CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AL QAEDA'S STRATEGIC CULTURE

THESIS MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

Strategic culture is often presented as largely resistant to change. Most literature on strategic culture agrees that external shocks, such as a war or a revolution, can change an actor's strategic culture. In the literature on al Qaeda's strategic culture a rift exists between those who argue it is mainly rigid and those who argue it adapts to other kinds of change, such as systemic or internal change. The thesis researches whether al Qaeda's strategic culture stays rigid or adapts when faced with systemic or internal change.

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic culture is often used as an analytical tool in an attempt to comprehend an actor's strategic choices and behaviour from the actor's point of view and understanding of the world. In other words, strategic culture provides an interpretivist approach to understanding an actor's strategy. Although strategic culture is mostly applied to states, it is argued that it can also be applied to non-state actors such as al Qaeda (Howlett, 2005; Smith, 2007; Long, 2009; Greathouse, 2010; Schultz, 2012; Pierman, 2015). Within this section of the literature, a divide exists between claims that al Qaeda's strategic culture is rigid and only changes through external shocks (Schultz, 2012) and claims that it changes through these shocks *and* that it adapts to systemic change (Greathouse, 2010). It is also argued that strategic culture can change through internal changes (Farrell, 2001). It is important to know whether new assessments need to be made of al Qaeda's (and by extension similar terrorist organisations') strategic culture only after external shocks or after systemic and internal changes as well. If the latter is the case, creating a single overview of al Qaeda's strategic culture and applying the same overview to different time periods in which change could have occurred, may lead to an inadequate understanding predictions of al Qaeda' strategic behaviour, thus undermining its usefulness.

This thesis will answer the following research question: '*In what ways has al Qaeda's strategic culture changed from 1989 to the Iraq invasion in 2003?*' to determine whether more frequent assessments need to be made of al Qaeda's strategic culture after systemic or internal changes or whether one assessment suffices. In order to answer this question, the time period under consideration is divided into three smaller time periods and for each of these periods data is collected on the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture. The elements are based on the literature on strategic culture, therefore utilising a deductive approach. After the data collection, a thematic analysis is conducted in order to determine themes within the data, utilising an inductive approach. This will form a picture of al Qaeda's strategic culture in the three separate periods. Finally, these pictures are

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compared to determine how al Qaeda's strategic culture has changed in the period under consideration.

For clarity it needs to be to be noted that al Qaeda in this thesis refers to al Qaeda central. Several conceptualisations of al Qaeda and associated movements exist. The majority consider al share the following elements in the time period under consideration. Firstly, al Qaeda Central, which consists of bin Laden, Zawahiri and the direct associates that created the group in the beginning. Secondly, al Qaeda affiliates, which consists of established insurgent groups that follow the rules, commands, and guidance of al Qaeda Central. Thirdly, the groups and individuals supported by al Qaeda Central. Finally, the groups and people who find inspiration in al Qaeda's messages, but who do not have ties to them, i.e. the so called "homegrown" terrorists . This thesis focusses only on al Qaeda Central, the organisation that was created in 1989 and which was responsible for the attacks on 9 September 2001. The findings of this thesis only apply to al Qaeda Central and not to any of the other affiliates. Separate studies need to be made about the strategic cultures of the associated movements, as they will most likely be influenced by their local situation and circumstances.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review firstly briefly talks about origins and development of strategic culture, after which the main debate in strategic culture literature is discussed. Thirdly, continuity and change in strategic culture is debated. Finally, the application of strategic culture to non-state actors is discussed.

The notion that culture could be of influence on the strategic matters of states, was already discussed by Sun Tzu, Thucydides and von Clausewitz (Lantis and Howlett, 2016). However, the term 'strategic culture' did not come into existence until Snyder introduced the idea of political culture into the security policy studies domain in the late 70s (Lantis, 2002). Snyder wanted to create an alternative approach to the rational actor approach used at the time to analyse US and Soviet nuclear interaction as he saw strategic cultural differences between the US and the Soviet Union in their approach to nuclear strategy (Lantis and Howlett, 2016). Although several works, for example by Gray and Booth, were written in this period, it was not until the 1990s that strategic culture enjoyed a renewed interest on a larger scale. Several scholars in the constructivist school were interested in how cultural factors, norms, and ideas could have as much influence on international security issues as material sources, which sparked a renewed interest in strategic culture (Farrell, 2002). The material world with its constraints and opportunities was no longer deemed to be the sole influence on the motivations of state behaviour (Johnston, 1995; Glenn, 2009).

Although strategic culturalists are unified in opposing the universal applicability of different rationalist and materialist International Relations theories, there is no internal coherence within the strategic cultural community (Bloomfield, 2012). This lack of coherence is demonstrated by the high number of existing definitions. Due to the high number of definitions, it is argued that the development of common definitions should be part of the research in this field (Lantis, 2009). This lack of coherence is further demonstrated by the biggest debate within strategic culture literature: the debate between Gray and Johnston. It

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is a debate about the conceptualisation of strategic culture, which started in the 90s and remains unresolved (Bloomfield, 2012) and in which they occupy irreconcilable positions. Johnston divides strategic culture into three generations and this division has been accepted by most of the authors on strategic culture (Uzman, 2009). The second generation focuses mainly on the use of discourse of the strategy elites in order to maintain their power and will not be further discussed as it has no further applicability for this thesis. Johnston includes Gray in the first generation and he includes himself in the third generation and the debate between them is mainly an epistemological one. Gray, as a proponent of the first generation, argues that strategic culture needs to be approached as a context that shapes behaviour and is, at the same time, a constitutive element of that behaviour (Gray, 1999). According to Gray, strategic culture is not an independent variable that is causally related to its the dependent variable strategic behaviour and decisions. It is context that can be used to better *understand* actors' reasons and motivations (Meyer, 2006), i.e. an interpretivist approach to strategic culture. In contrast, Johnston takes a positivist approach. He argues that strategic culture is either an independent or an intervening variable that *explains* strategic behaviour (Johnston, 1995. Meyer, 2006). As such, it is argued that a causal relationship exists between strategic culture and behaviour. Moreover, he argues that there should, at least, be a possibility to distinguish the influence of strategic culture on behaviour from "non-strategic culture variables" (Johnston, 1995); at best, this influence is falsifiable (Johnston, 1995). This divide between *understanding* and *explaining* strategic culture has not contributed to coherence within this field and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

More agreement is found about the idea of external shock leading to change in an actor's strategic culture. Most scholars agree that an external shock can lead to change in strategic culture(Farrell, 2001; Gray, 2009; Lantis, 2009; Greathouse, 2010; Schultz, 2012; Lantis and Howlett, 2016). Farrell argues that this is the case, because shocks, such as wars, depression, revolutions, may cast doubt on the legitimacy of existing norms, disrupt the power balance within communities, and provide the opportunity for norm entrepreneurs to introduce and create consensus around other norms (Farrell, 2001). Schultz argues that shocks are often traumatic enough to discredit an actor's core values and beliefs (Schultz, 2012) and can therefore cause actors to question existing beliefs and historical narratives (Lantis and

Howlett, 2016). However, Schultz argues that strategic culture *only* changes through shocks and that the actor does not adapt its known and relied upon means and methods to a new security environment that occurred due to systemic change (Schultz, 2012). In contrast, Farrell, Greathouse, and Meyer identify other causes for changes in an actor's strategic culture applicable to this thesis. Farrell argues that change in personnel may cause beliefs and ideas to change, as people take old beliefs and ideas with them as they leave and bring new beliefs and ideas as they enter (Farrell, 2001). This is important for this thesis because due to al Qaeda's relatively small size of and the level of involvement of its leaders, one of al Qaeda's leaders leaving or being killed can profoundly influence ideas and beliefs within the organization. Additionally, Greathouse argues that an actor's strategic culture evolves due to changes either in the actor's material condition and/or the impact of a systemic change (Greathouse, 2010) and that these changes occur in ideational elements which consists of beliefs and experiences (Greathouse, 2018). Lastly, Meyer argues that norms can change gradually when new groups gain influence in a society and possibilities occur for "normative contestation" (Meyer, 2006). This is similar to Farrell's argument about internal change in an organisation, only applied on a bigger scale . Meyer conceptualises norms as beliefs that tell the actor which goals and way regarding the use of force are "appropriate, legitimate or just" (Meyer, 2006). According to Johnson, norms can either be defined as practices or as the beliefs that underpin these practices (Johnson, 2009) and Meyer clearly approaches norms as a set of beliefs underpinning behaviour. The relevance of this will be explained in the section on theoretical framework. All three authors argue that gradual change in strategic culture can occur through changes in the beliefs of the actor which will also be explained below .

Another issue is the applicability of strategic culture to non-state actors. After the attacks on 9/11 2001, more focus within security studies shifted to terrorist groups (Greathouse, 2010). As mentioned the works of Snyder Gray, Booth, and Johnston on strategic culture literature focus almost completely on states. This makes sense as during the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the biggest (if not the only) threat to the United States in the bipolar international order, and vice versa. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a unipolar international order came into existence with the United States as the sole hegemon. Although the attacks on

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9/11 did not change the global order, they did cause a change (Pierman, 2015). The attacks demonstrated that, although transnational terrorist organisations, such as al Qaeda, do not possess territory and sovereignty, they could exercise a significant influence on the international system (Greathouse, 2010) by challenging the global hegemon, the United States. After the 9/11 attacks, strategic culture was applied to al Qaeda to better understand their rationality of their strategic decisions and behaviour (Smith, 2008). The suicide operations and indiscriminate killing of innocent people has often been labelled as the action of an irrational actor. The application of strategic culture to a non-state actor such as al Qaeda by Long provided an insight that al Qaeda was not an irrational actor, but that this actor operated from a rationale that differed from those trying to understand this new opponent. Despite this, the literature on the application of strategic culture to al Qaeda's is very limited. This might be related to the approach often taken to strategic culture. If strategic culture is considered only to apply to actors with a material basis (i.e. a defined territory accepted by the international community), then it would only apply to states. If ideational and normative factors are considered to be sufficient to form the basis of a strategic culture, it can also be applied to non-state actors, such al Qaeda (Howlett, 2005).

