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The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization

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Radicalization is often seen as a first, prerequisite step along the road towards terrorism. Yet to be radical is merely to reject the status quo, and not necessarily in a problematic or violent way. In Part 1—"Radicals"—this article compares the backgrounds, ideologies, behaviours, and attitudes of a sample of "violent radicals" with both radical and "mainstream" non-violent sample groups. By finding both what the violent and non-violent samples share, and also what they do not, the article hopes to achieve a more adept discrimination of violent and non-violent radicalization. In Part 2—"Radicalization"—the article suggests that, in addition to being an intellectual, rational, and religious decision, becoming a terrorist is also an emotional, social, and status-conscious one.

Keywords extremism, non-violence, radicalization, terrorism, violence

Introduction

In radicalization theory, the style *du jour* is to point to "permissive" factors that help establish an environment in which terrorism is more likely to occur. These range from those geopolitical affairs, foreign policy decisions, and military interventions that lead to the sense among some Muslims that the West is on a crusade to oppress the Muslim world, to specific—state-level—experiences shared by Muslim communities, especially educational, occupational, and economic disadvantages, to the individual socio-cultural complex of ideology, culture, and identity.

Research on radicalization, acting on each or many of these levels, has however often focused solely on the small number of known terrorists from which most conclusions about the conditions likely to conduce their actions are drawn, omitting a comparison group of non-terrorist radicals. Conclusions are, then, based on looking at the outliers without comparing them to the hundreds of thousands of people who experienced the same permissive factors, came into contact with the same people, read the same books, and had the same background, but were radicalized (or not) in a very different way.[1]

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This article presents the findings of a two-year fieldwork study funded by the ESRC and Public Safety Canada that aims, in part, to address this weakness. It was conducted in the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, France, and the Netherlands, focusing on the phenomenon of "homegrown" al-Qaeda inspired terrorism. The study attempts to compare what it argues to be distinguishable phenomena. The first, *radicalization that leads to violence* ("violent radicalization") is a process by which individuals come to undertake or directly aid or abet terrorist activity. The second, *radicalization that does not lead to violence* ("non-violent radicalization") refers to the process by which individuals come to hold radical views in relation to the *status quo* but do not undertake, aid, or abet terrorist activity.

In Part 1, the article contrasts the attitudes, ideologies, experiences, identities, and backgrounds of violent and non-violent radicals. It asks whether those "permissive factors" commonly suggested by the literature to correlate with violent radicalization also obtain for a much broader cohort of individuals who are not terrorists. In Part 2, the article looks at the process of radicalization. Here, it seeks to demonstrate how and why some types of radicalization develop into violence and others do not.

Overall, the article argues that whilst the journey into terrorism is often described as a process of "radicalization," radicalization is simply the process by which "individuals are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views."[2] To be a radical is to reject the status quo, but not necessarily in a violent or even problematic manner. Some radicals conduct, support, or encourage terrorism, whilst many others do no such thing, and actively and often effectively agitate against it.

It should be noted that the specific focus of the project was on "homegrown" violent extremist Islamist cells. At the time of research and writing (2007–2009), "homegrown" cell-based violent radicalism was the major concern facing policy-makers and the security community, and the least understood. Since then, important cases of "lone-wolf" terrorism have emerged: Roshonara Choudhry, Isa Ibrahim, and Nidal Malik Hasan most notably. Given the focus, it is true that many of the conclusions of the paper are predicated on the understanding and analysis of group dynamics—on how immediate social interactions shape and change ideology and sentiment—and are therefore not immediately applicable to the phenomenon of lone-wolf terrorism. Current and ongoing debates within the literature powerfully impact the extent to which group dynamics of some form still play a role in the processes of "lone-wolf" radicalization. For instance, some observers, such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center, note that the viral spread of extremism online, especially social media, can act as a surrogate offline social network.[3] If this is the case, it is possible the group dynamics we explicate occur within a digital ecology in some adumbrate form. On the other hand, Marc Sageman, *inter alia*, has argued that online content, especially popular online Imams, do not have "intrinsic power to influence people into taking arms against the West" but "merely reinforce only made-up minds."[4] Unfortunately, as the debate continues on whether self-radicalization requires some form of, possibly Internet-enabled, social network or not, the question of whether a "lone wolf" is someone who radicalized in a genuinely independent way is beyond the constraints of this paper to further discuss.

Method

To compare the phenomena of violent and non-violent radicalization, three sets of data were created:

1. *"Terrorists"*: 61 in-depth profiles of "homegrown" terrorists were created, all convicted of various terrorism-related offences.[5] They were drawn from seven cells or plots across Canada and Europe. 19 were of people involved in the "Toronto 18" and "Ressam cell" in Canada, and 38 were drawn from cells across Europe: the "21/7" and "fertilizer" (Operation CREVICE) plots in the UK, the "Chechen cell" in France, the "Hofstad network" in the Netherlands, and the "Vollsmose cell" in Denmark. The project predominantly looked at the formation and development of violent-extremist cells. We therefore restricted the potential sample pool to members of convicted members of cells. We decided a broad span of cells across countries would usefully aid international comparison, and therefore chose the largest post-9/11 cell from each country of focus. No terrorists were interviewed for this research. Direct interviews with convicted terrorists would have been valuable and a number of both formal and informal efforts to secure access were made, including contacting prison services and the lawyers of the convicted terrorists. These efforts were unfortunately unsuccessful due to legal reasons and time constraints. The profiles were based on a combination of interviews with people who knew the individuals in question, newspaper reports, and translated court transcripts.

2. *"Radicals"*: Profiles of 28 radicals were created, including 20 who were interviewed in depth, eight in Europe and 12 in Canada. "Radical" describes someone who merely expresses significant dissent from prevailing norms. We used a threshold model to determine if participants qualified for this category. If one or more of an individual's views differed sufficiently from a country-wide attitudinal orthodoxy on one or more key questions of religious, social, political, or cultural organisation or the rectitude of the use of force, they are a "radical." These key questions were, broadly: the relationship between church and state (for example, a desire to install a caliphate would be a "radical" designation); the role of religion in law (a desire to impose full orthodox Sharia law would be a "radical" designation); the use of force (a defence or support of those actively and violently resisting ISAF forces in Afghanistan would be a "radical" designation). The specific threshold of "radical" in any of these senses was moved, when necessary, to maintain a rough relational ratio between a wide mainstream and narrower margins of radicalism. It was also recognised that "radical" describes not only the view itself, but also the force with which the view was held. An individual actively agitating for the implementation of Sharia law would be more "radical" than a passive supporter. We accept that "radical" encompasses a very large and diverse spectrum of beliefs. We attached no value judgement to the term. Once the thresholds had been created, a specific identification process started through Internet and local newspaper research. We often supplemented this with interviews with journalists and local community leaders. In some cases "snowballing" occurred: people we interviewed suggested others. As this study's primary focus was to understand why some people became violent extremists whilst many others did not, the most important criteria for selection into the radical category was that the individual had some social connection or association with the convicted terrorists within the sample.

