism. In other words, 3.3% of IS attacks have a religious element, compared to 2.2% of non-IS terrorist attacks—a difference of 1.1%. While these numbers are very small, they are statistically significant.



IS also targets the police at higher rates than non-IS. The mean for IS was 0.197, reflecting that about 19.7% of their attacks target the police, while the mean for non-IS terrorists was 0.106, reflecting that about 10.6% of their attacks target the police. This difference of about 9.1% was statistically significant.



IS and non-IS terrorists appear to target the government/infrastructure at roughly the same rates, as there were no statistically significant findings. The mean for IS was 0.051, reflecting that 5.1% of their attacks involve the government and infrastructure, while the mean for non-IS was 0.049, reflecting that 4.9% of their attacks involve the government and infrastructure, which was a difference of only 0.2%.



While there are some differences, IS and non-IS targets appear very similar. Civilians make up IS's largest target, with the police falling in second place, the government/infrastructure occupying third place, and religious targets occupying the lowest priority. Just like with IS, the non-IS baseline of terrorism focuses its attacks on civilians, and then targets police, the government/infrastructure, and religious objects in descending order of priority.

3.2.1 Implications for Theories

Each theory made a series of predictions about the target type they expect to see and these findings either rejected or provided mixed support for the theories. Provocation theory expected a high targeting of the government, much higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism due to its emphasis of goading a government into repressive action. As IS appeared to have a low targeting of the government/infrastructure that was not significantly different from the non-IS baseline of terrorism, these findings do not support provocation theory.

Religious theory anticipated a high rate of attacks on religious targets, one much higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism for the group to 'purify' the population. IS did display

slightly more attacks on religious targets than the non-IS, but this was at a very small rate (1.1%). Additionally, religious elements were targeted at the lowest rate. This combination does not support religious theory.

Insurgency theory and religious-insurgency theory both anticipated a high targeting of the government/infrastructure and the police at rates higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism. IS did not target the government/infrastructure at a high rate nor at a rate higher than the non-IS baseline, however, it did target the police at a high rate that was significantly larger than the non-IS baseline, which provides mixed support for both theories. These two theories differ on their expectations of civilian targeting. Insurgency theory anticipates a low level of civilian targeting, as insurgencies need civilian support to thrive, but religious-insurgency theory expects a high rate of civilian targeting but one that is slightly lower than the non-IS baseline of terrorism. IS did target civilians at a high rate, but one slightly lower than the non-IS baseline of terrorism in a way that was statistically significant, which does not support insurgency theory but supports religious-insurgency theory. As a result, findings on target type can be said to offer low mixed support for insurgency theory and high mixed support for religious-insurgency theory.

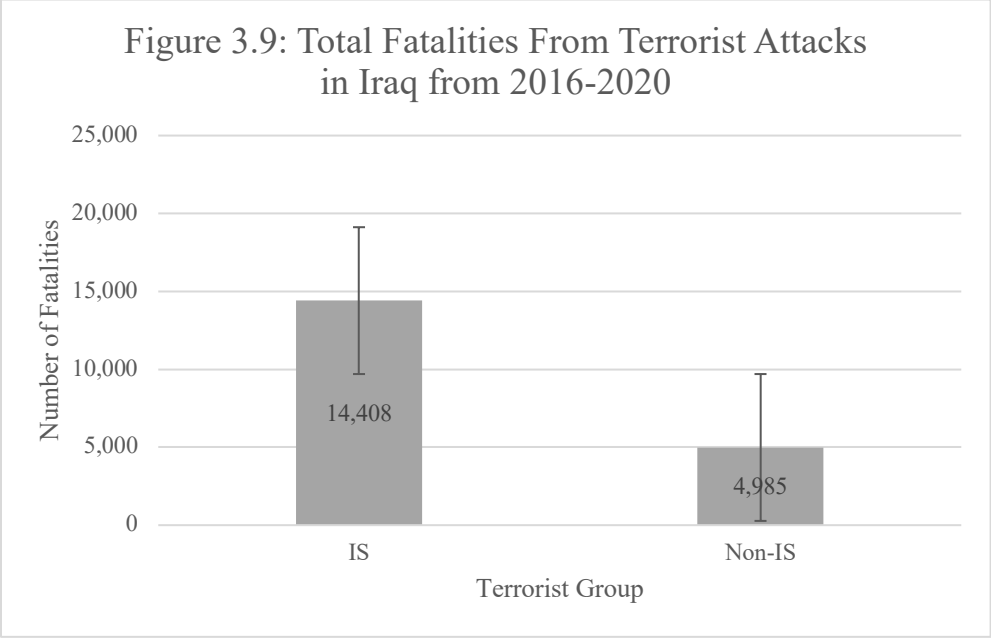
Table 3.0: Target Type Implications for Theories

Theory	Expectation	Finding
Provocation	High rate of government targeting above baseline	Not supported
Religious	High rate of religious targeting above baseline	Not supported
Insurgency	High rate of government/infrastructure and police targeting above baseline; low targeting of civilians much lower than baseline	Low mixed

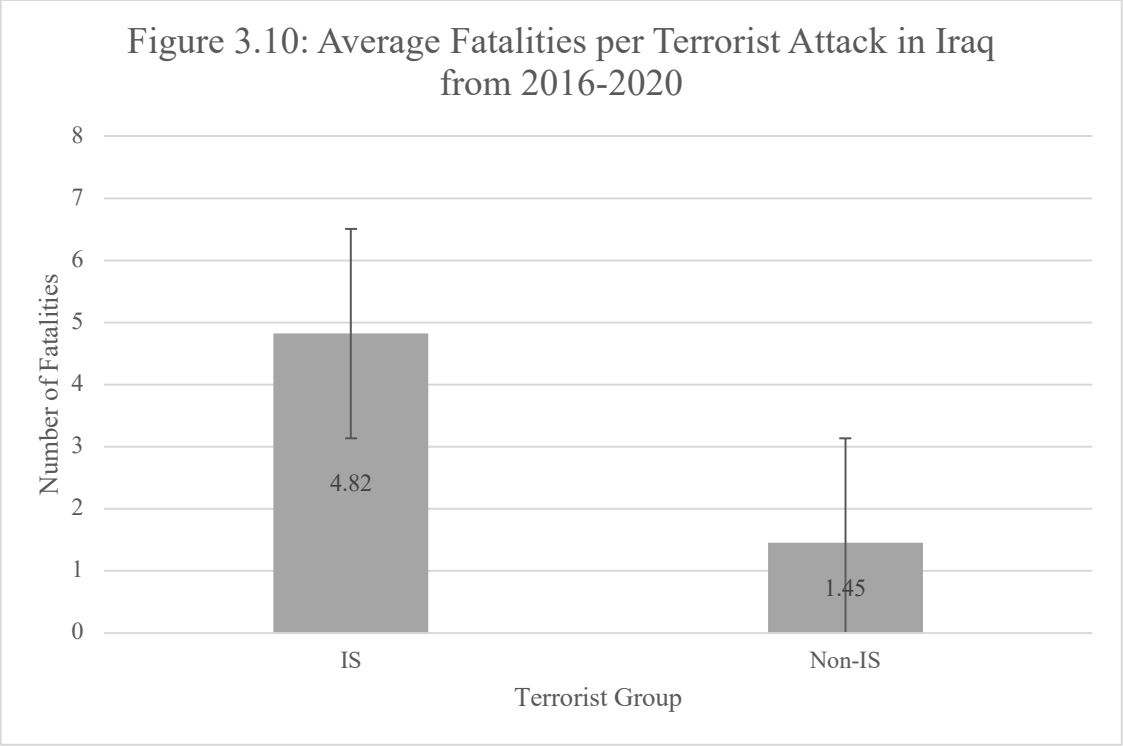
Religious-Insurgency	High rate of government/infrastructure and police targeting above baseline; high targeting of civilians slightly lower than baseline	Stronger mixed

3.3 Fatalities

Analysis of fatalities revealed that IS attacks overall killed more people in Iraq throughout the period and have a higher average fatalities per attack.

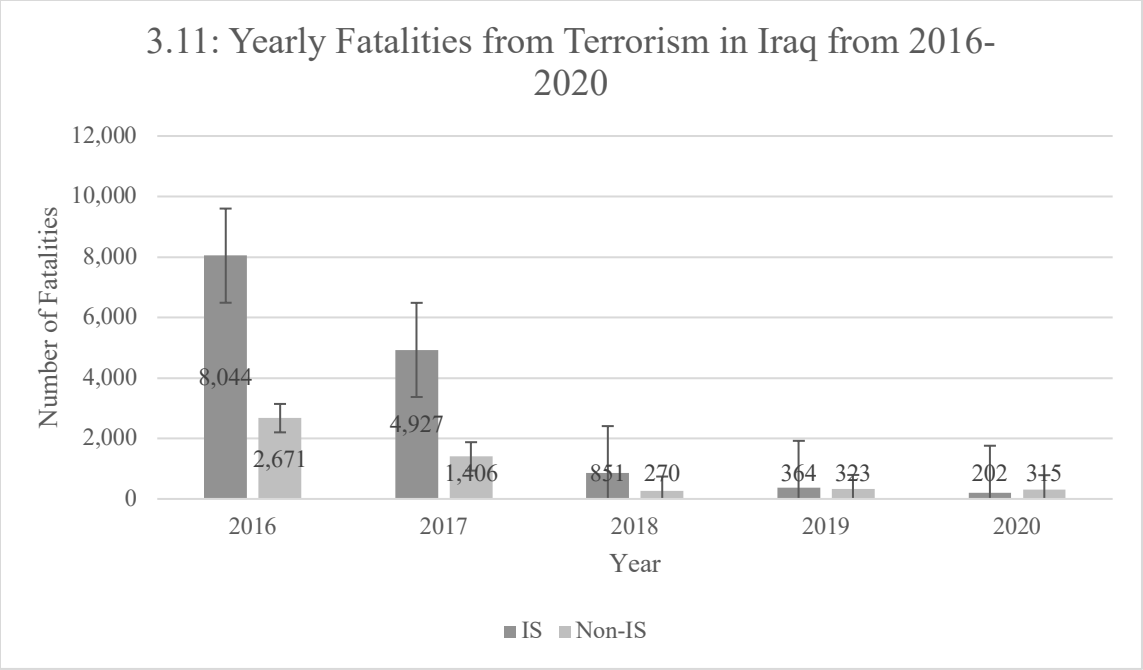


From 2016 to 2020, IS attacks killed 14,408 people in Iraq, compared to 4,985 people by the non-IS baseline of terrorism.



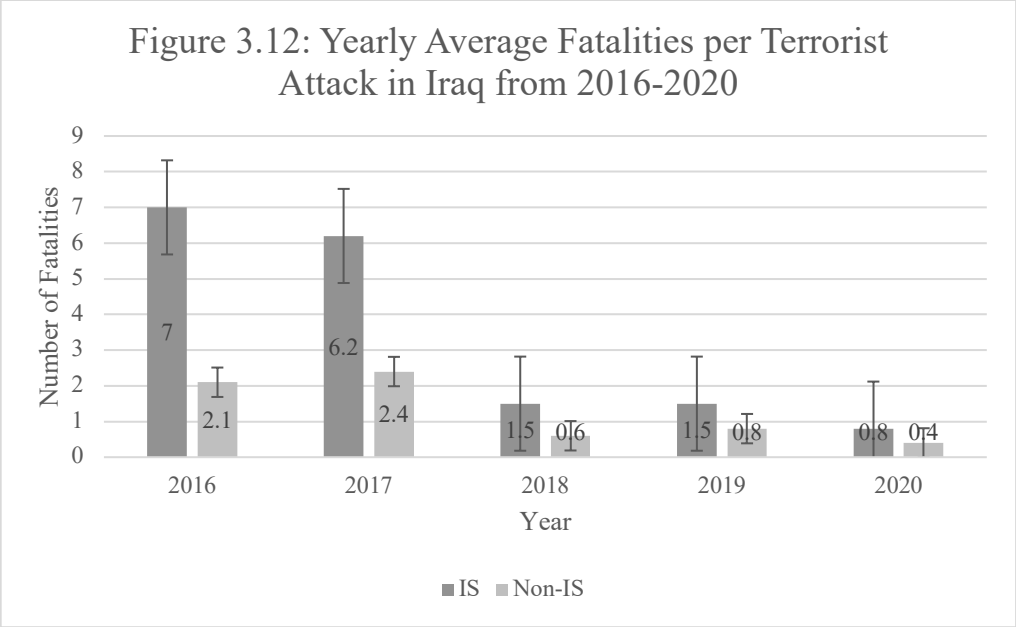
When looking at average fatalities per terrorist attack in Iraq between 2016 to 2017, the average fatality count came in at 2.73. When broken down into groups, the average IS attack kills 4.82 individuals, while the average non-IS terrorist attack killed 1.45 individuals. This difference was statistically significant. Additionally, IS attacks had a broader range of fatalities, with attacks incurring anywhere from 0 to 298 fatalities, compared to the non-IS baseline of terrorism, with attacks ranging from 0-78 fatalities.

Further analysis reveals substantial variation in the number of fatalities over time, especially for IS.



Time illustrates a clear decrease in IS fatalities as they appear to be the highest in the introductory period and decrease substantially over time. In 2016, IS incurred 8,044 fatalities, which decreased to 4,927 in 2017, 851 in 2018, 364 in 2019, and 202 in 2020. The non-IS baseline of terrorism appears to decline in the beginning as well. In 2016, the non-IS baseline had 2,671 fatalities, which decreased to 1,406 fatalities in 2017 and then to 270 in 2018. Following this, however, non-IS terrorism made a slight resurgence, increasing to 323 fatalities in 2019 and 315 fatalities in 2020.

Average fatalities per attack followed a similar pattern.



In 2016, IS attacks incurred an average of 7 fatalities per attack, which decreased to 6.2 in 2017, 1.5 in 2018, 1.5 in 2019, and 0.8 in 2020. Non-IS fatalities per attack were 2.1 in 2016. They then increased to 2.4 in 2017, decreased to 0.6 in 2018, increased to 0.8 in 2019, and decreased to 0.4 in 2020. The differences in average fatalities per attack between IS and the non-IS baseline were statistically significant.

3.3.1 Implications for Theories

Each theory expected to see a different level of fatalities. The findings did not support provocation theory and insurgency theory but supported both religious and religious-insurgency theory. Firstly, provocation theory expected to see overall low fatalities as they would be specific and targeted against individuals designed to drive the most oppressive reactionary response, although individual attacks may have high fatalities. IS fatalities were overall significantly higher than the non-IS baseline, rejecting provocation theory. Insurgency theory also expected overall low fatalities that are higher in the introductory period but low following it as

insurgencies must keep their fatalities low to maximize support. While IS fatalities were higher in the introductory period and decreased as time progressed, fatalities were high throughout the entire period, and, thus, did not support insurgency theory.

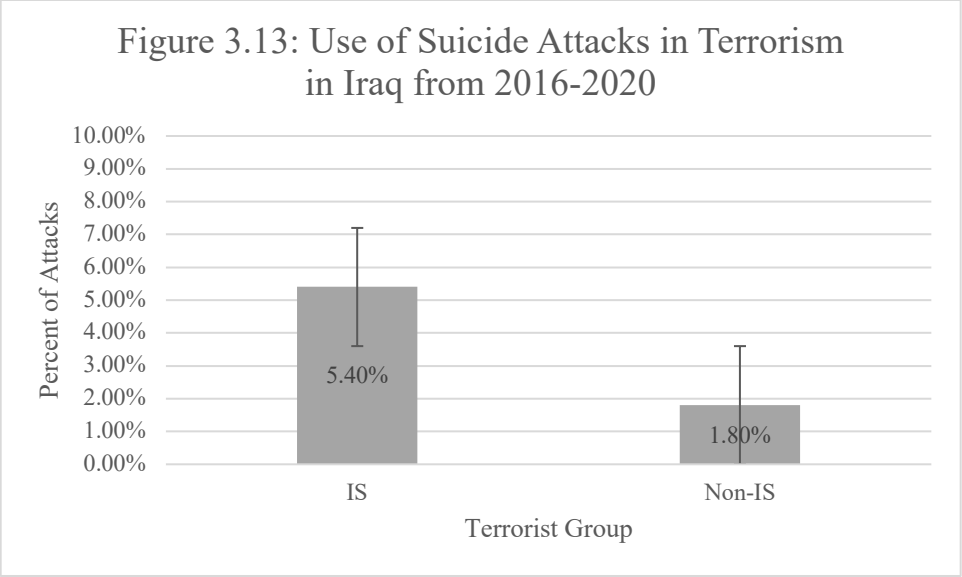
Religious and religious-insurgency theory both anticipated high fatalities due to the religious elements that demand religious purification through executions. IS did have high fatalities overall, supporting both theories. In addition, religious-insurgency theory expected fatalities to be highest in the introductory period and then decline over time as reflective of a prolonged conflict, which it did, further supporting religious-insurgency theory.

Table 3.1: Fatalities Implications for Theories

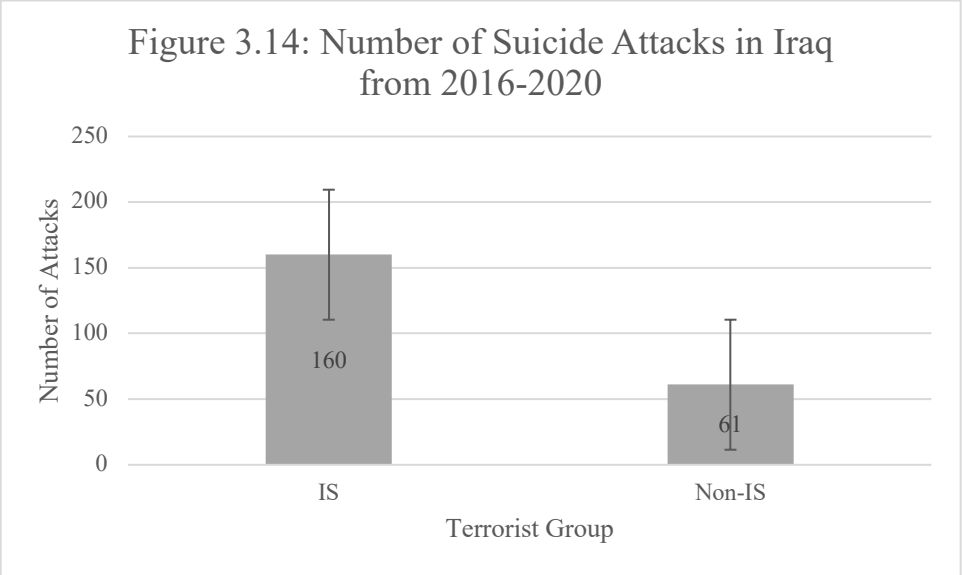
Theory	Expectation	Finding
Provocation	Low—specific and targeted	Not supported
Religious	High	Supported
Insurgency	Low; high introductory period and low following	Not supported
Religious-Insurgency	High; high introductory period and lower following	Supported

3.4 Suicide Attacks

IS attacks use suicide tactics more often than non-IS attacks in a way that is statistically significant.



The mean for IS attacks is 0.054, which means that about 5.4% of IS attacks use suicide techniques, while the mean for non-IS attacks is 0.018, which means about 1.8% of non-IS attacks use suicide tactics.



The number of attacks using suicide techniques is also substantially higher for IS than for the non-IS baseline. Suicide tactics were used in IS attacks 160 times, compared to 61 times for the non-IS baseline.

Overall, IS used more suicide attacks than non-IS, giving IS a higher percent use of suicide attacks.

3.4.1 Implications for Theories

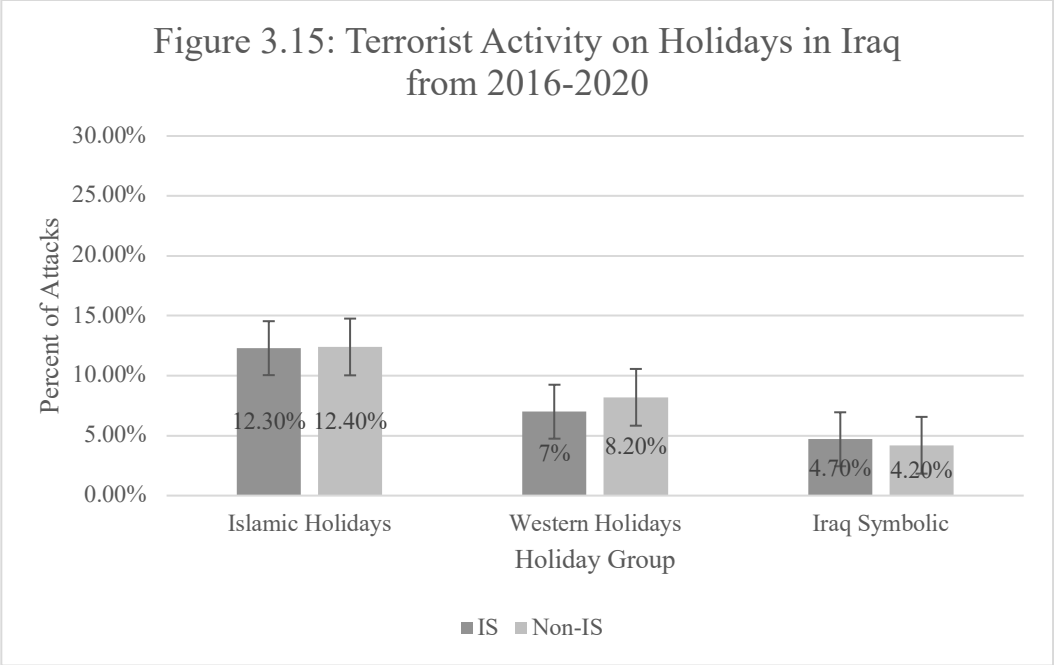
The expectations made by each theory for suicide attacks are less concrete than for other theories. Provocation theory does not make a prediction about the rate of suicide attacks because although this strategy would typically anticipate more spectacular attacks, these attacks don't necessarily have to come in the form of suicide attacks. Insurgency theory expects a high rate of suicide attacks due to the commitment it garners from followers, and religious theory expects a higher rate of suicide attacks due to ideas of martyrdom, which are both supported by these findings. Religious-insurgency theory also expects the highest rate of suicide attacks due to a combination of high commitments and ideas of martyrdom, which is also supported.

