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Political Islam in Southeast Asia and North Africa:
Toward a Critical Human Security Paradigm

The onset of the "war on terror" has seen the intensification of processes of securitization and the proliferation of analyses of political Islam. The former reclaim the state as the main referent of security and aim to remove certain issues from the sphere of democratic negotiation by presenting them as existential threats (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998; Fierke 2007). The latter attempt to explain the link between Islam and political violence usually by adopting a culturalist approach, which entails taking Islam to be the overdetermining explanatory factor for the emergence of extremism and violence.[1] This paper attempts to address two substantive gaps in international relations: the conceptual under-development of human security, as an alternative to the continuing emphasis on a national security paradigm, and the oversimplified treatment of the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism in light of recent preoccupation with extremist forms of political Islam.[2] To focus on these gaps, this analysis highlights several elements relevant to both an understanding of the complexity of political Islam in an age of globalization, and to a formulation of a critical human security paradigm as a viable alternative to current security orthodoxy.

Firstly, by focusing on several jihadist Islamic groups in Southeast Asia and North Africa, my paper intends to show how varied transnational forces such as colonialism, Christianity, capitalism and nationalism, have shaped contemporary extremist manifestations of political Islam. The types of Islamic terrorism active both in North Africa (also known as the Maghreb) and Southeast Asia bear striking similarities in terms of their intersection with and struggle against colonial rule, nationalist and capitalist projects. Given the focus on the link between various transnational forces and Islamic terrorism, this project will take into consideration several Islamist organizations whose purported goal is to establish Islamist states in these two regions, such as Jemaah Islamyiah (JI) in Southeast Asia, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf in Southern Philippines, and Al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM) in North Africa.

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[1] For critiques of the culturalist approach to the study of political Islam, see Pasha 2000 and 2007, Mandaville 2001 and 2007, Roy 2004, Mamdani 2005a and 2005b.

[2] A note on terminology is needed here: I understand the concept of political Islam to be synonymous with Islamism, which expresses a wide range of political mobilizations that aim to institute an Islamic political order supported by Islamic law, the sharia. Thus, following Peter Mandaville and Olivier Roy, I take Islamism to be a modern political movement actively engaged with 'religious knowledge that speaks to the political imperatives of the day' (Mandaville 2007:86). Islamism tends to be conflated with salafism, which is a movement advocating for a return to a purer Islam as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his followers. Salafism generally eschews political engagement and focuses on the individual's adherence to a 'pure' Islam, but there are salafists that combine the principle of strict adherence to religious practices with political engagement. This engagement can range from an active political engagement where violence has a limited and restricted role to the jihadist type of engagement, where the concept of jihad becomes a moral imperative and a duty incumbent upon all Muslims (see Mandaville 2007:248-249). This paper focuses specifically on jihadist groups, although there are references to less radical or violent movements.

By highlighting the transnational character of the forces that have shaped political Islam, I am thus interested in those 'processes of *interconnection* and *mutual constitution*', which indicate the 'making together' of phenomena that have become central to world politics (Barkawi 2006:17; see also Pasha 2000 and 2003; Mandaville 2001 and 2007:299; Fierke 2007:153-154; Woon 2009:98). By adopting a postcolonial perspective on human security, I contend that there are deeper connections between the emergence of Islamic terrorism and far-reaching historical links between political oppression and marginalization, social and economic disenfranchisement, and the modern projects of nation-building and capitalist expansion. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler state that the metropole and the colony cannot be separated, as they constitute a 'single analytical field' (1997:4; also cited in Barkawi and Laffey 2006:346). If they are correct in their assertion, then a research agenda that aims to understand the phenomenon of transnational terrorism and the transnational dynamics of political Islam cannot leave out the impact of colonial policies on such issues. Indeed, current research coming from comparative politics states that '[t]he legacy of past colonial policies continues to define many of the key issues for Islamic politics' (Means 2009:3; see also Sidel 2009) in both North Africa and Southeast Asia. Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey attempt to reframe security analysis in postcolonial terms by drawing 'attention to the implication of the 'War on Terror' in longer histories of warfare between the global North and the global South' (2006: 330; see also Gregory 2004; Mamdani 2005a). By taking into account the larger historical and political processes that have structured contemporary conflicts, a postcolonial approach would provide human security with a much needed emphasis on *structural* factors and on the global distribution of power.

Secondly, a human security perspective on the phenomenon of transnational terrorism seeks to address the following questions: What are the main causes of insecurity for those living in the global South? Which security approach is better suited to address and protect human security after 9/11? (Shani 2007:6). I thus contend that greater attention needs to be given to those processes and power structures that *produce* human insecurity in Southeast Asia and North Africa (see Fierke 2007:144). In other words, what types of political and social environments make terrorism possible? Building a 'critical human security paradigm' involves not only a focus on those values, which would constitute it as an *ethical*, credible and coherent alternative to contemporary security orthodoxy, but also a genuine consideration of non-Western 'perspectives on human security, its praxis, possibilities and limits' (McGrew 2007:ix).

There have been debates as to whether human security is simply 'part of a new regime of power' (Fierke 2007:150) or whether it represents a significant challenge to current security discourses. This paper argues that a critical human security paradigm has a strong emancipatory potential by drawing attention to several elements: the role of historical global/transnational relations in the production of militant Islamic movements, the need to conceptualize current forms of extremist political Islam as both 'a moment *of*, and a reaction *to*, neoliberal globalization' (Pasha 2000:243-244; see also Roy 2004), and the exploration of alternative articulations of human security by grass-roots movements in Southeast Asia and North Africa. The latter constitutes the focus of the last section of the paper taking into consideration those alternative articulations of civil society

movements (particularly women's rights groups and human rights activist networks) whose activities help formulate an understanding of (in)security and of an Islamic modernity that does not align itself either with conservative/militant Islamic ideologies nor with state-driven security. Such a focus would bring to light those non-Western perspectives on human security, but also the possibilities and limits of a *praxis* of human security, as Anthony McGrew put it.

