Poor Scapegoats

Moving beyond Radical Islam, Modernization, and Authoritarian Rule as the Root Causes of Terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa

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The Middle East and the states that comprise the Maghreb have been plagued by enduring hostilities for the past 50 years. With the end of the Cold War, the region hosted some of the bloodiest and most protracted wars in the world—namely, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the two wars in Iraq (1991 and 2003), the civil war in Yemen (1994), the struggle in Lebanon (2007), and the war between Iraq and Iran (1980–88), one of the deadliest interstate actions on record. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, a known conflict zone rife with internal and regional struggles, is also the site of some of the most lethal terror networks and attacks in the world. Thus, the prevalence of violence in the region has made the Middle East and the Maghreb the focal point for a great deal of research in political science.

For years, scholars have sought to understand why the MENA seemingly hosts an endless wave of violence. Several empirical studies have arrived at relevant theories that find the lack of democracy, barriers to modernization, and the presence of religious radicalism at the root of the conflicts.[1] Building upon this body of research, this article explores these arguments but from a different perspective. Instead of tackling democracy, modernization, and religious radicalism as discrete concepts, it examines the impact of these factors on the trend to political violence as components of state failure.

Next to sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, the MENA includes the highest percentage of weak and failed states in the world. Theories explored thus far as

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fundamental causes of the political violence in this area are simply symptoms of all weak states. Therefore, analyses of the causes of terrorism and political violence in the Middle East and the Maghreb should begin with an examination of the state dysfunction prevalent within the region.

Using data from the Arab Barometer Survey (2008), this article asserts that the conditions of state failure force individuals to resort to terrorism and political violence in the MENA as a means of obtaining tangible political, economic, and social goods and forcing strategic political concessions.[2] Therefore, promoting democracy, modernization, and religious freedom on an individual basis is a noble and useful pursuit, but addressing these factors in a broader context by cultivating state building in the region constitutes the first step towards dealing with the systematic violence.

Argument

This study evaluates the relationship between state failure and the prevalence of terrorist and insurgent activity in the Middle East and the Maghreb in an effort to illustrate that the process of state failure—not the grievance-based issues of a lack of democracy and economic development, which then fuel religious radicalism—explains the region's political violence. Although it is tempting to deduce the simple explanation that weak and failed states would naturally be attractive to terrorist groups and insurgents, given the absence of a functioning security force, the article maintains that the relationship is more nuanced. Certainly the element of a pull factor exists, in that actors engaging in political violence can better carry out operations in failed states. Until now, most studies have focused solely on this element—the attractiveness of failed states to terrorists and insurgents.[3] However, the article raises another issue in this dynamic: the possibility that citizens of failed states are attracted to political violence because of deteriorating conditions within this type of state. A critical element has remained absent from this discussion—specifically, the decision-making process of ordinary citizens to engage in terrorist and insurgent activity because the state can no longer fulfill its responsibilities to them. Individuals living in failed states gravitate to political violence because the system is broken—the state has failed in its duty.

Rather than use event data to evaluate the patterns of political violence in relation to the MENA's weak states, this study seeks to understand individuals' perspectives regarding the use of violence as a political tool when the state has failed. Arab Barometer survey data indicate an insidious pattern of deprivation and oppression within weak states in the MENA that drives ordinary citizens

to engage in and support political violence. This article helps further scholarly discourse by suggesting an alternative cause of this type of violence that global indicator models of terrorism have overlooked. Until now, because those models have ignored individual-level data, they have also ignored the basic tenets of human psychology and the forces that drive seemingly rational human beings to commit irrational acts of violence.

The fact that failed states threaten people's survival ultimately compels them to obtain tangible political and economic resources through other means, which include the use of political violence. Further, the major implications for the international community are that this pattern of deprivation makes individuals in these states more susceptible to the influence of internationally sponsored terrorist groups. Consequently, failed states become breeding grounds for terrorists, who then export their radical ideologies to other parts of the world to create threats across the globe. Thus, the global war on terrorism will remain a futile endeavor if the international community ignores the importance of comprehensive state building that incorporates the sustained development of strong political and economic institutions within developing societies.[4]

The importance of this research is twofold. First, it joins the existing body of research on weak states, fragile states, and failed states by outlining a discrete set of indicators of state decline.[5] However, it goes beyond those works by evaluating how these factors work together to weaken and create chaos and anarchy within a nation where terrorism and violence then become a legitimate avenue to obtain political and economic resources.

Beyond establishing a typology of state failure, this study is also particularly timely and differs from other works on terrorism in its approach to understanding alternative root causes of this type of violence beyond those of economic decline, religious radicalism, and levels of frustration.[6] Unlike previous works that focus on macrolevel terrorist incidents and specific country cases which paint a broad picture of how weak states contribute to political violence, this article probes deeper and seeks to understand why state failure influences an individual's decision to support and commit an act of political violence.

Terrorism and State Failure in the Middle East and North Africa

The state's main goal is to provide its citizens the public good of security. A strong state ensures that its borders are secure and that its citizens are not engaged in internal conflict.[7] The state can deliver a host of other public goods only when it sustains a reasonable measure of security within its borders and when neighboring states do so as well.[8] In contrast to strong states, failing

ones are inherently weak because of geographical, political, or economic constraints—basically strong but temporarily or situationally weak due to internal conflict, management weakness, corruption, despotism, or external threats.[9] Such nations typically exhibit ethnic, religious, linguistic, or some other type of intercommunal tension that has yet to erupt into widespread and uncontrollable violence. Per capita gross domestic product and other indicators of economic prosperity have all declined, the ability of the government to provide the essential public good of security has deteriorated or is deteriorating, and urban crime rates tend to be high or on the rise.

Whereas the failing state is in a precarious position of worsening circumstances, the failed state lacks all evidence of security and order. Most "failed states are tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions."[10] In most cases, the government of a failed state experiences multiple rebellions and civil unrest, communal conflict, and a host of discontent directed towards it.[11] Essentially, failed nation-states cannot control their borders; their economy has deteriorated; they are involved in bitter, violent struggles; they have no functioning physical infrastructure; and their political institutions lack any form of legitimacy. In other words, a failed state cannot perform the fundamental tasks of a nation-state in the modern world.

Such states experience tremendous upheaval, which has severe, long-term implications for society. Citizens of nation-states without a functioning political system and the basic tenets of security and order are more vulnerable to the propaganda and radical agenda of terrorist groups. Thus, extremists have the opportunity to gain popular support for the use of political violence during such a tenuous period. As a result, the ordinary citizen can be persuaded to support political violence and engage in such an act as a way of attaining tangible economic and political goods that the state can no longer provide.

This particular situation has been evident in the Middle East and the Maghreb, a region afflicted by a lack of economic development and inequities in resource distribution. Thus, economic crises born of a dearth of development have crippled the states in this region, making them perpetually weak, and have driven many of those suffering from poverty to support and join terrorist organizations. Further, the conditions of state fragility in this region have also given extremist groups material for propaganda, which has facilitated their recruitment efforts and legitimized their acts of terrorism among the populace.[12]

As mentioned above, next to sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, the MENA is plagued by failed states (tables 1 and 2). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the prevalence of state collapse and incidents of terrorism in the region, respectively. The following section discusses why these two factors are so strongly related.

Table 1. The 2008 *Index of State Weakness* rankings for the Middle East and North Africa (based on a total of 141 countries)

Country	*Ranking*	*Quintile*
Iraq	4	Bottom
Yemen*	30	2nd
Mauritania	37	2nd
Algeria*	57	3rd
Syria	59	3rd
Iran	66	3rd
Egypt	78	3rd
Libya	86	4th
Lebanon*	93	4th
Morocco*	96	4th
Turkey	98	4th
Tunisia	112	4th
Jordan*	118	5th (the highest)
Oman	128	5th (the highest)

Source: Susan E. Rice and Stewart Patrick, *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2008), 39–42, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Reports/2008/2/weak%20states%20index/02_weak_states_index.PDF.

*Country case in the Arab Barometer Survey

Table 2. "The Failed States Index 2009" rankings for the Middle East and North Africa (based on a total of 177 countries)

Country	*Ranking*	*Quintile*
Iraq	6	Alert
Yemen*	18	Alert
Lebanon*	29	Alert
Iran	38	Alert
Egypt	43	Warning
Mauritania	46	Warning
Israel/West Bank*	58	Warning
Algeria*	73	Warning
Turkey	85	Warning
Jordan*	86	Warning
Saudi Arabia	89	Warning
Morocco*	93	Warning
Libya	112	Warning
Tunisia	121	Warning
Kuwait*	125	Warning

Source: "The Failed States Index 2009," *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace, accessed 21 February 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings.

