



Studies into violent radicalisation; Lot 2

The beliefs ideologies and narratives

A study carried out by the Change Institute for the European Commission
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Adam House, 7-10 Adam Street, London WC2N 6AA
Telephone: +44 (0) 207 700 4821 | Fax: +44 (0) 207 607 1732

www.changeinstitute.co.uk

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The report also draws on direct contributions from the following individuals:

- Dr Asad Ahmad, Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution, Denmark
- Dr Hayrettin Aydin, Muslim Academy Germany, Germany
- Dr Jacques Barou, Pacte, CNRS, Grenoble II University, France
- Dr Nathalie Kakpo, Associate Researcher CSU, CNRS, Paris, France
- Dr Sajjad Rizvi, University of Exeter, UK
- Dr Yahya Birt, The Islamic Foundation, UK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The overall aim of this study was to explore the beliefs, narratives and ideologies that lead to violent radicalism underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam, with a view to understanding of the causes and remedies for violent radicalisation. The research was conducted through analysis and empirical data collection through 145 stakeholder and primary fieldwork interviews in four Member States; Denmark, France, Germany and the UK. The interview sample was intended to capture the diversity of the Muslim 'field' in each country as far as possible
2. Our wider case studies of terrorist movements indicate that grievances real or perceived, inform the employment of violence. These are not 'irrational' i.e. not subject to rational analysis, but supported by ideological frameworks with a view of perceived problems, a vision of the future and a prescription for action. It is also clear that ideology and narratives play a multiple role.
3. Our research engaged with the wide range of Internet content linked to violent ideologies. While there are claims made that the Internet may contribute to radicalisation, including self-radicalisation, the data collected in this study, along with other studies, leads us to conclude that this is likely to be secondary to face-to-face interaction in real settings. Our work indicates that the predominant role of the web for violent radicals is as a distribution mechanism, promoting violence against the enemy, propaganda in terms of military 'successes', and the glorification of martyrs.
4. Most importantly, the prevalence, articulation and adoption of specifically violent radical narratives is not the predominant trend identified during this study. Very few interviewees across the research countries purported to subscribe to or act upon violent radical views and many expressed explicit opposition to violence. The key narratives identified were; *living in a 'hostile' society, disenfranchisement and heightened political consciousness, anti-imperialism and social justice, revivalism, emancipation and the personal search to be a good Muslim and the headscarf as liberation, bringing together a constellation of narratives*. The vast majority of the Muslim populations of Europe are also members of a visible ethnic minority. Their experiences are therefore likely to be shaped by experiences such as xenophobia, lower employment and educational levels and, more recently, Islamophobia.
5. The ideational framework of violent radicals is characterised by a reliance on selective and literal interpretations of Islamic texts and employed in support of political causes and strategic necessities. Whilst the ideology appropriates concepts found in Islamic thought and is often characterised as 'Salafi', it is an overtly political ideology that has been developed outside of Islamic jurisprudence. It is also important to recognise that other groups and individuals may also share and /or articulate some of the strands without it necessarily making them radical or leading to direct violence. For example, individuals may see some of the precepts as valid in the context of the Middle East conflict (some interviewees expressed this view) but not applicable elsewhere.
6. Emerging from the analysis and the fieldwork, the core ideology of violent radicals can be seen to consist of the following components:

- **Jihadism**; interpreted as a way of life or a permanent and individual obligation on all Muslims.
 - **Takfir** (excommunication from the faith); of Muslim leaders for failing to rule by Shari'a, and, for some including the generality of Muslims for complicity or failure to believe and practice a form of Islam acceptable to extremists.
 - **The world as an abode of war** (Dar-al-Harb); the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds are assumed to be in a state of war until the rule of Shari'a is established. This means all rules for Muslim conduct can be suspended.
 - **The principle of non-discrimination between civilian and military targets**; Civilians are seen as culpable, for example by voting and paying taxes to the state, or seen as collateral damage.
 - **Attacking the far enemy**; a strategic switch from targeting the 'near' enemy (apostate Muslim governments) to attacking the US and its western allies directly. Here the underpinning rationale is probably that nationalist tendencies within the jihadist movements are minimised and that a pan-Islamic movement will be mobilised in a reaction to the 'war on terror.'
 - **Suicide bombing**; justified as part of asymmetric warfare and the weak position of Muslims. As suicide is a sin in Islam, suicide bombing is recast as self-martyrdom and sacrifice for the cause.
 - **The killing of other Muslims**; is justified on the grounds that they are either complicit through voting / paying taxes to Western or apostate Muslim governments, that they oppose the establishment of an Islamic state, or that they are collateral damage and, as Muslims, martyrs to the cause. Dependent on the school of Islam they may also be regarded as heretic.
 - **The return of the caliphate**; a world government ruled by the precepts of Shari'a, beginning with the reestablishment of a caliphate somewhere in the Muslim world.
7. Our view is that the proto-ideology of violent radicals possesses explanatory power derived from the employment of legitimate 'mainstream' narratives and benefiting from a favourable context for the propagation of their ideas. Intellectual counter-currents and narratives appear to have failed to directly address a key question in Muslim communities, namely why they / their co-religionists are experiencing hostility, discrimination and, in some case violence, from others and states across the globe.
 8. Reviewing the rise of religiosity in the Muslim 'field' we believe that the number of violent radicals, support for some, if not all, of their ideology in some sections of Muslim communities, and a search for 'what it means to be a good Muslim' (including among those who would previously be described as 'cultural' Muslims) indicates that what we are seeing has some if not all of the characteristics of a social movement.
 9. The social movement in the context of the Muslim 'field' is extremely broad, where individuals and groups with some common grievances and aspirations engage in uncoordinated but collective action, though they may disagree on specific tactics and even specific end points. Policy options for the EC / Member States need to be predicated on understanding and responding to how people are mobilised into collective (not necessarily centrally co-ordinated) action.
 10. Building on what is known about the key factors in effective mobilisation our recommendations are multi-layered and focus on three main potential fields of

intervention; *currencies* (the beliefs, ideologies and narratives flowing through the Muslim ‘field’), *communities* (individuals and key groupings and how they relate to this ideology in Muslims communities); and *context* (the social hostility and discrimination that emerged across our fieldwork).

11. Our recommendations are:

- 11.1. Conduct systematic and more robust national and EU-wide polling to quantify the extent to which violent radical narratives are being embraced (EC);
- 11.2. Critical research on the significance of the Middle East conflict in narratives across the spectrum in the Muslim field (EC);
- 11.3. Identify theologians/Imams and significant religious voices who have effectively made the counter–radical case (EC);
- 11.4. Support the propagation and effective dissemination of already existing counter narratives by some Muslims in Europe exploring the concept of European/national Muslim identity and Muslims living in the West (EC/MS);
- 11.5. Support development programmes for the training of Muslim civic society leadership potential to create an ideologically and theologically literate leadership and counter weight within community settings. This should particularly include women and young people (EC/MS);
- 11.6. Assist in the development of networks of European and Member State Muslim theologians, religious and community leaders – including women and young people (EC/MS);
- 11.7. Provide funding and infrastructure to ‘progressive’ individuals, organisations and for communities of practitioners already dealing with radicalisation issues on the ground (EC/MS);
- 11.8. Clerics / Religious leaders – offer information and advice on understanding the authorities and civic processes so they can offer practical advice and support to their jamaat (congregation) on issues from housing and education to social and legal systems (MS);
- 11.9. Rehabilitation of violent radicals – the violent radical narrative reconstructs ‘jihad’ as a permanent obligation and there is evidence from the literature and our interviews that radicals wishing to exit from the route they have gone down have little in the way of support or rehabilitation available (MS);
- 11.10. Dialogue with ‘moderate’, ‘mainstream’ and new Muslim organisations (EC/MS);
- 11.11. In terms of where violent radical narratives are being effectively promoted, we believe these to include; prisons, further and higher education institutions civil society organisations (CSOs) working with Muslim communities (Muslim women’s’ organisations in particular, alongside continued support for youth – specifically male focused – organizations), Mosques (Imams), the media (national and international) and make specific recommendations for interventions in these settings;
- 11.12. The EC should vigorously pursue the transposition of anti-discrimination legislation into Member State domestic law to reinforce that Muslims are entitled to the same rights and protections as others (EC);
- 11.13. For the same reason, Member States should vigorously apply anti-discrimination legislation across the board supported by an established equalities body as required by legislation to address real and perceived grievances across the board (MS);
- 11.14. The ‘interculturalism’ agenda and its centrality and significance for the future of Europe needs to be more widely understood and promoted across Member States. (EC/MS).

1. INTRODUCTION

The terrorist attacks in Madrid, London, and Glasgow and the foiled attempts and arrests in Copenhagen and Berlin have brought home the reality of the terrorist threat that faces Europe today. In the collective fight against terrorism, identifying and addressing the factors that lead individuals to participate in terrorist acts has become a central issue for the European Union and Member States.

The European Commission is aware that fighting terrorism¹ in all its forms necessitates a broad response ranging from ‘harder’ security and criminal justice measures to ‘softer’ public policy initiatives. In particular, the European Union (EU) *Plan of Action on Combating Terrorism*, adopted in June 2004, the *Communication on prevention, preparedness and response to terrorist attacks* and *The Hague Programme* adopted by the European Council in November 2004, all refer to the need to identify and address the factors and causes that are contributing to people taking a path of violence and terror. This approach also recognises that terrorism as a tactic, and the ideologies promoted by those who adopt it, represent a direct challenge to the key founding principles of the European Union including democracy, human rights, tolerance, diversity, and the rule of law. As part of a broad based response to terrorist threats, the development of an ideological response is a fundamental component.

Following the 2004 action plan, the European Commission Communication ‘*Terrorist recruitment; addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation*’, published in September 2005, presented the initial stages of development of a long-term EU strategy for addressing the complex factors that contribute to radicalisation and recruitment to terrorist activities. Following this Communication, an EU Strategy and Action Plan on Radicalisation and Recruitment, adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2005, further outlined the Commission’s intention to “develop [its] understanding of the problem” and recognised the key role of the Commission in delivering the strategy through “channelling its policies effectively, including through the investment of funds for research”.

In December 2006, in order to further understanding of the subject of ‘violent radicalisation’, the European Commission funded three related studies into motivational and desisting factors for violent radicalisation, the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radicalisation and the socio-economic factors contributing to violent radicalisation³. The purpose of these studies is to assist the Commission in developing more efficient and better targeted policy-making based on robust academic research and the generation of empirical evidence, and to confirm, adapt or reject commonly held assumptions in the field. The research programme also aimed to develop new thinking and perspectives based on fresh empirical evidence reflecting the current trends in radicalisation processes.

¹ Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 Article 1 defines terrorism as specified acts which; “given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation.”

³ Violent Radicalisation; “The phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism”³

The Change Institute Consortium (CIC) was contracted by the European Commission for the delivery of Lot 2; The Beliefs, Ideologies and Narratives of Violent Radicalisation. The CIC brought together a pan-European and multi-faith interdisciplinary team of academic departments, individual academics and policy research specialists actively engaged in this field for the delivery of this study.

1.1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

This study explores the beliefs, narratives and ideologies that underpin violent radicalism with a view to developing a much deeper understanding of the causes and remedies for violent radicalisation as part of an ideological response to the main terrorist threat facing Europe.

As recognised in the 2005 Communication, “although Europe has experienced different types of terrorism in its history, the main threat currently comes from terrorism that is underlined by an abusive interpretation of Islam”.⁴ While this study is primarily concerned with the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of this form of terrorism, it includes a comparative assessment of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of other threats in order to provide contextual understanding of the current threat, what it has in common with others, and its particularities.

The study synthesises existing knowledge in the field but is primarily concerned with generating new insights and perspectives that have to date remained hidden and/or under-researched. It seeks to contribute to an improved and more nuanced understanding of the nature of the beliefs, narratives and ideologies that justify the use of violence and hatred which are used by terrorists and those who support, harbour and assist them through disseminating their beliefs and implicit support. A key feature of the study is the extent to which it seeks to hear directly the voices and narratives of violent radicals, those who tacitly or otherwise have some sympathy for terrorists or ‘grievances’, those who have resisted calls to become involved, as well as those who have renounced violent action.

The research focused on the following key areas:

- The identification and analysis of the narratives of violent radicals and of those who show sympathy or support for their ‘cause’ and an exploration of the ways in which people embrace these ideas and make them their own.
- The extent to which violent radical and violent radical narratives are being shared, appropriated and normalised among the broader Muslim ‘field’.
- An analysis of the content and imagery of terrorist rhetoric and propaganda found on the internet.
- A comparative analysis with the narrative underlying other types of terrorism, including an assessment of the ‘cult of martyrdom.’

⁴ “abusive interpretation” ‘The means of justifying violent action (that is never legitimate) by abusively referring to views, aspirations or beliefs which may in themselves be legitimate, but which are most often insidiously distorted’.

The importance and power of narrative in both constructing meaning and social realities for individuals and groups, and also bounding or constraining understanding, is well documented in social science literature and has been drawn on in recent work on the nature of the terrorist threat.⁵ By revealing emotional ‘hot spots’, narratives not only promote understanding of the deeper roots of complex conflicts, they also offer an opportunity to identify barriers to change and opportunities for strategic interventions that can disrupt or destabilise meta-level and ‘closed’ narratives.

This approach provides opportunities to support competing narratives that are emerging around neo-modern, ‘liberal’ and/or democratic Islam and ‘European Muslim-ness’.⁶ In particular, understanding the ‘core’ narrative of violent radicals allows for the understanding of new connections of meaning with respect to the dynamics of radicalisation and forms a vital part of counter-terrorist policies and strategies at the EU level. In this broader context the study also considers the wider issues that may reinforce or support competing narratives and the power and influence of the narrators.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study of beliefs, ideologies and narratives is a highly complex and contestable exercise. Whilst terrorist acts are never justified, the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radicalisation, i.e. those beliefs, ideologies and narratives that *may* lead to terrorist acts are less clearly defined. Radical beliefs, ideologies and narratives are not in themselves illegitimate and may evolve, shift and be adopted in many complex ways. Some narratives may be shared by those who reject terrorist acts and some individuals may hold what might be considered by some as radical beliefs, ideologies and narratives but do subscribe to the use of violent action.

With this in mind a number of key considerations informed the development and delivery of the research methodology to enable the study to navigate the complex terrain of beliefs, ideologies and narratives, particularly with reference to Muslim diaspora communities in Europe. Key considerations included:

- The transnational nature of the narratives under consideration, driven by the dispersal of violent radical networks across the globe, the growth of the Muslim diaspora, and the use of the internet and other new mediums of communication.
- The complexity and interconnectedness of narratives; whilst the study focuses on the ‘beliefs, ideologies and narratives of *violent radicals*’, it is important to consider not only cross and counter-currents, but also more ‘mainstream’ narratives that may overlap with the narratives of violent radicals.
- The possibility of common or shared understandings of Muslim history with a wider group who reject violence as a tool – for example, promoting a strategy of ‘capture of the state’ instead, or a larger group still, including many older generations in

⁵ See for example Mark Howard Ross, ‘The Political Psychology of Competing Narratives, September 11 and beyond’, , <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/ross.htm>

⁶ Robert Hefner, ‘September 11 and the Struggle for Islam’, <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/hefner.htm>

European Muslim communities, who may share a ‘millennial’ vision, but draw a distinction between a rhetorical vision and any action to bring this about⁷.

- The ‘pluralisation’ or ‘democratisation’ of narratives taking place in parallel with the growth of competing narratives – including within violent radical groups. The migration of ideas and organisation through spaces such as the internet or social groups and networks is characterised by individuals and groups developing narratives relatively free from the constraints imposed by more traditional religious authorities. This medium may also facilitate the participation of women in the construction and/or reinforcement of narratives.
- The need to take into account the significance of counter-narratives emerging from within Muslim communities that stress the compatibility of Islam with European governance systems, democracy, civil rights and the separation of church and state.

Whilst this study is primarily focused on ‘violent radicalisation’, implicit within the study is an assessment and evaluation of what might be considered radical beliefs, ideologies and narratives. Radicalism can be understood in a number of ways. It can be seen as a system of belief considered by the holder/s as being unique and true in a universal sense, or alternatively a radical may be characterised by the aims of their beliefs, such as drastic reform and change to political / religious traditions, the status quo or seeking a fundamental return to particular roots or origins.

Even within contexts such as Europe, where values of human rights have since the Second World War been promoted as central to any European identity and institutional landscapes, universal categorisation of radical ideologies and views, individuals and groups based on a shared understanding or consensus would be a highly contested exercise. In addition, the labelling of beliefs ideologies and narratives as radical in the context of a study into (illegitimate) *violent* radicalisation and counter terrorism risks undermining the right to subscribe to or hold ‘alternative’ views, ideas or ideology within democratic systems. Consequently this study makes no attempt to directly engage with or develop typologies of ‘radical’ narratives or ideology.

The subject of this research is a highly contested area open to interpretation, challenges and distortion. In addition to this conceptual complexity, the subject of research is evolving within a continually changing political and security environment. For this reason it was imperative that the study was conducted in a spirit of genuine enquiry in order to uncover and assess the narratives, beliefs and ideologies that have been developed and disseminated. It was also hoped that such an approach would support the identification of those narratives that have the greatest salience in the field, how they have been adopted and by whom, regardless of any a priori assumptions about the field.

RESEARCH METHOD

Given the challenges of the study aims and subject matter the research methodology was primarily designed to generate usable qualitative data that was responsive not only to the core aims of the study but also to the research considerations described. Data was generated through a review of global, EC and member state literature, an extensive analysis of material

⁷ Pnina Werbeur, , ‘The Predicament of Diaspora and Millennial Islam, Reflections in the Aftermath of September 11’, <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/werbnr.htm>

found on the internet, in particular from internet ‘blogs’ and chat forums, and an extensive stakeholder and core fieldwork element delivered by small national research teams. Fieldwork was conducted in four Member States; Denmark, France, Germany and the United Kingdom over a period of 13 months, running from December 2006 to December 2007.

Literature review

A review of relevant literature relating to the particular member state and European context as well as in relation to the global terrorist networks and movements of relevance to the scope of this study was undertaken. The review also sought to identify those approaches and activities that have led to successful resolution / renunciation of terrorism as a means for achieving stated goals, as well as assessing the feasibility or otherwise of their application in relation to resolving terrorism conducted in the name of Islam. The national, European and global literature reviews further informed the refinement of core research hypotheses, development of interviewee profiles and fieldwork data collection guidelines.

Fieldwork

A total of 145 interviews were conducted during the course of the study across the four member states. Interviewees were grouped into two broad categories – those individuals with professional expertise or firsthand experience of issues of violent radicalisation, and primary fieldwork interviews with lay individuals with no specific identifiable relationship to violent radicalisation, groups or ideologies.

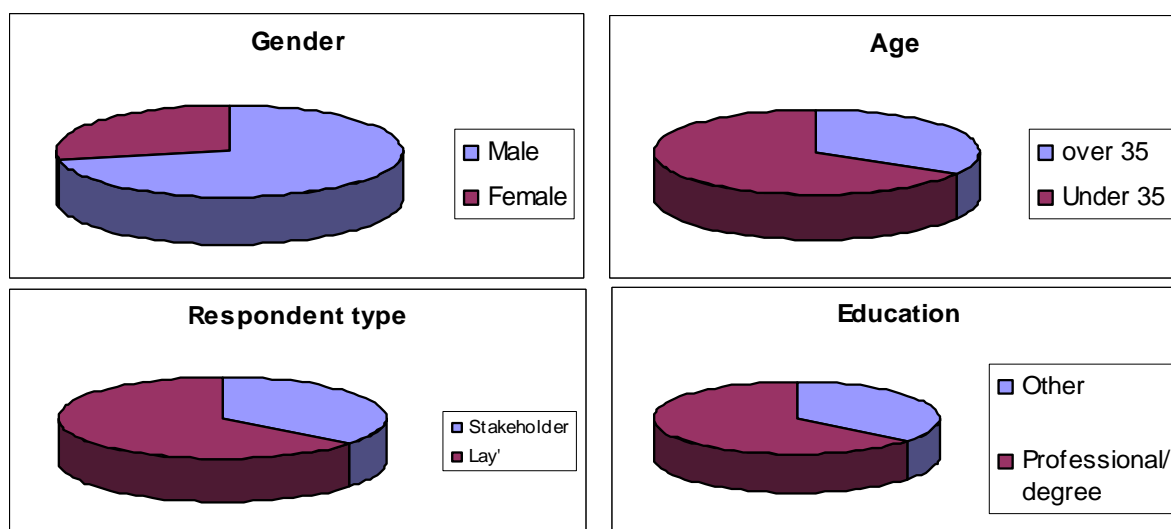


Figure 1 Interviewee breakdown

Key stakeholders were consulted for strategic insights into the national landscape for the issue. Interviewees included academics, community and voluntary organisations ranging from radical to ‘moderate’ to ‘progressive’, representatives of governments, and other significant stakeholders identified during the inception and literature review stages of the research. Researchers in each of the four countries also attended a number of public and ‘semi-public’ conferences, seminars and debates being organised locally representing different strands of Islam, including radical elements that officially reject violence.

Primary fieldwork interviews were conducted with interviewees with a variety of relationships to violent radical narratives. Interviewees ranged from those actively opposed to radical ideologies and groups, those who demonstrated sympathy or understanding for violent action, through to those holding what might be considered highly radical and violent views. Whilst the study actively sought the participation of current / former jihadists, securing their formal participation was not possible in most cases.

Within the target interviewee profiles, the research sought to ensure that the views and perspectives of women were captured. In addition to the growing participation of women in anti-Western protest and Islamic debate and, in some cases, violent radicalism, it is widely recognised that women are also at the forefront of challenging extremist discourse and play a critical educational role in socialising and transmitting culture and values to the young. In recognition of the targeting and greater susceptibility of some young people to radical influences, the study particularly sought the direct personal experiences and perspectives of young Muslims, as well as those of an older generation. Where interviews generated particular insight into how beliefs, ideologies and narratives may interact with the radicalisation process of individuals, more detailed case studies were produced.

The interview sample was intended to effectively capture the diversity of the Muslim ‘field’ and salience of particular beliefs, ideologies and narratives in each country as far as possible (*see figure 1*). Primary fieldwork interviews were conducted face to face based on a semi-structured research template designed to marry the requirement for comparable data with the need to effectively explore interviewee perspectives and pursue and capture avenues of enquiry outside of initial hypotheses.

The data collection framework was based on:

- A careful review of relevant theoretical and empirical research;
- The derivation and development of hypotheses to be tested within a theoretical framework;
- The a priori specification of possible variables and causal links;
- Thorough consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

(For the fieldwork framework see appendices)

Internet methodology

The internet was felt to have dual significance for this study. Not only is the internet increasingly being seen as an important arena for the promotion and development of narratives by violent radical groups it also represents a highly potent ‘open source’ research resource. A list of key sites to be tracked over a period of six months were identified following stakeholder consultation interviews and literature review and updated throughout the study. Websites and ‘blogs’ were monitored as part of the study, however the main focus was on forums as these produced the most interactive and ‘live’ content and provide an insight into the manner of promotion and interaction of participants and narratives.

Both Arabic and English language forums and a range of ‘moderate’, extremist and jihadist sites were tracked as well as popular mainstream sites such as Youtube.com. Quantitative data provided by websites was used to assess prominence and impact of various ‘posts’ and strands of discussion and this was used to refine the identification of key themes and

content. This element of the study also included a review of the content of imagery and videos and how they are distributed in the forums. The research was continued throughout the study to capture reaction to key events across time and avoid unrepresentative ‘one off snapshot’ analysis.

Methodological limitations

A number of key methodological limitations to this study should be noted when reviewing its findings:

- The study was not able to interview current members of violent radical groups or networks. Whilst the use of web based material and interviewing of key experts and stakeholders with contemporary insights have enabled insight into current dynamics and developments, the continual evolution of beliefs, ideologies and narratives may mean more recent developments or shifts may not have been fully captured.
- The sample size only allows for analysis of common trends, patterns and the salience of narratives in each of the research countries and is not large enough to be definitively representative within or across four member states. The study is a qualitative study designed to generate initial and comparable data in a complex area while capturing the diversity of national contexts and levels of exposure to violent radical ideas. This inevitably opens up the potential for variability and inconsistency in data collection. Whilst the study has sought to synthesise the data and reporting generated from each country, it has not attempted to impose a template that would restrict the country specific approach and understanding of the issues brought to the issue by country research teams.
- The contentious and highly political nature of the study may have led to some interviewees tailoring their responses when interviewed. Whilst the fieldwork research was delivered by skilled researchers it is possible that interviewees may give distorted responses for a wide range of reasons. These could have included not wishing to fall foul of the law, being an active participant in historical debates and therefore wishing to present events in a particular light, through to a desire not to present negative views to a perceived hostile society. Consequently, care has been taken to avoid presenting uncorroborated findings when addressing individuals involved in the development of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives described. In addition, we were struck by the willingness of interviewees to speak about events which they must have found difficult or traumatic or where their actions may have crossed legal boundaries.

Security and confidentiality

Given the highly sensitive nature of the study, the research teams observed the strictest frameworks and security measures to ensure legal, safe and confidential data storage and retrieval. The anonymity of all interviewees was guaranteed, and assurances to this effect given to all who responded to or participated in the study.

FIELDWORK RESEARCH SELECTION

The four countries selected represented a range of experiences of and responses to violent radicalisation. While the countries all had the issue of violent radicalisation underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam high on their domestic agendas, the history of migration and political responses, both recent and historical, represented a diversity of contexts for testing the comparability of beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radicalisation across member states.

United Kingdom; in the UK there are long established ethnic minority communities, including large Pakistani and Bangladeshi 2nd and 3rd generation diaspora populations. In addition a traditional tolerance of a range of radical organisations of many faiths supporting a wide variety of causes based in the UK can be observed. These groups include radical Muslim organisations that have been banned in some other countries but which are still able to legally function in Britain. As a widely acknowledged hub for violent radical Islamic thought, and given the aftermath of the July 2005 bombings in particular, the UK is useful not only for the study of beliefs, ideologies and narratives, but also for the role of counter terrorism measures, both legislative and social / educational.

Denmark; The cartoon affair in Denmark had been assumed by many to have had far reaching political, social and economic consequences, and poses many fundamental questions that are critical to this study. Of particular interest to the research team was exploring the opposing values and narratives exposed by the conflict, as well as the extent to which this has divided society and affected the views of Muslim communities, particularly young Muslims.

Germany; In addition to links between Frankfurt and Hamburg and the 9/11 terrorists, Germany has the second largest Muslim population in Europe, predominantly of Turkish heritage. Germany is undergoing an ongoing evolution of its internal relations with the Turkish Muslim community, as well as with the growing asylum seeking / refugee communities originating from African and Middle Eastern countries.

France; In recent years France has experienced profound conflicts arising out of differences in ethnicity, faith, culture and political ideals. The opposition from Muslim and other faith communities such as Sikhs to the head scarf ban highlights the dilemmas facing French and other European governments in reconciling or promoting acceptance of secular politics and practice in public life. This dilemma raises key questions about equality, citizenship, identity and alienation among marginalised migrant communities existing at the fringes of French society.

An overview of research country Muslim population demographics and key statistics is set out in the appendices.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In advance of the primary fieldwork interview phase, and informed by the results of literature reviews and stakeholder consultation interviews, a range of key hypotheses concerning ideologies in the global and European context were developed by the CIC project team for testing in the field. These hypotheses informed the development of fieldwork protocols and also framed the development of findings across the research teams. The research hypotheses were:

Global level

Global Narrative; that there is a core violent radical ideology and narrative that is being promoted globally regardless of context. This global narrative is underpinned by a violent form of Salafism and referred to by some as jihadism.

This ideology proposes that there is an ontological divide between Muslims and non-Muslims and that the only legitimate Muslims are those seen as personally committed to working to bring about a return to an idealised (utopian) social and political order. This order dates from the time of the Prophet and is characterised by peace, stability and social justice.

This ideology is supplemented and strengthened by narratives of destructive western imperialism, a Jewish / Christian crusade against Islam and the perpetration of atrocities and injustices against Muslim peoples. The ideology promotes literal interpretations and readings of the Quran and also reinterprets concepts such as jihad as a political struggle against injustices, and for the return of a Caliphate.

Shifts in legitimacy and authority; that the effectiveness of the ideology is enhanced by the loss of legitimacy or authority of traditional centres of interpretation and teaching of the Quran. The result is a spread of new interpretations, strands and sub-strands of both radical violent ideologies and narratives but also radically liberal ideologies and narratives.

European / 'Western' level

European context; that a global ideology and narrative is being supplemented and/or refined and adapted to take into account specific salient local issues / grievances and the context for Muslim communities in Europe. This includes the development of a specific European narrative linked to alienation and felt grievances.

Alienation; that alienation is a key concept in understanding motivations in 'turning' against one's own family, community, wider society and that this alienation is linked to the second generation migrant experience in Europe. This alienation may be driven by any or all the following; personal family circumstances and factors, perceived moral / ethical failings of the 'West', actions of the west, narratives and/or experience of socio-economic exclusion, being presented as the 'other' in the media, perceived faith discrimination by the state, or perception of indifference towards injustice and suffering of Muslims elsewhere in the world.

Foreign policy; that 'Western' foreign policy, particularly towards the Middle East, plays a key role in the promotion, adaptation and spread of radical ideologies.

Alternative group identity; that violent radicals promote, and are attracted to becoming part of, self determined groups as alternatives to family and community, and also see these as the core 'vanguard' of a resurgent global Ummah.

Targeting of Youth (c.8 to 35); that narratives are developed specifically for youth and offer 'solutions' to many of the uncertainties and issues faced by this group in relation to how to be a 'good' Muslim in a Western context. That these narratives can also play on this group's experiences of marginalisation, exclusion, discrimination and disadvantage in education, housing and employment opportunities to promote rejection of the 'other' and promote confidence in a Muslim cultural identity.

Gender; that gender plays a prominent role in many of the narratives and materials promoted by violent radicals, such as the headscarf debates being interpreted as an issue relating to the defence of Islam and promotion of Western society as decadent and corrupt in terms of permissiveness and sexuality (including homosexuality). That alternative women's voices are being organised, heard and promoted and this present a significant challenge to violent radical ideologies

Prominence of the UK; that this radical ideological and narrative framework of particular relevance to European 'audiences' has been developed in the UK, is facilitating the radicalisation of youth in the UK and has supported the export of combatants and ideas around the globe. That this ideological and narrative framework has the potential to be adapted and exported across mainland Europe.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives underpinned by an 'abusive interpretation of Islam' cannot be abstracted from the socio-economic and political context that the beliefs, ideologies and narratives have been both developed within, and seek to interpret.⁸ While representations of the 'Muslim world' are inevitably totalising, often inaccurate and sometimes unproductive, when attempting to understand radical ideologies and narratives that are being promoted globally to a global Muslim 'Ummah' the 'Muslim world' context is important, particularly given our fieldwork findings relating to the international awareness and heightened political consciousness among Muslim interviewees.

Global context

There are approximately 1.1 billion people of the Muslim faith in the world today. The vast majority of Muslims in the world are Sunni – estimated at 940 million - with the largest numbers in South and South East Asia/ Indonesia. There are approximately 120 million Shia Muslims and 170 million Ahmadiyya Muslims, further categorised as Qadianis or Lahores.

The largest national Muslim populations are to be found in the South East Asian states of Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, but the historical heartlands of the Islamic faith are in the Middle East region, particularly Saudi Arabia, where Mecca, the holiest site in Islam, is located. There is widespread economic inequality in the Middle East, where one in five Arab Muslims live on less than US\$2 a day and growth in income per head has been less than half a percent per annum over the last 20 years, lower than anywhere else in the world except sub-Saharan Africa.⁹ Stagnant economic growth, together with high levels of population growth, means about 12 million people, 15% of the labour force, are unemployed, and on present trends the number could rise to 25 million by 2010.¹⁰ Education outcomes in the Middle East and other Muslim majority countries are particularly poor, for example the worldwide Muslim literacy rate of 53%¹¹ is low when compared with the world literacy rate of 82%¹².

⁹ The Economist, July 4, 2002

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ UN and World Christian Database

¹² CIA world factbook

The ‘Muslim world’ or countries with significant Muslim populations in the Middle East, Central and South Asia, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the Horn of Africa are currently among the most unstable political regions in world. The occupations of both Afghanistan and Iraq have become targets of concerted insurgency activity, adversely affecting attempts to reconstruct both countries following the impact of military assaults.

Pakistan is increasingly a highly unstable political arena; a development heavily influenced by the war in Afghanistan and a historical relationship with the Taliban, who are continuing an aggressive insurgency campaign against NATO troops. The historically porous border between the two countries and autonomous nature of the tribal regions, suspected by some commentators to be the current location of Osama Bin Laden and the remaining al-Qaeda leadership, are also increasingly representing a direct threat to the political leadership of Pakistan. A military dictatorship in Pakistan, in place since a 1999 coup d’état, has contributed to political vacuum that is now being capitalised on by more radical Islamic political and cultural organisations.

In the Middle East, Iraq is now becoming an arena for geo-strategic power struggles between the US and Iran. The instability of Iraq is becoming a new arena for international terrorist actions against the US as well as domestic insurgency and interethnic conflict. The impacts of the instability are being felt throughout the region with an estimated 50,000 escaping the violence in Iraq each month, adding to an estimated two million refugees who have already left Iraq, largely for Syria and Jordan.¹³

These new Iraqi refugees are joining the 4.3 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations in the region, including 1.8 million registered in Jordan, some 4.4 million in Syria and 400,000 in the Lebanon.¹⁴ The Israeli / Palestinian dispute continues without stable settlement as yet, and the status of Palestinian refugees and their right of return remains unresolved. In Eastern Africa the conflicts in Eritrea and Somalia continue, with rebel forces now increasingly aligning themselves with an Islamic identity.

Top 10 Largest National Muslim Populations	
Country	Number of Muslims
Indonesia	170,310,000
Pakistan	136,000,000
Bangladesh	106,050,000
India	103,000,000
Turkey	62,410,000
Iran	60,790,000
Egypt	53,730,000
Nigeria	47,720,000
China	37,108,000

¹³ <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/462486374.html> The UNHCR also estimates that there are a further 1.9 million displaced persons within Iraq, meaning that 1 in 8 of the population has now been displaced. Whilst it should be noted that many Iraqis were displaced prior to the fall of the previous regime since the bombing of the Samara shrine in February 2006 750,000 Iraqis are estimated to have been displaced in what is described as “the most significant displacement in the Middle East since the dramatic events of 1948”

¹⁴ UN Total Registered Refugees Per Country and Area as at 31st March 2006 <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/> Sites of Palestinian Refugees include the Gaza Strip; 993,818 and the West Bank; 705,207

This global context of political instability and socio-economic stagnation, civic strife, and, in some cases, war, forms an important backdrop to the development and propagation of specific beliefs, ideologies and narratives. In particular it is clear that this context is of particular relevance not only to violent radicals but is also of real concern to the Muslim interviewees in this study, whether or not they share the beliefs of violent radicals, or are ‘moderates’ or radically progressive in their outlook.

European Union context

Due to a lack of accurate statistics, estimates of the Muslim population in the recently expanded EU vary considerably. Out of a population of 450 million, Muslims are estimated at between 13 and 25 million, with significant concentrations in specific countries including France, Germany and Britain. Neither Islam nor Muslim communities are new to Europe; however the origins, ethnicity and schools of Islam represented are highly diverse. What is new is the salience of ‘Muslim’ as a political category. During the 1960s through to the early 1980s, policy interest by authorities was largely limited to concerns that some cultural / religious practices and beliefs may be limiting the integration of immigrants into Western European societies. The category of ‘Muslim’ did not acquire a high level of resonance for authorities as a way of describing sections of the immigrant population in Western Europe until the 1980s and 1990s.

