Ideological organizations: Al Qaeda & IS

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Risks come from not knowing what you're doing (Warren Buffet)

My goals for this evening

- Trying to understand Al Qaeda & Islamic State 'achievements' in terms of strategy, organizational structure and leadership hereby using Mintzberg Ideological/Missionary organizational configuration and complexity leadership theory

- Trying to demonstrate old vs new school thinking of leadership

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Ideological/Missionary Organization (Mintzberg, 1983)

- Can be overlaid on conventional configuration, most commonly entrepreneurial, adhocracy, professional and machine bureaucracy

- A distinct, inspiring mission that has an intention to better some aspect of society, for its own sake rather than for private advantage

- Volunteer membership & loyalty through the mission

- Age:

  - No too young: ideology is rooted in history & traditions
  - Not too old: hard to retain a sense of missionary excitement for long periods
  - But exceptions can be found: 'flash fire missionaries', 'smoldering missionaries'

- Size: *develop, don't grow*

  - Small for feeling of cohesivness & identification with ideology
  - Large ones (that want to change the world): create small, intimate, rather autonomous enclaves, linked together by the ideology

Examples: Ideological/ Missionary Organizations

Ideal:

- IFRC "To inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world."

- Tesla: "to accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy".

- Buurtzorg: "zorg dicht bij huis"

- …

Examples: Ideological/ Missionary Organizations

Quasi-missionaries: should not be, but turns out to be

- Apple under Steve Jobs: "To make a contribution to the world by making tools for the mind that advance humankind."

- Google: don't do evil (have outgrown existing mission)

- 3M: "To Improve Every Life through Innovative Giving in Education, Community and the Environment"

Pseudo-missionaries: should be, but it is not

- Uber, Airbnb?

- Rotary club

Stage 1: the rooting of an ideology in a sense of mission (Mintzberg, 1983)

1) A founding father
2) A unique mission to be accomplished
3) Establishment of a group
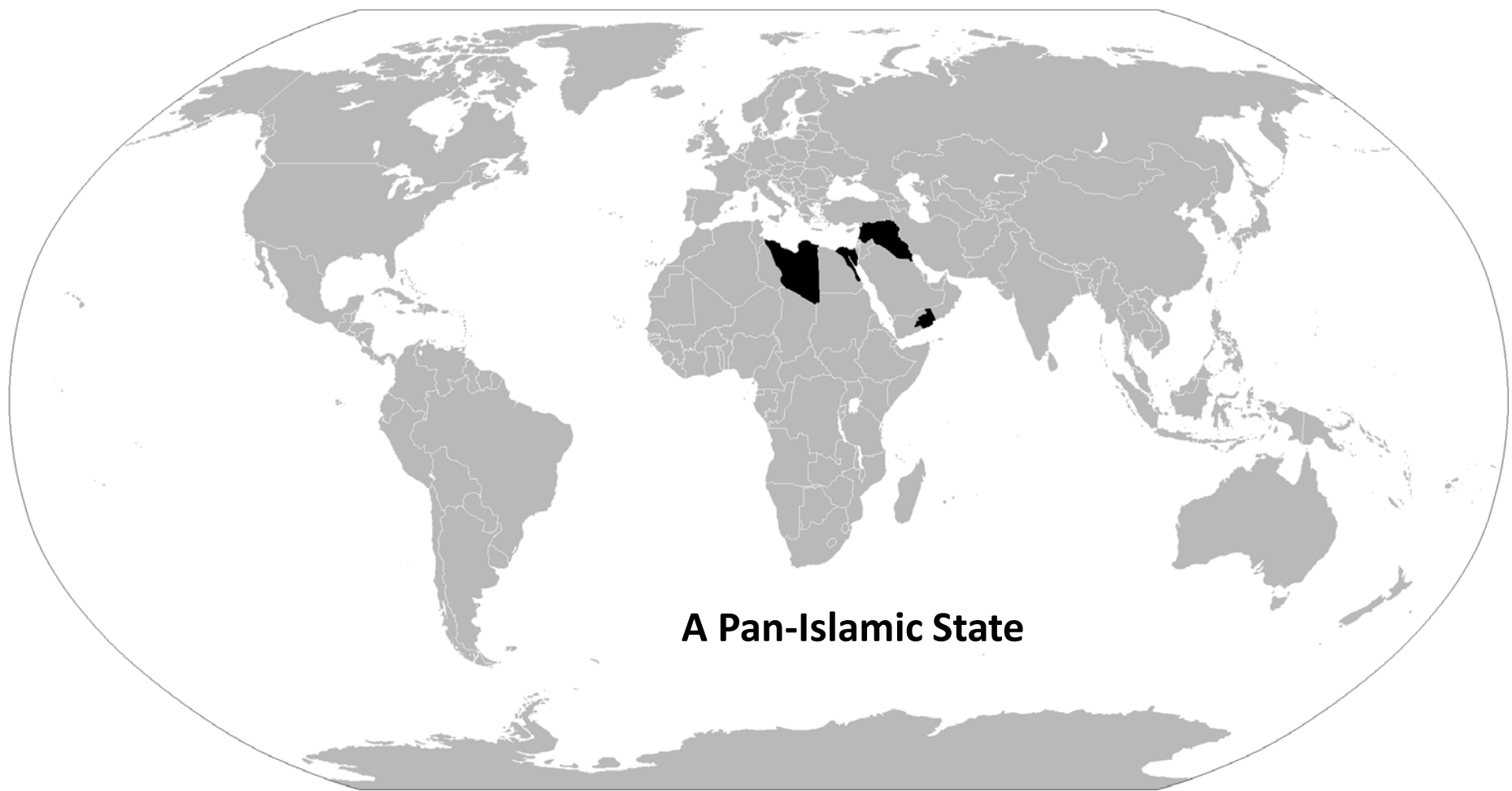
Al Qaeda
Osama Bin Laden (1988 in Pakistan)