1. Political Islam in Southeast Asia and North Africa

Many of the current analyses on the rise of political Islam tend to focus either on the regional conditions that contributed to the rise of specific Islamist movements (Abuza 2006; McCargo 2008; Means 2009), or on the global(ized) phenomenon of terrorism/jihadism (Roy 2004; Kepel 2006). I propose an approach that takes into consideration the linkages between regional Islamist mobilization and global forces. Such an approach would pay attention to the transnational connections between various jihadist groups, global capitalist flows, postcolonial nation-state building, and various processes of globalization, such as the dissemination of communication and military technologies. A postcolonial reading of the phenomenon of political Islam attempts to grasp its complexity by paying attention to far-reaching historical links and to the consequences of European colonial projects in Muslim communities. This *longue durée* dimension of Islamic terrorism has been underexamined in contemporary security studies. Recent research indicates that a structural and historical analysis of the phenomenon of terrorism is indispensable to an adequate appreciation of both its scale and its dynamics (see Kepel 2006; Roy 2004; Tagliacozzo 2009; Sidel 2009; Means 2009). Moreover, a postcolonial perspective would highlight the 'mutual constitution of European and non-European worlds and their joint role' in security relations (Barkawi and Laffey 2006: 329; see also Acharya 1997).

In other words, the emergence of transnational networks of Islamic terrorism in modernity is inseparable from the European colonial projects. Groups such as AQLIM (North Africa), MILF (Philippines), and JI (a militant organization that originated in Indonesia, with established cells in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and southern Philippines) have their roots in regional militant movements that attempted to overthrow European colonial administrations (Sidel 2009; Yegar 2009; Means 2009). With the independence of colonial territories in Northern Africa and Southeast Asia, the movement and evolution of Islamic armed militancy was crucially shaped by different transnational forces such as Christianity (in the Philippines and Indonesia), Buddhism (Thailand and Burma), and the "secular(izing) circuitries of the capitalist market and the modern nation-state" throughout North Africa and Southeast Asia (Sidel 2009:311). In several cases in Southeast Asia, Muslim communities have been relegated to minority status and to political and economic marginalization both by colonial administrations and/or by the subsequent postcolonial states. For example, any analysis of the political dynamics of the MILF in the Philippines needs to take into consideration the tremendous impact of Spanish Catholicism and U.S. liberalism, both of which reduced Muslim communities to disenfranchised minorities in their own lands (George 1980; McKenna 1998; Sidel 2009; Yegar 2009; Means 2009). For the Malay Muslims in Pattani, southern Thailand, the

turning point happened in 1909 with the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty, which left Pattani to Siam (Yegar 2009: 327; Aphornsuvan 2007: 30; McCargo 2008).

On the other hand, in majoritarian Muslim societies such as Algeria and Indonesia (to a certain extent Malaysia as well), the adherence to a Muslim identity during colonial rule entailed a refusal to succumb to the hegemonic power of colonialism (see Marshall 1979; Abdeljelil 2007: 3; Botha 2008; Laffan 2003; Sidel 2009; Means 2009). In these territories, Islam has been part of the national consciousness, which emerged during colonialism. It had to contend not only with colonial rule, but also with competing nationalist projects, which were not eager to accommodate the political agenda of militant Islamic groups (see Botha 2008). Some scholars thus see the rise of Islamism, whether in its regional or transnational variants, not only 'as a form of post-colonial discourse' (Mandaville 2001:68), but as 'a continuation of an unsuccessful process of decolonization' (Pasha 2000:245).

1.a. The Moro Revolt in Mindanao
The colonial encounter between Europeans and the local populations in the islands of the Philippines was profoundly structured by the Spanish colonial administration's emphasis on aggressive evangelization of the locals, and by the ethnic differentiation that ensued as a result of colonial policies. The islands encompassed various ethnic and religious communities, such as the indigenous tribes inhabiting inland territory and embracing animist traditions, the immigrants from the Malay peninsula who practiced animism and who lived in coastal settlements, and the two Muslim sultanates that thrived before the Spanish arrival. The sultanate of Sulu and the Magindanao confederation had complex relationships of commercial, religious, and cultural exchanges with Brunei, the state of Sabah (part of present-day Malaysia), and North Sulawesi (now part of Indonesia). Called "Moros" by the Spaniards, the Muslim populations in the southern Philippines considered themselves closer to other Muslim societies in Southeast Asia and distinct from the rest of the Philippine islands. The Spanish were keen to assimilate the Chinese immigrant population who came there to act as trade intermediaries between the colonial administration, China and Japan. The conversion of this immigrant group to Christianity, and their assimilation into the local society through intermarriage produced a 'Chinese *mestizo* comprador class', which would later spearhead the Philippino nationalist project, the integration of the islands into transnational circuits of capitalist development, and the internal colonization of Muslim Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago (Sidel 2009:280).

Thus, the ethnic differentiation imposed by the Spanish colonial administration would translate into an isolation of the southern islands before decolonization, and into an enforced marginalization and subordination of the region once the national integration process set in. What John Sidel called 'the combination between the peripherality within the Philippines' of the southern Muslim regions, and its 'transnational connectedness beyond its borders' (2009:281; see also Means 2009:197) are crucial elements in understanding the dynamics of current Islamist groups, such as MILF and the Abu Sayyaf Group. When the Spanish ceded the islands to the United States in 1898 after losing the Spanish-American War, the Americans took control of the islands. The American

colonial policies took a 'divide and conquer' approach in their administration: unable to defeat the rising the tide of anti-colonial nationalist movements, they attempted to strike deals with various local Muslim leaders. It is ironical that the direct intervention of American colonial authorities contributed to the 'development of a transcendental ethno-religious identity among Philippine Muslims', which would underpin the emergence of the "Bangsamoro" separatist movement of the 1960s, and would provide the movement with a *lingua franca*, English (Woon 2009:103). The postcolonial politics of the founding of the Philippines as an independent nation-state in 1946 complicates the relationship between an isolated Muslim south and a predominantly Catholic Philippines. The nationalist project of integration translated into an internal colonialism that saw the encouragement of large scale migration to the southern regions, which were fertile and not as densely populated as the northern ones. This internal migration resulted in a massive influx of non-Muslim settlers that altered considerably the demographic make-up of the southern regions, and set the stage for violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians (Means 2009:197). The result of this state-driven migration was the concentration of natural resources and wealth in the hands of Christians and foreign investors (Yegar 2009:331).