Despite the lack of consistent and comparable data, a variety of studies have attempted to develop a picture of the experiences of European Muslims in the workplace. This consistently shows that Muslim communities not only experience disadvantage in the labour market as ethnic minorities, but also often experience disadvantage by virtue of being a member of the Muslim community.¹⁵ Muslim communities are disproportionately represented in low skilled, low paid jobs, and in specific sectors such as manufacturing, construction, service sectors and seasonal labour.¹⁶

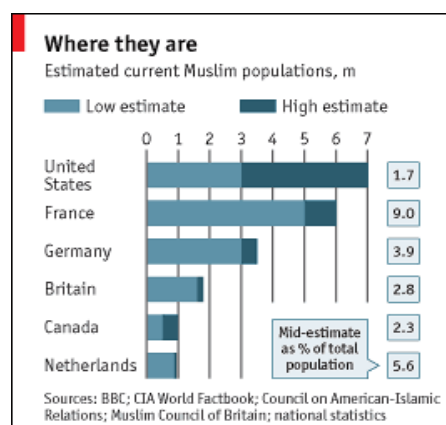


Figure 2 European Muslim Populations

to succeed academically.¹⁸ The EUMC notes that a highly differentiated and segregationist European school system produces and reproduces inequality.¹⁹ The OECD PISA study also indicated that while there are a number of variables that may contribute to poor educational performance among ethnic minority communities, there is also evidence that discriminatory practices are having a negative impact on the schooling of certain minority groups.²⁰ The

¹⁵ EUMC Discrimination and Islamophobia in the European Union 2006

¹⁶ Ibid & EUMC 2006 annual report

¹⁷ The EUMC became the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency on the 1st March 2007

¹⁸ Lakhbir Bhandal and Laurence Hopkins, *Fighting racism and promoting equal rights in the field of education*, ENAR, 2007.

¹⁹ EUMC 2006 annual report

²⁰ 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) performance study on The educational outcomes of migrant children in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

EUMC has identified a wide range of educational practices that can and are leading to discrimination.²¹

Europe now matches North America as a region of net immigration. As a result labour, migration, asylum and integration issues have become highly politically contested. Populist mobilisation on immigration has placed liberal oriented governments under pressure to pursue more restrictive approaches. Research into elections and political parties from across the Member States shows that while the far right is not gaining electoral ground its discourse is increasingly being adopted by democratic parties. Through this process the rhetoric of racism is being 'normalised' in the political landscape of Europe and Member States. It is also clear that for a small proportion of democratic parties across Europe, the issue of Turkey's entry into the EU and that of the future of Islam in Europe have become as important as immigration and the right to asylum.²²

The existence and rise of a specific anti-Muslim sentiment is also becoming apparent across the Union. The situation has been recognised by the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). A number of general policy recommendations have been developed to respond to this challenge. These recommendations are built on a recognition that Muslim communities are subject to prejudice that may manifest itself in many guises, and that, as a result of the events of September 11th, groups such as Muslims (and Jews) have become increasingly vulnerable to racism and or racial discrimination.

TERRORISM; DEFINITIONS, HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

Terrorism and political violence

The term terrorism describes the use, or threat of use, of violence against civilian targets for political or ideological goals. Understood in this way, terrorism is a tactic that has existed for millennia. Despite this apparent clarity in broad definition, given the value laden use of the term, in practice terrorism remains a highly contested term, with over 100 diplomatic and scholarly definitions, and many grey areas.²³

There are many attempted detailed typologies of terrorism. For example, terrorism may be international, transnational, or national, and understandings of these terms may change and evolve through time. The Lockerbie bombings and the events of the Munich Olympics can be seen to shape understandings of international terrorism at the time to describe violent acts against civilians carried out in the name of another state.²⁴ Understandings and usage of the term international terrorism have also evolved further following the end of the cold war.

Terrorism and international terrorism are now often used to describe violent non-state organisations that operate across borders with transnational identities and ideology, as commonly understood in the case of al-Qaeda. There are many forms of non-state violent

²¹ EUMC, *Migrants, Minorities and Education*, 2004

²² Camus, Jean-Yves 'The use of racist, anti Semitic and xenophobic arguments in political discourse' European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) 2005

²³ Krueger, Alan. B & Maleckova, Jitka; Education, *Poverty and Terrorism; Is there a causal connection?* in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Volume 17, Number 4, pp 119 - 144, 2003

²⁴ Poland, James M; *Understanding Terrorism, Groups Strategies and Responses* (Prentice Hall, NJ, 1988)

groups that have adopted terrorist tactics or been labelled as terrorist groups by any given actor at any given time, often rhetorically by many national governments in support of political agendas. When considering the types of groups employing terrorist tactics, it is a common practice to view action in relation to relativist perceptions of legitimate use of violence. This may include categories such as:

- ‘Pathological’/ ‘criminal’ terrorism – terrorists groups operating without significant identifiable public support;
- ‘Liberation movements’ – non-state groups conducting violent action in the face of a perceived injustice and a desire to promote political aims on behalf of an identified populous;
- ‘Guerrilla/ civil Warfare’ – non-state groups conducting violent action against military targets but will also include civilian targets often with more or less defined ‘front lines’;
- ‘State sponsored terrorism’ – non-state individuals or groups given variable degrees of support by states or individual components of a state in order to advance a particular view of strategic state interests.

Analysis of terrorism encompasses history, politics, economics, social anthropology and psychology as well as sociology, ideology and religion. As such complexity all but precludes an effective schematic of terrorism academic attention has largely focused on political analysis of the impacts intended on the civilian populations or the state in order to further understand the employment of terrorism as a tactic.²⁵

A brief history of terrorism

Many European and American scholars identify the history of modern terrorism as commencing just over 120 years ago with the coining of the term in Tsarist Russia. The academic David C Rapoport has developed a widely known framework that proposes four waves of modern terrorism, each lasting for approximately a generation and driven by identifiable ideological characteristics, including a prominence of a particular tactic, that builds and ebb away in their significance based around political events.²⁶

Anarchist movements; primarily associated with Tsarist Russia of the 1880s this wave is characterised by the adoption of violent terrorist tactics by revolutionaries who identified the actions as a means for the polarisation of the populous, and is associated with the Anarchists and other ‘radical’ political groups agitating for democratic reform. It was here that terrorism came to be characterised as violence beyond the moral conventions used to regulate violence. In addition, the activists of the time defined themselves as terrorists as a direct challenge to the authority of the state and its systems of management and criminalisation of violence.

Self determination; post WW1 and WW2 the use of violent action in support of self determination become more widespread through the targeting of military and colonial institutions becoming a central feature. With the ‘success’ of this wave and the actions being conducted against colonial powers, the term terrorism began to develop negative connotations, both through the influence of the colonial powers, as well as a consequence of

²⁵ Toloyan, Khachig; *Cultural narrative and the motivation of the terrorist*; in *Terrorism, Critical Concepts in political science*; David C. Rapoport ed (Routledge, Oxford, 2006)

²⁶ Rapoport, David C.; *the Four Waves of the Modern Terrorist*; In *Terrorism, Critical Concepts in political science*, David C. Rapoport (ed) (Routledge, Oxford, 2006)

the logic of national 'Self Determination'. As the legitimisation of force at national levels was increasingly entrenched into the international system the Israeli terrorist group Lehi is considered to be the last such self defined terrorist group.²⁷

International terrorism; from the 1970s there was an increase in terrorism characterised by a belief that the existing national and global systems were not democratic. These movements may have had nationalist claims but also often held strong political ideologies that in some cases alienated potential supporters of nationalist agendas. The adoption of hostage taking tactics was a prominent feature of this wave. During this period links and joint action between previously national groups who increasingly shared comparable ideologies became more common. Such collaboration included state actors, as is suspected in the case of the Lockerbie bombings. This period is also characterised by an increased targeting of the United States during the 1980s as its position as the world's leading super power became increasingly apparent.

During this period, moves to counter terrorist movements were increasingly supported on the international stage, including by newly independent states. While many of these states were still asserting their new found independence whilst still facing internal and external violent threats they commonly held a shared an interest in this agenda. In addition many high profile kidnappings, hijackings and bombings by terrorist groups further highlighted the need for a collective response. Incidents such as the Munich Olympic massacre spurred on the criminalisation of actions and activities associated with international terrorism at the international level through the UN, thus further entrenching the formal outlawing and criminalisation of terrorism on the national and international stage.

Current 'religious' wave; The current wave of terrorist activity had begun to develop during the end game of the cold war, with the emergence of the US as the world's only superpower and the political co-option or military defeat of many of the groups involved in the previous wave. This wave is characterised by groups who draw on Islamic interpretations, ideology and belief frameworks in support of their own specific contexts and aims. Rapoport's thesis sees the key events at the start of this wave as being the Islamic resurgence of the Iranian Revolution and the impacts of the soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of the Mujahedeen. (It should be noted that Sedgwick critiques Rapoport's chronology of the commencement of the religious wave, proposing the Iranian Revolution more as a consequence of a movement that began with the defeat of the Arab armies by Israel in 1967 that effectively ended the Arab Nationalist movements led by Nasser of Egypt).

Key features of the 'religious' wave of terrorism are the prominence of transnational terrorist networks and activity and the use of suicide bombing by a number of groups. This wave is seen as reaching its zenith in the 9/11 attacks on the USA by the al-Qaeda network led by Osama Bin Laden, and has subsequently been characterised by the US led 'war on terror'. A prominent aspect of this wave of terrorism is its characterisation as being underpinned by a 'Clash of Civilisations', as proposed by Samuel Huntingdon. This thesis has been adopted by both international terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and some US public policy experts and commentators to link a wide range of more local conflicts and to attempt to shape them according to their own political, ideological and geo-strategic aims. The aims, ideas and organisations that have come to characterise this wave of terrorism are set out later in this study.

²⁷ ibid

Suicide missions

Suicide missions are the defining characteristic of the current 'religious' wave of terrorism, but death, self immolation, suicide and martyrdom have a long tradition in political ideology and struggle. Movements as varied as the Crusaders, the Islamic Ismaili sect of the 12th and 13th centuries, through to the IRA hunger strikers in this century have employed tactics from this tradition. While suicide missions have been common in history, there is a general consensus that the current phase of modern suicide bombing commenced with the attack on the American embassy in Beirut in 1983 by the militant group Hezbollah. The tactic has subsequently become a prominent feature of the 'religious' wave of terrorism, with its usage increasing dramatically over the past two years.²⁸

Available figures indicate that there were 31 suicide terrorist attacks during the 1980's and 104 attacks in the 1990's. However, in 2000 and 2001 alone 53 suicide terrorist missions were recorded²⁹. This dramatic rise in suicide terrorism has happened at a time when the overall number of international terrorist incidents worldwide has been falling from a peak of 666 in 1987 to a low of 274 in 1998 and 348 in 2001.³⁰

Suicide bombing is primarily the tactic of organisations as opposed to individuals. Analysis conducted by Robert Pape suggests that up to 95% of suicide attacks are conducted with the sponsorship of an organisation and as part of an organised, planned and continuous campaign.³¹ It is also clear that there are both formal and informal organisational structures and processes in place to support the delivery of suicide missions, including psychological preparation and exit 'prevention' strategies. The adoption of suicide tactics can be analysed through rational strategic considerations, in particular the superior effectiveness of payload delivery that can be achieved by poorly equipped terrorist groups in comparison to more conventional remote means of delivery.³² The prominence and proliferation of the tactic of suicide bombing cannot be explained by structural or strategic considerations alone, though it is true that the demonstrative power of previous success has contributed to the adoption of the tactics by many operationally distinct groups, but who may consider their aims loosely associated or linked by a common faith or enemy.

The range of groups adopting these tactics is so wide that typologies are difficult to develop. One of the first organisations to adopt the tactic with any frequency was the LTTE (or Tamil Tigers) of Sri Lanka during the 1980s. However, the more recent increase in suicide missions has come largely from the proliferation amongst a diverse set of Islamic based organisations, both localised from Hezbollah to Hamas (and subsequently a variety of secular Palestinian terrorist organisations³³), to the globalised networks of the al-Qaeda affiliated groups. Primarily suicide missions are currently employed by groups that view their conflicts within a

²⁸ Pape, Robert A; *The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*; in *Terrorism, Critical Concepts in political science*, David C. Rapoport (ed) (Routledge, Oxford, 2006)

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ US Department of State patterns of global terrorism 2001 Figures quoted are for 'international' terrorist attacks i.e. involving citizens of more than one country. Later figures following the attacks of 9/11 show an initial drop in overall followed by rises commensurate with increased US presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

³¹ Pape, 2006

³² Ibid

³³ For further assessment of market share analysis of adoption of suicide tactics in relation the Israeli Palestinian conflict see Bloom, Mia; *Dying to kill, motivations for suicide terrorism*; in Pedhazur, A (ed); *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism, the globalisation of martyrdom*, (Routledge, London, 2006). Ricolfi, Luca; *Palestinians, 1981 – 2003*; in Gambetta, Diego (ed); *Making sense of suicide missions* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006)

religious or Islamic framework, and are involved in the current ‘hot’ conflicts of the world that has largely been concentrated on Muslim countries and organisations. It is also true that suicide missions have proliferated in many Arab and Muslim countries that are marked by authoritarian political structures that restrict dissent or are characterised by ongoing conflict.

THE BELIEFS IDEOLOGIES & NARRATIVES OF VIOLENT RADICALISATION

Beliefs, ideologies and narratives

Central to the development of any movement or group is the construction of an ideological framework which provides a logically coherent belief system, with a more or less sophisticated conception of history. Ideologies link the beliefs, narratives and cognitive and evaluative perceptions of one’s social condition – particularly prospects for the future – to a programme of collective action for the maintenance, alteration or transformation of society, whilst also providing the justification for a particular action. Ideologies in particular are a means of understanding the world and events, whilst mediating them to align with the aims and methods of a particular group. They also form the basis around which group identity can be coalesced, promoted, broader based support developed, and new members incorporated. Ideology may also inform strategy and coordinate activity in the absence of hierarchical organisational and command structures or ‘leaders’.

The study of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radicalisation is a highly complex area within a complex field, as the nature of beliefs, ideology and narratives are inherently subjective, and may be interpreted and adapted quite differently from person to person, place to place, and time to time. However, in conceptual approaches towards the study of terrorism and analysis of violent radicalisation, the centrality of beliefs, ideologies and narratives is prominent.

While the various definitions of terrorism do not necessarily require an ideological framework, a brief overview of the history of political violence shows that violence is inevitably conducted by groups who profess to subscribe to some kind of identifiable ideology. The analysis of Rapoport highlights how a variety of global waves of terrorism have been directly inspired by ideology, from Anarchism to nationalism to Marxist ideology, through to the current religious wave characterised by organisations who promote ideologies underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam.

Common ideologies that have underpinned terrorist organisations or movements have included to varying degrees Marxism, self-determination, and faith based ideologies. The core narratives and ideologies identified with these movements are often mediated through other more specific narratives of relevance to the context of the group in question, and have all stimulated a range of beliefs, ideologies and narratives that have been adopted by a range of violent radical organisations and movements. Such underpinning ideologies are also instrumental in that they are adapted, modified and refined, without losing their essential core, to maintain explanatory efficacy and to fit evolving circumstances. The question of instrumentality is an important one as it highlights how ideologies and narratives may evolve and be adapted to fit changing circumstances and needs and are not static abstract concepts divorced from the contexts to which they are applied or the individuals, groups or populations that apply them.

Beliefs ideologies and narratives of violent radical movements; a comparative analysis

A comparative literature review of a number of terrorist organisations including the Tamil Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Baader Meinhoff gang of Germany, Khalistani Sikh militants of the Punjab, as well as others including the Irish Republican Army and Hezbollah of Lebanon was undertaken. The review highlighted that the relationship of these groups and organisations with ideology varies across the members and supporters of violent radical groups. While some members may possess an understanding of the ideological frameworks proposed by the group, other powerful narratives of loyalty and duty toward a range of constituencies, including the immediate group, family or broader constituency, are also heavily prominent in an individual's own understanding and narrative underpinning of their motivations as are narratives of self worth, belonging and identity. The normalisation of narratives by individuals and groups is central to the development of violent radical action, ideological frameworks and associated processes of recruitment. This section provides an overview of how beliefs, ideologies and narratives have been employed by a broad range of violent political movements and organisations.

Marxism

Marxism has been the primary ideological challenger to the primacy of western style capitalism and liberal democracy during the 20th century, and has been adopted by a range of terrorist groups to varying degrees.

One of the factors that has made Marxist ideology so pertinent for violent radical groups has been the central role of violence in achieving its ends. Whilst many subsequent socialists preached reform, implicit within the Marxist theory is the necessity for violent revolution to eradicate the hegemonic economic system and cultural superstructures. Powerful narratives of a 'vanguard' are associated with this debate, and this is often a key explanatory concept for small groups operating without broad based support, secure in the knowledge that they are working towards an inevitable event for which they will also be the most prepared.

The Baader Meinhoff group in particular are a prominent example of the powerful role of Marxist ideology in not only developing a broader social movement, but also in bringing together a smaller group of people with no shared personal interest other than the shared identities and world views developed and mediated via Marxist theory. The template for the Baader Meinhoff group's communiqué, the Urban Guerrilla – the Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla by Carlos Marighella - outlined how kidnapping wealthy industrialists, senior representatives of the state and security services, along with bank robberies, would not only shatter the edifice of the seemingly omnipotent capitalist state, but would also provide the means through which the group could sustain itself and prepare for the coming revolution.

The transnational nature of a supposedly universal ideology such as Marxism has also promoted loose affiliation between terrorist groups, that range from the IRA, South American revolutionaries, Baader Meinhoff, and Palestinian organisations, all of whom have been influenced by other groups at some time. The range and variety of these groups demonstrate how a comprehensive ideological framework can be adopted, adapted and evolved in order to suit very different and changing political and strategic contexts.

Self determination

Self determination or nationalism, while not a complete ideology such as Marxism, has nevertheless been a prominent doctrine employed by post-colonial mass movements and violent radical groups challenging state power throughout the 20th Century. A wide range of groups have been motivated by its doctrines, ranging from the Tamil Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Irish Republican Army and Khalistani Sikh Militants.

The employment of violence by groups drawing on nationalist ideology is a powerful representation of a lack of confidence in the state and its ability or intention to serve the group's interests. While such movements are characterised by a range of ideas, including 'moderate' ideas, and there have been many instances of support ebbing away following employment of extreme violence by separatist groups, violence is characterised here as 'politics by other means' and a necessity forced upon a group by the actions of an enemy.

The principle of self-determination relies on the belief in the reality of identifiable collective identities, usually ethnic and / or cultural, as the basis for political organisation. Almost inevitably such groups will be constructed in opposition to pre-existing political state forms that will often be perceived and represented as dominated by the collective identity of an oppositional 'other'.

Calls on collective identities are informed by a perception that the socio-economic interests as well as the cultural identity of a group are no longer served by the existing structures of the state. The rallying call of self determination has also commonly been fixed around cultural and religious practice.

The construction of oppositional identities often encompasses selective interpretations of history and promotion of new or existing cultural institutions and associated identities to create dividing ground and enabling the promotion of clear constituencies of self determination. Importantly in the context of violent radical groups, such processes may also be accelerated through the employment of violence by the state and by terrorist groups in a reinforcing cycle.

The power of territorial claim in self determination or nationalist movements is also a central component of the ideology. The reality of these territorial claims are developed through similar processes to that of a construction of collective identity and often becomes its vessel of expression, as for example in the case of 'Khalistan', proposed by some Sikh militants as a geographical area that would be imbued with the noble principles of the Sikh faith, but not created exclusively for Sikhs. Claims for territorial sovereignty have commonly been drawn from a variety of sources that may include topography, strategic integrity, history and key cultural sites.

Faith based ideology

Groups that draw on abusive interpretations of religion characterise the current global 'religious' terrorism wave. Often associated and conflated with movements of self determination, religiously inspired terrorism can be underpinned by a more comprehensive world view, which though mobilised within territorial frameworks of self determination, also has broader non territorial explanatory power. As with Marxism, faith based groups may present fundamental critiques of temporal, often materialistic, governance and society, but the key issue is viewed as an imbalance of authority between the divine and the secular. Whilst ending this imbalance may be seen as necessitating revolution, as was the case in Iran, it is

also clear that many religious groups may also propose the capture of the institutions of the state, including by political as well as violent means, as in the case of Hezbollah.

The relationship of faith, ideology and politics is a highly contested one. However, it is clear that faith based ideologies may be adopted and understood in very different ways from other forms of ideology, and that an individual's relationship to faith and belief may be quite different from apparently rationally bounded temporal ideological frameworks and systems. Likewise it is also clear that temporal political aims and beliefs are commonly analogous in the ideology, rhetoric and practice of faith based groups, with appeals to social justice commonly facilitating broader based support.

The potency of faith employed in the name of political causes is its underpinning in divine motivation. The causes that are being described as political by others are for the true believer a divine article of faith. Whilst this has parallels with Marxist ideology and its equivalent belief in the inevitability of history, the Marxist revolution is based on rational analysis of the inequalities and dysfunctions of the capitalist system. Although dysfunctionality of temporal life and political systems is a common narrative in religious ideology, this is not self evident through a process of rational historical and contemporary analysis, but is based on the process of interpreting divine teachings. Similarly commonly held concepts of divine judgement and a select number who will be saved also reinforce ideas of a 'vanguard', similar to that used by Marxist-Leninist groups, to bring about and prepare for events.

The relationship of faith with violence and death is also a potent one. Commonly held conceptions of an afterlife play a significant role not only in the employment of violence, but also in that of suicide attacks and martyrdom. Religiously inspired groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas are prominent exponents of suicide missions and martyrdom, developing and sharing comparable concepts, teachings and methods of veneration in support of such missions. However, it is clear that even for non-religiously motivated organisations such as the Tamil Tigers, faith based beliefs form a cultural superstructure around death and martyrdom that is highly instrumental for its ongoing employment.

Common beliefs and narratives

The beliefs, ideologies and narratives of terrorist groups and their supporters are complex, and consist of culturally specific descriptions of the way in which societies or groups maintain their vision of their collective selves through different historical and projective narratives. It is through the influence of such narratives that societies and groups produce different terrorisms and different terrorists. The following themes provide a brief overview of the key narratives and concepts often found within the ideological, belief and narrative frameworks of a range of terrorist groups and movements:

Collective identities

The remaking and reinforcement of group identities are central to the development of organisations and movements, including those that employ violent action. Group identities are almost always constructed in opposition to others and commonly by both sets of actors. Such faith and ethnic identities are also open to those from the same group who, while not party to the core dynamics, may nevertheless identify with, empathise with, or directly support, the group. The LTTE possess extensive global networks of support amongst the Tamil diaspora, and continue to receive funding, allegedly through criminal activity. The IRA received extensive support from the US, from a large population with (often remote) Irish

heritage. It is worth noting, however, the manner in which broad based group support for the Khalistanis, the IRA, as well as Baader Meinhoff, dissipated following an increase in extreme violence and the impacts of this on broader populations not directly engaged in the violence.

Grievance and victim hood

All violent groups possess some kind of grievance, perceived or real. All of the groups reviewed supplement this by narratives of deliberate victimhood that informs the employment and justification of violence. Such beliefs can be developed over time and include perceptions of economic, political and cultural discrimination against the group. These grievances, however misconstrued, are not just ‘irrational’ sentiments i.e. not subject to rational analysis, but are supported by ideological frameworks that outline the nature and cause of perceived problems, a vision of the future, and a prescription for action.

Grievances can be personal, internal or external, against the individual and/or against a group. Experiences of stigmatisation and discrimination may be an internal grievance or source of victimhood, whilst external grievances may be only linked to the individual by virtue of their interpretation and relationship to that incident. Such internal and external victimhood and grievance is often interchangeable and linked.³⁴ The role of events is also fundamental in developing *shared* grievances central to (violent) group identities and ideological and narrative frameworks. Whilst victimhood is related to grievances it brings to these grievances a more expansive narrative of deliberate oppression, often historically based, that provides more clarity to the identity of the oppressor and the target of any subsequent action.

Events, individuals and martyrs

Events may be used as symbolic moments in history that develop a sense of group identity and grievance. The retelling of and understandings of events are used and interpreted by groups to develop and reinforce understandings of group identity and purpose. The interpretation of events may not be universally understood or empirically accurate, rather it is the sharing of a particular telling and interpretation of the story relating to an event that signifies support and membership in a manner that can sometimes become mythological constructs.

For example, the attack by the Indian army and state on the Golden Temple Shrine of Amritsar is the event that defined the Khalistani movement and the conflict for Sikhs in the region. The attack is continually cited in stories of revivalist identities among the Khalistanis and Sikhs more generally, as well as being identified as a central grievance and motivation for action. Similarly, it is the attack on the public library of Jaffna in 1981 that crystallised the conflict between Tamils and Singhalese that followed, and became a cultural reference point. Events such as these operate as vessels for a range of narratives as well as providing coupling points for ideology and contemporary or historical experiences. However, it is also clear that such events can come to represent narratives in their own right, bringing form to a constellation of emotions, narrative and forging of collective identities, the relationship to which comes to define individual and group identity and even the struggle itself.

³⁴ Ranstorp, Magnus & Herd, Graeme P.; *Approaches to Countering Terrorism*; in *The ideological war on terror, Worldwide strategies for counter terrorism*; Anne Aldis and Graeme P. Herd (eds) (Routledge, Oxford, 2007)

Territory and self determination

The development of territorial claims is often a central tenet of beliefs, ideologies and narratives for many of the most prominent violent radical groups. Whilst territorial claims may often be based on selective understandings of history they can be an integral part of developing collective identities and shared understandings of historical grievance and persecution.³⁵ Like events, claims for territory may come to carry equally mythical connotations, representing more than territorial space and instead representing particular values; this is particularly common if the likelihood of actually achieving the claim to lands is remote.

Territorial claims to self determination can also be seen as a tactical political approach toward ensuring the defence of cultural or religious identities and addressing perceived grievances through self rule. It is also true that the development of territorial claims and claims to nationhood can serve to legitimate the use of violence, and thus help counter attempts to criminalise the ideas and aims of the group, particularly on the international stage.

History

Historical and projective narratives that not only tell the story of the past but also map out the future are highly prominent. Readings of history, charting the events and processes that underpin grievances, serves to validate the ideology and the cause, as well as providing legitimacy for territorial claims in particular. Historical narratives also possess independent power when employed as part of radical causes in their ability to link the situation of individuals into grand sweeps of history, conferring the values and narratives and merits of individuals and events from the past onto individuals in the present, with the prospect that they too will be honoured and revered by future generations.

Violence and radicalism

The willingness to employ violence is often inherent in the group, its identity and its modus operandi. Violent action may be centrally integrated into the ideology and identity of a group and movement as opposed to arrived at as a strategic or tactical decision. Violence in effect comes to hold intrinsic value as well as a practical role in the achievement of aims. The use of violent action may also serve to maintain and entrench group identities and solidarity that in turn serve to perpetuate virtuous views of violence. Whilst some groups see violence as a last resort, others, Baader Meinhoff for example, see the violence itself as central in bringing about and preparing for the revolution. Others incorporate the radicalism and violent radicalisation from early stages of development and employ it to claim leadership of a movement and gaining market share of support, and as a central challenge to the perceived (failing) status quo.³⁶

Imagery and narratives of the virtue of sacrifice and violence can be drawn on and developed from histories and ideologies and developed in support of the political aims. Such relationships to violence are of particular note in the Khalistani movement that drew heavily on representations and shared understanding of the role and centrality of violence in Sikh

³⁵ Kempley Mahmood, Cynthia; *Fighting for Faith and Nation, Dialogues with Sikh Militants* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1996)

³⁶ For analysis of market share group based radicalisation dynamic see Bloom, 2006

historical defence against perceived attempted genocide. Elements such as the practice of wearing of the Kirpan - sword – as an article of faith that is imbued with understandings of the legitimacy of violence in defence of certain values such as truth – are central to Sikh faith identities and their defence, and were very prominent during the insurgency.

The organised violence of Tamil groups was born out of a failure of traditional consensual approaches and became central to retaliatory sentiments of the newly forming Tamil groups, largely populated by younger demographics. The LTTE are also a prime example of a group willing to go that extra step down the road of violent opposition to perceived Singhalese state oppression, and towards capturing the leadership and support of the Tamil movement. It should also be noted that violent radical groups are often young in their membership, if not necessarily in leadership, a situation that has been linked to psychoanalytic analysis of the pressures of teenage psychological development.³⁷

Duty and responsibility

It is also clear that less theorised concepts such as personal duty and responsibility are central pillars in personal motivations to violent action that may also become central narratives within a movement. Duty may be developed through the understanding and telling of an individual's personal story of involvement, through to the development and maintenance of group solidarity and support. Such narratives are very prominent in personal accounts of participation in political violence, sometime much more so than explicit ideology. They rely on personal and family experiences, and often manifest themselves in a proclamation of a self evident need to participate in a conflict that could not, or should not, be avoided. These sentiments were particularly common within the Khalistani movement, partly inspired by the very culturally sensitive punishments common in the aggressive counter insurgency campaign, but also as an 'innate' understanding of duty through narratives of Sikh history as a series of violent struggles to preserve the faith and its people.

Values of solidarity, duty and loyalty are also common in terrorist cells and are likely to perpetuate participation in violence independent of broader ideological and narrative frameworks. Likewise a narrative of love has been identified by some scholars in a number of movements that reinforces and maintains a deep seated sense of responsibility both between immediate colleagues, toward the cause, and the broader community in whose name the actions is undertaken, and from the broader community toward those fighting in their name.³⁸

Such narratives of selflessness are also prominent in many frameworks of terrorist organisations with almost all predicated on benefit for others, be it a class, ethnic or national group or even the will of God. These support and enable the representation of the group as devoid of self interest and working in a noble cause.

Social justice, empowerment and emancipation

Narratives of social justice are often present within the framework of many violent groups, almost inevitably intertwined with narratives of grievance, and employed in the search for support from a broader constituency. Similarly there are often narratives of emancipation and empowerment implicit within violent terrorist groups. Empowerment in the face of grievance

³⁷For further analysis see Twemlow, S.W. & Sacco, Frank C.; *Reflections on the making of a terrorist*; in *Terrorism and War, Unconscious Dynamics of Political Violence*; C. Covington, P. Williams, J. Arundale & J. Knox (Karnac, London, 2002) and Somasundaram, Daya; *Scarred minds; the psychological impact of war on Sri Lankan Tamils* (New Delhi; Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage Publications, 1998)

³⁸ Mahmood, 1996

and victimhood is a key aspect of understanding violent action and often represents an invigorating narrative employed to attract support, and represented in contrast to non violent approaches that are seen as failing. Such narratives also construct group identity in opposition to the exclusionary enemy.

A particular weight attaches to the emancipatory narrative when this comes to claim broader popular support among a range of groups. The case of Baader Meinhoff again provides an insight into this. During its earlier period, when it was seen as more of a counter cultural label rather than a highly destructive violent group, it enjoyed surprisingly high levels of support among German youth. Some commentators saw their popularity as being related to this presentation and perceptions of a 'counter cultural' group providing a 'voice' for a newly social liberal youth in a paternalistic and conservative Germany. In particular, portrayal of the group in an early police 'wanted' poster promoted and confirmed public understanding of the group's ideological commitment to gender equality, and made it particularly appealing to the female youth of Germany at the time.

Common associated narratives of resistance and criminality also tap into these narratives of empowerment and may represent a direct challenge to the conventional institutions of authorities and a dominant state. Baader Meinhoff saw its actions and attacks on the institutions of private property and the instruments of coercive power of the state as a direct challenge that would unmask what it saw as the latent violent Nazi character of the German state, and undermine the edifice of the capitalist system.

Vanguard

The 'vanguard' concept presupposes that the (small) group are acting at the forefront of a much wider movement that will eventually result in the revolution or upheaval desired by the group. The vanguard sees itself as having a key role in bringing about the revolution or events described, and there are often associated understandings that the vanguard is preparing for its coming, while those less enlightened remain in the dark about their lives. Such concepts have been highly prominent in Marxist-Leninist movements. In religious ideologies vanguard narratives may manifest themselves in other ways, such as a group of 'chosen' individuals working to God's will for the good of all. Such narratives are potent in constructing small group identities of underground violent radical groups, and may often be highly empowering for individuals who become involved.

Cultural participation and transmission

Cultural participation has played a central role in normalising shared ideology and narratives through groups and across generations. They may promote particular representations of a group or wider community and world view through collective participation in cultural activities such as stories and music as well as through education and access to services and amenities imbued with the world view. Such processes not only transmit beliefs, ideologies and narratives but develop shared understandings and group and community identities through collective participation in cultural activity. Here the boundary between cultural, social and political activities becomes blurred and the avenues and mechanisms for legitimate or separate 'political' debate and dialogue become unclear for authorities.

Martyrdom

Martyrdom, seen by some commentators as the ultimate act of redemptive self sacrifice and a vehicle of acutely powerful narratives, carries particular significance in any analysis of the

beliefs, ideologies and narratives of terrorist and suicide tactics in particular. Death as the ultimate transformative act has been imbued with psychological and cultural symbolism across a variety of cultures for millennia.

The term Martyr is derived from the Greek term 'witness' or 'original witness'. Its development as a term associated with religious self sacrifice comes from its association with the suffering inflicted on the original believers who were persecuted by the Romans for bearing witness to Christ as the son of God. Similarly the Arabic term Shahid means both a witness and a martyr, as the fighter killed in a cause bears testimony to the truth of his cause and his death symbolises that truth. Whilst Shahid is closely associated with the concept of Jihad, this is not expressly referred to in the Quran and is developed as a concept at a later date. It is thought its first development coincided with the conquering of Palestine in the 7th century, and the Ismaili sect of the 12th and 13th centuries was highly influential in the development and promotion of the concept at the time.³⁹

Some have identified the Martyrs of the Iranian Revolution and the trauma of the Iran/ Iraq war as key points in the development of a contemporary concept of Martyrdom adopted by violent groups underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam.⁴⁰ The contemporary concepts of Islamic Martyrdom have subsequently been promoted successively by a variety of groups and networks, by movement 'entrepreneurs' at local, global and organisational levels and through the networks characterising this 'religious' wave in support of a tactic of suicide bombing. The martyrs themselves have played key roles in publicising and promoting the values and motivations of martyrdom in their own 'martyrdom videos'.

Historically it has been religious teachings that have possessed the necessary narrative, ideological/ faith framework and authority to promote concepts of Martyrdom. Consequently the development of concepts of martyrdom has inevitably been linked to religious beliefs. However, with the rise of nationalist movements and their use of martyrs in the development of national myths and narratives, martyrdom can no longer be considered an exclusively religious concept.

Martyrdom often carries particularly powerful emotional narratives of self sacrifice and regeneration, purity and determination, afterlife and redemption;

Self Sacrifice and regeneration; Martyrdom is the most dramatic act of redemptive suffering and self sacrifice. Narratives of self sacrifice are imbued with imagery of purity of motivation, love and devotion to a cause and ultimate beneficiaries of the struggle. Self sacrifice also serves to maintain and regenerate belief and motivation for the struggle among supporters. Narratives of self sacrifice may also link the actions to the constituency, with narratives of 'love' and service for those that the action was undertaken (requested or otherwise).

Purity & determination; Self sacrifice in the name of a cause erodes perceptions of rational self interest in the conduct of an act and enables representations of the martyr as motivated by pure belief in the validity of their cause. Similarly, this strength or purity of belief may communicate to an enemy or potential supporters the strength of will and belief in the cause of the members of an organisation or movement.

³⁹ Khosrokhavar, Farhad; *Suicide Bombers, Allah's new martyrs* (Pluto Press, London, 2002)

⁴⁰ *ibid*

Afterlife / Redemption; Concepts of an afterlife and the redemption of a martyr present life as a parenthesis to far larger dynamics and conflicts. Such concepts provide a psychological framework of understanding for the suicide bomber to give their own life, with conflicts presented as small components of battles that may last for millennia. Martyrs also provide powerful symbolic links to past events and future action in grand historical narratives.

With the increasing prominence of the tactic it is apparent that a process of development of a contemporary concept of Martyrdom is occurring that is rooted in particular interpretations of Islamic texts and promoted through cultural institutions and propaganda exercises. Such a discursive process can be carried through and informed by social and cultural institutions to the extent that it may now increasingly represent a cultural and ideological 'tool kit' that can be employed by a wide range of organisations and individuals in support of suicide missions while also promoting the value of 'Martyrdom' in its own right.

Conclusions

The analysis of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radical organisations serves to highlight how a range of ideologies and narratives have been adopted by individuals, groups, organisations and movements. Whilst the narratives identified are often of specific relevance to the context of the group in question, it is nevertheless possible to identify common characteristics in the development, application and role of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives in violent radical groups.