Table 3.2: Suicide Attack Implications for Theories

Theory	Expectation	Finding
Provocation	No prediction	N/A
Religious	Highest use	Supported
Insurgency	High use	Supported
Religious-Insurgency	Highest use	Supported

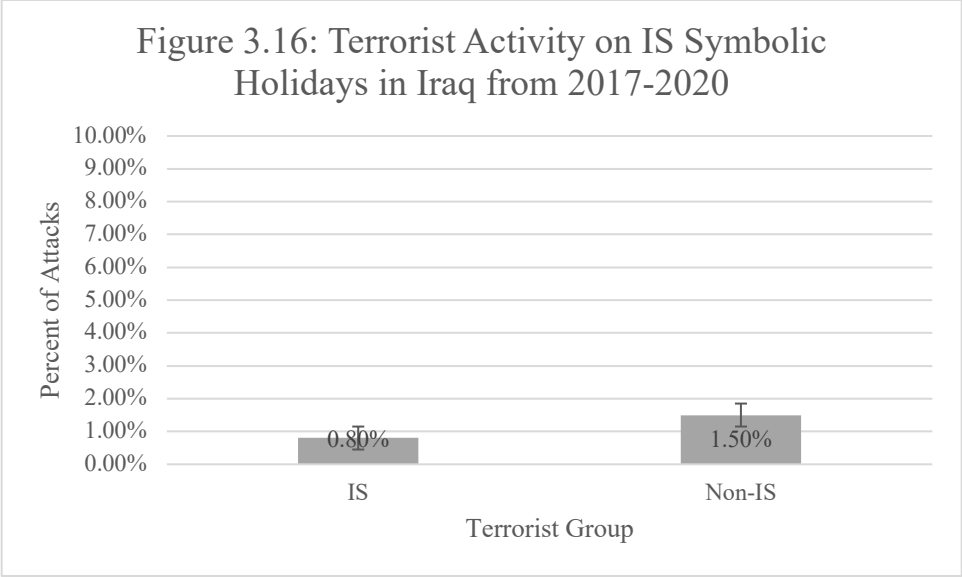
3.5 Holidays

Three of the variables—Islamic, western, and Iraq symbolic holidays—returned no statistically significant trends.



For Islamic holidays, the mean of IS activity was 0.123, compared to 0.124 for non-IS. For Western holidays, the mean of IS activity was 0.070, compared to 0.082 for non-IS. For Iraq symbolic holidays, the mean of IS activity was 0.047, compared to 0.042 for non-IS. This means that 12.3%% of IS activity and 12.4% of non-IS activity fell on Islamic holidays, 7% of IS activity and 8.2% of non-IS activity fell on Western holidays, and 4.7% of IS activity and 4.2% of non-IS activity fell on Iraq symbolic holidays. All these findings were very close, reflected low activity rates, and were not statistically significant.

One variable, IS symbolic holidays (the defeat of IS on December 10), did return statistically significant findings.



Non-IS terrorists committed more attacks within a three-day period before and after the official defeat of IS than IS did. The mean for non-IS was 0.015 and the mean for IS was 0.007697456. This means that 1.5% of non-IS activity and 0.8% of IS activity fell on IS symbolic holidays. This difference was statistically significant, although the numbers do reflect overall low activity on these days. It is possible that this reflects the original defeat of IS.

Overall, the level of activity on specific groups of holidays appears to be largely the same between IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism.

3.5.1 Implications for Theories

Due to the statistical insignificance of these findings and the minute difference between the finding that is statistically significant, the findings for this characteristic do not support any theory.

Table 3.3: Holiday Implications for Theories

Theory	Expectation	Finding
Provocation	Higher on Islamic or Iraq symbolic holidays	Not supported

Religious	Lower around Islamic holidays	Not supported
Insurgency	N/A	N/A
Religious-Insurgency	Lower around Islamic holidays, higher around Iraq and IS symbolic holidays	Not supported

3.5 Summarized Implications for Theories

Overall, the quantitative analysis provides an important glimpse into IS's differences from the non-IS baseline of terrorism and, as a result, IS's connections to different theories. Firstly, the findings reveal no support for provocation theory, which expected that IS would target the government, have low overall fatalities, and have increased attacks around Islamic holidays or Iraq symbolic holidays. Analysis of IS activity did not support any of these predictions, rejecting provocation theory entirely as IS's strategy.

The findings reveal limited support for religious theory. Religious theory expected IS would have a higher targeting of religious targets, higher fatalities, higher use of suicide attacks, and should decrease in activity on Islamic holidays. While IS did have higher fatalities and a higher use of suicide attacks, IS targeted religious elements at the lowest rate of all its targets and did not decrease its activity on Islamic holidays. Target type is one of the more important characteristics, and religious theory completely failed to accurately predict this characteristic.

Insurgency theory also appeared to have limited support. This theory expected a higher targeting of the government/infrastructure and police, lower overall fatalities, and a high use of suicide attacks. While IS did target the police at a higher rate and did illustrate a high use of suicide attacks, it did not target the government/infrastructure at a higher rate and did not have low fatalities. IS did have higher fatalities in the introductory period that decreased overtime, as

expected by insurgency theory. Fatalities are the other more important characteristic, next to target type, and insurgency theory largely fails to accurately predict it.

While religious-insurgency theory doesn't get everything right, it does the best job of explaining IS strategy. Religious-insurgency theory expected that IS would target the government/infrastructure and the police at higher rates, have high fatalities that are higher in the beginning and then decrease overtime, a higher use of suicide attacks, and decreased activity around Islamic holidays but higher activity around Iraq and IS symbolic holidays. IS did not target the government/infrastructure at higher rates and its activity did not reflect expectations, but it did target the police at a higher rate, had higher fatalities that decreased following an introductory period, and had a higher use of suicide attacks. This is the best prediction, leading the quantitative analysis to provide the most support to my hypothesized theory.

Table 3.4: Summarized Support for Theories

Theory	Target Type	Fatalities	Suicide Attacks	Holidays	OVERALL
Provocation	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported	N/A	0/3: Rejected
Religious	Not supported	Supported	Supported	Not supported	2/4: Mixed support
Insurgency	Half supported	Not supported	Supported	N/A	1.5/3: Mixed support
Religious-Insurgency	Half supported	Supported	Supported	Not supported	2.5/4 Most support

4.0 Other Interesting Findings

I examined two additional characteristics beyond the ones mentioned above, violence against women and attacks against IS. While these do not relate to the theories analyzed in this

thesis, they do provide interesting insight on the activities of IS. This section will cover these findings, as well as additional information on suicide attacks not relevant to my hypotheses.

4.1 Violence Against Women

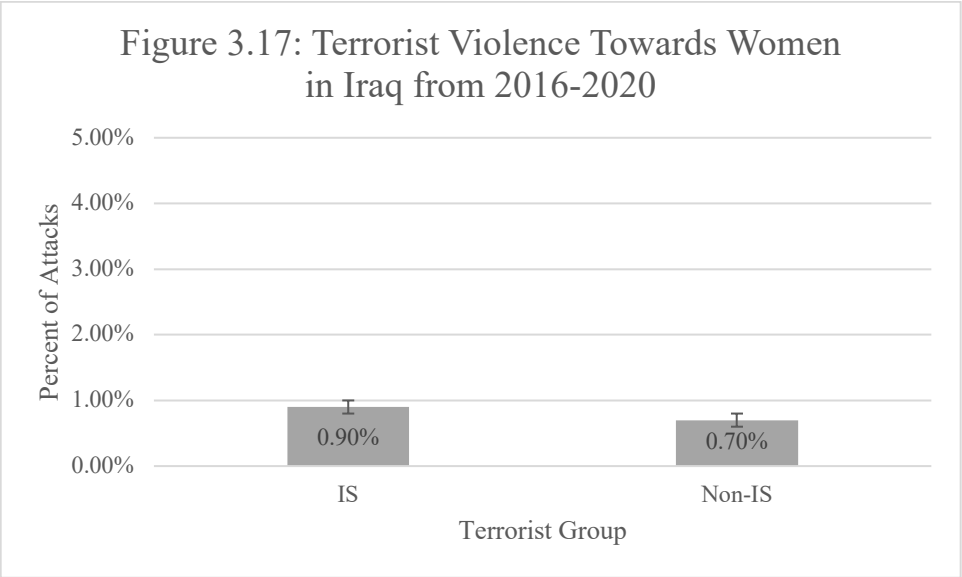
IS's violent nature towards women tends to be relatively well documented. Common comments on IS in relationship to its treatment of women include "[t]he disturbing way the Islamic State justifies raping and enslaving women," "Islamic State says it is buying and selling Yazidi women, using them as concubines," and "[r]eport: The Islamic State puts price tags on women, literally, and sells them."[110] Despite these headlines and reports, there are little to no quantitative analyses of IS violence towards women, making investigating the group's violence towards women necessary. While describing IS as kind to women is likely a stretch, how violent towards women is the group?

To answer this question, I coded violence against women in a manner like the other characteristics. Attacks that specifically or predominately targeted women received a 1 in the violence against women category. This most commonly included kidnappings of women, killings of women who insulted IS members, or attacks on schools for girls. Attacks that did not target women or unintentionally resulted in the death of women—such as an attack on a family or on a marketplace—were coded as 0. The targeted women did not need to die to be included.

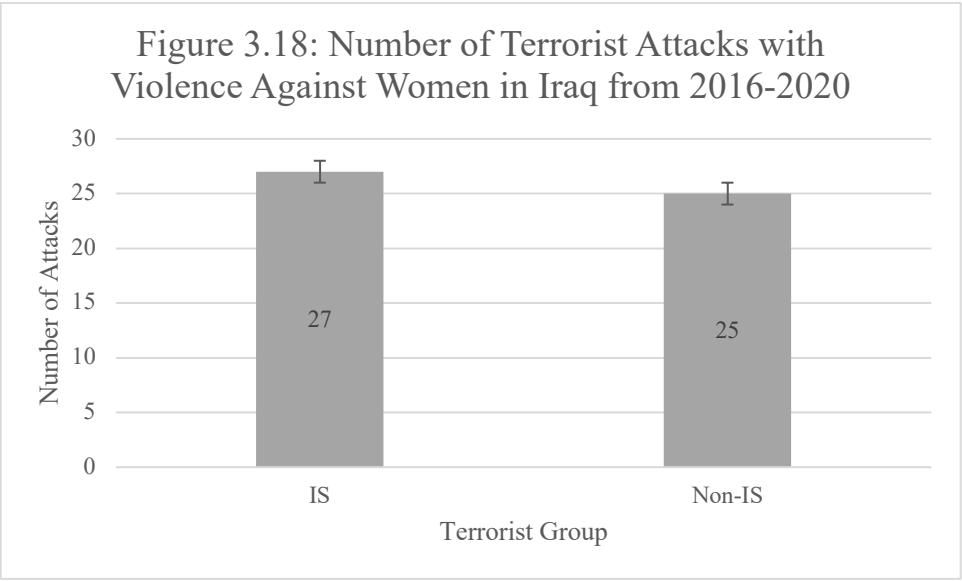
[110] Terrence McCoy. "The Disturbing Way the Islamic State Justifies Raping and Enslaving Women." The Washington Post. 13 October 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/10/13/the-disturbing-way-the-islamic-state-justifies-raping-and-enslaving-women/) (24 April 2022); Loveday Morris. "Islamic State Says it is Buying and Selling Yazidi women, Using Them as Concubines." The Washington Post. 12 October 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-says-it-is-buying-and-selling-yazidi-women-using-them-as-concubines/2014/10/12/d904756d-10ab-47b9-889c-d3b00343470f_story.html) (24 April 2022); Gail Sullivan. "Report: The Islamic State Puts Price Tags on Women, Literally, and Sells Them." The Washington Post. 3 October 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/10/03/report-the-islamic-state-puts-price-tags-on-women-literally-and-sells-them/) (24 April 2022)

4.1.1 Analysis

First analysis reveals that broadly, IS does not target women in a manner different from non-IS groups that is statistically significant.

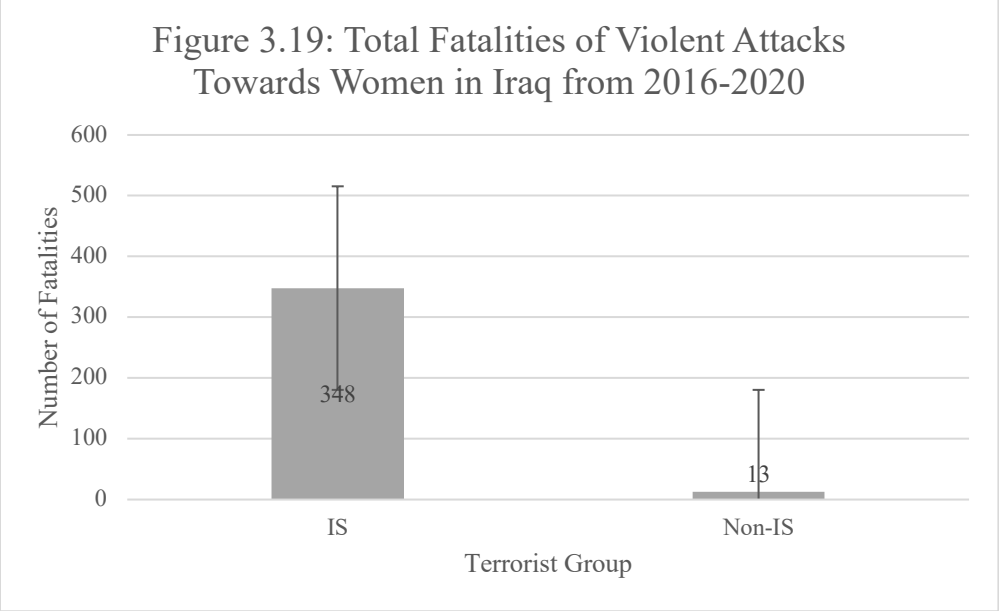


Both groups appear to have low levels of violence against women, with IS attacks targeting women at a rate of 0.009, or roughly 0.9%, compared to the non-IS baseline of 0.007, or roughly 0.7%. This finding was not statistically significant and reflects a very low rate of violence towards women in the terrorist attacks themselves.



This low rate of violence towards women is further reflected in the actual number of attacks that target women. From 2016 to 2020, IS carried out 27 attacks on women, while the non-IS baseline carried out 25 attacks.

Although the numbers of attacks against women were very similar, IS's attacks had substantially higher fatalities.



IS's total 27 attacks against women resulted in 358 deaths, while non-IS terrorist attacks on women claimed 13 deaths. These fatality counts mean that IS attacks towards women tend to incur an average of 12.9 fatalities while non-IS attacks towards women result in 0.5 fatalities each, although this difference was not statistically significant. When broken down into years, differences in the average fatalities per attack were still not statistically significant. IS may not be more violent towards women, but it may be more lethal towards women. Greater analysis, however, is required to draw this conclusion.

Overall, there was no statistically significant difference in the category of violence against women between IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism. Both IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism had roughly the same number of violent attacks against women, although IS's

attacks did result in substantially higher fatalities. While more analysis is required to determine the reasons behind this and the implications, this does suggest that IS's violent actions towards women do not tend to be present in their actual terrorist attacks.

4.2 Violence Against IS

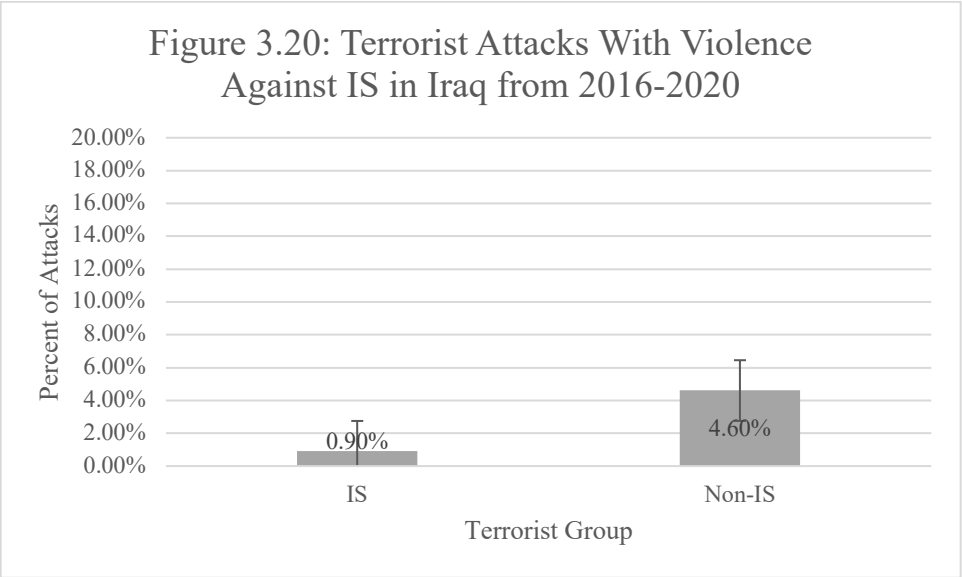
Like with the violence against women characteristic, attacks against IS is an untraditional characteristic to analyze. I selected this characteristic to compare the level of infighting in IS to the level of competition with IS. In other words, this characteristic studies how competition in IS compares to outside competition with IS. Commentary on IS suggests that IS suffers from a crippling level of infighting, with headlines reading "[r]eport says 120 Islamic State fighters executed — by Islamic State" and "Islamic State appears to be fraying from within."[111] By analyzing this characteristic, I look to see if IS really suffers from disastrous infighting, or if it's has been exaggerated. While greater analysis on this characteristic would be needed to draw definitive conclusions, a high level of infighting in IS may suggest a self-destructive nature that future counterterrorism endeavors should exploit.

Binary variables were also coded for violence against IS. Attacks targeting IS members regardless of if the attack was conducted by other IS members or not, were coded as 1. Attacks that did not kill or target IS members received a 0. As the number of IS attacks are roughly equivalent to non-IS attacks, this characteristic will reveal the degree of infighting present within IS and how it compares to competition among terrorist groups.

[111] Adam Taylor. "Report Says 120 Islamic State Fighters Executed — By Islamic State." The Washington Post. 29 December 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/12/29/report-says-120-islamic-state-fighters-executed-by-islamic-state/) (24 April 2022); Liz Sly. "Islamic State Appears to Be Fraying from Within." The Washington Post. 8 March 2015. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-islamic-state-is-fraying-from-within/2015/03/08/0003a2e0-c276-11e4-a188-8e4971d37a8d_story.html) (24 April 2022)

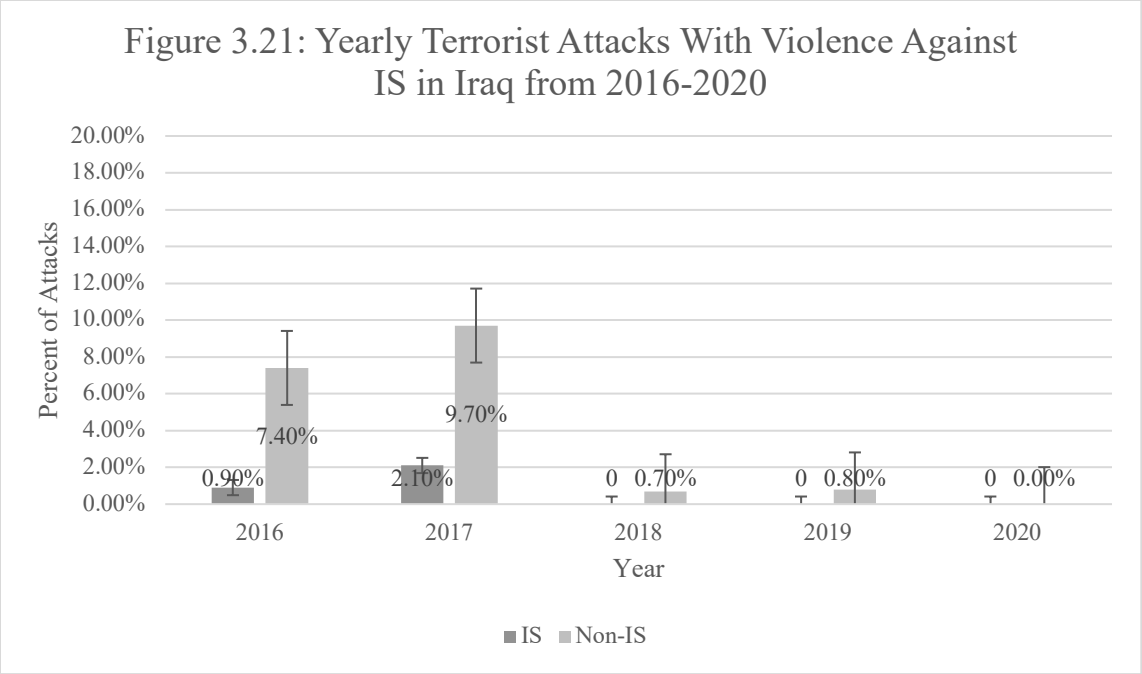
4.2.1 Analysis

Analysis reveals that non-IS terrorists more frequently attack IS members than IS.



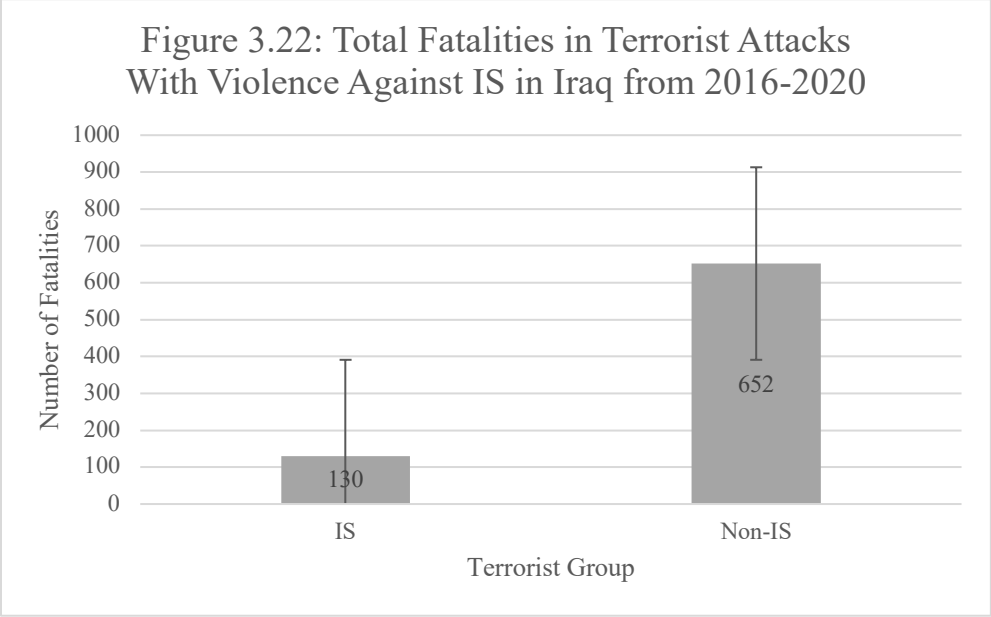
Non-IS terrorists more frequently attack IS members than IS. The mean for non-IS attacks is 0.046, compared to a mean of 0.009 for IS. This means that 0.9% of IS attacks target other IS members, compared to 4.6% of non-IS attacks. This was statistically significant and signifies a greater level of competition among IS and other terrorist groups than infighting within IS.