3. *"Young Muslims"*: Later in the study, it was decided that it would be useful to understand how far our findings from the terrorist and radical samples apply within Muslim communities more generally. To this end, a reflective cross-section of 70 young Canadian Muslims were also interviewed. A research agency was contracted to recruit a "young Muslim" group representative of the young adult population of Muslim communities in Canada (aged 18–30), with respect to a number of key questions of religious belief and devotion. To ensure the sample included a diversity of religious beliefs that broadly reflected the diversity of the various Muslim communities in Canada, the research agency first used telephone solicitation and Internet advertising to select the sample. Most of the interviews with this selected group then took the format of "focus groups"—with eight to 15 people answering questions at the same time. Two focus groups were conducted in Montreal (in French), and another four were conducted in Toronto (in English). Each group was professionally designed. The Young Muslim sample was drawn exclusively from Canada because of the funding arrangements of the work. It was, however, felt that illuminating, if not statistically robust comparisons could be made between them and the internationally composed "radicals" sample.

Each of these samples was, therefore, created using information obtained both through in-depth semi-structured interview and archival research. In total, 166 interviews were undertaken, recorded, and transcribed between 2007 and 2009. The samples above were supplemented by 75 interviews with security and intelligence experts, senior government officials, community leaders, activists, academics, religious scholars, and journalists.[6] This research was conducted in parallel to a review of security services reports, trial information, books, academic publications, and various media publications, such as Internet blogs and local newspapers. These were from English, French, Danish, and Dutch sources.

For the "terrorists," "radicals," and "young Muslims" samples, we built a comprehensive dataset of their demography, their youth, their involvement (if any) in politics, their religious inspirations, their views about theological concepts, their opinions about violence, their knowledge of extremist literature, and their interactions with violent members of their community. By then comparing them, violent radicals were effectively compared to a "control group" across a range of multivariant characteristics. By looking both at what was similar, but also different between these two samples, we sought to show the continuities and differences between these two types of radicalization, the nature and extent of the relationships between them.

Caveat About Categories

These categories are necessarily crude, and do not capture many nuances. Most notably, no two radicals were the same: they ranged from one who was under constant surveillance by security services, to another who was vehemently peaceful himself but actively supported suicide bombing in Iraq and hoped to create an Islamic caliphate in Canada.

The categories used here are also permeable. A small number of individuals can and sometimes do pass from one category to another. Consequently, and considering the sample size used, this study is illustrative rather than predictive; the findings should not be used as the basis for profiling terrorists and radicals. However, the

research does contribute towards a more nuanced understanding of behaviour across radicalized individuals, the nature and the cause of al-Qaeda inspired terrorism, and how that threat relates to other social trends. All of these points were taken into consideration during our analysis.

Data Analysis

Our analysis of the data gathered during the interviews and focus groups borrowed techniques from grounded theory methodology.[7] Grounded theory was chosen for three reasons. First, grounded theory is well suited for investigations of more general questions, where no *a priori* hypothesis is to be tested. Rather, theory is generated from the data. This study was not approached with a specific hypothesis in mind, but with the intent of understanding the relationship between violent and non-violent extremists more generally. Second, the large amounts of interview data lent itself well to grounded theory. Third, we felt that the most robust intellectual understanding of these phenomena would be achieved by using both quantitative and qualitative information: grounded theory therefore allowed us to combine both significant amounts of verbatim quotation and robust sample-wide comparisons in our description and analysis.

All of our interviews were recorded, anonymized, and transcribed professionally. We then undertook a separate process of coding for characteristics and attitudes, religion and ideology, interactions and relationships, organizations, and journey to Jihad. Following grounded theory, we did not set out looking for anything specific, but looked instead for very general themes that were relevant to the phenomenon under consideration, and any significant similarities and differences between and across groups. In this way we sought to allow themes to emerge.

The coding process followed five steps:

1. Code each phrase in each interview that is relevant to a series of general themes. Adopting a process called "deductive coding," we looked out for common ideas, theories, concepts, emotions, and the differences between the two groups on similar issues. For instance, for religion and ideology, we coded views on key concepts such as the legitimacy of violent Jihad, the Caliphate, Sharia law, and Takfir.
2. List the codes with the data source reference number (interview number and page number) and put similarities together.
3. Analyse codes for noticeable commonalities, differences, and emerging themes. We then found links and associations that allowed us to create broader headings under which we placed certain codes that were more important than others ("axial coding").
4. Focus on a handful of key codes, which are clearly vital to understanding the phenomenon studied. This is called "selective coding." From this we developed concepts from which we generate theories.
5. Compare codes, revisit the data, and refine the codes throughout.

In grounded theory, "theoretical saturation" is the point at which any new data acts to confirm what has already been found. This is considered to be the moment at which a sufficient sample has been reached. We began to reach this level after carrying out 20 interviews with radicals and 60 interviews with young Muslims.

To ensure that our own bias is not reflected in the research, researchers who undertook the interviews did not complete the analysis. Once an interview was

completed, the anonymous recordings were professionally transcribed and labelled with a number. That way researchers undertaking the analysis did not know who was who, and thus did not bring preconceptions about any given individual.

Radicals

Political Characteristics

Alienation from the state. Some scholars emphasise that individuals who feel alienated from state structures become prey for violent dogma.[8] Indeed, some members of the Toronto 18 are alleged to have originally planned to "storm" parliament buildings and take politicians "hostage," in a bid to make the Canadian government comply with their demands (removal of troops from Afghanistan and the release of prisoners from federal institutions). The plot would "screw" Prime Minister Steven Harper, the government, and the military.[9]

However, the large majority of radicals and young Muslims too displayed dislike of and a low level of trust in their state and government. Anti-government conspiracy theories, suggesting the wanton and unprovoked persecution of Muslims, were a constant reference. Many felt both 9/11 and subsequent terrorism arrests (for example, the Toronto 18 arrests in Canada and the 21/7 arrests in the UK) were set-ups and that respective security services actively spied on the Muslim community by sending officials in disguise to mosques and community events.[10] It was also common for young Muslims to believe (incorrectly) that "they [the security services] have the right to hold you without charge" and "lock people up without Habeas Corpus."[11] Some were deeply critical of governmental outreach programmes, cynically believing that the police "had their own agenda under their own sleeve,"[12] or were simply engaging in a "public relations game."[13] These sentiments were echoed throughout Canada and Europe, particularly in Denmark.[14]

Foreign policy. Anger at Western foreign policy is frequently used to explain terrorist activity. For terrorists, the extent of this feeling is often intense: Ressam, Meskini, and Haouari of the Ressam cell in Canada believed that the United States "was the biggest enemy of Islam" because of its foreign policy.[15] "End the torture and leave Iraq" was the message of leaflets distributed by a member of the London 21/7 cell,[16] while the killer of Theo Van Gogh, Muhammed Bouyeri, wrote that "the Netherlands is now our enemy because they participate in the occupation of Iraq."[17] Momin Khawaja, a Canadian citizen found guilty of involvement in the UK fertiliser bomb plot, wrote in an email: "when the *kuffar* amreekans [sic] invaded Afghanistan, that was the most painful time in my whole life."[18]

But this anger is not unique to terrorists. We found disapproval nearly unanimous in each sample. Many radicals and young Muslims have participated in protests against the Iraq War. One Canadian radical even went to Iraq in 2003 as a human shield.[19] Another stated that he agreed with defensive Jihad "one hundred per cent," arguing that "the West, for their geopolitical interests oppress Muslims."[20] For the young Muslims in particular, there is great mistrust concerning the objectives of the war in Afghanistan: "it is for everything besides what they are telling us...it's the ideology of a Muslim they don't want."[21]

However, many young Muslims voiced anti-war arguments that were unrelated to their Muslim identity. As one put it, "forget me as a Muslim, it's me as a

god-damn taxpayer!"[22] One radical interviewed in Denmark intellectually grounded his opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, drawing on international law and political self-defence principles, without making reference to religion at all.[23]

Experience of protest. A recent study of young Muslim American experiences found political mobilisation to be the most important factor preventing radicalization (including violent radicalization).[24] In our sample, radicals were more likely to have been involved in political protest—over a third (13 out of 35), compared with under a quarter (16 out of 70) of terrorists.