The MILF represents the culmination of a tradition of separatist movements in the southern Philippines, such as the Mindanao Independence Movement, the Union of Islamic Forces and Organizations, paramilitary local groups tasked with the self-defence of their communities, and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), founded in 1971 by Nur Misuari. The MILF is the splinter group that broke away from MNLF as a result of the divisions that emerged after the 1976 Tripoli Agreement negotiations. The MNLF had settled for autonomy instead of independence, and so MILF felt the former had betrayed the ideals and goals of the Muslims in the south (see Means 2009: 199; Woon 2009:102). But the emergence of the MILF as a separatist movement with an Islamist ideology has to be placed within the context of the transnational flows of Islamic ideas and movements. The isolation of the southern regions within the Philippines meant also their integration into Islamic transnational educational and political networks. The considerable expansion of the system of Koranic and Islamic schools (*madaris*) in the 1950s throughout the south contributed to the linkages between young Muslim students in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, and broader Islamic networks. Among the founders of the MILF were people educated in Islamic schools in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Middle East, where they absorbed a more transnational version of Islam, as propagated through the teachings of Sayyid Qutb and Maulana Maududi. Not to mention that the MILF sent about 700 recruits to join the mujahideen in Afghanistan following the 1979 Soviet invasion (Means 2009:203). Libya provided MILF with money and weapons until 1995 and Saudi Arabia channelled considerable funding in the region (Sidel 2009:284; Means 2009: 203). MILF insurgents trained in camps in Malaysia, Libya, Syria, PLO camps in the Middle East, and Pakistan (ICG 2004a:4).

Thus, far from being a mere regional separatist organization, the MNLF/MILF constitutes a complex network of transnational and regional alliances that implicate numerous governments and organizations. Moreover, it also stands out as a moment of both historical continuity and interruption. The former is evident in a genealogy of

struggle against Spanish and American colonial occupation, and against the postcolonial independent state that relegated the Muslim populations to minority citizens, subordinated to and disadvantaged by governmental neocolonial development and relocation policies. The notion of historical continuity is also manifest in the links between the islands of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago with wider Islamic networks, through education, commercial exchanges, and hajj (pilgrimage). The interruption mentioned earlier represents the exposure to and the integration into a global(ized) Islamist ideological framework that traces its origins to the anti-colonial rhetoric of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1920s Egypt and of Maulana Maududi in British India and in postcolonial Pakistan, and to the anti-nationalist and anti-Western rhetoric of Sayyid Qutb, among others.[3] The influence exerted by the teachings of these scholars is crucial in understanding the dynamics of both current regional and transnational Islamist militancy. As Peter Mandaville noted, it is '[d]uring the colonial era [that] Muslims developed a sense of "globality" (and they continue to do so today), an awareness of the world as a single political space and of their position within its configurations of hegemony' (2001:80). Focusing on the MILF, for example, thus entails a grasp of its trans-historical and trans-local connections. One of the most notorious (and debated) connections is with the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a transnational jihadist group based in Southeast Asia.

1.b. Jemaah Islamiyah: from trans-local to transnational

In Indonesia, the dynamics of political and of jihadist Islam have been shaped by 'a pattern of class and state formation' that placed different constraints on Islamist mobilization (Sidel 2009:287). There are several important elements in understanding the current shape of political violence under the banner of Islam in Indonesia. One notable factor is the mobilization and assimilation of the local aristocracy, the *priyayi*, (especially in Java) by the Dutch colonial administration into the bureaucratic structure of the colonial state (see Geertz 1976; Abuza 2006; Sidel 2009:288; Means 2009). Clifford Geertz categorized Muslims in Indonesia into *priyayi*, *santri*, and *abangan* (1976). The former represented the aristocracy, whose practice of Islam was strongly influenced by a hierarchical Hindu-Javanese tradition, which combined Islam with elements of Hinduism. With increased Westernization under Dutch colonial rule, the *priyayi* practice of Islam came to be increasingly regarded as un-Islamic and inauthentic (Means 2009:43). At the other end of the socio-political hierarchy were the *abangan*, the peasants, who lived in relatively independent communities and whose Islam combined the Adat customary law

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[3] The rise of a global Islamist ideology has been documented by many scholars working on political Islam, although the classifications and interpretations vary slightly from author to author. Olivier Roy, for example, sees such Islamic thinkers as the founders of 'Islamism,' which he understands as a *modern* form of political Islamic fundamentalism whose purpose is the establishment of a true Islamic society through the creation of an Islamic state (2004:58). Peter Mandaville interprets the teachings of Sayyid Qutb, Maududi, Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and others, as a pan-Islamic form of anti-colonial discourse, which aimed at 'pan-Islamic unity and a "reawakening" of the Muslim conscience' (2001:74-75). Such a revitalization of the Muslim *ummah* was to be accomplished either through a reform of Islam that would align it with Western modernity in terms of its emphasis on sciences, education, and technology (an ideological program championed by Al-Afghani and Abduh); or through a purification of Islam that moved it away from any influence coming from Western modernity (present in the writings of Sayyid Qutb and Maududi).

(indigenous to the Malay world) with mystical and even animistic worldviews (ibid.; see also Geertz 1976:126). The most orthodox form of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago was practiced by the *santri*, a distinct minority at that time, who were products of the *madrasahs*, the Koranic Islamic schools present throughout Indonesia. These schools were founded by Arab teachers or by Indonesians who had gone on pilgrimage to Mecca and who were thus exposed to the type of Islam taught and practiced in the Middle East (Means 2009:43; Geertz 1976:130). As it will be seen later, it is this minority who will play a crucial role in the rise of Islamism in postcolonial Indonesia, dubbed by some analysts as the *santri*-ization of Islam in this region.