*Country case in the Arab Barometer Survey

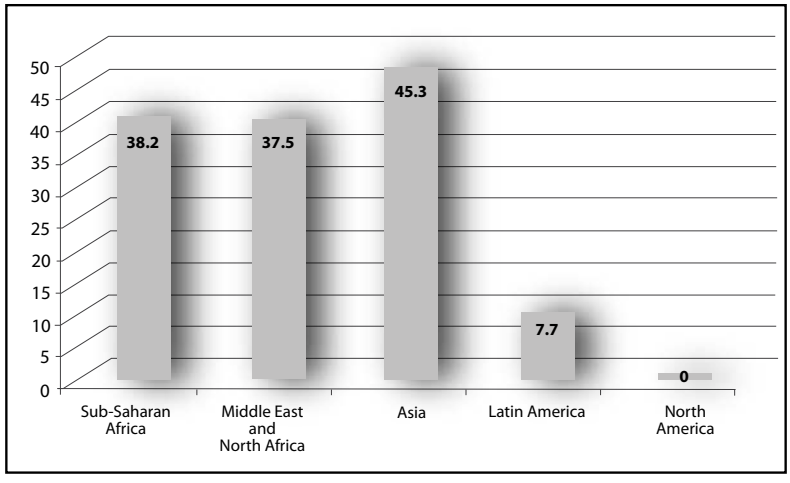

Figure 1. Percentage of states experiencing episodes of failure by region, 1998–2003. (Compiled by the author from James A. Piazza, "Draining the Swamp: Democracy Promotion, State Failure, and Terrorism in 19 Middle Eastern Countries," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30, no. 6 [2007]: 521–39, http://www.politicalscience.uncc.edu/jpiazza/PiazzaSCT2007.pdf.)

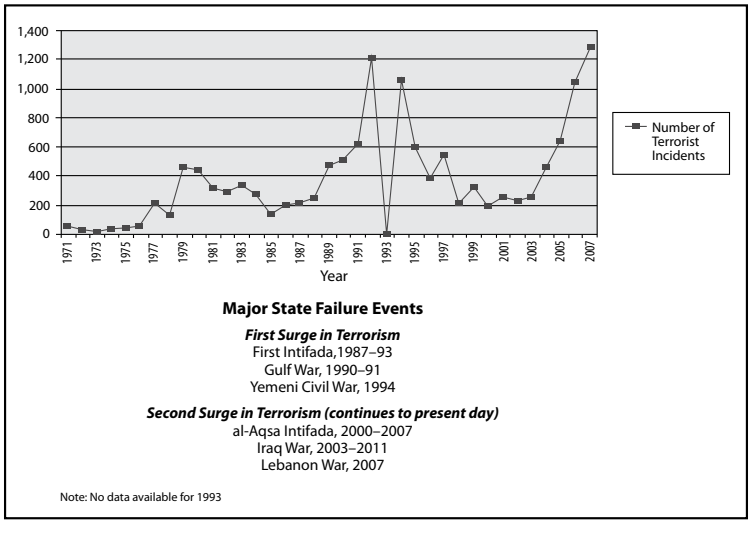

Figure 2. Number of reported terrorist incidents and major incidents of state failure in the Middle East and the Maghreb, 1977–2007. (Data compiled by the author from "Global Terrorism Database," National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland, accessed 2 February 2010, http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.) The figure depicts two surges of terrorism, the first of which began around 1985 and sharply increased throughout the first Palestinian intifada through the Gulf War and then the civil war in Yemen. The Arab-Israeli conflict, which lies at the nexus of security concerns in the region, prompted a decrease in the violence during the Oslo Peace Process of 1993–2000 and the Camp David negotiations in 2000. However, following the breakdown in negotiation talks and former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount, the second intifada began, leading to the second surge of political violence that has steadily increased with the war in Lebanon and the war in Iraq and its ongoing insurgency.

Essential to the relationship between state failure and terrorism is the absence of the state in ungoverned territory. Like many of the states in sub-Saharan Africa, the MENA has vast stretches of land "linked to the incubation of terrorism where the central government is unable to project its power in substantial regions of the country controlled by insurgents or regional actors [or terrorists]."[13] Within the MENA, the nations of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Lebanon have all hosted terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Palestine Liberation Organization within their tribal territories and remote regions where the influence of the government is marginal if not completely absent.

Beyond ungoverned territory, the MENA is also subject to other critical features of state failure: a lack of security, illegitimate and corrupt state authority, and the inability of the government to provide public goods and services to substantial segments of the population. Together, these factors represent the conditions of state failure. Yet, within the MENA one finds three additional factors not specifically unique to the region but often considered the major causes of political violence there.

Specifically, this article also explores the effect of authoritarianism, the lack of economic development, and the dominance of religious radicalism on individual support for such violence. Within the MENA, these function as intervening factors with regard to the relationship between political violence and state failure. As mentioned earlier, other studies have not neglected to examine these issues as key contributors to terrorism in the region; rather, they have not assessed their collective influence on terrorism within the context of state failure. The following section explores this relationship in greater detail. However, it is important to understand that cultural considerations and circumstances within the MENA make the convergence of these variables crucial to our understanding of state failure in this region and of their key impact on ideological support for terrorism—more so than in any other part of the world.[14]

Middle East Exceptionalism: Authoritarianism, Economic Development, and Religious Radicalism

The Absence of Democracy / Authoritarian Rule

The MENA is dominated by authoritarian systems of governance. Of the 24 states that make up the Middle East and the Maghreb, only Israel and Turkey represent traditional democratic states. Samuel Huntington points

to the MENA as one of the regions most resistant to democratic ideals; indeed, it has yet to experience a wave of democratization.[15] Along with other scholars, he has argued that one can attribute the absence of democracy in the MENA to a complex set of factors, the most notable being the salient nature of Islam.[16]

In a multivariate cross-sectional analysis, M. Steven Fish finds that Islam shares a strong relationship with autocracy and attributes this finding to the subordinate role of women in MENA society.[17] Daniela Donno and Bruce Russett, however, observe that, in general, Arab states are more likely to be authoritarian than Islamic states.[18] Thus, debate remains as to whether or not one may attribute the prevalence of autocratic systems of governance in the region to Arab culture or to the dominance of Islam in these countries. Regardless, the prominence of autocracy in the Middle East has long been considered a cause of discord in the region.[19] That is, in these types of states, "public grievances are not addressed and are therefore allowed to fester to the point that citizens turn to extremist actors for relief. The dictatorial nature of the regime furthermore retards the public virtues of political moderation and compromise, which are necessary ingredients of non-violent political expression."[20] Despite the relationship between authoritarianism and internal conflict, the one between authoritarianism and terrorism is less defined and lacks evidential support in the current body of research.

Studies have found little evidence to suggest that the absence of democracy and the presence of authoritarian rule encourage terrorism.[21] Several have even discovered that democracies are actually more conducive to terrorist activities than authoritarian states.[22] Thus, a major consideration of this analysis involves illustrating that the features of authoritarian rule which foster conflict also foster terrorism. It is logical to assume that a relationship exists between terrorism and autocratic forms of governance, given the strength of the relationship between violent conflict and autocracy. Consequently, the fact that studies have not been able to establish this linkage highlights the weaknesses of these analyses and the data used. By utilizing survey data, this text diverges from existing approaches by identifying the repressive components of authoritarian states, within the context of state weakness, that foster individual opinions and attitudes which could then lead to terrorist behavior. This approach reveals that autocratic systems of governance are at the source of terrorism.

Absence of Economic Development

Economic development and diversity have largely been absent in the MENA. Given an economy dependent upon natural resources (largely oil), foreign aid, and remittances, industrial development has lagged behind in the region.[23] Oil dependence plays a crucial role in the relationship between terrorism and state failure there. Some scholars point to resource scarcity as a major contributor to conflict, but a great deal of research has found empirical support for resource abundance as a factor in generating and sustaining conflict.[24] Moreover, rentier-state theory supports this assertion, and research indicates that states dependent upon one or a few natural resources have slow economic growth and are more likely to be based upon authoritarian political regimes than states with poor resources and/or diverse economies.[25]

Commentators have often cited the lack of economic development in the MENA as the principal motivation for violence in the region.[26] Lacking an inclusive economic system, the area has fostered grievances among able-bodied, educated, ideological youth who cannot find employment.[27] The ranks of terrorist organizations are filled with this disenfranchised and disillusioned segment of the population. Thus, the lack of economic development in the region has not only crippled these states, making them perpetually weak and driving many of the unemployed youth to terrorist organizations, but also has allowed something far worse to emerge. It has provided extremist groups with material for propaganda, which has facilitated their recruiting efforts, legitimized their acts of terrorism, and cultivated an ideology based upon religious radicalism.