While it is clear that all groups share frustrations, terrorists often refuse to engage in the political process or even in peaceful protest. Zakaria Amara of the Toronto 18 allegedly declared on a blog posting: "I hate flags, I hate countries...I hate man-made laws."[25] Likewise, convicted terrorists who were part of both the Vollsmose and Hoftsad cells disagreed with participation in elections and, more widely, with any engagement in politics, democracy, or the judicial system.[26]

Conversely, many radicals channel their energy through community or political work. One radical volunteered at a local correctional facility, counselling inmates,[27] another even travelled to Afghanistan to set up various community programmes, to "contribute in the way that I can."[28] In general, political involvement tended to focus on foreign policy across both groups.

Social Characteristics

Education. Both the absence and presence of education have been considered a permissive cause of terrorism.[29] Further, recent sociological research has found that those with technical or applied degrees were over-represented in extremist-Islamist movements in the Muslim world.[30]

In our sample, radicals had marginally higher levels of education than terrorists, were more likely to be employed, and more likely to have studied humanities. Terrorists were more likely to have dropped out of education. In the terrorist sample, eight of 30 attended universities, 16 finished high school, and six were "dropouts."[31] Radicals were more likely to attend university: 13 of 21 did so, six finished high school, and one was a "dropout." In the terrorist sample, only one of the 30 pursued an arts or social science subject, while the majority (17) studied vocational sciences, engineering, IT, and business. In comparison, the radical group were equally likely to have studied arts or humanities as sciences or business (seven studied the former, six the latter). Finally, radicals were slightly more likely to have been in employment than terrorists: 14 out of 15 radicals had been in employment at one point, compared with 21 out of 35 terrorists.[32]

Discrimination. Discrimination, perceived either personally or against Muslims generally, is frequently viewed as a permissive cause of terrorism.[33] Many Canadian and European terrorists cited this as a reason for action. One convicted member of the Hofstad network was convinced that Dutch society was intent on "exterminating Islam."[34] According to another member of the same cell, the Muslim community is under "threat" and "therefore armed action is legitimate and even obligatory in the Netherlands."[35] Likewise, Ahmed Abdullah Ali of the UK trans-Atlantic airline plot produced a martyrdom video in which he defended his

actions on the grounds that the "British are more concerned about the killing of foxes than of Muslims."[36]

Feelings of discrimination, although clearly felt among terrorists, do not set them apart from non-terrorists. Most radicals and young Muslims felt that, post 9/11, suspicion and distrust of Muslims had increased.[37] One stated that "people become very aggressive when they see you";[38] another claims to have been unfairly dismissed from his job, as people were "scared" of him,[39] while a number had experience of facing barriers in employment: "there is a certain fairness at the societal level, but not for employment."[40] Others argued that as ordinary Canadian Muslims, they were being made to feel "different" by others.[41] In Europe, this concern was equally, if not more, widespread. For instance, many felt the publication of the Mohammed cartoons in Denmark signified extreme "disrespect" of Muslims.[42] Discrimination was sometimes viewed as embedded in official institutions. One radical argued that the government hands down "different treatments,"[43] while another believed that the police unfairly target Muslim youth, detaining suspects with no proof.[44] Some cited cases that had received a great deal of media coverage, such as the security certificate recipients, the case of Maher Arar who underwent extraordinary rendition,[45] Abousfian Abdelrazik who was stranded in Sudan,[46] and Suaad Hagi Mohamud who was detained in Kenya for three months.[47]

Personal Characteristics

Identity. Farhad Khosrokhavar and Olivier Roy's dual identity theory argues that Western Muslims, often second or third generation immigrants, are unable to reconcile their Western identity with their national heritage or ethnic identity, and are constantly managing two sets of norms.[48] In that context, extremist ideologies can sometimes provide a clear (albeit negative) identity, a set of norms that reduces uncertainty.[49] Some element of an identity crisis appears common among terrorists. Zakaria Amara of the Toronto 18 cell is believed to have embraced Islam during a period of "general searching and questioning of his identity and his Muslim roots."[50] Likewise, several members of all cells that have contained terrorists across Europe experienced a period of profound searching following a period of hedonism, partying, and drinking.[51]

However, the exploration of one's identity is shared by radicals, and could also be seen in our sample of young Muslims. During accounts of their journey towards adulthood, the majority of radicals emphasised the struggle in reconciling their Islamic heritage with the Western society they live in:

> You want to do the right thing so badly. You're ashamed of your past, because you see all this partying and now this Islamic ideal. And you cannot run away from your past, so you try and get away from everything that reminds you of it.[52]

In an attempt to balance conflicting values and ideals, some are confused, have questions and need answers.[53] In this context, they recognised that religion provides "clear" answers, structures and rules to follow, collapsing these identities into one.[54] A number of radicals did not have a strong religious upbringing and reported

turning to a fairly devout—but peaceful—Islam during a period of contemplation, "when you don't have anybody."[55]

Religious understanding. The role that religion plays in terrorism is the most contentious area of counter-terrorism research. Opinion is often divided between those who believe that religion (in this case Islam) itself is part of the problem, and those who believe that religion is a frame or vehicle through which other problems are expressed.

The religiosity of upbringing did not differ significantly between radicals and terrorists. Only seven out of 33 terrorists and three out of 17 radicals had a "devout" upbringing; seven terrorists and five radicals had a "moderate" Islamic upbringing, and 19 terrorists and nine radicals did not have a religious upbringing at all.[56]

It appears that a significant number of terrorists in our sample did not necessarily have an incorrect, or factually inaccurate, understanding of Islam, but rather un-contextualized and simplistic religious knowledge. However, this did not mean terrorists were less devout, or that religion was unimportant to them. The difference between the terrorists and the radicals was not the *level* of knowledge (which is difficult to determine) but the willingness to delve more deeply into the religion, to recognize its complexity and admit one's own ignorance.