The primary theme that is shared by all of the groups reviewed is that of a sense of grievance, perceived or real, supplemented by narratives of deliberate victimhood that informs the employment and justification of violence. These grievances, however misconstrued, are not just 'irrational' sentiments i.e. not subject to rational analysis, but are supported by ideological frameworks that outline the nature and cause of perceived problems, a vision of the future and a prescription for action.

At the same time these underpinning ideologies are also instrumental in that they are adapted, modified and refined, without losing their essential core, to maintain explanatory efficacy and to fit evolving circumstances. There is a complex relationship here with strategy – where ideology informs but is also informed by the practical outcomes of attempts to operationalise a strategy, and subsequent attempts to legitimate these strategic shifts ideologically.

The relationship to ideology is variable throughout the members and supporters of violent radical groups. Whilst members may possess an understanding of the ideological frameworks proposed by the group, powerful narratives of loyalty and duty toward a range of constituencies, including the immediate group, family or broader constituency, are also heavily prominent in individual understanding and narrative underpinning of their motivations. The normalisation of narratives such as this by individuals and groups is central to the development of violent radical action that underpins ideological frameworks and associated processes of recruitment.

Narratives are a powerful, semi-independent agency that may bind a range of groups into one movement and the actions of government often have major impacts on a group's capacity to reinforce existing narratives or to search for others. Oppositional group based narratives have played a fundamental role in the construction of supposed constituencies of shared grievance, rationales for action and legitimating exercises. Through particular representations of groups, events, history society and economy as well as through the process of development and the

shared experience of the narratives themselves, groups can carve out and manipulate oppositional group based identities in order to achieve strategic or ideological aims.

4. THE GLOBAL JIHAD; THE JIHADIST MOVEMENT

The sources of the current and emerging narratives identified during the literature review as well as the primary research is critical to understanding the full range and complexity of what is occurring. The roots of the 'core' narrative identified in our literature review can be traced back to a combination and cross-fertilisation of beliefs, values and ideologies emanating from distinctive institutions and regions; namely the Salafi theology / ideology of Saudi Arabia, the ideology of members of the 1960s era Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and, organisations such as Maududi's Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan. The conflict in Afghanistan in the late 1980s provided the setting for the evolution of these currents and ideologies into the al-Qaeda narrative espoused by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri that has since been promoted to an expanding Muslim diaspora. Military and security action taken by governments against al-Qaeda has meant that the direct and continuing contribution of 'old' al-Qaeda to the promotion and development of this narrative has become more circumscribed.

This makes analysis and research more complex, for in addition to the continuing contribution emerging from al-Qaeda, there are now both organised / affiliated groups and unaffiliated / informal organisations promoting similar or related narratives. The situation is further complicated by the internet offering scope for 'singletons' operating in virtual groups being able to contribute to the formation of ideas, ideology, strategies and tactics. Some commentators have even argued that the scope for the 'bottom up' development of narratives has reversed the power relationships between different functions and levels of violent radical organisations, with the operatives possibly now leading the 'clerics' in making sense of the world and driving opportunities for violent action.⁴¹

An added complexity is the myriad sources of expression and access to radical ideas and narratives. Exposure to narratives and / or recruitment can take place in and around any one of these spaces and media; further and higher education institutions, in and around mosques, study groups, community centres, prison, private domestic spaces, conferences / seminars, web based forums and media, satellite, television and music settings. Additionally, there is other print and audio / visual material circulating within communities outside of the more formal communication channels. Each of these target different levels and constituencies of opinion, and collectively produces variations and interpretations of the 'core' ideologies and narratives.

The ideology

The terrorist attacks in Europe and the United States since 2001 were inspired and justified by an ideology commonly referred to as jihadism, jihadi-Salafism or the jihadist movement.⁴² The ideology has evolved from a body of medieval Islamic theology filtered through the Muslim Brotherhood from the 1930s through 1960s Egyptian politics, through challenges to the legitimacy of the Saudi Arabian regime, American and European military interventions,

⁴¹ See for example Sageman, Mark., *Understanding Terror Networks*, Pennsylvania, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁴² Wiktorowicz, Quentin, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29; 207-239, 2006

economic inequality and perceived corruption in the Middle East and an unresolved Palestine. While the key tenets and the main ideologues of the movement are known, it is difficult to be categorical as the social and transnational networks are particularly dense and there is also likely to be an element of a rewrite of history taking place for propaganda purposes. More will no doubt be known as further academic attention is paid to the historical roots of the phenomena.

Implicit in this narrative development is a move from a perceived need for defence against state repression to acts of violence in the pursuit of political ends. This is also an ideology that, unlike totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century, does not claim to deliver materially on earth⁴³; instead, adherents claim that they are acting by the will of God and the individual will claim benefits in eternity, secured by their unequivocal commitment and belief.⁴⁴ The strength of the narrative was made apparent through the actions of 19 men who promoted 'jihad' to the global stage and attempted to position Islam against the West in an apocalyptic struggle. There is no single 'manifesto', although many would cite Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones*, Ayman al-Zawahiri's *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, and Abdullah Azzam's *Defending the Land of the Muslims is Each Man's most Important Duty* as good starting points.

From the literature key emerging tenets of the ideology appear as follows:

1. Jihadis reject pluralism and want unity of thought;
2. The world is in a state of *jahiliyya* (ignorance) and in a state of war and therefore the war conditions of the Quran operate;
3. The regimes in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, that are the home of Islam, are apostates, corrupt and pawns of American and Western cultural and economic hegemony;
4. Islam should be deculturalised and stripped of its accumulated practices (innovation) and only the words of the Quran and those of the *salaf*, as recorded in the Sunnah, should inform the practice of Islam in the world. This is interpreted as having direct consequences, including the reformation of a single Caliphate guided by the words and actions of the Prophet including the application of *Shari'a* law;
5. Violence is justified in religious terms to achieve the above and *jihad*, perceived as external 'mobilisation' and a permanent obligation rather than internal spiritual struggle, is sometimes seen as a 'sixth pillar' of Islam.

There are also several points of contention within the jihadi movement; the most important of which concern who has the right to call for a jihad, who can excommunicate Muslims, and whether violent revolt against a Muslim ruler is legitimate.

The movement's ideology has been informed by medieval Islamic thought, modern day clerics and political activists, of whom the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) is a most dominant influence. Kepel describes Sayyid Qutb as "the greatest ideological influence on

⁴³ Sayyid Qutb conceded that an Islamic society under Shari'a would not be able to match the material benefits provided by the hated West but stated that this was necessary.

⁴⁴ Zimmerman, J.C., 'Sayyid Qutb's Influence on the 11 September Attacks', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16, No. 22, 2004, p. 242

the contemporary Islamist movement”⁴⁵ while Esposito sees him as the “architect of radical Islam”⁴⁶. Zimmerman notes that Qutb provides three important functions for current radical Islamist movements:

1. His writings provide an intellectual justification for extreme anti-Western sentiment on a cultural as well as political level;
2. He provides a justification for establishing an Islamic society based on *Shari’a*;
3. He formulated a justification for overthrowing all world governments, including those governed by Muslims, by means of a worldwide holy war.⁴⁷

However, Qutb cannot claim universal ownership of the jihadi ideology. A citation analysis of jihadi literature carried out by the U.S. Combating Terrorism Centre created a ranking of ideologues according to their influence on jihadi arguments and ideology and demonstrates the wide range of sources both old and new. They separate these into modern and medieval thinkers and according to whether they are scholars, ‘jihadi theorists’ or ‘jihadi strategists’. ‘Jihadi theorists’ are those, for example Qutb, who are not Islamic scholars or clerics but have written widely influential pieces. ‘Jihadi Strategists’ are seen as a subset of ‘jihadi theorists’ who have produced analytical studies of the strengths and weaknesses of the jihadi movement and the Western governments that oppose them. The most cited individual in their study was Ibn Taymiyya, a writer from the 14th century who formulated the view that it is legitimate to overthrow rulers who do not apply *Shari’a*. Figure three overleaf highlights the dominant influencers from this study.⁴⁸

The citation and use of Ibn Taymiyya by the jihadis is particularly important as he is widely revered by all Salafis and provides historical and theological legitimacy to the movement. Taymiyya was one of the earliest proponents of the view that Muslims needed to eradicate those beliefs and customs that were foreign to Islam and favoured a literal translation of the Quran. Taymiyya was revived in the 18th century by the theologian Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab (1703-1792), from whom the term ‘Wahhabism’ is derived.⁴⁹ Wahhab’s influence on Islam was assured through an agreement with Muhammad bin Saud that the House of Saud, now Saudi Arabia, would be ruled according to his teachings on Islam.⁵⁰ The fundamentalist interpretation that Wahhab evolved from Taymiyya’s 14th century writings would later be known as Salafism named after the *salaf* (righteous ancestors) of the Prophet Muhammad.

In addition to Qutb, there are other modern day jihadi theorists and scholars that have had a pronounced influence on the current ideology. Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979) is often cited as an influence on Qutb, bin Laden, al-Zawahiri and Abdullah Azzam, although he sought his goals through political methods rather than through violence. He founded the Jamaat-e-Islami in 1941, with the intention of creating an Islamic State or Caliphate that is

⁴⁵ Kepel, G., *Jihad: On the Trail of Political Islam*, Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 27.

⁴⁶ Esposito, J., *The Islamic Threat; Myth or Reality*, New York; Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 126.

⁴⁷ Zimmerman, 2004, p. 223.

⁴⁸ It should be noted that these scholars are not jihadis but their writings are used by jihadis to justify their actions and ideology. Al-Tartusi renounced suicide attacks after the London bombings, al-Maqdisi has criticised al-Zawahiri’s tactics and Hawali has recently criticised al-Qaeda in a direct letter to Osama bin Laden.

⁴⁹ It should be noted that ibn Abd-al-Wahhab did not advocate a separate school of thought and the term Wahhabism is often rejected as Wahhab’s teachings are those of the Prophet Muhammad not his own.

⁵⁰ See Allen, C., *God’s Terrorists; The Wahhabi Cult and Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad*, Little Publishing, 2006.

governed by Shari'a law where God is sovereign. Maududi has also been credited as being the first to use the term *jahilliya* (state of ignorance) with reference to the modern world.⁵¹

Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989) was a central figure in the Afghan defence against the Soviets and a teacher, mentor and ally of Osama bin Laden. He was heavily influenced by Qutb, notably on the necessity of the use of violence to establish an Islamic State. His fatwa to defend the 'Muslim Lands' following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was supported by Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti, Abd al-Aziz Bin Bazz. Azzam was assisted in his recruiting and operational efforts in Afghanistan by his former student Osama bin Laden.

Figure 3: Key Ideologues and Influencers⁵²

	Modern	Medieval
Scholars	Al-Maqdisi (Alive) Abdullah Azzam (d. 1989) Safar al-Hawali (Alive)	Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 1449) Al-Qurtubi (d. 1273)
'jihadi Theorists'	Abd al-Qadir (Alive) Abu Basir al-Tartusi (Alive) Ayman al-Zawahiri (Alive) Osama bin Laden (Alive) Sayyid Qutb (d.1966)	
'jihadi Strategists'	Yusuf al Uyayri (d. 2003) Ubayd al-Qurashi (Alive)	

Another important ideologue, often overlooked⁵⁶, is Abu Muhammad Asem al-Maqdisi, mentor of the former leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Maqdisi, currently in the custody of the Jordanian government, was an active dissident in Jordan and denounced the 'man-made' laws of its governments.⁵⁷ The Khobar bombers named Maqdisi as their

⁵¹Wright, Lawrence; *The Looming Tower*, (Penguin Books, 2006) p. Xvi.

⁵² McCants, W., *Militant Ideology Atlas*, Combating Terrorism Center, 2006.

⁵⁶ In a series of three-hour interviews with 639 Saudi prisoners conducted in 2004, the Interior Ministry discovered that the most influential figure in the prison population was not Osama bin Laden, a Saudi national, but Maqdisi. (Wilson, D., 'Maqdisi's Minions', *The Weekly Standard*, 14.11.2006)

⁵⁷ Maqdisi is also responsible for the radical *tawhed* website; <http://www.tawhed.ws/>

principal influence, particularly his book *Clear Evidence on the Infidel Nature of the Saudi State*, which insists that jihad be conducted offensively against the enemies of Islam.⁵⁸

Many analyses of the ideology place jihadism as a subset of Salafism but there are considerable theoretical and practical dangers in doing this, including the fact that the mujahedeen themselves regard Salafis as distinct and *Kafir*.⁵⁹ The ideology is more usefully conceptualised as a movement rather than an Islamic school of thought, i.e. jihadism, jihadi-Salafism. The *Militant Ideology Atlas* states that that the ideology should be renamed as ‘Qutbism’ as *jihad* is a central and not necessarily violent term in the lexicon of Islam and the violent radicals have appropriated and monopolised the term in its violent sense.⁶⁰

Narratives

From the literature it is possible to identify a ‘core’ narrative of violent radicals which includes the following elements:

- i. The interpretation that there was a ‘Golden Age of Islam’ during the time of the Prophet characterised by harmony, peace and justice. This Golden Age also forms the millennial vision to which violent radicals profess a desire to ‘return’.
- ii. The interpretation that cultural pollution (accumulated cultural practices or innovation), moral decay and / or Muslim ‘sinfulness’ led to the end of the Golden Age.
- iii. A view that, since that time, Muslims have suffered repression, ethnic cleansing and ‘defeats’ including; the loss of statehood (the Caliphate) in the early part of this century, partition with India and the creation of Indian controlled Kashmir and loss of East Pakistan (Bangladesh), Palestinian displacement and the loss of Jerusalem, repression in North Africa / Egypt/ Chechnya, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, infidel occupation of holy places in Saudi Arabia since the Gulf war, followed by occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. (These are just the main terrains of perceived struggle).
- iv. Behind these defeats are seen a United States, Israel and Britain / the EU united in a ‘Zionist / Crusader’ axis with Islam as the main enemy. As part of countries that elect governments that have undertaken these wars and repression, the populations of these countries are seen as ‘collectively guilty’ and therefore not subject to the norm of civilian protection. While some violent radicals are formally against nationals of these countries taking action, the perception is that it is open to others to take direct violent action against these populations. The narrative of violent radicals has moved from engagement with the ‘near’ enemy (e.g. a secular government in Egypt) to a globalised defensive jihad and offensive against the ‘far enemy’ (expelling the West from the Middle East).
- v. The experience of defeats, seen as relevant to all Muslims as part of the global ‘Ummah’ (community), is combined with the perception of a ‘Westoxification’ of Muslim life. The main elements of perceived poisonous ‘Western’ influence include the ascendancy of the material over the spiritual life, permissiveness, complacency and comfort valued more than honour or glory and the corrupting influence of the

⁵⁸ Wilson, 2006.

⁵⁹ From web research.

⁶⁰ McCants, 2006.

'city' (Babylon) through its cultural intermingling and loss of rootedness. (These perceptions have much in common with other anti-Western 'occidental' - and not necessarily Islamic - ideologies and, some argue, have their roots in Western thinking.⁶¹)

- vi. The combination of Muslim defeat and 'Westoxification' are seen as leading to shame and guilt for the whole 'Ummah' – a powerful emotional driver.
- vii. Violent radicals have reinterpreted the notion of jihad in the light of these circumstances away from a focus on internal struggle to external struggle ('migrate and fight') and salvation through a (more individualised) form of 'jihad'

This narrative is combined with strong appeals to values of social justice (interpreted through the prism of Muslims as victims both in the west and in supposedly 'Muslim' states). However, social justice is seen as requiring a return to Allah's law on earth before it can be achieved.

While there had been numerous Islamist/ jihadist groups, including those who used and promoted violence as the means to achieving their aims, al-Qaeda is credited with creating a powerful single meta-level narrative that transcends national and political boundaries while shifting attention towards the 'far enemy' in the form of America and Europe. The narrative was graphically advertised to the world through massive media coverage of their successful attack on the two pillars of American capitalism, the world trade centre, not to mention its defence headquarters, the Pentagon, killing three thousand people and causing US\$40 billion damage to the American economy in the first attack on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbour. Sedgwick argues that the most likely explanation for the 9/11 attacks was to provoke the US reaction that it did and thereby provoke the desired radicalising consequences for its primary constituency.⁶² Sedgwick also makes the critical point that:

*"Many political movements have to create their constituency. One of the major tasks of a nationalist or leftist movement is to encourage national or class consciousness, since it is only when a movement's chosen constituency recognises that it exists that a movement can begin attracting support and recruits from it. An Islamic movement can skip this stage, since its chosen constituency – Muslims – is already very conscious of its existence; it only needs to be made into a political constituency."*⁶³

Al-Qaeda has been said to have transformed from an organisation to a movement that inspires millions but that there is little or no direct contact with the initial network.⁶⁴ However, it should be highlighted that a recent CIA briefing notes that al-Qaeda, the organization, has regained strength.⁶⁵ Osama bin Laden has also recently resurfaced on the sixth anniversary of 9/11 with new threats to the West in a video distributed via the Internet. This was followed by an audio recording that called for an intensification of fighting against U.S. forces in Iraq and

⁶¹ See for example Baruma, I. and A. Margalit, *Occidentalism; The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*, New Delhi, Akhil Books, 2004.

⁶² Sedgwick, Mark; al-Qaeda and the nature of religious terrorism; in *Terrorism and political violence* Vol. 16, No. 4 (winter 2004), pp. 785-814.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 805.

⁶⁴ Gunaratna, R., 'The Post-Madrid Face of al-Qaeda', *The Washington Quarterly*, 27, no.3, Summer 2004, p.93

⁶⁵ 'Bin Laden Releases Video as C.I.A Issues Warning', *the New York Times*, 8.11.2007.

urged Muslims to 'join the battle'.⁶⁶ The anticipation of the video within jihadi forums highlights the continuing influence of bin Laden's messages within the jihadist movement.

Al-Qaeda; An organisation and movement

"Bush left no room for doubts or media opinion. He stated clearly that this war is a Crusader war. He said this in front of the whole world so as to emphasize this fact. ... When Bush says that, they try to cover up for him, then he said he didn't mean it. He said, 'crusade.' Bush divided the world into two; 'either with us or with terrorism' ... The odd thing about this is that he has taken the words right out of our mouths."

Osama bin Laden, 3rd November 2001.

Al-Qaeda, literally meaning 'the base', was formed by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri⁶⁷ in Peshawar in 1989 from a guesthouse for recruits to the *jihad* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.⁶⁸ The group is most notorious for its role in the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C. in 2001, publicly acknowledged by bin Laden in 2004, but is also held responsible for bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 as well as the bombing of the U.S.S Cole in 2000. The group espouses an ideology that aligns to the jihadist movement ideology outlined above, although the specific details of the group's grievances and strategy have evolved over time.⁶⁹ The organisation is now widely viewed as a collection of largely autonomous organisations that support the al-Qaeda ideology of a global jihad while not necessarily being operationally connected. An NYPD report notes that while al-Qaeda has "provided the inspiration for home grown radicalisation and terrorism; direct command and control by al-Qaeda has been the exception rather than the rule."⁷⁰

Organisational Dynamics

The operational and organisational structure of al-Qaeda has changed by both choice and necessity; particularly following the destruction of al-Qaeda's bases and resources in Afghanistan in 2001. Figure 4 outlines this evolution.

⁶⁶ 'Bin Laden Urges Muslims to Join Iraq Battle', *The New York Times*, 23.10.2007.

⁶⁷ The *Jihad group* was formed by al-Zawahiri in 1973 which operated with a high degree of secrecy. Egyptian investigations of the *Jihad Group* found rigorous arms and explosives training, studies of the behaviour and routines of key government figures, and research of the layout of strategic installations. In 1981 al-Zawahiri allied with the Muslim Brotherhood to assassinate Anwar Sadat, following his peace deal with Israel.

⁶⁸ Others have claimed that al-Qaeda was formed at the end of the conflict.

⁶⁹ Wiktorowicz, 2006.

⁷⁰ NYPD, *Radicalisation in the West; The Homegrown Threat*, 2007.

Figure 4: The evolution of al-Qaeda

Year	Host Countries	Overview of Activities	Operational Structure
1989-1992	Afghanistan Saudi Arabia	<p>The organisation focused its efforts on the struggle in Afghanistan against the Soviet Red Army.</p> <p>In 1990, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia as a hero of the conflict. Saudi Arabia rejects bin Laden's offer to defend the country and acceptance of American 'infidel' troops in the land of the holy places. Bin Laden is expelled from Saudi Arabia for anti-government activities.</p>	<p>The organisation emerged from a guesthouse for Arab Muslims in Afghanistan.</p>
1992-1996	Sudan London	<p>Khalid Fawwaz, bin Laden's associate in London, sent 17 bin Laden communiqués from his London office mostly directed to the Saudi government. This included the 1996 fatwa against the Americans for keeping troops in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden is expelled from Sudan in 1996 following US pressure. In 1996 the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia are bombed.⁷¹</p>	<p>Bin Laden appeared to focus his efforts on his business interests in Sudan and kept a relatively low profile.</p> <p>Towards the end of this period he set up an office in the suburb of Dollis Hill in London under the guise of the 'Advice and Reform Committee'.</p>
1996-2001	Afghanistan	<p>Al-Qaeda's return to Afghanistan and the backing of the Taliban regime allowed it to dramatically expand its ranks and the Global Jihad movement to support terror operations around the globe, from Algeria to the Philippines, from Tanzania to Central Asia and from Europe to America. Bin Laden writes his Declaration of Jihad (1998).</p>	<p>"It's fruitful to think of al-Qaeda as a sort of multinational holding company which was headquartered in Afghanistan, under the chairmanship of bin Laden." (Bergen, 2004)</p>

⁷¹ This incident is not officially linked to al-Qaeda although the 9/11 Commission noted that bin Laden was seen being congratulated on the day of the attack raising the possibility that he may have been involved. William Perry, United States Secretary for Defence at the time, said in a 2007 interview that he now believes al-Qaeda, rather than Iran as previously thought, was behind the 1996 truck bombing. ('Perry; U.S. eyed Iran attack after bombing', United Press International, 6 June 2007).

		Terrorist attacks on U.S Embassy in Kenya and U.S Embassy in Tanzania (1998), U.S.S Cole (2000) and New York and Washington D.C. (2001).	
2001-2007	Multiple	<p>Bin Laden is thought to have retreated to the Pakistan/Afghanistan border and resurfaces in a video on the 6th anniversary of 9/11 threatening the West to convert to Islam or face the consequences.</p> <p>Despite the destruction of the organisations headquarters and training camps, the group's ideology inspires numerous terror attacks and terrorist organisations with national grievances pledge their allegiance to the group such as the Salafist Group for Combat and Fighting (GSPC), now known as al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb.</p> <p>Al-Qaeda inspired attacks are carried out in Bali (2004), Madrid (2004), and London (2005).</p>	<p>There is agreement among analysts that the impact of the organisation goes far beyond its formal structure and actions and that the arguments, images and terror that it has produced has buoyed a generation of radicals. Bin Laden can no longer be seen as in direct operational and financial control of a systematically organised movement. The mujahedeen groups and terrorist cells around the world ally themselves to the al-Qaeda ideology are largely autonomous and self-financing.⁷²</p>

⁷² Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *The Suicide Factory* (London: Harper Collins, 2006 p. 6).

While there are numerous books and documents that detail the history, evolution, activities, intricacies and complexities of the al-Qaeda network, it is worth highlighting the final stage of organisational evolution which now mimics the dynamics of the internet.⁷³ Whether by design or by necessity, 'al-Qaeda' is now thought to exist as both a formal organization and an ideology that loosely connects a disparate number of groups which vary in their formal organisation and size across the globe. The potency of al-Qaeda has shifted from its organisation and conventional planning to an ideology that unites, motivates and legitimates terrorist action from a variety of organisations against a range of government, public and private targets.

A post in the jihadi Internet forum of al-Qaeda in Iraq, alsayf.com, illustrates this new configuration and strategy explicitly:

Post title; Do you want to join the ranks of al-Qaeda?

First, form your own small groups of 4 or 5, and let the most brave amongst you be the leader. Second, find information and training on the use of weaponry and explosives, you may look at the Muhajiroun website for details. Third, plan your attack, pick the location and go through the necessary drills and procedures. After you have completed your training declare yourself ready to us through websites, and await our command to commence as you are now part of al-Qaeda.

These groups broadly adhere to the ideology, but their grievances and tactics may differ. For example the salafist Group for Combat and Fighting (GSPC) which operated in Algeria fighting against the national government, aligned itself in September 2006 to al-Qaeda and subsequently renamed the organisation al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb. While this change signalled both support for the aims and objectives of bin Laden's organisation it has not necessarily altered its nationally focused strategy and there have been rifts in the leadership of the group.⁷⁴

Stated aims and ideology

The writings of bin Laden and Zawahiri have been labelled as a "startling series of religious and political tracts that, when taken together, chart the evolution of a disturbing, if intellectually murky, justification for religious violence".⁷⁵ Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's speeches and statements are cumulative and build upon those that have preceded them over the past decade.⁷⁶ However, the statements do outline their specific grievances as well as their interpretation of the Quran and the scholars whose views they find supportive. Sedgwick also

⁷³ *al-Qaeda; The True Story of Radical Islam* (2007) by Jason Burke, and *Understanding al-Qaeda; The Transformation of War* by Mohammad-Mahmoud Mohamedou (2006) provide a comprehensive and robust overview of al-Qaeda as an organization and movement. *The Suicide Factory* (2006) provides a well researched account of how the organization influenced and interlinked to operations and radicalisation in the UK and Europe. *Holy War Inc. Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* by Peter Bergen (2001) provides a useful and detailed account of al-Qaeda the organisation prior to 9/11.

⁷⁴ 'Splits Revealed Inside al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb' *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. V, Issue 17.

⁷⁵ Aslan, R., 'Why do they hate us? Strange answers lie in al-Qaeda's writings', *Slate*, 2007. <http://www.slate.com/id/2171752/> (4.10.2007)

⁷⁶ Michael Scheuer, 'Analysis of Osama Bin Laden's September 7 Video Statement', *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. IV, Issue 28.

notes that the immediate objectives of al-Qaeda are almost certainly political rather than religious.⁷⁷

Osama bin Laden, the son of a Yemeni labourer who made a fortune through construction contracts for the Saudi regime, studied management in Jeddah⁷⁸ and also took Islamic studies where he was taught by Abdullah Azzam and Muhammad Qutb.⁷⁹ Bin Laden's political awakening is traced to 1973 when an American airlift ensured Israeli victory over Egypt and Syria in the Yom Kippur War, and the associated perception of an Arab 'humiliation'. The majority of bin Laden's ideas stem from writings by his early mentors, particularly Abdullah Azzam's *Defending the Land of the Muslims is Each Man's Most Important Duty* (1985) but also the works of Sayyid Qutb and Maududi. Bin Laden argues that statements from the Quran authorise a generalised *lex talionis*, one capable of covering even the killing of innocent infidels in revenge for the killing of innocent believers.⁸⁰

It is notable that al-Qaeda's ideology lacks a social dimension, focusing on the glories of martyrdom rather than the spoils of victory. Rarely, if ever, do Bin Laden or Zawahiri discuss any specific state apparatus, perhaps due to their belief that the *jihad* will go on until the day of judgement. Al-Qaeda's nominal aspirations - the creation of a worldwide caliphate, the destruction of Israel, the banishing of foreigners from Islamic lands - are also hardly mentioned. Bergen notes that there are other significant omissions in bin Laden's statements;

*"In all the tens of thousands of words that bin Laden has uttered on the public record there are some significant omissions. He does not rail against the pernicious effects of Hollywood movies; or against Madonna's midriff, or against the pornography protected by the US constitution. Nor does he inveigh against the drug and alcohol culture of the West, or its tolerance for homosexuals. He leaves that ...to the American Christian fundamentalist Jerry Falwell, who opined that 9/11 attacks were God's vengeance on Americans for condoning feminism and homosexuality. Judging by his silence, bin Laden cares little about such cultural issues. What he condemns the US for is simple; its policies in the Middle East."*⁸⁴

If bin Laden sees a specific political arrangement coming out of his *jihad* it may be contained in his statement where he wants to see an era in which "the banner of unity is raised once again over enemy stolen Islamic land, from Palestine to al-Andalus and other Islamic lands that were lost because of the betrayals of rulers and the feebleness of Muslims."⁸⁵ He outlined this objective again on Al-Jazeera, the Qatari TV channel in 1999; "We seek to instigate the [Islamic] nation to get up and liberate its land, to fight for the sake of God and to make the Islamic law the highest law and the word of God the highest word of all."⁸⁶

If bin Laden is not explicit in the social purposes of victory he does provide numerous scriptural references to describe the rewards for the individual ready to fight the *jihad* in the

⁷⁷ Sedgwick, 2004, p. 795.

⁷⁸ Bin Laden never finished his degree.

⁷⁹ Brother of Sayyid Qutb.

⁸⁰ Lawrence, 2005, p. Xxi.

⁸⁴ Bergen, P; Holy War, Inc.; Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden, (New York, Phoenix Publishing, 2001) pp. 226-227.

⁸⁵ 'Betrayal of Palestine' in *Messages to the World – The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, p. 14.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Burke, J., *al-Qaeda; The True Story of Radical Islam*, London, Penguin Books, 2004, p. 37.

name of Allah as well as denouncing those who will not join in his vision, using scriptural carrots as well as sticks.

- “If you do not go out and fight God will punish you severely and put others in your place, but you cannot harm Him in anyway.”
- “Why, when it is said to you ‘Go and fight in God’s way’ do you dig your heads in the earth? Do you prefer this world to the life to come! How small the enjoyment of this world is, compare to the life to come! If you do not go out and fight, God will punish you severely and put others in your place, but you cannot harm Him in any way. God has power over all things.” Quran 9; 38-39 (The Sword Verses⁸⁷)
- “He will not let the deeds of those who are killed for his cause come to nothing. He will guide them and put them in a good state; He will admit them into the Garden He has already made known to them.” Quran 47;4-6
- “There are one hundred levels in Heaven that God has prepared for the Holy warriors who have died for Him;” hadith Book 20 No. 4645.
- “The best martyrs are those who stay in the battle line and do not turn their faces away until they are killed. They will achieve the highest level of Heaven, and their lord will look kindly on them.”⁸⁸
- “The martyr has a guarantee from God; he forgives him at the first drop of blood and shows him his seat in heaven. He decorates him with the jewels of faith, protects him from the torment of the grave, keeps him safe on the day of judgment, places a crown of dignity on his head with the finest rubies in the world, marries him to 72 of the pure virgins of paradise and intercedes on behalf of 70 of his relatives”.⁸⁹
- “God Most High has commanded us in many verses of the Quran to fight in His path and urge the believers to do so.”

The ideology of al-Qaeda/Osama bin Laden has evolved alongside the organisational structure noted in on page 40. His first public statement intended for distribution to a wider audience was entitled ‘Betrayal of Palestine’ in December 1994. It was sent from the Advice and Reform Committee (ARC) to the Chief Mufti in Saudi Arabia, bin Baz to condemn the regimes acceptance and ‘illegal’, under Islamic law, harbouring of US and other foreign troops in the Arabian Peninsula. It built on the pronouncements made in the ‘Memorandum of Advice’⁹⁰ (1992), a document authored by 107 clerics criticising the Saudi government for

⁸⁷ Burke, 2004, notes; “Though moderates prefer to quote the early verses, contemporary radicals, such as bin Laden, following the ideologues of the Umayyads and the Abbasids, maintain that they are abrogated by the later more aggressive verses. Abdullah Azzam makes this point explicitly. Writing in 1986 he said ‘The sword verses abrogate around 140 verses on jihad...revealed previously...They give a definite answer to anyone who questions the Quran’s clear definition of jihad.’” (p. 32)

⁸⁸ *Al-Jami al-Shaih – al-Bukari’s* collection of hadith. Book 20 p. 13 n. 34. Quoted in ibn Hajar al-Haitimi, *Majma al-Zawa’id wa Manba al-Fawa’id*, p. 909.

⁸⁹ Quoted in *Declaration of Jihad*, bin Laden, from Ahmad al-Timidhi, hadith vol. 4 book 23 chapter 1 no. 1620.

⁹⁰ Among the most serious things the scholars highlighted in the memo was the setting up of a rival authority to god in which man-made laws deem illegal laws to be permissible.

human rights abuses and allowing US troops on Saudi soil.⁹¹ This statement and other early statements lay out clearly bin Laden's early *raison d'être* for dissident activity. These included:

- The spread of usury;
- The failure to uproot Communism in Yemen;
- Bin Baz's endorsement of the Oslo Accords (1993);
- The judicial decree allowing foreign troops on Saudi soil giving legitimacy to the secular regimes and acknowledging the authority of Saudi's over Muslims. "You justified this with an arbitrary judicial decree excusing this terrible act, which insulted the pride of our *Ummah* and sullied its honour, as well as polluting our holy places." Bin Laden calls this "a calamity unprecedented in the history of *Ummah*."

In the *Declaration of Jihad* aka 'the ladenese epistle' (1996), bin Laden notes that the Saudi regime has desecrated its legitimacy through its suspension of the rulings of Islamic law and its replacement with manmade laws. He states that "The situation in Saudi Arabia has begun to resemble a huge volcano that is about to explode and destroy unbelief and corruption, wherever it comes from⁹²." Wiktorowicz notes that toward the middle of the 1990s the Saudi regime heavily repressed political dissidents, leaving a void that was eventually filled by the jihadis.⁹³ The clerics of the state were criticised by the jihadis for reconciling with 'tyrants' and handing over "the land and the people to the Jews, the Crusaders, and their hangers-on among our apostate rulers". The declaration also covered:

- Jewish occupation of Arabian Palestine. "The current Jewish enemy is not an enemy settled in his own original country fighting in its defence until he gains peace agreement, but an attacking enemy and a corrupter of religion and the world."
- The Jewish and the Americans, who "corrupt religion". He quotes ibn Taymiyyah; "There is no greater duty after faith than unconditionally fighting the attacking enemy who corrupts religion and the world. He must be resisted as hard as possible, as stipulated by our companions the scholars and others."
- "Terrorising the American occupiers is a religious and logical obligation." "America continues to claim that it is upholding the banner of freedom and humanity, yet it perpetrated deeds which you would not find the most ravenous of animals debasing themselves to do so."

In addition to being a call to arms, his statements also ask scholars to join him in denouncing the apostate regimes and *Kafirs*. For example; "Honourable and righteous scholars, come and lead your *Ummah*, and call her to God, and return her to her religion and the abandonment of jihad for the sake of God almighty." This is no doubt due to the need for scholarly legitimation wherever possible for his interpretations and mobilising the *Ummah* against the infidels.

⁹¹ The dissident theologians are called the *sahewa* in contrast to the state sanctioned *ulema*. According to bin Laden the chief motive for setting up the ARC, in North London, was the repression of the *sahewa*.

⁹² *Declaration of Jihad* aka the Ladenese Epistle

⁹³ Wiktorowicz, 2006, p. 225

Osama bin Laden signalled his intention to focus on the 'far enemy' with the *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders* in 1998 where he stated it was "the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies - civilians and military - is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."

Legitimacy

The legitimacy of the al-Qaeda narrative appears to stem firstly from the perception that bin Laden has made a great personal sacrifice; he is seen by many as a pious Muslim, leaving a comfortable life behind in Saudi, and, secondly, from his organisation's military 'successes'. It has been noted that "his personal reputation for probity, austerity, dignity, and courage contrasts so starkly with the mismanagement, bordering on incompetence, of most Arab regimes."⁹⁴ Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA unit charged with hunting bin Laden noted that "Bin Laden is seen by millions of his co-religionists – because of his defense of Islam, personal piety, physical bravery, integrity and generosity – as an Islamic hero, as that faith's ideal type, and almost as a modern-day Saladin."⁹⁵

Grievance

While the organisation is international in its presence, approach and outlook, the central content of al-Qaeda's pronouncements has been the highlighting and reinforcement of grievances relating to the suffering of Palestinians, the tyranny of Arab regimes, the presence of Americans on holy lands and, more recently, the American occupation of Iraq.