Another important element in understanding the current shape of political Islam in Indonesia is 'the spread and deepening of capitalist market relations […] by a comprador business class of decidedly non-Muslim complexion' (Sidel 2009:288; see also Means 2009). This business class was primarily made up of Chinese immigrants whose assimilation into local society was strongly discouraged by Dutch colonials. Added to this was the rise to power of a Christian minority (Catholic and Protestant), the result of Portuguese and Dutch missionary efforts, who rose rapidly through the ranks of civil service and the army both during the colonial administration and after the establishment of the Indonesian nation-state. With independence, the Indonesian postcolonial state under the rule of Soekarno – a graduate of Dutch secular schools (Sidel 2009:292) – adopted the nationalist ideology of *pancasila* (five principles), which comprised: belief in God, national consciousness, humanism, social justice, sovereignty of the people (Means 2009:65). The Muslim-based parties strongly opposed this ideology, which in their estimation curtailed the possibility of establishing an Islamic state based on Islamic law, the sharia. Secondly, they saw it as an enforcement of secular and non-Muslim interests, and thus profoundly anti-Islamic in its character. Thirdly, they claimed it failed to recognize and reward the anti-colonial struggles of Islamic movements, such as Sarekat Islam (the Islamic Union) and Darul Islam (the Realm of Islam). The latter in particular continued its armed struggle against the newly founded postcolonial state who, by establishing itself on secular foundations, became 'as evil an enemy as the Dutch' (Adam Schwartz quoted in Abuza 2006:16). Soekarno's nationalist forces managed to drive the movement underground in the 1960s.

Both during Soekarno's rule and under Suharto's New Order, Islam as a political alternative was effectively marginalized by a ruling coalition between secular nationalist and communist parties (although the communist parties fell out of favour during Suharto's rule).[4] In fact, under Suharto's new electoral laws, only two parties were legally allowed to compete in elections, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP – United Development Party), which incorporated four Muslim parties, and the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI - Indonesian Democratic Party), incorporating nationalist, socialist, and Christian political forces into a single party (Means 2009:96). Consequently, during Suharto's authoritarian rule, Islam came to be seen as a viable political alternative to and

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[4] Two major Islamic political parties, Muhammadiya and Nahdlatul Ulama, occupied prominent political positions during Soekarno and Suharto's regimes, but they represented a particular kind of Islam that was considered non-threatening to the Indonesian state, aligned with *pancasila*, and compliant with the state's version of Islam.

'a plausible idiom of protest' against a dictatorial regime, which was perceived to privilege a minority comprised of 'foreign and Chinese capital, Christians, and graduates of secular institutions of higher institutions' (Sidel 2009:295). It became common for some people to make a professional career of the promotion of Islam, a phenomenon supported by the proliferation of Islamic schools, *madrasahs*, and *pesantren* (traditional boarding schools) throughout Indonesia. The Suharto and post-Suharto eras witnessed the *santri*-ization of Indonesian Islam with an increasing emphasis being placed on restoring the purity of Islam. This phenomenon entailed a shift from Islam being perceived as a lived unexamined identity to its becoming a coherent system of practices and regulations emanating from traditional Islamic schools (Gregory Garrett in Sidel 2009:296). It was this self-conscious Muslim layer of Indonesian society, the 'professional Muslims', that spearheaded the Reformasi movement, which culminated in the fall of Suharto.

The origins of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) network draw precisely on this complex situation of marginalization of Islam as a political alternative within the structure of the secular Indonesian state, and on a disenchantment with and resentment of the power and privilege enjoyed by a non-Muslim and/or secular elite. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, alleged to be the spiritual leader of JI, is the product of the Dewan Dakwah Islamyiah Indonesia (DDII, or Indonesian Islamic Preaching Council), a wide network of Islamic organizations founded in 1967 with the support of Saudi Arabia and other foreign donors. The aspirations of and the ideological framework within which Ba'asyir operates is firmly established within a transnational Islam, which is much more 'cosmopolitan' and wide-ranging in its outlook and activities than MILF in the Philippines.

This type of transnational Islam was shaped partly by extensive pilgrimage circuits between Indonesia and the Middle East, which produced a two-way migration flows between the two regions (see Tagliacozzo 2009). A relatively large group of Indonesians had established themselves in and around Mecca. They came to be known as 'the Jawa', and maintained tight connections with their homeland (Sidel 2009:298; Means 2009:43). Indonesian Islamic associations such as Al-Irshad and Persis (Islamic Union) were founded in the early 20th century by Muslims of Hadrami Arab descent (from the valley of Hadramaut in Yemen), who established themselves as an Arab diaspora in Southeast Asia (particularly Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) (see Freitag 2009 and Abaza 2009). The schools placed great emphasis on the study of Arabic and on the practice of an Islam purified from local customs and integrated within the transnational Islamic system of schools and universities. The founder of Laskar Jihad, an Islamist anti-Christian militia formed during the inter-ethnic violence between Muslims and Christians on the Moluccas islands of Indonesia in 2000, was of Hadrami Arab descent and had fought in Afghanistan as a mujahideen during the 1980s Soviet-Afghan war. Ba'asyir himself comes from a family of Hadrami Arab and Javanese descent. JI is thus the result of not only the specific historical context of Indonesian nation-building around secular values, and of class formation during the Dutch colonial rule, which was continued by the postcolonial regimes. It is also the product of particular transnational connections that make JI both a trans-local/regional organization and a transnational one.