Deeper analysis reflects fluctuations in IS targeting across the years.



In 2016, the mean of IS violence against IS was 0.009, compared to 0.074 for non-IS violence against IS. In 2017, IS's mean of violence against IS was 0.021, compared to 0.097 for non-IS. In 2018, IS's violence against IS dropped to 0 and non-IS dropped to 0.007. In 2019, IS continued to report no incidents of violence against other IS members, and non-IS violence against IS rose slightly to 0.008. Both IS and non-IS reported no incidents of violence against IS in 2020. This means that in 2016, 0.9% of IS attacks were directed towards other IS members, compared to 7.4% of non-IS attacks. 2017 saw 2.1% of IS attacks directed towards other IS members, compared to 9.7% of non-IS attacks. In 2018, 0.7% of non-IS attacks targeted IS members, but no IS attacks did and in 2019, 0.8% of non-IS attacks targeted IS. No attacks in 2020 targeted IS. The findings for 2016 and 2017 were statistically significant, but the findings for the following years were not. The sharpest decrease in IS activity can be seen from 2017 to 2018, which coincides with the highest period of non-IS violence against IS, which may suggest that non-IS terrorist competition with IS contributed to IS's decline, although more information is necessary on this.

In addition to having higher rates of violence against IS, non-IS's violence against IS incurred higher fatalities.



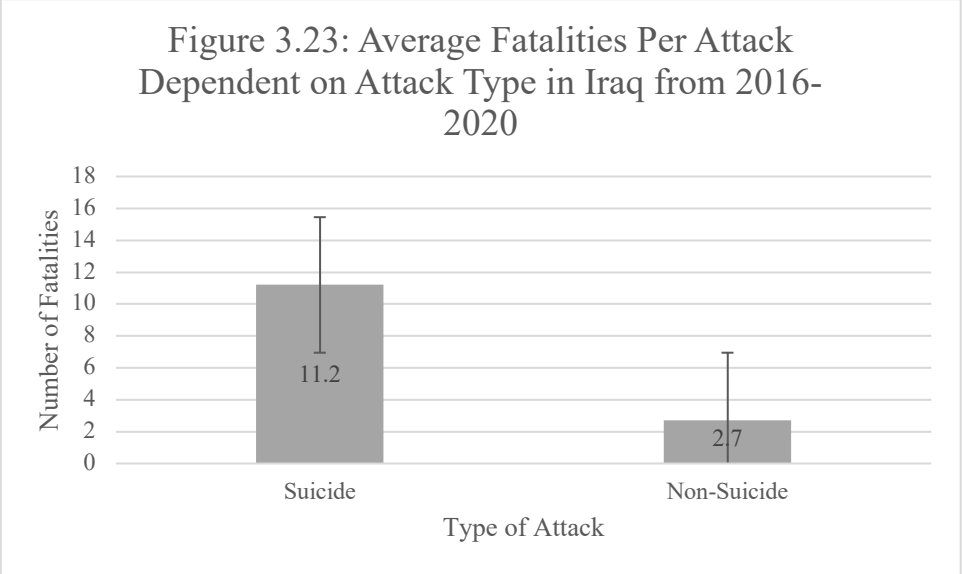
Infighting in IS resulted in the deaths of 130 IS members, while the non-IS violence towards IS resulted in the deaths of 652 IS members. These deaths were likely due to more frequent attacks by non-IS terrorism, as their attacks against IS members tended to incur similar numbers of fatalities.

Although commentary may suggest that IS has a high rate of infighting, the competition between it and other groups is substantially higher. Other terrorists are more of a threat to IS than IS is to itself.

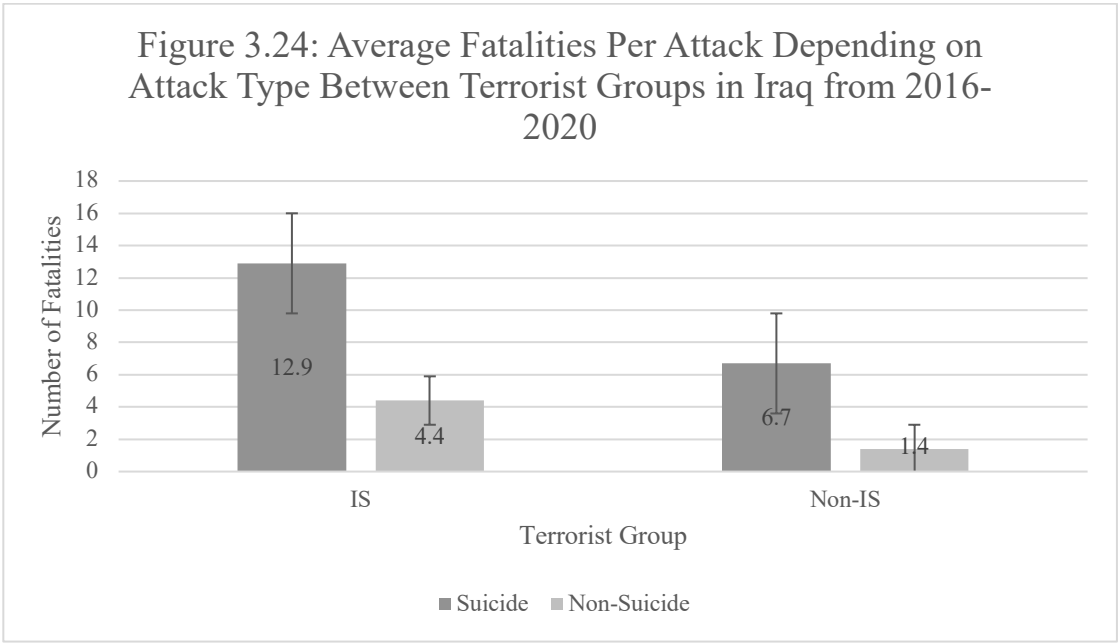
4.2 Suicide Attacks

Part of the findings on suicide attacks—that IS uses a higher rate of suicide attacks than the non-IS baseline ties into my hypothesis and the expectations of theories. However, there were additional findings on suicide attacks that are interesting and not relevant to my hypotheses.

The first pertains to the lethality of suicide attacks. Suicide attacks tend to be more lethal than non-suicide attacks.



When not differentiating between different terrorist groups, suicide attacks incur an average of 11.2 fatalities per attack, compared to 2.7 for non-suicide attacks. This difference was statistically significant.



IS terrorist attacks that used suicide tactics had an average of 12.9 fatalities per attack, compared to 4.4 for their non-suicide attacks. Non-IS terrorist attacks incurred an average of 6.7 fatalities when they implemented suicide tactics and 1.4 fatalities when they did not. These differences were statistically significant.

These findings suggest a clear advantage in suicide attacks for groups trying to maximize the lethality of their attacks. Even for groups that are less lethal on average, such as the non-IS terrorist groups, suicide tactics were able to provide a significant increase in fatalities. Suicide attacks also appear to provide an edge to already highly lethal groups, offering IS almost double the fatalities per attack.

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: WHAT MAKES THE ISLAMIC STATE DIFFERENT?

1.0 Overview

In this thesis, I analyze patterns of Islamic State (IS) terrorism in Iraq from 2016 to 2020 and compare them to the non-IS baseline of terrorism to reveal IS's strategy of terrorism. A statistical comparison of IS attacks to the baseline of terrorism in Iraq (all other attacks by other groups and individuals) in the preceding chapter revealed that IS differed frequently from the baseline of terrorism. When compared to the non-IS baseline of terrorism, IS targeted the police at a higher rate and civilians at a slightly lower rate, incurred substantially more fatalities, and used suicide attacks at a higher rate. These findings rejected provocation theory as IS's strategy of terrorism, provided some support for both religious and insurgency theory, and offered the strongest support for religious-insurgency theory. In this chapter, I explore how qualitative findings on IS activity continue to support religious-insurgency theory and then explain the circumstances that led to deviations from the theory. This chapter also features many qualitative hypotheses that may at times diverge from the more quantitative ones that this thesis has primarily focused on in past chapters.

2.0 Target Type

Much like the preceding hypotheses about target type, a terrorist organization implementing a religious-insurgency strategy of terrorism would be expected to target the government/infrastructure and the police at higher rates than other groups and slightly reduce civilian attacks. I also anticipate that while IS may attack religious elements targets slightly more than the non-IS baseline, that they will be the lowest target type because they offer little strategic

value to the group in the primary goal of accumulating territory for its caliphate. While IS does not appear to attack the government/infrastructure at high rates, it does illustrate a clear focus on the police and reducing some civilian casualties, although civilian casualties still play a large role, and attacks religious targets. This subsection first explores IS's targeting of the police, civilians, and religious elements, before diving into potential explanations behind its low targeting of government/infrastructure.

2.1 Police

Religious-insurgency theory would anticipate higher police targeting due to IS's insurgency side. Insurgencies typically target state security apparatuses at high rates, whether it be the military and/or police forces to force governmental concessions. In the case of IS, they want the Iraqi (and Syrian) governments to concede rule of the territory to establish their caliphate in the region. The higher the targeting of security forces, the more IS hopes to be able to make security give up. Sanchez-Cuenca (2007) found similar patterns of targeting of security forces in other instances of insurgency terrorism. He specifically studied two cases of insurgency terrorism, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA), where the groups were carrying out attacks to assert their independence.[112] In these two cases, the groups targeted security institutions at high rates—40.1% for the IRA and 47.2% for the ETA—with exact rates of targeting the police and the military dependent on the roles of the police and/or military in these cases dependent on their exact involvement in anti-terrorism endeavors.[113] While the rate at which IS targets the police (19.7%) is substantially lower than 40%, this could be driven by several different factors related to differences between this study

[112] Sanchez-Cuenca. 2007.
[113] Ibid.

and mine in determining target type or the role of police and military in Iraqi counterterrorism. Security forces can reduce a group's ability to operate within a region, making it necessary for an insurgency to target them substantially and a logical expectation of a group following a religious-insurgency strategy.

2.1.1 IS Soldiers Harvest Campaign

This insurgent drive to kill security forces is most evident in IS's "Soldiers Harvest" campaign, which it launched in 2018 to intimidate and attack security forces.[114] IS modeled it after Al Qaeda's Soldiers Harvest campaign, leading many scholars to refer to it as "Soldiers Harvest II."[115] Unless otherwise specified, I will be referring to the IS campaign. There were two legs of this campaign, the first from July 2018 to May 2019 and the second from May 2019 to the present.[116] IS carried out dozens of brutal attacks on police as part of this campaign, such as one on May 26th, 2018, when four police officers were killed by two IS IEDs east of Salahuddin.[117] Another attack in Samarra on October 22nd, 2019, left seven police officers dead.[118] Dozens of other attacks in these campaigns mirrored the two mentioned, and demonstrate a clear focus in attacking the police.

An important note regarding this campaign is that as part of "security forces," IS did attack a substantial number of soldiers from the Syrian Democratic Forces, the Iraqi army, the Assad Syrian regime, the Popular Mobilization Forces, the Tribal Mobilization Forces, and the

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[114] Robert Collins. "Inside the Rise of ISIS." PBS. 7 August 2014. (https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/inside-the-rise-of-isis/) (22 April 2022).
[115] Jennifer Cafarella, Brandon Wallace, and Jason Zhou. "ISIS's Second Comeback." Institute for the Study of War. June 2019 (https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISW%20Report%20-%20ISIS's%20Second%20Comeback%20-%20June%202019.pdf) (22 April 2022)
[116] Ibid.
[117] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 6229082
[118] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 7097499

US army, among a few others. These attacks, however, do not qualify as terrorist attacks due to my definition of terrorism, which excludes violence against combatants to avoid the inclusion of civil war data. If attacks against armies were included in my definition of terrorism, it's likely that the data would reflect high soldier fatalities associated with this campaign as well.

In IS's Soldiers Harvest campaigns, IS aims to cripple the security institutions that are tasked with countering their rise.[119] They do this through targeted assassinations of military and police members—assassinations are easier and require less planning and fewer people.[120] Targeted killings of security members have allowed IS to create "micro-terror-sanctuaries" from where they can better plan and launch attacks.[121] In addition to targeted assassinations, as part of this campaign, IS also collects intelligence on security forces, such as their home addresses and family information, which IS uses to intimidate them into taking action believed to be more conducive to IS interests, such as surrendering or refraining from policing certain areas.[122] Many scholars believe that IS's taking of Mosul appears to have been facilitated by this strategy.[123] To create a security vacuum that IS hoped to exploit to surge, IS targeted security members at higher rates than the baseline of terrorism.

2.1.2 Non-IS Campaigns

IS has launched clear, notable campaigns aimed at killing security officials, which includes police officers. While other terrorist organizations definitely kill police officers in Iraq,

[119] "Intel Brief: The Islamic State Tries to Return to 2013." The Soufan Center. 6 July 2018. (https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-the-islamic-state-tries-to-return-to-2013/) (22 April 2022).
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Collins. 2014.
[123] Ibid.

they lack the same drive to do so, evident in the lack of other campaigns directed at security forces.

There is one other campaign known to have been directed at security forces. Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) launched the first Soldier's Harvest in 2013, where just like the following IS campaign, they targeted Iraqi security forces.[124] While this did occur, this campaign falls before 2016 and is thus, outside the scope of this analysis. Additionally, AQI evolved into IS, making this not a campaign from a truly distinct other group. There are no known campaigns within the time analyzed in the thesis specifically targeting security forces other than IS's campaigns, which makes IS's targeting of police a clear deviation from the norm that provides strong support for religious-insurgency theory.

2.2 Civilians

Religious-insurgency theory would expect a terrorist organization to have a slightly lower targeting of civilians than groups adhering to other strategies of terrorism but a still high rate of civilian targeting due to its religious drive to purify a religion. IS does appear at times to temper its killing of civilians and illustrates a clear drive to kill individuals it perceives as infidels, which provides strong support for religious-insurgency theory.

2.2.1 Religious Ideology

This religious drive for purification can be seen in IS views of individuals. IS identifies a clear in-group and out-group and believes the out-group—infidels—should be cleansed from the general population. These beliefs are rooted in the concepts of "*wala wal bara*", undying loyalty

[124] Cafarella, Wallace, and Zhou. 2019.

to Islam and the rejection of un-Islamic ways, and "*tawhid*", God's oneness.[125] In addition, IS is a proponent of the Qutbi idea that a conversion back to true Islam must be violent and forceful, as the Muslim world has deviated so much that it cannot revert voluntarily.[126] These ideas are dangerous, and deeply ingrained in IS members during their religious training.

The first part of IS training is religious, where individuals are instructed on *tawhid, bida'a,* and *wala wal bara,* and the understanding that "the foundation of this religion is a book that guides and a sword that brings victory."[127] IS followers are expected to fully embody these ideas and can be recalled from the battlefield or where they're stationed if suspected of wavering on any of these tenets. Even after IS members have been captured and imprisoned for their actions or IS family members have been moved to refugee prison camps, individuals still express belief in the caliphate and IS's teachings.

As a result of these beliefs and IS member commitments to these beliefs, IS takes a relatively harsh stance on individuals it believes to be "infidels." When IS takes over an area, former followers explain, the IS stance is that "you are either with us or not," and those deemed to be against the group were denied all basic necessities, including food.[128] Often, IS's treatment of people it perceived as not true believers of Islam were just killed. IS actively practices takfiri, or excommunication, and labels anyone that does not believe or support IS ideology a *murtad* (apostate), *infidel,* or *kafir* (unbeliever), categories worthy of death.[129] Individuals of these categories are allowed the *tawbah* (repentance) process, but if they do not, they are killed.[130]

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[125] Hassan. 2016.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Hassan. 2015.
[128] Anne Speckhard and Ahmet Yayla. "Eyewitness Accounts from Recent Defectors from Islamic State: Why They Joined, What They Saw, Why They Quit." Perspectives on Terrorism 9. no. 6 (2015): 95-118
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.

Cultivating the support of individuals who don't adhere to IS ideology would violate the group's religious tenets.

IS does recognize that it needs some civilians, resulting in a very slightly lower targeting of civilians. It does this through scare tactics used to force adherence to its religious ideology. Civilians living in populations conquered by IS know they have two choices—submit to the group or face certain death. Stories of life under IS, such as in the Raqqa Diaries rule reflect this. Although written regarding life under IS in Syria, it's also applicable to IS operations in Iraq. One account in the broadcast series recounts an instance of observing executions:

> While I am lost in thought, some people behind me start peeling away, desperate to leave this awful scene without being noticed. But this is very risky. Daesh is determined to ensure that we all watch the killings before us.
>
> I heard the name of one of my neighbours being called out over the speakers. Somehow, I couldn't stop myself going over. His decapitated head was on the ground. I couldn't stand up; my legs just wouldn't hold me. I can't get this image out of my mind.
>
> As I walked down the road, cursing out loud, a group of Isis religious police rushed over and grabbed me. They took me to their headquarters. I tried to reason with them, but it was no use. "You were cursing out loud. Your punishment is 40 lashes." Without any mercy or humanity, a man lashed me. I could see in his eyes that he took pride in this.[131]

Other accounts reflect similar levels of fear. Naser, who fled om Qayyarah, Iraq, recounts,

> I left because of ISIS. They were very cruel. You had to obey their rules. If they even saw a finger of a woman showing, they would threaten violence. If you resisted in any way, you would be killed. Two of my brothers were beaten for many hours after being accused of working with the Iraqi army. Anyone with a cell phone would be executed as a traitor.[132]

Individuals who could escape IS's brutality tried, but those who couldn't, knew their only other options were to accept it or die. IS ensured it was meeting its religious goals of killing infidels

[131] "The Raqqa Diaries: Life Under Isis Rule." The Guardian. 26 February 2017. (https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/feb/26/the-raqqa-diaries-life-under-isis-rule-samer-mike-thomson-syria) (22 April 2022)
[132] Paul Donahoe. "What Life is Like Under ISIS." International Rescue Committee. October 2016 (https://www.rescue.org/article/what-life-under-isis) (22 April 2022)

while slightly reducing their civilian targeting through scare tactics, which provides support for religious-insurgency theory.

4.2.3 Other Groups

The extreme religious nature of IS is unique and cannot be seen in other groups. The non-IS baseline of terrorism is comprised of groups that adhere to multiple different theories of terrorism and are not all a combination of religious and insurgnecy theories. Some are not religious at all, and many that are religious are less extreme in their views and practices than IS.

While religion can be a motive that leads some to terrorism, it tends to not play that large of a role. In a poll of Arabs in the Middle East, when asked about the best way to defeat extremism, countering extremist interpretations of Islam came only in 7th place, illustrating that extreme religious interpretations are not believed to be the biggest driver of terrorism.[133] There are other factors at play and correcting people's interpretations of Islam won't be the most effective method to reduce rates of terrorism when not the main force.

Even when religion is often thought of as being a driver for a particular group, like Al Qaeda, interpretations tend to be less extreme than in IS. Religious ideology, especially as it pertains to the harming of Muslim civilians was one of the main drivers in the split between IS and Al Qaeda. IS started as Al Qaeda in Iraq, but this alliance was destined to fail as Al Qaeda was focused on targeting the 'far enemy', the United States, who it believed was responsible for the world's corruption, while IS wanted to focus more on the 'near enemy', local repressive regimes, apostate Shias, and Sunnis who collaborated with Shias.[134] Al Qaeda didn't believe in

[133] Anthony Cordesman. "Islam and the Patterns in Terrorism and Violent Extremism." Center for Strategic and International Studies. 17 October 2017 (https://www.csis.org/analysis/islam-and-patterns-terrorism-and-violent-extremism) (22 April 2022)
[134] Byman and Williams. 2015.

attacking Muslims, as they were at least practicing the religion and they believed doing so would tarnish people's images of jihad, but IS (still operating as AQI) thought it was necessary to cleanse Islam and rid the region of oppressive regimes.[135] Killing large swaths of civilians and stoking sectarian conflict may be contrary to tenets of an insurgency, but IS's desire to purify Islam overcame this to a substantial degree, a level of extreme religious adherence that other terrorist organizations have not demonstrated on the same scale, supporting religious-insurgency theory.

As a result of this lack of religiosity, other terrorist groups tend to target civilians for other reasons. For many, the civilians that are most frequently attacked are those believed to be allied with the enemy; civilians who support the terrorist group are typically left unharmed.[136] In places like Iraq, that are plagued by sectarian divides, however, almost everyone is an enemy of at least one terrorist group, evidenced by high and often indiscriminate civilian targeting.

In addition to attacking civilians due to their affiliation with enemy groups, terrorist organizations also attack civilians regardless of their affiliations. This may occur due to terrorist competition, known in this case as outbidding.[137] When more than one terrorist organization is active in a certain area or on a certain topic, they will inevitably end up competing for support and dominance.[138] This competition often turns violent, with big attacks used to convince the public to support or fear the group more.[139] Even when groups are not competing with each other, they may attack civilian populations indiscriminately, not differentiating between allies

[135] Ibid.
[136] Jeff Goodwin. "Terrorism" in Edwin Amenta, Kate Nash, and Alan Scott. The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology. (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2012). 190-203.
[137] Kydd and Walter. 2006.
[138] Kydd and Walter. 2006.
[139] Ibid.

and enemies, as big, dramatic attacks raise a lot of publicity for the group.[140] Areas where people feel at ease and that regularly attract large numbers of people are typically the most enticing spots for terrorists, and result in high numbers of civilian causalities.