Long is the first to apply strategic culture to al Qaeda (Long, 2009). He focuses on the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by al Qaeda. His article is quoted or referred to by other when they argue that strategic culture is indeed applicable to terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda (Greathouse, 2010; Pierman, 2015). Long argues that despite al Qaeda not being a state nor a nation in terms of international relations, strategic culture is nevertheless applicable to al Qaeda. He argues that 'nation' can be conceptualised as "a group of people who strongly identify with an overarching, shared cultural narrative" (Long, 2009) which is an important focus in strategic cultural analysis. Al Qaeda has used its version of religion to shape this narrative in which the religious bonds overrule state identification (Long, 2009) and thus have shaped the notion of a nation to which strategic culture can be applied. Although the ultimate goal was the establishment of a caliphate (territory ruled by the application of the Sharia), al Qaeda was not in possession of this caliphate in the period under consideration. Due to the lack of territory al Qaeda forms the first transnational

terrorist organisation whose strategic behaviour and decisions are analysed by means of strategic culture.

Several years later, Schultz also applies strategic culture to al Qaeda. He attempts to create a general overview of al Qaeda's strategic culture and does not specifically focus on the use of WMDs by al Qaeda. He argues that the al Qaeda stood at the bases of much of the current global jihadi movement (Schultz, 2012). Although Long does not explicitly state that al Qaeda's strategic culture is susceptible to change, Schultz explicitly states that an actor's strategic culture in general (this includes al Qaeda's strategic culture) is mostly rigid and only changes through shock, as noted above. Systemic change in the security environment of the actor does not lead to a change in means and methods, it leads to the use of means and methods that are not fit for a changing or new security environment (Schultz, 2010). This means that strategic culture hinders adaption to systemic change resulting out-of-date or unfit methods for the new security or strategic environment after this kind of change.

In contrast, Greathouse argues that an actor's strategic culture evolves without being exposed to shocks and is applicable to non-state actors and he uses al Qaeda as an example. Although he argues that strategic culture is applicable to non-state actors and that it evolves over time, he does not demonstrate that al Qaeda's strategic culture has changed when systemic changes occurred, because he does not apply a strategic cultural analysis to al Qaeda. Farrell argues more generally that an actor's strategic culture can change due to a change in personnel, which will be explained further below. This thesis looks to contribute to the literature on al Qaeda's strategic culture, researching whether al Qaeda's strategic culture only changes through shocks and remains rigid when confronted with systemic or internal change or whether al Qaeda's strategic culture is affected by systemic or internal change.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

As stated in the literature review, the interest during the 90s in the influence of cultural factors, norms and ideas on international security by several constructivist scholars, sparked a renewed interest in strategic culture (Lantis and Howlett, 2016). Constructivism argues that reality is socially constructed by agents and structures that are mutually constitutive, intersubjectivity, and the centrality of ideational factors, such as identity and norms to "the constitution and dynamics of world politics" (McDonald, 2013). Strategic culture fits well within this constructivist ontology as strategic culture is an analytical frameworks that looks at the influence of normative and ideational factors on an actor's strategic decisions and behaviour. Moreover, strategic culture is intersubjective as its normative and ideational factors need to be shared and believed by, at least, the strategic elite of a community. Strategic culture uses these normative and ideational factors to create an understanding of an actor's strategic choices and behaviour from the perspective of the actor itself; this constitutes an interpretivist epistemology. The epistemology and ontology of this thesis, result in a qualitative research strategy. It necessary to acquire a great amount of detail to research the possible changes in the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture. Therefore, a case study research design is employed.

Based on the literature on strategic culture, this thesis considers the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's to be norms, values and perceptive lens (Johnson, 2009). Although Johnson also includes identity as a constitutive elements of strategic culture in her framework, others (including Johnson herself in other works) argue that identity shapes the constitutive elements of strategic culture (Smith, 2008; Lantis, 2009; Johnson, 2009a; Pierman, 2015). Consequently, this thesis recognises the importance of identity for al Qaeda's strategic culture, but does not include it as a constitutive element of al Qaeda's strategic culture.

Strategy is an attempt to achieve "political *ends*, through the choice of suitable strategic *ways*, employing largely the military *means* then available" (Gray, 2015). Strategic culture influences all three elements: the perceived availability of certain ways to utilise certain means; and the perception of the desired political ends. A change in the constitutive

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elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture should therefore be reflected in a change in the perceived ways, means, and ends. It is important to note that a change in ways, means, and ends is not necessarily the result of a change in strategic culture, as there are many reasons why an actor would adapt its strategy. Norms, values, and 'perceptive lens', are the foundational elements of strategic culture and need further conceptualisation.

The first foundational element to be conceptualised is norms, which can be conceptualised as either a set of practices or the beliefs underpinning those practices (Johnson, 2009), see literature review. As beliefs are included in the elements of 'perceptive lens' in this thesis, norms are conceptualised as "accepted and expected modes of behavior" (Johnson, 2009). The link between identity and behaviour are important to al Qaeda. Identity is crucial to al Qaeda's self-proclaimed roles of protector and vanguard of the ummah (Islamic community). Consequently, al Qaeda does not allow other sources other than their version of Islam to guide their behaviour. Furthermore, behaviour associated with the collective identity al Qaeda has constructed (for example, fighting jihad against infidels and/or apostate regimes) is expected of those who claim to share this identity.

Secondly, values need to be conceptualised. Values can refer to ultimate values such as security, honour, equality, power and so forth. Values can also refer to conceptions of what is desirable for a person or community (one or more of the ultimate values). They are stable and are not situation dependent. Values can be seen as a compass when a community or an individual is faced with moral choices. They also prioritise certain end-states or goals over others and are highly resistant to change (Matti and Newell, 2017).

The last foundational element to be conceptualised is perceptive lens. This concept consists of beliefs (true or not) and experiences that have an impact on the perception of the actor, which, combined, colour the way an actor perceives the world (Johnson, 2009). Values are linked with situationally dependent attitudes and opinions by "more specific and empirically orientated beliefs" (e.g. worldviews, conceptions of reality, or policy core beliefs) (Matti and Newell, 2017), in other words, what people hold to be true. These beliefs determine how an actor interprets, gives meaning to, and activates values in specific areas of the actor's life.

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These beliefs are less resistant to change than values and they can be influenced and changed through the process of learning (Matti and Newell, 2017). This element is most susceptible to evolutionary change as Greathouse argues that experiences that have not yet become norms can influence the strategic culture of an actor through this element. It allows gradual evolution of an actor's strategic culture when it has to adapt to systemic change (Greathouse, 2018) or internal changes, e.g. change in personnel (Farrell, 2001), as argued in the literature review. Both values and beliefs play an important role in any religion, which makes them important elements in creating a collective religious identity, as al Qaeda has attempted to create. Simultaneously , values and beliefs influence an actor's strategic culture. Values determine what a strategic actor considers important and therefore influence strategic decision making by prioritising options.

'Perceived means , ways to achieve a community's security objectives (ends)' are influenced by an actor's strategic culture, i.e. changes in the actor's strategic culture should be reflected in changes in these perceived means, ways, and ends. Consequently, data on the means, ways, and ends as perceived by al Qaeda are collected to determine whether changes occurred in the ways al Qaeda utilised their means to achieve their ends. This category does not need further conceptualisation, as they are exactly what it says: the means and ways perceived by al Qaeda to be available and useful to achieve their ends. It will be referred to as category 'perceived means, ways, and ends' from here on, for sake of brevity.

Directed content analysis is used to identify and categorise norms, values, and perceptive lens as well as category 'perceived means , ways and ends' in three types of text: ideological, propaganda, and strategic writings. The key concepts have been identified by existing theory on strategic culture, as discussed above, and will be used as coding categories. Data will be coded as 'norm' when it refers to identity related expectations of behaviour (the 'ought-to-ness' of behaviour) and proper and improper conduct (Johnson, 2009). Data will be coded 'values' when it indicates to one or more of al Qaeda's ultimate values, and al Qaeda's notions of right vs wrong and good vs evil (Johnson, 2009). Data will be coded as 'perceptive lens' when it indicates al Qaeda's worldviews and its perception of the world. Experiences

related to matters of conflict and security that have been of impact on al Qaeda will also be coded as 'perceptive lens'. Data will be coded as category 'perceived means, ways and ends' if it refers to the ways, means and/or ends as perceived by al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda's identity needs to be 'mobilised' so it can be communicated to others al Qaeda wants to reach (possible supporters, potential members etc.). Ideology acts as a vehicle to mobilise an actor's identity and the combination of identity and ideology provides an audience and target (through the 'us and them' divide), ends to achieve, and a justification (Smith, 2012). This means that the norms, values, perceptive lens, and 'perceived means, ways and ends' of this actor can be found in its ideological writings. Al Qaeda's ideological writings are aimed at a Muslim audience. The ideological texts that are used to identify and categorise the key concepts are *Join the Caravan, Moderate Islam is Prostration to the West, Loyalty and Enmity, Sharia and Democracy,* and *Jihad, Martyrdom, and the Killing of Innocents.* The content of ideological writing differs from al Qaeda's propaganda writings, as the latter are aimed at a Western audience. However, together, these two types of writing accurately reflect the evolution of al Qaeda's belief structures. In other words, they disclose much of al Qaeda's ideology (Ibrahim, 2007; Quiggin, 2009). Therefore, al Qaeda's propaganda texts can also be used to identify and categorise norms, values, perceptive lens, and 'perceived means, ways and ends'. The texts that are used *Declaration of Jihad*, *Jihad against Jews and Crusaders, World's Most Wanted Terrorist, Interview with bin Laden,* and *Why We Are Fighting You: Osama bin Laden's Letter to Americans.* These ideological and propaganda texts are described as "the most relevant and influential (meaning works that have been quoted or used by those who have taken the path of violent jihad)" (Quigging, 2009).