Religious Radicalism

Inarguably, radical Islam springs from the creation and militarization of Israel. However, scholars argue that not until the end of the Six Day War in 1967 did radical Islam and the fundamentalist organizations driving these ideologies begin to gain popularity.[28] The defeat of the Arab nations by Israel in six days infused the region with a sense of humiliation and hopelessness.[29] The failure of radical socialism in the 1950s and 1960s, along with the pan-Arabism movements, found the people of the MENA desperate to escape the perceived dominance of Western ideals and values and to find a successful political, economic, and social movement unique to the culture and dominant religion of the region.

The radical Islamist movements supplemented—or in many cases, supplanted—the government as the source of economic and social goods,

which, in the end, conferred political power on these groups as well. Consequently, drawing upon a large membership base of educated, unemployed individuals frustrated with the political and economic situation in the region, the Muslim Brotherhood, Fatah, Hamas, and other radical Islamic groups have successfully promoted and implemented their agenda of violence.

As discussed previously, this study diverges from previous works by not simply looking at the individual effect of certain factors on the occurrence of terrorism.[30] In the case of religious radicalism, it holds that nothing about the religion of Islam accounts for the emergence of popular support for radical ideologies—or terrorism, for that matter. Instead, the lack of economic development, coupled with exposure to radical Islam, explains an individual's support for political violence. Consequently, this article examines these two features of state failure together, elaborating upon them in the discussion of methodology and findings.

State Failure: The Main Hypothesis

The hypothesis that guides this analysis maintains that failing and failed states are breeding grounds for political violence, primarily because of their weak rule of law and the absence of a security infrastructure capable of monitoring territorial borders. However, the conditions in failing and failed states can also drive individuals to resort to violent activities as a way of realizing some measure of security and obtaining tangible political and economic goods.

Strong states provide one basic, fundamental public good that weak states lack: that of security.[31] Without security, it is difficult for states to offer other basic goods indicative of their stability. The following four hypotheses capture the dimensions of state weakness.

Public Good of Security

Hypothesis 1: Individuals Who Feel That the State Does Not Provide Adequate Personal Security Are Likely to Support Political Violence

This hypothesis is grounded in the notion that individuals who have been victims of a violent act will turn to political violence as a means of obtaining some measure of security that the state has failed to provide. Thus, they are likely to engage in violent acts against the state or to support groups that may commit such acts but at the same time offer ad hoc security. This particular phenomenon proceeds from what some sociologists have identified

as the key factor that contributes to gang membership. Studies have found that adolescent males who have witnessed violence or have been victims of violence no longer believe that the state and its security personnel can protect them.[32] Consequently, they seek protection from alternative groups, such as a gang, even as the gang itself commits violent acts. Kathryn Seifert applies this particular cognitive behavior not only to the recruitment of gang members but also to cults and terrorist organizations. She maintains that adolescents' exposure to war and genocide increases the likelihood that they will grow up to become violent and participate in social violence practiced by terrorist organizations.[33] In the MENA, where both adults' and adolescents' exposure to violence is not uncommon, those citizens are more accepting of political violence than individuals in regions where such exposure is less prevalent. Clearly, personal insecurity has the potential to lead to support for and participation in political violence.

Presence of the State

Hypothesis 2: The Greater the Presence of the State, the Less Likely an Individual Will Participate in and Support Political Violence

In every known case of state failure, the absence of the state's influence is captured by the existence of ungoverned territory, an area characterized by large stretches of land within a state without rule of law exercised by the central government. These spaces are typically located in rural areas beyond governmental influence or in mountainous, rough terrain.[34] Such territory is a recipe for disaster. Without the presence of the government and security personnel, nonstate actors such as rebel groups, terrorist cells, paramilitary units, and insurgents can organize themselves in these spaces and engage in illegal, dangerous activities. Given what we know about ungoverned territory, this hypothesis maintains that the greater the presence of the state, the less likely an individual will engage in or support political violence.

State Authority

Hypothesis 3: The Greater the Authority and Legitimacy of the State, the Less Likely an Individual Will Participate in and Support Political Violence

The logic behind this hypothesis is that leadership sets the tone for the state. If people perceive the state authority as corrupt or as having seized power through illegitimate means, then the state will have difficulty convincing citizens to adhere to basic laws and institutional rules.[35] The only

exception occurs when state leaders use violence and coercion rather than functioning institutions to maintain authority and legitimacy. In those cases, states maintain power and authority only through oppression and the use of repressive tactics. However, in the end, state repression can subdue the populace for only so long in the face of deteriorating conditions brought about by state failure.

Provision of Public Goods

Hypothesis 4: When Citizens Are Provided Tangible Public Goods, They Are Less Likely to Participate in and Support Political Violence

Once the state ensures the public good of security, other tangible goods such as an education system, a health care system, a transportation system, a mail-delivery system, and other basic services become its essential responsibilities.[36] When states fail to offer these fundamental services, individuals must seek alternative ways of accessing them.[37] That is, they may resort to political violence or throw their support to terrorist organizations and insurgent groups because they believe that they will succeed where the state has failed.

Additional Hypotheses: Factors Unique to the Middle East

As discussed previously, this study hypothesizes that the climate of state failure engenders political violence. In the case of the MENA, certain cultural factors unique to the region coexist to create a situation of failure. Thus, beyond the features of state failure outlined in the preceding section, three additional factors—both unique and central to state weakness in the MENA—demand examination.

Prevalence of Autocracy

Hypothesis 5: Given the Presence of Autocratic Governance, Citizens of These States Are More Likely to Participate in and Support Political Violence

Lack of Economic Development

Hypothesis 6: When Citizens Perceive Their State As One That Lags Behind in Economic Development, They Are More Likely to Participate in and Support Political Violence

Religious Radicalism

Hypothesis 7: Given the Prevalence and Acceptance of Widespread Radical Religious Ideology, Citizens Exposed to These Ideals in Their States Are More Likely to Participate in and Support Political Violence

This article hypothesizes that, in addition to the lack of the public good of security, the absence of the state, a weak state authority, and the lack of provision of public goods, the prevalence of state failure in the MENA also proceeds from the dominance of autocratic regimes in the region, a lack of economic development, and the presence of mainstream religious radicalism. As demonstrated by the statistical models, these factors work together to create a climate of state failure in the area. As a result, this situation encourages citizens to support and engage in political violence to attain political and economic concessions from the state.

Data and Methodology

The data for this analysis come from the Arab Barometer Survey, which canvasses between 750 to 1,300 respondents of voting age from each of the seven MENA countries. In each country case, the survey team conducted face-to-face interviews, using various methods of data collection. In Algeria, Morocco, and Kuwait, the survey employed an area probability sample, basing quotas for age, education, and gender upon the most recent census. In Jordan, a sample of 100 clusters was randomly selected from the master sample, organized according to the number and geographic location of the families to ensure adequate representation. In Lebanon, the survey drew a nationally representative sample from a master sampling frame developed by *Statistics Lebanon*.[38] A nationally representative sample was also drawn in Yemen but in multiple stages from 21 Yemeni governorates proportional to the population in each governorate. Finally, in Palestine, the survey utilized a three-stage cluster sampling method based upon the most recent national census.

Dependent Variables

Two dependent variables measure the concept of "support for political violence." Together, they capture individuals' attitudes regarding the use of violence as a legitimate tool to secure tangible goods or concessions from the state.

Dependent variable 1: Political violence. The first measure of political violence is based upon the following question in the Arab Barometer Survey:

> Question (Variable=Violence1a–Violence1e): "Do you think the following operations are terrorist operations or not?"[39]

Operations	*Terrorist*	*Not Terrorist*	*Have Not Heard of Them*	*Don't Know [Do Not Read]*	*Decline to Answer*
1. Amman Hotel Explosions	1	2	3	8	9
2. Egyptian Explosions (Sharm al Sheikh/Dahab)					
3. London Underground Explosions					
4. Madrid Train Explosions					
5. Casablanca (Morocco) Explosions					

To estimate the model, I set the value "1" to zero, value "2" to one, and coded the remaining values as "missing data" for each incident. I did so because I am interested only in those respondents who favor the use of violence in relation to those who do not. I do not know the motivations of respondents who have not heard of the incidents, do not have an answer, or have declined to answer, so this information is not useful to me.

Given this study's definition of terrorism, the incidents listed above represent acts of political violence; thus, I code the variable in this manner because if respondents do not consider these events acts of terrorism, then I infer that they support these actions and the use of violence. The transformation of the variable allows me to determine which dimensions of state failure increase the likelihood that individuals support the use of political violence. On the one hand, the value "1" indicates that the respondent does not consider the incidents cited acts of terrorism and therefore sanctions the use of this type of violence. On the other hand, the value "0" indicates that the respondent considers the incidents cited acts of terrorism and does not support the use of this type of violence.