The Christmas Eve bombings in 2000, the Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005, the Marriott Hotel bombings in Jakarta in 2003 and the latest in 2009, and the Australian Embassy bombing in 2004 have all been linked to JI. Scholars of political Islam diverge as regards the extent of the links between Al-Qaeda and JI, the resilience of JI, and its intent behind the attacks. John Sidel, for example, sees a trans-temporal link between these attacks and the series of explosions that took place during the mid-1980s in Indonesia, which targeted shopping malls, banks, and the Buddhist temple Borobudur (2009:310). He claims that such bombings occur when there is a significant defeat of Islam as a political alternative, and a re-consolidation of secular and non-Muslim forces (ibid.). Zachary Abuza (2006), on the other hand, sees these attacks as instances of the growing influence of political Islam in Indonesia and of the inevitable link between violence and radicalization of Indonesian Muslims. The International Crisis Group's report on Indonesia released in 2004 quotes Aly Gufron's (one of the convicted Bali bombers) statement in which he defends the 2002 Bali bombing. He indicates that jihad is an obligation of every devout Muslim, much like praying, fasting and going on a pilgrimage, undertaken when Islam in being attacked and endangered. To him and to many other jihadists, 'the best form of defence is attack' (ICG 2004b:25). What we have here is both a trans-temporal link with other previous attacks, particularly throughout the 1980s – when Suharto's rule was at its most repressive stage, and a web of complex transnational linkages between JI, MILF, and Al-Qaeda, not to mention a vast array of educational and charitable Muslim organizations and institutions. But the Al-Qaeda connection needs to qualified: whereas some authors tend to portray JI as nothing more than the regional franchise of Al-Qaeda (see Gunaratna 2002 and Abuza 2002; see also Means 2009:170), others prefer to caution against simplistic Al-Qaeda-centred analyses of radical Islam (see Sidel 2009; Mandaville 2007; Barkawi 2006; Woon 2009; see also Roy 2004; Honna 2007). After all, while there are indisputable transnational and global links between JI and other radical Islamist organizations, the origins and the political aspirations of JI are deeply entrenched both in a transnational and in a trans-local Southeast Asian context.

As Chih Yuan Woon aptly remarked, the question is not simply: *what* is the link between Al-Qaeda and regional jihadist movements? Rather, the question is also: *why* are such alliances forged between these different movements (Woon 2009:95)? Tarak Barkawi implicitly answers this question when reflecting on what a Moro fighter might be thinking regarding the 9/11 events: "Watching those towers fall on a satellite television deep in the bush, or perhaps viewing some gloating Al-Qaeda video of the events of that day, *he might well have realized that something had happened to his own little war, that it had become part of something bigger.*" (2006:135; added emphasis) Barkawi's statement implicitly refers to the intricate links between the globalization of communication technologies, the countless ideological and political networks of transnational Islam, and ultimately to 'the international as a distinct social space of interconnection and mutual constitution' (Barkawi 2006:140). As Olivier Roy's penetrating analysis of the phenomenon of globalized Islam illustrates, Al-Qaeda and radical Islam are hybrid products of the encounter between processes of Western modernity, globalization, and 'Islam.' The interconnection and mutual constitution of the

international is also evident in an exploration of political Islam in North Africa, with a focus on the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

1.c. Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM): 'the transnationalization of domestic terrorism'?

It is notable that, similar to Southeast Asia, Islam in North Africa (especially Algeria) gave rise to strong movements of resistance against conditions of social and political inequity and oppression. As mentioned earlier, the adherence to a Muslim identity during colonial rule entailed a refusal to succumb to the hegemonic power of colonialism. In Algeria, Islam constituted the rallying cry for many who fought both against the injustices of the Ottoman occupation, and especially against the French occupation. France occupied and colonized Algeria from 1830 until 1962. During the French colonial rule, the Muslim-based anti-colonial mobilization was championed by a variety of Sufi brotherhoods, who organized themselves around *zawiyas*, a 'combination monastery-school-hostel', where students studied Islam and Arabic (Laremont 2000:28). With the implementation of the Warnier law in 1873, 1877 and until 1920, Algerian farmers and peasants saw the loss of over 1.3 million hectares of land to French settlers (Laremont 2000:44). The consequences were devastating for the local population, among which were forced displacement from their land and increased taxations for the locals, driving them into abysmal poverty. Added to this, the French confiscated religious property, thereby depriving *zawiyas*, schools and mosques of their means of subsistence (Laremont 2000:47). Because of the strict control and regulation of Islamic religious institutions by the French colonial administration, the Muslim identity crystallized into a powerful impetus for anti-colonial mobilization.

But the anti-colonial clerically led movement, which emerged in the first half of the 19th century, had two more contestants for political allegiance: a nationalist movement spearheaded by the proletariat and deeply inspired by communism, and another movement that sought increased autonomy but not independence from France, championed by the liberal petite bourgeoisie (Laremont 2000:57). During the Algerian War of independence (1954-1962), the question of the nature of the future independent Algerian state became an extremely important one: would the state be Islamic or secular? The victory of the FLN (National Liberation Front), a revolutionary group formed in the nationalist-socialist tradition, sealed the fate of the newly independent state under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Bella. Ben Bella was deposed in a coup by Colonel Houari Boumedienne in 1965, marking the beginning of a military authoritarian era that would last until 1978. Since the inception of the postcolonial state, the Islamists in Algeria – similar to those in Indonesia – strongly opposed the newly formed state, which they saw as averse to Islam. Although initially Boumedienne favoured an 'Islamic socialism' he quickly moved to a centralized autocratic system that preferred 'competent efficient technocratic management' over alliances with the religious establishment (Laremont 2000:146; see also Botha 2008:24-25). Most particularly poignant was the exclusion of any reference to Islam as a state religion from the 1976 Constitution, which was seen by the Islamists as a clear sign of hostility against Islam and as a bias towards secular Marxist elements (Botha 2008:24). Thus, Islamist groups started to mobilize around a

political platform that advocated the rejection of the secular state and of the controls imposed by the state on religion, and a return to Islam (Botha 2008:26).