It is also worth noting that these grievances have much in common with those of other, including non-Muslim, groups. For example Zawahiri's extensive February 2005 essay, entitled 'The Freeing of Humanity and Homelands Under the Banner of the Quran,' marked the start of al-Qaeda's campaign of trying to reinforce and deepen already existing anti-Americanism among the anti-Globalisation movement, environmentalists, nuclear disarmament activists, anti-U.S. Europeans and other 'oppressed people'.⁹⁶ Bin Laden and Zawahiri have also focused on race relations issues in the United States and championed the Islamic ideas of Malcolm X, with bin Laden, for example noting differences in conditions for white and black U.S. soldiers in Iraq "It is severer than what the slaves used to suffer at your hands centuries ago, and it is as if some of them have gone from one slavery to another more severe and harmful, even if it be in the fancy dress of the Defense Department's financial enticements."⁹⁷

Aslan notes that al-Qaeda's grievances "are a means of weaving local and global resentments into a single anti-American narrative, the overarching aim of which is to form a collective identity across borders and nationalities, and to convince the world that it is locked in a

⁹⁴ Lawrence, 2005, p. xvii.

⁹⁵ Anonymous (Michael Scheuer), *Imperial Hubris; Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*, Potomac Books, 2005, p. 104.

⁹⁶ Some of bin Laden's more bizarre grievances include the United Nations' rejection of Zimbabwe's elections, the failure of the U.S. to ratify the Kyoto agreement, the Bush administration's unwillingness to sign up to the International Criminal Court, American campaign finance laws and America's role in global warming.

⁹⁷ Michael Scheuer, 'Analysis of Osama Bin Laden's September 7 Video Statement', *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. IV, Issue 28.

cosmic contest between the forces of Truth and Falsehood, Belief and Unbelief, Good and Evil, Us and Them.”⁹⁸

Ideological Transmission

al-Qaeda and other jihadist organisations demonstrate considerable understanding of the modern media cycle as well as their place within it (in 1998 Bin Laden wrote a letter to a collaborator in Pakistan discussing increasing payments to journalists to heighten the media profile).⁹⁹ They are also adept at utilising the web to disseminate and proliferate their messages. The Global Islamic Media Front, the Jihad Information Brigade, the Jihad Media Battalion are all organisations that specialise in the production and transmission of jihadi messages and communiqués despite claiming no responsibility for violent acts. These organisations primarily distribute ‘successful’ news from the frontlines of Iraq via the internet through videos and images of roadside bombs, car bombs, suicide bombs, beheadings, assassinations and other martyrdom operations as well as posting threats and commentary on current events.

A 2006 study by Jordan, Horsburgh and Torres provide some useful and robust empirical descriptions of the audiences, mediums, content and evolution of jihadi propaganda. Jordan et al note that since the proliferation of propaganda since 2004, the lack of mass media attention has forced many other jihadist organisations to diffuse almost all their audio/visual/written material on the internet.¹⁰⁰

The strike on the twin towers transmitted a message that was understood globally and as Jordan et al note “The spectacular character of its actions has led to global media attention that other global jihadist movement groups crave and pursue...[and has] become the vanguard of the global jihadi movement in terms of global communicative action”.¹⁰¹ Prior to 9/11 this was an ideology and a movement operating and known in small circles that was not seriously considered an imminent threat in the UK and was similarly ignored by senior U.S. officials. Post 9/11, the actions of al-Qaeda have created an ideological franchise now perceived to be the primary threat to global security.

⁹⁸ *Aslan, Reza; No God but God, (Arrow Books, 2006).*

⁹⁹ Burke, 2004

⁵¹ Jordan, Javier, Torres Manuel, Horsburgh Nicola, “Analysis and Evolution of the Global jihadist Movement Propaganda” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 18, Issue Number 3 2006.

¹⁰¹ Horsburgh et al, p. 418.

Figure 5: Analysis of Jihadist propaganda 1996-2005¹⁰²

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of communiqués sent	3	1	12	3	1	19	63	60	266	2450
Target Audience of propaganda	Muslims 91.4% Non-Muslims 1.9% Both 6.4%									
Medium of diffusion used	Internet 95.9% TV 1.8% Written mediums 2.3%									
Principal Content	Re-vindication of an attack 76.0% Commentary on current affairs 12.5% Threat 5.0% Political-religious discourse (exclusively) 1.9% Assassination of hostages 1.4% Mobilisation 1.4% Blackmail for hostage taking 1.3% Denial of responsibility for an attack 0.5%									

¹⁰² Jordan et al 2006

5. JIHADI MOVEMENT PROPAGANDA AND INFORMATION PLATFORMS

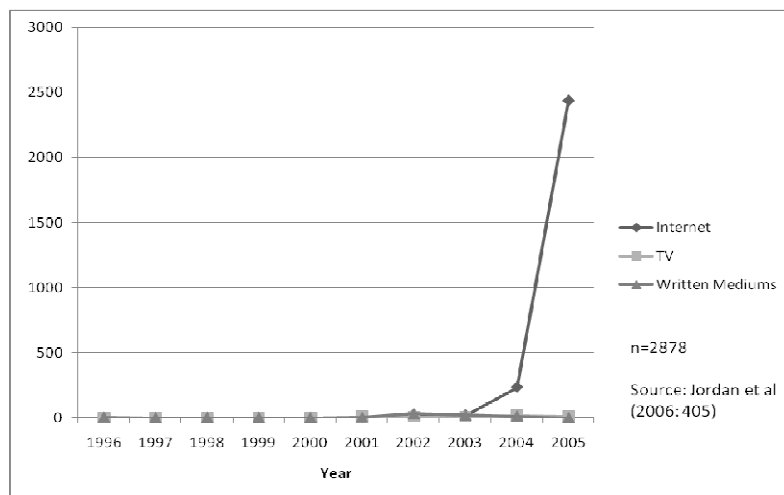


Figure 6: Jihadi movement communiqués by medium used to disseminate 1996-2005

its message through a variety of communication mediums. Television and written mediums were the primary means of dissemination and communication for al-Qaeda from 1996 until 2001. However, from 2002, as figure 6 above illustrates, the Internet has exponentially increased in its importance as the primary medium of communication and its role with respect to beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radicalisation were a significant component of this research study.

The Internet

The Internet is widely recognised by both jihadis and counter-terrorism experts as playing an important role in both the radicalisation process and planning of terror operations.¹⁰⁴ The Commission Communication on *Terrorist recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation* notes that “the use of the Internet to incite people into becoming violently radical, or as a vehicle for terrorist recruitment, is extremely worrying in view of its global reach, real-time nature and effectiveness”.¹⁰⁵ The Internet is also overtly recognised and adopted by jihadists to disseminate propaganda and information as evidenced by this quote from the ‘Technical Mujahid Online Magazine’:

“The Internet provides a golden opportunity... for the mujahideen to break the siege placed upon them by the media of the Crusaders and their followers in the Muslim

¹⁰³ J. Jordan, et al 2006, pp. 399-400. A good overview of recent EU responses and approaches to extremist jihadi websites and content can be found in Ryan. J, *Combating Militant Islamist Terrorism on the Web*, Institute for European Affairs, 2007,

¹⁰⁴ *Council Conclusions on cooperation to combat terrorist use of the internet, ANNEX, 2007, p. 4.*

¹⁰⁵ Commission Communication adopted by the Commission on *Terrorist recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation*, MEMO/05/329 21.9.2005.

countries, and to use [the Internet] for [the sake of] jihad and the victory of the faith.”¹⁰⁶

In addition to being an important vehicle for jihadist public relations and media campaigns, the internet facilitates the exchange and dissemination of information by jihadist organisations and individuals drawn to abusive interpretations of Islam. While the literature of violent jihad has been on the web almost as long as the web has been a mass communication medium, since 9/11 it has evolved into a major distribution system for jihad-related material to a mass readership¹⁰⁷ and analysts have noted that it has compensated for the loss of Afghanistan as a major training arena in both ideological and tactical senses.¹⁰⁸

While it is important to understand how the internet is leveraged for tactical advantage, such as financing and fundraising, co-ordination, terror training, the dissemination of technical knowledge and ‘cyber-jihad’, the role that the internet plays in the dissemination of narratives, beliefs and ideologies of violent radicalisation is a critical focus aligned to the study’s terms of reference. As such, it is important to understand the dynamics of dissemination, web-based interactions and the impact of web based content, including language and imagery, on violent radicals and internet users.

The following analysis provides an overview of the most prominent narratives identified during the study, those that generated the greatest interest on web forums and the various ways in which these narratives are supported, replicated and reinforced.

Key web narratives

Similar to those that emerged during the research literature review and fieldwork; these narratives varied in their strength and detail, but can be aligned to the categories outlined below. Additionally, these narratives do not act as discrete arguments or expressions but are linked to the current - and shifting- political and social landscape. These narratives can also be flexible, a dynamic response used to interpret current events through different lenses.

Anti-imperialism

One of the dominant themes in the jihadist websites is the criticism of ‘Western Imperialism’, an expression of a jihadi worldview that posits a Western hegemony bent on dominance of Muslim lands aided by their ‘clients’ in ‘Muslim Lands’. Posts often characterised the West as ‘The Romans’ or ‘The Crusaders’ to imply a historical continuation of past conflicts and reinforcing an ontological divide between ‘The West’ and Islam.

While most examples of this narrative adopted generic terminology, it was sometimes articulated with reference to a specific country’s historical relationship with its ‘oppressor’. This example focuses on France’s relationship with Algeria:

‘Ever since 1830, France’s history in Algeria has been filled with crimes and injustices against the Algerian People. The level of suffering that the Muslims have endured in

⁴ Translated by MEMRI - Islamist Websites Monitor No. 29, December, 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Horsburgh et al, 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Ulph, S., *A Guide to Jihad on the Web*, Jamestown Terrorism Focus, Vol. 2, Issue 7, March 2005.

Algeria is unfathomable, how can we now make friends with those who have caused us much harm?’¹⁰⁹

This narrative is often supplemented by criticism of Arab and Muslim governments, frequently described as domestic collaborators against Muslims and Islam, with vilification of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan particularly widespread due to their relationships with the U.S. Additionally, opposition to the governments of these countries is also contextualised in terms of their historical approach to Islam and the state:

“Pervez Musharraf, in his best Bush impersonation, has murdered innocent civilians, manipulated catchphrases of “terrorist” rhetoric, showed that military force is his chosen diplomacy, and in turn has advanced the cause of the very people he claims to be fighting. In analyzing the complex multi-dimensions of the recent Lal Masjid massacre, this dictator’s love for sadistic murder and betrayal becomes apparent. He, like other rulers over Muslim lands, is an apostate oppressor bent on seeking self-interest and protecting his secular lusts.”¹¹⁰

Saudi Arabia is the most criticised government in the forums and is particularly attacked for failing in its role as the keeper of the Holy sites of Islam and its economic dependency on the U.S:

“The House of Saud is one of the most dangerous institutions presently at war against Islam. Islamic voices across the globe should call for the dismemberment of the authoritarian regime, the expulsion from positions of authority for all individuals that protect them, and the subsequent re-implementation of the actual Shari’a thru means of re-establishing a caliphate across Islamic lands.”¹¹¹

The Call to Jihad

Similarly, the centrality of Jihad to Islam and its obligatory nature is a recurring theme, legitimatised and substantiated through the use of quotes from the Quran and Sunnah. Whilst there is a need to delineate between the dominant understanding of jihad with its focus on the inner and outer dimensions of self against ego, worldliness, injustice and advancing the cause of Islam, those forums that expressed violent radical sentiments emphasised warfare as the critical expression of Jihad. The call to Jihad is the ‘right path’, reinforced by the sense of duty and privilege of being part of the select few who undertake the noble cause of Jihad. This call to Jihad is often backed up with examples of ‘brave men’ who have submitted themselves to the Jihad and become martyrs in the process. The following quote from an Arabic language jihadi forum is a more typical example of the content:

“Dear Muslim, I urge you to read the Quran with deep reflection without any predispositions, and you will find the straight path, the true path, and become a soldier in God’s Army.”¹¹²

It is notable, given its popularity in Western media, the promise of virgins and other such pleasures in the afterlife did not feature in any of the forums.

¹⁰⁹ <http://jihadalkaida.yoo7.com/> (this Post generated 131 views).

¹¹⁰ <http://www.islamicthinkers.com/>

¹¹¹ <http://www.islamicthinkers.com>

¹¹² <http://alsayf.com>, (this Post generated 1316 views, and was the 8th most viewed on the forum)

Martyrdom

Martyrdom is a common theme that is glorified, often with accompanying videos and music. Martyrs are eulogized in forums through life story accounts of men who were ‘lost’ before finding Islam. These stories not only serve to create a cult of martyrdom but to reinforce the ‘call to Jihad’.

Grievances on behalf of other Muslims

This is a category of narratives which encompass a range of grievances that forum users have in relation to the treatment of Muslims across the globe. It is a theme that is present across all web forums from moderate to extreme sites. While posts might relate to individual injustices, these are usually presented in a wider context of either a ‘war on Islam’ or the systematic discrimination and oppression of Muslims. For example:

“Every time I read what happened to our brothers it brings tears to my eyes. May Allah (SWT) grant them paradise and sabr to the family for the lost of their loved ones. I also hope that the truth of what happened to them will come out and show the world how unjust the USA regime is. Wassalaam. London. UK”

These grievances are usually linked into the anti-imperialism narrative and claims of the ‘hypocrisy’ of the West with respect to its overtly stated values of ‘democracy and human rights’ are ubiquitous. Often these posts appropriate the pejorative language of Western elites to describe their own actions. For example:

“I express my condolences to the families of the martirized [sic] people. The international community know that they are innocent. As the USA oil totalitarianism didn't find legal grounds to convict and sentence them, they were exterminated. This shameless act constitutes a crime against the humanity and in no case the accountability of the USA can be covered up.”¹¹³

These posts also provide insights into transnational identity formation of online users, also identified in the fieldwork interviews, that demonstrates an overriding attachment to the ‘Ummah’ and its suffering:

“The governments of the West have a long history of oppression of Muslims, this is nothing new! They colonized Muslim land spreading havoc and destruction, they divided our Ummah and land. Since when is Kuwait separate from Iraq and separated by whom? We have a long history with them!”

Grievances expressed differ according to the forums, with moderate and political forums discussing a number of human rights issues, particularly those relevant to Muslims such as the detention and treatment of prisoners and the welfare of Palestinians in Israel. While the discussion of such grievances incites similar emotions to more radical sites, the moderate and political site users are explicit in their denouncement of terrorism and violence in the name of Islam to respond to these issues. For instance the following excerpts from a thread on

¹¹³ cageprisoners.com, 4035 views, 25 replies

Ummah.com which unfolded in real time following the 7/7 bombings are a particularly interesting example of how many Muslims reacted to these events¹¹⁴:

"I'm just hearing sirens every minute...Phone networks are down-- and at work we have been told that we should not leave the building unless absolutely necessary. A reminder; Make du'a. We need to remember that Islam, a religion in tune with nature, is not fixed but fluid, not firm but flexible, not fierce but forgiving. I am not saying we should ever compromise our religion in matters that are obligatory but merely stating that is it the natural state to work around things - in that there is great wisdom and benefits."

"No, they need to wake up and realise what a load of bull such crap is. The same people who praise 9/11 praise incidents like this. Members of Ummah.com have praised 9/11 and will praise this, even the ones in England. Posting crap like that encourages more attacks like this. This is why we banned that crap on sunniforum. It's as simple as that. If you praise and encourage attacks and violence against your fellow Ummah.com members - muslims or not, I hope you get locked up and the key thrown away."

Criticism of Western foreign policy

This narrative is implicit and sometimes explicit within the anti-imperialist and grievance narratives but the quantity of and interest generated by posts specific to U.S. and Western foreign policy decisions makes it worthwhile separating as a key strand. Central to the violent radical narrative is an articulation of the defence of Islam and Muslims from oppression. The focus on the 'offensive' and violent foreign policy of the West targeted at Muslim majority nations is a popular method of justifying the actions of violent radicals who seek to create wider support for their cause, through a defensive posture. The vast majority of posts focus on the Iraq war and US foreign policy towards Israel, seen to fortify the Israeli position against an under resourced and powerless Palestinian population. These posts align to a 'conspiracy theory' sentiment common across mainstream political discourse (for more, see section below), as most view US foreign policy positions to be symptomatic of historical attempts to establish US global cultural and economic hegemony:

*"It is in fact, U.S. government and military terrorism that has directly slaughtered literally millions of civilian people in the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Russia (the civil war, 1918-1920), Japan, France, Germany, Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Panama, Grenada, Libya, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Bosnia and Yugoslavia. In addition, the terrorist U.S. military and CIA have trained armed, funded, provided intelligence and direct military support for fascist puppet-regimes and right-wing death-squads around the world."*¹¹⁵

It should be noted that criticism of U.S. and Western foreign policy is not unique to Muslim web forums and opinion. The decision to invade Iraq has been hugely unpopular across a broad spectrum of Western populations and continues to be a contentious and controversial

¹¹⁴ 'Breaking News: Explosion in London Underground', <http://www.Ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?t=60439>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.islamicthinkers.com>

issue in the political landscape of countries that were involved in the ‘Coalition of the willing’.

Conspiracy theories

As noted above, the widespread dissemination and acceptance of ‘conspiracy theories’ are especially popular in ‘radical’ and ‘political’ English language forums. The governments and the military apparatuses of the US, Israel and the UK are usually implicated in these theories, highlighting the high levels of distrust of these governments. It should be emphasised that conspiracy theories are not unique to Muslim forums, especially those that relate to 9/11 and 7/7. Numerous websites and DVDs, both Muslim and non-Muslim, are dedicated to ‘exposing’ the ‘myths’ of 9/11 and 7/7, which are frequently viewed as government plots.

For example, one of the most popular topics on the moderated *The Islamic Forum* is ‘9/11 proof [of conspiracy]’:

“However, the official story (of 9/11) does not withstand critical examination. It is a deliberate lie, designed to fool the American people and the rest of the world. If you examine the evidences, you can see that the attack on September 11th was carried out by the American Government.”¹¹⁶

“The London explosions carry the characteristic features of a state-sponsored, false flag, synthetic terror provocation by networks within the British intelligence services MI-5, MI-6, the Home Office, and the Metropolitan Police Special Branch who are favorable to a wider Anglo-American aggressive war in the Middle East.”¹¹⁷

Similarly, the demonising of the US and its allies is a recurring theme, evoking symbolism of the evils of ‘Shaytan’ that all Muslims need to resist:

“America’s Leaders take part in Satan Worship, satanists collectively known as the Illuminati, control the Secret or Inner government of the United States as well as other governments in the world...The triangle containing the eye represents the all-seeing eye that is illuminated. This represents the worship of Lucifer which is described as the bringer of light. The pyramid has 13 levels - this is no accident. The Illuminati are a group of 13 interconnected bloodlines who make up the heads of the New World Order conspiracy.”¹¹⁸

Apostasy

One of the main findings of our research into web forums was the paucity of posts that explicitly explained, described or debated the ideologies that were uncovered in the fieldwork and literature review. However, the one area that did re-occur across a number of forums, generating significant debate was the ‘culpability’ and apostasy of Muslims in the ‘war on Islam’.

¹¹⁶ <http://forums.islamicawakening.com> , 36,484 views, the highest in the ‘Jihad and Struggle section of the forum

¹¹⁷ <http://forums.islamicawakening.com>, 3,600 views

¹¹⁸ <http://forums.islamicawakening.com>, 27,250 views

“You are supporting a draconian system and trampling of human rights in your own backyard. The war on terror is a shambles. It is not a war on terror, but a war of terror. You yourselves have become the terrorists, and have the audacity to call others the same.”¹¹⁹*

Islamophobia and Muslims as minorities in the West

An increasing trend in English language forums was the dominance of posts relating to the alleged and actual ill treatment and unjust discrimination of Muslims in the West, either as a result of racist abuse, anti-Muslim sentiment or more commonly as a result of counter-terrorism and security operations.

“I am writing to you because a sister has been detained recently. She is 16 years old and from New York. Her name is Tashnuba. Tashnuba is in very difficult situation and we need your support in this matter. As Muslims we should be aware of what goes on in the community. This is why it's important for us to acknowledge Tashnuba and her case. It is paramount that we bring attention and give Muslims the knowledge they need to deal with issues like this. It would be very helpful if the Muslims weekly could shed some light on this case make it known throughout the Muslim community.”¹²⁰

“Does the killing of 3,000 people, not matter how wicked justify killing and torturing hundreds of thousands? This issue goes a lot deeper than a so called group named "Al Qaeda". I live in the west and I suffer on daily basis as I am a woman with niqab (and a convert) even so, I am told to go back to where I came from and we are subjected to hatred on a daily basis. It is Islam they hate not a few individuals. This is a war against Islam.”¹²¹

Localised stories and incidents are invariably contextualised through the ‘war on Islam’, serving to reinforce outrage, anger and empathy about the plight of Muslims in the West. Additionally, concerns about the unrelenting negative media coverage of Muslims are reinforced by research about the role of the media in fuelling Islamophobia sentiment. For instance, a report commissioned by the Greater London Authority found that in a typical week over 90% of the media articles that referred to Muslims and Islam were negative and that *“the overall picture presented by the media was that Islam is profoundly different from and a threat to the West”*.¹²²

One example of such a discussion was a reply to a post titled ‘Do British Muslims want an Islamic Run Britain?’

“As far as what I can make out this is myth peddled by right wing groups in an attempt to scare Britons into thinking the Muslims here are planning some sort of secret coup to replace labour with a Taliban style leadership. Truth is there are a very few extreme elements that have mentioned it but I would 99% of British Muslims aren't looking for a

¹¹⁹ <http://forums.islamicawakening.com>, 4626 views

¹²⁰ <http://talk.islamicnetwork.com>, 1,413 views

¹²¹ Islam Today Online Forum

¹²² *The search for common ground: Muslims, non-Muslims and the UK Media*, Greater London Authority, November 2007, p. xi.

UK Muslim state but would mind aspects of Shari'a being allowed to settle disputes within communities."¹²³

Additionally, a wide variety of posts related to Muslims living as minorities in non-Muslim countries. Discussions generated a number of views and replies, providing insights into a broader intra-community debates that were previously the sole domain of the *Ulema*, with young Muslims in particular eager to discuss ideas and the challenges of Muslims living in the West. The post below was in response to a topic discussion on how to reconcile Islamic law with living in a non-Muslim country:

*"Muslims should try to abide by Islamic Law. Islamic Law states when Muslims live in a Non Muslim country they must abide by the laws of that country and be law abiding citizens. WE do not want a Muslim state in Britain thank you, we want to earn a living, worship God and take care of families and be productive members of society. I know it's 'bland' but there you have it."*¹²⁴

While discussions that focused on the practice of Islam in the West did not feature any sentiments that were symptomatic of a 'violent radical' discourse, it nonetheless represents a revivalist interest about the faith and 'democratisation' of associated debates:

*"i was brought up where, though i was brought up islaamicly, at school the impression i always got about religion is that it is just that...a religion...something you do in addition to everything else you do. But no Islam isn't a one day religion or something you put on the side.... Islam is the perfect way of life...the guidelines for life sent by Allah..to let his creation know. When god created us, and He sent religion as a way of life, and we have been sent the most perfect guide on how best to live our lives, why should we argue over which rules to implement or not and chose NOT to rule by the laws outlined by God but by what we THINK is right.....so maybe you can explain why you think religion should NOT rule a country??? (of course this doesn't apply to other religions than islaam...because all other religions have been 'modernised' by the people adding in things that they think make the religion more correct...and just like judaism was abrogated when Allah sent the prophet Jesus, christianity was aborgated when Allah sent Muhammad peace be upon him his final messenger until the day of judgement.)"*¹²⁵

Anti-Muslim sentiment

Many of the forums that were reviewed included instances where a non-Muslim user had participated in discussions, and used abusive or xenophobic language with respect to Muslims and Islam. This increased substantially following the attempted attacks in Glasgow and London during the summer of 2007:

"I can assure that many of us are awake and watching the foreign plague that has descended on our country. I do not descriminate against muslims because I believe all

¹²³ <http://forum.mpacuk.org/>, 657 views

¹²⁴ <http://www.Ummah.com/forum/>

¹²⁵ www.cageprisoners.com, 4501 views.

non white foreigners should be repatriated . Make childish remarks if you will but the British People will awaken. WAKE UP BRITAIN BEFORE ITS TOO LATE."¹²⁶

There were also instances where blog postings have been removed. For instance, The Guardian newspaper's 'Islamophobic' podcast was so flooded with racist and Islamophobic language that the blog posting had to be removed from the site.

Supporting the narrative

In addition to the narratives analysis outlined above a number of key characteristics and dynamics specific to jihadist and violent radical websites were also identified.

Operational Intent

This study supports existing research that suggests individuals are logging onto jihadist websites from an 'operational intent' perspective, having already adopted a violent radical view point. The key difference between non-jihadist and jihadist sites is that the latter are overtly engaged in campaigning and propaganda for the jihadist cause through a variety of methods that include sermons and justifications from religious texts, 'news' stories and videos/graphic representations of atrocities against Muslims. Likewise The proliferation of operational and technical information, including undertaking terrorist acts and forming terrorist cells, was the primary topic of interest on the websites we reviewed.

Anti-Shiaism

The increasing preponderance of posts in opposition to Shiaism and Shia Muslims was particularly evident. While these posts did not directly reflect key themes of the research study, and were only found in the Arabic language forums, they nonetheless illustrated the strong sectarian nature of web discourse within these forums. The Shia's were often referred to as 'Rafhada' or 'Rafhida' (rejectionists), viewed as the proxy of the 'Crusader alliance', with posts exposing 'historical treachery' and advocating the boycotting of Iranian goods. While the ongoing historical and theological debates between Shia and Sunni Islam are well known, the proliferation of anti-Shia posts during the research study time frame could be explained by Iranian ascendancy within the region following the fall of the Saddam Hussain regime.

Multimedia Content

Jihad and the need for it feature as a key theme on these sites, as does the multimedia nature of the content. The discussion and narratives on these websites cannot be viewed in isolation from the multimedia content that accompanies discussions. Video and audio content are ubiquitous on such websites, particularly the Arabic jihadi sites many of which are run by the media operations of al-Qaeda and other jihadi organisations. The popular forum 'Al-Boraq', is entirely dedicated to jihadi multimedia content and al-Qaeda's 'as-Sahab Productions' released 92 videos by December 2007, compared to 58 releases in 2006.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ www.ukchatterbox.co.uk, 'Never an end to Islamophobia', 51 replies.

¹²⁸ Michael Scheuer, 'al-Qaeda at Year's End 2007: What Do the Facts Say?', *Terrorism Focus*, December 19, 2007 – Volume 4, Issue 42.

Alongside posts which contain links to video downloads there are ‘trailers’ for new and upcoming videos, for example this post ‘advertised’ the upcoming Osama bin Laden video:

“Soon, a new tape from the sheikh, the Lion, Osama Bin Laden at the sixth anniversary of the battle of Manhattan, the sheikh Osama bin laden will release a new video.”¹²⁹

The majority of videos fall into four categories:

- Martyrdom videos: These contain collages of martyrs who have undertaken suicide operations. These are often set to music (*nasheeds*) proclaiming the heroic nature of the individuals.
- Terrorist operations: These videos usually feature car bombs, suicide bombings and mortar attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq.
- Graphic violence: We found a number of explicitly graphic videos that contained footage of beheadings and executions of *kafir* Iraqi soldiers.
- Sermons, lectures and speeches: These videos feature prominent jihadi leaders such as Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri outlining their ideologies and grievances.

Additionally, mainstream video sites are now being explicitly targeted by radicals who wish to disseminate jihadist propaganda to a wider audience. Following the release of a 20 minute video advertisement for an upcoming e-book on the leaders of al-Qaeda, various forum users encouraged the distribution of the promotional video in as many internet venues as possible, with references to YouTube, MetaCafe and GoogleVideo.

Countering Western media dominance

Jihadi forum posts directly engage with Western media in coverage of conflict zones in an attempt to counter their media and public opinion dominance and communicate stories that demonstrate that the Mujahedeen are in the ascendant on the battle front:

“The Western media has claimed in the past few weeks that that sammarra has been subdued, and that the insurgents in the city have been eliminated. Therefore, we at the Army of the Ansaar al Sunnah have sought to show that they are wrong, and the mujahids are still here, and we are still strong. We have released a video showing our successful recent operations and our involvement in the local community.”¹³⁰

Jihadist forums frequently detail news from the battle-front featuring stories of latest victories against the enemy, which are sometimes substantiated with videos for additional proof.

Use of Iconography

The use of iconography to promote Jihad are also important characteristics of jihadist sites and forums; including wide-spread use of both living and martyred mujahedeen with Osama bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Abu Musab al-Zaqawi being the most popular. Icons are

¹²⁹ This topic generated 9, 010views, the second highest in one of the sections of the al-ekhlaas forums.

<http://ekhlass.org>

¹³⁰ www.al-boraq.com, 2,082 views

often superimposed upon religious imagery and the image of the anonymous hooded, heroic mujahedeen with a Kalashnikov has become ubiquitous.

Countering alternative voices

Criticising and engaging with moderate voices became evident in the jihadist sites and forums that were researched. Any attempts to counter the violent radical narrative were robustly challenged, and this was a common feature across both English and Arabic language sites. For example, on the second day of Ramadan in September 2007, the well known Wahhabi scholar Salman bin Fahd Al-Oudah read a letter addressed directly to Osama Bin Laden live on the Saudi MBC Television Network.¹³¹

He said:

“How many innocent people, elderly men and children have been killed and displaced under the Al Qaeda banner? Would you be happy to meet God carrying the burden (of their death) on your shoulders? ...What did we gain from the total destruction of a people as happened in Iraq and Afghanistan? ...Who benefits from the attempts to turn Morocco, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and other countries into scared countries where people don't feel secure?”

The jihadi forums contained a number of responses to Al-Oudah's criticism of Osama bin Laden:

“Sheikh Salman Al-Oudah's time has now passed...Shiekh Salman Al-Oudah has stood on the side of righteousness and has suffered as a result in prison, there is now doubt that that Sheikh Salman has the interests of Islam in his heart, this is evidenced by his actions in the past, but his Ideas have now past, and they remain in the mindset of the past.”¹³²

Ayman al-Zawahiri also responded to Al-Oudah's message, which was broadcast on Saudi television, highlighting the obvious threat of key Saudi individuals to the jihadi ideology and their influence on al-Qaeda's constituency. This may be due to Al-Oudah's previous opposition to the Saudi state which gives him legitimacy amongst individuals sympathetic to the jihadist cause.¹³³

¹³¹ 'A Ramadan Letter to Osama bin Laden',

http://www.islamtoday.com/showme2.cfm?cat_id=29&sub_cat_id=1521 (27.9.2007).

Sheikh Salman al-Oadah (or Awdah) was imprisoned for five years by the Saudi government, partly his opposition to the participation of Western forces in the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq and on account of some of his books and some of the lessons that he had given. His imprisonment was condemned along with al-Hawali by Osama bin Laden's 1996 *Declaration of War*. He was released along with his colleagues and resumed his activities from his home, giving sermons on topics such as Qur'anic commentary, ethics, education, and personal reform. He is currently director of the popular website IslamToday at www.islamtoday.net, which proclaims to be the first website in the Saudi Kingdom to offer such a high level of diversity in its subject matter and material. He also gives classes and lectures over the Internet and by phone to a wide range of listeners.

¹³² <http://www.muslim.net/vb>, this post has generated 23,162 views.

¹³³ Another significant opposition to jihadist ideology and actions was made by Sayyid Imam Sharif, the founder of The Egyptian Islamic Jihad Organization, which orchestrated the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981 announced the release of a 100 page book denouncing Violence against Civilians in the name of Islam.

Conclusions

One of the main findings of the research into web forums is that there is a paucity of posts that explain, describe or debate the ideologies that were uncovered in the fieldwork and literature review. However, forum users seldom focus on singular and isolated themes and often incorporate a number of interlinked narratives. These narratives therefore do not act as discrete arguments or expressions of ideology, but are flexible and responsive to shifting political and social landscapes. While the Internet plays a key role in fostering belonging, developing identities and attachment with the global Ummah, the engagement of individuals with the violent radical agenda is primarily sought through the tailoring of narratives to local contexts.

There are also significant differences between Arabic and English language extremist forums. Whilst ideology is rarely discussed in either English or Arabic Language forums, there is more debate within the former on points of doctrine. The Arabic forums on the other hand contain more extreme, objectionable and violent content. The users of these websites appear to have developed their views outside of forums and enter them either to find likeminded individuals, or to argue with individuals they disagree with. The limited debate that does occur in the English forums is rarely constructive – people talk past each other or at each other.

The predominant role of the web in the jihadist movement appears to primarily act as a distribution mechanism, promoting violence against the enemy, propagating military ‘successes’ of the mujahedeen and glorifying martyrs. Operational and technical information are pervasive on the extreme Arab sites.

Contrary to some reports, ‘moderate’ or mainstream forums are largely devoid of violent radical propaganda and the vast majority of relevant posts denounce and challenge the use of violence in the name of Islam. What is striking about many of the moderate and activist sites is the level of political and global awareness of the users and their engagement with a range of political issues in addition to those directly related to Muslims or Islam. Many of the sites also provide specific educational sections that are well read and discussed. Additionally, the recent development of ‘moderate’ counter-narratives and its increasing popularity is a new and significant development. People like Amr Khalid, Sheikh Hamza Yusuf and the Wahhabi cleric Salman Al-Ouda are widely followed, and it appears that they have wide appeal.

A worrying trend on the internet is the frequent attacks on Islam by some of the (non-Muslim) members of these forums and sites and the promotion / construction of the ‘other’ as alien. Xenophobic attacks on mainstream Muslim sites and forums are common.

Whilst the Internet may go some way in contributing to the radicalisation of individuals, especially given the exponential proliferation and sophistication of content, the data collected in this study, along with other empirical studies and case studies reviewed, suggests that it is likely to have secondary influence in comparison to face-to-face interaction in other real settings.

6. FIELDWORK FINDINGS

The following section outlines the key themes and narratives that were identified during the fieldwork research conducted in each of the research countries. These sections are drawn from in-country reports that cover in full the context, history and contemporary trends of violent radicalisation of each research country.

UK

Prior to the fieldwork the UK team conducted an extensive stakeholder consultation to map the landscape and identify key issues, themes and actors in the UK. 30 primary fieldwork interviews were undertaken and the team was successful in securing access for interviews with a wide range of Muslim interviewees, including activists and radicals, and including formerly violent radicals.

The British context and country report has had the greatest raw material to work with in relation to the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radicals, given that the UK is seen by many academics and commentators as having been a central ‘hub’ for Islamic radicals for two decades, and the range of individuals, organisations and literature, including avowedly radical, available for research.

The UK research team identified the key characteristics of individuals and organisations in the jihad ‘field’ in the UK as its competitiveness and fissiparous nature, noting for example the significance of relatively small doctrinal differences leading to conflicts. For example the al-Muhajiroun (now banned) leadership openly admitted in one of its internal documents that “all fundamentalist groups share 95% of the same ideological precepts.”

In the UK analysis and fieldwork the key narratives that emerged include anti-imperialist and colonialist sentiment; ‘there is a historical anger in the children of colonialism. Young British Muslims carry this anger’, as well as concerns with social justice. UK Lead Researcher Yahya Birt has identified what he refers to as an ‘ideational’ model of violent radical ideology. He sees this model as a jigsaw of components whose current form was not planned or necessarily even discernible by many of the actors involved in its creation. These pieces form the basic components out of which a religious ideology justifying violence is created, and for that reason it can be seen as a proto-ideology around which violent radicals, who may have differences on some elements, are able to coalesce, propagate and organise or facilitate violent radical action. This model is drawn on directly in the findings of this report and is outlined in more details in the following sections.

Early jihadist tendencies in Britain (Early 1980s-1992)

The earliest jihadist tendency in Britain cannot be described as forming a cohesive movement as it did not have a developed ideological world-view. In the mid-1980s that there was no explicit self-understanding as being part of the Salafi movement. What is commonly described is a youth movement that wanted to explore in its own way the roots of the faith by studying its sources -- the Quran and the Sunnah (or way of the Prophet) -- directly for themselves.