Dependent variable 2: Political violence. The second measure of political violence is based upon the following question in the Arab Barometer Survey:

> Question (Variable=Violence3): "Do you agree that armed groups are justified in attacking civilians in Iraq in order to resist the American occupation?"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree, 8=Can't Choose [Do Not Read], 9=Decline to Answer [Do Not Read][40]

To estimate the model, I set the values "1" and "2" to one, values "3" and "4" to zero, and coded the remaining values as missing data. Most people agree that using armed violence against civilians to make a political statement or force certain concessions from the government is an act of terrorism. Therefore, this variable—more so than the other two dependent variables—clearly indicates whether or not the respondent sanctions the use of political violence. The transformation of this variable leaves me with a measure of political violence, whereby respondents' agreement with this statement implies that they support political violence and their disagreement implies that they do not sanction such violence.

Before turning to a discussion of the explanatory variable, I must make two points about the proxy measures for political violence. First, at no point do these measures indicate whether respondents support the use of political violence against their own government—actually, quite the opposite since the second question mentions terrorist acts against the American occupation of Iraq. Therefore, it is likely that some of the respondents may support the use of political violence against the United States but not against their own state. I acknowledge the flaws that come with using these variables as measures of political violence against a respondent's home state, which raises my second point.

The literature on political violence in the MENA finds that negative attitudes towards the West, particularly the United States, often correlate with dissatisfaction with one's own government: "A continued sense of humiliation through covert and direct foreign support for repressive regimes as well as direct foreign intervention has left many [in the MENA] disillusioned with their own governments, as well as those of the major Western powers."[41] Support for the use of terrorism against the United States or any other state in the MENA should suggest support for the use of political violence against a respondent's own state.

Table 3 and figure 3 bolster this argument. The Pearson Correlation Analysis (table 3) reveals a strong correlation between the two measures of political violence. Although the coefficient results for the variable that involves

terrorist violence against the United States report weaker relationships with the other constructs, the relationships still remain statistically significant. Further, figure 3 supports the findings of the correlation analysis. The percentage of respondents who consider the incidents of violence terrorist acts is consistent with my argument and our understanding of the nature of terrorism. The respondents overwhelmingly believe that the violence committed against targets in the MENA and civilians in other countries constitutes terrorists acts.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Analysis for measures of political violence

Variables	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
1. Amman Hotel Explosions	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
2. Egyptian Explosions (Sharm al Sheikh/Dahab)	.6704***	----	----	----	----	----	----
3. London Underground Explosions	.4559***	.5811***	----	----	----	----	----
4. Madrid Train Explosions	.4677***	.5712***	.9125***	----	----	----	----
5. Casablanca (Morocco) Explosions	.6305***	.7085***	.6525***	.6692***	----	----	----
6. Armed groups are justified in attacking civilians in Iraq in order to resist the American occupation	.1045***	.1054***	.0935***	.0993***	.1015***	.1668***	----

Note: ***$p < .01$ for two-tailed test[42]

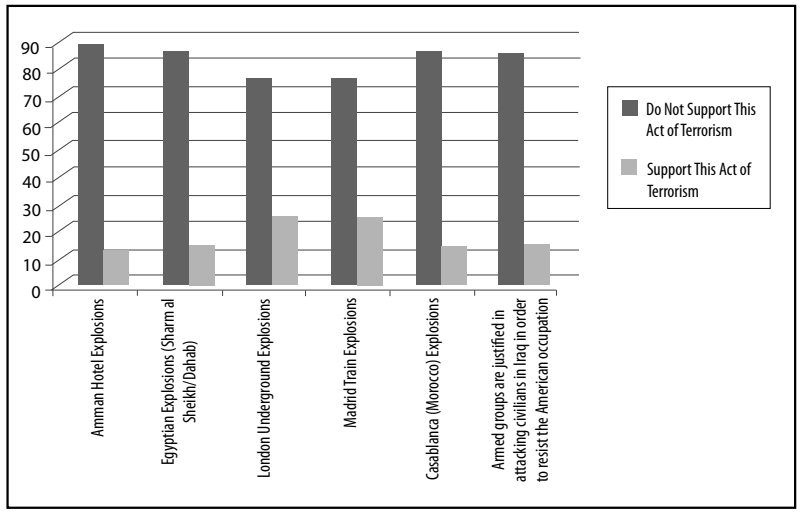

Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who support the use of political violence

The findings in table 3 and figure 3 lend credence to my assertion that negative attitudes towards the West are also correlated with dissatisfaction with one's own government. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, regardless of the region where the terrorist incident took place, the notion that individuals sanction this type of violence should imply that they support the use of political violence in general. Thus, there is a strong probability that they also support this type of violence against their own state.

Explanatory Variables

The public good of security. The first explanatory variable derives from a single measure of the public good of security and captures individuals' opinions regarding how secure they feel. The greater the feelings of personal insecurity, the more likely individuals will condone the use of political violence against the failed state that did not protect them. Furthermore, they are highly likely to support groups that engage in political violence because the latter often protect them.

The measure for the public good of security is based upon the following question in the Arab Barometer Survey:

> Question 1 (Variable=Security1): "Generally speaking, how safe is living in this (city/town/village)?"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Very Safe, 2=Safe, 3=Unsafe, 4=Very Unsafe, 8=[Do Not Read] Can't Choose, 9=[Do Not Read] Declined to Answer[43]

To estimate the model, I coded the values "8" and "9" as missing data for both variables. Removing these values leaves me with a scale that indicates an increase in perceived insecurity. Given the measurement of this explanatory variable, a positive coefficient signifies that a higher level of perceived insecurity increases the likelihood that a respondent will support political violence.

The presence of the state. The second explanatory variable, the presence of the state, stems from a single measure with five dimensions. Together, they capture individuals' opinions regarding the ease with which they can contact and receive services from the government. The more visible and accessible the government, the more likely the state is present. Similarly, the less visible and less accessible the government, the greater the likelihood that it is not present in the respondent's region, thus implying the presence of ungoverned territory—where terrorist groups tend to flourish.

Measures for the presence of the state are based upon the following questions in the Arab Barometer Survey:

Question 1 (Variable=Presence1–Presence5): "Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following administrative or social services from the government?"[44]

Service	*Very Easy*	*Easy*	*Difficult*	*Very Difficult*	*Never Tried*	*Can't Choose [Do Not Read]*	*Decline to Answer [Do Not Read]*
1. An identity document (such as a birth certificate, driver's license, or passport)	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
2. Registering a child in primary school in the public system							
3. Medical treatment at a nearby clinic							
4. Help from the police when you need it							
5. Access to individuals or institutions to file a complaint when your rights are violated							

To estimate the model, I code the values "8" and "9" as missing data for the five variables. Removing these values leaves me with a scale that indicates an increase in the perceived absence of the state. I recoded the variables to invert the scale whereby "5=never tried" becomes zero, "4=very difficult" becomes 1, "3=difficult" becomes 2, "easy=2" becomes 3, and "very easy=1" becomes 4. I inverted the scale because I do not wish to drop the value "5=never tried." In some cases, upper-class individuals with the means to obtain these services from privatized sources would not rely upon the government for them. Therefore, it is not that the government is not present and accessible but that these individuals go elsewhere. At the same time, people of a lower economic status may need these services but are apathetic towards the government and its ability to provide them. Because I do not know the motivations behind an individual's reasons for not attempting to obtain these services from the government, I cannot remove the value. If I did, I would lose information. Recoding this variable leaves me with a scale that denotes the perceived presence of the state. Given the measurement of this variable and my hypothesis, a negative coefficient would indicate that the perceived *absence* of the state increases the likelihood that a respondent will support political violence.

The state authority. The third explanatory variable, state authority, derives from three measures that capture individuals' opinions regarding

their trust in the government and their belief in its legitimacy. If they perceive state authority as corrupt and untrustworthy, the state will have difficulty convincing citizens to adhere to its laws and institutional rules. Thus, the absence of state authority encourages citizens to engage in political violence as a means of protesting the corrupt and illegitimate government. The measures of state authority are based upon the following questions in the Arab Barometer Survey:

> Question 1 (Variable=Trust1–Trust5): "For each [institution], please tell me how much trust you have in them. Is it a great deal of trust, quite a lot of trust, not very much trust, or none at all?"[45]

Institution	*A Great Deal of Trust*	*Quite a Lot of Trust*	*Not Very Much Trust*	*None at All*	*Don't Know (Don't Read)*	*Decline to Answer (Don't Read)*
1. Prime Minister	1	2	3	4	8	9
2. The Courts						
3. Parliament						
4. The Police						
5. Political Parties						

To estimate the model, I coded the values "8" and "9" as missing data. Removing these values leaves me with a scale that indicates an increase in the perceived lack of trust in government officials who represent the state. Given the measurement of these independent variables and my hypothesis, a positive coefficient would indicate that the perceived lack of trust in the government increases the likelihood that a respondent will support political violence.