Similarly, Al Qaeda's strategic writing such as *Revolutionary Wars*, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* (unfortunately the only material available in English are excerpts), *Fourth Generation Warfare*, and *A Practical Course for Guerrilla War* will be mainly used to identify and categorise 'perceived means, ways and ends', as well as norms values, and perceptive lens, if they occur in these documents. These works and their authors have been of great

influence on al Qaeda's strategy (Stout et al, 2008; Ryan, 2013). It needs to be noted that *A Practical Course for Guerrilla War* is considered to be the highpoint of military strategy by al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP). However, Ryan claims that this work on military strategy will have been spread across the whole of al Qaeda, although slightly adapted to the local circumstances (Ryan, 2013), which is why it is included in this thesis. There are reasons to believe that this work reflected the strategic view of al Qaeda Central. The Arabian Peninsula in general, and Saudi Arabia specifically (the theatre of operations for AQAP) were important for bin Laden (Stout, 2008). Therefore, it is very likely that bin Laden was involved with, or at least approved, of this work. His leadership style is compared to that of Hitler, mostly aloof concerning military matters, but overly involved in projects that were of personal interest to him. Bin Laden was never fully engaged with the general planning process, but he wanted to select the precise point where the truck was to hit in the attack on the American embassy in Nairobi, 1998 (Bergen & Cruickshank, 2012). It seems very unlikely that he would not (at least) be involved in a work of such importance to him.

A timeline that starts at the start of al Qaeda in 1989 and ends at the Iraq invasion in 2003 by the US and UK will be created and al Qaeda's norms, values, perceptive lens, and 'perceived means, ways and ends' found in the ideological, propaganda, and strategic writings will be entered into this timeline chronologically. Before the start of the timeline of period I, a section on the ideological foundation of al Qaeda will discuss several recurring concepts and ideas that form much of the basis for al Qaeda's norms, values and perceptive lens. This section will facilitate understanding the of the themes found in the different categories per period. Moreover, it will demonstrate the continuity of several themes and therefore continuity in certain elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture. The 2003 Iraq invasion has been specifically chosen as an end point, as the insurgency in Iraq took precedence in the writings of al Qaeda rather than the global struggle. The timeline is divided into three parts based on occurrences in the different parts. Part I covers the start of al Qaeda to the 1996 *Declaration of Jihad,* as reorientation of al Qaeda takes place in this time frame. Several letters and internal documents are used to clarify al Qaeda's strategic outlook at the beginning of and during this period I. Part II starts in 1996 and lasts until 9/11 2001. In this time frame, the reorientation evolves further and culminates in the 9/11 attacks. Part III

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starts after 9/11 2001 to the Iraq invasion in 2003. After 9/11, al Qaeda was attacked and dislodged form Afghanistan, which can be considered a shock that can alter its strategic culture, as discussed above. For all three parts of the timeline the different types of available texts will be mined for the different categories and sub-categories. Patterns, or themes, existing in the categories are identified by thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This way a snapshot will be made of al Qaeda's strategic culture in the three different time intervals. These three snapshots can be compared and analysed for differences and similarities. As argued above, changes in al Qaeda's strategic culture should be reflected in changes in 'perceived means, ways and ends' in these time intervals. Therefore, when changes in al Qaeda's strategic culture are identified, it will also be checked whether change occurred in 'perceived means, ways and ends', to determine whether the changes in strategic culture have led to a change in al Qaeda's strategy. For each period, an overview of the attacks by al Qaeda found in the global terrorism database will be added at the end of each analysis. This overview will be used to determine whether changes in al Qaeda's strategic culture have led to changes in strategic behaviour. Although a great number of attacks in these periods took place and were suspected to have been executed by al Qaeda, only those attacks are included that have either been claimed by al Qaeda or which have been traced back to them. Finally, it is necessary to clearly identify moments of possible internal or systemic change in the time intervals (if they took place) as these changes could indicate possible evolutionary changes to the actor's strategic culture. Therefore, a short description of moments of possible external shocks, internal and/or systemic change will be provided.

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AL QAEDA'S IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

This section will briefly discuss the Egyptian and Saudi development of Salafi-Jihadi thought. Several ideologues, Ibn Taymiyya, Mawdudi, Qutb, Faraj and Azzam, have been of great influence on the development of al Qaeda's ideology (Gregg, 2010). Al Qaeda's ideology combines some of their ideas, and adapts and continues others. This essentially fuses the Egyptian and Saudi strands of Salafi-Jihadi thought and forms a unique strand of its own. The core ideas of this ideology do not only form the basis of al Qaeda's norms, values, and perceptive lens, they also form a thread throughout the three periods, thus proving continuity to al Qaeda's strategic culture.

At its core, al Qaeda's is a Salafist organisation. Salafists believe that the generation of the prophet Muhammed and the two generations after him (*al salaf al salihin*, hence the term Salafism) constituted the 'golden age' of Islam. Salafists wish to return to the core of Islam as taught by "the Quran, the Hadith (oral reports of the Prophet's teachings and choices), and the Sunnah (records of the Prophet's teachings and choices)" (Holbrook, 2014), the only accepted sources of the *sharia* (Islamic law) (Ryan, 2016). The goal is to (re)create the Islamic society of the Prophet's generation and the two generations after him, with strict implementation of the sharia, i.e. taking believers back to pure Islam of these three generations. By reconstructing the 'golden age' of Islam, they believe that they will be the *al firqa al najiya* (saved sect) (Maher, 2016). Wiktorowicz created different typologies of the Salafists: purists (concerned with maintaining purity within Islam non-violently), politicos (trying to affect change through politics), and jihadis (supportive of violent means to create Islamic states) (Wiktorowicz, 2006). This was adapted slightly by Maher into clerical bodies (advisory), activists (challenge) and violent groups (who reject the existing order) the state (Maher, 2016). Both typologies demonstrate that within Salafi thought some Salafists use the political order to affect change. However, for Salafi-Jihadis, only one way exists: the rejection of the current international order and the use of violent means to create a caliphate. Salafi-Jihadism emerged during the fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (Wiktorowicz, 2006). It considers Jihad (i.e. the use of violence) as the only way to achieve

Salafist goals. When bin Laden and Zawahiri formed the al Qaeda leadership, they fused the Egyptian and Saudi line of this Salafi-Jihadi thought, thus forming al Qaeda's ideology. As will become clear in the analytical sections, the Jihad (e.g. violence) to achieve Salafi goals forms the core of al Qaeda's strategic culture.

Firstly, the Egyptian line of Salafi thought is discussed. This line starts with Ibn Taymiyya, who lived when the Mongols conquered Mesopotamia and started their own dynasty. The Mongols had converted to Islam and therefore became members of the same religion as the Muslims they oppressed. As a religious prohibition against revolting against Muslim rulers exists within Islam, this prevented a revolution from taking place. However, Ibn Taymiyya argued that *tawhid* (or unity of God) did not only apply to God as the sole creator and sovereign of the universe, but also to the worship and obedience of God alone. He argued that following man-made law was an act of *kufr* (apostasy or unbelieve), punishable by death. The prohibition against revolt is only valid when the rulers are Muslim and govern according to the sharia. The Mongol leaders did not rule according to sharia and were therefore declared *takfir* (not Muslim), thus legitimizing jihad against them (Stout et al, 2008). In other words, using man-made law is virtually the same as the worship of or being obedient to something other than God and therefore apostasy (Wiktorowicz, 2005). The ideas and concepts introduced by Ibn Taymiyya's form a recurring theme in the analysis of the three periods.

In the 1960s, Qutb also argued for takfir and Jihad. His importance in the creation of the Salafi-jihadi movement is not easily overstated as he is often seen as the godfather of revolutionary Sunni Islam (Wiktorowicz, 2005). Qutb borrows the concepts *jahiliyyah* and *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty) from his contemporary Mawdudi. Both concepts are important in al Qaeda ideology and its strategy and will be explained here. *Jahiliyyah* is the state of ignorance or barbarism of the Arab world before the Prophet Muhammed brought Islam. Mawdudi made a distinction between members of the 'party of God' (i.e. the one following his ideas) and 'party of Satan', which includes Muslims who followed man-made law (Wiktorowicz, 2005), the latter being in a state *modern jahiliyyah.* This state indicates that

Muslims deviated from Islam (secular law was used in Muslim countries by Muslim leaders) and elites followed Western ideas (Wiktorowicz, 2005; Gregg, 2010). For Mawudi, being a true Muslim meant fighting against this state of ignorance (Wiktorowicz, 2005). Qutb essentially fuses *modern jahiliyya* and Taymiyya's medieval idea that Muslims follow God's law in order to safeguard tawhid (God's unity). *Hakimiyyah* is the idea that sovereignty belongs to God. All authority is stripped away from worldly leaders and the only recognised source of authority is God, all man-made law needs to be rejected (Ryan, 2013). This created an even bigger dichotomy between the 'Party of God' and the 'Party of Satan'. This creates the situation that those who do not practise faith by following the sharia and strictly follow God's commands (i.e. Qutb's view) are members of the 'Part of Satan' (*jahiliyya*). This would constitute apostasy and they are no longer considered Muslim. Qutb finds a different solution to *modern jahailiyya* than Mawdudi. He allows Jihad (the use of force) to create an Islamic state. Mawdudi was willing to work within the system, Qutb wants to overthrow it. Qutb argues against jihad as just a defensive war to protect Islam and Muslims from external threats. As the rulers in the Muslim world followed non-Islamic laws, they could be considered not real Muslims (takfir) and they are are part of *jahiliyya,* which consequently legitimises the use of violence against them to remove them from power (Wiktorowicz, 2005). This line of reasoning also applies to international law and international institutions (Stout et al, 2008). Lastly, Qutb argues for the need of a vanguard fighting *jahiliyyah* on behalf of the *Ummah* (Islamic society) (Holbrook, 2014).