There was no name [for what was emerging]. This was a circle in the mid-80s, and the thing about the mid-80s, Thatcher’s policies were kicking in, the depression of the late

70s had gone and opulence was on the rise, the sun was shining in the mid-80s. What was beginning to draw people like me slowly as well was the Iranian revolution, the Soviet intervention [in Afghanistan]. Brother Y was very active, he was doing his MA at the University of London. He would photocopy lots of pages and every week we would come away with some book or the other. This also showed us that this guy is committed. We had been raised in the environment of, mosque communities always argue, lots of politics involved. Brother Y never argued, which is something we found appealing. Brother Y himself belonged to no faction, but the basic Salafi and Ahl-e Hadith outlook, even though he did not know it then, he had already adopted....¹³⁴

This lack of self definition changed by the late 1980s when some students studying in Saudi Arabia began to expose this movement to the details of modern-day Salafi ideas on creedal issues, worship and how to propagate religious revival.¹³⁵ At the same time key figures in this embryonic youth movement participated in the Afghanistan jihad against Soviet occupation, a resistance that was backed by the Americans and the Gulf States at the time. This participation was described as life-changing, as standing up with a Muslim people in their struggle for self-determination.¹³⁶ But participation in this jihad by this youth movement was seen at the time as fulfilling a religious obligation and emulating the way of the earliest Muslims rather than as a political act.¹³⁷ Their access to the Afghan jihad was facilitated by sectarian rather than ethnic linkages so that they spent their time with a Salafi fighting force.¹³⁸ There was an element of historical contingency in the early emergence of a small jihad movement in Britain compared with other European nations, as it was in Afghanistan that a global jihadi caucus was developed out of which al-Qaeda eventually emerged, the fact that large numbers of British Muslims had ethnic and theological connections to the region suggests itself as the salient factor.

The rise of takfiri jihadism in Britain after 1992

Whilst from the outset there were strong connections between Salafi theology and the jihad movement, these were very ill-defined at the beginning. However it also true that the pathway into mainstream non-violent Salafi piety coincides with much of the pathway into violent extremism. The evidence shows that the debate in Britain on issues around jihad and the use of violence throughout the 1990s were sufficiently developed in the jihadist subculture to keep pace with the progress of that debate elsewhere in the Muslim world. The jihadist preachers that mattered were Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada who both started their propaganda in Britain in earnest in 1993. Abu Hamza's Supporters of Shari'a was set up in 1994. Abdullah el-Faisal was also appointed as a teacher at Brixton Mosque in South London in 1991 but was ousted two years later when he made his extremist views more apparent and attempted unsuccessfully to take over the mosque.¹³⁹ Abu Qatada was quickly identified in 1993 within the wider Salafi community as posing the most serious intellectual threat.¹⁴⁰

The key trigger to split the movement was its division over what constituted true Salafism, jihad and takfir. These issues arose in the context of the Saudi support for American recapture

¹³⁴ UK Interviewee number #1

¹³⁵ UK interviewee #3

¹³⁶ UK interviewees #1 & #18

¹³⁷ UK interviewee #1

¹³⁸ UK Interviewee #1 & #18

¹³⁹ UK interviewee #1 & #4

¹⁴⁰ UK interviewee #4

of Kuwait from Saddam Hussain in 1990-91. Of the three major Salafi sheikhs of the day, al-Albani opposed the use of American troops, while Bin Baz and Ibn al-`Uthaymin in line with the Saudi establishment supported their use, which was very divisive in British Salafi circles.¹⁴¹ Hizb ut-Tahrir, then under the leadership of Omar Bakri Mohammed, played a significant role in this period of the early nineties by forcing this subculture to face political issues much more directly in a way that promoted “the cause of the Ummah” and downgraded purely theological arguments.¹⁴² The second divisive issue was that the major Saudi Salafi sheikhs of the day, Bin Baz and al-`Uthaymin, both condemned the post-1992 situation in Afghanistan, after the communist Najibullah government fell in Kabul.¹⁴³ It was no longer a jihad, in their view, as the former Muslim factions were now killing each other. Some continued, however, to train and to fight in Afghanistan¹⁴⁴. This split was reflected in Britain as well, which was marked by a period of defining boundaries more clearly between various Salafi tendencies. One influential figure among some British Salafi pietists during this period was Rabi al-Madkhali who promoted a strong critique of the influence of Sayyid Qutb on Salafis and advocated a policy of strict disassociation (*al-wala’ wa’l-bara’*, literally “loyalty and disassociation”).¹⁴⁵

The series of conflicts in the Muslim world had a major effect upon the jihadi movement in Britain, cutting across the gradual development in the complexity of theological debate and the definition of Salafi segments. Nearly all of the interviewees were agreed that the Bosnia conflict (1992-1995) played the central role in galvanising the jihad movement in Britain and considerably strengthening it because of proximity and access. It was only “30 hours away in a car” as one interviewee remarked.¹⁴⁶ The Bosnian leadership encouraged the formation of a separate foreign Muslim contingent in the Bosnian army. This had the effect of bringing together many former Afghanistan jihadists together on a new battlefield, and a chance for the young British Muslim men who went there to be exposed to these veterans.¹⁴⁷ Alija Izetbegovic (d. 2003), the then President of Bosnia, defended this contingent on the basis of the support it was providing, despite the excesses of some Salafi units that wanted to purify Bosnian Islam from cultural accretions, as they saw them, through an aggressive form of mission.¹⁴⁸ Another interviewee remarked that it was in the early nineties, and in particular Bosnia, that the romantic sheen around “standing up for the oppressed Muslims” began to fade for some, because some British Muslims involved in the Bosnian jihad were targeted by takfiri elements for recruitment and they began to cause problems upon returning home.¹⁴⁹ The mujahidin factions in Afghanistan had begun to fight each other. So the turning point in Britain for the splitting of the jihad movement into takfiri and non-takfiri elements as well as the splitting of Salafi pietists more clearly from the jihadists and the politicians came to a head in 1992-1993.

The key figures in Britain were those able to bring the arguments of the Arab takfiri jihadist discourse to the attention of multiethnic Muslim communities, particularly South Asians.

¹⁴¹ UK interviewee #1

¹⁴² Ed Husain, *The Islamist* (London; Penguin, 2007) an ex-associate of HT and public accounts by former members like Maajid Nawaz and Shiraz Maher (see <http://maajidnawaz.blogspot.com/>).

¹⁴³ UK interviewee #1 & #3

¹⁴⁴ UK interviewee #3 & #12

¹⁴⁵ UK interviewee #1 & #3

¹⁴⁶ UK interviewee #14

¹⁴⁷ UK Interviewee #5

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

¹⁴⁹ UK interviewee #1

Even if figures like Abu Basir al-Tartusi¹⁵⁰, Muhammad al-Surur¹⁵¹ and Abu Qatada were more focused if not exclusively so upon communicating with an elite set of Arabs, it was Omar Bakri Mohammed, Abu Hamza and Abdullah Faisal who were able to connect young South Asian Muslims on these issues and had a national impact in Britain. In the fissiparous, competitive world of the British jihadi scene, all these figures were in competition for money, influence and recruits:

*'Al-Muhajiroun must convince potential joiners that slight differences among fundamentalist groups are critical in determining whether individuals are actually practising "real Islam" and will receive a spiritual payoff. Most of the movement's culturing ... is therefore devoted to explaining not only the ideological template ... but also the deficiencies of intrafundamentalist community rivals.'*¹⁵²

Omar Bakri probably had the greatest propagandist influence both as leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain in the early 1990s and even more so as leader of al-Muhajiroun, as his group was larger and better organised nationally. Many of the terrorist cells involving British-born or raised recruits have had some past connections with al-Muhajiroun. The group was founded in Saudi Arabia in 1983 but after a crackdown there, Bakri left for London in 1986, and rejoined Hizb ut-Tahrir where he succeeded through his high profile, controversial style in attracting a considerable membership to the Party as well as international notoriety. Bakri's outlandish positions became too extreme for Hizb ut-Tahrir's leadership (e.g. explicitly wishing to establish the caliphate in Britain), and he was stripped of his leadership of the UK section in November 1995 by the then worldwide leader, Abdul Qadeem Zalloum. He later resigned from Hizb ut-Tahrir and re-launched al-Muhajiroun in January 1996.

After 9/11, he was more equivocal, condemning attacks on civilian targets but claiming still that this was an act of mistaken but still rewardable legal reasoning (ijtihad) on al-Qaeda's part. Only in July 2003 did the Metropolitan police really crack down on the group after the bombing of Mike's Place in Tel Aviv by two British Muslims who were some way linked, at least indirectly, to the movement. In 2004, al-Muhajiroun was disbanded. In January 2005, Omar Bakri in an internet chat room forum informed his followers that the "covenant of security" had been "violated" by tough anti-terrorism legislation and that "Britain had become Dar al-Harb" in which "the kafir (non-believers) have no sanctity for their own life and property."¹⁵³ In August 2005, Bakri left for the Lebanon and was subsequently banned from returning to Britain. Al-Muhajiroun's successor groups al-Gurabaa and the Saved Sect were banned by the British government in July 2006, after some internal disagreement and

¹⁵⁰ A Syrian jihadist scholar (b. 1959) living in London who had links with Algerian jihadists in the past and has been an influential theorist of jihad. Yet he has moderated his position somewhat by having been sharply critical in the past of Hamas' deviation from the true jihad and also of the 7/7 attacks in London, attacking the logic of the symmetry of revenge, an important rationale in jihadist thinking. This caused considerable consternation in international jihadist quarters.

¹⁵¹ A Syrian activist (b. 1938) with historical ties to the Muslim Brotherhood who helped to develop the Salafi politico discourse from the late sixties onwards in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and left for London in 1984 and worked in this whole period in Birmingham and London ([3], [5]). However other interviewees were completely unaware of him showing that his influence had real limits among the second generation of British Muslims ([4]). For a pen portrait see Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds; Islam and the West* (Harvard; Belknap, 2002), 174, 176-177, 219-220, 233-234, 236.

¹⁵² Q. Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising* (Lanham, MD, 2005), 184.

¹⁵³ *Times*, 17 January 2005.

equivocation from the former Home Secretary Charles Clarke and from the intelligence services.¹⁵⁴

Wiktorowicz's major study on al-Muhajiroun, *Radical Islam Rising*, shows that as there was considerable overlap in overall ideological thinking, and whatever ideological distinctions existed were emphasised by the competition for recruits, recognition and resources. These differences between Al-Muhajiroun and Hizb ut-Tahrir were more tactical than substantive;

(i) While they both believe in the re-establishment of the caliphate by a coup d'état, Hizb ut-Tahrir believes such work is confined to the Muslim world, whereas al-Muhajiroun considers it an obligation to establish God's command wherever Muslims are including in Britain.

(ii) Al-Muhajiroun adopts a more public style of moral correction, of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, or 'high risk activism', in contrast to Hizb ut-Tahrir's more private method of training and inculcation.

(iii) Finally, unlike Hizb ut-Tahrir, al-Muhajiroun openly supports the cause of jihad by hand, heart or tongue in the British context. Their spokesmen, either in al-Muhajiroun or its successor groups, have in the past refused to condemn the bombers of 9/11 or 7/7, but have argued that foreign Muslims ought to make a strike on British soil for this country's military support for the American-led 'war on terror'. Hizb ut-Tahrir prefers to use entryist methods to engineer a military coup d'état in the Muslim world and not in non-Muslim majority nations. It has also had an established record of condemning terrorist attacks and of actively discouraging British Muslims from going for jihads abroad.¹⁵⁵

Otherwise substantive ideological similarities remain that help to explain the emergence of al-Muhajiroun out of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the mid-1990s. Islam is seen as an ideology, a way of life, based on the eternal values of the Shari'a. At present the world is in a state of war (dar al-harb) including the Muslim world, dictatorships and democracies included. There is a strong link made between faith and the need to establish an Islamic superstate (the caliphate). The narrative of loyalty to the Ummah over all other nationalist attachments is common to both in order to prepare the Muslim masses for this revolution.

However, al-Muhajiroun is also the outcome of its interaction with other Salafi jihadist groups whose ideological features are somewhat distinct from Hizb ut-Tahrir's, but this seems to have been a late development. By 2004 at the latest, it was more widely known outside of al-Muhajiroun that Omar Bakri had taken up Salafi beliefs and given up on the Sunni Ash'ari theological school.¹⁵⁶ Wiktorowicz found plenty of evidence of Salafi theology at the heart of al-Muhajiroun during the course of his fieldwork in 2002. There is the familiar characterisation of, and emphasis upon, monotheism (tawhid) and upon takfir (Al-Muhajiroun list of what nullifies a person's Islam consists of 277 political and religious items). There is the commitment to support jihad through ideological, financial and physical means.¹⁵⁷ Former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir are wont to emphasise its ideological similarities with al-Muhajiroun whilst its current leaders stress Omar Bakri's period in charge as an "aberration" and that he took none of their full members with him when he left in 1996,

¹⁵⁴ *New Statesman*, 30 January 2005, based on information from a confidential memo leaked to the journalist Martin Bright.

¹⁵⁵ UK Interviewee #7

¹⁵⁶ Yahya Birt's personal recollection from various community contacts at the time.

¹⁵⁷ Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 6-11, 46, 78, 168-170, 177-181, 261-217.

but only the youth (shabab).¹⁵⁸ The former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir make no mention of these jihadist Salafi influences on Omar Bakri in their criticism.

Abu Hamza was also able to develop a strong centre for takfiri jihadism at the Finsbury Park Mosque in North London between 1997-2003 in which hundreds were sent for training and jihad in Afghanistan and elsewhere, funds were illegally raised, some UK-based training was offered, and the mosque operated as a propaganda hub for violent extremism. Abu Hamza was originally inspired by Abdullah Azzam whom he met in 1987 to pursue the cause of jihadism. Losing his hands in an accident at an Afghanistan terrorist training camp in 1993, Abu Hamza returned and set up Supporters of Shari'a in 1994, and saw his role as a facilitator and propagandist for jihadism. Abu Qatada also acted as his spiritual mentor at the time. In the mid-1990s he developed his links with North African groups like the Groupe Islamique Armé, at one time editing their magazine *al-Ansaar* from London. Abu Qatada, another former editor of *al-Ansaar*, repudiated the Groupe Islamique Armé in June 1996 when, under the leadership of Djamel Zitoune, they began to target and kill civilians.¹⁵⁹ Abu Hamza was forced by popular discontent from Algerians at the Finsbury Park Mosque to disown the GIA in 1997 to retain his influence just as he was taking over the institution.¹⁶⁰

Abu Hamza was able to raise significant finances for foreign jihads and send hundreds of Muslims for jihad training or for actual combat in Algeria, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir and the Yemen. Reda Hussaine, the former spy, describes how Abu Hamza used diasporic connections and anti-imperialist rhetoric to recruit for the jihad; "Many of these kids were British Asian boys, and he would talk to them in English. He would talk about Kashmir. ... when the people were Algerians he used to sit with them with coffee and dates and show them the GIA videos.... he used to talk about Yemen and Egypt."¹⁶¹ Abu Hamza only came under intense scrutiny and pressure from police in 1999 when he spoke on behalf of the Islamic Army of Aden who had kidnapped British and American tourists, four of whom were killed in the rescue attempt by the Yemeni government. It has been alleged that Abu Hamza ordered the kidnapping as an exchange for a group of British Muslims he had sent out for jihad training and allegedly to hit terrorist targets, who had been arrested by the Yemenis.¹⁶²

The al-Qaeda effect after 1998

If the period between 1992-1998 is best seen as a period of uncentralised development that was reflected in Britain through entrepreneurial attempts to connect with varied conflict zones and takfiri jihadist groups, there was more clearly an attempt from British takfiri jihadists to reach out to, and gain credibility with, al-Qaeda once it began to establish itself in Afghanistan in the late 1990s. As ideas within the global jihad movement changed, these were reflected, debated and developed in this small subculture in Britain.

While Abu Qatada was already a trusted figure, seen as a scholarly mentor in the circles around Bin Laden, through the late nineties and onwards Omar Bakri Mohammed and Abu Hamza were in competition to gain access and influence in those same circles. Omar Bakri described himself as the spokesman for Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front for

¹⁵⁸ UK interviewee #7 & #13

¹⁵⁹ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad* (Harvard; Belknap, 2002), 270-71.

¹⁶⁰ O'Niell and McGrory, 44-45.

¹⁶¹ Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *The Suicide Factory* (London; Harper Collins, 2006), 85.

¹⁶² O'Neill and McGrory, 155-169.

Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders. If Abu Hamza described the 9/11 attacks as “a towering day in history”, Omar Bakri praised the perpetrators as “the magnificent 19”, much to the consternation of British Muslims. Both claimed to be sending volunteers to Afghanistan both before and after 9/11. After 1998 at the Finsbury Park Mosque the focus of Abu Hamza’s jihadi recruitment was primarily, if not exclusively, Afghanistan. Details of the many recruits passing through the Finsbury Park Mosque were found at an al-Qaeda safe house in Kandahar after 2001.¹⁶³ Both aped each other’s tactics, such as the Supporters of Shari’a adopting al-Muhajiroun’s high-profile protests to get media attention. The tactics were shared as the groups recruited from each other.¹⁶⁴ This was part of the psychology of intensive competition where nuances of method, rhetoric and ideology were crucial and which led to a process of one-upmanship by which the “seven pieces of al-Qaeda’s ideology” were assembled and articulated, particularly after 1998.

This increasing influence of al-Qaeda in Britain did not however mean that recruitment for the jihad did not continue to disperse and be mobilised for new conflict zones like Kosovo, Chechnya and Macedonia in the period running up to 9/11.¹⁶⁵

Going underground; the pressure of the British state after 2001

Since 2001, Britain has driven much of the open propaganda for takfiri jihadism underground. Abu Hamza was arrested in 2004 and convicted in 2006 of inciting race hate and murder and on one terrorist charge and is presently the subject of an extradition request from the United States for his alleged involvement in the Yemen kidnapping. As described above, al-Muhajiroun were disbanded and proscribed and Omar Bakri was exiled to the Lebanon between 2004-2006. Abdullah Faisal was jailed for soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred in 2003 and was deported back to Jamaica, his country of origin, in 2007. Abu Qatada was detained at Belmarsh Prison from 2002 to ‘05, was released under a control order and then was subsequently returned to custody and is still awaiting the legal outcome of his extradition case in 2007.¹⁶⁶

However, as is clear from several of our case studies, if the first generation of chief propagandists have been removed, a number of the British-based terror cells have been headed by their disciples who have taken up the propaganda role themselves. For instance, Abdullah Faisal preached on a few occasions in Beeston, Leeds, where three of the four 7/7 bombers grew up.¹⁶⁷ As one informant remarked:

‘I think Faisal was important as he visited Leeds back in the 1990s and I was struck by what I heard him say e.g. he was once asked what to do about some gypsies who were behaving badly with local Muslims, he replied “finish them off!” which I found shocking and you wonder in what way young people took it.’¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ O’Neill and McGrory,

¹⁶⁴ Wiktorowicz, 66, 82 n.76.

¹⁶⁵ UK Interviewee #5

¹⁶⁶ Back to his home country, Jordan.

¹⁶⁷ Shiv Malik, “My Brother, the Bomber”, *Prospect*, June 2007, 135, available at http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=9635.

¹⁶⁸ UK interviewee #17

The materials of such propagandists are still in circulation and may be used to culture seekers or recruits to a quite high level of theological sophistication and political reorientation.¹⁶⁹ At the same time there is now the propaganda of the deed, iconic attacks like 9/11 or 7/7, or the use of simple slogans to send out powerful public messages like Mohammed Sidique Khan's "I am a soldier and we are at war" that exploit the narrative that the Muslim world and the West are in inevitable conflict. This narrative has become more plausible since the military response to 9/11 commenced.

In the UK context, Lead Researcher Yahya Birt sees the need for a multi-dimensional, long term and holistic approach using a mix of strategies and interventions at different levels to respond to this radicalisation – security service estimates as of September 2007 are that some 2,000 individuals, 200 terrorist networks and 30 active plots, plus a significant number of sympathisers are being tracked.¹⁷⁰ Yahya Birt sees Muslim communities as having a need to build their capacity to address difficult issues, including being able to offer theological challenge to the espousal of violent extremism. He concludes by recommending that government strengthen the internal potential within the Muslim community to respond, reinforce mainstream Islam, and reassure the general public.

DENMARK

The majority of interviewees in Denmark were of second generation minority ethnic background. They range from interviewees with a high level of education and interest in religious and social issues, allied to the largest Danish Islamic organisation, to young Muslims in their teens spread geographically across the country. In addition, the researchers have been able to draw on the expertise of integration consultants with experience of working with marginalised youth who were unlikely to have agreed to participate in interviews. The great majority of the interviewees are second-generation immigrants with a Middle Eastern or an Asian background. Almost all have been either born in Denmark or lived in the country since early childhood. As a result of recruiting interviewees from different sub – groups the Danish team encountered a very diverse group of interviewees that they felt to be a reasonable sample of the diversity of views in the Muslim 'field' in Denmark.

It is important to note that Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark declined to participate despite repeated requests from researchers. The Lead Researcher, Asad Ahmad is of the view that this is probably due to the recently increasing negative publicity and pressure from the Danish State on the organisation, which has included the arrest of a leading figure.

The research in Denmark indicates that the global movements such as Salafism, Hizb ut-Tahrir and Caliphate State do not seem, in an organised way, to have gained a foothold in the Danish society. The complexities and variety of Salafi thinking, such as striving towards living a life as a 'good Muslim', is also noted. In addition the concept of a Caliphate is commonly presented as a conceptual or idealized concept rather than a practical aim by some of the interviewees and is envisaged as being realised somewhere in the Muslim world and not in Europe.

The findings in Denmark support the conclusions put forward in a study on the extent of

¹⁶⁹ UK interviewee #2

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page28.html>

violent radicalisation in Denmark recently documented via a working paper titled *Jihad in Denmark* and published in autumn 2006 by the Danish Institute for International Studies (*DIIS*). The two main conclusions of this working paper were that:

- The pool of candidates for Jihad has always been very small and this trend continues to this day.
- Perhaps the most significant impact of the jihadists has not been on the frontlines, in international terrorism, in propaganda activities or spectacular recruitment drives, but on Danish society. In spite of their small numbers they have managed to wedge themselves between the Muslim communities and mainstream Danish society. Their success in polarising Denmark has been completely out of proportion with their real numbers.

Consequently it would appear that the activities and actions of jihadists has succeeded in stimulating underlying pressures and tensions in Danish society, having a catalytic effect that has contributed to a polarisation of these dynamics. With these findings in mind, the research conducted in Denmark analysing the process of radicalisation is mainly focused on narratives about attitudes and policies towards Islam in general and more specifically towards Muslims residing in Denmark.

There seems to be a general perception amongst members of the various Muslim communities, including the interviewees, that the negative attitudes towards Islam in general and Muslim residents in Denmark in particular are based on generalisations, prejudices and Islamophobic sentiments and perceptions and some members of Muslim communities regard these attitudes being based on racist ideology.

The hypothesis of the Danish study is that this narrative of Islamophobia and the polarised political context is an important contributing factor that is influencing a process of revivalism, and in some instances radicalism, amongst youth with Muslim background residing in Denmark. Members of the Muslim community who are interested in strengthening the radicalisation movement cite negative attitudes towards Islam in the Danish society as legitimate grounds for targeting the basis of allegiances and identities of “native” Danes as well as for furthering the cause of radicalisation.

Overall religious beliefs

The great majority of the interviewees describe Islam as playing a central part in their lives and identities and they are characterised by the adoption of a non-political approach to their faith.¹⁷¹ Yet there are some important distinctions to be made with regard to their religious attitudes.

For one subgroup Islam provides the fundament of their lives and identities and they seek to attain religious perfectionism. Being Muslim is their essential identity, and Islam is omnipresent in all aspects of their lives. The other main subgroup is practising Muslims, but where religion takes up a less central role in their definition of self. Islam is rather a source of calm and meaning in life and provides a general sense of direction and a set of rules to live by.

¹⁷¹ It should be noted that a total of three of the interviewees termed themselves as non-believers. The contents of these interviews differ accordingly and have provided a contextual framework for the analysis.

The co-existence of Islam and the surrounding society is preferred by both groups. It is also generally held that Islamic principles should be adapted to the Danish ways of life and that it is a duty to become integrated in society. There was also a general belief that one cannot judge other Muslims and their individual ways of practising their faith. The important relationship is generally seen as being between God and the individual.

There is a general sense of belonging to a global Muslim community. However, this association and relationship is second to the overall perception of religion as being primarily a personal matter.

Attitudes to religion and politics

The landscape of the interviewees' views on the relationship between religion and politics is a varied one, though the main theme is a generally apolitical attitude to religion. One grouping calls for a sharp division between Islam and the Danish politics, "Shari'a and modern politics are incompatible", and stresses the need to focus on integration.¹⁷² It is notable that some of the interviewees fail to relate to religion and politics on a conceptual level. Some hold the belief that religious minorities working politically in accordance with democratic principles should be politically represented and that, if more prevalent, Islam would enhance levels of integration.

One interviewee argued that a partial incorporation of Islam in Danish politics would advance the recognition of a religiously versatile society. In contrast to the main group of interviewees is the observation by one young male that Islam as an ideology is composed indivisibly by religion and politics and accordingly, religion should be granted maximum influence in a non-Islamic state.

The interviewees' attitudes to the caliphate correspond to a political awareness where association of religion and politics is not desirable for most interviewees. The caliphate is considered utopian and the attraction in the opinion of a female interviewee is "safety and welfare for all". Another female interviewee focused on the issue of justice in society and believed that questions of whether a society is secular or 'khilafa'¹⁷³ were a secondary issue.

Views on the use of violence

The interviewees conveyed a strong overall rejection of the use of violence, generally believing that linking Islam and terrorist activities arises from ignorance and misinterpretations of the Quran. It was widely held that certain contextual factors are of overriding importance in understanding the development of violent radicalism; Western foreign policies and prejudice towards Muslims in Western societies were seen as accounting for the interconnection of violence and religion.

According to a young female, terrorists are "not Muslims...the Quran prohibits the killing of civilians".¹⁷⁴ 9/11. The London bombings are unanimously condemned and written off as deliberate misinterpretations. One interviewee perceived the 9/11 bombings to be a misreading of the jihadi thinking; "It was murder. It had nothing to do with self-defence" (Mohammed). Al-Qaeda was seen as abusing religion in a political and ideological conflict

¹⁷² Denmark interviewee #1

¹⁷³ Alternative term for the Caliphate

¹⁷⁴ Denmark interviewee #20

and Islam should not be reduced to politics.¹⁷⁵

Despite the dissociation of Islam and terrorism, it was a common observation that violence may be acceptable in situations of war and self-defence. The majority of the interviewees condoned and to some extent defended the Palestinian use of violence. Emotions ran high on the subject, “Israel should not exist”¹⁷⁶ was the belief of one respondent and the occupation of Palestinian land was seen as unjust and legitimising violent action in self-defence. One interviewee expressing sympathy for the Hamas saying “nothing is wrong in war”.¹⁷⁷ However, most others considered that civilians are innocent and terrorist acts aimed at civilians were seen as directly in opposition to Islam.

On the subject of suicide attacks, few interviewees were explicit in their attitudes to martyrdom. One female interviewee stressed that despite her understanding of the desperation that the suicide bombers may feel, suicide is inherently un-Islamic and not martyrdom.

There is a wide-ranging tendency among the interviewees to adopt a nuanced interpretation of terrorism in a global and local context. According to one male interviewee, terrorism emanates from a sense of helplessness in society or in situations of war (such as Iraq) in which one is “pushed into it.” Such circumstances increase the comprehensibility of terrorist actions, yet they remain outcomes of a misinterpretation of Islam. Also, terrorist acts may be seen as an outlet for anger at society, as in the case of the UK doctors.¹⁷⁸

The criticism of American foreign policies particularly among interviewees was immense. A common feeling is that the US disguises its financial interest as a humanitarian concern and its course of action contributes to terror; Western interference in the Muslim world is seen as an attack on religion. There is a profound feeling of alienation in minority Muslim communities as well as an experienced prejudice and injustice towards Muslims in Denmark.

Prevalence of particular ideologies, narratives and sources

There is an emerging picture of common narratives reflecting Muslim outlook on life in Denmark. This contrasts with the absence of any overall religious ideology among the interviewees. However, bearing in mind evident variations, Danish Muslims share the experience of being alienated from society and a lack of respect for and understanding of Islam. It appears that this sense of alienation emanates from global and local events and developments that are inevitably intertwined.

Much of the material generated from the interview data and quoted throughout his analysis illustrates the prominence of the identity development trend amongst youth with a Muslim background residing in Denmark. The frustration with and perceived lack of understanding of the host society, including the Danish media, is another common theme. A third element apparent in some of the interviews is what young persons with a Muslim background consider to be unjust and warlike policies of Western governments in the Middle East.

The post 9/11 focus on Islam and terrorism has engendered a growing religious consciousness among many interviewees. There is a sense of persecution of and injustice towards Muslims

¹⁷⁵ Denmark interviewee #3

¹⁷⁶ Denmark interviewee #1

¹⁷⁷ Denmark interviewee #7

¹⁷⁸ Denmark interviewee #21

by global society out of which a need for self-defence has arisen; “As a Muslim you are guilty until proven innocent”.¹⁷⁹ On the whole this group feels strongly about US foreign policy, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the perceived occupation of Palestine. “The US has set an agenda that Denmark follows uncritically. It provokes me deeply”.¹⁸⁰ The interviewees oppose the presence of the western military forces in the Middle East on ideological grounds, as some take the view that western interference in the Muslim world is an attack on religion.¹⁸¹

Danish Muslims experience the reverberations of the global situation in an increasingly negative context. The interviewees are affected by the western world’s views and representations of Muslims that are “coloured by an anti-Islamic agenda”.¹⁸² This woman also describes a sense of threat, as practising Islam in Denmark is seen as equated with fanaticism and extremism. Several interviewees believe that prejudice towards Danish Muslims results from a widespread ignorance of Islam and point to a tendency to “reduce Islam to politics.”¹⁸³

Interviewees also blame the Danish media for a negative and one-sided representation of local Muslim communities and the global terror threat. The media is considered active in the process of alienating Danish Muslims by promoting prejudice and maintaining ignorance of Islam. Surprisingly the cartoon crisis was only mentioned by a few interviewees. One argues “The cartoons were not that bad. This is how it is in Denmark. Of course it was not great, but you have to adapt”.¹⁸⁴ Another viewpoint was that the printing of the cartoons has had the effect of “criminalizing her faith” and had left her exposed being a Muslim in Denmark.¹⁸⁵ One interviewee, who in other respects showed little political awareness in his religious outlook and definition of self, explained that he felt an intensifying unity with the Muslim world as a consequence of the negative focus on Islam in Denmark and the situation in the Middle East.¹⁸⁶

There were references to groups of youths who ‘withdraw’ and oppose western ways of thought, adhering increasingly to the views of their advisers, Imams and other mentors. “When you as a foreigner are under pressure, you become anti- something or other” (Yunes). These groups of excluded youth were perceived by some interviewees to be potential targets for recruitment by Hizb ut-Tahrir and other Islamist groupings. One source tells of Imams who are trying to recruit very young and impressible youth using parallel narratives of Islam taken out of their rightful context “they tell the young people what to do and what is rewarded in the war against the Western society – including acts of violence” (Mohammed).

One of the interviewees was a founder of an Islamic web forum (shiaonline.dk) that among other things serves as a forum for discussion of Islam. In addition to online activity, the users, who are all young male Muslims, are invited to participate in social as well as educational events, such as football matches, debates and lectures. A group of approximately 20 regular users meet up once a week while bigger events gather up to 100 attendants. Nicknamed “The

¹⁷⁹ Denmark interviewee #1

¹⁸⁰ Denmark interviewee #10

¹⁸¹ Denmark interviewee #6

¹⁸² Denmark interviewee #10

¹⁸³ ibid

¹⁸⁴ Denmark interviewee #16

¹⁸⁵ Denmark interviewee #10

¹⁸⁶ Denmark interviewee #3

administrator”, he is deeply religious and spends most of his time studying the Quran while aspiring to become a military officer in the Danish army. He states that the purpose of the website/club is to provide the right understanding of Islam, to avoid prejudice and promote co-existence, while aiming at “straightening up oneself, straightening up the young and straightening up the others.”

“The administrator” ascribes to Islam as an ideology and argues that politics should be based on the rules of Islam. He refers to the Hizb ut-Tahrir as another example of an alternative to crime among young people, yet he disagrees with the organisation both on political and religious levels and criticises their lack of “religious foundation.” As one of the case studies illustrates, this web-based forum embodied by “the administrator” has provided a non-violent alternative to a previously radical Islamist in the making, albeit an alternative verging on religious extremism.

Assessment of the scale and significance of ideological radicalisation

The interviews disclose some identification with what the interviewees refer to as the original or literal meaning of Salafi. They aspire to attain the high level and spiritual development of the prophet’s way of life which presents the Islamic “truth” and ideal. This understanding is contrasted with the current political and violent Salafist groups found in Western societies, and the interviewees do not convey a political understanding of the term. One states that allegedly extremist Salafist groupings and ideologies have no place in society while another believes them to have many adherents in Denmark. They are considered intolerant, e.g. in their views on women, while interviewees acknowledged that they may help people move away from a criminal lifestyle.

With one exception, none of the interviewees condoned violence against the host society and the prevalence of ideological radicalisation in the interview material is insignificant. It needs to be emphasised that Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark did not wish to participate in the research conducted and thus the research material is not as comprehensive as desired, yet it does offer an insight into the diversity of beliefs, narratives and ideologies amongst Muslim youth in Denmark.

The interviews unravel narratives on the feelings of alienation and injustice among Danish Muslims and the widespread resentment against western foreign policies. They also provide an insight into the subjective experiences of Islam disclosing a primary focus on individual religious affiliation to date rather than a collective attachment to a worldwide religious community.

While these Danish Muslims do not articulate or promote global narratives of Salafist ideology, some do aspire to elements of the aforementioned “original” Salafism and thus to literal interpretations of the Quran. It is also worth noting that in one of the interviews the understanding of Salafi ways of thinking offers such an approach to Salafi ideology, albeit a ‘moderate’ one.¹⁸⁷

The narratives of injustice centre on issues of western foreign policy, i.e. ulterior economic motives for the US organised invasion of Iraq, rather than an attack on a perceived ideological imperialist agenda. It is important to note that the attitudes and discussions

¹⁸⁷ Denmark interviewee #22

concerning the Palestinian issue are of a fundamentally different nature. The emphasis here is on ethics, principles, unjust treatment and repression, and in such cases violent measures are considered legitimate and / or condoned.

The condemnation by a number of interviewees of what they regard as the unjust occupation of Palestine and consider as misguided western foreign policies in relation to the Middle Eastern and/or Muslim countries are two central narratives emerging from the interviews. These narratives form part of the framework for understanding the other recurrent narrative; the feeling of exclusion and alienation in the Danish society. On an international level these Danish Muslims perceived injustice to Muslim communities, while at the same time experiencing the local effects of these policies in a Danish society that they consider as increasingly prejudiced against Muslims. The feeling of standing out as a Muslim, of having to continually defend their faith and disassociate Islam from terrorism is overwhelmingly present in the narratives and feeds an acute awareness of being different and estranged.

In a majority of the interviews the media are criticised for using generalisations when referring to Muslim communities and creating stereotypical presentations of Islam as “them”, neglecting the demands of objectivity and feeding hostility towards Muslims.

As a consequence of these socio-religious trends, there was a growing attachment and identification with Islam among several of the interviewees to counteract the feeling of alienation. An interviewee described how wearing a headscarf is now used as an identity statement in relation to the wider society. As a response to the feeling of being excluded and to the negative focus on Islam, religion provides an alternative platform for identity formation and in-group cohesion. However, it is important to note that several of the interviewees emphasised that religious approach and affiliation are in an issue for the individual and his/her relation to God, rather than requiring shaping or mediation by political religious groupings.

GERMANY

The German research included 9 interviews with stakeholder interviewees with particular insight and engagement with issues of violent radicalisation and 30 primary fieldwork interviews. The 30 interviews were intended to include a broad spectrum of religious orientations and were in broad categories to ensure an appropriate range of interviewees for the German context. Interviews were specifically sought with women within the general categories as well as with converts of non-Muslim heritage (5). The spectrum of cultural background was intended to be broad. Taking into account that immigrants from Turkey are the largest Muslim group in Germany 7 interviewees were from Turkey or had a Turkish or Kurdish background. Other countries of origin or migration included Morocco, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Pakistan.