> Question 2 (Variable=Legitimate1): "On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election held in [country name]? Was it:"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Completely Free and Fair, 2=Free and Fair, but with Minor Problems, 3=Free and Fair, with Major Problems, 4=Not Free or Fair, 8=[Do Not Read] Can't Choose, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[46]
>
> Question 3 (Variable=Corrupt1): "Here are some statements that describe how widespread corruption and bribe taking are in all sectors of [country name]. Which of the following statements reflects your own opinion the best?"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Hardly Anyone Is Involved in Corruption or Bribery, 2=Not a Lot of Officials Are Corrupt, 3=Most Officials Are Corrupt,

> 4=Almost Everyone Is Corrupt, 8=[Do Not Read] I Don't Know, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[47]

To estimate the model, I coded the values "8" and "9" as missing data for the variables Legitimate1 and Corrupt1. Removing these values leaves me with a scale that indicates an increase in the perceived presence of corruption among elected officials (Corrupt1) and the lack of government legitimacy (Legitimate1). Given the measurement of these independent variables and my hypothesis, a positive coefficient would indicate that the perceived presence of government corruption and lack of government legitimacy increases the likelihood that a respondent will support political violence.

The provision of public goods. The fourth explanatory variable, the provision of public goods, relies upon a single proxy measure that captures individuals' opinions regarding the state's ability to offer citizens essential public and social services. Citizens will perceive a state that cannot and/or does not provide such services as weak and will likely resort to other means of obtaining them, mainly through political violence. In support of the hypothesis, a state that does not supply essential public services to its citizens encourages them to engage in or support political violence as a method of gaining access to these goods and services.

The measure for the provision of public goods is based upon the following question in the Arab Barometer Survey:

> Question 1 (Variable=Goods1): "Do you agree with the following statement: 'The government does all it can to provide citizens with all services.'"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree, 8=[Do Not Read] Can't Choose, 9=[Do Not Read]Decline to Answer[48]

To estimate the model, I coded the values "8" and "9" as missing data. Removing these values leaves me with a scale that indicates the increasing ability of the government to provide citizens with necessary public services. Given the measurement of this variable and my hypothesis, a negative coefficient would indicate that the perceived inability of the government to offer citizens public goods and services raises the likelihood that a respondent will support political violence.

Prevalence of autocracy. The fifth explanatory variable, the prevalence of autocracy in the region, is based upon two related proxy measures that capture individuals' opinions regarding their belief that authoritarianism is

the most important problem facing their country. Individuals who consider the prevalence of authoritarianism in their country the most (or second-most) important problem confronting their state will likely hold negative feelings and attitudes towards the repressive nature of authoritarian states. Therefore, they are more likely to support political violence against the state than those who do not consider authoritarianism a major issue.

The measure for the prevalence of autocracy is based upon the following questions in the Arab Barometer Survey:[49]

> Question 1 (Variable=Autocracy1): "In your opinion, which of the following is the most important problem facing [country name] today?"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Economic Situation, 2=Corruption, *3=Authoritarianism*, 4=Ending the US Occupation of Iraq, 5=The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 8=[Do Not Read] I Don't Know, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[50]
>
> Question 1 (Variable=Autocracy2): "Which of the following is the *second* most important problem facing [country name] today?"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Economic Situation, 2=Corruption, *3=Authoritarianism*, 4=Ending the US Occupation in Iraq, 5=The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 8=[Do Not Read] I Don't Know, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[51]

To estimate the model, I recoded value label "3=Authoritarianism" to one, all other values to zero, and the values "8" and "9" as missing data. The new coding structure leaves a dichotomous measure that allows me to isolate those individuals who consider authoritarianism a major problem in their state. Given the measurement of this variable and my hypothesis, a positive coefficient would indicate that those individuals who consider authoritarianism a major problem in their country are more likely to support political violence.

Lack of economic development. The sixth explanatory variable, the lack of economic development in the region, is based upon two proxy measures that capture individuals' opinions regarding their belief that it is the most important problem facing their country and that economic conditions there are bad. The measure for the lack of economic development derives from the following questions in the Arab Barometer Survey:

> Question 1 (Variable=EconDev1): "In your opinion, which of the following is the most important problem facing [country name] today?"

> Value Labels: *1=Economic situation*, 2=Corruption, 3=Authoritarianism, 4=Ending the US Occupation in Iraq, 5=The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 8=[Do Not Read] I Don't Know, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[52]
>
> Question 1 (Variable=EconDev2): "How would you rate the current overall economic condition of [country name] today?"
>
> Value Labels: 1=Very Good, 2=Good, 3=Bad, 4=Very Bad, 8=[Do Not Read] Don't Know, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[53]

For the variable EconDev1, I maintained the original coding for the value label "1=Economic Situation." I recoded all of the other values, setting them to zero, and coded the values "8" and "9" as missing data. The new coding structure leaves a dichotomous measure that allows me to isolate those individuals who consider the economic situation in their country a major problem. Given the measurement of this variable and my hypothesis, a positive coefficient would indicate that those individuals who consider the economic situation the most important problem facing their country are more likely to support political violence.

For the variable EconDev2, I coded the values "8" and "9" as missing data. Removing these values leaves with a scale that indicates increasing dissatisfaction with the economic situation in one's state. Given the measurement of this variable and my hypothesis, a positive coefficient would indicate that the perceived inability of the government to properly manage the economic situation in an individual's country enhances the likelihood that a respondent will support political violence.

Religious radicalism. As outlined in the theoretical arguments discussed at the beginning of this article and in the findings of earlier research, the dominance of radical Islamic ideologies has contributed to intrastate conflicts in the region. Therefore, the seventh explanatory variable, the presence of religious radicalism, comes from two proxy measures intended to capture extreme interpretations of religious doctrine. Radical Islamic views alone cannot explain political violence in the MENA. Therefore, in addition to estimating this variable as an independent factor in the model, I also interact it with the measures for authoritarianism and lack of economic development. Radical Islam has managed to flourish only because of the lack of political and economic development in the region. Consequently, I expect to find that individuals who consider authoritarianism and the lack of economic development major problems in their state will also hold radical Islamic

ideologies. A repressive political climate and poor economic conditions permit terrorists to manipulate religious fervor; thus, they can also successfully promote political violence against the state.

The measure for religious radicalism is based upon the following questions in the Arab Barometer Survey:

> Question 1 (Variable=Religion1): "In your opinion, how important is . . . the following [principle] as a guide for making the laws of your country? . . . The government should implement only the laws of the sharia."
>
> Value Labels: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree, 8=[Do Not Read] I Don't Know, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[54]
>
> Question 2 (Variable=Religion2): "Today as in the past, Muslim scholars and jurists sometimes disagree about the proper interpretation of Islam in response to present-day issues. For . . . the [following statement] . . . please indicate whether you agree strongly, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly with the interpretation of Islam that is presented. . . . If a Muslim converts to another religion, he must be punished by execution."
>
> Value Labels: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree, 8=[Do Not Read] I Don't Know, 9=[Do Not Read] Decline to Answer[55]

To estimate the model, I coded the values "8" and "9" as missing data. Removing these values leaves me with a scale that indicates a decrease in support for radical Islamic ideals as the scale moves higher. Given the measurement of this variable and my hypothesis, a negative coefficient would indicate that the greater the support for radical Islamic ideologies, the greater the likelihood that a respondent will support the use of political violence.

Controls

I operationalized a series of control variables that capture the socioeconomic conditions of the respondents. These include the variables level of education, employment status, age, and gender, which serve as appropriate indicators of an individual's socioeconomic position within that country. Their inclusion in the model controls their influence on the relationship between the selected independent conditions and political violence. See the appendix for a description

of these variables and their measurement. Table 4 describes each of the variables included in the analysis.