The Algerian civil war erupted when the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was denied victory in the 1991 electoral polls. FIS is an Islamist party founded in 1989 as a result of the 1988 constitutional amendment that allowed parties other than the ruling FLN to participate in elections. In 1990 and 1991, benefiting from growing mass discontent with the autocratic rule of the FLN, FIS swept the local and the parliamentary elections, triggering the cancellation of the electoral process by the government in 1992, the arrest of the main leaders of FIS, and the establishment of a state of emergency. The civil war between Islamist guerrillas and governmental forces lasted until 2000, and took a heavy toll on the Algerian civilians. Among the most notorious pro-FIS Islamist guerrilla groups was GIA (Armed Islamic Group of Algeria) founded in 1992 by a group of Afghan mujahideen. It should be noted here that by the end of 1980, between 3,000 and 4,000 Algerians went through training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan in preparation for their involvement in the Soviet-Afghan war (Botha 2008:32). The GIA is known for its ruthless tactics of slaughtering entire villages and for a long-standing campaign against civilians, targeting especially educated Algerians and foreigners (see Kepel 2006). Following a tremendous loss of support for the Islamists due to the indiscriminate massacre of civilians, a breakaway faction from the GIA, the GSPC (the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) changed tactics by declaring its refusal to kill civilians and its focus solely on governmental and military targets (see ICG 2004c). What is remarkable about the GSPC is its transnational system of operations, much like JI, with cells not only throughout Algeria and North Africa, but also across Western Europe and the Middle East (see Botha 2008: 42).

In 2006, the GSPC officially announced a change of name to Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM), indicating not only a shift in their tactics but also in their political agenda and goals (Hansen and Vriens 2009). This change of tactics involved a move away from more traditional combat relying on firearms (such as guerrilla-style ambushes) to suicide bombings, and explosions, and an increased focus on foreign targets instead of the usual attacks against the Algerian government and its police and military forces (Hansen and Vriens 2009; Botha 2008). More significant is the AQLIM's change of political goals from the overthrow of the secular Algerian government and the instauration of an Islamic state in Algeria, to an increased interest in waging global jihad not only in North Africa, but also in Western Europe and the Middle East (especially in Iraq) (Hansen and Vriens 2009). Nonetheless, these analyses, much like the analyses of the JI-Al-Qaeda connections, tend to be Al-Qaeda centred and tend to revolve exclusively around establishing an unambiguous link between AQLIM and Al-Qaeda, and thereby proving the global reach and power of the Al-Qaeda organization. What we miss by focusing exclusively on the 'what' of these links instead of on the 'why' is both the nature of Al-Qaeda and of the phenomenon of globalized Islam, on the one hand, and the political and social conditions which render radicalism, extremism, and terrorism possible in regions such as North Africa and Southeast Asia, on the other hand. After all, as Olivier Roy (2004) remarked, Al-Qaeda is not a coherent social organization,

it is a global brand ready to be franchised. It is as much a *product* of globalization, as it is a reaction against it (see also Pasha 2003 and 2005; Barkawi 2006; Mandaville 2007).

The franchising of the Al-Qaeda label to regions in North Africa and Southeast Asia is an important global phenomenon that highlights both the need to understand the current dynamics of globalized jihad, and the importance of exploring the origins of contemporary Islamic radicalism. The emphasis on the 'peripheral jihad' waged today in regions such as North Africa, Southeast Asia, Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, and the Western world gestures towards an imagined *ummah* whose frontiers must be protected by a jihad that can be waged anywhere, as a means of concretizing the imagined political community (Roy 2004:275; see also Mandaville 2007). But, as mentioned earlier, the global jihad waged today on the periphery cannot function outside processes of globalization (be they financial, technological, communicational, political, and social). In fact, as several scholars have pointed out, the phenomenon of radical Islam is not an exclusive product of Islam, but of the encounter between the West and Islam. Contemporary Islamist organizations share significant links with Third Worldist, radical leftist and antiglobalization movements active in the 1960s and 1970s whose political agendas coalesce around anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, around issues of social inequity and oppression (see Roy 2004:41-54; Pasha 2000). Examining the phenomenon of 'the transnationalization of domestic terrorism', as Anneli Botha put it, can be a short-sighted exercise if it is reduced to Al-Qaeda and its reach in various regions. As Olivier Roy remarked, Al-Qaeda is not a 'strategic threat,' but a security issue (2004:57), or, as it will be explored later, a human (in)security issue, whose understanding requires awareness of the complicated global, transnational, trans-local and historical processes that intersect to produce it.

Among the many international/global developments that contributed to the rise of globalized jihad, two elements in particular stand out: the emergence of a salafist ideology that has acquired global currency among radical Islamists, and the Soviet-Afghan war that produced a generation of transnational jihadists with serious consequences for radical Islamic movements in North Africa and Southeast Asia. As already discussed earlier, many founders of jihadist groups are inspired by a salafist ideology that traces its inception to the anti-colonial/anti-Western and anti-nationalist teachings of Sayyid Qutb, Maulana Maududi, and the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, among others.[5] While the relationship between salafism and terrorism is ambivalent at best, it is important to note that 'salafism as a form of religious discourse interacts with processes of identity formation to shape the worldviews of

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[5] Scholars and political analysts such as Olivier Roy, Gilles Kepel, Peter Mandaville, John Sidel, and the analysts affiliated with the International Crisis Group, are keen to distinguish between salafism as a conservative Islamic ideology, which aims to bring Muslims back to a 'purer' and 'truer' practice of Islam through education, and jihadism as a political movement whose aim is to establish a transnational Islamic state through violent means. Salafism does not necessarily lead to jihadism. Rather many jihadists make use of the salafist ideology as a justification for their violent actions. The relationship between well-known salafist scholars and clerics and jihadist groups is somewhat ambivalent, ranging from outright condemnation to endorsement and support. For an insight into the relationship between salafism and terrorism in Indonesia, see ICG Asia Report no. 83, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don't Mix" (2004).

would-be activists in particular ways' (Mandaville 2007:261). As Roy has pointed out as well in his *Globalized Islam*, especially the new generation of jihadists have a weak national and religious identity and employ instrumentally the salafist ideology, with its focus on transcending local affinities and loyalties towards the more transnational idea of *ummah*, in order to ground their actions within a religious frame. It is not coincidental that most if not all of the founders of jihadist movements such as JI and Laskar Jihad in Indonesia, MILF and Abu Sayyaf in the Southern Philippines, and GIA, GSPC/AQLIM in North Africa acknowledge the inspiration they drew from the teachings of several significant salafist figures (mentioned above). Also, it is worth noting that many of the senior figures of such movements are Afghan mujahideen, whose understanding and practice of jihad was profoundly shaped by their experience in Afghanistan. In fact, Mandaville states that '[m]uch of the intensity of the Islamic violence in countries such as Algeria and Egypt during the 1990s […] can be understood as a direct result of the injection into national settings of battle-hardened Arab-Afghans keen to continue the fight' (2007:253).