Although radicals do sometimes accuse the terrorists of "not even knowing Islam,"[57] they are more frequently described as "warped,"[58] following a "shallow and baseless,"[59] "do it yourself,"[60] or "pamphlet" version of Islam.[61] One radical interviewed who personally knew Fahim Ahmad, one of the members of the Toronto 18, said Ahmad had a "shallow" understanding of Islam and "could not offer any qualified scholarship to support his ideas on waging Jihad."[62] Sometimes this would be reflected in poor religious practice—that they "don't even read the Qur'an."[63] This opinion was shared in Europe, where intelligence agencies do not consider homegrown terrorists to have a "well defined" ideology, rather a "cut and paste variety" that centres on the Iraq War and the cartoon controversy.[64]

As a group, radicals had delved deeper into Islamic history and jurisprudence, considering its depth, logic, capacity, and rigor as great virtues. Within the sample of young Muslims, both views were present. Some expressed an unquestioned certainty that their views and interpretation was correct, that the Qur'an was the only source of religious guidance needed, and that other sects of Islam were un-Islamic. However, the majority of young Muslims took the approach of radicals. As one young Muslim put it: "As Muslims we're people of law, we have a very developed society."[65] For the majority of non-terrorist groups, Islam is far too complex to be summarized as "us against them."

Critical thinking and learning. Many radicals thought the root of the problem is that terrorists are unwilling to engage in critical thinking and analysis: terrorists did not "educate themselves,"[66] did not engage in "deep analysis,"[67] and therefore had grossly "misinterpreted" the Qur'an.[68] One radical who knew convicted members of the Vollsmose cell personally described them as "Sufi and simple."[69] This analysis is supported to some extent by some accounts of the al-Qaeda leadership. In his popular biography *Desperately Seeking Paradise*, Ziauddin Sardar recalled having met Osama bin Laden in Peshawar and discerned his defining characteristic to be a "blind adherence" to literalism.[70]

Radicals and the majority of young Muslims alike stressed the importance of learning to overcome one's own ignorance, drawing on the importance the Prophet

Mohammed placed on reflection.[71] One radical quoted the Qur'anic verse: "Seek learning, even if it is in China."[72] Unsurprisingly, radicals and the majority of young Muslims stressed the importance of context, particularly in references to interpreting the so-called "blood verses," which speak specifically of war, including the oft-quoted "slay the idolaters wherever you find them" (Surah 9, ayat 5).[73] As one young Muslim in Montreal put it:

> There are texts in the Qur'an which talk of Jihad, of war, sometimes that you must commit acts of violence, but they are in relation to events in the time of the prophet, very particular situations.[74]

When looking for answers to religious questions, radicals and young Muslims argued that one must be selective and very careful about sources of information: "If you manipulate [the Qur'an] you can control someone about exactly what they're doing."[75] They recognised that there are so many sources of information and guidance available that "you have to be sure of your source"[76] because "it's not always trustworthy. You don't just go with it whatever the source."[77]

Ideology, Religious Concepts, and Beliefs

Takfir and kafir. The centrality of *takfir* and *kafir* has often been viewed as dangerous because these concepts form a central part of a discriminatory approach to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Takfiri ideology is primarily concerned with the legitimacy of accusing other Muslims of apostasy, and as a result, condemning them to death. Loosely related is the more general position taken by terrorists towards *kuffar* (the plural of *kafir*) or non-believers. This was apparent among both Canadian and European people we interviewed, who deemed non-Muslims and indeed other Muslims as apostates or *kuffar*. The Toronto 18 cell discussed how to tell whether or not someone is a *kafir* or not.[78]

Most radicals and young Muslims agreed that non-Muslims *can* be described as "kuffar." As one radical told us: "I'm sitting with you like this. But when I'm sitting with other Muslims, you are *kuffar*, you know … you are *kuffar* so I kill you? No – it doesn't work like that!"[79] A significant minority of young Muslims in our sample did not consider it to be problematic at all: "It's just like concealing something, if you know the truth and then cover it, or merely a term which, in a very matter-of-fact way, refers to non-believers."[80] Far more common among the groups was the idea that the term should not be applied to other Muslims, and more importantly, that it is just impolite.[81]

Radicals and terrorists both accepted, to some extent, the generic concept of *kuffar* and the notion that some form of segregation can be beneficial. The difference, however, was whether these concepts served to dehumanize non-Muslims and Muslims who disagree with their views. Radicalization to violence involves discussions about the legitimacy of stealing from, or lying to, the *kuffar*. Deep engagement in literature that explains how to determine a *kafir* and what is permissible once one knows (for example, "The Basic Rule of the Blood, Wealth and Honour of the Disbelievers"), alongside the more obvious Jihadi texts such as "39 ways to undertake Jihad" and viewings of gory Jihadist videos, are indications of a culture of violence, beyond average literary curiosity.

Caliphate and Sharia law. Two other ideas are often associated with radicalization to violence: the caliphate and Sharia law. The re-creation of an Islamic caliphate, or imposition of a caliphate in Europe, is often at the heart of terrorist ideology and is a key element of al-Qaeda ideology. Indeed, re-installing the Caliphate was often discussed by members of the Hofstad network.[82] However, this desire was not particular to terrorists. The caliphate was a popular concept among radicals—at least in an aspirational sense. As one radical put it: "The idea of an Islamic state? I say yes. Canada to become an Islamic state? I say yes. But how to reach it? We can't? So what? I wish many things."[83] It is, for many, an un-realizable dream, completely impracticable, but a matter of "nostalgia."[84] It was also popular among many young Muslims in our sample, although knowledge about what it means in detail was extremely limited.[85]

The introduction of Sharia law is also a core tenet of al-Qaeda ideology. However, Sharia law was popular across all groups.[86] Radicals believed that Sharia law was compatible with democratic life, a beautiful concept being entirely misunderstood. Media representation of Sharia law often depicts it as repressive and violent (for example, stoning women or punishing crimes with amputations), but this is not the perception many Muslims hold: "It's not to oppress people or to cause devastation or to do injustice – it's just to live a moral code."[87] These views were also reflected in a majority of the young Muslims in our sample. Similarly to the caliphate, most radicals saw Sharia law as an ideal to be aspired to—"like having a dream."[88] For some young Muslims, introducing Islamic principles was even considered noble: "As far as I'm saying, when you're a Muslim, right, you're following Islam because you think it's the right way, the right path so why won't you wish that upon everybody? Why would you want to be selfish?"[89]

Scholars and texts. The recognition of complexity and context is caused by, and reflected in, the type of scholars and sources the groups draw on. Terrorists typically draw on a narrow band of thinkers, and four names frequently appear: Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammed Ibn Wahhab, and Abdullah Azzam. The poetry of Mohammed Bouyeri, who murdered the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh, was inspired by Qutb and Taymiyya, and he often quoted Azzam's famous maxim: "Jihad by the rifle alone."[90] Zakaria Amara, a convicted member of the Toronto 18, allegedly wrote to his wife from jail that his predicament reminded him of a "jailed radical sheikh of the thirteenth century who inspired Wahhabism" (Taymiyya).[91] In the Vollsmose cell, most members owned works by Taymiyya and Azzam.[92] They were inspired by Wahhabism, and met to discuss sources they had acquired from Saudi Arabia.[93]