IS
Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi
(Al Qaeda leader of Iraq, 2006)

A Pan-Islamic State

"A story about US vs Them", the "pure from the impure". It is "the glue that holds even the most tenuous organization together" (Stern, 2003, p.142)

The ideology is the coordinating mechanism (Mintzberg, 1983).

Role of complexity leader

- Leaders are 'Tags':
  - specialized form of catalysts that symbolize, articulate or help unify a movement
- Leaders like Bin Laden, al-Zarqawi are more important as symbols and articulators, than as managers

=> Al-Qaeda or IS are the product of interaction capital and not the brainchild of an indiviual; its strenght does not reside in its leaders, altough its leaders tags were important to its development and fitness

> If Bin Laden was not there, you would have another Bin Laden. You would have another name, with the same character, with the same role, of Bin Laden now. That's why we call it phenomena, not a person (PBS Online, 2001)

Stage 2: the development of the ideology through traditions and sagas (Mintzberg, 1983)

Al Qaeda
Ayman al-Zawahiri

IS: 2006-2013
ISIS: 2013-2014
IS: 2014-...
Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

"The leader initiates the changes, but these emerge in an organizationatal sage only if, once he is gone, the important members of the organization become committed to them, and conserve and perpetuate them." (Mintzberg, 1983, p.154)

Strategy & tactics

Al Qaeda

- Global jihad is a long game

- First unite (virtual) & then territory

- Far enemy: USA, bcs they support military & economical corrupt dictators in middle east, draw them in multiple wars, until world economic system collapses in 2020

- Large scale dramatic attacks against strategic & symbolic targets

- Written statements, bland, made-for TV proselytizing

Mintzberg:

- Reformer: set out to change the world directly, force or convince outsiders to change their ways

- Major challenge: assimiliation (drawn into the larger society)

Strategy & tactics

IS

- Want a Muslim state now

- First territory & purfiy

- Near enemy: apostate regimes like Bashar Assad regime in Syria and the Haider al-Abadi regime in Iraq

- Artilleray, massed forces, tanks

- Social media & propaganda

Mintzberg

- Converters: attract enough members & try to change their ways

- Major challenge: isolation (often live & work physically inside the organization) vs assimilation

Strategic monitoring & environmental analysis

Use 2 vehicles of globalization to their advantage

- Deregulation: soft border controls (attacks, moving money, international trade...)