Attacking civilians is a normal activity of a terrorist organization, especially for those that do not seek to control a population or territory. These terrorist groups are not insurgencies and thus don't need to cultivate civilian support to survive. IS doesn't have this luxury, as reflected in a slight tempering of civilian targeting, although protecting civilians opposes IS's religious motives driving it to kill individuals that don't adhere to its ideology. IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism attack civilians for very different reasons, with IS's religious killing of infidels and slight insurgent tempering of civilian attacks compared to the non-IS baseline's relative indiscriminate civilian attacks offering support to religious-insurgency theory.

4.3 Religious

Religious-insurgency theory expected that while IS may attack religious targets at a rate slightly above the non-IS baseline of terrorism, religious targets will have the lowest rate of any target because they offer little strategic value in the establishment of a territorial caliphate. This expectation is reflected qualitatively because although IS is a deeply religious organization, their attacks do not reflect this.

This is not to say that IS does not conduct religious attacks—it does. There are numerous examples, like on October 16th, 2016, when an IS suicide bomber blew himself up at a Shia gathering to commemorate the death of Imam Hussein in Baghdad, killing five civilians.[141] In

[140] Hannah Ritchie et al.. "Terrorism." Our World in Data. July 2013. (https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism#citation) (22 April 2022).
[141] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 7501528

another religious attack, on August 23rd, 2019, IS planted an IED next to a Shia mosque in Northern Babylon province, killing four individuals.[142] It does carry out religious attacks, especially against Shias and religious minorities, but it does not prioritize these attacks.

Instead, IS appears to prioritize its religiosity in its relationships with recruits and governance. Each recruit to IS goes through in-depth religious training, learning about IS teachings and unlearning tenets of Islam that IS disagrees with. Religious elements did influence the way IS ruled over its members and the territories it controlled, collecting jizya—a special tax from non-Muslims discussed in the Quran—implementing sharia, and forcing many conversions.[143] Religious attacks do not seem to be IS's main priority.

An analysis of IS's largest attacks, which typically require more planning and resources further reflect this. IS's largest attack took place on July 2nd, 2016, when IS detonated a car bomb in Karada, Baghdad, resulting in the deaths of 293 civilians.[144] Other of its largest attacks included one on April 21st, 2016, when IS executed 200 women in Mosul; another two on November 2nd and 6th, 2016, when IS executed over 180 civilians each day.[145] IS's largest religious attack was on November 24th, 2016, when IS detonated a car bomb outside a gas station targeting Shia pilgrims, killing 80 civilians.[146] This attack ranked 19th overall in terms of fatalities, with most other targets incurring higher fatalities. Religious attacks occur but are clearly not IS's priority, supporting the expectation of religious-insurgency theory. First the group focuses on governmental and territorial accumulation, and then the more religious goals follow.

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[142] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 6029618
[143] Kelly Phillips Erb. "Islamic State Warns Christians: Convert, Pay Tax, Leave Or Die." Forbes. 19 July 2014 (https://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillipserb/2014/07/19/islamic-state-warns-christians-convert-pay-tax-leave-or-die/?sh=5b5083862c25) (22 April 2022)
[144] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 7501362
[145] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 6061723 and 5637687
[146] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 6228595

4.3.1 Non-IS Religious Attacks

Like with IS, terrorism in the Middle East is typically described as being more religious than it actually is. Muslims in the Middle East overwhelmingly reject extremist interpretations of Islam, with over 2/3rds of Middle Eastern Muslims claiming to be concerned about Islamic extremism, and over 3/4ths of most Middle Eastern Muslims (91% in Iraq) believing that suicide attacks in defense of Islam are never permissible.[147] Arab youth also largely reject IS core ideology, with 78% saying that they wouldn't support IS, even if they were less violent.[148] Islam is not an inherently violent religion and Muslims in the Middle East, including Iraq, disapprove of extremist interpretations of Islam and violence in the name of defending Islam.

There still are terrorist organizations in Iraq that are religious and carry out attacks that are religiously motivated. As these groups are combined with groups that are not religiously motivated in the non-IS baseline of terrorism, a low level of religiously targeted attacks is expected and reflective of a general low preference for religious attacks among terrorists in Iraq. While IS may be more extreme in terms of religiosity, its religious targeting matches that of the non-IS baseline.

4.4 Government/Infrastructure

Religious-insurgency theory expected that IS would have a high targeting of the government/infrastructure to weaken the government enough to force them to concede to IS and weaken services enough facilitate IS takeover. While there are numerous examples of IS attacks

[147] Anthony Cordesman. "Islam and the Patterns in Terrorism and Violent Extremism." Center for Strategic and International Studies. 17 October 2017 (https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/171017_Report_Islam%20and%20the%20-War_on_Terrorism_.pdf) (22 April 2022)
[148] Ibid.

on the government/infrastructure, such as on April 14th, 2019, when the group killed nine militiamen and village chiefs for cooperating with the Iraqi government, and on November 25th, 2017, when a government health employee was killed alongside two other civilians, quantitative analysis did not reveal government/infrastructure attacks to be a priority for IS.[149] The same has been found qualitatively. IS does not attack the government/infrastructure at high rates, but this is suspected to not be due to problems with the theory, but rather due to the weakness of the Iraqi government. This low targeting of the government/infrastructure due to governmental weakness can also be found in the non-IS baseline of terrorism.

4.4.1 Weakness of Iraqi Government

The Iraqi government prior to the surge of IS was weak, having barely recovered from the 2003 US invasion, and having dealt with years of poor governance and numerous costly and failed wars under Saddam Hussein. When combined with the withdrawal of US troops and growing sectarian conflict in Iraq, this created the perfect conditions for a quick and easy collapse of the Iraqi government.

When the US fully withdrew from Iraq in 2011, the Iraq it left behind was marginally better than under Saddam Hussein, but still rocked by poor, unstable governments, and massive sectarian divides.[150] The 2011 Arab Spring protests over corruption, unemployment, and poor governance didn't help, as government security divisions oppressively and violently cracked

[149] Raleigh et al.. 2010. ID: 7264293 and 5918977
[150] Mike Watson. "Is the U.S. Repeating the Error of the Iraq Withdrawal?" The Washington Street Journal. 16 December 2021. (https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-us-repeating-iraq-error-isis-surge-oil-prices-withdrawal-transition-asia-indo-pacific-pivot-11639688193) (22 April 2022)

down on protestors, fermenting increased dissatisfaction with the regime.[151] The government was weak and disliked.

The weakness of the government can be easily seen in how it responded to the incursion of IS. By 2014, IS had already conquered major cities in Iraq, including Fallujah and Al-Ramadi, and was easily taking others, like Mosul.[152] The government and security forces in these areas stood no chance against IS and gave up quickly.[153] The side of Iraq greatly outnumbered that of IS, but crumbled.[154] In the areas where IS was most concentrated, there was no real government to fight against.

The weakness and quick fall of the Iraqi government seemingly rendered government targets irrelevant, making their targeting of government targets lower than anticipated and closer to the non-IS baseline of terrorism, who also benefits from the Iraqi government being weak and unable to both effectively govern to prevent the proliferation of terrorist groups across its territory. It's also likely that if the government had been stronger, in addition to the IS targeting of the government being higher, that the non-IS baseline targeting of the government would be too. With a government as ineffective as Iraq's, there was genuinely likely no reason for IS or any terrorist group to prioritize attacks on the government/infrastructure.

4.4.2 Other Explanations for Low Government/Infrastructure Targeting

There are a few other potential explanations behind the low government/infrastructure targeting that suggest possible exceptions to this expectation. Beyond the weakness of the

[151] Laura Rostad and Rachel Peterson. "Iraq and the Arab Spring." Wilson Center. 8 June 2011 (https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/iraq-and-the-arab-spring) (22 April 2022)
[152] Sarhang Hamasaeed and Garrett Nada. "Iraq Timeline: Since the 2003 War." United States Institute of Peace. 29 May 2020 (https://www.usip.org/iraq-timeline-2003-war) (22 April 2022)
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

government, IS may have refrained from prioritizing attacks on the government/infrastructure due to the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). As the government forces failed to protect cities against IS, local civilian militias stepped up to defend the country, proving much more effective than the military.[155] Following the capture of Mosul by IS, the Iraqi government formally recognized many militias as the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).[156] Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, one of the most popular Shia clerics in Iraq, called upon all of his followers to join the PMF's fight against IS, leading to a surge in PMF membership.[157] The fight was now in the hands of civilians, not the government.

As the PMF is recognized and supported by the Iraqi government, attacks against the PMF do not meet the requirements of my definition of terrorism. Still, their role in combatting IS is important. As government forces were so weak, IS may have seen attacking civilians—who supported the PMF in all ways—as having more strategic value than attacking the government. By attacking civilians, IS may have hoped to cut off support to the PMF, their biggest threat. This would then lead to decreased frequency of government targets and increased frequency of civilian targets, a trend that IS attacks do display. Instead of fighting the government, like in a traditional insurgency, IS fights the non-government counterinsurgency.

There are other potential explanations, such as a disinterest in the government or difficultly in attacking the government/infrastructure. While the exact reason is unclear, these circumstances suggest that this low targeting of the government is likely due to circumstances in Iraq rather than issues with the theory. I would expect terrorists adhering to religious-insurgency

[155] Hamaseed and Nada. 2020
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.

theory in countries with stronger governments to demonstrate a higher rate of government/infrastructure targeting.

4.5 Section Summary

The qualitative analysis of IS behavior and its deviations from the non-IS baseline of terrorism continues to provide support for religious-insurgency theory. Religious-insurgency theory expected that IS would target the government/infrastructure and the police at a higher rate than the non-IS baseline of terrorism, civilians at a high rate but one slightly lower than the non-IS baseline, and religious elements at an overall low rate, although it may be slightly higher than the non-IS baseline. IS did illustrate a high commitment to targeting the police and other security forces. Its combination of the religious drive to purge the religion from infidels and ability to scare individuals into obedience to slightly temper its civilian targeting clearly results in a high targeting of civilians, although slightly lower than non-IS terrorists. Religious targets are not a priority for IS terrorists in terms of attacks—and they don't appear to be for non-IS terrorists either. Finally, extenuating circumstances in Iraq surrounding the weakness of the government appear to be prompting IS and the non-IS baseline's low targeting of the government, not issues with the expectation. In terms of target type, IS appears to truly be a religious-insurgency terrorist group.

5.0 Fatalities

Religious-insurgency theory expects that terrorists following this strategy will have high fatalities. This was supported in the quantitative analysis, which found that IS was significantly more lethal that the non-IS baseline of terrorism. More qualitative expectations for religious-

insurgency theory would argue that terrorists following this strategy are so much deadlier than terrorists who don't follow this strategy due to the specific choices they make. On the theory's insurgent side, these terrorists choose to recruit members with backgrounds more conducive to terrorism, offer better training, and ensure they have better weapons in order to maximize their lethality. These elements are then laced with a deep religious commitment on the theory's religious side to continue maximizing its lethality. Groups that don't adhere to this theory, like the non-IS baseline of terrorism do not do this.

5.1 IS Fighter Background

IS made a choice to specifically recruit individuals with backgrounds conducive to lethal terrorism. Many scholars describe IS as having roots in "prison culture", as many of its top leaders spent time in notorious prison camps in Iraq—such as Abu Gharib and Camp Bucca. Additionally, the group placed an emphasis on conducting prison breaks to release imprisoned Muslims early in the IS surge.[158]

Prison camps in Iraq prior to the main surge of IS—around 2003-2012—are often referred to as "jihadi universities" as radical inmates indoctrinated less radical inmates, a process facilitated by series of abuses experienced by inmates at the hands of US soldiers policing the prisons.[159] Prison camps in Iraq reached peak use right after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and during the sectarian conflict between 2006 and 2007, and were populated by individuals captured during security sweeps who were thought to be factional leaders or Islamic extremists, although

[158] Robin Wright. "The Dangerous Dregs of ISIS." The New Yorker. 16 April 2019. (https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-dangerous-dregs-of-isis) (20 April 2022)
[159] Joshua Eaton. "U.S. Military Now Says ISIS Leader Was Held in Notorious Abu Gharib Prison." The Intercept. 25 August 2016. (https://theintercept.com/2016/08/25/u-s-military-now-says-isis-leader-was-held-in-notorious-abu-ghraib-prison/) (22 April 2016)

many proclaimed their innocence and likely were innocent.[160] In these camps, all prisoners were able to interact with each other, with "hard-core extremist detainees" allowed to fully mingle with regular, non-extremists in the prisons.[161] Extremists considered their unfettered access to regular inmates an "extraordinary opportunity" for them, with terrorists remarking "we could never have all got together like this in Baghdad, or anywhere else" and using it as an opportunity to galvanize extremism.[162] Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, one of IS's top leaders, spent a substantial amount of time in these prisons—mostly in Abu Gharib—and used the opportunity to network with jihadis and former Iraqi military officials who would later occupy top positions in IS leadership.[163] In fact, many of IS's top leaders came from connections made at these prison camps, with 17 out of the most important 25 IS leaders having spent time in US prisons in Iraq between 2004-2011.[164]

Recruiting disillusioned and angry individuals in these camps was facilitated by a history of extreme abuses at the hands of US soldiers. The height of the abuses occurred at the Abu Gharib camp between 2003 to 2006 and resulted in the conviction of 11 US soldiers, who confessed to severe humiliation and torture of inmates which resulted in several suspicious deaths.[165] When combined with the imprisonment of noncombatants and individuals believed to be innocent, these abuses convinced Iraqis that the American occupation of Iraq was unjust and minimally better than Hussein's tyranny—a strong radicalizing effect.[166] Extremists in these

[160] Martin Chulov. "Largest of America's Two Prisons in Iraq to Shut." The Guardian. 16 September 2019. (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/16/us-prison-iraq-bucca-closure) (20 April 2022)
[161] Aki Peritz. "The Great Iraqi Jail Break." Foreign Policy. 26 June 2014. (https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/26/the-great-iraqi-jail-break/) (20 April 2022)
[162] Martin Chulov. "ISIS: The Inside Story." The Guardian. 11 December 2014. (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/11/-sp-isis-the-inside-story) (20 April 2022)
[163] Eaton. 2016.
[164] Chulov. 2014.
[165] "Iraq Prison Abuse Scandal Fast Facts." CNN. 11 March 2022. (https://www.cnn.com/2013/10/30/world/meast/iraq-prison-abuse-scandal-fast-facts/index.html) (20 April 2022)
[166] Chulov. 2014.

camps were able to capitalize upon disillusionment and anger at the US, creating dangerous sentiments in fighters.

In addition to creating IS networks while imprisoned in Iraq, IS also filled its lower ranks through prison breaks. Near the beginning of IS's main offensive, in 2012, leader al-Baghdadi declared that "releasing Muslim prisoners everywhere, and chasing and eliminating judges and investigators and their guards" should be IS's first priority, launching the breaking-the-walls campaign, a series of prison raids, the following year.[167] This offensive successfully attacked numerous prisons—including the notorious Abu Gharib—releasing over 1000 prisoners, including some Al Qaeda death row inmates, who quickly populated the ranks of IS in Iraq and Syria.[168] Drawing group membership from prisons adds to IS's strength in three ways: many inmates were extremists who would be dedicated to IS's cause, non-extremist prisoners convicted of criminal charges could have been easily radicalized while incarcerated, and common criminals who resisted radicalization during their incarceration can likely now be made to feel "indebted" to there is liberators and encouraged to fight.[169] A sizeable portion of IS's forces are not average civilians, but hardened criminals dedicated to the IS cause.

US prison camps in Iraq provided the perfect breeding grounds for IS fighters, maximizing their lethality. Not only did they allow extremists to safely network with each other while incarcerated, US prisons facilitated the radicalization of non-extremists by allowing interactions with extremists and failing to prevent severe abuses of prisoners. IS prison breaks continued to capitalize upon the radicalization of inmates, encouraging them to fill IS ranks. By choosing to fill its positions with criminals and extremists, IS was working to maximize its

[167] Wright. 2019.
[168] Peritz. 2014.
[169] Ibid.

power. This deliberate choice to maximize lethal power supports religious-insurgency theory as it demonstrates high fatalities as a priority for IS.

5.2 Non-IS Terrorist Backgrounds

While many IS fighters came from prison backgrounds which is conducive to terrorism, non-IS terrorists don't seem to have the same emphasis on conducive backgrounds. People join terrorist organizations from a wide variety of backgrounds and for a wide variety of reasons, meaning that there will always be individuals that deviate from the norm. This section focuses on noticeable trends in backgrounds but does not argue that all terrorists have this background or that individuals with these characteristics are destined to become terrorists.

Although some psychological theories of the driving factors behind terrorism cite mental illness as the main important background for terrorism—the idea that people willing to commit such horrible acts have to be insane—this finding is not reflected empirically.[170] Instead, more common traits shared by individuals are feelings of anger, alienation, and disfranchisement; lack of objections to violence; connections to terrorist groups and/or family members that support terrorism; among others.[171] These are characteristics likely shared with IS recruits.

Beyond these feelings, studies of terrorist backgrounds have revealed some commonalities. While many of these studies do have limitations—for example, they were only able to be conducted with caught or otherwise known terrorists, which may exclude highly skilled terrorists who were able to avoid capture or identification or very low-level terrorists—but they do provide the best information available on the backgrounds of terrorists. A study of Middle Eastern extremists by Post, Sprinzak, and Denny (2003) revealed that most had high

[170] Randy Borum. Psychology of Terrorism (Tampa: University of South Florida. 2004). 1-78
[171] Tori DeAngelis. "Understanding Terrorism." American Psychological Association 40. no. 10 (2009): 60

school educations with a few having higher education with families that tended to place great pride on the terrorist participations of their children.[172] The study also revealed that Palestinian suicide bombers did deviate from the norm in terms of younger ages, 17-22, and lower educational attainment and social levels.[173] Another study, conducted by Sageman (2004), found that terrorists, as children, tended to be described neutrally or positively, although 'loners' did outnumber those who were outgoing.[174] Additionally, he found low levels of crime, with only a quarter of his group having a history of petty crimes.[175] While in some cases, individuals were low-educated with low life prospects, the literature suggests that individuals who turn to terrorism tend to be ordinary people who have led ordinary lives.

Looking specifically at another major terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, strengthens the idea that most terrorist organizations are populated by a mix of ordinary individuals. A study of 2,032 individuals who joined Al Qaeda by Venhaus (2010) found that while many terrorists had been unemployed and poor, many also came from middle-income or even wealthy, privileged backgrounds.[176] Economic motivations were the least cited reasons for joining Al Qaeda.[177] Additionally, individuals who joined tended to not be extremists, but rather from incomplete religious educations or weakly religious backgrounds.[178] The bulk of these individuals were normal people who likely wouldn't have been singled out for fears that they would become terrorists.

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[172] Jeff Victoroff. "The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches." Journal of Conflict Resolution 49. no. 1 (2005): 3-42
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] John Vehnaus. "Why Youth Join Al Qaeda." The United States Institute of Peace. May 2010. (https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR236Venhaus.pdf) (21 April 2022)
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.

While some IS adherents were like this, especially in the later stages of IS when it was able to send individuals to recruit, as explained in the preceding subsection, the bulk of its early members came from prisons.[179] While many individuals at these prison camps were undoubtably innocent, many were not ordinary people, but rather captured extremists, terrorists, or other criminals which provided more conducive backgrounds for lethal terrorism. Additionally, by pulling members from these camps, IS was able to secure more experienced terrorists, which also sets them apart. Ordinary people new to terrorism and crime tend to populate most terrorist groups, and while IS certainly had these people, drawing from individuals in Iraqi prison camps in the early to mid 2000s gave IS a clear advantage. This didn't occur by chance, but reflects decisions made by IS to improve its chances of success and supports religious-insurgency theory. Groups that merely want to gain small concessions, convince a population of the government's unworthiness for rule, or cleanse a religion in a certain area do not pay as much attention to their cultivating their lethality. Groups driven to capture land to establish a religious utopia do because they have a vested interest in killing infidels and causing harm to the government. I would expect other terrorists following religious-insurgency theory to also recruit individuals with backgrounds more conducive to terrorism.

5.3 IS Training Practices

Beyond a background predisposing many individuals to fighting, IS offers its adherents military-grade training, increasing their lethality, supporting another expectation of religious-

[179] Asaad H. Almohammad and Anne Speckhard. "The Operational Ranks and Roles of Female ISIS Operatives: From Assassins and Morality Police to Spies and Suicide Bombers." International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism. 23 April 2017 (https://www.icsve.org/the-operational-ranks-and-roles-of-female-isis-operatives-from-assassins-and-morality-police-to-spies-and-suicide-bombers/) (21 April 2022)

insurgency theory. IS takes its training seriously, offering and requiring it of its adult male fighters, women and children.

The information known on IS training camps is relatively limited, but what is known suggests the group takes the process seriously. The length of training varies, ranging from a minimum of two weeks to over a year, with three main parts—military, political, and sharia orientation.[180] Recruits are occasionally dispatched to checkpoints during the training process, and following graduation, remain under close supervision.[181] If individuals express reservations or act disobediently, they can be expelled from IS or sent back to training camps for faith "strengthen[ing]".[182]

During their military training, IS recruits learn a lot about how to fight. Once it finally retook Mosul, the Iraqi military discovered the Sheikh Abu Samaya Ansari Camp, which acted as a military camp for new IS recruits.[183] Documents left at the camp revealed that new fighters were instructed on range of guerilla and conventional tactics that reflected a very detailed level of military capability, especially as it related to training and planning.[184] This early camp focused on the basics, instructing fighters on the equipment they should have on them at all times and testing them on how to use each weapon.[185] Health tests were also conducted and steroids provided to maximize strength of recruits.[186] Another camp near Mosul, nicknamed Palmyra, was discovered in an old railway tunnel outside of Mosul and featured a basic shooting range and

[180] Hassan Hassan. "The secret world of Isis training camps – ruled by sacred texts and the sword." The Guardian. 24 January 2015 (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/25/inside-isis-training-camps) (21 April 2022)
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Loveday Morris and Mustafa Salim. "Found at an Islamic State Training Camp: Bunk Beds, Weapons Manuals, Steroids." The Washington Post. 3 December 2016. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/found-at-an-islamic-state-training-camp-bunk-beds-weapons-manuals-steroids/2016/12/03/9fab92c8-b818-11e6-939c-91749443c5e5_story.html) (21 April 2022)
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

an over half-mile long obstacle course that recruits had to traverse while being shot at by instructors.[187] An entire section was devoted to ensuring that recruits knew how to use the AK-47s each were equipped with.[188] IS was serious about making sure that its members were all combat trained, and its training camps reflect this.