Table 4. Variable names and description of the concepts measured

Variable	*Indicator Concept*
Violence1a–Violence1e	Measures Political Violence Indicates that respondents do not believe that the following are terrorist attacks: - Amman hotel explosions - Egyptian explosions - London underground explosions - Madrid train explosions - Casablanca explosions
Violence2	Measures Political Violence Indicates that respondents believe that armed groups are justified in attacking civilians in Iraq in order to resist the American occupation
Security1	How safe they feel
Presence1–Presence 5	The ease or difficulty with which citizens may obtain the following services from the government - Identity document - Registering a child for public school - Medical treatment at a nearby clinic - Help from the police when needed - Access to government in order to file a complaint when rights are violated
Trust1	Measures State Authority - Do they trust the prime minister?
Trust2	Measures State Authority - Do they trust the courts?
Trust3	Measures State Authority - Do they trust the parliament?
Trust4	Measures State Authority - Do they trust the police?
Trust5	Measures State Authority - Do they trust the political parties?
Legitimate1	Measures State Authority - Indicates how they would rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election
Corrupt1	Measures State Authority - Indicates widespread corruption in all sectors of the respondent's country
Goods1	The government does all it can to provide social services
Autocracy1	Authoritarianism is the most important problem facing their state
Autocracy2	Authoritarianism is the second-most important problem facing their state
EconDev1	The economic situation in the respondents' nations is the most important problem facing their state
EconDev2	The current overall economic condition in their state is bad
Religion1	The government should implement only laws of Sharia
Religion2	If a Muslim converts to another religion, he must be punished by execution
Education	Respondent's highest level of education
Gender	Gender
Employment	Respondent's employment status
Age	Respondent's age

Models

I conducted cross-sectional analysis using logistical regression to determine which dimensions of state failure elevate the probability that an individual will support political violence in the selected country cases. To test my assumptions, I estimated two logit regression models. (A logistical regression predicts the outcome of a categorical dependent variable based on one or more predictor variables, converting the empirical relationship between the dependent variable and predictor, or independent variable, into a probability score.) The first logit model indicates respondents' support for political violence and includes the variables that I identify as features of state failure, along with the variables prevalence of autocracy, lack of economic development, and religious radicalism (fig. 4). The second logit model (fig. 5) resembles the one in figure 4 but includes the interactions among religious radicalism, authoritarianism, and economic development.

$$Model\,1 = ln\left(\frac{p_i(violence)}{1-p_i(violence)}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Security + \beta_2 State\,Presence + \beta_3 State\,Authority +$$

$$\beta_4 State\,Legitimacy + \beta_5 Public\,Services + \beta_6 Authoritarianism + \beta_7 Religion + \beta_8 Economic\,Development +$$

$$\beta_9 Employment + \beta_{10} Education + \beta_{11} Age + \beta_{12} Gender + e$$

Figure 4. Model of state failure with measures specific to the MENA: Authoritarianism, religious radicalism, and economic development

$$Model\,2 = ln\left(\frac{p_i(violence)}{1-p_i(violence)}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1\ Security + \beta_2\ State\,Presence + \beta_3\ State\,Authority +$$

$$\beta_4 State\,Legitimacy + \beta_5 Public\,Services + \beta_6 Authoritarianism + \beta_7 Religion + \beta_8\ Economic\ Development +$$

$$\beta_9\ Employment + \beta_{10} Education + \beta_{11} Age + \beta_{12} Gender + \beta_{13} Authoritarianism * Religion +$$

$$\beta_{14}\ Religion * Economic\ Development + \ \beta_{15} Authoritarianism * Economic\ Development + e$$

Figure 5. Model of state failure with measures specific to the MENA: Authoritarianism, religious radicalism, and economic development (including interactions)

Results

Table 5 reports the binary logit estimates for the model indicating the probability that a respondent will support political violence. The results reveal that the variables which capture the concept of state failure—those measured

by the absence of the public good of security, the absence of the state, the perceived absence of the legitimacy of state authority, the lack of trust in state authority, and the lack of essential public goods—all influence a citizen's decision to support terrorism.

Table 5. Binary logit estimates of support for political violence

Variable	*Violence1a-Amman*	*Violence1b-Egypt*	*Violence1c-London*	*Violence1d-Madrid*	*Violence1e-Casablanca*	*Violence2*	*Violence3*
Security1	.227 (.157)	.352** (.166)	.302** (.132)	.184 (.134)	.158 (.171)	.105 (.091)	-.058 (.124)
Presence1	.079 (.112)	.035 (.118)	.019 (.093)	.112 (.095)	-.053 (.122)	-.112* (.058)	-.168** (.078)
Presence2	.103 (.091)	-.069 (.088)	.042 (.070)	.025 (.070)	-.086 (.092)	.046 (.044)	-.051 (.061)
Presence3	.146 (.114)	.091 (.118)	-.013 (.088)	-.011 (.089)	.088 (.122)	-.055 (.055)	.154 (.075)
Presence4	-.178* (.099)	-.155 (.106)	-.048 (.077)	-.082 (.078)	.012 (.109)	.082 (.055)	-.025 (.075)
Presence5	.005 (.115)	-.041 (.123)	-.131 (.087)	-.085 (.087)	-.153 (.118)	.001 (.055)	.210 (.072)
Trust1	.035 (.128)	.161 (.132)	.021 (.098)	-.097 (.099)	-.042 (.134)	.180** (.062)	.144* (.084)
Trust2	.364** (.137)	.056 (.136)	.129 (.104)	.082 (.109)	-.100 (.142)	-.304*** (.070)	.025 (.096)
Trust3	.137 (.136)	-.196 (.132)	.188* (.103)	.278** (.104)	-.045 (.138)	.122** (.059)	.034 (.079)
Trust4	.439*** (.126)	.681*** (.130)	-.056 (.098)	-.004 (.102)	.434*** (.132)	-.020 (.064)	-.130 (.089)
Trust5	.001 (.126)	.026 (.125)	-.032 (.094)	-.162* (.095)	-.124 (.124)	-.158** (.059)	-.331*** (.077)
Legitimate1	.303** (.109)	.037 (.108)	.057 (.084)	.056 (.085)	.331** (.115)	.006 (.053)	.002 (.071)
Corrupt1	.161 (.151)	.357** (.158)	.286** (.115)	.381*** (.116)	.099 (.156)	-.029 (.075)	.168* (.096)
Goods1	-.055 (.110)	.126 (.120)	-.153 (.094)	-.094 (.096)	.015 (.130)	.014 (.065)	-.180** (.087)
Autocracy1	.099 (.509)	-.045 (.485)	.394 (.361)	.019 (.391)	.455 (.467)	-.544** (.232)	-.215 (.343)
Autocracy2	-.115 (.412)	.307 (.365)	-.114 (.294)	-.477 (.321)	-.343 (.449)	-.595*** (.172)	-.196 (.235)
EconDev1	.701*** (.219)	-.106 (.215)	.254 (.174)	.215 (.177)	.152 (.228)	-.314** (.117)	.012 (.155)
EconDev2	-.255* (.144)	-.279* (.150)	-.309** (.109)	-.260** (.110)	-.199 (.150)	.060 (.073)	-.022 (.092)
Religion1	-.496*** (.127)	-.405** (.134)	-.545*** (.103)	-.653*** (.106)	-.351** (.136)	-.237*** (.067)	-.023 (.092)
Religion2	-.407*** (.105)	-.683*** (.121)	-.500 (.085)	-.373*** (.084)	-.676*** (.122)	-.247*** (.062)	-.082 (.078)
Gender	-.034 (.216)	-.017 (.222)	-.781*** (.182)	-.376** (.179)	-.214 (.234)	-.113 (.120)	-.383** (.165)
Age	.006 (.010)	.004 (.009)	-.004 (.007)	-.010 (.008)	.029** (.009)	-.008* (.004)	.004 (.006)
Education	.337*** (.073)	.129* (.072)	.221*** (.058)	.203*** (.059)	.225** (.075)	-.042 (.039)	-.030 (.054)
Employment	.225 (.237)	.377 (.247)	-.331* (.181)	-.231 (.186)	.373 (.255)	.034 (.123)	-.450** (.164)

Table 5. Binary logit estimates of support for political violence (*continued*)

Variable	*Violence1a-Amman*	*Violence1b-Egypt*	*Violence1c-London*	*Violence1d-Madrid*	*Violence1e-Casablanca*	*Violence2*	*Violence3*
Interactions							
Autocracy1*EconDev1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Autocracy1*EconDev2	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Autocracy1*Religion2	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Religion2*EconDev1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Religion2*EconDev2	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Constant	-6.94*** (1.09)	-4.34*** (1.08)	-.953 (.815)	-.956 (.832)	-3.40** (1.08)	2.39*** (.499)	-.173 (.652)
Observations	1990	1958	1861	1809	1730	1571	1606
Pseudo R^2	.2638	.2391	.1831	.1753	.1895	.0785	.0677
LR χ^2	265.91	223.56	238.67	220.55	155.24	170.99	93.12
Prob > χ^2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Note: ***p < .01 for two-tailed test; ** p < .05 for two-tailed test; *p <0.1 for two-tailed test; standard errors in parentheses

With regard to the variables economic development, the presence of autocratic government, and religious radicalism (included in the model, given my argument that these factors are unique to the MENA), only the measure of religious radicalism consistently has both statistical and substantive significance. The findings indicate that religious radicalism is a strong predictor of support for political violence—not surprising in light of the existing literature. Nevertheless, it does contradict my hypotheses and the belief that radical Islam alone cannot explain an individual's support for political violence. For that reason, I delve deeper into this finding in the conclusion of this article. In addition to religious radicalism, the model does reveal only weak support, at best, for the measure designated lack of economic development. The variable EconDev1 is substantively and statistically significant in only one equation. Although it has statistical significance in a second equation, the interpretation of the coefficient contradicts the hypotheses. Thus, these results convince me that with regard to the MENA, the lack of economic development alone is not enough to turn individuals to political violence. (I expand upon this notion in greater detail in a discussion of the model in table 6, below.)