- Information technology: website, free electronic encrypted emails

Challenge

- Muslim diversity (often more gender equal): most Arabs are Muslims (more than 80%), most Muslims are not Arabs (more than 80%) (e.g. Arabs, Persians, Turks, Africans, Indian, Chinese, Malays)

- Direct competition: other (Fundamentalist Islamist) terrorist groups

- Indirect "substitute" competition: reformists, rationalists: reinterpretation of Muslims texts, and adoption of practices consistent with modernity

Stage 3: the reinforcement of the ideology through identification
(Mintzberg, 1983)

weakest ————————————————— strongest

Calculated Identification

The system of Authority (Inducements through bureaucrattic control systems)

Selected Identification (recruitment & promotion)

Evoked Identification (socialization & indoctrination)

Natural Identification
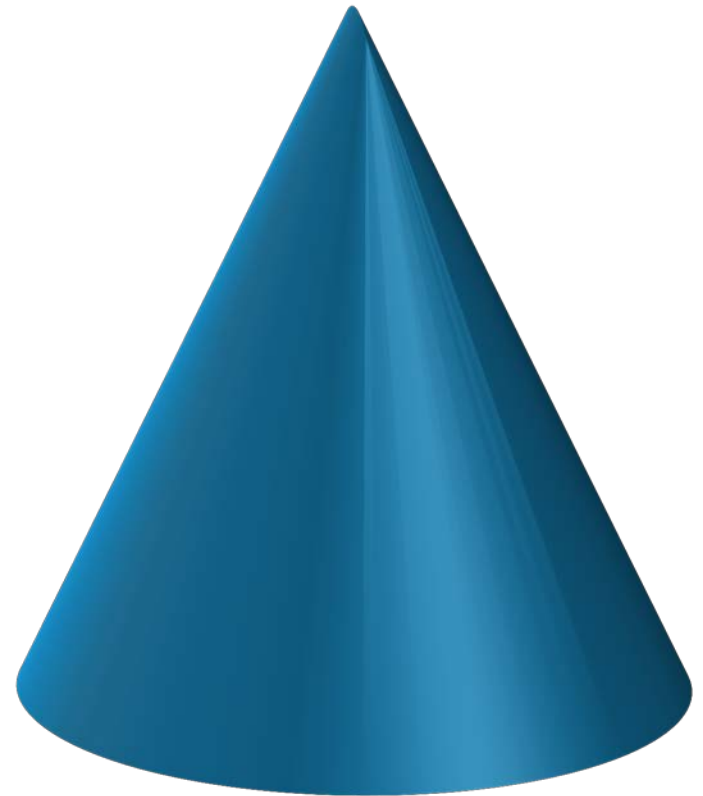
Internal strenghts

1. Ideology: attract jihadi's from around the world

2. Military experience: inherited from fighting Soviet Army late 80's

They developed these core competencies :

- Training objective: convert members into independent self-sufficient individuals, held together by the ideology

  - Mental training, religious indoctrination, familiarity with evil enemies 'new Crusade' against the lands of the islam => pre-occupation is not personal career, but group's common goals => less resistance to change when switching strategies

  - 14 qualifications are compulsory for joining Al Qaeda

- Pay skilled & unskilled labor differently

Organization

1) Hierarchical structure of command

2) Organic network

3) Franchised network

4) 'Free electron' network

Hierachical structure of Al Qaeda
(Guess in 2011: 200 to 1000 members)