Given their prominence on terrorists' bookshelves, it is intuitive to infer that these authors inspire hate and violence. Yet the vast majority of radicals in the sample were also familiar with these writers, although there were two significant differences. First, radicals shared an interest in the respected "scholars" of Islam such as Ibn Taymiyya or early political Islamists such as Sayyid Qutb, but not in more militant and modern Jihadi thinkers such as Azzam, who make direct calls to action in reference to today's circumstances. Second, radicals recognized the importance of the context in which the authors found themselves at the time of writing. Radicals acknowledged that Qutb's writings contained harsh ideas, but interpreted these as a response to his imprisonment and torture. For Taymiyya the majority of radicals were aware of him, that he "has written great works," but that "many people have

taken some aspects'' and presented them ''as a very negative aspect''—instead one should ''put it into context, the perspective.''[94]

Jihad in the West and the East. For terrorists, the common justification for Jihad being a duty for Muslims in the West revolves around the idea that Islam and the Ummah, the world's Muslim community, are under attack and must be defended.[95] According to one radical interviewed, who knew members of the Toronto 18 personally, this formed a large part of the justification of those who were convicted.[96] In the Netherlands, some members of the Hofstad network were permitted to ''slaughter the *kuffar* . . . their blood is *halal* because they declare war on Islam in public.''[97] Terrorists consider it to be a religious obligation to use violence in what they argue is a defensive and reactive undertaking.

None of the radicals or young Muslims admitted to believing that violent Jihad in the West is religiously obligatory, acceptable, or permitted given the present circumstances. However, there was widespread support among radicals and young Muslims for Iraqi and Afghan people ''defending themselves'' from ''invaders,'' framed in the language of self-defence, just war, and state sovereignty. Many found the idea of Islam being *only* and *exclusively* pacific to be one-dimensional. Instead, young Muslims and radicals stressed that violent Jihad in defence of one's land, property, religion, or family is no different from any other just war, often drawing comparisons with the French resistance in the Second World War: when you are under attack, you fight back.[98] In Denmark, radicals sent money to the Mujahideen and some even considered going to join them, with these discussions and decisions taking place through a Da'wa meeting.[99] According to those we interviewed, the need to support (though not necessarily financially) the Mujahideen overseas was a ''widely held'' view in the mosque in Denmark where the Vollsmose group sometimes met.[100] As a result, defensive Jihad is commonly framed as a matter of fairness—usually with no reference to religion whatsoever.[101] Some were even more explicit about it: Western soldiers in Islamic lands are legitimate targets—''kill them, as far as I am concerned . . . while they are there occupying, kill them.''[102] The only difference is ''we call it Jihad,'' but anyone in the same situation would do it.[103]

It is possible to conclude that radicals do not see Islam as a religion of peace but as a religion based on justified violence, much like the other Abrahamic religions and the long tradition of just war theory. Crucially, this idea found resonance among the young Muslim sample, with implications for how to make communications with that group more effective.

Radicalization

A number of different theories seek to describe and explain the actual process whereby someone becomes radicalized. First, experts have argued that, under certain circumstances, terrorism can be a rational response. By ''rational,'' it is meant that terrorists are not necessarily terrorists for the sake of terrorism, but rather select terrorism from a range of alternatives as the tactic considered most likely to achieve their aims.[104] For instance, Arial Merari argues, ''in reality the form of insurgency – terrorism, guerrilla, mass-protest, or any combination of these – is mainly determined by objective conditions rather than by strategic conceptions of the insurgents.''[105] Martha Crenshaw, an advocate of this approach, argues that a number of factors are necessary in the decision to use terrorism by the group: small size, failure to mobilise support,

and that it is the likeliest way to set the political agenda.[106] Indeed, as Faisal Devji points out, 9/11 did raise the profile of grievances within the Muslim world.[107]

There have also been many attempts at modeling radicalization into violence as a process of discrete phases that individuals go through before undertaking violence. The New York Police Department (NYPD) suggests four distinct and successive phases: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and Jihadisation.[108] Fathali Moghaddam by contrast uses the metaphor of a staircase, where each step represents a necessary psychological condition for the next. Mobilization, at the base of this staircase, begins when people experience feelings of deprivation and perceived injustice; they proceed to the next step when they begin seeking options to fight this injustice (first floor). At later stages, the person disengages from mainstream values and edges towards justifying violence.[109] Similarly, Glees and Pope conclude that there is a conveyor belt process from Islamism to terrorism—their research found that there is a parallel between the activities of the extremist Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir and Islamic student societies at London university campuses (and elsewhere in the UK) and the recruitment of British Muslim students into terrorism.[110]

Social movement theory, a third approach, recognizes that people are drawn into movements for reasons other than those directly related to the aims of the group itself. In particular they show that these networks of relationships can serve to facilitate mobilization even before awareness of the grievances of a group becomes prominent.[111] Through his documentation of al-Qaeda operatives, Marc Sageman emphasizes the importance of social affiliations and networks that solidified and preceded any formal induction into the terrorist network.[112] Edwin Bakker's work shows the importance of friends and family connections within networks.[113] For those without these pre-existing family ties, a significant change is needed to disrupt their existing social networks to make them seek out new ones; for Sageman's sample group this was social or geographical mobility. In his landmark study of the now banned UK group Al-Muhajiroun, Quintan Wicktorowicz identifies the stages of an extensive socialization process that enhances the chances that a potential joiner will be drawn to a radical Islamic group and eventually participate.[114]

In accordance with the precepts of social movement theory, our research suggests that four elements are often overlooked, but taken alongside other research they can deepen our understanding of how radicalization that leads to violence sometimes differs from radicalization that does not:

- Emotional "pull" to act in the face of injustice,
- Thrill, excitement, and coolness,
- Status and internal code of honour, and
- Peer pressure.

The Emotional Pull

For many people violent Jihad is about emotion—not intellect or reasoning. As one radical put it, "Some people, they don't take the time to study it; they don't want to listen to anybody because they are emotional...and some people will give into that."[115]

Two common features suggest that the emotional pull is important. The first is the vitriolic and engaging narrative based on the notion of Muslims under attack all around the world from evil, scheming Western interests. It is alleged that some younger members of the Toronto 18 came under the influence of a senior at a local

Musalla who was espousing anti-American views and a literalist interpretation of the Qur'an.[116] Many members of the European cells considered also came into contact with the "us versus them" narrative in various guises. For example, members of the Vollsmose cell suggested in court that their own mosque "was quite radical," with some individuals there expressing sympathy for al-Qaeda.[117] Yet, again, this does not, alone, prove that such preaching convinced them that violent action was the appropriate response. Many individuals come into contact with similar ideas without accepting them or believing a violent response is required.