In the works discussed above, it is apparent that violence against apostate leaders is legitimised and the idea of a vanguard begins to emerge. In his work '*The Neglected Duty',* Faraj elevated Jihad to the sixth pillar of Islam, arguing that Jihad is central to Islam and that it is second only to belief. He also applies Qutb's argument discussed above to rulers who use non-Islamic laws are *kufr* and need to be removed (Wiktorowicz, 2005). This was rapidly embraced by Jihadis. Although Jihad as a defensive war (to protect Islam against external threats) is recognised by most Salafists, Salafi-Jihadis claim that violence justified by religion is a sign of devotion. It seen as a legitimate tool to change society and a method to subvert perceived adversaries, both within and outside Muslim societies. Salafi-Jihadism interprets political realities "according to puritanical values systems and sources of identity" (Holbrook,

2014) and looks for violent ways to affect these realities. Lastly, the Azzam 's '*Join the Caravan*' is influential, because it is an individual duty of every Muslim to defend Islam by means of violent Jihad, wherever Islam is under attack. '*Join the Caravan*' is one of the primary sources used in the analysis norms, values, and perceptive lens in period I.

Although much of the radicalisation of Islamism can be attributed to Qutb in the Egyptian strand of Salafism, the Saudi strand contributed to this radicalisation through Ibn Wahhab. His '*The Ten Voiders of Islam*' states ten reasons to automatically expel someone from Islam (see appendix A) of which three are very important to Jihadis. Firstly, if a Muslim associates someone or something in the worship of God, he becomes a disbeliever (used by Jihadis to criticise rulers using non-Islamic law). Secondly, any Muslim who judges by non-Islamic laws and who believes non-Islamic law to be superior to Islamic law. Judging by non-Islamic law is enough for Jihadis to declare someone an apostate. Both of these points relate to Ibn Taymiyya's emphasis on *tawhid*, which is important for both Egyptian and Saudi Salafi-Jihadism. Lastly, in the Saudi strand, support or help of non-believers/non-Muslims against Muslims is considered apostasy (Wiktorowiz, 2005). Ibn Wahhab was influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah's writing and, like Qutb, he also stressed the importance of Jihad. Ibn Wahhab wanted to rid Islam of influences other than the Prophet and his teachings. Like Qutb, Ibn Wahhab also had a very strict reading of Islam; all inventions in Islam since the earliest times were considered polytheism and thus a threat to *tawhid*. Sufis, Shi'ites, Christian and Jews (anybody who did not follow this version of Islam) were considered *kufr* and it was possible to wage Jihad against them (Ryan, 2013).
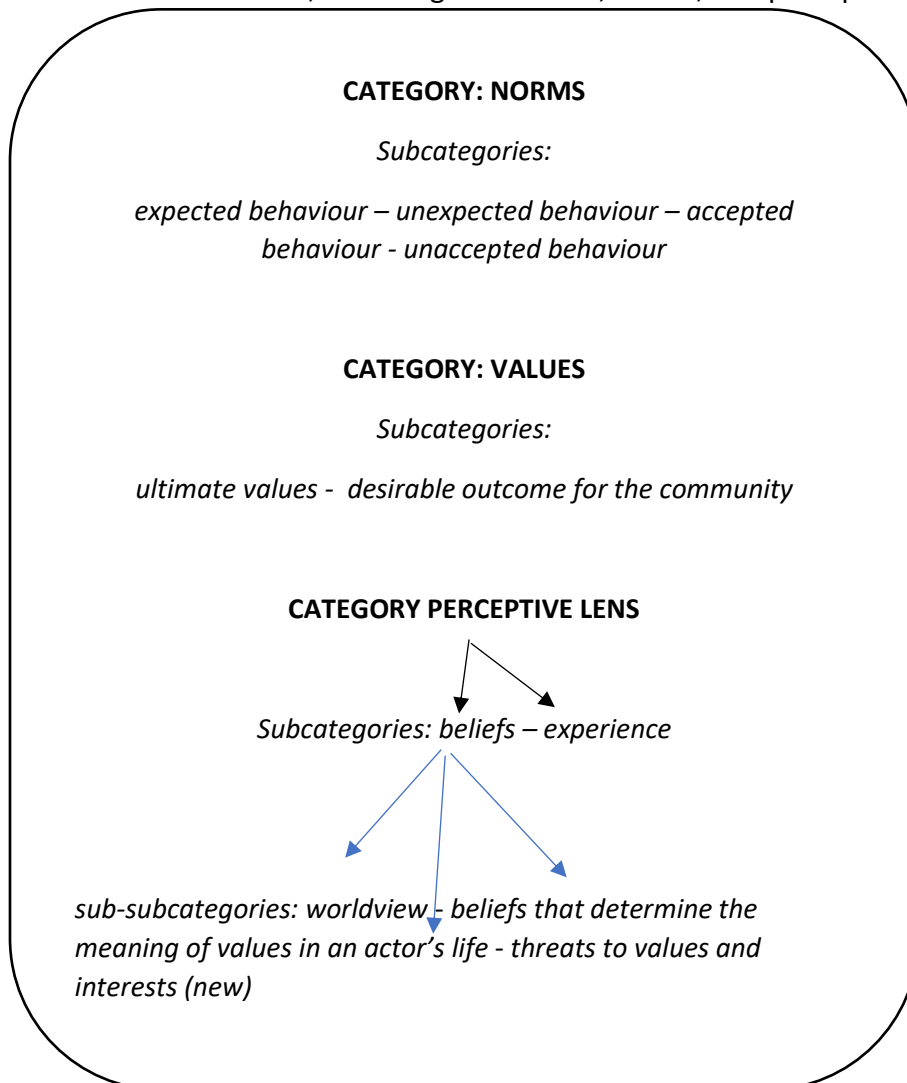
When bin Laden and Zawahiri met in Afghanistan, the Egyptian and Saudi strain of Salafi thought fused thus forming al Qaeda's ideology, which is essentially a continuation of the ideas discussed above starting with Ibn Taymiyya. Al Qaeda sees itself as Qutb's vanguard fighting modern *jahiliyyah,* protecting *tawhid* (Gods unity), fighting the party of Satan. Due to the principle of *hakimiyyah* (all sovereignty belongs to God) all man-made laws are rejected. This means that violence can be used legitimately against Muslim leaders that implement secular laws, because they are apostates and therefore part of *modern jahiliyyah.* This justifies the use of Jihad. Where previously solutions were sought within the

existing political system (by Mawdudi), Qutb seeks to overthrow it. Moreover, Qutb envisions a vanguard to fight *jahiliyyah* on behalf of the Ummah. After, Qutb, Jihad is seen as not just a way of achieving one's goals, i.e. Jihad is not solely utilised instrumentally. Jihad is elevated to one of the pillars of Islam. It has become a means to show devotion, it is a violent manner of expressing one's faith. Lastly, in the Egyptian strand of Salafi-Jihadi thought, Jihad is presented as the duty of every single Muslim. The Saudi strand of Salafi-Jihadi thought mainly introduces proclaiming someone a disbeliever when one associates anything in the worship of God. Furthermore, judging by non-Islamic rule is enough for Jihadis to declare someone an apostate. Lastly, the support or help of non-believers/non-Muslims against Muslims is considered an act of apostasy. The arguments, concepts, and ideas discussed above are used by al Qaeda to legitimise the use of violence against, what they consider, apostate leaders (the Saudi regime, for example). As will become clear in the analytical section, although there is some degree of variation, these arguments, concepts, and ideas form a red thread throughout the different periods under consideration. They provide al Qaeda's strategic culture with continuity. Moreover, because al Qaeda is a Salafi-Jihadi organisation, violence is considered the only option to achieve their ends, thus severely limiting the range of options considered feasible to achieve its goals. In the analysis of the different periods, it becomes clear that Salafi-Jihadi thought has heavily influenced al Qaeda's strategic culture as al Qaeda's norms, values, and perceptive lens (strategic culture's constitutive elements) are derived from this world view.

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FINDINGS

Each period starts with data (taken from the Global Terrorism Database) of the attacks attributed by al Qaeda in that specific period. For each period data is collected on the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture (i.e. norms, values, and perceptive lens) from the individual documents per document type (treatise, communiques, and strategic writing). For clarity's sake, these documents are mentioned at the beginning of the analysis of each period. All the references made in this period refer to these documents, i.e. primary sources. For all three periods the major themes are identified that occur in norms, values, and perceptive lens. Continuity and/or change in the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture will briefly be discussed in the analysis of the period and will be discussed further when the three periods are eventually compared. The diagram demonstrates how, based on the literature, the categories norms, values, and perceptive lens were further divided into subcategories before data collection.

CATEGORY: NORMS

Subcategories:

expected behaviour – unexpected behaviour – accepted behaviour - unaccepted behaviour

CATEGORY: VALUES

Subcategories:

ultimate values - desirable outcome for the community

CATEGORY PERCEPTIVE LENS

Subcategories: beliefs – experience

sub-subcategories: worldview - beliefs that determine the meaning of values in an actor's life - threats to values and interests (new)

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During coding of period I, a new sub-subcategory was added to the subcategory *beliefs*, namely *threats to values and interests* (hereafter: *threats*)*,* which was then added to period II and III. Not included in the overview above are the ways, means, and ends, because they do not form a constitutive part of al Qaeda's strategic culture. They are included in the analysis of the different time periods, because, as argued above, a change in al Qaeda's strategic culture should be reflected in a change in the ways, means, and ends as perceived by al Qaeda. The analysis of each period will start with a brief overview of events that occur in that period that could have influenced the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture.

Attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda in period I

29 December 1992 - Three people die when bombs are detonated at two different hotels in Aden, Yemen. In both bombings, the target was US military personnel who had stayed there previous to the attacks, but who had already left.

This period starts with the creation of al Qaeda to fight Soviet troops in Afghanistan. However, the Soviet Union withdraws troops from the Afghanistan in September 1989. On 24 November 1989 Abdullah Azzam, one of the founders of al Qaeda and mentor to bin Laden, is killed when his car explodes. Eventually, the Soviet Union collapses in December 1991 and the bipolar order changes to a unipolar order, with the US as hegemon. The following documents were used to gather data on al Qaeda's norms, values, and perceptive lens in this period: *Join the Caravan* (Azzam, 1987), several letters from bin Laden to people in Saudi Arabia, minutes of an al Qaeda meeting by an anonymous source, several letters to al Qaeda leadership by 'l-Walid, and Sharia and Democracy (Zawahiri, 2007).