Therefore, although the variable autocracy is not significant in the model and only marginal support exists for economic development, I remain certain that these variables are still important to the discussion of the relationship between state failure and terrorism. However, as I previously observed, I consider these factors intricately tied to one another, and thus, as we have seen in this model, by themselves they exert little influence on support for political

violence. Perusal of the statistical model in table 6 will show that, when examined collectively as interaction terms, these factors have a greater impact on support for political violence.

Finally, the control variables gender, age, education, and employment have a significant effect on support for political violence. The findings suggest that men and young adults are more likely to lend such support. Further, unemployed individuals are more likely to support the use of political violence. Finally, the more educated the respondents, the more likely they will support political violence. Regarding the results of the control variables in the model, I am sure that we are seeing findings specific to the region, which has a substantial proportion of young, educated, but unemployed males. The literature suggests that members of this group—dissatisfied with unemployment despite their educational achievements—are most easily swayed by propaganda and radical ideologies used by terrorist groups to recruit this segment of the population.[56]

Table 6 reports the binary logit estimates for the model which indicates the probability that a respondent will support political violence. This model differs from the one in table 5 in that it incorporates interactions among the variables economic development, autocracy, and religious radicalism. The findings reveal that the model of state failure remains stable in this equation. The variables measuring the absence of the public good of security, the absence of the state, the perceived absence of the legitimacy of state authority, the lack of trust in state authority, and the lack of essential public goods all influence a citizen's decision to support terrorism. The substantive interpretation of the control variables also remains consistent. Young, educated, unemployed males are more likely to support political violence. Moreover, of the three factors I consider specific to the MENA, only religious radicalism has both statistical and substantive significance. The dominance of this variable in the two models and across the equations suggests that it is a salient factor in predicting support for terrorism.

The findings with regard to interactions among economic development, autocracy, and religious radicalism are very telling. Unlike table 5, which indicates that the variables autocracy and economic development appear to have no effect on support for political violence, table 6 reveals that these factors have significant influence on a respondent's decision to support terrorism. The findings suggest that the presence of autocracy and a lack of economic development influence one's decision to support terrorism. The same holds true for the presence of autocracy and religious radicalism. Finally, the interaction between the presence of religious radicalism and the lack of economic development is the most consistent of the interaction terms across all equations, suggesting that

this relationship significantly affects one's decision to support political violence. In sum, the findings in table 6 are consistent with the hypotheses. (Table 7 lists the specific hypotheses supported by the regression analysis.) Specifically, economic development, autocracy, and religious radicalism have a stronger predictive influence on support for political violence when examined together as interaction terms than they do when incorporated into the model as discrete factors.

Table 6. Binary logit estimates of support for political violence: State failure model with measures specific to the MENA (authoritarianism, religious radicalism, and economic development as interaction terms)

Variable	*Violence1a-Amman*	*Violence1b-Egypt*	*Violence1c-London*	*Violence1d-Madrid*	*Violence1e-Casablanca*	*Violence2*	*Violence3*
Security1	.235 (.159)	.354** (.168)	.307** (.133)	.187 (.134)	.142 (.173)	.075 (.092)	-.043 (.125)
Presence1	.078 (.111)	.037 (.118)	.020 (.093)	.104 (.095)	-.045 (.123)	-.123** (.058)	-.177** (.079)
Presence2	.090 (.091)	-.107 (.089)	.040 (.070)	.032 (.070)	-.105 (.094)	.052 (.044)	-.042 (.062)
Presence3	.143 (.116)	.095 (.119)	-.013 (.089)	-.018 (.090)	.102 (.123)	-.046 (.056)	.158 (.076)
Presence4	-.177* (.100)	-.092 (.108)	-.049 (.078)	-.086 (.079)	.013 (.111)	.081 (.055)	-.024 (.076)
Presence5	-.005 (.117)	-.037 (.124)	-.131 (.088)	-.078 (.088)	-.139 (.119)	.002 (.056)	.191 (.074)
Trust1	.044 (.129)	.158 (.132)	.022 (.098)	-.098 (.099)	-.034 (.135)	.185** (.063)	.158* (.084)
Trust2	.355** (.135)	.046 (.134)	.132 (.105)	.088 (.109)	-.123 (.143)	-.334 (.071)	.026 (.096)
Trust3	.129 (.135)	-.205 (.132)	.188* (.103)	.280** (.105)	-.049 (.139)	.121** (.059)	.016 (.080)
Trust4	.437*** (.126)	.656*** (.130)	-.065 (.099)	-.008 (.103)	.419** (.134)	-.015 (.064)	-.143 (.091)
Trust5	-.014 (.126)	-.005 (.128)	-.035 (.095)	-.152 (.096)	-.126 (.126)	-.152** (.060)	-.348 (.079)
Legitimate1	.305** (.110)	.021 (.109)	.053 (.085)	.064 (.086)	.321** (.117)	.005 (.053)	.004 (.072)
Corrupt1	.177 (.152)	.376** (.156)	.293** (.116)	.379*** (.116)	.136 (.155)	-.002 (.075)	.173* (.097)
Goods1	-.050 (.110)	.133 (.122)	-.156* (.095)	-.102 (.096)	.025 (.132)	.006 (.066)	-.157* (.089)
Autocracy1	-2.24** (1.04)	-.697 (.801)	.368 (.563)	-.483 (.652)	-.088 (.892)	-.187 (.344)	-.191*** (.591)
Autocracy2	-1.36 (.919)	.098 (.668)	-.109 (.563)	-1.22* (.698)	-.984 (.965)	-.691** (.326)	-1.41** (.500)
EconDev1	.510 (.339)	-.158 (.389)	.171 (.274)	.088 (.268)	.067 (.397)	-.175 (.142)	-.025 (.200)
EconDev2	-.372** (.179)	-.684*** (.185)	-.337** (.138)	-.235* (.139)	-.415** (.192)	.003 (.085)	-.305** (.110)
Religion1	-.490*** (.133)	-.286** (.139)	-.529*** (.107)	-.657*** (.110)	-.274** (.141)	-.201** (.069)	.032 (.093)
Religion2	-.168 (.170)	-.243 (.169)	-.385** (.125)	-.304** (.126)	-.375** (.171)	-.343*** (.039)	.202* (.110)
Gender	-.014 (.220)	.026 (.228)	-.783*** (.182)	-.367** (.179)	-.184 (.236)	-.109 (.121)	-.391** (.168)
Age	.006 (.010)	.005 (.010)	-.004 (.007)	-.009 (.008)	.028** (.009)	-.009** (.004)	.004 (.006)
Education	.356*** (.076)	.121* (.073)	.222*** (.058)	.207*** (.059)	.212** (.075)	-.034 (.039)	-.045 (.054)
Employment	.283 (.242)	.398 (.252)	-.325* (.182)	-.229 (.186)	.415* (.256)	.003 (.124)	-.141** (.168)

Table 6. Binary logit estimates of support for political violence: State failure model with measures specific to the MENA (authoritarianism, religious radicalism, and economic development as interaction terms) (*continued*)

Interactions							
Autocracy1*EconDev1	-3.00** (1.24)	-.862 (.831)	-.059 (.596)	.512 (.669)	.167 (.937)	.792** (.355)	-.771 (.530)
Autocracy1*EconDev2	1.95** (.853)	.163 (.658)	-.541 (.490)	-.210 (.546)	-.781 (.720)	-.450 (.309)	1.69** (..495)
Autocracy1*Religion2	1.76** (.819)	.754 (.675)	.457 (.497)	.927* (.575)	1.23 (.831)	-.359 (.320)	1.36** (.457)
Religion2*EconDev1	.540 (.396)	.199 (.434)	.149 (.311)	.146 (.311)	.147 (.443)	-.791*** (.216)	.199 (.277)
Religion2*EconDev2	.268 (.371)	1.47*** (.380)	.237 (.284)	-.024 (.293)	.909** (.390)	.569** (.233)	.924** (.281)
Constant	-7.39*** (1.13)	-4.70*** (1.13)	-1.21 (.846)	-1.18 (.861)	-3.87*** (1.13)	2.81*** (.540)	-.393 (.703)
Observations	1990	1958	1861	1809	1730	1571	1606
Pseudo R^2	.2802	.2602	.1858	.1788	.2014	.0889	.0941
LR χ^2	282.41	243.29	242.13	224.91	164.95	193.64	129.36
Prob > χ^2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Note: ***p < .01 for two-tailed test; ** p < .05 for two-tailed test; *p <0.1 for two-tailed test; standard errors in parentheses