The second is the prevalence of Jihadi videos seen in every cell. One radical interviewed claimed that members of the Toronto 18 would watch videos that they called the "reality" series, gory videos of the oppression of Muslims around the world.[118] Some members of the Hofstad network in the Netherlands did the same, and so did one member of the Vollsmose cell, for whom some videos were "like action movies." The gorier the better, often with beheadings.[119]

However, watching such videos is not necessarily confined to or indicative of terrorists. According to one resident of the estate where members of the Vollsmose cell were living, "everyone" had heard Jihadi songs and seen Jihadi pictures—but no one wanted to act on them. The important difference seems to be watching videos, or listening to these songs, in a group.[120] Creating a culture of violence, where it is acceptable to use violence as a means to social or personal advancement, is clearly important, and group viewing of Jihadi videos can encourage this.[121]

Adventure and Being "Cool"

A number of homegrown terrorists, both those within the sample group considered here and others, have found the idea of violent Jihad attractive for non-religious reasons: because they find it cool and exciting. One recent book on "cool," by Pountain and Robbins, define it as "an oppositional attitude adopted by individuals to express defiance to authority . . . a permanent state of private rebellion."[122] "The uncomfortable truth," those authors go on to argue, is that "compared to the excitement of the drug and gun culture, a prosperous, well ordered society is boring."[123]

To understand this aspect of its appeal, it is instructive to consider the way violent Jihad is marketed to those who might be vulnerable to recruitment and the way it is discussed. It is alleged that the activities undertaken at the Washago training camp by the Toronto 18 are revealing: they used a "9 mm semi-automatic pistol; an air rifle; paint ball guns and engaged in Jihadist discussions, military style marches . . . ."[124] These are strikingly similar to other adventure activities that attract young people (especially those interested in guns). Indeed, the training camp was sold to a number of unsuspecting youths as an adventure or activity trip—not as a terror training camp at all. It was reported by Canada's *Globe and Mail* that Zakaria Amara of the Toronto 18 declared in one blog posting, "as for the paintball guns that we have, man, whether 'training or not' it was a hell of a lot of fun."[125] One radical reported someone trying to recruit him by telling him they were off "to the forest with a 9 mm to fire off a couple of shots."[126] A Parisian sermon from 2002 promised similar excitement: "Jihad is better than a holiday in Los Angeles. It's an adventure. You eat, you discover the countryside. What's more, you help our brothers."[127]

In Denmark, it is alleged that three members of the Vollsmose cell made a trip to Copenhagen to pick targets and meet a clothes vendor.[128] Nizar Sassi and Mourad Benchellali, from a run-down *banlieue* in Lyon, France, were transfixed

by Menad Benchellali's stories of excitement, exotic landscapes, and guns and decided to go to Afghanistan to experience it themselves, an account corroborated by the prosecuting judge.[129] Both Sassi and Benchellali were incarcerated without trial in Guantanamo Bay and were subsequently cleared of terrorist activity on their return to France—but their stories do offer an insight into the phenomenon.

Status

Anthropology and social psychology has long shown that groups of young men (especially) have informal "codes of honour" and internalised rules by which they operate. Cells in which terrorists are found are no exception and this can help explain a turn to action. Individuals who do not fit in socially often adopt a strategy of disengagement and develop subcultures that provide an alternative route to self-esteem.[130] This echoes findings from studies of street gangs, which suggest that when young men cannot take pride "in a prestigious job, nice house...their reputation on the street is their only claim to status."[131]

Improved status has been recognised as one of the "rewards" of martyrdom operations in Palestine, but not studied with people engaged in non-suicide terrorism or homegrown terrorism.[132] Our research suggests improved status is one further reason to explain why radicalization to violence is also a social phenomenon.

A common feature within every cell studied was the accordance of status to those demonstrating defiant or violent tendencies and language: the more radical, the higher the standing in the group. Many of the cell members seemed drawn to strong leadership and the sway of group dynamics in this way. For religious figures to be granted legitimacy, appearance and personal experience were as important as formal religious knowledge. The typical leader was often slightly older, always charismatic, and with a smattering of Arabic.[133] To many of the young Muslims in the crowd, the leader's faith and trustworthiness are based on the fact that he is being bold, "the biggest thing...he is doing is speaking out."[134] Danish intelligence officers have observed that undertaking preventative talks with target individuals can have the unintended effect of increasing their status and credibility within the radical milieu.[135]

Previous conflict experience abroad, or the perception of "battle hardiness," including the charisma and gravitas derived from such experiences, also emerged as important. Fateh Kamal's role as leader of the Ressam cell certainly seemed to rely on his experience as a battle-hardened Jihadi. The "millennium bomber" from that cell, Ahmed Ressam, realised that the most respected men in his circle of friends had all been on military training or fought in Bosnia or Chechnya.[136] Their meetings have been described as "terrorist tupper-ware parties...some of these guys were killers, and the others sat at their feet, enthralled. There were bragging rights."[137] One member of the Vollsmose cell was well respected among the group because he was strong, a career criminal (convicted for violent behavior), and a good fighter; in the Hofstad network, Redouine Al-Issar fit the same description: he had also been imprisoned, was formerly a drug dealer and very charismatic.[138] That status was reflected in part by violence, which was clearly explained by Nazir Sassi, who saw going to Afghanistan as a badge:

> It's true...that in my neighbourhood, if someone has a gun, he's respected...if you can say that you've been to Afghanistan, everyone respects you.[139]

Peer Pressure

How words and outward shows of bravado turn into a willingness to act remains an important but difficult conundrum. Peer pressure is recognised in anthropology and psychology literature as critical to understanding the way a group behaves and evolves. In psychology it is well established that in-group competition can be important in pushing members of the group towards more extreme positions (in a variety of non-religious settings). This is known as "group extremity shift" or "group polarisation," where discussions within a group lead to an enhancement of an initially dominant position.[140]

The power of peer pressure in such settings is considerable. If defiance or radicalization is tied to status, individuals will tend to compete with each other for status, and if status is equated with defiance or violence, there is a risk of spiralling into one-upmanship. This is common in all social movements, particularly radical ones, which split internally between "do-ers" and "talkers." Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, in a broad study of terrorism, call this "fissioning": when tensions among group members lead to splintering, the newly emerged groups will often take radical action against former allies to establish their new group norms as superior.[141]

This dynamic is also visible in cells reviewed in this research. In the Hofstad network, members would complain of "yoghurt" Muslims who are only Muslims in name and do not take action while bad things happen to other Muslims.[142] More explicitly, members of the Toronto 18 were interested in the impact that their attack would have and boasted about "out-doing" those who perpetrated the London bombings: "It's going to be destruction … it will make the London story very small."[143] It is alleged that the Toronto 18 split, with Fahim Ahmad and Zakaria Amara the ringleaders of each splinter. Those supporting Amara accused Ahmad of "all talk and no action," believing that they were the only ones who had the "real guts" to proceed apace with plans.[144] Indeed, members of the cell intended to show a cassette recording of their training camp to "higher up Mujahideen who would be impressed with us" if they could be convinced the group was "the real deal."[145]

Concluding Remarks

From the vantage point of a comparison of terrorists with non-violent control groups, we can see that many of the claims regularly deployed to explain terrorism apply to far wider, non-violent populations. Many non-violent radicals felt a strong, cynical distrust of government, and believed conspiracy theories about it. A deep outrage with Western foreign policy was almost unanimous. Non-violent groups shared a keen perception of social discrimination, especially in employment, experienced periods of drift and uncertainty about their own identity, desired in some sense the creation of either the caliph or an Islamic government, and were even attached to some level of self-segregation, and aspects of a theological just war theory.