Context

The largest Muslim membership organisation in Germany is the ICMG, founded in 1985 and seen as Islamist in that it follows the ideas of Necmettin Erbakan of building a ‘just order’ that is based on religion. The second largest is the Muslim Brotherhood aiming to establish states based on the Quran and Sunnah and seen as the ‘ideological mother’ of other Sunni Islamist organisations. The Tabligh have also come to the attention of security experts in recent years, as despite their focus on missionary work and strict ritual and personal religious

practice, the German authorities have proved in some legal cases that the infrastructure of the Tabligh has been used by members of terrorist groups and networks for some journeys.

Fieldwork in Germany indicates Salafis in Germany appear as individuals or small groups in communities and it is impossible to accurately gauge numbers. Some specific mosque associations can be identified as attended by Salafis or having a Salafi orientation, though in itself this gives no indication of a radical violent presence. Currently there is a high profile public figure, the convert Pierre Vogel, who is active in missionary work and presents a Salafi version of Islam to audiences.

In terms of explicitly radical organisations Hizb ut-Tahrir is still active after a ban in 2003 and is estimated to have some 300 members. On its German webpage it describes itself as a political party whose ideology is Islam and whose ambition to establish an Islamic State. A second radical organisation is the Caliphate State that was founded in 1984 with the goal of a state based on the Quran (though not elaborated) and the destruction of the secular republic of Turkey to be replaced by an Islamic state. The organisation was banned in 2001, though a few members are still active. In addition there is a group of supporters of Hamas, estimated at about 300, whose activities are restricted to the collection of donations.

The Ansar-al-Sunnah (originally Ansar-al-Islam), was founded in 2001 and has its origins in Iraq. It has mostly Kurdish membership and an aim of creating a state in the Kurdish region of Iraq based on Islamic principles. German security experts describe this as a Salafi-jihadist organisation. They are seen as directly responsible for terrorist attacks against people and infrastructure as well as secular Kurdish organisations. It appears their main activity in Germany is the collection of funds and provision of technical support. A number of members have been arrested, put on trial and convicted for being members and supporters of a terrorist organisation.

Key narratives in German Muslim communities parallel those also identified in the Danish and French contexts; including anti-imperial and anti-colonial perceptions of US / 'Western' policy in the Middle East and towards Palestine, as well as concerns about the motivation for conflict in Iraq and in Afghanistan. This sentiment is often linked to a critique of the social injustices generated by a capitalist system. The West is seen as engaged in a campaign or fight against Islam and there is reference to the return of the Caliphate though whether this is a reference to a largely unspecified and benign social utopia or a vision of a structured political arrangement for the state is unclear. There is also a focus and concern among interviewees with 'the correct Islamic way of life' which reinforces the findings in all country research of a primary concern across most interviewees of what it means to be 'a good Muslim.'

Broad findings

A hostile society

The attitude of actors in the public sphere towards Muslims was identified by a range of interviewees as a key dynamic impacting upon the Muslim populations of Germany. This appears in the form of a rhetoric of "us" and "them" / "we" and "you", and a stigmatising of Muslims as the "other". One key example of this dynamic cited by one of the interviewees is of the pressure commonly placed on Muslim youth, often in school settings, to explain a

range of negative developments in the Muslim world, with a framing and characterisation of the interviewee as part of an ‘other’, i.e. Islam, responsible for the negative developments.¹⁸⁸

This ascription and reinforcement of separate identities for Muslim youth, in particular in schools, is identified by interviewees in examples such as discussions of cultural difference and “value conflicts” framing Muslim youth as “outsiders”, even if they were born and grew up in the country. A typical stereotype reported by interviewees is that underpinning the narrative “in *our* country”, a narrative that constructs and identifies young Muslim people as “the other” or outsider.

This lack of a sense of belonging and the anger it generates was reported by a stakeholder in the following way:

“In Europe we face the situation that Muslims who grew up here, who speak the language very well and have a high level of education, do not feel part of society. They have grown up with the wars in Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan and Iraq and hear again and again about human rights. In their perception these values do not count for Muslims. Many young Muslims then ask themselves how this could be possible and feel anger.”¹⁸⁹

Another factor which was mentioned as playing a role in potentially radicalising Muslim youth in Germany is the ‘taboo’ of expressing criticism of Israeli politics. For historical reasons, criticism of the Israeli government is very sensitive in Germany and can easily be seen as Anti-Semitism. A journalist who was interviewed reported on a film she had made of youngsters coming from the Lebanon. They explained how they felt that they are not allowed to talk in school about relatives killed by the Israeli army. They complained that if they did, they would automatically be branded as anti-Semitic.

“This makes people angry. This does not automatically produce violent radicals, but when rage builds up, they can fall prey to radicals. It must be possible to criticise without automatically being pilloried. Criticism should not turn into hatred. If you don’t give people the chance to express their views, they will not be able to learn.”¹⁹⁰

Other interviewees underlined that the lack of basic religious knowledge can facilitate the development of a radical mindset or point of view. One stakeholder described his own observations as follows:

“From time to time I became acquainted with radical thinking, but barely with radical acting Muslims. From the perspective of my own biography [as a convert] for me it was striking that these Muslims were very weak in Islamic scholarliness and education. [...] Radical thinking Muslims occasionally tried to win me as lawyer and to represent their interests. But these efforts to gain me failed very soon, when we started to discuss the basis of it [their interests] and I could show them quiet plainly that they themselves did not stand on the ground of the Islamic teaching but they are violating permanently some basic Islamic principles. [...] For me it is obvious that broad education will pull

¹⁸⁸ Germany interviewee Muslim teenager.

¹⁸⁹ Germany interview with Souad Mekhennet, investigative journalist.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid

the rug out from demagogy. Only Islamically uneducated persons can be influenced easily by demagogy."¹⁹¹

Interviewees and stakeholders pointed out that personal or observed experiences of discrimination can underpin the appeal of conspiracy theories among many Muslim youth. A staff member of a neighbourhood management described it as follows:

*"In my point of view radicalisation has to be seen in connection with personal experiences like discrimination. In some cases you then develop conspiracy theories. Part of the conspiracy theories can (include) even the school principal, who is seen as part of the Zionist world conspiracy. Very crude world views, as you can see."*¹⁹²

The sensitivity towards discrimination has also had a negative impact on Muslims who adopt what might be considered a more 'modern' way of life, in which traditional dressing and religious practice only play a minor role. They can continue to feel empathy and anger at restrictions and discrimination against traditionally practising Muslims. A young Muslim woman who was born in Lebanon and came with her family as refugees to Germany, described this as follows:

*"I do not wear a headscarf and I follow a liberal practice in dealing with others. But I become very angry when I see how Muslims here are discriminated against and restricted in their freedom of worship. That hurts me in my identity. Adding the unjust things, that are happening abroad, it has an effect in radicalising me."*¹⁹³

Islamic Revivalism

During the course of the study general narratives and dynamics of religious revivalism amongst Muslims who have grown up in Germany could be identified. In some cases the lack of scope for religious practice in public life can be a factor that leads young Muslims who grow up as a minority to join a specific Islamic community or Islamic organisation. This dynamic can also include cultural expressions of religious life, such as specific dress which is seen as Islamic. A former member of the Tablighi Jama'at describes what attracted him to join the movement. "One day I was in the Turkish mosque where I saw people with robes and turbans. It was fascinating. They were people from the Tablighi Jama'at. They gave everybody something into their hands in which it was described how to eat, how to sit, how to sleep and so forth. And I thought wow! Something is opening its door and you pick up things about the Islamic way of life."¹⁹⁴ This description indicates that it is the authenticity of religious life, in this case demonstrated by special clothes seen as authentically Islamic, that can attract young Muslims to join a group. The fact that this is seen as attractive highlights how for this interviewee, in normal life the notion of authenticity of religiosity as a Muslim is lacking.

¹⁹¹ Germany interview with a Muslim convert, working as solicitor, mostly for Muslim migrants.

¹⁹² Germany interview with a staff member of a neighbourhood management in Berlin who is in an intensive contact with mosque associations and their members.

¹⁹³ Germany interview with a 27 year old female student, born in the Lebanon and living in Germany since 1990.

¹⁹⁴ Germany interviewee number 3

The correct Islamic way of life

One particular type of narrative of authenticity is represented by the *Tablighi Jama'at*, a group of Pakistani origin which is also very active in Germany. The Tablighi Jama'at is mostly occupied with da'wa work, da'wa literally meaning to invite people to the real faith. Practically it means to practice da'wa towards Muslims to make them 'real' Muslims and the main narrative here is the "*correct Islamic way of life*".

To propagate this the Tablighi Jama'at members make visits (Khurūj) to mosques and groups and spend time in discussion with young Muslims to convince them of the 'right' understanding of Islam. According to the Tablighi Jama'at only one correct understanding of Islam exists and this includes rules on how to dress, eat, sleep and sit correctly. This movement can perhaps be described as a non-intellectual, because the "correct" understanding of the religion is not explained discursively and rationally. According to Tablighi Jama'at, the movement possesses and defends the only correct understanding of the "truth" (al-haqq). Defending and practising the only right understanding means that other Muslim thinkers are criticised and other Muslims seen as inferior for not practicing the religion rightly (though this should not be equated with Takfir, i.e. seeing them as infidels).¹⁹⁵

A main characteristic of the Tablighi Jama'at movement is that they do not propagate political goals nor do they defend a particular position in political controversies and do not discuss visions of an Islamic state. They restrict themselves strictly to da'wa work for *the* correct Islamic way of life that follows a literalistic understanding of religion as described by a former member of the Tablighi Jama'at, who followed the guidance when visiting the Pakistan headquarters of the movement in Rajband.¹⁹⁶ In addition, Tablighi Jama'at members do not defend and articulate any opinion on, for example, the situation of the Palestinians. As a former Tablighi Jama'at member who was interviewed reported, Tablighi Jama'at members in an Arab mosque were repeatedly asked to comment on the situation of the Palestinians. When the Tablighi members eventually stated a belief that the Palestinians were being punished by God for not living the Islamic faith correctly, the discussion ended promptly and the Tablighi Jama'at members lost much sympathy and support. This exclusive understanding of Islam can therefore rapidly alienate them from many other Muslims.

Though the Tablighi Jama'at does not pursue and promote political goals and in that sense can hardly be described as Islamist, security experts nevertheless assess them as potentially dangerous because of the training they organise in Pakistan. This training can be for some Muslims the start of an Islamist or even terrorist career.¹⁹⁷ This assessment is also shared by the interviewed former Tablighi Jama'at member, who argues that the organisation can serve a catalyst function for a radicalisation.¹⁹⁸ Others argue that although the Tablighi Jama'at does not formally propagate violence they sometimes articulate some understanding or acceptance of violence that occurs, which might have a catalytic influence on some individuals.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ ibid

¹⁹⁶ ibid

¹⁹⁷ See Bundesministerium des Innern; Verfassungsschutzbericht 2005, Berlin, May 2006, p. 194.

¹⁹⁸ Germany interview with a former member of the Tablighi Jama'at.

¹⁹⁹ Germany interview with Korkut Buğday, Ministry for Domestic Affairs in North-Rhine Westfalia.

Opinions and attitudes towards violence

In the case of radical groups like the Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Khalifate State it was reported by interviewees that these groups wished to distance themselves from violence. In the case of the Hizb ut-Tahrir it was pointed out by a former activist that the organisation had a clear goal of establishing an Islamic state based on Islamic principles, but that the political work to reach this goal had to be peaceful, utilising propaganda and convincing others. As a positive example the prophet himself is seen as having established his state peacefully. All groups that were propagating the use of violence were criticised by the organisation.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless the organisation was banned in January 2003 and confirmed in 2006 by the Federal Administrative Court on the basis that the organisation has called publicly for the violent destruction of the state of Israel.²⁰¹ Consequently, although violence in Germany was not being propagated, since the goal is to establish an Islamic state in the Islamic world the group's fundamental attitude towards the use of violence is ambiguous.

A similar pattern is reflected in the Caliphate State (Hilafet Devleti). As underlined by a former activist, the former members of the banned organisations have distanced themselves from violence. But their attitude towards the use of violence in the country where they have pursued political aims is similarly ambiguous. They have idealized fighters for the religious cause, and activists at meetings have carried replica machine guns. Of interest is the recent change in the orientation of the members / former members. While previously their only interest appeared to be the situation in Turkey, after the September 11 members started to discuss Israel and showing solidarity with other Islamic groups and organisations. The attacks on the USA were seen by members as legitimate.²⁰²

Most of the interviewees argued explicitly or implicitly against the use of violence in Germany or other European countries. The opinions and attitudes vary and show nuances in the case of violent conflicts in the Middle East. While some persons perceive violence - for example by Palestinians - as understandable, others make a clear distinction between violence in defence and violence that targets civilians as in the case of suicide bombings. Violence against civilians is mostly rejected, but a few see it legitimate. "Concerning political violence in some one-to-one conversations I can hear - especially among Palestinians - that they see some forms of violence as legitimate - even against civilians. But this (was) already so in the 1980s when they came to Germany as refugees. But I don't see this as a danger for our society. I never encountered the need to inform the police."²⁰³

The Middle Eastern conflict and other conflicts

One major issue in the debate and the publications (printed, online, round robin emails) of Islamic organisations and groups is the Middle Eastern conflict, particularly the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and the situation in Iraq. Muslims of non-Arab origin or

²⁰⁰ Germany interview with the former activist of the Hizb ut-Tahrir.

²⁰¹ See Bundesverwaltungsgericht; *Verbot der Betätigung des Vereins "Hizb-ut-Tahrir" bestätigt*, press release, 25.01.2006, http://www.bundesverwaltungsgericht.de/enid/537d3c789807f6cdaff139f1f9d6975f.ad921d7365617263685f646973706c6179436f6e7461696e6572092d093632333093a095f7472636964092d09353737/Pressemitteilungen/Pressemitteilungen_9d.html [25.08.2007]

²⁰² Germany interview with a former activist, whose father is still in contact with the members of the banned organisation.

²⁰³ Germany interview with a staff member of a neighbourhood management organisation in Berlin.

background in Germany may or may not have the same emotional connection with this issue or hold radical views on Israel, however this is difficult to analyse as there may be a wariness of articulating opinions which in the German context are seen as anti-Semitic or adapted anti-Semitic rhetoric.

The "campaign / war against Islam"

Another narrative that can be seen in the German context in different forms and to intensity is the "fight" or the "campaign of the West against Islam". According to this narrative the "West" is conducting a fight against Islam, ideologically and militarily. One variety of this narrative is that the United States of America is leading a military campaign against Islam. "US-campaign against Islam and the rest of the world" is a sub-headline of the internet-forum "Muslim-Markt", where articles from leftist newspapers, magazines or blogs are listed chronologically.

The criticism of capitalism

Another narrative that can be observed is the notion that Islam is an alternative to capitalism. This narrative automatically includes - in most cases a superficial - criticism of capitalism. In some cases Islam is described as an 'ideological' alternative to capitalism. "Islam is the only remaining ideology, which can seriously withstand capitalism. With its call for justice it is the natural enemy of capitalism." So the fight against Islam finds its explanation in its ideological stand against capitalism.²⁰⁴ A criticism of the "capitalist ideology" can also be found in the texts of the Hizb ut-Tahrir. This "wrong ideology" is based on "the separation of religion from the daily problems of people". The capitalist philosophy leads the capitalist states "to further their colonialist foreign policy" by using the fight against terrorism as a pretext. That is why "Today Islam is the only serious ideological danger for the capitalist states."²⁰⁵

The discussions on a "German Islam" or a "European Islam"

For some years a debate has been taking place as to whether a "German" or a "European Islam" might or should develop. The notion of a German or European version or interpretation of the religion has two sources. As well as in the political and public policy sphere the issue has and is being discussed by individual Muslims and organisations.

Some radical groups have already reacted to this discourse. A clearly negative response to the idea comes for example from Hizb ut-Tahrir. On their webpage they reacted to a Muslim writer who predicted the development of a specifically German variety of Islam in the next decades by stating that the notion of a "German", "European" or "enlightened Islam" is *kafir*, because "Islam, the belief order which God preserves can never be changed - not in Germany, not elsewhere".²⁰⁶ In a leaflet which sympathisers or members of the organisation had distributed at mosques in Hamburg in June 2007, Hizb ut-Tahrir warns against integration

²⁰⁴ See *Online-Portal Muslim-Markt warnt vor "Raubtierkapitalismus"*, in: Jugendkultur, Religion und Demokratie. Politische Bildung mit jungen Muslimen, No 1, 15 August 2007, p. 8.

²⁰⁵ See Hizb-ut-Tahrir; *Befreiung der Ummah*, im Internet unter; http://www.islam-projekte.com/kalifat/kalifat/_rubric/detail.php?nr=35&rubric=Artikel%3A_Kalifat&PHPSESSID=d098a6e2e7171664fe6c42d9791662ac [Access; 24.09.2007]

²⁰⁶ See the comment on Feridun Zaimoğlu on the German webpage of Hizbu't-Tahrir under; http://www.islam-projekte.com/kalifat/kalifat/_rubric/detail.php?nr=2624&rubric=Artikel%3A_Zitate&PHPSESSID=e060af030027dfb8c4cf4ab02d26c845 [Access; 21.09.2007]

into the "Western secular system"; Muslims should not integrate into German society but follow the universal message of Islam.

The efforts of the "Kafir" (unbelievers) to create a German Islam intends – they explain - to re-interpret Islam to that extent that it harmonizes with the "Kafir laws" (laws of unbelief). "Homosexuality, the rejection of God as Law giver, secularism, apostasy and many other bad things are expected to be tolerated by Muslims and even seen as in conformity with Islam."²⁰⁷ In the argument, the German Islam Conference is seen as a part of the efforts "to impose ... capitalistic-secular achievements on our main beliefs". These efforts are an attempt to "replace the Islam, Muhammad (saw) has left us, by an Islam à la Schäuble" (Federal Minister for Domestic Affairs). The idea of religious instruction at public schools in German has to be seen in this context, which aims to "vaccinate the 'secular' version of Islam to our children".²⁰⁸

A polemical approach to Muslims within the 'establishment' or those who advocate dialogue can be found on web pages, as in the case of Salafi oriented groups or individuals. One example is the web page "Centre for German-speaking Muslims for Da`wa-Salafiya", where Muslim personalities who practise dialogue with broader society and work within the system are labelled "kafir".²⁰⁹

The Caliphate

An ideological position of radical organisations is the idea of the caliphate as a political system. According to a specific reading of the Quran the *Khalifa* as a person has to be the head of the community and the state. As such he is not a ruler who follows his own will but is practicing God's will on earth and ensuring that others do so too. The most well-known promoters of the idea of the caliphate as the head of the state which is organized according to principles and rules of the Quran in Germany are the Caliphate State (Kalifatsstaat) and the "Islamic Liberation Party" (Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami), which also has a "branch" (wilāya) in Germany. Both organisations were banned after the terrorist attacks in the United States of America in 2001. The Caliphate State was banned in 2001, the Hizb ut-Tahrir in 2003. Though officially banned, both organisations are active illegally. According to official reports, the number of members of the Hizb ut-Tahrir has grown since then, while the number of followers of the Caliphate State has been constant.²¹⁰ While both place the caliph at the centre of their political programs as head of state, the ideas behind this political goal differ, with differing organisational structures and proposed strategies in reaching their goal.

²⁰⁷ See *Die Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT); Propaganda gegen "Einbürgerung" und "Islam-Konferenz"*, in; Jugendkultur, Religion und Demokratie. Politische Bildung mit jungen Muslimen, No 1, 15 August 2007, p. 6-8.

²⁰⁸ See Assem, Shaker; *Stellungnahme zur zweiten deutschen Islamkonferenz*, Rubrik "Verlautbarungen von Hizb-ut-Tahrir", 6.5.2007, im Internet unter; http://www.islam-projekte.com/kalifat/kalifat/_rubric_verlautbarungen/detail.php?nr=1833&rubric=Verlautbarungen%3A_Von+Hizb-ut-Tahrir&PHPSESSID=f47f800f3b8a6b040b359e690baaacc4 [Access; 24.09.2007]; see also See *Die Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT); Propaganda gegen "Einbürgerung" und "Islam-Konferenz"*, in; Jugendkultur, Religion und Demokratie. Politische Bildung mit jungen Muslimen, No 1, 15 August 2007, p. 6-8.

²⁰⁹ See the subchapter on Salafis in this report.

²¹⁰ See Bundesministerium des Innern (Hg.); *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2005*, Berlin, Mai 2006; im Internet unter; http://www.bmi.bund.de/Internet/Content/Common/Anlagen/Broschueren/2006/Verfassungsschutzbericht_2005_de.templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/Verfassungsschutzbericht_2005_de.pdf [Access; 14.02.2007]

Common to both is the idea of a caliphate as a political system. Both identify an incompatibility between “Islam” and democracy. Another characteristic common to both organisations is their attitude to the use of violence. Both organisations argue that violence should be used in order to reach political goals. The Hizb ut-Tahrir organisation argues for the caliph to be established everywhere where Muslims are living and the members of the Hizb ut-Tahrir in Germany have prepared a long text published on their homepage in which they argue democracy and the political participation in the democratic process have to be rejected, supported by quotations from the Quran and the Sunnah.²¹¹ The Hizb ut-Tahrir has a developed notion of the apparatus of the Islamic state with the caliph on the top of it.²¹²

Differentiated from the concept of the Hizb ut-Tahrir, the *Caliphate State* in Germany aims to replace the secular regime in Turkey with the caliphate system. The goal is regional and has Turkey as the target. This also means that the Caliphate State has no political targets in Germany or in any other country. The narrative of the caliphate state has no elaborated concept of the state and focuses on the writings and the discourse of the former leader and other members of the organisation, non- or anti-Islamic politics and the non Islamic way of life of the founder of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Beyond this rhetoric, the theories that he was born as an illegal child (veled-i zina) play an important role.²¹³

Cult of martyrdom

No information could be found on the cult of martyrdom among violent radicals in Germany. One text which deals with martyrdom in history as it is seen by Islamic scholars has been published by the Interior Ministry of the *Bundesland* Northrhine-Westfalia. It also deals with the phenomenon in the Middle East conflict but contains no information on contemporary beliefs among Muslims in Germany or other European countries.²¹⁴ The question of suicide bombings in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has also been analysed by another researcher in Germany, but also contains no information on the cult of martyrdom among Muslims in Germany.²¹⁵

Non-violent counter-movement of young Muslims

A key trend of note in the German context has been the many young Muslims with a strong religious orientation who have felt uncomfortable with the effects of the public debate after the 9/11 attacks and have started to develop a counter movement which emphasises that their

²¹¹ See Hizb ut-Tahrir; *Die politische Partizipation im Westen und der diesbezügliche Rechtspruch des Islam. 1423 n.H. / 2002 n.Chr. [Political Participation in the West and the legal decision of Islam on this, 1423 a.H. / a.Chr]*, im Internet unter; http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/deutsch/leaflets/wilayatflts/Europa/die_politische_partizipation_im.htm [Access; 3.4.05]

²¹² See Innenministerium des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen; *Islamismus – Instrumentalisierung der Religion für politische Zwecke [Islamism – The Instrumentalisation of the Religion for Political Aims]*, Düsseldorf, May 2005.

²¹³ This assessment was also made by an interviewee who was formerly member of the Caliphate State organisation.

²¹⁴ See Innenministerium des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Abteilung Verfassungsschutz (Hg.); *Märtyrertum und Bombenterror. Eine vergleichende Darstellung des Märtyrerbegriffes im Islam und der Selbstmordanschläge im Nahen Osten*, Düsseldorf, Oktober 2003, <http://www.im.nrw.de/sch/doks/vs/maertyrertum.pdf> [Access; 14.02.2007]

²¹⁵ See Schneiders, Thorsten Gerald; *Heute sprengte ich mich in die Luft - Suizidanschläge im israelisch-palästinensischen Konflikt. Ein wissenschaftlicher Beitrag zur Frage des Warum*, Münster et al; Lit Verlag 2006.

religion should not be equated with violence. These young Muslims come together in public events such as conferences and concerts of musicians and use these events as a forum for discussions. A journalist who attended many of these events and undertook interviews with young Muslims describes this movement as “pop Islam”.²¹⁶

According to her observations these are youngsters who have suffered discrimination by the broader society and observe a great gap between Muslims and non-Muslims. Among them are many who appear to be frustrated and feeling they receive unequal or unjust treatment as Muslims. Key stories include for example the Abu Ghraib incidents in Iraq or the case of Murat Kurnaz, captured in Pakistan and brought to Guantanamo where he was imprisoned for five years and although it became clear that he was not involved in any violent action he was still denied return by officials in Germany. The common characteristics of these “Pop Muslims” appear to be the wish to open up debate and take steps against radicalisation and violence, as well as a desire to be successful in their personal life. They see no contradiction in being a believing and practicing Muslim and taking pleasure in listening to music and being fashionable in their dress.²¹⁷

FRANCE

During the course of this study 26 stakeholders were interviewed. Interviewees ranged from consultees with particular insight into the experiences of radicalisation through the responsibilities they exercise in Muslim organisations, in the police or in the academic field through to Muslim youth interviewed with no particular relationship to political violence or radical ideologies. Six interviewees were members of Muslim organisations, three from the moderate trend represented by the “Grande Mosquée” of Paris, one to the reformist trend of the UOIF, with other members of local Muslim association without any link to a specific trend. Two interviewees have been chaplains in jails and have particular insight into the development and impact of radical narratives and ideologies on young prisoners. One interviewee was an imam from a deprived district with insight into the role of religious narratives in articulating the social preoccupations and concerns of the inhabitants. Also interviewed were social workers and educators who are in contact with young Muslims attracted by violence. Three interviewees were academics who have studied the question of the interpretation of the sacred texts, the building of political ideologies corresponding to the main Islamic values and the effects of radical narratives on Muslims living in France. One interviewee was a police officer who has followed the evolution of the different Islamic groups acting in France.

In addition a range of additional interviewees with no professional interest or particular relationship to radical or violent radical groups were interviewed in order to evaluate how the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radical groups interacted with the interviewees. These interviewees are drawn from a range of social backgrounds and are largely based in the urban areas of Lyon and Paris. 15 of these interviews were conducted. In addition, one former militant was interviewed and brought particular insight into the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of violent radicalisation and how individuals may engage with them and the violent

²¹⁶ See Gerlach, Julia; *Zwischen Pop und Dschihad. Muslimische Jugendliche in Deutschland*, Berlin; Ch. Links Verlag 2006.

²¹⁷ Germany interview with Julia Gerlach.

action that they propose. It was not possible to interview contemporary members of radical groups promoting terrorism underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam.

The French research team set their report in the context of the French state's attempts to manage the Muslim faith in France through organisational means. This has involved allowing or encouraging consulates of originating countries to take responsibility for the organisation of Muslim communities and religious facilities – often referred to as the 'Islam of the consulates'. The rationale is that these countries have more experience and also a direct vested interest in preventing radicalisation in these communities. It is also worth pointing out that France has the earliest experience in Europe of having to deal directly with violent radicals claiming allegiance to Islam committing terrorist acts in France, following on from the GIA expansion of its attempts to bring down the Algerian state to France itself. The importance of the political failures to bring equality and social inclusion since the 'Marche de beurs' in 1983, and political disaffection of the generations since then was also highlighted as a key political context to note.

The French team identify four phases in the development of 'Islamic' terrorism in France; the Iranians and their networks, what they refer to as the –relatively unsophisticated - 'young amateurs', the 'international' terrorists with little domestic links, and, now, potentially, those who have been and are being attracted to fight in the war in Iraq. Most recently they point to the key circumstances potentially leading to radicalisation and terrorism as the socio-economic conditions in the French suburbs and prisons, where some 50% of prisoners are estimated to be of Muslim heritage. There is some evidence that political participation in the form of voting has increased among people of Muslim heritage, though it is unclear whether this is in protest against perceived slights from leading political figures or a precursor to a wider mobilisation linked to Islamic allegiances or some combination of these in a context of French laicism.

Overview of ideologies and narratives in the French Muslim Field

Decline of political Islam and rise of Salafi ideology

As noted in the U.K, in France a growing differentiation has been observed recently between the traditional political Islam, "Islamism", and the *Salafi* movements. In the French context, it is possible to explain such a phenomenon as an indirect consequence of the creation in 2003 of the first official authority representing Islam, the CFCM (French Council of the Muslim Faith). This authority is dominated by three main currents: the FNMF, largely controlled by the Moroccan consulates, the *Grande Mosquée of Paris*, strongly influenced by the Algerian government, and the UOIF, linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. The latter appeared for a long time to be the best representative of Islamist ideology and attracted Moroccan and Algerian immigrants who were opponents of the political regimes existing in their home countries. A large number of French Muslims were also interested in the radical aspect of the narratives diffused by certain members of the UOIF. They appeared as the best defenders of Islamist solutions to the political and social problems faced by pious Muslims in a secular context. After four years of participation in the CFCM, the UOIF has lost a large number of supporters among young French Muslims.

Allied to the lack of representativeness within the organisation itself, the stance of the UOIF toward French authorities has also been a source of disappointment for those who had hoped

to receive radical support from this organisation in promoting the interests of Muslims. For example, they did not organise popular protests against the law of 2004 prohibiting the Islamic veil and other religious symbols in schools, despite previous statements that such a prohibition would undermine the religious freedom of Muslims. A common perception of their objectives amongst potential constituencies of support was not the protection of popular concern but the promotion of the organisation against other Muslim bodies by obtaining the esteem of the national and local politicians. Consequently the UOIF began to lose some of their influence among the French Muslims who had previously supported them as the best proponents of Islamic concerns.

The beliefs and narratives of “purist” Salafis

At the same time, particularly since 2000, a growing influence of the *Salafi* ideology among similar constituencies has been noted. The *Salafi* groups appeared in France at the beginning of the nineties and began to expand their influence ten years later. The pious *Salafis* undertook the dissemination of their view of Islam through modern means such as websites and TV channels based in the countries of the Persian Gulf. They also criticised the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood based on their view of maintaining separatism to western political systems and values. In particular, democracy is not considered an Islamic concept and there is no other law to respect than the law of God and, therefore, Muslim organisations in France do not have to take part in an authority created by a non-Muslim government. In addition, according to their interpretation of the Quran compromise concerning Islamic duties is not allowed and consequently Muslims in a western country should best insulate themselves from these systems and live in a closed circle without recourse to public authorities.

This strand has attracted those who have been disappointed by the actions led by Islamic movements like the UOIF, inspired by the principles of the Muslim Brotherhood, which consist in being present in the political field in order to gain power but in the frame of the existing system. Whilst the pious *Salafis* do not promote violence and often condemn it²¹⁸, they do commonly foster a radical rejection of both western civilisation and moderate Islam in France.

From purist Salafism to jihadism

There has been evidence of a pathway from pious Salafism to the jihadi current of Salafism. As explained later through the analysis of the interview with Interviewee #1, the experience of militancy in a group like the ‘Tablighi’, which has no political dimension but a sectarian functioning, can be influential in provoking attitudes and sentiments of frustration in which the more active means and ideologies of the militants may become of more interest.

The jihadist current was introduced and developed in France by Algerian refugees, former members of the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS).²¹⁹ They consider the jihad as the sixth pillar

²¹⁸ Ibn Uthaymin, a Salafi cheikh and member of the Committee of the Saudi Ulamas, is the author of a fatwa condemning suicide bombings. The most important Salafi cheikhs are teaching in the universities of Mecca and Medina. So it is difficult for them to promote opinions which embarrass the Saudi regime and its western allies. The other currents among the Salafis, especially the “jihadists”, consider pious Salafism as an ideology used by the Saudi monarchy to maintain its power. According to them, such a regime is not a legitimate one from an Islamic point of view, because of its alliance with the western countries. Since the war of 1991, the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia is proof that the Saudi monarchy is flouting Islamic principles.

²¹⁹ *Front Islamique du Salut*, an Islamic party prosecuted by the Algerian government after the putsch of 1992.

of Islam. According to their interpretation of Islam, Muslims have a duty to fight against the western societies and against the “corrupted” regimes of Muslim countries, by violence if necessary. Although early attempts were made to take control of some mosques and use the Web to spread their opinions they have become more cautious, commonly avoiding references to violence both in the sermons they deliver in the few mosques they control and on their websites, particularly after some were arrested after they called for murder in a “chat” on a website.

One man who threatened by phone to kill the Algerian journalist Mohamed Siffaoui – who, as a refugee in France, continues his ideological fight against radical Islamism – was identified through his e-mail address after he took part in a chat on a jihadi website. He was rapidly arrested by the police and given a suspended jail sentence. The investigation showed that he had regular relations with jihadis on the Web, even though he was not himself a member of the organisation. He said he was caused to feel personally attacked by the arguments expressed by Mohamed Siffahoui against radical Islamism because of his own ideological adherence to the themes developed by the jihadis and their sympathisers during the web chats in which he took part.

There are very few jihadi organisations identified in France but their ideology is successfully spread through unofficial meetings and chats on the Web and hold significant appeal to those for whom the political movements and the religious organisations acting legally in the French context hold no appeal. A number of stakeholders noted that the growth of their influence is a direct consequence of the crisis of political representation in France. They benefit from the ideological void affecting the popular classes. Although in the fieldwork conducted for this study no interviewees presented themselves as a member of a jihadi organisation, a number did express sympathy for the current.

The power of the Salafi jihadi ideology, and the danger it represents, is not expressed through large organisations but its ability to appear as a mobilising utopia for those who feel excluded from society because of their social difficulties as well as those suffering from a lack of intellectual recognition from the establishment. The current void in the field of secular ideologies promoting a radical fight against imperialism and capitalism explains the influence of the jihadis and the war in Iraq in particular appears to be employed as a concrete case to evidence the ‘real’ nature of US imperialism.

Narratives of radicalisation

Islam against domination

To understand radicalisation and the ideologies underpinning it, the French research team argue that it is not the current social and political situation in Arab countries that should be examined but the lives of individuals in European countries. Sociological research draws our attention to the family, school and professional situations of individuals, particularly during *the period of insertion* which is widely considered decisive in developing relationships with the social world.

In France, working-class youth of North African origin encounter multiple obstacles in their quest for success; including racism and forms of discrimination, but also the small number of socially valorised opportunities and the competition between social classes for jobs. During this period of insertion, the attitude of these young people towards society hardens and their

bitterness is sometimes likely to cause them to be drawn towards certain fundamentalist discourses.

The French research team took the view that the intersection of beliefs, ideologies and narratives with the personal and social trajectory of Muslim individuals is critical in explaining receptiveness of individuals to violent radical ideas. The difficulties related to the personal and social development trajectory in formative years and the appeal of radical narratives and ideologies that it may sometimes support are best examined through detailed analysis of the individual trajectory of interviewees.

The first key case is that of Interviewee #11's case which is particularly representative of many similar ideological evolutions among young Muslims influenced by the same kind of Islamic points of view. Different academic works have analysed a large number of similar cases that underline the overlapping of religious references with social and political points of views²²² and the interview with Interviewee #11 as part of this study was of particular interest in this respect.

Interviewee #11 was the second son in a family with twelve children. His parents were from a rural area in Algeria. His father was a deliveryman in a government institution and his mother was unemployed. The boy's schooling took place in a disrupted climate. The other inhabitants complained of the Benziadi family's noisiness and these neighbourhood problems affected the father's relations with his children. *'The neighbour upset my father, he'd hit us so that we wouldn't shout, so that we wouldn't get kicked out of the flat'*²²³, explained Interviewee #11, who developed vindictive behaviours towards his classmates. These attitudes were explained by the family climate and the fact that Interviewee #11 was left to his own devices.

At secondary school his adversarial relationship with classmates and teachers grew worse, his fights and insults multiplied, and he started committing minor offences. In 1990 the social services decided to place the boy in an institution. Afterwards Interviewee #11 was unable to return to school because none of them *'wanted to take him'*. This was the beginning of a period of wandering that lasted for several years; *'I was morally distressed, lost. I didn't go home at night, my parents wouldn't see me for two weeks, I walked the streets, I slept in stairways or in the mosque ... It's the house of God. I went into a corner and I slept'*. Interviewee #11 alternated delinquent acts and trips to Algeria, during which he hoped to find his roots. In the early 2000s he was sentenced to jail by a French court for his multiple offences. It was in jail that he converted to Islam in circumstances that Interviewee #11 did not wish to describe during the interview.