The confessions of captured IS terrorists suggest that all male members of the group, even if they did not hold a fighting position were sent to training camps. Lirim Sulejmani, an IS prisoner at Dashisha formerly from Chicago, Illinois, explained that despite never having actually fought, he was "dispatched briefly to Iraq, for military and religious training" where he "learned to operate an AK-47 automatic rifle".[189] He claimed to have only shot 20 bullets because he joined IS to live under a caliphate, not to fight or carry out terrorist attacks.[190] Another American who had joined IS, Mirsad Hariz Adem Ramic, reportedly held an active but smaller role as an anti-aircraft shooter, also received extensive military training from IS.[191] While it's likely that interviews of IS terrorists, suspected or convicted, downplay the role that they had in the organization, it's clear that IS valued training all of its recruits, not just its top leaders.

IS also trained women. One of the earliest groups involving women was Al-Dawa in Syria, but as they were tasked primarily with enforcing IS codes of morality and distributing resources, they received heavy sharia training but little to no weapons training.[192] When Al-Dawa began to promote female membership in IS's hisbah—main morality police—women

[187] Ben Kesling and Awadh Altaie. "Islamic State Hid Training Camp in Rail Tunnel Near Mosul." Wall Street Journal. 2 March 2017 (https://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-hid-training-camp-in-rail-tunnel-near-mosul-1488492937) (21 April 2022)
[188] Ibid.
[189] Wright. 2019.
[190] Ibid.
[191] https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/bowling-green-man-arrested-multiple-terrorism-charges
[192] Almohammad and Speckhard. 2017.

began to receive basic security training.[193] The Al-Dawa battalion was eventually succeeded by the Al-Khansa battalion, which trained women in military and intelligence tactics, the Aumahat al-Moaminin battalion, which trained women specifically in military arms tactics, and the Amaliat Khasa/Khadija Bintu Kwaild battalion, which provided the highest skilled military and tactical operations training for women.[194] There were also other battalions that offered training to women, such as Khatiba Nusaybah, which was led by American Allison Elizabeth Fluke-Ekren, who was charged by the US government for training women "on the use of automatic firing AK-47 assault rifles, grenades, and suicide belts" as well as providing support services to IS operations.[195] Women were important parts of IS operations from the beginning and as IS began losing many of its male militants, they became even more important. IS increasing turned to women—calling on them to prepare for battle and openly praising photos and videos of women wielding AK-47s.[196] Following her capture, IS member Mariam Nasser explained that "every man carried a gun," and "every woman, too."[197] Gender did not exclude IS members from training.

IS also recruited and trained teenagers and children. By recruiting individuals at young ages, IS believes its following other youth groups created by dictatorships—such as Hitler Youth and Saddam's Lion Cubs (Ashbal Saddam)—and safeguarding its future.[198] They believe they

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[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] "American Woman Who Led ISIS Battalion Charged with Providing Material Support to a Terrorist Organization." Department of Justice U.S. Attorney's Office Eastern District of Virginia. 29 January 2022. (https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/american-woman-who-led-isis-battalion-charged-providing-material-support-terrorist) (22 April 2022)
[196] Vera Mironova. "Is the Future of ISIS Female?" The New York Times. 20 February 2019. (https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/opinion/islamic-state-female-fighters.html) (21 April 2022)
[197] Wright. 2019.
[198] Mark Townsend. "How Islamic State is Training Child Killers in Doctrine of Hate." The Guardian. 5 March 2016 (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/05/islamic-state-trains-purer-child-killers-in-doctrine-of-hate) (21 April 2022)

are indoctrinating their next generation of fighters who will ensure that IS and IS's goals endure.[199] IS gains child fighters mostly through coercive techniques, either kidnapping them, typically from Yazidi or Turkmen minorities, or scaring their parents into giving them up by spreading propaganda that children who don't willingly join the group will be "flogged, tortured or raped."[200] There are also reports of IS paying parents $300-500 a month to give up their children, sums of money that typically largely exceed a typical monthly salary for the family.[201] In areas under IS control, IS often simply takes over the education system, implementing their ideas and tactics.[202] This has allowed IS to garner large populations of child fighters.

There are different levels to the training and indoctrination IS provides to children. Younger children typically receive an education from birth focusing on IS's most important religious tenets, which IS hopes means the children are "saved from corruption."[203] Once children are old enough, they are exposed to brutal violence with IS encouraging young children to play football with decapitated heads or otherwise interact with them.[204] As soon as they can, IS moves to teach children more advanced killing tactics, releasing a video of a four-year old boy detonating a car bomb and repeatedly celebrating child killers.[205] Even as IS has been on the decline and surviving without territory, they have continued their practice of training child

[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Sara Carter. "ISIS Expanding Training Camps, Recruiting Children." US News. 12 February 2016. (https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-02-12/isis-expanding-training-camps-recruiting-children) (21 April 2022)
[202] Townsend. 2016.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.

fighters and are reportedly stealing children wherever possible from refugee and prison camps, such as al-Hol in Syria.[206]

IS recruits its members with special attention paid to how conducive their backgrounds are to their mission and provides training to all individuals, even women and children, to maximize their effectiveness in fighting. IS members are not untrained individuals plucked from streets, but rather skilled terrorists who know how to maximize the casualty count of their attacks, a deliberate choice made in support of religious-insurgency theory.

5.4 Non-IS Training Practices

Religious-insurgency theory expects a rigorous training process and assumes that terrorists that do not follow religious-insurgency theory have less of an emphasis on training. Analysis does suggest that non-IS terrorists place a lower value on their training. While little continues to be known about the bulk of terrorist training facilities, large training facilities outfitted with amenities, like firing ranges, used to train recruits, such as the Al Qaeda facility in Kandahar, Afghanistan, where Osama Bin-Laden reportedly planned 9/11, are things of the past.[207] Now, most groups, like Al Qaeda, outsource their training to Pakistan, where Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), among others, operate about 40 training camps, which are comprised of one or two temporary, small buildings that can each train 20 terrorists at a time.[208] Outsiders or individuals who show up for training are typically turned away due to concerns about spies—which also excludes individuals not affiliated with a

[206] Jeff Seldin. "Islamic State Group Smuggling Boys to Desert Training Camps." Voice of America News. 3 August 2021. (https://www.voanews.com/a/middle-east_islamic-state-group-smuggling-boys-desert-training-camps/6209124.html) (21 April 2022)
[207] Joshua Keating. "What Do You Learn at Terrorist Training Camp?" Foreign Policy. 10 May 2010. (https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/05/10/what-do-you-learn-at-terrorist-training-camp/) (21 April 2022)
[208] Ibid.

recognized group—and terrorists in these camps are instructed in small arms and other basic weaponry and tactics.[209] Previous camps led by Al Qaeda used to train recruits on how to use sniper rifles and more advanced weaponry, which does not occur now, although recruits who show promise can receive more advanced training.[210]

In addition to more organized camps, terrorists in Iraq have typically used the instability and frequent presence of conflict to educate themselves.[211] Parts of Iraq are often referred to as "on the job training" with terrorists able to "gain tactical and operational learning, particularly in the area of urban guerilla warfare," and scholars postulating that some terrorist groups may not have existed without Iraq's violent atmosphere.[212] Many groups, especially smaller ones, have no need for expensive training camps when members can get on the ground direct experience.

IS is the only major organization providing direct and in-depth training to all its members, regardless of age and gender, which its more lethal attacks reflect. This also provides strong support to religious-insurgency theory.

5.5 IS Weapons

The strength and quality of weapons also play into a group's ability to inflict damages. Like with the other characteristics, religious-insurgency theory would expect a group adhering to this strategy to have more advanced weaponry than other groups because they can increase attack fatalities, which are important to religious-insurgency terrorists. Non-state actors, like terrorist groups, typically have worse weapons than states, preventing them from inflicting high levels of

[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] James Forest. "Terrorist Training Centers Around the World: A Brief Review" in The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training and Root Causes. (Westport, Conn. : Praeger Security International, 2006.) 296-309
[212] Ibid.

damage.[213] This was not the case for IS, as they were able to steal military grade weapons from Syria and Iraq in 2013 and 2014.[214] Many of these weapons were Soviet or US weapons, imported into Iraq during the US invasion and other conflicts in Iraq.[215] Conflict and poor governance by Iraq led to many of these weapons being unsecured and easily stolen by IS.[216] Stolen weapons range from ammunitions to much larger machinery, including g at least seven American M1 Abrams tanks.[217] In other instances, IS has stolen weapons delivered to forces in the Middle East fighting them. In 2014, the US was airdropping pallets of weapons to Kurdish forces in Kobani, Syria, when IS managed to seize part of the delivery, gaining boxes of hand grenades, rocket-propelled grenades, and other weapons.[218] This has happened numerous other times, with a study in 2015 revealing that it took some weapons purchased by the US for the conflict against IS under two months to end up in IS hands.[219]

This stealing of weapons has led to IS having relatively high-quality weaponry. Approximately 90% of IS weapons and ammunition come from members of the former Warsaw Pact (Russia, China, Eastern Europe, etc.) and while a lot of their weaponry is old, they also have a substantial number of newer weaponry, such as anti-armor rockets manufactured between

[213] Ahmed Hashim. "The Islamic State's Way of War in Iraq and Syria: From its Origins to the Post Caliphate Era." Perspectives on Terrorism 13. no. 1 (2019): 22-31
[214] Ibid.
[215] "How Islamic State Got its Weapons." Amnesty International UK. 12 January 2018. (https://www.amnesty.org.uk/how-isis-islamic-state-isil-got-its-weapons-iraq-syria) (21 April 2022)
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ewen MacAskill, and Martin Chulov. "ISIS Apparently Takes Control of US Weapons Airdrop Intended for Kurds." The Guardian. 22 October 2014. (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/22/isis-us-airdrop-weapons-pentagon) (21 April 2022)
[218] Ibid.
[219] Gabe Joselow. "ISIS Weapons Arsenal Included Some Purchased by U.S. Government." NBC News. 14 December 2017. (https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/isis-weapons-arsenal-included-some-purchased-u-s-government-n829201) (21 April 2022)

2014-2017.[220] Other valuable and powerful weapons under IS possession include portable air defense systems, guided anti-tank missiles, and armored fighting vehicles.[221]

In addition to stolen weapons, IS has also tinkered with chemical and biological weapons. After IS captured Mosul, it began to experiment on its prisoners with numerous toxic chemicals, including thallium (rat poison) and nicotine (lethal in high doses), weaponized vesicants, nerve agents, and other toxic agents.[222] The group also heavily explored manufacturing and weaponizing chlorine and mustard gas, and successfully used chlorine gas in attacks against Kurdish and Iraqi forces.[223] This illustrates a high degree of skill and commitment to developing high-quality weaponry.

IS is not a typical terrorist organization relying on homemade weapons, rather, they are armed with advanced weapons that they can wield effectively due to their intense training programs, making these weapons a powerful component of their lethality and a strong indicator of their adherence to religious-insurgency theory. IS places a clear importance on incurring high fatalities, a major component of religious-insurgency theory.

5.6 Non-IS Weapons

Terrorists not implementing a religious-insurgency strategy do not pay as much attention to their weapons. Their weapons are typically of low-quality, at the very least of lower quality than states as they cannot produce their own weapons and have limited access to advanced

[220] "Weapons of the Islamic State." Conflict Armament Research. December 2017. (https://www.conflictarm.com/reports/weapons-of-the-islamic-state/) (21 April 2022)
[221] "How the Islamic State Got its Weapons." 2018.
[222] Joby Warrick. "ISIS Used Chemical Weapons on Iraqi Prisoners, U.N. Investigators Find." The Washington Post. 13 May 2021. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/isis-chemical-weapons-experiments-mosul/2021/05/13/bbfebfb0-b42e-11eb-a980-a60af976ed44_story.html) (21 April 2022).
[223] Ibid.

technology.[224] The main ways that terrorists can acquire weapons are through sympathetic transfer from states or stealing them, which results in poorer quality weapons.[225] The most common weapons used by terrorists tend to be conventional manufactured or improvised firearms and improvised bombs known as improvised explosive devices (IEDS).[226] Grenades are also popular weapons, and few terrorists are known to have surface to air, or shoulder fired missiles—technology that IS has.[227] This general low quality weaponry, while it does allow for terrorists to kill people, fortunately prevents attacks from reaching their full possible lethality.

Low quality weapons don't just apply to small, unrecognized terrorist organizations, but also bigger ones, like Al Qaeda. Although there are a few notable exceptions, Al Qaeda operatives tended to carry out their attacks with simple IEDS, some that failed to detonate and others whose design clearly matched jihad manuals widely available.[228] Al Qaeda's most notorious attacks illustrated a more complex understanding of weapons, but the average attack did not. IS has so many more complex weapons in its arsenal, a choice resulting in a marked difference from other terrorists to increase lethality, which provides solid support for religious-insurgency theory.

5.7 IS Motivations

Finally, religious-insurgency theory anticipates a religious ideology that emphasizes high fatalities, which IS very clearly has woven throughout all it does—which is where the religious side of religious-insurgency can be most clearly seen. Hoover Fellow at Stanford University,

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[224] Hashim. 2019.
[225] Hashim. 2019.
[226] "Conventional Terrorist Weapons." United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (https://www.unodc.org/images/odccp/terrorism_weapons_conventional.html) (21 April 2022)
[227] Ibid.
[228]Jonas Feltes. "Terrorist Group: Al Qaeda Weapons Use." Counterterrorism Ethics. (https://counterterrorismethics.tudelft.nl/the-past-present-and-future-weapon-use-of-al-qaeda/) (21 April 2022)

Cole Bunzel, explains that IS's "objective is to inflict the utmost harm on the enemy so that he not only cedes ground but is so badly defeated as to be unable to return to the battlefield".[229] IS members commit to this ideology, and rarely stray.

This commitment can largely be connected to intense religious training. While IS military training prepares recruits for actual battle and violence, religious training is used to indoctrinate new members. The religious elements at the training camps come first and focus on overriding the idea of religious innovation and Baathist elements, teaching the ideas of *tawhid*, *bida'a*, and *wala wal bara*, and the understanding that "the foundation of this religion is a book that guides and a sword that brings victory."[230] Recruits learn that terrorism and violence are the best ways of bringing about the world promised to them by the Islamic teachings they have received, teachings that stick with them.

Even after they have been captured and IS has been largely defeated, IS members still express a deep commitment to the group and its ideas. Lirim Sulejmani, an IS member imprisoned in the Dashisha prison originally from Chicago, Illinois, explained that he joined IS to "make *hegira*" and "live under Sharia", and although imprisoned and disillusioned with al-Baghdadi, he would do it all again and believes that there would be enough people willing to bring back the caliphate despite mass surrenders.[231] Others interviewed agreed. Rahila Osman, a Uighur woman in a refugee camp, still believed in the caliphate, and Salimah Athilayabah, who lost her husband in a coalition airstrike and lived in dismal conditions at a refugee camp for IS wives proudly stated, "there's a caliphate in our hearts".[232] Even once the caliphate dies, the

[229] Cole Bunzel. "Explainer: The Islamic State in 2021." The Wilson Center. 10 December 2021 (https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/explainer-islamic-state-2021) (21 April 2022)
[230] Hassan. 2015.
[231] Hegira is a term used to describe prophet Mohammad's migration to Mecca from Medina to avoid persecution; Wright. 2019.
[232] Wright. 2019.

ideology and beliefs motivating individuals to fight for it does not, a powerful phenomenon likely driving its brutality. This religious motivation is laced in everything that IS does and its presence supports religious-insurgency theory.

5.8 Non-IS Motivations

While IS goals are clear, to exact enough damage upon the Iraqi state and other actors in Iraq to be able to claim and control territory for its Islamic caliphate, the goals of non-IS terrorists tend to be different and vary more, as expected of groups not following a religious-insurgency theory. This is also partially a given as the non-IS baseline of terrorism includes all other groups operating in Iraq, regardless of the theory of terrorism that they may adhere to or other characteristics. There are many different motivations for terrorism, with individuals most commonly claiming to be drawn to terrorism as they feel they have been transgressed against, for religious values, identity problems, the sense of belonging, delusions of heroism, searches for autonomy, and political activities.[233] Individuals claiming to be driven by each different motive or combination of motives frequently illustrate different levels of commitment and needs. IS needs to kill a lot of people who don't agree with it, but other groups often don't have this same motivation. This deep drive to kill—which IS has managed to largely root in religion—is not a found in most other terrorist organizations, and the way it functions with IS provides support for religious-insurgency theory.

5.9 Section Summary

[233] Malini Subramanyam. "Motivation Leading to Radicalization in Terrorists." Forensic Research & Criminology International Journal 6. no. 4 (2018): 301-307

As explained, religious-insurgency theory anticipates high fatalities from groups adhering to it because it believes groups will make the necessary choices needed to maximize their lethality. Specifically, I would expect them to recruit individuals with backgrounds more conducive to terrorism, offer their terrorists more advanced weaponry, and provide higher levels of training for their recruits than other terrorists—characteristics reflective of the insurgent side—and lace all these elements with a strong motivating religious ideology emphasizing fatalities—reflective of the religious side. IS appears to do this perfectly in a way that is markedly different from the non-IS baseline of terrorism. The group is not more lethal by chance, but rather it is the result of choices made to maximize the skill of their members. This lethality is a central part of IS operations and demonstrates values and priorities expected of a religious-insurgency terrorist organization.

6.0 Suicide Attacks

Religious-insurgency theory expects terrorists adhering to it to use suicide attacks at a higher rate than other terrorists due to its religious emphasis on martyrdom and the insurgent deeply motivating goal. Due to ideas of martyrdom, which would reunite one with God, theories of religious terrorism expect frequent suicide attacks.[234] Religiously motivated terrorist groups and attacks often reflect this expectation. This can be seen many IS suicide attacks with religious elements, such as one on October 3, 2016, when an IS terrorist detonated his explosive belt next to a tent offering refreshments to those passing as part of a Shia ritual in Baghdad, killing four and wounding eighteen.[235] This could also be seen six days later, on October 9, 2016, when an IS terrorist blew himself up at a Shia pilgrimage site in New Baghdad, killing two civilians and

[234] Reynie. 2021.
[235] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 7501653

wounding seven more.[236] In these instances, an individual becomes a martyr in the name of continued purification of Islam, cleansing themselves of any sins and reuniting themselves with God. This sacrificing of oneself for the greater good is important to IS and many believe it provides a religious benefit. This martyrdom is much more common of IS than the non-IS baseline of terrorism. Between 2016-2020, there were twenty incidents of suicide attacks with a religious target, and out of those attacks, eighteen had been committed by IS, leaving only two attacks by the non-IS baseline. These attacks were similar, but committed at a much higher rate by IS.

Insurgency theories of terrorism also expect high levels of suicide attacks as this form of terrorism is driven by the group's mobilizing motive and desperation caused by the failure of peaceful tactics.[237] These can be seen in IS attacks on policeman, such as April 29, 2017, when 6 IS suicide bombers detonated themselves in the Old City of Mosul, killing fourteen police officers and injuring twenty more.[238] Another attack by IS occurred on April 28, 2020, when several suicide bombers detonated themselves outside of Kirkuk City's intelligence directorate, injuring four.[239] As with religious suicide attacks, the non-IS baseline of terrorism does conduct these suicide attacks, but at a much lower rate.

Combining two of the most mobilizing reasons to commit suicide attacks—the allure of martyrdom and the desire to commit to an important cause—makes it reasonable that IS terrorism would have a higher-than-normal use of suicide attacks. Additionally, it explains why IS would have both religious and insurgent suicide attacks unlike the non-IS baseline. Most terrorist groups don't combine these two theories in the way that IS clear has. In fact, insurgency

[236] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 7501959
[237] Kydd and Walter. 2006.
[238] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 6249749
[239] Raleigh et al. 2010. ID: 7096816

motives are rather uncommon, demonstrated in the reluctance of terrorists to engage in territorial control and state-building, things that IS has not shied away from.[240] This combination of two of the most conducive theories to suicide attacks makes individuals feel that they are becoming martyrs for the ideal cause—the establishment of a religious utopia governed by individuals who truly embody correct religious teachings. This deeper commitment to the goals of the group in a way that prompts more frequent use of suicide attacks cannot be so easily found in other terrorist organization and reflects that IS truly follows a religious-insurgency model of terrorism.

7.0 Holidays

Religious-insurgency theory predicted that IS attacks would be less frequent during Islamic holidays, but more frequent around Iraq and IS symbolic holidays when compared to the baseline. This was expected both quantitatively and qualitatively. Statistical analysis did not reveal this, and there is not enough qualitative information to draw a conclusion. No scholarship focuses on fluctuations in IS activity depending on the day and temporal analyses typically focus more on the time gaps between attacks than the exact days attacks take place. Due to the lack of quantitative or qualitative findings on the impact of holidays on IS or non-IS terrorist activity, this characteristic appears to be largely irrelevant in determining the strategy of terrorism employed by IS.

8.0 Other Interesting Findings

[240] Shadi Hamid. "What America never understood about ISIS." Brookings. 1 November 2019. (https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/11/01/what-america-never-understood-about-isis/) (22 April 2022)

Like in the quantitative section, the qualitative analysis also revealed interesting findings unrelated to the theories and their expectations. This information is important in understanding IS as an organization but does not shed much light on the strategy of terrorism that the group implements. These findings pertain to the level of violence against women promoted by the group and active role that many women appear to take in all the major operations of IS.

8.1 Violence Against Women

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, I decided to examine this characteristic based on commentary that suggests IS should have a high rate of violence against women. As in the quantitative analysis, this was not found. This is not to say that IS is not violent against women, it merely suggests that when the group is violent against women, many these incidents don't qualify as terrorist attacks. Additionally, despite this violence towards them, women also often seem to play a relatively large role in IS operations as fighters and recruiters.