Firstly, the category *norms* was analysed for period I. A focus exists in the subcategory *expected behaviour* in this period on the behaviour of members of the Ummah as well as apostate regimes. It becomes apparent that Al Qaeda condemns all behaviour in the Muslim world that deviates from their views. A theme clearly present in *norms* is Jihad. Firstly, Jihad is presented by Azzam as a religious duty "fulfilling the duty of Jihad, and responding to the call of the Lord" (Azzam, 1989). Secondly, it is presented as a call to the people of countries being invaded "when the enemy enters an Islamic land or a land that was once part of the Islamic lands it is obligatory on the inhabitants of that place to go forth to face the enemy" (Azzam, 1989). This indicates a defensive Jihad as opposed to an offensive Jihad (see period III). Finally, it is presented as a an individual obligation of every Muslim "Jihad today is individually obligatory (fard 'ayn) in person and by wealth, in every place that the Disbelievers have occupied" (Azzam, 1989). In the subcategory *unaccepted behaviour,* 'not performing Jihad' is a theme. The importance attributed by al Qaeda to Jihad is
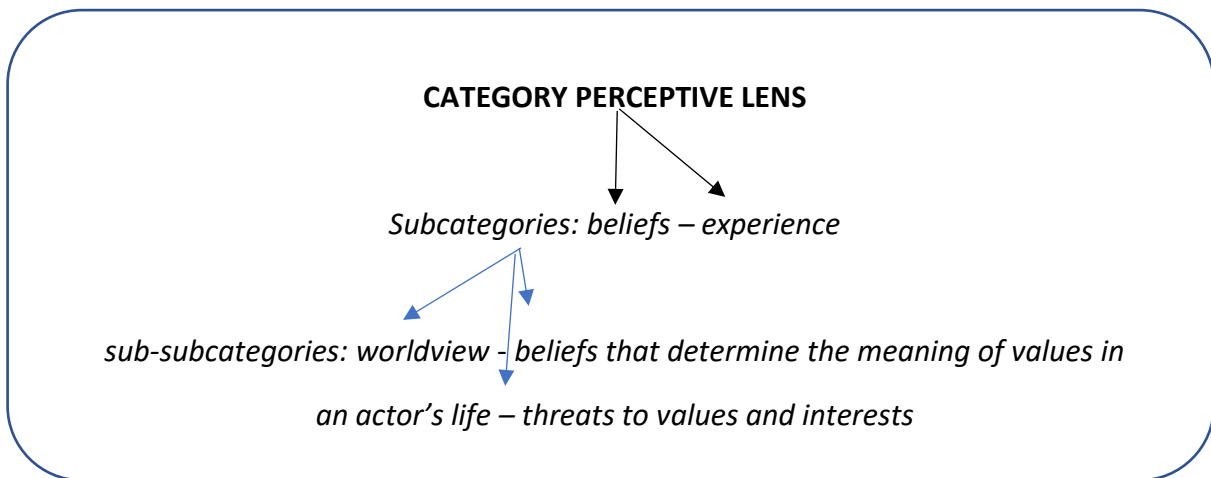
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demonstrated by the following data entry: "everyone not performing Jihad today is forsaking a duty, just like the one who eats during the days of Ramadhan without out excuse" (Azzam, 1989). Several other data entries refer to Jihad in a similar manner, giving a further indication of how important Jihad is. Azzam, who preaches about Jihad vehemently, is considered as one of the founders of al Qaeda and as bin Laden's mentor, has therefore been of great influence on bin Laden and al Qaeda. Due to Azzam, Jihad, i.e. the use of violence to reach certain ends, forms the core way of achieving a set goal or end of a Salafi-Jihadi organisation such as al Qaeda.

Another theme that became apparent in the subcategory *expected behaviour* was the duty to overthrow infidel rulers. Zawahiri writes that "it is obligatory to overthrow them, to wage jihad against them, and to depose them installing a Muslim ruler in their stead" (Zawahiri, 2007a). At the same time he states that "it is forbidden to overthrow a tyrant" (Zawahiri, 2007a) when they are Muslim. This is based on Ibn Taymiyya's argument that was discussed in the previous section. It provides continuity as this idea is discussed in the other periods as well. The importance of this argument is demonstrated when bin Laden labels the Saudi regime apostates: "as for one who legitimizes interest he is an apostate and infidel [...] because he makes himself an equal to God [...](bin Laden, 1994d). He further criticises the Saudi regime: "You placed Allah's heavenly Shari'a and his Quranic laws at the bottom of your list of sources for arbitration. You placed the scum of human positivist thoughts, the customs and traditions of the pre-Islamic epoch, and the laws of judicial systems above the Shari'a" (bin Laden, 1995). Placing 'man-made law' above the Sharia is considered a threat to the unity of God (see *values* below) and therefor unacceptable. This constant reminder of the regime's apostacy is an attempt to legitimise the use of violence in attempts to overthrow the regime, as apostasy legitimises violent means. All data above is related to behaviour concerning local leaders, or the "close enemy".

The theme that becomes apparent in the category *values* is the unity of God, or *tawhid,* the most important (ultimate) value in period I. God is considered to be the sole creator and as the only object worthy of worship. Related to the topic of this thesis, this value needs to be protected above anything else. Furthermore, the elevation of Jihad to the second important

thing in Islam after belief itself, is continued by Azzam. He claims that "Jihad is the zenith of Islam" (Azzam, 1987), which was started by Faraj, as discussed in the previous section. The combination of *tawhid* and Jihad, means that anything that threatens the unity of God (e.g. the apostate regimes discussed above) can be violently disposed of and that Jihad is something to value in its own right. Both these themes are discussed further in the section about perceptive lens.

A reminder of how the category perceptive lens is constructed:

CATEGORY PERCEPTIVE LENS

Subcategories: beliefs – experience

sub-subcategories: worldview - beliefs that determine the meaning of values in an actor's life – threats to values and interests

An important theme in the subcategory *experience* is that Muslims are under attack in different countries, ranging from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Bosnia, Palestine, Lebanon, and India. "The Ummah is under threat in all this countries […] the Muslims in Afghanistan are in severe distress and definite, menacing peril" (Azzam, 1987). "The UN, which humiliated the Muslims of Somalia […]. The UN supported Jewish attacks in Lebanon. The UN turned a blind eye to the massacres committed by the Hindus against Muslims in India and Kashmir" (bin Laden, 1994b). This not only lists the countries where Muslims are under attack, but also the lack of action to protect Muslims by the UN. A picture is painted here of the Ummah being under consistent attack without being able to count on the help of institutions of the UN, which will recur later. Furthermore, it becomes clear that al Qaeda learns lessons from experiences. A lesson learned in Yemen is that "the Western world, most of all the United States, was not willing to take risk of intervention in order to protect or assist corrupt regimes that do not have the support […] of their publics" (bin Laden, 1994c). This view of the dependency of US/the West's policy on public support is considered a weakness that can be exploited. This will be discussed in period II.

In the newly added sub-subcategory *threats,* a theme exists on the threat of replacement of sharia by secular law: "the current situation is characterized by the corruption of the shari'ah, the spread of evil, the restriction of worship and the waging of war against the just people […]" (bin Laden, 1994a). This corresponds with the theme on the importance of

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sharia above man-made laws in the in the sub-subcategory *worldview*. Zawahiri states that "The current rulers of Muslim countries who govern without the sharia of Allah are apostate infidels" (Zawahiri, 2007). Therefore, democracy is considered a direct threat to *tawhid* (see *values* above) due to the elevation of secular law over the sharia. God is the sole object of reference and nothing exists above God's law (sharia), therefore following democratic rule is considered an affront to God or as Zawahiri states "… democracy is built atop the premise 'rule by the people for the people' and rejection of the Commandments of Allah which are all comprehensive for all mankind" (Zawahiri, 2007a). However, in the defeat of the communist regime in Yemen in 1990, bin Laden sees evidence that secular and atheist regime have generally been rejected in the region. He adds "We envision a new beginning in the implementation of the prophet's will of expelling all the unbelievers form the Arabian Peninsula […]" (bin Laden, 1994d). In this period al Qaeda focuses on apostate Muslim regimes that rule according to secular law arguing that they are following the sharia if they cleanse the Arabian Peninsula from all unbelievers, i.e. the reason al Qaeda's existence.

As argued in the theoretical framework section above, strategic culture influences strategic decisions and behaviour of an actor. Changes in strategic culture are reflected in changes in these ways, means, and ends. Al Qaeda's perceived ways, means, and ends were collected per period from al Qaeda's strategic writing. Unfortunately, these works were not written until the late 90s. However, as noted in the theory and methods chapter, an organisational document written at the beginning of period I, and several letters written to al Qaeda leadership half way through this period, help clarify al Qaeda's strategic outlook at this time. The first document registers the response of members of al Qaeda's leadership (or members involved in its leadership at some point) to the question what their view was on participating in the battle in Afghanistan after the Soviet Union started withdrawing from Afghanistan in 1988 and the future of jihad needed to be decided. Azzam, a Palestinian, wanted to focus on the long term goal of waging "Jihad against the Jews in Palestine" (anonymous, 1989). Zawahiri and members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), later to merge with al Qaeda, stated that "Egypt is the heart of the Islamic world and it is necessary to establish the Caliphate there first" (anonymous, 1989). Bin Laden seems to be more focused on the

"liberation of Southern Yemen from communism" (anonymous, 1989). Abu 'l-Walid argues for a total participation with the mujahidin in order to achieve military and political victory and turning Afghanistan into a base (qaeda) that would support Muslims (anonymous, 1989). At its outset, al Qaeda's focus is, quite literally, all over the place and the goals are also divergent . Additionally, Abu 'l-Walid writes five letters between 1993 and 1996 to the al Qaeda leadership when they are in Sudan, criticising the leadership for lack of strategy indicating that in 1995, the strategic divergence had not yet been resolved. He is critical because the jihad seems to be waged without political objective in mind. He argues that manoeuvring in the political arena is more essential than manoeuvring in military operations and claims that military action without a plan (jihad for the sake of jihad) is stupid and futile (l Walid, 1993). He writes that when a movement exists isolated from its masses and when mutual suspicion exists between the movement and the masses, the movement does nothing but destroy itself ('l Walid, 1993), indicating that al Qaeda has not been able to forge ties with local populations. In letter three, he argues that al Qaeda did not enter Somalia with a clear military or political strategy ('l Walid, 1994). The data on the future of Jihad combined with the data from Walid's letter are a strong indication that al Qaeda initially did not have clear ends in mind. Consequently, ways and means could not be utilised in a meaningful way, resulting in the absence of a strategy.