2. Human (in)security: alternative articulations

Mark Duffield argued that with decolonization there was a shift from the perception of conflict in the Global South as 'internal war', unrelated to the security of the West, to one of 'global instability' whereby conflict and wars in the Global South have been seen as potentially destabilizing factors for the security and welfare of the West (2007:24). Duffield's argument points to the 'significance of decolonization for the security of the West and its relationship to the advent of unending war' (ibid.). The 'war on terror' as a form of 'unending war' describes current security approaches to the phenomenon of globalized Islam and transnational terrorism. As Giorgio Shani indicated, the failure of the US-led campaign to eradicate terrorism 'illustrates the inability of the national security paradigm to effectively deal with threats from non-state actors in a rapidly globalizing world' (2007:3). The focus of the national security paradigm on a narrow national interest pursued through aggressive militaristic means fails to address both the roots of terrorism, and to grasp the political and social conditions that make terrorism possible. A human security approach has the merit to re-instate the individual and the society as security referents by addressing the socio-economic, political and cultural environments that produce threats (UNDP 1994; Hampson 2001; Thakur and Newman 2004; Kaldor 2007). But human security has also been severely criticized. Criticisms rallied against it invoke, among other things, its conceptual vagueness and its lack of conceptual sophistication (Paris 2001); its disturbing implicit agenda of securitizing the everyday by expanding the security agenda to include issues such as poverty, migration, development, and others (Berman 2007); and its employment by Western governments as a tool to govern the global South through neoliberal programs of development and economic growth (Fierke 2007:144-66; Duffield 2007; Duffield and Hewitt 2009).

As Karin Fierke argues, the critical potential of human security needs to be harnessed through an attention to 'the role of historical global relations' in the production of fear and want (2007:156). It is the argument of this paper that a postcolonial reading of human (in)security not only establishes the linkages between various 'historical global

relations,' but also can bring into the conversation alternative articulations of human security from non-Western perspectives (see Shani, Sato and Pasha 2007). In my analysis of political Islam in Southeast Asia and North Africa and its contemporary jihadist manifestations, I took into account the larger historical and political processes, but also the contextual local histories, which have structured the phenomenon of global jihad. Thus through a postcolonial reading of terrorism in Southeast Asia and North Africa, my intention was to infuse human security with a much needed emphasis on *structural* factors and on the global distribution of power. Two questions were posed earlier in the introduction: What are the main causes of insecurity for those living in the global South? Which security approach is better suited to address and protect human security after 9/11? (Shani 2007:6). The former speaks about multifaceted intersections between destabilizing processes of global capitalism, top-down democratization and development projects, nation-building strategies and secularizing forces (see Nagata 1994). Or to put it in a phrase used by Mark Duffield, it speaks about 'the pacification of the global borderland' as the main tool for safeguarding the security and stability of the West (2007:121). Such a global project of pacification means that 'their' development is important only insofar as it contributes to 'our' security (Duffield 2007:128).

Mustapha Pasha's (2005) theorization on the notion of global resistance in what he calls the Islamic Cultural Zones (ICZs) draws our attention to the mutual processes of hegemony and counter-resistance, and to the manner in which they unfold in the ICZs. He poses a significant question: 'How do peripheral societies *actively* transform hegemonic effects?' (2005:546). Or to rephrase the question in the context of the current analysis, how can we grasp the interaction between global hegemonic forces and trans-local/transnational resistance movements? By emphasizing the *active* interaction between and the mutual constitution of transnational terrorism and forces of globalization, I sought to investigate the relationship between human agency and structure in tackling the issue of Islamic terrorism, and thus conceptualizing human (in)security in its transnational dimensions.

But to read the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as merely an instance of particularistic resistance against the homogenizing effects of globalization would be simplistic. Pasha insightfully notes that many analyses celebrate resistance unreflexively and thus end up homogenizing resistance itself (2000:243). To clarify this insight, I suggest that perhaps a more nuanced reading of Islamic terrorism needs to take place, one that goes beyond celebrating radical Islam as opposition to globalization and capitalism, or beyond perceiving it as the evil product of a backward civilization that refuses the light of modernity. In an article reflecting on the links between neo-liberalism and Islam and their impact on human security, Pasha notes that both Islamic fundamentalism and global neo-liberalism are two types of fundamentalisms circumscribed by global modernity (2007:188-189). They are more linked than separated by their exacerbation of individualism (see also Roy 2004), the emphasis on privatization (one of religiosity, the other of the everyday), and their insistence on being the only total socio-political and economic alternatives in an age of rapid globalization.

The paradigm of human security, while offering ways out of this simplified worldview, is also a contested one. The most common conceptualization and use of human security are set against a background of liberal aspirations, which congeal around a set of (Western) values: linear progress and economic growth through the developmental paradigm, reliance on market rationality and thus on an economistic understanding of poverty and marginalization, liberal neutrality emancipated from the socio-cultural richness of locales. As Karen Fierke noted, if human security is to achieve its critical potential it needs to problematize 'the liberal assumptions underlying [it]' (2007:166). Mustapha Pasha conceives of a different conception of human security, one that is culturally embedded, going beyond negative protections but highlighting instead 'positive aspirations to preserve and enhance human dignity and forms of (cultural) life in which human dignity is embedded' (2007:180). To recapitulate the second question posed in the introduction, what is the most appropriate approach to preserve and enhance human dignity?