3 major sections

- Emir or the leader

- Consultative Council: a dozen veteran clerics & military leaders

- Operational Committees:

  - Military

    - Internal Security Service
    - Enemy Infiltration

  - Fatwa

  - Media & Publicity

  - Finance & Business Committee (with financial controllers, portfolio managers, payroll office, management office)

    - Network of charities, banks, companies, diamond trading, manufacturing, transport
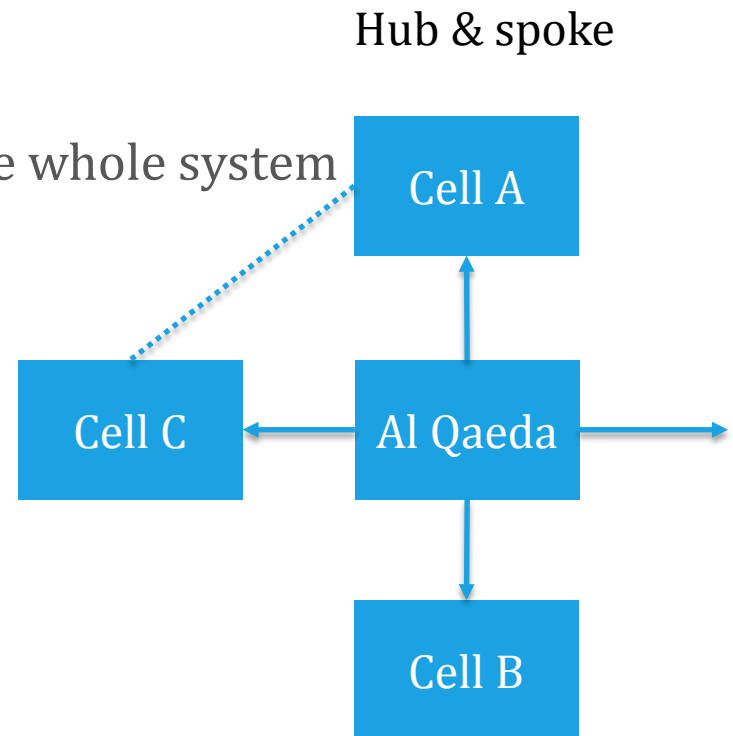
Real policy of staff & rank

- 4 levels

Al Qaeda organic network

Organic member network, characterized by a loose, one-sided (mostly top-down) communication relation

- Weak ties in order to avoid damaging the whole system
- Good for highly diversified firms
- Good for radical new ideas
- Good in dynamic industries

(Greve et al., 2014)

Hub & spoke

Al Qaeda franchised network (adhocracy)

Ideological franchise

- Contact Al Qaeda to learn its operational techniques

- Receive instructions, guidance, and sometimes funding, but operate independently of each other

- They pay for the privilege of operating under a well recognized brand

  - The international Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews & Crusaders
  - Mori Islamic Liberation Front (Philippines)
  - Jemaah Islamiah (Southeast Asian)
  - Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya (Egypt)
  - Jayash-e Mohammed (South Asia)
  - ....
  - Ansar al-islam (Iraq & Syria): merged wih IS in 2014
  - Al-Ansar Mujahidin (Caucasus): switched to IS
  - Abu Sayyaf (Philippines): switched to IS in 2014

Al Qaeda franchised network

They meet on radical Islamic Conferences...

- Less good for radical new ideas
- Excellent when you're small to absorpe shocks

(Greve et al., 2014)