The comparisons made in this paper do not only serve to debunk what are essentially empirically flimsy stereotyping of violent radicalization, however. They also allow us to more keenly identify genuine causes and symptoms of violent radicalization. Whilst many non-violent radicals had seen violent films, few routinely watched these in a group. Whilst many non-violent radicals had read the works of Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammed Ibn Wahhab, and Abdullah Azzam, most read them in context, and as part of a wider body of literature and influences. Other factors stand out as likely to indicate the process of violent radicalization. The

distribution of Jihad videos, debates between "do-ers" and "talkers," deep engagement in literature that explains how to determine a *kafir* (unbeliever) and what is permissible once you know, and any criminal activity undertaken in this respect.

Our work also suggests that, especially in the case of "homegrown" young men, violent radicalization is not necessarily, or wholly, a religious, intellectual, or rational decision. There is an emotional pull to radicalization. To join the battle against the power and authority of Western states is considered risky, exciting, heroic, and taps into a counter-cultural and anti-establishment tradition exemplified by many youth subcultures, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Further, in-group peer pressure and an internal code of honour can render violence, in certain social contexts, the most obvious route to accrue status, respect, and meaning.

Notes

1. See Jonathan Githens-Mazer, "Causal Processes, Radicalization and Bad Policy," paper presented to the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, 6 Sep 2009.

2. Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Radicalization: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Ottawa: Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2009), 1.

3. See for instance, Simon Wiesenthal Center and Snider Social Action Institute, Report: Online Terror and Hate – The First Decade, 2008, http://www.kintera.org/site/apps/s/link.asp?c=fwLYKnN8LzH&b=4145951 (accessed 19 May 2011).

4. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p.111.

5. This number includes a small number of individuals who are still at large, have been deported, have been convicted in other countries or *in absentia.*

6. Of these, 36 were conducted in Canada, and 39 in the UK, France, the Netherlands, and Denmark (there were also a small number of follow-up interviews with the same individuals).

7. See Christine Marlow, *Research Methods for Generalist Social Work* (New Mexico: Wadsworth, 2011) and Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, "Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2004), 273–285.

8. See for instance Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan* (London: Encounter Books), 27 and Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 161–169.

9. "R v NY": *Summary of the Crown's Anticipated Evidence* [not publicly available court proceedings]; "Statement of Uncontested Facts: R v Saad Khalid," Court Transcript, http://beta.images.theglobeandmail.com/archive/00208/ Terror_case__Uncont_208021a.pdf (accessed 3 Mar 2010).

10. Interviews 51–61, 22 Sep 2009; Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

11. Interviews 71–81, 5 Nov 2009.

12. Interview 8, 4 Nov 2009.

13. Expert interview 6, 20 Feb 2009.

14. Interview with European terrorism expert, 17 Apr 2008.

15. "U.S. v. Mokhtar Haouari," Testimony of Ahmed Ressam before United States District Court of the Southern District of New York, S4-00 Cr. 15, July 3, 2001.

16. Duncan Gardham, "Terrorists Turned Kitchen into Bomb Factory," *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 Feb. 2007, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1541473/terrorists-turned-kitchen-into-bomb-factory.html

17. Robert Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 (July–Aug. 2005): 125.

18. "R v Khawaja," Court Transcript, [2008] OJ No 4244, (F.C.), 2007 FC 463 (2007), [2008] 1 FCR 621, http://reports.fja.gc.ca/eng/2007/2007fc490/2007fc490.html (accessed 3 Mar 2010).

19. Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

20. Interview 44, 4 Nov 2009.

21. Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

22. Interviews 71–81, 5 Nov 2009.

23. Interview 20, 26 Jun 2008.

24. David Schanzer, Charles Kurzman, and Ebrahim Moosa, *Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 2010), 2.

25. Omar el Akkad and Greg McArthur, ''Blog Offers Glimpse of Accused,'' *Globe and Mail*, 7 June 2006, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/article829339.ece

26. Expert Interview 18, 25 Jun 2008.

27. Interview 11, 16 Oct 2009.

28. Interview 10, 21 Oct 2009.

29. See for instance Education Minister of Punjab Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman: ''Illiteracy Cause of Terrorism,'' *The Nation*, 21 March 2010, http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/21-Mar-2010/Illiteracy-cause-of-terrorism, and Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 35.

30. See Diego Gambetta and Steffan Hertog, ''Engineers of Jihad,'' *Sociology Working Papers* No. 10 (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2007).

31. We had information on 30 terrorists and 21 radicals.

32. Here, we are only counting those of working age or older.

33. See Darcy Noricks, ''The Root Causes of Terrorism,'' in Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin (eds.), *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 11–68.

34. A poem written by a member of the Hofstad network, Jason Waters, and posted on the site DeBasis, cited in Albert Benschop, *Chronicle of a Political Murder Foretold: Jihad in the Netherlands,* http://www.sociosite.org/jihad_nl_en.php (accessed 3 March 2010).

35. Messages that appeared on the website Marollo.nl and Muwahideen, allegedly written by Mohammed Boujeri, cited in Benschop (see note 34 above).

36. Max Hastings, ''What hope is there if we can't bring to justice those accused of wanting to destroy us?'' *Daily Mail*, 10 September 2008, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1054099/Max-Hastings-what-hope-bring-justice-accused-wanting-destroy-us.html

37. Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009; interviews 51–61, 22 Sep 2009; interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

38. Interviews 51–61, 22 Sep 2009.

39. Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

40. Original: '*Il y a une certaine égalité au niveau de la société, mais pour l'emploi, il n'y en a pas.*' Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009.

41. Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

42. Interview 20, 26 Jun 2008.

43. Interview 7, 22 Sep 2009.

44. Interview 1, 23 Apr 2009.

45. CBC News, ''Maher Arar: Timeline,'' January 26, 2007, http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/arar/ (accessed 4 March 2009).

46. Stefan Christoff, ''Abousfian Abdelrazik: Terror, Torture and Return,'' *The McGill Daily*, 19 November 2009, http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2009/11/abousfian_abdelrazik_terror_torture_and_return_/

47. CBC News, ''Mohamud Assails Canada's Officials in Kenyan Ordeal,'' http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2009/08/26/suaad-mohamud.html (accessed 1 Mar 2010).

48. Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

49. See also Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); Donald Taylor and Louis Winnifred, ''Terrorism and the Quest for Identity,'' in Fathali Moghaddam and Anthony Marsella (eds.), *Understanding Terrorism: Psychosocial Roots, Consequences and Interventions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2004), 169–187, and Dilwar Hussain, ''Identity Formation and Change in British Muslim Communities,'' in Margaret Wetherell,

Michelynn Lafleche, and Robert Berkeley (eds.), *Identity, Ethnic Diversity and Community Cohesion* (London: Sage, 2007), 34–39.

50. Omar el Akkad and Greg McArthur, "The Transformation of Zakaria Amara," *The Globe and Mail,* 30 June 2006, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-transformation-of-zakaria-amara/article832953/

51. Sean O'Neill, "Ramzi Mohammed: Father of Two Who Left a Suicide Note," *The Times,* 10 July 2007, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article2051431.ece Mohammed Boujeri and Menad Benchellali are also well known examples.