Table 7. Hypotheses supported by the logistical regression analysis

Hypotheses	*Variable and Concept Measured*
Absence of the Public Good of Security	Security2-Respondent Feels Safe
State Presence	Presence1-Identity Document Presence4-Help from the Police Presence5-Government Access to File Complaint When Rights Are Violated
State Authority	Trust1-Trust Prime Minister Trust2-Trust the Courts Trust3-Trust Parliament Trust4-Trust the Police Legitimate1-Free and Fair National Election Corrupt1-Corruption in All Sectors of the State
Provision of Public Goods	Goods1-The Government Provides Social Services
Economic Development	EconDev1-Economy Is the Most Important Problem Facing the Nation
Religious Radicalism	Religion1-Sharia Law Religion2-Execution If One Converts to Another Religion
Interactions	Autocracy2*EconDev1 Autocracy2*EconDev2 Religion1*EconDev2 Autocracy1*Religion2
Controls	Gender Age Employment Status-Employed or Not Employed Education-Respondent's Highest Level of Education

Conclusion

The MENA has occupied the center of international politics for the last 50 years. The creation of Israel, subsequent wars, the Iranian revolution, oppressive authoritarian regimes, and the existence of dangerous terrorist networks and activity have made the region the subject of scholarly discourse and debate, producing much research on the region and the sources of violence. This article has drawn upon this material but has sought to fill the gaps that remain, one of which is the absence of research on the relationship between state failure in the region and political violence. As this study has demonstrated, the political and economic conditions found in weak states positively influence individuals in deciding whether or not to support terrorism. Beyond that finding, this study has also arrived at conclusions regarding existing theories of violence in the MENA that have important implications for future research.

The results of the model of state failure found in table 5 are consistent with the overarching hypothesis of this text: that the measures of state failure serve as significant predictors of individual support for political violence. The findings reveal that the absence of the state, the absence of the public good of security, the lack of state authority, and the lack of the provision of public goods are important to making decisions about supporting political violence and terrorism. One must make a consequential point about these findings, however.

Because the Arab Barometer data have no such concrete measure of support for political violence, I had to use proxy variables. The latter represent important indicators of the willingness of individuals to support political violence by seeking their opinion about well-documented terrorist attacks. That is, the expectation was that those individuals who did not consider these events terrorist attacks were more likely to support political violence, based upon what one could only perceive as a predisposition to support radical, violent behavior. The results reveal a general consensus among the respondents, in the sense that the geographic location of the attack (Europe versus MENA) led to expected cultural delineations. For example, the public good of security proved less important to the respondent's decision if the incident took place outside the Middle East and/or North Africa. In other words, the results reveal that certain conditions of state failure were more important to respondents, given the location of the terrorist incident. As I indicated, this was expected. One would not expect a respondent who lives in the MENA to consider the absence of the public good of security important when it concerns a terrorist incident in Madrid. However, the lack of the public good of security does become important to respondents when the attack occurs in a country within their region because the

effects are far more tangible to them. Still, despite some of the discrepancies between the estimated equations and the geographic locations of the attacks, the model of state failure indicates that conditions of state failure are salient contributors to individual support for political violence.

In the model of state failure that includes variables considered important to the MENA (see table 6), the findings are mostly consistent with the hypotheses. First, the model depicted in table 5 remains stable. Thus, in the presence of additional variables, the conditions of state failure continue to affect support for political violence. Further, the variable religious radicalism seems a strong predictor of such support.

Although scholars assert that the presence of authoritarian regimes, a lack of economic development, and the widespread prevalence of religious extremism in the region explain the violence, I have argued otherwise, hypothesizing that as individual factors, these variables would have no significant impact on support for political violence. The relationship among the variables as interaction terms would prove to be the explanation that scholars have sought but could not support by means of statistical models. The results for the most part are consistent with my hypotheses, with the exception of religious radicalism—a consistent predictor of support for political violence that has forced me to reevaluate my position. Apparently there is something unique and enduring about religious extremism in the region that makes it such an important contributor to political violence. Yet, of the three variables that I consider specific to the region, this one is the most difficult to control in society if one wishes to address terrorism.

Evidently, the presence of state failure and religious radicalism in the Middle East and the Maghreb is a combustible combination. In an effort to address terrorism, the international community can promote economic development and foster democratic ideals in the region, but it cannot tell people what to believe when it comes to their religion. Thus, without addressing what lies at the root of religious radicalism, political violence will continue to plague the region and will export terrorists and terrorist threats to other parts of the world. This analysis stops short of investigating the sources of religious radicalism. I can postulate that the lack of economic development and the presence of authoritarian regimes play a role, as I indicated at the beginning of this article. However, I do not test this assumption—that is something for future works to explore. However, we should examine and dissect the causes of religious radicalism if we wish to understand how this single factor represents such a significant predictor of political violence and

if we wish to address religious extremism in an already fragile region plagued by deeply rooted religious factions.

Finally, as I have argued, the interactions among authoritarianism, economic development, and religious radicalism are significant predictors of support for political violence. This finding is consistent with my understanding of the interconnectedness of these factors. Together, they create a climate in the region ripe for terrorism and political violence, as illustrated by the results. In addition, the control measures reveal that educated, unemployed young men are more likely to support violence—a finding consistent with the literature on terrorism.

In conclusion, state failure has a devastating effect on any state, but in the MENA, where a lack of economic development, the prevalence of authoritarian regimes, and the presence of religious radicalism have already had a destructive influence on these states, the conditions of state failure have left the region crippled. Until the serious pursuit of state-building efforts, state failure has positioned the Middle East and North Africa as an enduring frontier for terrorism and political violence.

Appendix

Table 8. Descriptive statistics

Variable	*Observations*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Violence1a	5,901	.114	.317	0	1
Violence1b	5,791	.138	.345	0	1
Violence1c	5,452	.238	.426	0	1
Violence1d	5,267	.235	.424	0	1
Violence1e	5,027	.152	.359	0	1
Violence2	5,013	.577	.494	0	1
Violence3	6,373	.143	.350	0	1
Security1	7,979	1.99	.721	1	4
Presence1	7,974	2.72	1.11	0	4
Presence2	7,800	2.51	1.43	0	4
Presence3	7,984	2.25	1.14	0	4
Presence4	7,847	1.81	1.40	0	4
Presence5	7,700	1.43	1.16	0	4
Trust1	7,616	2.59	1.12	1	4
Trust2	7,603	2.58	1.09	1	4
Trust3	7,582	2.78	1.09	1	4
Trust4	7,737	2.42	1.10	1	4
Trust5	7,239	3.13	1.01	1	4
Legitimate1	6,439	2.32	1.17	1	4
Corrupt1	7,547	2.64	.830	1	4
Goods1	5,342	2.54	1.04	1	4
Autocracy1	6,451	.057	.233	0	1
Autocracy2	6,258	.1011	.302	0	1
EconDev1	6,451	.574	.494	0	1
EconDev2	7,877	2.86	.894	1	4
Religion1	7,616	2.05	.995	1	4
Religion2	6,820	2.37	1.13	1	4
Education	8,098	3.75	1.73	1	7
Gender	8,119	.492	.499	0	1
Employment	8,054	.479	.499	0	1
Age	6,799	35.9	13.1	18	90

Control Variables

1. Education

Question Number: Q703

Variable Label: Education of respondent

Value Labels: 1=Illiterate, 2=Elementary, 3=Primary, 4=Secondary, 5=College Diploma (Two Years), 6=Bachelor's Degree, 7=Master's Degree or Higher, 97=Not Clear

*To estimate the model, I coded the value "97" as missing data.

2. Employment Status

Question Number: Q704

Variable Label: Employment Status of Respondent

Value Labels: 1=Employed, 2=Not Employed, 97=Not Clear

*To estimate the model, I labeled the values so that "0" equals not employed and "1" equals employed. I then coded the value "97" as missing data.

3. Gender

Question Number: Q702

Question: Respondent's gender

Variable Label: Gender of respondent

Values: 1, 2
Value Labels: 1=Male, 2=Female

*To estimate the model, I labeled the values so that "0" equals male and "1" equals female.

4. Age

Question Number: Q701

Question: Respondent's age

Variable Label: Age of respondent

Values: 18–90

Value Labels: N/A

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