8.1.1 Definition of Terrorism

As I study terrorism in this thesis, acts that do not qualify as terrorism, no matter how brutal, are excluded. If an act is not the use of violence by a nonstate actor to further specific goals, it does not qualify as terrorism. As a result, acts of violence against individuals under IS governance, such as during the height of the caliphate, do not qualify as terrorism. Accounts by women in IS controlled areas reflect this. Yezidi women captured by IS recount forceful conversions to Islam and numerous incidents of sexual and physical assault, as well as psychological violence.[241] The instance when the women were first kidnapped would likely be

[241] "Iraq: Women Suffer Under ISIS." Human Rights Watch. 5 April 2016 (https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/05/iraq-women-suffer-under-isis#) (22 April 2022)

coded as an incident of terrorism—assuming it was reported and that these women were kidnapped while not under IS rule—but the following acts of violence against them would not qualify as they were technically "governed" by IS. In addition, every incident was likely not reported, so even if these were to be included as terrorist attacks, the number reported would not capture the full extent. Sunni Muslim women were also often subjected to violence by IS, such as beatings by IS members and IS 'morality police' for failing to properly adhere to strict laws concerning their behavior and proper dress.[242] Similar to violence against Yezidis and other minority groups, this violence against Muslim women occurred primarily in areas under IS control, and thus if even properly reported, would likely not be captured by my definition of terrorism. It's not that IS was not violent or oppressive towards women, it's that they did it in a way that does not qualify as terrorism.

Additionally, this characteristic only looks at attacks where only women were killed or only women known to be targeted. There are likely attacks that featured women as the motive but included people of other genders and a non-publicized motive, which would have resulted in them not being coded as violence against women. The motives behind terrorist attacks can be hard to find and it's likely that the motives of some terrorist attacks included in this analysis were unknown. Thus, attacks that may have been directed at women may have gone unknown, resulting in underreporting of attacks against women. However, this is unlikely to have caused a major difference between IS and the non-IS baseline as this is a problem that would equally affect both groups.

8.1.2 Women as Soldiers

[242] Ibid.

As the insurgency waged on, female soldiers became increasingly important to IS. In the earlier days of IS, women were confined to the home as much as possible and if they wanted to leave their homes, they were required to be chaperoned by a man.[243] Even when in the presence of their male chaperones, IS morality laws requiring women to be completely covered discouraged them from leaving their houses. Wafa of Mosul recounts picnicking at the park with her family and lifting her khimar—the fabric covering her face—just enough for a spoon when the morality police issued her a citation for 21 lashes.[244] Other women recount similar stories, being punished for having a single hole in a sock or lifting their veils just slightly to count money.[245] Rasha Al Aqeedi, also of Mosul, explains that these rules were to make women completely stay in the home, as "the essence of their Islamic jurisprudence is to make women melt away."[246]

This tactic, while widely practiced in the beginning of IS, became unsustainable as the group faced considerable losses of territory and people. In October 2017, as the territory controlled by IS was shrinking and many male soldiers caught or killed, the Naba—IS's weekly newspaper—called for women to prepare themselves to fight, writing:

> Today, in the context of this war against the Islamic state, and with all that is experienced of hardship and pain, it is mandatory for the Muslim women to fulfill their duty from all aspects in supporting the mujahideen in this battle, by preparing themselves as mujahidat in the cause of Allah, and readying to sacrifice themselves to defend the religion of Allah the Most High and Mighty.[247]

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[243] Rukmini Callimachi. "For Women Under ISIS, a Tyranny of Dress Code and Punishment." The New York Times. 12 December 2016 (https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/12/world/middleeast/islamic-state-mosul-women-dress-code-morality.html) (22 April 2022)
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Rita Katz. "How Do We Know ISIS is Losing? Now it's Asking Women to Fight." The Washington Post. 2 November 2017. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/11/02/how-do-we-know-isis-is-losing-now-its-asking-women-to-fight-for-it/)

Once expected to stay at home, women were now allowed and encouraged to pick up arms in defense of IS, a major deviation from the past.

This need for women to serve as fighters also became reflected in training practices. Once primarily focused on training men for war and some women for roles in the IS morality police, IS training shifted to focus on training women for combat. One of IS's top female trainers was Allison Fluke-Ekren, an American, who led an all-female battalion and trained women on how to use AK-47s and on IS doctrine.[248] Captured IS wives, such as Mariam Nasser admitted to having military training and carrying guns.[249] If not fighters, women were also used to conduct suicide attacks. When a government or security apparatuses begin cracking down on terrorist groups, female suicide bombers often present a clear advantage as they are better able to pass through checkpoints with hidden bombs, a technique which became very popular in Algerian and Palestinian terrorist endeavors.[250] Knowing this, all IS marriage certificates would include the clause, "[i]f the Prince of believers [Baghdadi] consents to her carrying out a suicide mission, then her husband should not prohibit her" to allow women to carry out these attacks.[251] IS capitalizes upon this clause frequently, reportedly using a significant number of local women to carry out suicide attacks, although the exact number is unknown.[252] IS needs women to be willing to fight for IS and carry out attacks, which likely contributes to lower levels of direct terrorism against women.

[248] "American Woman Who Led ISIS Battalion Charged with Providing Material Support to a Terrorist Organization." United States Department of Justice U.S. Attorney's Office Eastern District of Virginia. 29 January 2022 (https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/american-woman-who-led-isis-battalion-charged-providing-material-support-terrorist) (22 April 2022)
[249] Wright. 2019.
[250] Almohammad and Speckhard. 2017.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid.

8.1.3 Women as Recruiters

In addition to fighting and suicide attacks, women have been central to the IS recruitment process. By early 2014, women were active recruiters, making door-to-door visits to poor households to hand out food and money, facilitating marriages between IS men and non-IS women, raising awareness about the group's doctrine, and advertising sharia classes designed to indoctrinate attendants.[253] In addition to in-person local recruitment, women were also heavily active online, speaking to individuals all over the world about IS.[254] Many of IS's most notorious female recruiters came from Western countries to Iraq and Syria to marry IS fighters and use their knowledge of the West to effectively use platforms like Twitter and Kik to create and distribute propaganda videos, information on how to travel to Iraq and Syria, and more persuasive material to recruit a wide range of individuals to IS.[255] As men are needed to fight and conduct attacks, women, especially those not in fighting or rule enforcement positions, are the ideal individuals to recruit more adherents. To be able to do so, however, IS must manage the extent of its violence towards women.

After the fall of the caliphate, women also picked up a new role—recruiting and enforcing IS rule in refugee camps located across Iraq and Syria. The most well-known camp for IS wives and children is al-Hol, and while located in Syria, there are similar camps in Iraq that suffer from similar issues.[256] The camp, often referred to as "the most dangerous camp in the world" and from which IS flags can frequently be seen, is home to about 15,000 foreigners and

[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Katie Zavadski. "Meet the Female Recruiters of ISIS." New York. 4 September 2014 (https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2014/09/meet-the-female-recruiters-of-isis.html) (22 April 2022)
[256] Louisa Loveluck. "In Syrian camp for women and children who left ISIS caliphate, a struggle even to register names." The Washington Post. 28 June 2020 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syria-al-hol-annex-isis-caliphate-women-children/2020/06/28/80ddabb4-b71b-11ea-9a1d-d3db1cbe07ce_story.html) (22 April 2022)

30,000 Iraqis, in addition to the tens of thousands of their children.[257] Although the camp is supposed to be controlled by US-backed Kurdish troops, IS wives actually run it, enforcing all of IS's laws and punishments.[258] Individuals that claim to no longer support IS, who speak to Western media, or who do not adhere to IS codes of behavior or dress face threats, beatings, and death.[259] Even the individuals charged with policing the camp fear many IS women in the camp, with an intelligence official explaining that "[t]here are many types of people here, but some of them were princesses among ISIS. There are spaces inside the camp that are like an academy for them now," and that "[w]e can contain the women, but we can't control their ideology."[260] The caliphate may have been defeated, but it thrives in the camps. By enforcing IS doctrine, women are creating and recruiting the next generation of IS fighters. Like the camps across Iraq following the US invasion of Iraq, al Hol and other camps have provided IS ripe opportunities for radicalization and recruitment by mixing radical detainees with less radical ones and will drive future resurgences of IS.[261] Women dominate these camps, making them responsible for this radicalization and resurgences. The future of IS is seen every day, as children play with homemade toy guns and fashion IS paraphernalia out of whatever they have, and officials managing the camp fear that without intervention, they can easily turn into their parents.[262] The caliphate may technically be defeated, but due to the work of women, it thrives in camps.

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[257] Ibid.
[258] Louisa Loveluck and Souad Mekhennet. "At a Sprawling Tent Camp in Syria, ISIS Women Impose a Brutal Rule." The Washington Post. 3 September 2019. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/at-a-sprawling-tent-camp-in-syria-isis-women-impose-a-brutal-rule/2019/09/03/3fcdfd14-c4ea-11e9-8bf7-cde2d9e09055_story.html) (22 April 2022)
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Christian Vianna de Azevedo. "ISIS Resurgence in Al Hawl Camp and Human Smuggling Enterprises in Syria." Perspectives on Terrorism 14. no. 4 (2020): 43-63
[262] Loveluck and Mekhennet. 2019.

9.0 Summary

This qualitative analysis provided further support for religious-insurgency theory. IS acts like an organization at war and relies on insurgent and religious tenets to achieve its goals, which is a significant deviation from the non-IS baseline of terrorism. The non-IS baseline of terrorism does not act anywhere like IS, a fact made very evident by this qualitative analysis.

For target type, religious-insurgency theory expected that IS would target the government/infrastructure and the police at high rates that were higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism, civilians at a high but slightly lower rate than the non-IS baseline, and religious elements at a low rate but potentially slightly higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism. Qualitative analysis largely supported all these predictions, except for government/infrastructure. IS attacks focused on the police far more than the non-IS baseline of terrorism, evident in campaigns launched by IS with the sole purpose of killing security officials, including police officers. The reasoning behind this is clear—reduced security and law enforcement makes it easier for IS to slip into territory and take over. Non-IS terrorists, while they do target the police, don't make it a priority like IS does. There are no campaigns by the non-IS baseline of terrorism towards the police in Iraq from 2016-2020. The need to purge infidels from the population, a religious motive, as expected by religious-insurgency theory was also an important focus of IS, clear in the high targeting of civilians. Still, IS did appear slightly temper their targeting of civilians by using scare tactics to force many into compliance, reflecting an understanding of insurgency theory surrounding civilian targeting. The non-IS baseline killed civilians largely indiscriminately with no need to hold back. IS did not prioritize religious attacks as they didn't help the group with their goal of accumulating territory, and the non-IS baseline of terrorism did not appear to do so either. Finally, IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism did not attack the

government/infrastructure at high rates, although this was reflective more of the weakness of the Iraqi government than problems with the theory.

In terms of fatalities, religious-insurgency theory expected that a terrorist group following this strategy would have higher fatalities and make more deliberate choices to maximize this than other terrorist groups. In terms of choices, I expected that IS would recruit better members, offer more robust training, have better weaponry, and have a stronger ideology mobilizing people to kill than the non-IS baseline. This was found. IS members on average came from more conducive backgrounds for terrorism, a choice the group made when it began recruiting at prisons. IS's training appears substantially more rigorous than non-IS terrorists with the goal of ensuring that everyone, even individuals not in a fighting position, have the capacity to be as lethal as possible. By stealing weapons meant for groups fighting against them, IS was able to access an assortment of more advanced weaponry not available to the average non-IS terrorist organization. Finally, IS's religious ideology, which emphasizes killing infidels to purify the religion and population, was laced throughout all its actions, adding to the group's lethality. The non-IS baseline of terrorism did not have an ideology so committed to death. High fatalities are important to IS, supportive of religious-insurgency theory.

Religious-insurgency theory also anticipated a high use of suicide attacks caused by a presence of religious ideas of martyrdom and insurgent commitment. IS members believed sacrificing themselves would cleanse them of their sins and better the population, convincing reasons to commit one. They also deeply believed in the cause of establishing a caliphate that the group itself would have rule over, a sentiment held long after its territorial collapse, making suicide attacks in the name of IS appear largely attractive to its members.

While IS did deviate from expectations in targeting of the government/infrastructure, qualitative analysis of the group in regard to the non-IS baseline and expectations of the theory revealed substantial support for religious-insurgency theory. In every characteristic, IS is seen intertwining religious and insurgency strategy, a phenomenon not observable in the non-IS baseline of terrorism. IS appears to truly be an insurgency in the name of God.

CHAPTER 5: IS-K ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

1. Overview

In this thesis, I study patterns of Islamic State (IS) terrorism in Iraq between 2016 and 2020 and analyze how their terrorism deviates from the non-IS baseline of terrorism to reveal the strategy of terrorism IS employs. Chapters three and four, my quantitative and qualitative analyses, revealed high levels of support for religious-insurgency theory, which combines the most important parts of religious and insurgency theories. IS is undeniably a religious organization, with deep religious goals permeating everything IS does, but the majority of its attacks have a more strategic focus, targeting civilians and the police instead of religious objects. This is where the insurgency side comes in, all the choices made by IS are strategic decisions made to accumulate territory, strengthen the caliphate, and improve its chances of survival. This chapter will explore if religious-insurgency theory can also be applied to IS offshoots through a qualitative analysis of the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K). I would expect IS offshoots to implement similar strategies due to their shared goals and understanding if this is true will help understand the groups better resulting in better counterterrorism plans. This analysis will be followed up with implications for understanding the terrorism of other IS offshoots and other terrorists in general.

2. Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K) Background

As its name suggests, IS-K is an offshoot of IS. The group formed in 2015 in the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan out of many estranged members of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan

(TTP) and Lashkar-e Islam (LeI).[263] Although the group emerged in Afghanistan, it operates in the rest of the Khorasan region, which additionally includes Iran, Central Asia and Pakistan.[264] IS-K has a close connection with the Iraqi IS core, with IS investing hundreds of thousands of dollars into the group, transferring militants from the caliphate core to Afghanistan, and helping them recruit militants to IS-K away from other terrorist organizations.[265] Like IS, IS-K has goals of establishing an Islamic caliphate in the Khorasan region, which it sees as an extension of the main caliphate in the Levant, and while it mocks the US, IS-K has not carried out any major attacks in the West.[266]

The religious ideology of IS-K is also very similar to that of the IS core. It believes that the caliphate must be a "pure Islamic State" where all individuals strictly practice the traditions of the Prophet, known as 'sunna', and that anyone who rejects IS ideology is an apostate worthy of execution.[267] The group does not appear to have any real ideological innovations that differentiate it from IS, but rather illustrates a deep commitment to upholding core IS tenets.

3.0 General Predictions of Religious-Insurgency Theory for IS-K

If religious-insurgency theory apples IS-K, I would anticipate its characteristics to look similar to IS. The group should appear to strategically balance religion and insurgent tactics,

[263] Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)." Center for Strategic and International Studies. (https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/past-projects/terrorism-backgrounders/islamic-state-khorasan) (22 April 2022)
[264] Ibid.
[265] "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)." Center for Strategic and International Studies. (https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/past-projects/terrorism-backgrounders/islamic-state-khorasan) (22 April 2022)
[266] Ibid.
[267] Catrina Doxsee, Jared Thompson, and Grace Hwang. "Examining Extremism: Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)." Center for Strategic and International Studies. 8 September 2021 (https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-islamic-state-khorasan-province-iskp) (22 April 2022)

although it may be a bit more or less extreme than IS on certain characteristics. The next several sections evaluate this.

4.0 Fatalities

Religious-insurgency theory anticipates high fatalities overall with a decrease overtime as a combination of both theories. Additionally, it should maximize its lethality by recruiting fighters with backgrounds more conducive to terrorism, offering more intensive training to its recruits, using more advanced weaponry, and incorporating a more mobilizing ideology with an emphasis on fatalities. IS did this well—attack fatalities were much higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism and decreased following the introductory period and IS did recruit fighters with backgrounds conducive to terrorism, use more advanced stolen weaponry, require more intensive training practices, and preach more mobilizing ideology—providing strong support for religious-insurgency theory.

While IS-K does not appear to carry out nearly as many attacks as IS, the attacks that they do carry out appear to also demonstrate a high degree of lethality, which suggests adherence to religious-insurgency theory. IS-K is known as the "most extreme and violent of all the jihadist militant groups in Afghanistan," and is blamed for some of Afghanistan's worst terrorist attacks.[268] A CSIS report on IS-K published in 2018 attributes 84 attacks against civilians in Afghanistan and another 11 attacks in Pakistan to the group, and the attacks in Afghanistan alone resulted in the deaths of 819 civilians from 2017-2018.[269] This means that IS-K had, on average,

[268] Frank Gardner. "Afghanistan: Who are Islamic State Khorasan Province Militants?" BBC News. 11 October 2021 (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58333533) (22 April 2022)
[269] "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)"

9.75 fatalities per attack.[270] While it's likely that these numbers suffer from some reporting biases and errors, this number is almost double that of IS and several times larger than Iraq's non-IS baseline of terrorism. The same period in Pakistan reported 338 civilian deaths, which would translate to 30.73 fatalities per attack, an even high number.[271] Other reports offer similar findings, explaining that while the Taliban conduct the most attacks in Afghanistan, substantially more than IS-K, IS-K routinely has a higher fatality count.[272] The exact number of fatalities per IS-K attack is only achievable through quantitative analysis, but is substantially higher than other groups, a strong reflection of religious-insurgency theory. While IS-K meets the general expectation of higher fatalities, it only clearly meets some of the other expectations of religious-insurgency theory: fighters with backgrounds conducive to terrorism, rigorous training practices, and mobilizing motives directed at increasing fatalities. IS-K does not appear to meet the expectations of religious-insurgency theory on advanced weaponry. The next few subsections will explore these aspects.

4.1 Fighter Background

In chapter four, I established that the non-IS baseline of terrorism's normal recruits are normal people typically troubled by feelings of anger, alienation, or disenfranchisement. They also typically have connections to terrorist groups, have their extremism be supported by their friends and families, and lack inhibitions against violence. Beyond these characteristics, there is no real social, religious, economic, or psychological profile of who becomes a terrorist. Groups

[270] ACLED data was not used for this analysis due to time constraints. As ACLED reports incidents of political violence, not just terrorist attacks, running an analysis on IS-K similar to the one on IS would require substantial cleaning and coding of the data that the time constraints of a university level thesis do not allow for.
[271] Ibid.
[272] "Five Countries Most Impacted by Terrorism in 2021." Vision of Humanity. (https://www.visionofhumanity.org/five-countries-most-impacted-by-terrorism-in-2021/) (22 April 2022)

have drawn equally from people of all economic, religious, and social backgrounds, and terrorists rarely have mental illnesses. Criminals make up a very small proportion of recruits, with individuals most often being normal individuals.

While IS did recruit a lot of normal, average people, it also made a deliberate choice to recruit people with backgrounds conducive to terrorism. It did this mostly through prison camps, where imprisoned extremists would network with other extremists and radicalize the non-extremist other criminals in these camps. While some people at these camps were innocent, many were extremists and terrorists. By pulling membership from this group of people, IS was able to fill its ranks with people who already knew how to fight or who could pick these skills up quickly.

The ranks of IS-K were initially populated by individuals like those first recruited by IS. When forming IS-K, IS deliberately called upon members of other terrorist organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, even installing the former TTP commander Hafiz Saeed Khan as the group's first emir.[273] Members of groups like TTP and LeI quickly joined as well, seeing IS-K as a way to continue jihad but also escape the pressure of security forces in Pakistan.[274] In addition to recruiting established terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan, IS also transferred many of its seasoned operatives to IS-K, allowing IS-K to also benefit from IS's prison culture roots.[275] IS-K may be a relatively new group, but its fighters are not. Instead, they're experienced and hardened terrorists, which meets the expectations of religious-insurgency theory. IS-K, like IS, chose their fighters for maximum effectiveness.

[273] "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)"
[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid.

4.2 Weaponry

Less information is known about IS-K weapons than IS weapons, making it unclear if IS-K meets the religious-insurgency expectation of having more advanced weaponry. As IS has been heavily involved in funding and supporting IS-K, it's likely that IS-K has some advanced weaponry. In addition, following the collapse of the Afghani government against the Taliban (although this did occur outside the time scope of this thesis) and in prior engagements with the Taliban and US/Afghani military, IS-K was reportedly able to steal some weapons, which would also give the group access to some form of more advanced weapons, although likely less than IS or the Taliban.[276]

Profiles of the weapons used in two major IS-K attacks, however, reflect that any advanced weaponry the group may have are not their first-choice weapons. Instead of using complex firearms, attackers carefully selected rifles that were small and easy concealable.[277] The majority of these weapons were also remarkably old, with some nearing 70 years old, and despite their age, they were immaculately maintained, with almost all having their original parts.[278] These weapons were also typically of Soviet design, which did differ from standard designs commonly used in Afghanistan.[279] While their weaponry is likely better than some groups due to IS's support of the group and their ability to steal weapons from other groups, advanced weaponry is not their first choice and is thus, likely not used in many of their daily operations. This finding does not provide support for religious-insurgency theory.

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[276] Nolan Fahrenkopf. "Taliban, Islamic State Arm Themselves With Weapons US Left Behind." The Conversation. 22 September 2021. (https://theconversation.com/taliban-islamic-state-arm-themselves-with-weapons-us-left-behind-167960) (22 April 2022)
[277] "New Report Profiles Weapons Used in High-Profile Attacks Claimed by Taliban, ISIS Khorasan." Homeland Security Today. 23 February 2022 (https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/new-report-profiles-weapons-used-in-high-profile-attacks-claimed-by-taliban-isis-khorasan/) (22 April 2022)
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid.

4.3 Training

Like with weaponry, there is less information on the training IS-K provides to its members than with IS. Still, it is known that IS-K provides a considerable amount of training to its new recruits, which suggests support for religious-insurgency theory, although support for this characteristic is weaker than for others. IS-K's training camps are predominately set up in the eastern part of Afghanistan, and focus on preparing new recruits for war.[280] These camps primarily rely on Afghanis returning to Afghanistan after fighting for IS in either Iraq or Syria to train recruits, as these individuals have a better idea of IS fighting habits.[281] In addition to these returned fighters, IS-K also turns to the core IS organization in general for assistance with training.[282] What camps look like exactly for IS-K is currently largely unknown, but due to their reliance on assistance from IS and returned IS fighters, likely looks similar to IS training.