To summarise, it becomes clear that in this period al Qaeda considers Jihad to be the only way of achieving its ends and that other ways to achieve their goals are not taken into consideration. This corresponds with the description of strategic culture as constraint on the number of options an actor perceives to achieve security objectives (Gray, 2007; Johnson et al, 2007; Greathouse, 2010; Schultz, 2012). Al Qaeda's consideration of Jihad as the way to achieve their goals to the exclusion of other ways, makes sense as al Qaeda is a Salafi-Jihadi organisation. Jihad is one of the ideas that forms the core of al Qaeda's norms, values, and perceptive lens, i.e. all three constitutive elements of its strategic culture. The other idea that is part of this core is the protection of *tawhid* by fighting local apostate regimes that do not rule according to the sharia. At its inception, al Qaeda's leadership sees a wide range of options to continue Jihad. The goals that al Qaeda wants to achieve are quite diverse ranging from establishing the caliphate in Egypt, fighting the Jews in Israel, to fighting communism in

Yemen. Overall, the goals is to protect (former) Muslim lands; where to do this and what the actual end goal is, is not agreed upon. How to do it is simple: Jihad. During this period, it becomes apparent that jihad is often fought for the sake of Jihad, without one of the goals just mentioned in mind. The most likely cause for this is that al Qaeda continues to elevate Jihad only second after belief in Islam. Jihad as a theme cuts across *norms, values,* and *perceptive lens,* highlighting its importance for, and influence on, al Qaeda's strategic culture.

The implementation of a coherent strategy by al Qaeda's leadership did not occur in at the beginning of period I. However, towards the end of period I, a more focused goals begin to occur, for example, the cleansing of the Arabian Peninsula of infidels. This is a more focused goal than the myriad of goals and their locations in the beginning of this period. Al Qaeda's leadership as well as its surroundings were in flux. Its initial focus, the Soviet Union, no longer posed a viable opponent and eventually ceased to exist all together, profoundly changing al Qaeda's immediate security environment. Within al Qaeda agreement existed on the continuation of Jihad; its location and goal were harder to determine. One of its founders, Azzam, is assassinated a few years after al Qaeda's creation. According to the literature on strategic culture, both these situations can lead to a change in an actor's strategic culture. In order to determine whether change occurred, period II and III need to be analysed and compared period I.

Attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda in period II

07 August 1998 - 224 people die when suicide attackers detonate a bomb in a vehicle outside the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. 11 people are killed when suicide attackers detonate a bomb in a vehicle outside the US embassy in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

03 January 2000 - Explosive laden boat sinks on its way to USS the Sullivans; attack fails

12 October 2000 - Suicide bombers detonate explosives in a small boat, killing 17 US navy personnel on board the USS Cole

9 September 2001 - Close to 3000 people are killed, the vast majority civilians, when two aeroplanes hit the two towers of the World Trade Center, one aeroplane hits the Pentagon, and one aeroplane crashes in Pennsylvania after being hijacked.

The following documents were used to gather data on al Qaeda's norms, values, and perceptive lens in this period: *Declaration of Jihad* by bin Laden, an interview by bin Laden, *Jihad, martyrdom, and the killing of innocents* and *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* both by Zawahiri. Finally, *Revolutionary Wars* by al Qurashi was used

Firstly, the analysis of the category *norms* of period II. In the subcategory *expected behaviour* the theme Jihad is continued. "The ultimate aim of pleasing Allah […] is to fight the enemy in every aspect and in a complete manner" (bin Laden, 1996). Simultaneously, a new theme concerning a closer connection of al Qaeda and the local community emerges in this subcategory . "The jihad movement must enter the battle in the midst of the community […] It must guard itself from isolating itself from its community …" (Zawahiri, 2008). This is to be achieved by winning the people's "confidence, respect, and affection" (Zawahiri, 2008). This differs from period I in which 'l Walid's criticises the al Qaeda leadership for being unable to forge ties with local population. This new theme is further discussed in the category means, ways and ends below. Yet another theme in this subcategory is the duty to fight the occupation by US troops of the Arabian Peninsula, in

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general and Saudi Arabia specifically. This is of the utmost importance: "After Imaan (belief) no more important duty than pushing American enemy out of the holy land" (bin Laden 1996). Jihad in general has already been elevated to great heights, now there is nothing greater than the struggle against the American enemy. Within two years this changes into: "Ruling to kill Americans and their allies (civilians and military) is an individual duty for every Muslim" (bin Laden, 1998).

In the subcategory *accepted behaviour* a new theme is the permissibility of killing of innocents. It is forgiven when innocents are killed during an impetuous attack "due to the good of defending Islam and its people and repelling the enemies who wish to take over the sanctities of the Muslims" (Zawahiri, before 2001). Similarly, human shields can be killed if the good of the Muslim community can be achieved and innocents among the infidels can be killed if the "evils produced by not fighting the infidels are greater than the evils produced" (Zawahiri, 2007b) by killing innocents. The category *norms* reveals that an increased focus on cleansing the Arabian Peninsula occurs. This is combined with an increased focus on fighting and killing of US and allied military personnel and civilians. This is paired with a new permissibility of killing innocents.

Secondly, in the category *values*, *c*ontinuation and change also become visible. Similar to period I, the importance of *tawhid* is a theme in this category. However, several ultimate values exist in period II that were not mentioned in period I. "[…] we must reiterate that this battle , which we must wage to defend our faith, community, sanctuaries, honor, values, wealth and resources, is that of every Muslim […]" (Zawahiri, 2008). In light of closer ties to the local population, the emphasis on more worldly values seems to be a move towards making al Qaeda more accessible. More people are reached by expanding the values beyond mere religious ideas or concepts such as *tawhid.* The loss of some of these values (property, honor, land) is used as a warning should Jihad be abandoned, "whereas loving martyrdom and engaging in battle lead to glory strength (Zawahiri, 2007b).

Thirdly, new themes emerge in the category *perceptive lens.* In the subcategory *experience* a new theme is the occupation of the Arab Peninsula by the US "plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbours, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead to fight neighbouring Muslim people" (bin Laden, 1998). There is an increased focus on the Arabian Peninsula and its occupation by the US. Whereas in the previous period the UN was held responsible, in this period the focus has shifted to crusader-Jewish alliance and more specifically to the US, and the intensity has increased.

This leads to new themes in the subcategory *beliefs.* In the sub-subcategory *threats*, a new theme is the threat to values and interests in the form of the occupation of the two Holy Places (Saudi Arabia) by US troops and those leaders who govern the people without the sharia (Zawahiri, 2007b). The US is held responsible : "The American enemy is principal and main cause of the situation (bin Laden, 1996).

A new theme in the sub-subcategory *beliefs determining values* is martyrdom operations. Although suicide is prohibited in Islam, these operations are justified, because doing this out of one's own accord can "never be evil or suicidal. […] such a deed Allah loves and extols" (Zawahiri, 2007b) and they are considered legitimate if it benefits the faith and stops infidels from ruling over and humiliating Muslims (Zawahiri, 2007b). Suicide operations is not a theme in period I, indicating that beliefs relating to values compared to period I have become more extreme.

Lastly, new themes emerge in the final category *ways, means, and ends.* Firstly, the creation of an Islamic state in defendable territory in the heart of the Muslim world in order to lead struggle to restore the caliphate is now one of the goals (Zawahiri, 2008). Secondly, closer ties with the community, as discussed above, is a new theme. The people need to be won over, and this is considered the way to victory: "In a revolution, military force plays a secondary role since the decisive factor is popular support […] is the principal goal and the decisive means" (Al Qurashi, 2013a). The use of terrorist tactics is discussed as a method to increase the

organisation's prestige, destroy government morale, and polarise society. Guerrilla warfare is seen as a way to achieve victory, due to the power imbalance between the two opponents, for this the movement needs the agreement and support of the people to achieve their goals. Thirdly, it is argued that "military action overall remains subordinate and complementary to the political mission in revolutionary wars" (Al Qurashi, 2013a), echoing the criticism of 'l Walid in period I.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that several new themes can be identified in the different categories in period II, while at the same time old themes are continued. Jihad is still an important theme in period II as is *tawhid* in the category *values*. New theme in the categories *norms* and *ways, means and* ends is the closer connection that needs to be forged between al Qaeda and the community. When fighting a guerrilla war, as advocated by al Qurashi, the support of the population is needed, otherwise the endeavour is doomed to fail. In this context, it is, again, argued that military actions should be used as a means to an end, not an end in itself. Furthermore, the importance of the population for strategic purposes is a new development. Two other themes that seem to go hand in hand in this period is permissibility of killing innocent people (including Muslims) and the legitimisation of suicide (or martyrdom) operations. Both are justified as long as it stops a greater harm to the Ummah form happening or stops infidels from ruling over Muslims. A new theme in the subcategory *experience* is the responsibility of the US (and to a minor degree Britain and Israel) for the attack on Muslims in the world. This might be because al Qaeda perceives the occupation of many places in the Arabian Peninsula by the US as a threat. Overall, Jihad, e.g. violent means, is still considered the way to deal with goals that al Qaeda wants to achieve. However, the combination of the permissibility of killing of innocents and suicide operation demonstrates the radicalisation that occurred within view on the use of Jihad . The threat of US troops in Arabian Peninsula is preferably dealt with by killing as many of US (and its allies) military personnel and civilians as possible. This progression of attacks in this period ending with the attacks on 9/11 2001 reflect this change. Interestingly, the strategic documents seem to concern themselves with the strategic situation for the local situation. They do not seem to provide the al Qaeda leadership with a strategy for the global level al Qaeda was catapulted towards after the 9/11 attacks.

Attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda in period III

22 December 2001 - France Richard Reid attempts to detonate explosive in his shoes on a flight from Paris to Miami. Attack fails.

8 April 2002 - Afghanistan 10 civilians are killed when a bomb explodes 10 metres from the car carrying the Afghan Defence Minister General Mohammed Qasim Fahim.

11 April 2002 - Tunisia 22 people killed when tanker truck filled with 5000 litres of liquid gas rams the Ghriba synagogue.

27 June 2002 - Afghanistan 19 people die in Spinboldak when rockets are launched into an Afghan munitions dump

6 October 2002 - International 1 person dies when rubber dinghy filled with explosive is detonated at the side of the French oil tanker spilling 90000 barrels of oil in the Gulf of Aden

During this period (7 October 2001), the US together with the UK and other allies invade Afghanistan in order to dismantle al Qaeda and demand the handover of Osama bin Laden. According to the literature on strategic culture this kind of shock (war, revolution etc) can cause change to an actor's strategic culture. The following documents were used to gather data on al Qaeda's norms, values, and perceptive lens in this period: *Moderate Islam Is a Prostration to the West* and *Why We Are fighting You* both by bin Laden, *Loyalty and Enmity; An Inherited Doctrine and a Lost Reality* by Zawahiri, *Fourth Generation Warfare* by al Qurashi, and *A Practical Course for Guerrilla War*, by al Muqrin.

Firstly, the analysis of the category *norms.* Continuation of themes from the previous periods occur in this period: the obligation to free Islamic Ummah and to wage war Jihad against the "infidels who have usurped the lands of Islam" (Zawahiri, 2007c). Again, this duty is elevated to a position second only to faith (Zawahiri, 2007c). However, three new themes become apparent in this period. Firstly, the spread of Sharia "Muslims, and especially the learned among them, should spread sharia law to the world – that and nothing else" (bin Laden,

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2007b) and "[…] giving and sacrificing in the cause of liberating the lands of the Muslims, making Islam supreme in its own land and then spreading it around the world" (Zawahiri, 2007c). The second theme is battling infidels and apostates, because they are infidels: "The sharia commands us to battle infidels" (Zawahiri, 2007c). Combined, this forms the basis of offensive Jihad as opposed to the defensive Jihad advocated in the previous two periods. This will be further discussed in *perceptive lens*. The last new theme in this category is the prohibition to take infidels as friends in the subcategory *unaccepted behaviour.* "The Lord Almighty has commanded us to hate the infidels and reject their love. For they hate us and begrudge us our religion […] (Zawahiri, 2007c). Battling the infidels is easier when one is supposed to hate them by religious decree. This, in turn, makes it easier to fight an offensive Jihad to take their lands and spread the sharia

In the category *values* the themes from the previous periods are also continued. Again, t*awhid* is a theme. However, in the previous periods *tawhid* was not mentioned in connection with other values in period III the "religion of tawhid of Allah" (bin Laden, 2007a) is mentioned in combination with "sincerity, the best of manners, righteousness, mercy, honor, purity, and piety" (bin Laden, 2007a). This might again be to connect the rather otherworldly value of the unity of God with the more worldly values of righteousness and honour (as in in period II) and more concrete values such as purity and piety in order to reach a broader audience. Interestingly, in period III Western values are explicitly criticised "you separate religion from your politics, contradicting the pure nature that affirms absolute authority to the Lord your Creator" (bin Laden, 2007a). Moreover, Americans are asked to "reject the immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling, an usury" (bin Laden, 2007a). This is most likely to emphasise the contrast between Western and al Qaeda's values, which corresponds with the new themes in *norms.*

Similar to the periods I and II, the category *perceptive lens* has the highest number of data entries. Firstly, in the subcategory *experience* 'Islam under attack in various locations' is again a major theme. According to al Qaeda, Islam is under attack in Chechnya, Kashmir, Lebanon, Iraq, Jerusalem (bin Laden, 2002). As in period I (but missing from period II), the

UN plays a role: "UN exists in order to prevent rule by sharia and to guarantee submissions to [...] the security council" (Zawahiri, 2007c)). Secondly, in the sub-subcategory *worldview* hate of and battling the infidels is a new theme: "Battle, animosity, and hatred – directed form the Muslim to the infidel – is the foundation of our religion" (bin Laden, 2002a) and "Befriending believers and battling infidels are critical pillars in a Muslim's faith. His faith is incomplete without it" (Zawahiri, 2007c) are only two of many data entries that clearly communicate this view. Thirdly, in the sub-subcategory *beliefs determining values* a new theme is the switch from defensive Jihad (defence of Islamic lands) to offensive Islam (spread of Islam in non-Islamic lands) demonstrated by the following data entries: "Offensive Jihad is an established and basic tenet of this religion" (bin Laden, 2007b) and "The good of the people is found in Islam; and Islam is spread with the sword alone, [...]" (bin Laden, 2007b). The belief that Jihad is basic tenet of Islam (value) illustrates again the importance of Jihad for al Qaeda's version of Islam. Lastly, in the subcategory *threats* of *beliefs* there are entries that range from "[...] a new campaign against Iraq wherein hundreds of thousands of Muslims are expected to die until the oil wells of Iraq are well secured" (Zawahiri, 2007c) to the "occupation, thievery, plunder, domination and the Crusaders' suppression of Muslims in the holiest of lands: the Arabian Peninsula" (bin Laden, 2007a). Hate for infidels and offensive Jihad are themes that correspond with the findings in the category *norms* of this period, but these are different to the previous periods. The threats in period III are also mentioned in period I and II. The occurrence in all three periods creates the idea that this threat is all encompassing and unrelenting, although the locations seem to differ slightly per period) .

In sum, new themes in the various constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture are an obligation of Muslims to spread sharia. This leads to another theme, namely the switch from defensive Jihad to offensive Jihad. Jihad is no longer just about protecting Muslim lands, but also about the spread of Islam in non-Islamic lands. Battling and hating infidels is a new theme, which is in line with the spread of Islam. There is no room for infidels and no compromise for it is wrong to let an infidel live. Infidels "either submit, live under the suzerainty of Islam, or die" (Zawahiri, 2007c). The focus seems to have shifted from Islamic lands and moved towards non-Islamic lands that need to be converted by means of the

sword. This occurs in combination with an explicit criticism of the Western way of life and values (which did not occur in the previous periods).The most important value *tawhid* is combined with more worldly values such as sincerity, righteousness, mercy, honour, purity, and piety, which is a new development. The combination of criticism on Western values, the inclusion of values such as honour and righteousness, and the focus on the commands to battle and kill infidels justifies the spread of Islam. This will be done by the sword, i.e. offensive Jihad. Waging this offensive Jihad to spread Islam is essentially done for the sake of the infidels as they will be saved.

It seems that the shift from a defensive to an offensive Jihad, the desire to spread sharia, and the battling of the infidel in period III are indications of a radicalisation in al Qaeda's norms, values, and perceptive lens compared to the other periods. However, the goal the mujahideen are trying to achieve according to a strategic document in period III "is a high and noble one, namely the call for a pure Islamic system free from defects and infidel elements, one based on the Book [i.e., the Qur'an] and the Sunnah" (al Muqrin, 2002). This is similar to the goal mentioned in period II and does not seem to indicate a radicalisation in the goals al Qaeda wants to achieve. Moreover, relating to guerrilla warfare, this strategic document continues on a similar note as the ones found in period II: "Just wars are those wars that a party or peoples deprived of power, who are oppressed and wronged, wage against an oppressive aggressor or a tyrannical ruler. The objective is to end injustice and aggression, and to fight for the sake of God to make the shari'a the law of the land and for the word of God to become supreme" (al Muqrin, 2002). This is an indication that the perceived ends, ways and means compared to period II have not changed significantly. Interestingly, al Qurashi applies the concept of some elements of fourth generation warfare to al Qaeda. He argues that if an organisation does not have a headquarter and manoeuvres and moves quickly it is very difficult to mount a pre-emptive strike, which essentially is a continuation of a type of guerrilla warfare described in period II and by other strategic documents used in period III. However, he also states that fourth generation warfare will use the tactics and techniques from previous generations of warfare, but will also "span the full spectrum, the political, the social, the economic, and the military; and will be fought between parties at the international, national, regional, and tribal – indeed organizational

level as well" (al Qurashi, 2013b). This seems to indicate a widening of al Qaeda's strategy and which seems to be based on the strategic development in period II, instead of being based on the developments of the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture in period II and III.

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In period I, it becomes apparent that after the after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union form Afghanistan, al Qaeda considers a number of different places and goals as goals for the continuation of Jihad. Fighting the communist regime in Yemen, the creation of a caliphate in Egypt, or fighting in Israel are all options. Furthermore, it becomes clear that Jihad is considered the be only way to achieve goals, regardless of the goals that are chosen. Jihad is of the utmost importance and is elevated to such a height that is second only to faith. From internal documents it becomes clear that some within al Qaeda think that Jihad is often being fought for the sake of Jihad. Waging Jihad is presented as the only way to protect the Ummah and *tawhid*. This is done by attacking the apostate regimes (i.e. regimes that place secular law and democracy above the sharia). The focus here is on the local regimes, or what al Qaeda labels "the near enemy". Interestingly, although the US is not explicitly mentioned as an enemy until period II, the attacks that take place in period I in Yemen in 1992 are aimed at US military personnel instead of the local apostate regimes. An attack on the latter would have been more in line with the focus al Qaeda displays in the documents of period I. The shift in al Qaeda's focus is a gradual process that already started in the 90s.