Network

Franchise A

Franchise B

Franchise C
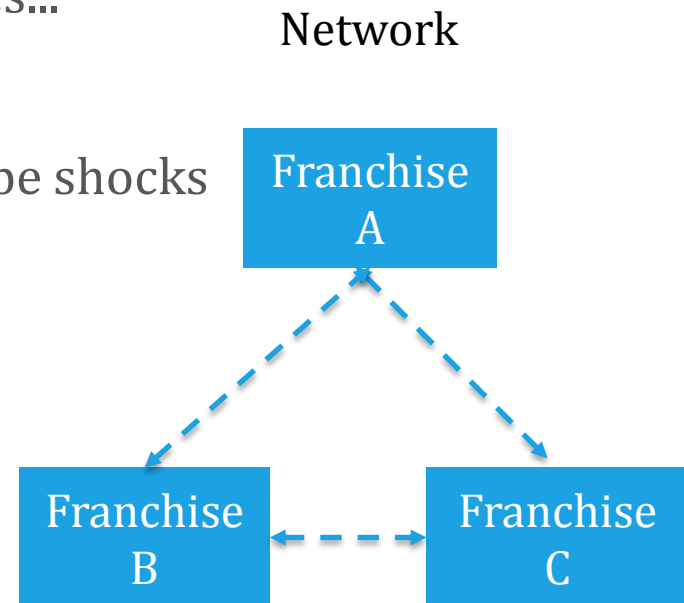
'Free electron' network (adhocracy)

- No contact between the parties (especially in western countries)

- Attracted by ideology, self-identify, often through social media

- Lone-wolf avenger or small groups with local agenda, who often eliminate themselves

- No guarantee of affilitation, but the "inspiring" organizations are likely to support small group with media praise and post-event recognition (who they trust to take care of the message after the extinction)

- They participate based on willingness, not based upon attributes (like in the larger organization)

Role of complexity leaders

1. Leadership of the network gives up certain things:

   • Insistence that the "top" of the organization is kept fully informed of the actions of the members

   • Control over the linkages formed by network members

   • Authorithy over action of members: action on their own within the overall mission

   => Stay out of the way of spontaneous development and innovation

2. Served as tag to

   1. Catalyze mission
   2. Recruit new members
   3. Promote activities within the context of the mission
   4. Drop seeds of innovation
   5. Provide ressources and network contacts

How to win from them?

1. Make the indirect competition stronger

   - Often don't get very old
   - Maybe they become cloisters: total isolation?

2. Use their internal rivalry

   - Infighting will undermine their ability to shape regional politics, diminish both movements' influence and discredit jihadism in general
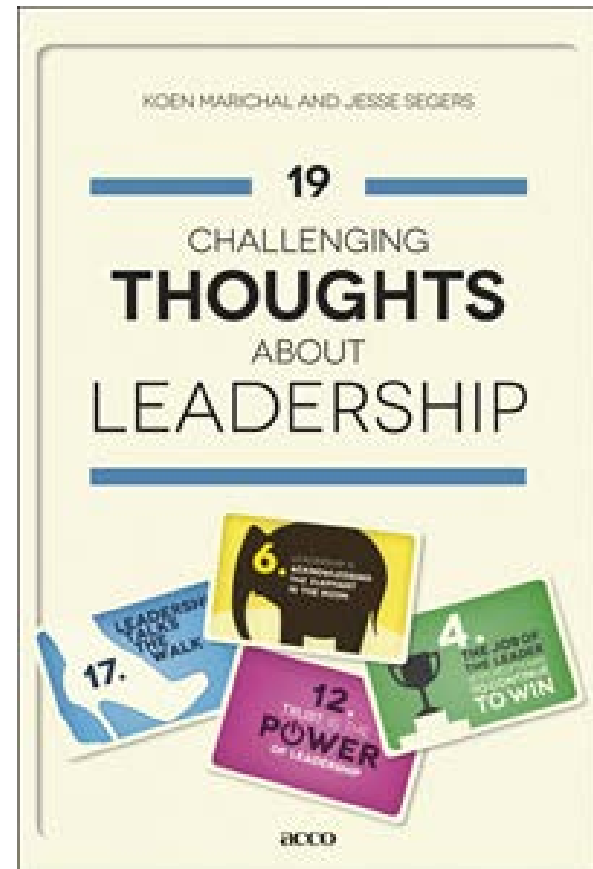
Q&A

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