As IS-K training likely emulates that of IS, its training practices likely greatly exceed that of the terrorist baseline, except potentially for the Taliban. Little is also known about their training camps, but they are affiliated with Al Qaeda with recruits at the very least learning how to fight, how to make bombs, and how to plan terrorist attacks.[283] Due to the wealth of resources

[280] Antonio Giustozzi. "How Much of a Threat is the Islamic State in Khorasan?" Royal United Services Institute. 28 March 2022 (https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/how-much-threat-islamic-state-khorasan) (22 April 2022)
[281] Casey Johnson. "The Rise and Stall of the Islamic State in Afghanistan." United States Institute of Peace. November 2016 (https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR395-The-Rise-and-Stall-of-the-Islamic-State-in-Afghanistan.pdf) (22 April 2022)
[282] Amira Jadoon and Andrew Mines. "What is ISIS-K? Two Terrorism Experts on the Group Behind the Deadly Kabul Airport Attack and its Rivalry with the Taliban." The Conversation. 27 August 2021 (https://theconversation.com/what-is-isis-k-two-terrorism-experts-on-the-group-behind-the-deadly-kabul-airport-attack-and-its-rivalry-with-the-taliban-166873) (22 April 2022)
[283] Rebecca Husselbee and Henry Holloway. "Total Terror Taliban Training camps 'Will Restart By September' in Afghanistan Heralding New Wave of Terror Against 'Weak' West." The Sun. 29 June 2021 (https://www.the-sun.com/news/3179499/taliban-training-camps-afghanistan-west/) (22 April 2022)

that the Taliban have, as well as their high level of success against the Afghanistan military, it's likely that they may have more advanced training as well.

4.4 Mobilizing Ideology

In terms of motives, just like IS, the extreme ideology of IS-K blows all other groups out of the water, making it the part that provides the strongest support for religious-insurgency theory within this characteristic. Like IS, IS-K is deeply religious and wants to install sharia rule across the territory that it governs.[284] When it pledged its allegiance to IS, IS-K agreed to uphold the ideology of IS, in purifying Islam and the region through violence while consolidating territory to control. This extreme ideology is what motivated many IS-K members to join the organization in the first place. Pakistani and Afghani jihadists, including members of the Taliban, frequently view IS-K as the more extreme alternative to their organizations and the place to join when their group is no longer extreme enough for them.[285] IS being more extreme than all other groups operating in the region is attractive and mobilizing for many of its members, reflects a motive more mobilizing than other terrorist groups.

4.5 Fatalities Summary

Religious-insurgency theory expected IS to have higher fatalities than the non-IS baseline of terrorism, a finding which IS-K replicates. In Afghanistan, IS-K is by far the deadliest terrorist group, despite conducting fewer attacks than others, and basic numbers reported suggest that IS-K attacks may even be more lethal that IS attacks. In addition, while information is at times very limited, it does appear that IS-K meets most of the other expectations of religious-insurgency

[284] "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)."
[285] Gardner. 2021.

theory on fighter background, training, and mobilizing motives. Like IS, IS-K made deliberate choices to recruit terrorists with backgrounds that would be more conducive to terrorism, to offer intensive training practices, and to lace everything with a strong, mobilizing religious motive driving people to kill. IS-K's use of weapons, however, does not seem to provide strong support for religious-insurgency theory, because while the group likely does have more advanced weaponry, it typically chooses to older and more basic weapons. Even without the support for the weaponry, these findings for fatalities do overall suggest that IS-K follows a religious-insurgency path, although it may be a bit weaker than for IS.

5.0 Target Type

My analysis has four target types, police, civilian, government/infrastructure, and religious. Religious-insurgency theory anticipated high targeting of the police and government/infrastructure, high levels of civilian targeting albeit at a rate slightly lower than non-IS terrorism, and low religious targeting. Analysis of IS revealed it adhered to all of this, except for government/infrastructure, which it actually targeted at a low-rate equivalent to that of the non-IS baseline of terrorism. Qualitative analysis revealed that this was likely an exception due to Iraq's weak government. To prompt these quantitative findings, religious-insurgency theory expected that terrorist groups adhering to this strategy would focus on attacking the government/infrastructure and police at high rates and attack civilians at a high rate due to religious drives to kill infidels but temper it slightly due to insurgent elements. Even when the expectation for targeting of the government/infrastructure was removed due to IS not meeting this expectation either, findings on IS-K targeting do not provide support for religious-insurgency theory.

5.1 Police

Religious-insurgency theory expected that IS would target the police at a high rate, one higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism, and it did. Police were the second most common target for IS after civilians and IS attacked them significantly more than the non-IS baseline. IS-K does not appear to follow this trend. When IS-K first appeared in Afghanistan, it made a point to not attack the government or police, explaining that they had no conflicts or problems with the common people of Afghanistan.[286] Instead, its problems were with the Taliban, and it prioritized attacks on Taliban, focusing on these attacks so much that many individuals thought the group was just a government creation to deal with the Taliban.[287] This led many people to not be concerned about the group. This narrative was eventually replaced by one that saw IS-K as a creation of the Pakistani government meant to keep Afghanistan weak, a story promoted by both the Taliban and the Afghan government.[288] After this, there is very little literature explaining how IS-K targets the police.

Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, there is a tremendous amount of literature that one of IS-K's biggest targets is the Taliban security apparatuses, which includes their police.[289] The status of the Taliban is difficult because although they technically have control over Afghanistan, they are not fully recognized as the legitimate rulers by most countries in the world.[290] This control over the state of Afghanistan but status as terrorists to most other

[286] Johnson. 2016.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid.
[289] Victor Blue, Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Christina Goldbaum. "ISIS Poses a Growing Threat to New Taliban Government in Afghanistan." The New York Times. 3 November 2021. (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/world/asia/isis-afghanistan-taliban.html) (22 April 2022)
[290] Lindsay Maizland. "The Taliban in Afghanistan." Council on Foreign Relations. 15 September 2021. (https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan) (22 April 2022)

countries in the world makes these attacks of the police not the same attacks on police as IS. If this weren't complicated enough, these attacks also occur outside the timeframe of my analysis, and thus, technically shouldn't be included in this analysis. The police do not seem to be a major or important target for IS-K, but more research on IS-K is required for a definitive answer.

5.2 Civilians

Religious-insurgency theory expected IS to have a high targeting of civilians, although lower than non-IS baseline of terrorism as religious elements would encourage a high targeting of civilians, but insurgency elements would somewhat keep this in check. This held true, with IS targeting civilians at a high rate but a rate slightly lower than the non-IS baseline. IS-K appears to follow this trend as well. While in the beginning of its operations in Afghanistan, IS-K pointedly chose not to target civilians in favor of attacking the Taliban, this has not lasted.[291] In fact, civilians have often been IS-K's main target, a finding similar to IS.[292] The group frequently advocates for mass casualty attacks against civilians in its goal to topple the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, punish Shias, and purify both Islam and Afghanistan.[293] This high targeting of civilians are also reflected in the group's consistent high numbers of fatalities, which greatly exceed groups with far more attacks than IS-K.

The high targeting of civilians by IS can be explained by its religious ideology that emphasizes excommunication and a purification of religion through death. IS does not want the support of people it deems infidels and also uses its high rate of violence to force compliance from people. Recognizing that the group does need adherents and cannot tolerate a mass

[291] Johnson. 2016.
[292] Blue, Gibbons-Neff, and Goldbaum. 2021.
[293] Asfandyar Mir. "The ISIS-K Resurgence." Wilson Center. 8 October 2021. (https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/isis-k-resurgence) (22 April 2022)

pushback against its forces, however, IS does allow its insurgent needs to slightly temper its targeting of civilians. Although the two have similar findings, IS-K's high targeting of civilians can be explained best by its religious ideology. IS-K, although supported by IS, doesn't have the same level of wealth and resources as IS—evidenced by its smaller numbers and less successful campaigns—making it need civilians more. However, its strong religious elements make this irrelevant to IS-K. To them, it's better to kill apostates than have a strong following, even if this means sacrificing future successes. This provides mixed support for religious-insurgency theory because while the religious drive to kill civilians is present, the insurgent recognition that it needs civilians is lacking.

5.2.1 Religious Ideology

As an affiliate of IS, IS-K is inherently a religious organization. Its end goal is to "establish a 'pure' Islamic system in Afghanistan," which, like IS, means applying Salafist thought.[294] They adhere to all of the same ideas as IS, like "wala wal bara", undying loyalty to Islam and the rejection of un-Islamic ways, and "tawhid", God's oneness.[295] They also recognize the Qutbi idea that due to how far the Muslim world—for them especially in Afghanistan—has deviated from true Islam, all conversion to true Islam must be violent.[296] Like IS, IS-K has no problem with this violence, routinely carrying out public executions, including of tribal elders, and closing schools.[297] IS-K routinely advocates for mass killings of civilians because it would rather have individuals it perceives as "infidels" dead than alive.[298]

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[294] Ibid.
[295] Hassan. 2016.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Joe Hernandez. "What We Know About ISIS-K, The Group Behind The Kabul Attack." NPR. 28 August 2021. (https://www.npr.org/2021/08/26/1031349674/isis-k-taliban-who-what-you-need-to-know) (22 April 2022)
[298] Mir. 2021.

IS-K's religious elements can sometime seem more extreme than IS, which is largely due to the presence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. IS-K has a strong hatred of the Taliban as the Taliban follows the Hanafi madhhab school of Islam, which is "deficient" to IS-K, who practices Salafism.[299] In addition to the different schools, IS-K also believes in uniting all Muslims under a single caliphate, which the Taliban opposes due to fears that it would challenge their ability to rule over Afghanistan.[300] Not only is the Taliban full of infidels due to their improper religious practices, but they also believe other identities to be more important than Islam, unacceptable ideas to IS-K. This unacceptable group is also the main challenger to the Afghani government, which IS-K also sees as apostates, making IS-K likely feel that it is surrounded by infidels, which requires a greater level of violence. These religious tenets are strong, and the idea that pure Islam can only be achieved by executing infidels, is responsible for IS-K's high civilian targeting.

5.2.2 Relationship with Civilians

In addition to religious elements, IS's was able to ensure compliance by scaring individuals into following their values. This tempered their civilian targeting slightly, allowing them to have a slightly lower civilian targeting than the non-IS baseline of terrorism but still a high rate. IS-K has not appeared to temper its targeting of civilians at all, and many strategies implemented by IS to ensure compliance have not worked well for IS-K.

While IS's high targeting of civilians succeeded in scaring many civilians, it also backfired, reducing support for IS-K. The group's extreme ideology and high use of violence has reportedly been a major alienating factor for most Afghanis, who don't support either of these,

[299] Mir. 2021.
[300] Mir. 2021.

even for the most religiously conservative leaders in the country.[301] While it's normal for a population to disapprove of the actions of a terrorist group, IS-K's actions and ideology goes far beyond what would be considered permissible for a terrorist organization, heavily reducing support that the organization could gain. With this aspect, it is largely believed that IS-K will never be successful in Afghanistan.[302]

Targeting of civilians can hurt an insurgency's cause, something that IS did recognize and somewhat implement in its slightly lower level of civilian targeting. Expecting these groups to not target civilians at all is unrealistic due to the religious emphasis on executing infidels that can override desires for high civilian support. However, for IS, this strategy worked. For IS-K, which needs more support from civilians due to a weaker financial position, this strategy of allowing its religious drive to kill infidels seems to have hurt the group's chances of success. There does not appear to be sufficient tempering of civilian targeting on behalf of IS-K, and this lack of recognition for insurgent logic does not provide support for the group adhering to a theory of religious-insurgency.

5.3 Government/Infrastructure

Religious-insurgency theory expected IS to target the government at a high rate as the one of the most important elements of insurgency theory is the exacting of high costs upon governments and their security apparatuses. The quantitative and qualitative analyses both rejected this expectation, with IS targeting the government/infrastructure at the same low rate as the non-IS baseline of terrorism. However, the qualitative analysis revealed that this is likely due

[301] Joshua White. "Nonstate threats in the Taliban's Afghanistan." Brookings. 1 February 2022. (https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/01/nonstate-threats-in-the-talibans-afghanistan/) (22 April 2022).
[302] Ibid.

to Iraq's extenuating circumstances. The government and the military all but collapsed at the beginning of the IS surge with little IS effort. Additionally, attacking civilians could have been a strategic decision as doing so could likely reduce potential PMF recruitment abilities. If the government was stronger and targeting it was more strategic, it's likely that both IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism would have targeted the government at a higher rate.

IS-K seems to have followed a similar path of low government/infrastructure targeting, but this does appear to be at least partially a choice made by the terrorist group. In the beginning, IS-K, as with it did with the police, completely refrained from attacking the government and infrastructure, instead focusing all of its energy on the Taliban.[303] As some time passed, IS-K did start attacking the Afghan government, as well as foreign government interests and Afghani infrastructure to hope to convince the public of the weakness of the Afghani government.[304] While these attacks did occur, they were lower than by other terrorist groups, like the Taliban.[305] There was a government to attack, but IS-K chose to focus its energies elsewhere, which does not support religious-insurgency theory or suggest that an exception to the theory is entirely at play here.

While IS-K does appear to have made a deliberate choice to refrain from high government/infrastructure attacks, making this not an exception like in the case of IS, the weakness of the Afghani government could still play some of a role here. Similar to Iraq, Afghanistan's modern history has been rocked by instability. This began in 1978, when revolutionaries overthrew the government and began instituting socialist and communist policies,

[303] Johnson. 2016.
[304] "Explainer: ISIS-Khorasan in Afghanistan." Wilson Center. 27 August 2021. (https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/explainer-isis-khorasan-afghanistan) (22 April 2022)
[305] Ibid.

which also directly inserted the country into Cold War conflict.[306] The Soviet Union capitalized upon this, sending supplies to the revolutionaries, which then caused the US to support fighters against the Soviet Union, many of whom eventually turned into the Taliban.[307] In 1992, these fighters seized control of the government to establish an Islamic state, but this only resulted in a civil war that left Afghanistan deeply divided and in shambles.[308] In 1994, a group of fighters who would eventually become known as the Taliban started consolidating their rule in the south of Afghanistan, which they expanded to all of Afghanistan in 1996.[309] Their rule was brutal, with the Taliban expelling women from all public activities, engaging in high levels of political violence and murdering individuals of ethnic minority groups.[310] Following the Taliban's refusal to extradite Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, to the US and crack down on Al Qaeda operations in the country, the US slapped Afghanistan with economic sanctions in 2000, before ultimately launching airstrikes and invading the country in 2001.[311] Conflict among Al Qaeda, the Taliban, US military and the Afghan government continued for the next several years, until 2013-2014 when the US began reducing its military presence in the country.[312] Conflict between the Afghan government and the Taliban did continue, until it eventually seized power in 2021.[313] This instability greatly weakened Afghanistan, as evidenced also by how quickly the government collapsed to the Taliban following the full withdrawal of US troops in 2021.[314] While IS-K did

[306] Scott Tong. "A Modern History Of Afghanistan And The Taliban." WBUR. 17 August 2021. (https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2021/08/17/afghanistan-taliban-history) (22 April 2022)
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Ibid.
[311] "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan." PBS. 30 August 2021. (https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan) (22 April 2022)
[312] Ibid.
[313] Ibid.
[314] "Afghanistan Conflict: Kabul Falls to Taliban as President Flees." BBC. 16 August 2021. (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58223231) (22 April 2022)

make the choice not to attack the government/infrastructure—something it openly publicized—the weakness of Afghanistan likely also did not make it an attractive target.

The other aspects that applied in the case of Iraq, such as the PMF, don't hold here, and the non-IS-K baseline of terrorism in Afghanistan (which is largely the Taliban) appears to target the government at higher rates. With this, it appears that IS-K's religious goals, especially of killing apostate Taliban members, are more important than any insurgent goals—which the group may not fully have. It is possible, however, that the Taliban's seizure of power, that IS-K would shift its attention to attacking more government targets now that its enemy runs the government. The findings here do not provide support for IS-K adhering to a theory of religious-terrorism.

5.4 Target Type: Religious

Religious-insurgency theory expected that IS would target religious targets at a rate higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism, but still at a very low level. My findings reflected this, with religious attacks comprising a very small portion of IS's attacks due to their low strategic value. This provided strong support for religious-insurgency theory, as it shows that religious attacks are not IS priorities. IS-K appears to focus more on its religious attacks than IS does, illustrating high religiosity, which does not support it following a theory of religious-insurgency.

IS-K considers a large number of people as apostates. Unlike IS, which focuses its religious attacks mostly on Shias—and secondly on other religious/ethnic minorities like Yezidis—IS-K focuses more on Sunnis, seeing Shias as apostates but also anyone between them

and Sunni Afghan National Army recruits.[315] This is a strategic decision by the group and stems from its views of the Taliban. Even though it focuses its religious attacks more on Sunnis, it still targets other religious minorities at high rates, especially the Hazara Shia community, which many argue account to crimes against humanity.[316] While many of IS-K's attacks focus on mosques, other directly religious institutions, or the Taliban, its more civilian attacks tend to focus on major Shia gathering places, such as sports centers, community centers, and neighborhoods, and Shia events.[317] IS-K is deliberate in its attacks, with the pattern of attacks on civilians that feature a higher than expected number of Shia due to their proportion of the population not an accident. In addition to carrying out a high number of religious attacks, these attacks tend to also have high fatalities, evidenced by many of its attacks on Shia incurring over 20 deaths.[318] IS-K attacks frequently have religious targets, which is not the expectation for a group following religious-insurgency theory.

5.5 Summary

Religious-insurgency theory expected IS would target civilians at a high rate, the government at a high rate, and religious targets at a low rate. It did all of this except for the targeting of the government/infrastructure, which it did not target at a rate higher than the non-IS baseline of terrorism. However, this likely stemmed more from the weakness of the Iraqi government making other targets more strategic than issues with the theory. More analysis would have to be conducted in more stable states to test this. IS-K targeting often differed and provides

[315] "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)."
[316] "Afghanistan: Surge in Islamic State Attacks on Shia." Human Rights Watch. 25 October 2021 (https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/25/afghanistan-surge-islamic-state-attacks-shia) (22 April 2022)
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid.

very weak support for religious-insurgency theory. Like IS, it attacked civilians at a high rate and government/infrastructure at a low rate, but it attacked religious targets seemingly at a much higher rate. Its civilian targeting does not appear to be tempered at all, with religious motives clouding almost all insurgent needs. Based on qualitative analysis, religious targets appear to take up most of IS-K's focus, with the focus on religion also seeming to play more of a role into the group's low targeting of the government/infrastructure than the weakness of the Afghan government. IS-K made the choice to not attack the government/infrastructure and the police to allow more resources to go to its religious attacks and competition with the Taliban. IS places its religious attacks on the backburner, preferring instead to focus on more strategic attacks, while IS-K appears to focus on its religious attacks, or at the very least, putting them on the same level as its strategic attacking of the Taliban.

While these qualitative findings do not inherently reject religious-insurgency theory, they provide very weak support for it. IS-K's goal of adding to the caliphate that IS plans on eventually establishing is reflective of an insurgency, but IS-K's insurgent elements appear to be weak.

6.0 Suicide Attacks

Religious-insurgency theory expected a high level of suicide attacks as both sides to this theory alone anticipate a high use of suicide attacks. This is due to the ideas of martyrdom that permeate religious theories and the highly mobilizing motives that run through insurgency theory. IS did have a higher use of suicide attacks than the non-IS baseline of terrorism due to ideas of martyrdom and the insurgent high commitment level, supporting religious-insurgency theory. IS-K likely uses a similar number of suicide bombings for similar reasons, which

suggests support for religious-insurgency theory, but a lack of information on the topic makes it difficult to reach a definitive conclusion.

A 2021 Human Rights Watch report on IS-K targeting of Shias also reported the major terrorist attacks conducted by IS-K from 2015 to October 2021. This report cited one attack in 2015, two attacks in 2016, four attacks in 2017, five attacks in 2018, two attacks in 2019, four attacks in 2020, and seven attacks in 2021, for a total of 25 attacks.[319] While these only represent the biggest attacks of these years (although they do have a wide range of fatalities, from six to one-hundred and seventy), out of the twenty-five attacks, fourteen of them were suicide attacks.[320] These attacks being conducted on the Shia community does suggest that the religious element driving individuals to kill themselves for their cause does exist within IS-K, but more study is needed on this and their level of insurgent commitment. Without a quantitative analysis, it's difficult to ascertain the exact percentage of IS-K attacks that employ suicide attacks, but this information does suggest it uses them at least as much as IS. If anything, due to the fewer attacks that IS-K does carry out, it's possible that a quantitative analysis would reveal a much higher rate of suicide attacks than for IS. This high rate of suicide attacks does provide support for religious-insurgency theory.

7.0 Holidays

Religious-insurgency theory initially predicted that IS would attack at lower-than-average rates on Islamic holidays in observance of these days and at higher rates on Iraqi symbolic and IS symbolic dates to make a point. Quantitative analysis did not reflect this, with IS appearing to be as active on these dates as the non-IS baseline of terrorism. The only exception to this was for IS

[319] Ibid.
[320] Ibid.

symbolic holidays, in which the analysis revealed the non-IS baseline of terrorism conducted more attacks on these days than IS. Qualitative analyses provided no insight on how IS and the non-IS baseline of terrorism see holidays, but the small numbers and lack of statistical significance for many of these sub-characteristics makes it difficult to determine trends and the potential factors motivating these findings. Additionally, there is very little qualitative information available on IS-K activity around these specific dates, which makes it not possible to qualitatively analyze this characteristic for IS-K.

10. IS-K Summarized Implications for Religious-Insurgency Theory

IS-K is no IS, a fact that this qualitative analysis reveals. IS-K follows IS ideology and practices, but their actual fighting operations reveals several important differences. Firstly, IS-K appears to be much more lethal than IS, although it does carry out significantly fewer attacks. At the same time, it does follow many of the same choices that IS makes to increase their lethality. Quantitative analysis on IS-K attacks is needed to conclusively say if IS-K is more lethal than IS. Secondly, IS-K's targeting priorities focus more on religious objects than IS, with apparent little targeting of the police and little drive to temper civilian targeting to meet their insurgent needs, even at the expense of their long-term success. Finally, IS-K's targeting choices cannot predominately be explained by government weakness, but rather a religious motive that leads it to focus on Shias and against the Taliban. IS chooses to not attack the government so that it has more resources for other attacks. IS-K's greater religiosity and focus on its religious elements in guiding its attacks, make it seem more as adhering to a religious theory of terrorism, although more analysis is needed to make that conclusion. The goal of establishing a caliphate is still more

reflective of an insurgency, but the goal of first purifying the religion causes makes the religious side stronger. A quantitative analysis would be needed to help confirm or deny this.