The interview nevertheless proved to be rich from the point of view of political and religious ideologies. The boy perceived France and more broadly the Western world as a space of domination over peoples of North African origin. His discourse was thus organised around an opposition between 'them' and 'us'. The domination was that of the fathers – *'my father lost his mother and his seven brothers and sisters during the Algerian War'* – and the young generations of immigrant origin, born in France. For Interviewee #11, identifying with Islam meant fighting against the liberal world and, more generally, giving *power* back to peoples of

²²² For instance ; Gilles Kepel, *A l'ouest d'Allah*, 1994, Le Seuil, Paris.

²²³ A flat in social housing.

Arab origin. The term 'power' was understood here as 'the opportunity of having one's own way in a social relationship'.²²⁴ Islam in this sense was a form of re-conquest.

Interviewee #11's discourse revealed heroes, all of whom were positioned in opposition to the liberal world order. Khomeiny first, who '*lived, suffered, saw, and spoke the truth*' and who '*freed Iran from the Shah*'. Interviewee #11 also admired Fidel Castro who was fighting so that his island did not become a brothel ('*un bordel*'), by which he was referring to '*women, certain pleasures, clothes, sex outside marriage now and then*', all of which he related to Western values. At the top of Interviewee #11's pantheon was Ben Laden, whom he compared to Che Guevara; '*Ben Laden is our Che Guevara. He's the Muslims' good guy. Why aren't we allowed to support him, to see him?*'

Interviewee #11 also discusses his professed desire to turn to violence. '*Honestly, today, what I'd like to do, is to take up arms, speak into a microphone to a lot of people and then take up arms to defend what I believe in ... It's not fundamentalism. We're too powerless. Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, we've been on the defensive. We don't attack, we defend ourselves.*' However, Interviewee #11 has never taken that step. Behind his discourse, his radical condemnation of Western countries and his identification with heroes who fought against the liberal world, lie multiple frustrations in terms of access '*to nice clothes, to women, to pleasures*'. Due to his extremely precarious social and material situation, Interviewee #11 cannot consume as he would like to and this frustration probably helps to worsen his resentment.

The narrative and influence of the group

A second key interview conducted during the French research was with a former militant, 45 years old and born in the south of Morocco²²⁵. He is now working as a translator in a social service for Arabic-speaking persons and also undertakes activity in the academic field. He is also an adviser on Islamic issues for local authorities in the Rhône-Alpes region. Interviewee #1 has frequent contacts with the different Islamic groups, even with the most radical ones and has therefore been able to observe in detail the path followed by some young Muslims attracted by violence, a path he himself followed twenty years ago.

His case is representative of the process through which religious narratives overlap with violent ones. As many other Muslim people who were members of radical groups in France, he began as a member of the *Tabligh wa Da'wa*, a non political organisation. As noted in previous sections the relationship of the Tabligh with violent radicalism is complex and has been the subject of recent scrutiny.

The case of Interviewee #1 is a good example of someone who goes from a religious commitment to a violently political one not because of specific psychological circumstances but because of the impact of a similar kind of narrative. Whether the aims are religious or political, the narratives insist on the necessity of obedience to the group which is typical of sectarian organisations.

Born in a Berber village of southern Morocco Interviewee #1 was studying in a boarding school in Agadir, when he was approached by members of the movement "*Tabligh wa Da'wa*" which offered to teach him more about his religion. He became an active member of

²²⁴ Max Weber, *Economie et société*, Paris, Plon, 1971; 56.

²²⁵ France interviewee #1

this movement, which had no violent objectives but a highly sectarian practice. Later, he studied economics in the University of Casablanca. There he met more politicised people and joined the Muslim Brotherhood, which was banned at that time in Morocco. He remembers that even though his experience among the 'Tablighi' had no political dimension, he was conditioned to gradually adopt a more and more radical ideology but that he eventually tired of following the strict rules of an organisation that focused only on religious problems and offered no solution to social and political problems. He was attracted by the revolutionary narratives of the Muslim Brotherhood which was very active at that time among student. He subsequently became responsible for a clandestine cell preparing acts of terrorism against figures in the Moroccan regime.

His views on the risks of violent radicalisation among young Muslims in France are informed by his own experience and he believes the role of the group is essential, where the individual belongs entirely to the group, has to respect a strict hierarchy and rarely has the opportunity to reflect by himself. The group gives immediate and definitive answers to his questions. In return, the group gives him solidarity and protection. In particular, Interviewee #1 understood that if he was killed carrying out a terrorist act or if he was jailed for life, the organisation would take care of his family.

The importance of the group in the ideology of radical Islamism is underlined by some academics who have studied larger samples of members of extremist organisations. Dounia Bouzar, an anthropologist and specialist of radical Islamism analysed the narratives of the jihadis and their effects on the behaviour of the individuals and proposes that such ideology reduces the religious faith to obedience to prescriptions.²²⁷ The faith becomes external to the believer and must be evidenced through visible signs only, with the spiritual aspects and inner feelings of the believer of secondary importance and shorn of autonomous thought. Consequently individuals are locked into the group through practice and their beliefs are reduced to the continuing shared respect of collective standards of religious behaviour.

Literalism, the cult of martyrdom and grievance theology

The strength of the jihadi ideology is commonly linked to the promise of an immediate solidarity in the present life and an eternal felicity in the future life. As noted by Interviewee #1, it is difficult to argue against an ideology which considers the present life as a parenthesis in a human destiny. To kill innocents in a suicide bombing is not a problem as those who are infidels will be damned. If you shorten their lives, you prevent them from committing more sins and you give them a chance to be forgiven by God. If among them there are sincere believers, they could benefit from the privileged status of martyrs. Here the incitement to violence promoted by the jihadis is based on the literal interpretation of the Quran defended by the pious Salafis.

Revivalism; the rise of piety versus critical views of religion

The 'Muslim community', a new family

Muslims who practise their faith rigidly differ from the first group described above in so far as they do not adopt political or societal discourse. The only thing that counts is scrupulous respect for the rites which organise their lives. However, there is a wide variety of contexts

²²⁷ D.Bouzar, *L'intégrisme, l'islam et nous*, Plon, Paris, 2007.

and personal narratives that draw individuals to such groups. This is best illustrated by the case of Hocine, of Algerian origin, born in 1968 into a modest family in a town in the Rhône-Alpes region. His father was an unskilled worker and his mother a housewife. He left school early and obtained a diploma in mechanics. During a visit to the United States as a tourist, with his brothers, he decided to stay in that country. The myth of the American dream had influenced his choice. Yet he experienced many difficulties in the US job market, going from one unskilled, temporary job to the next. The fact of being so far from his family, of being in a different society from the one in which he had always lived, and a feeling of loneliness caused him to be drawn towards a small local mosque in New York, where he was living. There he met devout Senegalese and Malian Muslims.

Hocine's religious path was spread over a long period. He read and listened to tapes, and gradually became an autodidact in religious matters. The discovery of the figure of Malcolm X, an Afro-American who converted to Islam, played a key part in his religious engagement. As in Interviewee #11's story, we see here the importance of heroes for young men – probably another difference between feminine and masculine religiosities. The local micro-community gradually became Hocine's new family. After 11 September 2001 and the hardening of American society towards people of Arab origin, Hocine returned to France and shortly afterwards married a devout Muslim woman. His existence is now ascetic; he respects the food laws and prays five times a day. Moreover, his recreational activities are very limited; he does not frequent cafés and spends very little money. Hocine does not like talking politics and has very little interest in it.

The trajectory of Sydney, a convert, is similar to Hocine's in so far as he was also seeking a new family, in a way, in 'the Muslim community'. Sydney was from a modest, mono-parental family. He grew up in a town on the Swiss border without having known his father. At the age of 17, along with some youths from his neighbourhood, he was drawn to the Geneva mosque of Eaux-Vives, headed by Hani Ramadan. Today Sydney has moved away from the Eaux-Vives community, probably owing to his studies in psychology. He offers interesting clues for interpreting his engagement at the time, which he sees as *'a way of solving filial and especially paternal problems'*. His membership of the religious community enabled him to observe *'massive projections of the paternal figure on Tariq, Hani and other local leaders'*. For Sydney, joining a religious community was a quest for a valorising father figure.

In the case of individuals with profiles like that of Sydney or Hocine, the local religious community plays a key part in religious engagement. Joining the community is a symbolic rebirth. Sydney changed his first name to Salman, with reference to one of the prophet's companions, Salman Al-Farisi. Membership of the community also explains the rigidity of these practising Muslims. The community is a space in which all the members know they are being observed by the others. When believers go to the mosque it is also to see and to be seen. As Sydney notes,

'ranking is performed by the group and based on criteria of merit (piety and sincerity towards God) and knowledge. In this context, a drop in status (which weighs on everyone, if they sin) means being considered as a "hypocrite". The doubt as to someone's sincerity is truly a form of relegation'.

Apart from the fact that rigid practices feed on membership of a local community, their construction is closely related to the religious market. This market is characterised by the

growing importance of normative and rigorous Islam. The Goutte d'Or neighbourhood is a potent example.

Zooming in on the religious market

An exclusive focus on personal trajectories can overlook broader influencing trends and dynamics, in particular *the religious goods market* which has swelled over the past fifteen years.²²⁸ These religious goods contribute towards shaping Muslim religiosities and revivalist identities as well as opening possible sociological or conceptual pathways to radicalisation and violent radicalisation. The development of this religious market is not solely part of an 'upsurge' of Muslim religiosities but part of an even broader entrenchment of beliefs in France and across Europe.

As noted by Olivier Roy, "The novelty brought by the spread of Islam to the West is the unhinging of Islam as a religion from an actual culture. Individuals consequently have to reformulate, on their own, a religion which is no longer conveyed by social evidence', with an individualising of Muslim believing as the production of books, DVDs or tapes is developing.²³⁰ The religious market is necessarily the other side to this individualisation, as believers hope to find something in these products on which to base their faith and their practices. A hypothesis of this study is that certain forms of radicalisation are rooted not only in painful and humiliating experiences such as racism and discrimination; but that their origins lie in the encounter between such personal narratives and the religious goods market.

More precisely, these religious productions constitute the raw material from which individuals produce and develop *ideologies*. Along with the analysis of individual trajectories, this report also focuses on the study of these religious goods, not in an abstract way but by starting from a field in which we had the opportunity of working; the Goutte d'Or neighbourhood in Paris. On the scale of Paris and its suburbs, the Goutte d'Or neighbourhood is a 'Mecca' for religious goods with three mosques and eleven bookshops in a small number of streets. The offers of Islam present in this neighbourhood are a typical example of this 'Islamobusiness' found in other large European cities such as London and Berlin and elsewhere. Consequently this study has made a specific analysis of this market as a key site of access to religious instruction, an important arena for understanding key narratives within France and the diffusion of particular narratives beliefs and approaches to religion, all of which has direct importance in the development and propagation of violent radical narratives.

In this neighbourhood the religious goods market is characterised by a pre-eminence of *normative Islam*; books, tapes and sermons telling Muslims what they must do and not do. These works concern daily life or important times in individuals' lives. They affirm that the scrupulous observance of rites and religious practices will enable everyone to have access to the status of a 'good Muslim'. Reflection on religion and its whys and wherefores or any distance taken from the religious message are discouraged, with the diversity of Muslim cultural traditions afforded less importance. This normative Islam is divided into two sub-categories. The first, which could be called a vertical Islam, details the rites through which the Muslim pays homage to God. The mode used resembles an injunction; 'the

²²⁸ By religious goods market we mean books, audio and video tapes, pamphlets and Islamic websites which largely defy the control of both religious authorities and states in the context of globalisation.

²³⁰ Olivier Roy, *L'islam mondialisé*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2002, p.20. English translation; *Globalized Islam; a Search for a new Ummah*, London, Routledge, 201p, 2005.

accomplishment of prayer is valid only when certain conditions are fulfilled', 'prayer is not valid without the ablutions', although 'the fact of touching a woman with premeditation and pleasure (...), the loss of perception of the self such as madness, the consumption of narcotics or diabetes' invalidate the ablutions. The rites are therefore carefully codified in many books on prayer or pilgrimage to Mecca, which could be equated to 'concise guides'.

The second normative Islam that can be identified relates more to Muslims' relations with their surroundings, whether direct or not, and their social lives. It could be referred to as horizontal Islam. On sex, marriage and children's education, for example, the books decree strict norms which, once again, promise readers that only by abiding by these rules will they have access to the status of Muslims. Within these categories there are many works intended for young Muslims, designed to dispense a religious education. Vertical and horizontal Islam are dominant in bookshops. Moreover, the sermons at the Rue Myrrha mosque that Nadia attends are Salafist. In the weekly classes a sectarian Islam is taught, in which two social groups are distinguished; the '*real Muslims*' and the '*non-believers*'. The faithful at the mosque are moreover vilified for their lack of religious knowledge when they are unable to answer questions.

Questions concerning that which is not on sale in the bookshops can yield interesting findings. First, very few books, tapes or DVDs propose an approach in which thought is given to religion. For instance, we do not find the books of philosophers such as Abdou Filali Ansari, and there are very few which historicise Islam and present its various currents and tendencies. Academic or specialist books are also difficult to find, with a few exceptions such as Olivier Carré, François Burgat and Malek Chebel. Thus, we witness real links between increasingly rigid practices and a religious goods market which sells the normative and dogmatic offers of Islam, without it being possible to know which one influences the other.

The absence of political books in these bookshops, especially compared to the extent of the offer of normative Islam, is of particular note. Authors such as Hassan El Banna, Saïd Ramadan and Sayed Qutb are largely absent from bookshops even though they have been extensively published and are considered highly influential. More broadly, one finds no books which justify – or criticise – a particular type of state, organisation or political ideology.

Even though the neighbourhood Quranic bookshops propose no strictly-speaking political writings, one of the key findings of our research is that the offers of normative Islam nevertheless comprise a dimension which could be qualified as *infra-political*. They are designed to weigh on the believer's social life and on the way in which she or he defines her- or himself in society. Due to the very narrow perceptions of the social world which they diffuse, we can posit that the offers of normative Islam are likely to participate, within certain trajectories and in conjunction with other factors, in triggering a conflictual relationship with society, and possible decisions to engage with radical and violent radical ideologies.

Religiosity, a sign of loyalty to one's origins

The last category that is identified from the French research comprises individuals who maintain a relatively distant relationship with Islam. They have grown up in Muslim families in which the parents respected food laws and / or observed Ramadan. In their stories, these individuals have reinterpreted parental religion. Here we observe processes of rationalisation

of religion which are very distant from the main characteristics of the offers of Islam found on the religious market.

These individuals consider Islam solely as a part of their cultural heritage. They observe Ramadan and do not eat pork, but this relates far more to loyalty to the family than respect for religious rites. They define themselves as non-practising believers and their adherence to Islam, as an established religion, is relatively weak. Samia, for example, grew up in a small town in Normandy, in a lower-middle-class home. Her father had a restaurant – which he bought late in life – and her mother was a middle-ranking civil servant at the Prefecture. She had nevertheless graduated from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, which strongly influenced the trajectory of Samia and her sister Leila. After graduating in patent law, Samia took many practical training courses for several years, before she eventually managed to find a job in a subsidiary of Canal Plus. The family in which she grew up was hardly religious at all; they drank alcohol and no one observed Ramadan. The only rule they observed was not eating pork. This was probably not unrelated to the family's choice of a place of residence; they lived in a town in Normandy where North African communities were rare.

Moreover, Samia did not grow up in a working-class neighbourhood and during her life had very little contact with youth from the housing estates, girls or boys. Samia now has a distant relationship with religion. She says that she is a believer but not a practising Muslim. In her daily life she has some reflexes stemming from the religious socialisation that she received; *'I always have this reflex when there's something that I'd really like to happen I say Inch'Allah. This is something I often do. It's actually a religious saying but I use it as a usual term in my language. I don't use it as a religious thing but basically it's religious. For me, it's part of the way I talk'*. This type of small daily habit relates more to family habits than to adherence to a religious view of the world. Religiosity is above all a sign of loyalty to the family. *'The family is very important to me'*, she says. Samia is the grand-daughter of a Harki[#]. She remained very close to her grand-father until his death, which she experienced as a great loss. This grandfather's trajectory, which Samia categorically refuses to discuss, was probably one of the factors which shaped the family's distant relationship with religion. Moreover, Samia has never visited Algeria.

A critical view of religion

Some other interviewees have a critical view of certain rites and practices which they associate with religion. Mounir, for instance, defines himself as a Muslim because he is circumcised, observes Ramadan and does not eat pork. Yet his belief is closer to agnosticism; he believes in *'a messenger'* and in *'respect for people'*. He moreover vehemently expresses his disagreement with certain practices of Islam.

'The woman's condition. I'm not feminist but there are things where women don't need to be belittled. The image in Afghanistan with the veil. It's a human being, it's not a dog. When I saw that I was shocked. With the grid, a kind of grid. This is not a burka, it's a grid, I don't know what it is. Now it's jeans and trainers and miniskirts. Well, miniskirts it depends up to where but okay ... I don't want to be blasphemous regarding my faith but there are things I disagree with. The fact of arranged marriages, deciding on someone's fate. I saw a thing that shocked me to the bone, in Djibouti, you know what they do to little girls, so that they don't feel pleasure. The Middle Ages are over!'

[#] Algerians who collaborated with the French forces during the Algerian War.[transl.]

Mounir's belief corresponds to a religious modernity; a religion that is at the service of individuals and that should not contribute towards their submission or limit their freedom. Here we can identify the primacy of free choice and respect for tradition and dogmas that is characterizing many contemporary religiosities.

7. BROAD TRENDS AND COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

The findings generated from each research country draw on a wide diversity of experiences that encompasses the specific experiences of migrant and Muslim communities in the member state. Questions of migration and integration, public policy and political discourses and new trends arising from experiences of violent radicalism, the development of violent radical beliefs, narratives and ideologies and the state and political responses are identified throughout the study as key influences in the Muslim field and the dissemination of violent radical narratives. However, while the contexts of the four research countries are diverse in relation to the extent and dynamics of development the findings may provide a overarching narrative to the development and proliferation of violent radical narratives in Europe.

It is clear that the UK has the potential to offer greatest insight into the forms and employment of ideological templates of violent radicalisation that are underpinned by an 'abusive' interpretation of Islam. While there are a range and diversity of beliefs and narratives common to the other research states it has been possible in the UK, by virtue of the history and continued presence of violent radical networks, to begin to identify a clear ideological or 'ideational' framework underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam adopted by violent radicals that is not possible (or discernible yet) in the other three member states.

This development can be understood within a social movement 'ideal type' framework underpinned by a range of identifiable global and local historical processes and events, structural contexts, sociological dynamics and individual actions that include but are not limited to:

- the mobilising effects of key events such as the Salman Rushdie affair and the influence on the development of a faith based political identity consciousness;
- the internal dynamics of a variety of groupings and social networks seeking a renewed engagement with Islamic teachings independent of the traditional institutions of religious instruction and engagement as practiced by their parents, and largely characterised by Salafist interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah;
- the presence of radical movement 'interlocutors' in the UK, such as Abu Hamza and Omar Bakri, who operated largely unchallenged for a period of time;
- the facilitating effects of cultural links with Pakistan, an arena of great importance in the development of violent radical ideologies in the global 'jihadist' movement and more specifically the connections to Kashmir and Afghanistan;

- the practical experiences and aftermath of events such as the Bosnian War; its role in recruitment, the development and refinement of ideological justifications, practical training and socialisation to violence as well as the psychological conditioning and trauma of many who participated in active fighting.

The influence of the colonial relationship with Pakistan and the instability of the region, including the ongoing wars in Afghanistan from the days of Soviet rule and the associated politics of the North Western Frontier province as well as the Kashmir region are highly evident, not only in the UK context but also throughout the global jihadist movement. However, the French context also serves to highlight the ongoing influence of the colonial relationship with a specific history of relations between France and its former Muslim colonies that has previously produced political violence whilst also informing state responses to such terrorist threats. Although the terrorist activity seen in France in the past was largely undertaken by ‘cultural’ Muslims as part of post colonial struggles, these earlier phases of terrorism in France, both in their organisational structure, networks and command as well as their underpinning ideological and narrative framework, are qualitatively distinct from those networks and ideologies that are the predominant focus of this study.

However, commonalities between the different phases of terrorism in France, including narratives of anti-imperialism and economic liberation as well as shared participants may represent a continuing influence on current development of Salafi or jihadi ideologies in France. In particular the rise of normative literalist Salafist approaches among disenfranchised migrant populations in France may prove an increasingly receptive field for the narratives, interpretations and concepts associated with violent radicalism as developed in the UK and throughout the ‘jihadist’ movement. Likewise the influence of the UK movement in Europe can also be seen in the activities of Abu Hamza, at the time editor of Al Ansar (the Algerian GIA mouthpiece) in the UK, when providing the ‘Gang of Roubaix’ with a ‘fatwa’ for the undertaking of criminal activity in support of Jihad. It is also important to note the potential for the Iraq war to act as an arena comparable to the Bosnian war in the development and adoption of ideological frameworks and social networks as well as associated psychological stress or ‘trauma’ that may yet further influence the French Muslim field.

In Germany, the dominant theme is the promotion of violent radical ideologies informed by an abusive interpretation of Islam through more formal domestic organisational structures. Whilst the specific history of the German state and its response to Islamist organisations may inform this focus, it would also appear that the state response has been instrumental in the disruption of a range of Islamist organisations in Germany. It should be noted that while some of the groups banned by the German authorities would by most definitions be considered violent radicals, other banned organisations have represented non violent and less radical Islamist ideologies. It is also clear that the Salafi networks that in the past have been associated with jihadist type ideologies are not as prominent in the domestic German context. Also of note are that concerns relating to the articulation of violent radical narratives appear to focus on the smaller numbers of more recent migrants rather than the majority Muslim Turkish population.

With a more recent history of immigration and smaller migrant populations, Denmark has a nominal visible presence of radical Islamic organisations. However it is clear that the overtly

'Islamophobic' politics of some mainstream parties, galvanised following the 'Cartoons' affair, is representative of a socio-political context where the immigrant Muslim population is under intense social and political scrutiny. Whilst the events and debates associated with the publication of the cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed in 2006 were not notably prominent in interviewee responses, this incident can be seen to encapsulate a dynamic frequently reported among interviewees where they feel their faith, and by extension they personally, are under intense scrutiny and pressure. The Danish context in particular illuminates a process of Islamic revivalism and a construction of shared immigrant identities based on an Islamic faith that can be identifiable from the fieldwork responses gathered by the Danish research team. Of particular note, and a key finding of this report, is that similar dynamics are also discernable throughout the other research countries.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BELIEFS, IDEOLOGIES AND NARRATIVES

The four research countries were chosen precisely because of their differing contexts and discernible relations to violent radicalisation. They have differing histories in relation to migration, integration, citizenship and also experiences of terrorism. In addition other areas also came to light that provided interesting contrasts, for example contrasting approaches to politics, the state and religion were highlighted in the French, German and UK reports. For some interviewees this had a direct bearing not only on their own experiences but also the development of radical narratives influencing broader political and cultural experiences of Muslim populations. However, while of importance, discussion and analysis of the distinctive political cultures and contexts of the research countries requires specific and independent attention.

Despite the many notable contrasts in ideological development between the UK and the other three member states there are key trends that can be identified and broader narratives and beliefs that can be discerned and have been adopted in different forms by different groups across all four member states.

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, the prevalence, articulation and adoption of specifically violent radical narratives or ideological concepts is not the predominant trend identified during this study. Very few interviewees across the research countries purported to subscribe to or act upon violent radical views and many expressed explicit opposition to violence. While this finding should carry the caveat that only limited access to those who are currently engaged in violent acts was possible and consequently they are not heavily represented in this study, the apparent lack of broader adoption or normalisation of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives of support for violent radicals should be noted. The following quote is indicative of a common sentiment expressed throughout all the research countries:

"I don't know much about radicalism and extremism. Being a Muslim, I can't believe that another Muslim can do this.... How could any practising Muslim really want to do this?"²³¹

However, whilst the prevailing trend was a lack of penetration of violent radical beliefs, ideologies and narratives, many of the interviewees who may previously have had more

²³¹ UK interviewee #20

remote relationships to the issues were increasingly coming under pressure, particularly from the broader population, but also in some instances from more radical organisations, to respond to questions and issues that would hitherto not have been seen as relevance by many of the interviewees.

“Why do I need to defend things other Muslims do?”²³²

“I wish to be considered as an individual and not a representative for all Muslims”²³³

The impact of this dynamic is of great importance when considering the development of violent radical narratives as part of a counter terrorism strategy. As reported in the Danish context and evident in all of the other research countries, the most significant impact of the beliefs, ideologies and narratives as well as the activity of violent radicals is in the disruption of relations between minority Muslim populations and the broader populations of Western European states. This disruption can be understood as a central component of violent radical activity, both as an integral part of their core narratives and a fundamental ideological belief but also as part of the development of oppositional group identities and development of constituencies of support central to the generation of new recruits to their cause.

8. KEY NARRATIVES REPORTED DURING THE STUDY

“The media today is blasting images every single day of Muslims being slaughtered, carpet-bombed, annihilated, chopped into pieces, whole villages destroyed. What kind of an effect do you think that will have on a young person growing up in Britain? When I was young this wasn't an issue, I grew up in the 70s and the 80s. The biggest issue we had at that time was National Front and skinheads. ... when we were young we had this issue of being called a Paki. ... So what did we do? We reverted back to our core roots, to our culture. That, yeah, I am a Pakistani, and I am Asian, and I am brown, and I am proud to be. And we became very aggressive in that kind of approach because we were being bombarded and made to feel inferior.”

“Today the young Muslims don't have that issue. Today they're not being called a Paki, they're being called a Muslim terrorist. So what do they do? Natural reaction. They go, yeah, I am a Muslim and I'm proud to be a Muslim. And if you've got a problem with that, step outside. So what you've done is, you've created this situation. If you left those people alone, if you didn't constantly hammer them, are you Muslim? Are you British? Are you with Bin Laden? Are you against him? Are you with us? Are you against us? You know a youngster on the street doesn't want to be making those kinds of life-changing decisions. He just wants to watch the football. He just wants to go and play with his mates. He just wants to go and play on his PS2 [Play Station Two, a computer games console]. He's not interested in this kind of political debate. ...”²³⁴

During the course of the study a range of interviewees were interviewed, from those who had historically participated in violent activity, to those who expressed radical political outlooks and approaches, to youth with no particular relationship to violent or radical narratives. The intention was to shed light on the common narratives that could be identified across the

²³² Denmark interviewee #18

²³³ Denmark interviewee #17

²³⁴ UK interviewee #14

European Muslim field and identify if and where violent radical narratives and ideologies may have penetrated or become normalised into mainstream discourse and debate. The research found no evidence that violent radical narratives have normalised into mainstream discourse. This is not to say, however, that narratives are not shared. Violent radicals employ many comparable narratives to that expressed both by those with radical views and those who would be considered ‘moderate’ or even ‘progressive’.

The key difference in the employment of the narratives is the fundamentalist approach to adherence and promotion of narratives, the violent representation and presentation of the narrative as well as, critically, a particular ideological framing that contrasts with much of the Muslim field. In short, the following narratives should not be seen as a product of promotion by violent radical groups. Though these groups will undeniably have influenced some of our interviewees we see no evidence that such groups have had a singular impact on the paradigm of the debate or adoption of narratives amongst our interviewees or the broader Muslim field. Rather, the narratives that are outlined here have developed in a highly complex matrix influenced by cultural diversity and the migrant experience, contemporary politics and world affairs as well as political and sociological contexts, the actions of extremists and terrorist groups as well as those of governments, media and civil and society and, in particular, political society, all of which have raised questions of personal identity, belief, belonging and loyalties for interviewees.

These narratives intersect and are understood in a variety of ways by the individual interviewees interviewed, virtually all of whom are under increasing pressure to understand, articulate and respond to these challenges, often during quite formative phases of life. The themes described below may also be understood as being framed by the complexities of identity and the experience of 2nd and 3rd generation diaspora populations in Western Europe (see for example the Danish report for an elaboration).

While the narratives are summarised as far as possible under thematic labels and illustrated with quotations and examples they should not be understood as discrete or additive concepts but as complex and evolving narrative dynamics. These narratives may have a radical representation in the hands of ‘angry young men’ or be articulated in a thoughtful and cohesive manner by those with ‘moderate’ or ‘progressive’ views.

Living in a ‘hostile’ society

“I am deeply frustrated by the anti- Muslim attitudes”²³⁵

The sense of living in a hostile society that increasingly views Islam, migrants and Muslims with suspicion was a narrative that was reported across a wide range of interviewees. The nature of this hostility ranged from overt pressures on interviewees to justify oneself in relation to the ‘War on terror’ and national allegiances to having to respond to and made to feel accountable for the actions and beliefs of ‘Islamic’ foreign governments and groups from around the world. In particular many of our interviewees described being under pressure to assess, as a Muslim, their relationship to violent radical narratives and the politics of the Muslim world despite having no specific knowledge of or relationship to them.

²³⁵ Denmark interviewee #9

However there was also a sense of a more ‘benign’ dimension to the promotion and reinforcement of difference promoted either unwittingly or deliberately by the ‘host’ society through cultural and political debate, questioning and attitudes that also served to cement self awareness of a minority culture status among interviewees. Such a trend contributed to a belief that the interrogation of their religious identity and beliefs was increasingly being driven as part of debates relating to questions of immigration, integration and the compatibility of Western style liberal democracy and Islam.

The sentiment that *“as a Muslim you are guilty until proven innocent”* reported by a Danish interviewee serves to illustrate the feeling of being under continual scrutiny and pressure to justify oneself as a Muslim. These quotes provide a vivid illustration of the role of mainstream society in the ascription of Muslim identities on migrant populations and the subsequent demands of the broader population placed on this specific minority faith group to justify this identity.

However, just as informative are the descriptions of more everyday experiences of living in a Western society holding different cultural beliefs and practices that was notable even before the intense political scrutiny being afforded Islam in Europe today. Some of the examples of these pressures include justifying not drinking alcohol when socialising, or the wearing of long sleeves when working indoors. One example that was particularly illuminating came from the Danish context and serves to highlight the choices being forced upon many Muslim’s in Europe today:

“I had always been doing many sports and at that time I played basketball. I had done it for 3 – 4 years before I took the scarf on but they had made a rule saying that you can’t play if you’re wearing a scarf. I became very sad but as my mum says you can’t have both. It’s your choice and you can’t have religion and enjoy life with, for example, sport...”

My coach wants me to play but others say no. I was so sad because basketball really meant a lot to me. My sister stopped a few months later. I’d love to start again but it is impossible when they make up such rules.”²³⁷

Such incidents and concerns were noted prominently by Danish interviewees but also across the UK, German and French research.

In the German context these concerns were commonly articulated in relation to perceived restrictions on freedom of religious expressions, as characterised by public opposition to the building of mosques. The following quote highlights the concerns that one of our interviewees felt in relation to freedom of religious expression in Europe, but also how these sentiments can link to and are part of broader political questions that encompass world affairs:

“I do not wear a headscarf and I follow a liberal practice in dealing with others. But I become very angry when I see how Muslims here are discriminated against and

²³⁷ Denmark interviewee #20

*restricted in their freedom of worship. That hurts me in my identity. Adding to the unjust things, that are happening abroad, it has an effect in radicalising me.*²³⁸

The French context reported this concern in different ways with a narrative of cultural hegemony denying the difference of interviewees. The following quote highlights one interviewee noting how the denial of their differences had a negative impact on the experience of immigrants in the education system:

*“I felt even more Algerian because there was racism, they put us all together amongst ourselves in corners, they did not look after us, there was no support. Whether it was sport or education they could have supported us better, they know very well that we were from immigrant families, that we had differences and that we weren’t like the others.”*²³⁹

In the UK the narrative of a hostile society was reported as being directly and prominently broadcast by the media with totalising and negative representations of the Muslim faith in the media frequently hooked on negative incidents:

*“I am really sick of the reporting going on in the media representing young Muslims, it’s so negative and in the news too much”*²⁴⁰

For interviewees the relationship with what was described as a hostile society should not be characterised as a passive one. The hostile contexts described are continually being interpreted and assessed by interviewees and a range of personal responses developed. Such responses can be seen to be manifested in the politics and political awareness evident among almost all the interviewees, including a desire to engage in critical self reflection and to interrogate their own history and culture when understanding their position in western European societies. In particular this hostile context has a clear and powerful role in the simultaneous ascription but also personal construction of faith based identities among many of the interviewees.

Disenfranchisement and heightened political consciousness

Perhaps the most pervasive theme of this study and across interviewees was the acute political awareness of all those interviewees interviewed, including those interviewed with no immediate or direct personal or professional connection with the subject matter. The political awareness described ranged from world affairs and religious debate through to a highly critical self awareness of their own culture, their place in society and their relationship with the majority society and prevailing socio-economic context. However, there was also a clear pattern and concern among interviewees that their concerns were not represented or shared, and even actively opposed, by the mainstream political systems in which they lived. These concerns were not confined to cultural identity but included public policy developments and reactions that encompassed universal political issues such as civil liberties, foreign policy and social justice concerns.

²³⁸ Germany interview with a 27 year old female student, born in the Lebanon and living in Germany since 1990.

²³⁹ France interviewee #11

²⁴⁰ UK interviewee 19

Throughout the discussion with interviewees there is evidently a highly aware political consciousness that is ready to critically reflect on their own culture as well as their broader socio-economic position. Whilst this response may be informed by the selection of interviewees and the subject of the study this finding is corroborated by responses from stakeholders interviewed as part of this study as well as the extensive work with minority and Muslim communities undertaken by all the research teams.

However it is also clear from the interviews conducted as part of this study that a sense of disenfranchisement from mainstream political discourse and the frustration of a political voice was a key theme that was being reported. The disappointments experienced following the ‘Marche des Beures’ in France in 1983 are notable in providing a context for the sense of an increasing alienation and dislocation from influence and participation in the political system for the French Muslim population. Whilst interviewees discuss participation in leftist politics as well as political Islam in the form of the Muslim Brotherhood and other organisations such as UOIF, there is a sense that none of these vehicles are seen as having secured significant improvement in their situation, a particular concern for younger generations.

In the UK, events such as the Salman Rushdie affair, the Iraq war and the response of police and security services to attacks as well as broader debates about the Islam in the UK have all served to reinforce, for some, feelings that Muslims are increasingly alienated and sidelined from the mainstream society. In Germany the reported example of the Lebanese interviewees feeling unable to discuss her experiences and view of the actions of Israel for fear of being branded an anti-Semite highlight how a narrative of political alienation from can be developed. It should also be noted that these narratives are also supported by empirical evidence of the small numbers of Muslims in national legislatures, executives or other positions of power as well as the evidence of the dissemination of Islamophobic and anti-immigrant discourse throughout European politics.²⁴¹ Throughout the in-country reports there is a clear narrative of political marginalisation of their concerns and a situation where interviewees feel un-represented by the political parties movements or institutions of the society in which they are living.

Anti-imperialism and social justice

“The US has set an agenda that Denmark follows uncritically. It provokes me deeply”²⁴²

“I really began to notice the prejudice, the affliction that Muslims suffer, and the human right abuses. These events made me want to explore the issues in more depth and I kept on thinking that ‘why are people being attacked because of their faith?’²⁴³

The political awareness of the interviewees in this study was one of the most striking aspects of the study. There were a range of prominent political concerns that related to foreign wars involving Muslim peoples, US foreign policy in the Middle East, the conflicts of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon. Also notable were the narratives and beliefs associated with anti-imperialism as well as anti-capitalist and social justice liberation politics. The genesis of this

²⁴¹ ECRI ‘The use of racist, anti Semitic and xenophobic arguments in political discourse’ 2005

²⁴² Denmark interviewee #10

²⁴³ UK interviewee #23

political dynamic is complex, however it is clear that it goes beyond the more radical politics usually associated with a relatively youthful population and is informed by a number of other issues, including the personal, historical and cultural experiences of diaspora populations in Europe. However such concerns are equally underpinned also core universal values of social justice, which in many cases are also interpreted through religious values and teachings.

Whilst key concerns included economic and social marginalisation as well as experiences of direct discrimination and hostility to their faith and culture the most prominent concern was with global affairs. Concerns particularly centred on the influence of Western governments and economic systems as well as the perceived corruption and unrepresentative nature of national leaders and governments of many Muslim countries. These narratives of anti-imperialism were particularly prominent in relation to deep seated concerns relating to US foreign policy and the wars in the Middle East. This concern and anger is commonly reflected in an intense interest and often detailed knowledge and analysis of the actions of the US and western European governments, allied to a sense of powerlessness and impotence.