I argue that in order to discover such approaches one needs to go beyond the expert knowledge produced *about* non-Western worlds, a knowledge that is removed from lived experience and whose prescriptions amount to well-rehearsed recipes of economic growth, development and democratization. Instead, we need to look to those knowledges produced by grass-roots and activists movements, whose activities attempt to negotiate between the fundamentalisms of religious identities, of market rationality, and of nation-building projects. I suggest that certain civil society movements (particularly women's rights groups and human rights activist networks) help formulate an understanding of (in)security and of an Islamic modernity that does not align itself either with conservative/militant Islamic ideologies nor with state-driven security. There is a plethora of activist networks both in North Africa and in Southeast Asia, whose grounded efforts have translated into local, international, and transnational projects, such as: Sisters in Islam (Malaysia), Gerwani (Indonesia), Queens of Islam (Rahima/Indonesia), Voluntary Team for Humanity (Aceh, Indonesia), Muslim women's rights activists in Thailand (Cross Cultural Foundation), Muslim women's rights and peace activists in Mindanao (Maranao Women Leaders), Women Living Under Muslim Laws (some of whose founders come from North Africa), El Taller (based in Tunisia), the World Courts of Women.

Such organizations not only provide gender-based analyses of conflict and insecurity, but they also point to the impact on human security of transnational phenomena such as fundamentalism, neo-liberalism, and development. El Taller, an international organization based in Tunisia, expressed its mission as the implementation of programmes that 'challenge the violence of patriarchy in its different forms, the patriarchy in tradition and the patriarchy in modernity':

> "In our quest for new terrain we are rooting ourselves in different regions in a process of regionalisation of El Taller's structures and are discovering new ways to relate to civil society and communities on the periphery. This new rootedness is enabling us to challenge the dominant discourse of development, human rights, gender, environment from regional and local perspective." (http://www.eltaller.in)

By attempting to challenge patriarchy in all its forms and dominant liberal discourses, the organization envisions alternative practices for the enhancement of human dignity articulated through women's experiences. Additionally, it aims to bring about a new generation of human rights stemming from the lived experiences and the local knowledges produced in the Global South (see Kumar 2005). El Taller's vision echoes Mustapha Pasha warning against current strategies that attempt to tackle conflict, fanaticism, and poverty through universalistic liberal agendas. Pasha posits that recent attempts to secularize Muslim societies are reminiscent of the colonial efforts to rid 'natives' of their irrationality (2007:190). Neo-liberal strategies to tackle Islamic fundamentalism end up reinforcing it by providing it both with the anti-imperialist rhetoric so necessary for its legitimacy, and with the technological know-how essential for its operations. As Pasha has warned, the losers of this global competition are ordinary people, stuck between forces they cannot tame. In the case of both North Africa and Southeast Asia, it is worth noting that women are caught between the anti-capitalist struggles of Islamist groups and the pro-capitalist agenda of the state and ruling elites. Nonetheless, (Muslim) women's rights organizations and the activist networks of which they are part, find incredibly creative ways to navigate the difficult terrain of women's rights in Muslim societies. Muslim women's rights organizations like Rahima (Queens of Islam) and Sisters of Islam, for example, based in Indonesia and Malaysia respectively, advocate for women's equality based on a re-interpretation of the Koran and of Islamic teachings, thereby attempting to create 'an authentic Muslim culture of modernity' (Ong 2006). Aihwa Ong remarks that such organizations find creative ways of combining secular and Islamic elements in order to articulate a public sphere where women are welcome. In order to promote their ideals, Rahima, for example, works closely with many non-Muslim organizations. The activists are currently working in Aceh with Tim Relawan untuk Kemanusiaan (The Voluntary Team for Humanity), a coalition of various Indonesian non-governmental organizations headed by Father Sandyawan Sumardi, a Catholic priest (http://www.wluml.org/node/2979).

These alliances speak about the emergence of alternative human security discourses and practices that challenge both the fundamentalism of neo-liberal approaches and that of Islamist groups. More importantly, these movements are culturally and materially embedded in local contexts of lived experience, articulating a vision of human security and human dignity based on non-Western knowledges and perspectives.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, I argued that to understand the phenomenon of political Islam more generally, and of transnational terrorism more specifically, one needs to pay attention to those 'contextual geographies' (Woon 2009:98), and to 'the role of historical global relations' (Fierke 2007:156) in the production of those insecurities that make terrorism possible. By applying postcolonial perspectives to the study of human security (Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Shani, Sato and Pasha 2007), this analysis attempted to make a twofold contribution to the field of security studies. Firstly, I intended to expand the research agenda of human security by focusing not simply on 'the manifestations of insecurity' engendered by Islamic terrorism, but also, more importantly, on the underlying structural causes of this type of political violence (Newman 2009:25). Secondly, by employing a

postcolonial approach to human security, I sought to investigate the relationship between human agency and structure in tackling the issue of Islamic terrorism. The merit of the postcolonial perspective is that it highlights the 'mutual constitution of European and non-European worlds and their joint role' in security relations (Barkawi and Laffey 2006:329; see also Acharya 1997). By examining the intersections between European colonialism, postcolonial processes of state formation and capitalist expansion in the understanding of political Islam, this investigation illustrates the 'mutual constitution' of transnational processes relevant to world politics.

Although human security is a contested concept, a postcolonial reading of human security has the advantage of highlighting those non-Western articulations of human security, which could constitute it as a credible and ethical alternative to the current security orthodoxy. Moreover, a postcolonial take on human security has the potential to move it beyond its current grounding in liberal assumptions, divorced from the lived experience and the cultural embeddedness of various communities, and to imbue it with more positive aspirations concerning the preservation and enhancement of human dignity (see Pasha 2007).

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