11.0 Implications for Other IS Offshoots and Other Terrorists

Qualitative analysis revealed weak support for IS-K adhering to a religious-insurgency theory of terrorism. While more analysis is needed to make a definitive conclusion on the strategy of terrorism the group employs, this finding has many implications. Firstly, it suggests that not all IS groups have the same motives and priorities. While all offshoots of IS are technically all part of the same group, they appear to be adapted to the circumstances present in their state. There is not one universal doctrine instructing IS offshoots on the attacks they should be carrying out, but rather the groups seem able to largely chart their own path within the umbrella of IS ideology. Thus, the findings of this thesis—that IS adheres to a religious-insurgency strategy—should not be applied to all other IS groups without further analysis.

If religious-insurgency theory cannot be definitely applied to explain the strategies of other IS offshoots, it should also not be applied to other terrorist groups, not even those in the Middle East or Iraq, without further analysis. Religious-insurgency theory is applicable to IS in Iraq, but there is no guarantee of its applicability beyond this. At this point, religious-insurgency theory is not a theory that can explain all terrorism, and substantial future research is needed before this claim can be made.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTERRORISM, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1.0 Conclusion

Often hailed as the "world's worst terror group", through this analysis, it's clear that IS is not like other terrorist organizations.[321] Unlike other groups that rely on disillusioned groups of normal people, IS is a carefully thought-out organization that relies on experienced fighters and terrorists to wage an insurgency to capture land to implement their religious doctrine. Everything the group does is carefully planned out, with intense training, high-quality weapons, and mobilizing motives used to increase the group's lethality and a high targeting of police to weaken security control in areas. While the group is deeply religious and plans to govern its territory with one of the strictest interpretations of Islam, its religious elements are less important to the group in practice than non-religious, strategic attacks, as evidenced by IS targeting religion less than any other one. While some attacks of the group can be described by a lot of the theories commonly applied to it, such as provocation, insurgency, and religious theories, the best way to encompass IS's attacks and priorities is through my hypothesis of religious-insurgency theory. This theory combines the most successful and important elements of religious and insurgency theories and argue that while IS is undeniably religious, its commitment to religion is equivalent to its insurgent desire to control territory. IS is an insurgency in the name of God, walking the fine line between religious theory and insurgency theory.

This concept of religious-insurgency doesn't seem to necessarily hold across IS's many offshoots, with a shadow case of IS-K, IS's most well-known offshoot. While IS-K wants to establish a caliphate, like IS, its focus is more religious than IS. The bulk of its attacks are

[321] Beauchamp. 2015.

religiously motivated, whether it be against Sunnis and Shias it sees as apostates or the Taliban, which it also attacks because they are seen as apostates. It refrains from attacking the government and little information is available on how it attacks the police. This information makes IS-K appear to be adhere to more of a religious theory, which may also explain why it has been less effective in seizing territory than IS.

When terrorist organizations have extreme religious ideologies that influence how they act in many circumstances, attacks should still be carefully studied and analyzed to see if the religion is truly the driving force behind many of the attacks. In the case of IS, while religion does govern what the group believes, insurgency strategy governs how it thinks and acts, making a religious-insurgency theory the best way to explain its actions and strategic motivations.

2.0 Implications for Counterterrorism

While IS is a religious organization and driven by religious commitments, its attacks are more insurgency focused, which is made especially clear when compared to its affiliate in Afghanistan, IS-K. For IS, establishing control over territory comes before its goal of religious purification, while for IS-K, religious purification comes first. While IS-K is a religious terrorist organization, IS adheres to a religious-insurgency model. Preparing for and preventing their attacks should take this into consideration. With these findings, there are several implications for counterterrorism policies. Firstly, IS's religious elements cannot be allowed to cloud its insurgency side. IS thinks of itself like any other military, and its emulation of military practices, like training, fighting experience, and advanced weaponry, are what make it so lethal. Endeavors to destroy the group should treat like an insurgency and cut off access to what allows it to thrive, instead of focusing on countering extremist Islamic interpretations. Secondly, as the police are

one of IS's biggest targets, steps should be taken to protect them above religious or government/infrastructure targets. Finally, in dealing with the remnants of IS, especially in prison camps, the role of women in keeping the organization alive should not be overlooked.

IS is not like other terrorist organizations that preys upon poor, disillusioned groups of normal people. Instead, the group is well-thought out and draws its population from experienced terrorists and criminals with backgrounds generally conducive to terrorism. Many of its earliest and most effective fighters were recruited in prison camps, as extremists were able to radicalize and indoctrinate non-radical inmates. With these findings, I recommend that Iraq and other countries pay special attention to its prisons. Inmates should not all be allowed to socialize, especially if populations contain some radical and some not radical inmates. Criminal backgrounds can often be conducive to terrorism, making the radicalization of inmates in these circumstances dangerous. If countries are unable to keep its extremist populations in prisons separate from non-radical inmates, this may be a good opportunity for other countries to offer resources and help. This will not solve terrorism, as groups can still draw from disillusioned and angry populations and criminals dead set on joining terrorist organizations will still do so, but it can help reduce the number of experienced individuals populating the ranks of future terrorist groups, preventing them from becoming as lethal as IS. Spreading non-extreme interpretations of Islam in this situation is not as helpful as directly cutting off access to non-radical populations from extremists.

Secondly, IS's targeting of the police differs substantially from that of the non-IS baseline of terrorism. The police are a much more important target for IS than non-IS and the group also has the resources and skills needed to attack them effectively. Religious targets have been proven to not be as important to IS, and thus, counterterrorism strategy should focus more

on protecting police forces from IS than religious areas. If this triggers a decrease in police targeting and increase in religious targeting, this should be revisited, but as it stands, police need greater protection than they're getting. This feeds into a broader recommendation for counterterrorism—ensuring that elements of a group do not overshadow their practices. IS is religious but focuses more on non-religious attacks.

Finally, although IS may have been largely defeated, this may not last for long. In preparing for a future major IS resurgence, the danger of women should not be overlooked. While fighters are imprisoned in high security camps, their wives and children are in lower security camps. In these camps, like al Hol, women are keeping the caliphate alive and raising the next generations of IS fighters.[322] Women have played a substantial role in the organization domestically, acting as wives and indoctrinating children with the group's ideology, and externally, acting as the group's best recruiters, serving as suicide bombers, working to enforce moral codes, and even fighting for IS when needed.[323] While many narratives surrounding the women and wives of IS see them as having been "brainwash[ed]" or as victims of online "grooming," and thus, largely innocent in IS atrocities, many female members of IS were direct perpetrators of atrocities.[324] In many cases, women were just as active participants in IS as their male counterparts. In whatever countries decide to do with the women in al Hol and similar camps, whether it be to extradite foreign fighters' home or keep them all in these camps across Syria and Iraq, countries need to recognize the danger some of these women pose. Individuals brought back to their countries should receive adequate attention to ensure they receive justice

[322] Loveluck and Mekhennet. 2019.
[323] Bigio and Vogelstein. 2019.
[324] Mubaraz Ahmed. "Treating ISIS Brides as Victims Reeks of Stereotyping." CNN. 21 February 2019 (https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/21/opinions/isis-bride-shamima-begum-opinion-intl-gbr/index.html) (22 April 2022).

and are properly rehabilitated and individuals left in the Middle East should be closely monitored and separated from vulnerable populations. When applicable, women should receive the same punishments for their actions as men.

By cutting off the ability of terrorist organizations to recruit in prisons, offering greater protection to the police, and recognizing the danger of women, countries can reduce the lethality of potential terrorist organizations and restrain future resurgences of IS. Eliminating terrorism entirely is an unrealistic endeavor but reducing the ability of organizations to effectively function and minimizing their lethality are realistic and obtainable.

3.0 Recommendations for Future Research

The conclusions of this analysis on the theory and motivations behind IS attacks in Iraq create important spaces for future research. There are two main areas that this can fall into—further examination of IS affiliates and examination of other terrorist organizations.

IS is not like all its affiliates, something that the qualitative shadow case on IS-K revealed. While information was limited, IS-K appeared to be much more religious and prioritized its religious attacks over most others, a largely non-strategic choice. However, the group also appeared to have higher fatalities and be more effective in other areas, making a quantitative analysis of IS-K necessary to fully determine how it interacts with different theories of terrorism. In addition to IS-K, there are numerous others IS offshoots, including the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), Islamic State-Sinai Province (IS-SP), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (IS-GS), Islamic State in the Philippines, and Islamic State in Somalia (ISS), among others. While all these groups are IS offshoots, they all incorporate IS ideology and priorities in different ways and understanding what motivates them specifically would help in

counterterrorism. Looking at their attacks may reveal that they're all driven by the same priorities even if their overarching goals are the same. Knowing what truly drives each of them would help with counterterrorism.

Beyond IS groups, a similar analysis of characteristics of non-IS groups should also be conducted to see if the theory or theories used to describe a group is the best one. Groups described as being motivated by religious theories of terrorism should be prioritized as oftentimes the presence of religious elements can overshadow other ones. Rarely do studies of terrorism analyze all the attacks committed by a terrorist group in a country and how characteristics vary across the selected time but doing this is essential in ensuring that the attacks themselves line up to the theories being used to describe them. It would be interesting to see if groups like Al Qaeda are as motivated by religion as they are claimed to be, especially given that a group hailed as one of the most religiously extreme prioritizes non-religious attacks. The driving factors and priorities of terrorists are widely complex, making further research on individual groups and their strategies essential.

APPENDIX: CODEBOOK AND RAW DATA

1.0 Codebook

TABLE A.1: Codebook*				
Variable and explanation		Coded Name	Range of Values	Value based on
IS or Other		IS	IS-1 Not IS-0	'Actor1' value
Fatalities		Fatalities	0-298	'Fatalities' value
Target Type	Civilian	Civilian	Civilian-1 No civilians-0	Keyword search for: civilian
	Government/ Infrastructure	Government	Government or infrastructure-1 No government or infrastructure-0	Keyword search for: official, mukhtar, mayor, leader, electricity, tower, transmission, pylon, generator, government, department
	Religious	Religious	Religious-1 Not religious-0	Keyword search for: mosque, shrine, Yazidis, Yezidis, imam, Muslim, church, cleric, Shia, Shias, Shiite, Shiites, Christians, Jews, religious
	Police	Police	Police-1 Not police-0	Keyword search for: police or police station
Suicide Attacks		Suicide	Suicide attack present-1 No suicide attack-0	Keyword search for: suicide
Holidays	Western	Western	On the holiday +/- 3 days-1 Not on the holiday +/- 3 days-0	'Date' value adjusted for each year
	Islamic	Islamic		
	Iraq	IraqSymbolic		
	IS	ISSymbolic		

Violence Against Women	Women	Attack against women-1 Not against women-0	Keyword search for: women, violence against women
Violence Against IS	AgainstIS	Attack against IS-1 Not against IS-0	'Actor2' and 'associatedactor2'; Keyword search for: IS

*The description of all attacks was also read to verify identification

2.0 Raw Data

TABLE A.2: Raw Data

Characteristic		Mean of IS	Mean of Non-IS	Difference in Means	t	df	Confidence Low	Confidence High	P value	Statistically Significant?
Fatalities		4.821954	1.448707	3.373247	12.742	3250.9	2.935472	4.003180	2.2e-16	Yes
Target Type	Civilian	0.6947791	0.7311828	-0.0364037	-3.216	6227.3	-0.05859394	-0.01421342	0.001307	Yes
	Religious	0.03246319	0.02237722	0.01008597	2.4553	5838.3	0.002032979	0.018138962	0.01411	Yes
	Government/ Infrastructure	0.05120482	0.04911363	0.00209119	0.38281	6264.6	-0.00861752	0.01279990	0.7019	No
	Police	0.1971218	0.1057832	0.0913386	10.181	5585.6	0.07375157	0.10892567	2.2e-16	Yes
Suicide Attack		0.05354752	0.01772740	0.03582012	7.6319	4673.9	0.02661866	0.04502158	2.787e-14	Yes
Violence Against Women		0.009033121	0.007265330	0.001767791	0.78337	6057	-0.002656056	0.006191639	0.4334	No
Holidays	Islamic Holidays	0.1231593	0.1235106	-0.0003513	-0.04272	6303.3	-0.01647186	0.01576925	0.9659	No
	Western Holidays	0.07028112	0.08224353	-0.01196241	-1.8072	6396.4	-0.024938743	0.001013924	0.07078	No
	Iraq Symbolic Holidays	0.04651941	0.04155769	0.00496172	0.96516	6192.2	-0.005116089	0.015039537	0.3345	No
	IS Symbolic Holidays	0.007697456	0.015111886	-0.00741443	-2.826	6209.8	-0.012557772	-0.002271088	0.004729	Yes
Against IS		0.009036145	0.045626271	-0.03659013	-9.2474	4943	-0.04434717	-0.02883308	2.2e-16	Yes

3.0 Code in R

Number of Islamic State Terrorist attacks

```
table(FinalThesisAttacks$IS)

##
##    0    1
## 3440 2989
```

Attacks throughout the years

```
table(FinalThesisAttacks$IS[FinalThesisAttacks$year==2016])

##
##    0    1
## 1268 1147

table(FinalThesisAttacks$IS[FinalThesisAttacks$year==2017])

##
##   0   1
## 586 802

table(FinalThesisAttacks$IS[FinalThesisAttacks$year==2018])

##
##   0   1
## 442 550

table(FinalThesisAttacks$IS[FinalThesisAttacks$year==2019])

##
##   0   1
## 391 246

table(FinalThesisAttacks$IS[FinalThesisAttacks$year==2020])

##
##   0   1
## 753 244
```

Target Type

```
##Civilian
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Civilian[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAtta
cks$Civilian[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Civilian[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and FinalTh
esisAttacks$Civilian[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = -3.2554, df = 6227.7, p-value = 0.001138
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.05903846 -0.01465889
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
## 0.6945467 0.7313953

##Religious
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Religious[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAtt
acks$Religious[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Religious[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and FinalT
hesisAttacks$Religious[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 2.6017, df = 5805.1, p-value = 0.009301
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  0.00263594 0.01875178
## sample estimates:
##  mean of x  mean of y
## 0.03278689 0.02209302
```

```
##Police
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Police[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAttack
s$Police[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Police[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and FinalThes
isAttacks$Police[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 10.172, df = 5588.7, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  0.07365662 0.10882721
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
## 0.1970559 0.1058140
```

```
##Government/Infrastructure
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Government[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAt
tacks$Government[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Government[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and Final
ThesisAttacks$Government[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 0.37708, df = 6266.4, p-value = 0.7061
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.008648408  0.012767970
## sample estimates:
##  mean of x  mean of y
## 0.05118769 0.04912791
```

Fatalities

```
sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1])
```

```
## [1] 14420

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2016])

## [1] 8044

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2017])

## [1] 4959

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2018])

## [1] 851

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2019])

## [1] 364

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2020])

## [1] 202

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

## [1] 4973

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2016])

## [1] 2671

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2017])

## [1] 1394

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2018])

## [1] 270

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2019])

## [1] 323

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$year==2020])

## [1] 315
```

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAt
tacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and Final
ThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 13.262, df = 3289.4, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  2.879213 3.878220
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
##  4.824356  1.445640

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAt
tacks$year==2016], FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & F
inalThesisAttacks$year==2016])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThe
sisAttacks$year == 2016] and FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks
$IS == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2016]
## t = 9.0286, df = 1213.4, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  3.840400 5.972821
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
##  7.013078  2.106467

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAt
tacks$year==2017], FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & F
inalThesisAttacks$year==2017])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThe
sisAttacks$year == 2017] and FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks
$IS == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2017]
## t = 7.1166, df = 1123.1, p-value = 1.969e-12
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  2.755544 4.853361
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
##  6.183292  2.378840
```

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAt
tacks$year==2018], FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & F
inalThesisAttacks$year==2018])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThe
sisAttacks$year == 2018] and FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks
$IS == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2018]
## t = 6.9309, df = 878.54, p-value = 8.09e-12
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  0.6712432 1.2015828
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
## 1.5472727 0.6108597
```

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAt
tacks$year==2019], FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & F
inalThesisAttacks$year==2019])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThe
sisAttacks$year == 2019] and FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks
$IS == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2019]
## t = 4.1801, df = 555.72, p-value = 3.384e-05
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  0.3464670 0.9607086
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
##  1.479675  0.826087
```

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAt
tacks$year==2020], FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & F
inalThesisAttacks$year==2020])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThe
sisAttacks$year == 2020] and FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks
$IS == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2020]
## t = 5.062, df = 316.77, p-value = 7.051e-07
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  0.2503612 0.5687231
## sample estimates:
```

```
## mean of x mean of y
## 0.8278689 0.4183267
```

Suicide Attacks

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAttac
ks$Suicide[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and FinalThe
sisAttacks$Suicide[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 7.7584, df = 4644.6, p-value = 1.051e-14
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  0.02721869 0.04562593
## sample estimates:
##  mean of x  mean of y
## 0.05386417 0.01744186

table(FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1])

##
##    0    1
## 2828  161

table(FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##    0    1
## 3380   60
```

Holidays

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$WesternHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThe
sisAttacks$WesternHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$WesternHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and
FinalThesisAttacks$WesternHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = -1.8144, df = 6397.2, p-value = 0.06967
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.0249858831  0.0009662219
## sample estimates:
##  mean of x  mean of y
## 0.07025761 0.08226744
```

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$IslamicHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThe
sisAttacks$IslamicHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$IslamicHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and
FinalThesisAttacks$IslamicHolidays[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = -0.052099, df = 6304.8, p-value = 0.9585
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.01654831  0.01569149
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
## 0.1231181 0.1235465

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$IraqSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesis
Attacks$IraqSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$IraqSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and Fin
alThesisAttacks$IraqSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 0.95984, df = 6194.3, p-value = 0.3372
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.00514314  0.01501130
## sample estimates:
##  mean of x  mean of y
## 0.04650385 0.04156977

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$ISSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAt
tacks$ISSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$ISSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and Final
ThesisAttacks$ISSymbolic[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = -2.8284, df = 6207.8, p-value = 0.004692
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.01256504 -0.00227776
## sample estimates:
##   mean of x   mean of y
## 0.007694881 0.015116279
```

Violence Against Women

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Women[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAttacks
$Women[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Women[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and FinalThesi
sAttacks$Women[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 0.78234, df = 6057.3, p-value = 0.434
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.002658696  0.006190055
## sample estimates:
##   mean of x   mean of y
## 0.009033121 0.007267442

table(FinalThesisAttacks$Women[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1])

##
##    0    1
## 2962   27

table(FinalThesisAttacks$Women[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##    0    1
## 3415   25

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$Women==1])

## [1] 348

sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & FinalThesisAttac
ks$Women==1])

## [1] 13
```

Violence Against IS

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAtt
acks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and FinalT
hesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = -9.25, df = 4940.2, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.04436475 -0.02884808
```

```
## sample estimates:
##   mean of x   mean of y
## 0.009033121 0.045639535

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAtt
acks$year==2016], FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & Fin
alThesisAttacks$year==2016])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThes
isAttacks$year == 2016] and FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$I
S == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2016]
## t = -8.3268, df = 1609.8, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.08082283 -0.05000536
## sample estimates:
##   mean of x   mean of y
## 0.008718396 0.074132492

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAtt
acks$year==2017], FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & Fin
alThesisAttacks$year==2017])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThes
isAttacks$year == 2017] and FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$I
S == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2017]
## t = -5.7342, df = 787.2, p-value = 1.397e-08
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.10211465 -0.05003058
## sample estimates:
##  mean of x  mean of y
## 0.02119701 0.09726962

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAtt
acks$year==2018], FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & Fin
alThesisAttacks$year==2018])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThes
isAttacks$year == 2018] and FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$I
S == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2018]
## t = -1.736, df = 441, p-value = 0.08326
```

```
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.0144714294  0.0008967688
## sample estimates:
##  mean of x  mean of y
## 0.00000000 0.00678733
```

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAtt
acks$year==2019], FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & Fin
alThesisAttacks$year==2019])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThes
isAttacks$year == 2019] and FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$I
S == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2019]
## t = -1.7365, df = 390, p-value = 0.08326
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -0.016359545  0.001014277
## sample estimates:
##   mean of x   mean of y
## 0.000000000 0.007672634
```

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1 & FinalThesisAtt
acks$year==2020], FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0 & Fin
alThesisAttacks$year==2020])
```

```
##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1 & FinalThes
isAttacks$year == 2020] and FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS[FinalThesisAttacks$I
S == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$year == 2020]
## t = NaN, df = NaN, p-value = NA
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  NaN NaN
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
##         0         0
```

```
sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS==1 & FinalThes
isAttacks$IS==1])
```

```
## [1] 130
```

```
sum(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$AgainstIS==1 & FinalThes
isAttacks$IS==0])
```

```
## [1] 652
```

Suicide Attacks (Extra)

```
t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide==1], FinalThe
sisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide == 1] and
FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide == 0]
## t = 5.6234, df = 222.46, p-value = 5.587e-08
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##   5.489046 11.411898
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
## 11.176471  2.725999

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide==1 & FinalThe
sisAttacks$IS==1], FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide==
0 & FinalThesisAttacks$IS==1])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide == 1 & Fin
alThesisAttacks$IS == 1] and FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks
$Suicide == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 1]
## t = 4.1817, df = 164.28, p-value = 4.695e-05
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##   4.495152 12.537564
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
## 12.881988  4.365629

t.test(FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide==1 & FinalThe
sisAttacks$IS==0], FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide==
0 & FinalThesisAttacks$IS==0])

##
##  Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data:  FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks$Suicide == 1 & Fin
alThesisAttacks$IS == 0] and FinalThesisAttacks$Fatalities[FinalThesisAttacks
$Suicide == 0 & FinalThesisAttacks$IS == 0]
## t = 6.9228, df = 59.602, p-value = 3.49e-09
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  3.729898 6.761818
## sample estimates:
```

```
## mean of x mean of y
##  6.600000  1.354142
```