This changes in focus and becomes more pronounced in period II, which starts at the Declaration of Jihad by bin Laden in 1996. The fragmentation in strategic focus on Yemen, Palestine, Egypt, and Afghanistan in period I is replaced by a focus on the US and its allies (the Crusader alliance) as enemies. Although al Qaeda claims that it is the duty of all Muslims to kill as many American and allied military personnel and civilians as possible, the US receives the most attention. Much of this can be related to how al Qaeda experiences international affairs in the world. The experience in period I and II seems fairly similar: al Qaeda experiences Muslims under attack throughout the world in both periods. However, in period II much, if not all, of the responsibility is placed with the US (the far enemy) instead of with the local apostate regimes (the near enemy), as is the case in period I. One possible explanation for this is the perception by al Qaeda of the occupation of many places in the Arabian Peninsula in general and the occupation by US troops of Saudi Arabia specifically.

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Saudi Arabia is considered special due to the presence of two of the holiest mosques in Islam in Mecca and Medina. The occupation of Saudi Arabia by US troops is considered a threat of such magnitude that fighting the Americans and pushing them out of Saudi Arabia becomes the most important duty after belief itself. The presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia seems to have resulted in not only a shift in the focus of al Qaeda on the US as an enemy, but also in a radicalisation of al Qaeda reflected by the shift (initially in word only) to killing American and allied civilians in period II. Another indication of this radicalisation in period II is the justification and legitimisation of suicide (or martyrdom) operations occur and the justification of killing innocents. This combination demonstrates which ways and means al Qaeda considers feasible in period II. In comparison, in period I there is a call to Jihad, but no description of the methods that should be employed nor a justification for killing innocent people or suicide attacks. However, although it annoys and angers bin Laden, the occupation by US troops of the Arabian Peninsula in general and Saudi Arabi more specifically does not constitute a shock according to the literature on strategic culture. A shock in the literature is defined as a war, depression, or revolution that can cast doubt on the legitimacy of existing norms or disrupt the power balance within ranks of the actor. As this occupation does not constitute a shock, it cannot be the cause of change in al Qaeda's strategic culture that occurs in this period.

The attacks by al Qaeda in period II culminating in the killing of close to 3000, mainly, civilians seem to reflect the change in al Qaeda strategic culture. Suicide operations are used and civilians are not spared in the 9/11 attacks. However, the strategic documents of period II mainly demonstrate a pragmatic, calculated, and rational approach to strategy and do not reflect the radicalisation identified in al Qaeda's norms and perceptive lens (i.e. use of martyrdom operations and legitimisation of killing innocent people). The strategic documents of period II argue that fighting Jihad needs to be instrumental in achieving military or political goals and that the support of the population is needed in order to be able to use a guerrilla strategy. They seem to focus on a different kind of fight that will take place in within the Arabian Peninsula and do not correspond with al Qaeda's strategy on a global level.

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Period III starts after the attacks on 9/11 by al Qaeda in the US. The US responds to the al Qaeda attacks by attacking al Qaeda in Afghanistan where they stayed under the protection of the Taliban. Jihad is still a theme in period III, but in period III a switch occurs from defensive Jihad (i.e. protection Muslim lands under attack) to offensive Jihad (i.e. spread of Islam to non-Islamic lands). This is reflected by an emphasis in period III of the obligation of Muslims to spread sharia. The combination of the offensive Jihad and the spread of sharia indicates the spread of the latter by violent means. This is significantly different to the protection of Islamic lands. The spread of sharia by violent means goes hand in hand with the new theme of battling and hating infidels. In al Qaeda's view in period III, there is no room for infidels. They either have to submit voluntarily to Islam, live under its dominion, or die. Compared to period I and II, this seems to indicate a further radicalisation of al Qaeda views. However, this radicalisation is not reflected in the perception of ways, means, and ends found in the strategic documents. The strategic documents in period III are a continuation of the strategic documents from period II. This could indicate a gap between the evolution of the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture and al Qaeda's strategic development. However, strategic documents of period III, as is the case in period II seem to focus on a more hands-on guerrilla battle in the Arabian Peninsula or where al Qaeda troops will face US troops directly. It does not focus on al Qaeda's strategy as transnational terrorist organisation. However, in the strategic writing of period III, it is argued that the warfare al Qaeda wages should include the political, social, economic, and military. This is a widening of the al Qaeda's strategic approach which is different from period II and even further removed from the strategic fragmentation in period I. The attacks in period III are a combination of attacks on a civilians (airliner, synagogue), an oil tanker, and military personnel and they take place in different locations. More attacks took place in this period that were supposedly executed by al Qaeda. They have not been included, because al Qaeda was not proven nor claimed to be behind these attacks. The number of attacks that have been attributed to al Qaeda by the global terrorism database in this period are relatively small with low numbers of casualties. They do not seem to have been carried out with the goals of spreading sharia on a global scale by means of an offensive Jihad.

CONCLUSION

Both continuity and change play an important role in al Qaeda's strategic culture in the period under consideration. Several of the ideas and concepts discussed in the section on the ideological foundation of al Qaeda occur throughout the different periods. They sometimes recur in a slightly altered version. Jihad, the fight against infidels and values such as *tawhid* (and its protection) are present in all three periods. The idea that al Qaeda is a vanguard against *modern jahiliyyah* and a protector of the Ummah are also recurrent themes. This makes sense considering al Qaeda is a Salafi-Jihadist organisation and Salafi thought and the utilisation of Jihad to achieve their means form its core. However, change also plays a role in al Qaeda's strategic culture. Just after al Qaeda's start, the Soviet Union collapsed, resulting in unipolar international order. One of al Qaeda's founders and bin Laden's mentor, Azzam, was assassinated around this time as well. This thesis argues systemic and internal change can affect an actor's strategic culture. Obviously, it is extremely difficult to establish a correlation, let alone a causal relationship, between the systemic and internal changes in period I and the evolution of al Qaeda's strategic culture in period I and II. However, it does become clear that Al Qaeda's strategic focus was mainly fragmented at the beginning of this period and is replaced by a focus on the West and the US in period II and III. A possible explanation is that al Qaeda focusses more on the US in these periods because of a reorientation of strategic targets due to a changing security environment, caused by the emergence of US as a hegemon in a unipolar international system. A different explanation might be that the perceived occupation of Saudi Arabia by US troops caused Al Qaeda to focus more on the US in period II. However, this occupation of Saudi Arabia does not qualify as a shock (war, revolution etc.) as defined in the literature on strategic culture. In period I and II no shocks can be identified that could explain al Qaeda's changing strategic culture in these periods. The focus on the US in period II goes hand in hand with a radicalisation of *norms* and *perceptive lens* in period II, i.e. a change in al Qaeda's strategic culture. The killing of innocents (including Muslims) and suicide operations become feasible means to achieve their goal, which results in the killing of 3000 people (mostly civilians) on 9/11 2001. The radicalisation that is observable in two constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture are reflected in the actions undertaken in this period. However, the radicalisation of some of the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture in period II

and III is not reflected in its strategic writings of these periods. In fact, after the strategic fragmentation of period I, a rational, stable, and pragmatic strategic view is introduced in period II and continued in period III. This seems to indicate that changes in al Qaeda's strategic culture have not affected its strategic writing. Although a possible divide between al Qaeda's strategic culture on the one hand and strategic writings produced by its strategists on the other is interesting, it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In this thesis norms, values, and perceptive lens are considered to be the three constitutive elements that form al Qaeda's strategic culture. The ideas and concepts in al Qaeda's ideological foundation recur in these constitutive elements providing al Qaeda's strategic culture with continuity. However, change plays an important role as well. Perceptive lens and norm show a radicalisation from period I to II culminating in the 9/11 attacks. Moreover, this radicalisation continues in period III with a switch from defensive to offensive Jihad and claim that Islam requires Muslims to hate, fight, and kill infidels. The changes in these two constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture in the first two periods cannot be attributed to external shocks, which is almost unanimously accepted in the literature as a cause of change in an actor's strategic culture, as these shocks did not occur in period I and II. It is possible to attribute the further radicalisation in period III to the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, as this qualifies as an external shock, since al Qaeda found itself facing the US military determined to win the fight against al Qaeda. The changes that occur between period I and II in the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture demonstrated in this thesis cast doubt on the claim by Shultz that al Qaeda's strategic culture is rigid and does not adapt to systemic change. In fact, the interpretation of the data demonstrates that al Qaeda's strategic culture has adapted to systemic and internal change. This means that after external shocks, systemic changes, and internal changes a new picture needs to be formed of al Qaeda's strategic culture in order to determine whether these changes resulted in adaptations of their strategic culture.

Further research on changes in the strategic culture of other, but similar non-state actors caused by systemic or internal change could clarify whether this kind of change is common

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or whether al Qaeda is unique in this matter. Additionally, it could prove interesting to research whether states react similarly to internal and systemic change, or whether the institutionalisation of their strategic culture constrains the amount of possible change. Additional research on changes in the constitutive elements of al Qaeda's strategic culture after 2003 could reveal impact of the shock of fighting the US in an irregular war. This might have caused further radicalisation of al Qaeda's norms and perceptive lens, to such an extent that al Qaeda's strategic culture around the 9/11 attacks could be vastly different from the one that exists currently. This might affect policy with regards to combating al Qaeda.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1 The ten voiders according to Ibn Wahhab (i.e., automatic apostasy)
1) Polytheism (associating others with God in worship)
2) Using mediators for God (for example, praying to saints)
3) Doubting that non-Muslims are disbelievers
4) Judging by non-Islamic laws and believing these are superior to divine law
5) Hating anything the Prophet Mohammed practiced
6) Mocking Islam or the Prophet Mohammed
7) Using or supporting magic
8) Supporting or helping non-believers against Muslims
9) Believing that someone has the right to stop practicing Islam
10) Turning away from Islam by not studying or practicing it

(Wiktorowicz, 2005)

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