52. Interview 1, 23 Apr 2009.

53. Expert interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

54. Expert interview 2, 28 Oct 2008; interview 1, 23 Apr 2009.

55. Interview 5, Jan 30 2009.

56. We use "devout" for an individual who has been brought up in an Islamic household that strictly adheres to the religious tenets; we use "moderate" for an individual who has been brought up in a household where Islam was part of their upbringing (for example, they attended a mosque regularly), but religion was not a major influence; and we use "not religious at all" for individuals who specifically stated that Islam did not play any role in their upbringing or those who converted to Islam at a later age.

57. Expert interview 6, 20 Feb 2009.

58. Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

59. Interview 3, Mar 10 2009.

60. Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

61. Interviews 40–50, 4 Nov 2009.

62. Linden McIntyre, "Canada: The cell next door," *PBS Broadcast,* 30 January 2007, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/canada602/video_index.html (accessed 4 March 2009).

63. Expert interview 6, 20 Feb 2009.

64. Expert interviews 13–23, 2–4 Apr 2009.

65. Interviews 40–50, 4 Nov 2009.

66. Interviews 51–61, 22 Sep 2009.

67. Expert interview 8, 4 Nov 2009.

68. Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

69. Interview 16, 3 Apr 2008.

70. Ziauddin Sardar, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim* (London: Granta Books, 2004), 334.

71. Interview 19, 4 Apr 2008.

72. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

73. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

74. Original: '*Il y a dans le Coran des textes qui parlent du Jihad, qui parlent de la guerre, qui parlent comme parfois il faut aller commettre la violence, mais c'était lié à des événements comme au temps du prophète . . . des situations très particulières.*'

75. Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

76. Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

77. Original: '*C'est pas toujours fiable. Tu vas pas à n'importe quel site*.' Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009.

78. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

79. Interview 5, 30 Jan 2009.

80. Toronto Focus Group.

81. Expert interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

82. See Lorenzo Vidino, "The Hofstad Group: The New Face of Terrorist Networks in Europe," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30, no. 7 (July 2007): 579–592.

83. Interview 5, 30 Jan 2009.

84. Expert interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

85. Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

86. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

87. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

88. Interview 8, 4 Nov 2009; interview 10, 21 Oct 2009.

89. Interview 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

90. Petter Nesser, "The Slaying of a Dutch Filmmaker: Religiously Motivated Violence or Islamist Terrorism in the Name of Global Jihad?" *FFI Research Report* 2005/00376, February 2, 2005.

91. Omar el Akkad and Greg McArthur, "Prison Steels Amara's Faith, Letters Show," *Globe and Mail*, 15 July 2006, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/article846720.ece

92. Expert interview 30, 25 Jun 2008.

93. Interview 18, 25 Jun 2008.

94. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

95. "R v NY": *Summary of the Crown's Anticipated Evidence.*

96. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

97. Jason Walters post on a blog, http://dutchreport.blogspot.com/2005_01_01_dutchreport_archive.html (accessed 1 Mar 2010).

98. Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009.

99. Interviews 16–17, 3 Apr 2008.

100. Interview 20, 26 Jun 2008.

101. Interview 6, 24 Apr 2009.

102. Interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

103. Interviews 40–50, 4 Nov 2009.

104. For more information see Edward Muller and Karl-Dieter Opp, "Rational Choice and Rebellious Collective Action," *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 2 (June 1986): 471–488.

105. Ariel Merari, "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 247.

106. See Martha Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behaviour as a Product of Strategic Choice," in Walter Reich (ed.), *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 1998).

107. Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of Jihad* (London: Hurst and Company, 2005).

108. Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (New York: New York Police Department, 2007), 6.

109. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (see note 8 above), 162–166.

110. Anthony Glees and Chris Pope, *When Students Turn to Terror: Terrorist and Extremist Activity on British Campuses* (London: Social Affairs Unit, 2005).

111. John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 15.

112. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (see note 29 above).

113. Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in which they Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2006).

114. See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Joining the Cause: Al-Muhajiroun and Radical Islam," *Paper to Conference, The Roots of Islamic Radicalism* (Memphis, TN: Rhodes College, 2004), 1 and 7–8.

115. Interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

116. Surya Bhattacharya and Christopher Maughan, "Preaching Swayed Trio of School Pals," *Toronto Star,* 6 June 2006.

117.   *Danish Government v Vollsmose Cell,* Court Transcript [not publicly available].

118. Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

119. See *Danish Government v Vollsmose Cell*, Court Transcript and Benschop, *Chronicle of a Political Murder Foretold* (see note 34 above).

120. Interview 18, 25 Jun 2008.

121. Expert interview 5, 23 Sep 2009.

122. Dick Pountain and David Robbins, *Cool Rules*: *Anatomy of an Attitude* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 177.

123. Ibid.

124. "R v NY": *Summary of the Crown's Anticipated Evidence.*

125. Akkad and McArthur, "Blog Offers Glimpse of Accused" (see note 25 above).

126. Interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

127. Original: *'Le Jihad, c'est mieux que les vacances à Los Angeles. C'est l'aventure. On mange, on découvre le paysage. En plus, on aide nos frères.'* From A Laidi and A Salam, *Le Jihad en Europe: Les filières du terrorisme islamiste.*

128. *Danish Government v Vollsmose Cell* (see FN 115).

129. Expert interviews 33–41 (interview 39), 6 Dec 2008; Menad Benchellali, *Voyage vers l'enfer* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2006).

130. Poutain and Robins, *Cool Rules* (see note 122 above), 31.

131. Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (Putnam: Penguin, 2002), 308.

132. See Todd C. Helmus, "Why and How Some People Become Terrorists," in Davis and Cragin (eds.), *Social Science for Counterterrorism* (see note 33 above), 92.

133. Expert interviews 13–23, 2–4 Apr 2009.

134. Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

135. Expert interview 17, 2 Apr 2008.

136. Steve Miletich and David Heath, "Documents tell of Ressam's motives," *Seattle Times,* 30 October 2001, http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=20011030&slug=ressam30

137. Hal Bernton et al., "The Terrorist Within," *Seattle Times*, 23 Jun–7 Jul 2002, http://seattletimes.com/nwsource.com/news/national-world/terroristwithin/

138. Nesser (see note 90 above).

139. Original: *'C'est vrai . . . dans ma cité, celui qui a une arme, il est respecté . . . si tu peut dire que tu as été en Afghanistan, tout le monde te respecte.'* Nizar Sassi, *Prissonier 325: de Vénissieux à Guantanamo* (Paris: DeNoel, 2006). Nizar Sassi was not convicted of terrorist activity, but his testimony of why he went to Afghanistan in 2001 sheds light on the phenomenon.

140. Miles Hewstone and Wolfgang Stroebe (eds.), *Introduction to Social Psychology* (3rd edn.) (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 428–429.

141. Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 3 (2000): 426.

142. Benschop, *Chronicle of a Political Murder Foretold* (see note 34 above).

143. "R v Saad Khalid" (see note 9 above).

144. Greg McArthur and Joe Friesen, "From soccer field to schism to arrests," *Globe and Mail,* 10 June 2006.

145. "R v Saad Khalid" (see note 9 above).