The anger toward both the events in question and the felt powerlessness associated with them is expressed in many different ways. For some it is highly rationalised and articulated, for others, particularly disaffected young men, the expression is far more ‘radical’ and strident. The following interviewee describes the sentiments of some disaffected Bangladeshi youth in the East End of London that describes the expression of such sentiments in a manner without focus and laced with frustration:

“They had such extreme views, were very anti-west and displayed an aggressive machismo”²⁴⁴

But this same interviewee herself notes the different perspectives on domestic and world politics that are commonly associated with diaspora populations living in the former colonial powers of Western Europe:

“I find it hypocritical what Britain has offered. Education tells us about imperialism and what the West represents and sees, but we can also see the other side”²⁴⁵

As frequently reported by ex-members of the group and many key stakeholders, the appeal of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) lay in its concern with the same issues and its ability to provide an intellectual and political coherence to nascent political views and sentiments, as illustrated by the following quotes:

“By that time it was the intellectual approach that was attractive. The party had made intellectually profound political studies and that had attracted me. [It provided] explanations on the situation in the Middle East and on the politics of the recent years. It was very interesting, because it was very profound. It was a totally new form of presentation of Islam. It was not just like usual. It was not only restricted to the dogmas and ritual practice, but covered also questions like how a state or economic order in Islam could be. The Hizb ut-Tahrir had an elaborated constitution in which all basic

²⁴⁴ UK interviewee #19

²⁴⁵ *ibid*

rights were anchored. A similar profoundness couldn't be observed anywhere. This was very attractive for me and couldn't be found anywhere else."²⁴⁶

This quote further emphasises how Hizb ut-Tahrir appealed to the concerns of many interviewees but also represented a viable and accessible political narrative and voice:

"because that was the only articulation that was really out there, I had bumped into HT because they were talking politically, and there was no political narrative amongst the Muslims [at the time].

*"As I say, with the first gulf war it was suddenly out there, you suddenly realize this is what is happening [...] you could hear different things and the HT narrative was very attractive, you thought, hold on, yeah this is right, what is going on."*²⁴⁷

Whilst these perspectives and priorities in relation to world politics may be informed by the common experience of being a diaspora population and commonly disadvantaged ethnic minority population, the politics of social justice and concern with world affairs can also be seen to be informed by an increasing identification with a Muslim 'Ummah'. The following quotes illustrate these sentiments:

*"I feel unity with the Muslim world because of the negative focus in my surroundings on Islam and the unjust foreign policies and warfare in the Middle East."*²⁴⁸

This increasing identification with a broader collective Muslim identity, that also links to concepts of a universal Muslim Ummah, can not only be seen through the global political awareness and activism but also through more subtle aspects such as references to Muslim brothers and sisters. This narrative, and also the complexity of the relationships that it entails can be seen in these following quotes:

"They are my Muslim brothers and sisters but I disagree with them [Hizb ut-Tahrir] in many aspects, for example procedure. They say thing has to be done in this way to reach a certain goal. Maybe we can agree upon visions out in the future but getting there is entirely different."

*"I do see myself as being part of the Muslim Ummah and define myself as a sister."*²⁴⁹

In addition the Palestinian question was not only a highly prominent concern amongst the interviewees, as noted previously, but was also was also a highly prominent feature in the aims and messages of more radical student Islamic groups in the UK in the mid-1990s:

*"The focus of ISB and FOSIS year in year out was the Israeli Palestinian conflict – the political arena. The approach could be seen as pragmatic or opportunist on world events and using them to infuse Muslim youth in the UK to take action and join Islam – but in a politically based manner."*²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Germany interviewee

²⁴⁷ UK interviewee #2

²⁴⁸ Denmark interviewee #3

²⁴⁹ UK interviewee #23

²⁵⁰ UK interviewee #3

However, of particular note when considering questions of political alienation and the role of Hizb ut-Tahrir as a focus for political disaffection was the reported decline of its membership in the UK during the anti Iraq war protests from 2003 onwards. Many interviewees and the analysis of the UK report suggests that the anti-war movement represented a participative movement genuinely open to a wide range of politically motivated Muslim youth that was seem to effectively articulating their concerns and as such acted as a viable and engaging alternative movement to organisations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir. Likewise it is also possible that the controversy, stigma, and associated peer group pressure following 9/11, Madrid and latterly 7/7 would be a deterrent to many as shown in many of the moderate web forums analysed.

Revivalism, emancipation and the personal search to be a good Muslim

All four country contexts describe developing revivalist faith based identities among 2nd and 3rd generation Muslim populations. In many ways this new construction of faith identities and revivalist sentiments may be seen as an emancipatory response to the pressures and responsibilities being applied to and felt by the interviewees in this study. Whilst the reaffirmation of an Islamic religious identity is both a personal response to a range of concerns, that includes the ascription of an Islamic identity, it is also clear that their faith is also becoming a key support and guide in the conduct of complex lives and is encapsulated by many interviewees in the sentiment of striving to be a ‘good Muslim’. The development of revivalist individual and shared identities and the realisation of this search is described as a highly pluralistic and discursive process that responds to the full range of contemporary experience. A range of manifestations exist, including a focus on the spiritual or political as well as being underpinned by communitarian or individualistic values. This is a highly personalised process, increasingly removed from the culturally bounded Islamic teaching often understood and practiced by their parents, with the Quran an important tool in supporting personal or social group responses to modern life in Western European states.

The revivalist identities reported here can be seen to be informed by a range of contemporary demands and dynamics intersecting on many of the interviewees that they are pressured to mediate and interpret in relation to their own situations. Although this development of revivalist identities can be framed by a broader global political trend that is commonly traced from the Iranian revolution, it should also be understood as a rapidly evolving European phenomenon. The following quote highlights how these trends have been developing in the UK context since before the dramatic events of 9/11:

“Even before 9/11 Bangladeshis were re-evaluating their faith and becoming more religious. I remember more male relatives growing beards. Two main things were happening at the time: there was a sense of moral decay with young Bangladeshi kids going into crime and drugs etc and Muslims generally becoming more interested in gaining knowledge about their faith”²⁵¹

However, this quote from the French context also highlights the concern with losing identity and the faith that is also motivating revivalist trends:

²⁵¹ UK interviewee #21

“we have lost everything, our culture, our values. You no longer know who you are. Young people today no longer know who they are”²⁵²

These trends of revivalist faith identified can also be seen to be described throughout the Danish, German and French reports. However this revivalism of faith based identity can be seen not as an engagement with the religious practices of their parents, but rather a more personalised search based on new sources and influences, and with the Quran holding a prominent role for many in this exploration:

“[I came to] the analytical point of trying to find out whether it is from the Quran and Sunnah and I thought to myself, OK now I can chuck out what is cultural, cause it was almost a rejection of what my parents Hanafi/Pakistani type of Islam that we have been taught, which on balance now when I look at it is a very silly way to look at things but you know the arrogance of youth is something else, but yeah it was very much like yes we need to see where the evidence is.”²⁵³

The search to be a good Muslim

A key narrative strand running through these revivalist trends was the search to be a ‘good’ Muslim. The desire to navigate the complexities of life as a second or third generation migrant informed by religious identities is a key trend reported by many of the interviewees, though an important caveat should be placed on this finding, in particular that the interviews were not explicitly framed by questions of personal faith.

The sentiment of a felt need to be a ‘good Muslim’ was highly prominent in the Danish report as highlighted by the following quotes:

“it is important for me to become a good Muslim”; “I am striving to become a good Muslim”; “The process of becoming a good Muslim is a step by step process”

In the German context this search was articulated by one interviewee in relation to a search for an authenticity of religion as described in the following:

“they gave everybody something into their hands in which it was described how to eat, how to sit, how to sleep and so forth. And I thought wow! Something is opening its door and you pick up things about the Islamic way of life”²⁵⁴

New perspectives on religion

As noted above, central to these revivalist responses is an increased personalisation and individualisation of religious practice and identities. This personalisation is characterised by a shift away from the more traditionally culturally bounded religious practice as practiced by parental generations. Instead there is a notable desire for a personalised and inevitably pluralistic approach to understanding the path to be a good Muslim and the relationship to faith that is more responsive to the challenges confronting these younger 2nd and 3rd generation populations and is well summarised in the following quote from the UK:

²⁵² France interviewee #11

²⁵³ UK interviewee #3

²⁵⁴ Germany interview with a former member of the Tablighi Jamaat

“It was when I started university that I made more Muslim friends, when I began attending Islamic conferences and events. What struck me was many of them didn’t have cultural expression of Islam at all. They realised that the cultural dimensions were creating too many problems... Young people are more confused and are exploring [religion] outside the prism and constraints of their family”²⁵⁵

The responses to a revivalist faith identity commonly range from highly ‘Westernised’ and private understandings of faith and the elements that one may adopt, through to more public shows of faith, such as the donning of the headscarf - often contrary to the wishes of parents. In addition, many may seek out greater religious instruction and adopt highly pious approaches to the faith, as described by the German interviewee above.

This quote from the French context indicates how small aspects of religious practice may be adopted as part of maintaining some connection with the faith that does not rely on pious manifestations:

“I do little things such as saying Bismillah before I eat. Where there is something that I want to happen I say inshallah. Basically it’s a religious word; I use it as a normal term from my language. For me its part of my normal language”²⁵⁶

Tentative conclusions about the erosion of culturally based religious instruction among 2nd and 3rd generation Muslim youth may also be drawn from this reported dynamic. In particular the erosion of the culturally based approaches is in many cases supplanted by what might be characterised as Salafist type approaches that rely on personal interpretation of the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and reported by many of the interviewees from across the research countries and highlighted by the UK quote described above. Further discussion of the implication of spread of Salafist approaches are addressed in the following section.

The analysis of the Goutte d’Or area in Paris maps a dynamic of a market for the consumption of Islamic goods that may also represent an increasing individualisation of relationships with the Islamic faith and how instruction is accessed and consumed. In this instance the goods being supplied are predominantly characterised by the Salafist and normative approaches to Islam commonly associated with shifts away from culturally bounded Islamic instruction.

Responsibility

“I do see myself as being part of the Muslim Ummah and define myself as a sister. Muslims need to be doing more.”²⁵⁷

This responsibility commonly appears to be thrust on many of the interviewees and demands that they understand and resolve the complexities of integration, a supposed clash of civilisations and the ‘war on terror’, whilst at the same time resolve the tensions within their own life relating to their identity and understanding of their own cultural heritage. What is also apparent is that there appear to be few avenues of support and assistance in resolving these tensions and challenges open to many of the interviewees beyond their own exploration of their faith. Consequently, and as can be seen throughout the study, many of our

²⁵⁵ UK respondent #23

²⁵⁶ France interviewee Saima

²⁵⁷ UK interviewee #23

interviewees have engaged with their faith in a range of personalised ways to understand their place in the world, make sense of the challenges and complexities facing them in their lives.

The headscarf as liberation; a constellation of narratives

*“I was 25 when I began thinking about it in a serious way, but the response from my family wasn’t good. There was no defining moment or event that took place, I just remember thinking about it one day and realising that it was the right thing to do. I had been reading the *Quran* and *hadith*, and it is what I needed to do and that was that really.*

“My father thought that I had suddenly adopted an extremist position and was following a different Islam. My mother didn’t respond well either. She thought that it was a cover and that I was hiding something, only pretending to be good. Obviously, I wasn’t happy about that, and felt very disappointed, though I realised that our parents are more culturally influenced than religiously.”²⁵⁸

The role of high profile events may also illustrate dynamics of revivalist pressures as key ‘plotlines’. The occurrence and aftermath of events such as 9/11, the publication of the Mohammed cartoons in Denmark or the perceived failure of high profile anti-racist movements in France to bring about lasting change are prominent throughout the reports. Also highlighted in such process are the impacts of increasingly negative cultural representations of Islam within broader societies along with the increasingly negative encounters with the state and criminal justice systems in heightened security environments.

However, the headscarf debates were the most prominent theme throughout the interviews and appeared to typify the nature of the forces being experienced and mediated by interviewees on a daily basis. In each research country as well as across the internet the issue of the headscarf was possibly the most consistently discussed issue. What is particularly notable about this issue was the manner in which it joined a constellation of issues and narratives, encompassing personal religious identities, evidencing of hostility towards this identity, compounding senses of disenfranchisement and the association of the issue with principles of political liberty and freedom of expression.

The question of the headscarf is perhaps so potent because the manner in which this range of narratives and dynamics are intertwined into a visible female symbol. The suspicion of Islam apparent in the research is represented in the common hostility and suspicion toward those who wear the scarf and subsequently the scarf itself. In addition formal political steps or pronouncements to prevent or limit its usage continue to reinforce these issues. The strength of the state and the political will to limit its usage allied to the lack of support from many sections of political discourse –conservative or progressive – further highlights the political disempowerment described by interviewees.

However in this context the headscarf is also a highly pertinent symbol of faith and cultural identity and for many of the interviewees in this study the decision to adopt the scarf is represented as part of a desire to reconnect with their faith on a personal level and the commonly described search for ways to be a good Muslim. However this desire and revivalist dynamic cannot be divorced from a felt desire to connect with a cultural identity in the face

²⁵⁸ UK interviewee #20

of a hostile and disempowering environment. In effect, for many of the interviewees, the wearing of the headscarf can also be seen to be an act of empowerment that at times can even be infused with narratives of resistance. Likewise, the choice to adopt what is also a highly visible symbol of faith is described as part of a personal voyage and discovery and maturation that frames the act as a highly individualised and personalised decision central to an outward construction of faith based identity. However, this description of a personal and emancipated choice described by the interviewees in this study should not mask the actual and potential peer group or patriarchal pressures that may be applied to women in donning the head scarf or more concealing versions of this dress such as the Niqab.

Whilst this analysis focuses on the personal act of wearing the scarf, its divisiveness and controversy predominantly, though not exclusively, lies in its role as a vehicle for questions of culture, faith and integration in public discourse. As the wearing of the headscarf cannot be divorced from the messaging contained within and values ascribed to it, it is of particular interest that these dynamics intersect so powerfully on women.

Gender

In many media and political discourses feminine religiosities are associated with the submission and domination of women. Common representations of Islam are of a patriarchal ideology commonly believed to act against women, and represented by the veil. There are far fewer discourses in which Muslim women are the authors of ideologies, in effect portraying Muslim women as having a passive role of conveying ideologies without intending to or ever having wished to. Consequently the majority of attention has focused on masculine forms of radicalisation and overlooks their feminine counterpart.

In order to adequately address these representations and assumptions this study sought to interrogate possible gender dimension in the development, propagation and prevention of the beliefs ideologies and narratives of violent radicals. However no conclusive findings are possible from a small sample size although it is clear that the violent radical narratives have predominantly been developed, disseminated and adopted by men. In addition it is also apparent that normative approaches to the role of women and their sexuality are common, but not exclusive to, to the beliefs of violent radicals. Likewise the power of the headscarf issue and the role and power of the female interviewees to this study in the development and reclamation of public identities of faith highlights the important role women are playing in developing understandings of the role of Islam in Western Europe and the emerging activism should be noted.

The French study did however provide tentative insights into the complexities of gender, ideologies and narratives. Whilst these insights are by no means conclusive they do merit analysis as part of the core findings in order to promote critical thinking about the role of gender in the complex arena of violent radicalisation underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam and particularly analysis of the supporting beliefs, ideologies and narratives.

A key consideration when considering the role of gender in questions of radicalisation, and particularly in light of some of the narratives outlined above, particularly those associated with the headscarf, is the origins of the image of submissive Muslim women who are consequently unlikely to contribute towards the elaboration of ideologies. This can be traced in part in the construction of relations between East and West and in colonial history. For

example, during the 1930s, the situation of women in French Algeria became a focus for action by the colonial administration there. Its professed deploration of the subjection of the Muslim woman and the development of mutual help societies to support them, gradually established an indictment of the Algerian man, whose 'practices were likened to barbarian and medieval survivals'²⁵⁹. In such a situation the altruism of the colonisers' interest in the Algerian woman's situation could be viewed as an exercise in the exertion and legitimation of the colonial power's claimed superiority over the indigenous society. It is relevant here to recall that these representations of exclusively submissive Muslim women are a form of domination as noted by Edward Saïd 'to tell someone I hold your truth instigates a power struggle in which the image creator dominates and the image subject is dominated'²⁶⁰.

Within such a historical context an important question that underpins this report is whether existing forms of radicalisation are exclusively masculine or whether they also concern women. Likewise questions of women's relationship to such ideologies, if they elaborate them, which ones they may elaborate and the manner in which they might differ from those found in male discourse are all of interest. The research conducted in France suggests that women are also authors of ideologies but that they are organised around other issues than those present in male discourse. Whereas violence may be central in some men's discourse, the idea of 'purity' can more commonly be identified as at the heart of certain women's religious engagements. We witness here a vision of the world organised around the theme of the impure (them) and the pure (us), based on very strict norms. The following quote from Nadia, 39, frequents the Rue Myrrha mosque in the Goutte d'Or neighbourhood in Paris. She is a housewife and her husband is involved in Muslim associations:

*'There was a day or, well, it's not like a conversion but almost, so I had to do that as if I was ... Jacqueline or someone who comes to Islam, that's to say, when one converts, one takes a bath, it's symbolic. When one washes oneself, one cleanses oneself, well there isn't only body dirt in this symbol, there's also the cleansing of the soul. Well, so then, having known the before and the after, one washes oneself all the time. But it's not the same anymore. For example, when we have our periods, us women, we can't pray during all that time, we feel ... I don't feel good, I can't speak for the other women. There are perhaps those who take that for a time to rest, no hassle, I'm not going to do my prayers, but personally, during those two or three days I feel a kind of weight, I don't know how to put it, there's something missing. I haven't done it ... That's not good. When I'm ready to pray again I take my shower. What a joy ... I feel light, clean, all good, but not only physically clean. You've taken your bath, cool, and you're before God and you pray. It's great ... It's a rebirth, it's not a constraint ... It's not "oh, it's time to do it, I'd better go". Perhaps there are some who go with that frame of mind. But they'd do better to go and do something else ... but it's great ... And that's how one should always approach prayer.'*²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Frantz Fanon, 'Algérie se dévoile' in *L'an V de la révolution algérienne*, Paris, Maspéro, 1961. English translation: 'Unveiled Algeria' in *A Dying Colonialism*, New York, Grove Press, 1967. See also the work of historian Julia Clancy Smith, 2006, 'Le regard colonial. Histoire, genre et identité dans la fabrication de l'Algérie française' in *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, vol. 25, n° 1.

²⁶⁰ Edward Saïd, *L'orientalisme*, Paris, Seuil, 2005: 8. English translation: *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, New York, Vintage, 1978 (first translation).

²⁶¹ France interviewee Naida

Nadia elaborates an ideology here that can be seen as a more or less systematised set of ideas, opinions and beliefs, constituting a doctrine which influences individual and collective behaviour. We observe a distinction between the believer's daily life, which is suggested as a space in which one soils oneself, and the moment of prayer and the ablutions preceding it, which appear as the individual's access to the status of a pure believer. Cleanliness is considered here as the cornerstone of the believer's existence: 'Well, so then, having known the before and the after, one washes oneself all the time.' In this world, the feminine – represented here by menstruation – appears as incompatible with the religious rite and practice. A normative side also appears in Nadia's discourse: those who have another conception of prayer 'would do better to go and do something else', 'that's how one should always approach prayer'.

Such narratives and ideologies can come to represent alternative discourse to those that are more commonly identified among men. Rather than being an overtly political framework, with no reference to domination of peoples or recourse to arms to fight against the liberal world, these narratives and ideational frameworks focus instead on ultra-normative conceptions of the body, sexuality and the management of relationships between men and women. What is clear is that Nadia and others like her are not simply manipulated by Islamists and cannot be viewed purely as the submissive wife, but active constructors of ideas and world views and actions. These findings of women as key actors in the construction and development of ideology and Islamic practice are based on only limited data generated as part of this study. However it should be noted that these findings are also reflected and supported by broader work conducted by members of the study research team which has identified that issues and debate about female participation in mosque life is increasingly prominent in some settings.

Salafism

Throughout the study the role, influence and relationship of Salafism to violent radical narratives was a common point of contention. However, it is also clear that there is a great deal of misunderstanding about the true nature of Salafism.

Salafism in its modern-day manifestation is a diverse movement characterised by its adherence to a strong emphasis on monotheism and a commitment to the reform of the late medieval Sunni consensus in theology, mysticism and law, typified by Salafism's attack on following received scholarly opinion (*taqlid*). It advocates a return to proto-Islam, or the practices and thought of the first three generations of the religion. It often classifies as reprehensible innovation in belief and practice many aspects of traditional Sunni Islam, Islamic modernism and Shi'ism. It has liberal, more rationalising tendencies as typified by the Egyptian reformers like Abduh and Rashid Rida, and more literalist and conservative tendencies represented by Saudi Arabian Wahhabism, a tradition that dates back two hundred years. Other proto-Salafi streams were widespread in the Muslim world from Africa to Asia; some of these were closely aligned in their outlook such as the Indian Ahl-i Hadis.

The two streams – liberal and Wahhabi – have come much closer together since the 1960s chiefly through the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia, and these ideas have been spread around the Muslim world and the Muslim diaspora since the 1970s, efforts that were financially backed by an oil-rich Saudi Arabia. Thus modern-day Salafism consists largely of Wahhabi theology with a spectrum of views influenced by Islamism and Wahhabism on issues of religious practice, politics and economics. In sociological terms,

Salafism is fissiparous and has similarities with un-churched Evangelical Christianity, producing small communities based around charismatic religious leaders (sometimes religiously trained, sometimes lay) who align themselves with more senior scholars who stand somewhere within the Salafi spectrum. The Islamist movements, like the Brotherhood, have tended, however, to keep their modern centralised formal organisation intact while being particularly influenced by aspects of Wahhabi theology and worship.

This movement agrees that all Muslim countries should more fully embody the law and practice of Islam in state and society, but differs on how this is to be achieved. The pietists emphasise preaching (*da'wa*) and education, and support the status quo, which includes the Saudi religious establishment. The 'politicos' tend to advocate political change as necessary to achieve this, and argue that the pietists are too disconnected from current affairs to respond to the political crises in the Muslim world. The politicians have been identified with the Sahwa sheikhs, Salman al-'Awda and Safar al-Hawali, particularly during their anti-establishment period in the 1990s. The jihadists meanwhile argue for the violent overthrow of corrupt Muslim regimes, with some arguing, like al-Qaeda, that the priority is to attack "the far enemy", the West, directly and can be in direct opposition to the other strands of Salafism.²⁶²

Whilst Salafism possesses formal scholarly structures commonly emanating out of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, it is also commonly characterised by a reliance on a direct interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah that is stripped of cultural institutions. While not also strictly Salafist, this type of literalist approach does appear to hold a certain appeal to many of the interviewees as it enables exploration of their religion by individuals or small social groups in relation to their specific circumstances and contexts. The results of these explorations are described as highly diverse in our research, as is the case in the broader Salafist movement. In addition, the descriptions of encountering Salafist organizations by a number of the interviewees highlight how the Salafist approach also lends itself to the development of a shared Muslim identity independent of, and even superseding, cultural or ethnic identities.

There are key concerns from a number of perspectives relating to the Salafist teachings and the sociology of these networks. Firstly, for those firmly committed to liberal democratic values, the teachings of normative pious Salafism can represent an alternative narrative to the universal participation in the values and political systems of liberal democracies. Non-participation and separatism from political systems and associated ethos is a right in itself in liberal democratic systems, likewise the emphasis on charitable *da'wa* work can also be seen as beneficial and progressive in many communities. However those normative narratives and teachings cause concern among those who, as described in the French report, see the normative pious approach as infra-political and, if adopted on a significant scale, particularly in the case of Saudi Wahabbist manifestations, undermining the development of genuinely inclusive and integrated societies based on liberal democratic principles. These concerns are well captured in the following excerpt from one of the UK interviewees:

*"to me radicalism is associated with condemnation and extremism, excluding yourself from systems and process... It's a narrow mindedness, tunnel vision way of looking at things, and an attempt to take you back to the 1400's."*²⁶³

²⁶² Q. Wiktorowicz, 2005 & 2006.

²⁶³ UK interviewee #21

The second aspect, as noted in the UK report, is the historical sociological linkages between the different strands of Salafism. The UK security services as well as the French report have identified pathways to jihadism from pious Salafism that have been travelled by some in the past. These pathways can be seen in the close links between the various Salafist networks, the development of which during the late 1980 and 1990s is described in the UK report. However this report argues that the employment of the jihadist ideational framework as developed in the UK should be understood as a political exercise, the recruitment to which may be facilitated by personal exposure and contact and a comparable approach to religious instruction, the socialisation of highlight proscriptive normative approaches to religion and active attempts of promotion/ recruitment, but still essentially informed by an individual's own personal choice framework informed by a myriad of personal biographical, contextual, political and psychological influences that are outside the remit of this study.

Innovation, ambiguity and the role of scholars

A third central issue of relevance to the aims of this study that can be identified through the preceding overview of the Salafist movement is the central role of Scholars in interpreting the Quran and Sunnah, and in particular the issue of innovation, or *bid'ah*, in Islam. The term *bid'ah* refers to the role of human innovation both in worldly and Godly senses, and its applicability in Islam. Whilst *bid'ah* is commonly understood as representing sinful practice in Islam, what is considered innovation, where innovations are relevant to the practicing of faith, and even if *bid'ah* is forbidden at all²⁶⁴, are all key areas of contestation between two broad epistemological strands of Islam. These two currents can be generally be characterised on the one hand as those who might be considered neo-traditionalist Salafis and those who are considered to constitute a more progressive modernist approach to the interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah and the concept of *bid'ah*.

Broadly speaking, the progressive theological view is based on the fundamental premise that textual sources (such as the Quran and Sunnah) are subject to socially constructed interpretational processes. This approach translates itself into the importance and emphasis given to examining the epistemological and methodological dimensions underlying and determining the validity and applicability of various inherited interpretational models of overall teachings. Such approaches develop more contemporary contextualised and acculturalist interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah that commonly incorporate a more diverse approach and understanding of the Muslim faith and its cultures. The question of context becomes central, and the issue and debate about the context that Muslims are actually in becomes a critical aspect of interpreting the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.

However, the dominant school of interpretation, inspired by Saudi Wahhabism and promoted by the Salafis, rejects any reference to an approach using the methods of the human sciences. The latter is considered as *bid'ah*, an illegitimate innovation, and precludes anything but a reliance on literal interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah in order to follow the true path of the faith. Therefore this worldview considers modernity and its by-products, such as development of human and social sciences but also in some instances social and cultural practices, as *bid'ah*, an ungodly innovation and sinful in to pure Islamic thought. Its associated political ideology, based upon imitation of early models of Islamic caliphate, is hostile towards any modern theories that do not have an epistemic root in a pre-modern Islamic tradition.

²⁶⁴ http://www.minhajuk.org/artikelen.php?parent_id=1143424320

The difficulty of studying and interpreting the Quran and Sunnah, particularly in this contested arena, accrues considerable influence to the Scholars or *Fuqqaha*, the specialists of the sacred text. In the 1920s these scientists, teaching in the prestigious University of Al Azhar in Cairo, were influenced by the methods of modern religious sciences, using references to history, archaeology and linguistics.²⁶⁵ This approach sought to distil the meaning of verses from the often violent and specific contexts associated with the time of the birth of Islam and identify those verses carrying a more universal meaning through a rational scientific scholarly process, a tradition that is continued by the progressive movement. Similarly, the role of scholars in interpreting the faith in traditional literalist forms of Salafism is also a central feature of that movement, with the key sources of scholarly activity emanating from Saudi, Yemen, Kuwait and the UAE.

However, the scope for personal as well as abusive literal interpretations is also apparent, and commonly exploited by those within the jihadist movement. This is particularly the case in contexts where individuals have less access to the formal and nuanced scholarly instruction, as described by a number of UK interviewees who were part of the nascent UK Salafi movement in the late 1980s and early 90s. Whilst access to such guidance is now more accessible, including for western European Muslims, thanks to wider availability of translated texts and the dissemination power of the internet, the guidance of many scholars remains highly ambiguous, with rulings often dense, impenetrable and in effect heavily encoded.

This situation of a perceived continual ambiguity, particularly to ‘outsiders’, in relation to scholarly interpretation on the fundamental issue of bid’ah and other key issues that spring from the two currents are not only a reflection of the complexities of interpreting religious teachings. Ambiguity may also be seen as an ongoing manifestation of the complex and evolving balance of theological, social and political forces in the Muslim field. Consequently, whilst the role of scholars is a key component, the political contexts within which they operate remain a central theme, and of key relevance to any counter ideological strategy to address violent radical narratives and ideologies.

The violent radical narratives

Described in the sections above are a range of beliefs and narratives that emerged during the fieldwork. However none of these can be described as specifically violent radical narratives and all represent ideas, and views and beliefs that can be legitimately held. What is notable however is the manner in which these narratives are also found in the narratives of violent radical discourse. Here the representations of these narratives are far more aggressive and heavily reliant on violent imagery and ‘fundamentalist’ representations of the issues. Likewise violent radical narratives may call on these narratives in efforts to create new constituencies but also reframe them and promote an ideological coherence and interpretive power via the ideational framework outlined in the following section.

The following narratives can be discerned and are described by a number of the UK interviewees as well as a handful of the French interviewees as components of violent radicalisation. In addition they are also heavily represented throughout the web based analysis. The two central narratives are:

²⁶⁵ O.Youssef, *Le Coran, au risque de la psychanalyse*, Albin Michel, Paris, 2007.

- A belief that the West, and more specifically a Christian – Judaic crusade, is attacking Islam, and has been engaged in a battle against Islam for centuries, and
- That there is an ontological divide between Islam and Christianity and that Muslims are living in hostile societies and need to protect themselves.

The following quotes illustrate the nature and representation of these narratives;

“Since the fall of the Ottoman empire, we’ve been on the defensive.”²⁶⁶

“The US is THE most interfering country in the world... you support the war on terrorism; the killing of thousands upon thousands of innocent women, men children and civilians around the world. You are supporting a vicious circle of violence that is motivated not by justice but by greed and selfishness or your oil and power-hungry politicians”²⁶⁷

“The war that the West and Russia are conducting is a war against Islam”²⁶⁸

“The governments of the West have a long history of oppression of Muslims, this is nothing new! They colonized Muslim land spreading havoc and destruction, they divided our Ummah and land.”²⁶⁹

“I live in the West and I suffer on a daily basis as I am a woman with niqab (and a convert) even so, I am told to go back to where I came from and we are subjected to hatred on a daily basis. It is Islam that they hate not a few individuals. This is a war against Islam”²⁷⁰

Key narratives include that Muslims have suffered repression, ethnic cleansing and ‘defeats’ including the loss of the caliphate in the early part of the century, the loss of part of Kashmir to India during partition, the military defeat in relation to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Palestinian displacement and the apparent loss of Jerusalem, repression in North Africa / Egypt/ Chechnya, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, infidel occupation of holy places in Saudi Arabia since the Gulf War and the current occupation of Afghanistan or other conflicts of direct relevance to a particular audience, for example French colonial and the subsequent domestic military rule of Algeria.

More recent narratives build on and reinforce the idea of victimhood, with the occupation of Iraq seen as a cover for oil interests and the war against terror seen as a proxy for a war against Muslims and included American / western support for Israel and unequal treatment of the Palestinians, expansionism and interference in the Muslim world, Western foreign policy as driven by oil and economic interests under the guise of democracy and human rights.

In addition, America / the West are seen as sponsors and beneficiaries of the capitalist system resulting in social injustices for the poor and minorities, including Muslims. Those Muslims that are living in Western Europe are seen as living in hostile societies and subject to cultural imperialism by increasingly morally bankrupt Christian crusaders engaged in a war against

²⁶⁶ France interviewee #11

²⁶⁷ English language forum

²⁶⁸ English language forum

²⁶⁹ English language forum

²⁷⁰ English language forum

Islam that encompasses the cultural and social, as illustrated by this quote from the UK report:

“Western societies are irredeemable – you have to destroy because any positive work you do in these societies will only buttress them”²⁷¹

Denouncement of the Kafir and the celebration of the Mujahedeen

An additional narrative of the violent radicals is the development of oppositional group identities based on an allegiance to the Muslim Ummah in opposition to those described by the abusive term kafir, or ‘unbeliever’. However what is notable in this narrative is that the term kafir is not only reserved for non Muslims, but all those who commonly oppose violent radical narratives and groups. The term kafir does have some penetration into broader language, commonly among disaffected youth, as highlighted by the rather amateurish rap video ‘Dirty kafir’ that could be found on the website you tube.

This narrative of suspicion and denigration of traditional forms of authority, feeding off a sense of disenfranchisement for many of the interviewees in the West, is applied by its proponents to almost all the institutions and leaders outside of the jihadist movement and is also given ideological form through the key concept of Takfir, expanded in more detail in the following ideational framework.

The power of this narrative lies not only in its challenge to the perceived corrupt leaders and governance of Muslim nations, religious institutions, the authorities of Western European countries but also to the traditional community and faith representation structures. These themes not only provide rationale and justification for their opposition to authority, but also reinforce group identities and belonging and even feed narratives of a globally linked ‘vanguard’. Such concepts are common among terrorist groups and particularly among those based on ideological and social networks models, and are given form in this instance through the representations of the virtues and bravery of the ‘Mujahed’. The virtue and value of the Mujahedeen is commonly reinforced through a glorification of nobility and responsibility in their martyrdom.

This glorification of the Mujahedeen and their martyrdom as well as more general propaganda was highly prominent across the internet sites reviewed and quotes such as this were littered across the message boards that were reviewed:

“one of our lions has driven a lorry filled with explosives and resulted in the destruction of half of the building and the death of tens of policemen. This comes as part of the strategic plan that has been put in place by the Amir al-Mu’mineen (Leader of the faithful) Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq.”

Solidarity and empowerment

The power of the group, and in particular the conditioning and socialisation associated with the mutual support commonly provided in radical groups was highlighted by the interview with Interviewee #1 as part of the French study. In addition, among the UK interviewees a sense of shared responsibility and moral and personal worth accrued from engaging in jihad in support of Muslim brothers and sisters under attack in Afghanistan and Bosnia could also

²⁷¹ UK interviewee #15

be discerned as well as a powerful sense of empowerment in defending Muslims from oppression. This excitement described by some of the UK interviewees when reaching Afghanistan or Bosnia can also be seen to be infused with narratives of group loyalty, acceptance and, crucially, empowerment as part of a just cause.:

“And it was very, it was very, very emotional, it was a time when you felt alive, you’d stripped yourself of all the kind of career...my parents were just aghast, you know, why do you have to do it, you got a career ahead of you, but you just had to do it.”²⁷²

Role of the Middle East conflict – a ‘coupling’ point

Virtually all interviewees, other than the avowed radicals interviewed, strongly rejected the general use of violence for religious-political ends. However it should also be noted that some were more ambiguous in relation to violent conflicts in the Middle East, including Israel / Palestine. These were often seen as extreme cases where a long suffering population were under direct attack with no viable strategic alternative. This finding was noted in the Danish research as well as in the German context while in the UK the issue has actively been used by violent radicals as a polarising point of debate in order to promote a world view and an ideational framework by appropriating a highly charged subject for their cause. One interviewee who had subscribed to violent jihadism discussed his previous attitudes toward legitimate employment of violent jihad:

“Today it means about soldiers in Iraq and Palestine and not innocent people [...] Iraq is not a good example because there was military rule but in Palestine that is occupied and there live Palestinians and Jews. Then came Israel and the Zionists, was it then alright to blow up a bus full of Israeli children? That was alright for me before.”²⁷³

Theatres of conflict can therefore be employed as coupling points for the promotion of the violent radical narratives and the violent radical ideational framework to a broader audience, particularly in regard to the legitimate use of suicide bombing. It should also be noted such views relating to the legitimate employment of violence are not exclusive to those who claim to be of Muslim faith.²⁷⁴

9. THE IDEATIONAL FRAMEWORK

‘The false equation that Islam is exercise of temporal power and the expansion of territorial space, the binary narrative of dar al-harb [and] dar al-kafir. The world-view that leads to exclusionary separatist views to life and a dichotomisation and identity crisis and a vacuum in young people’s minds and an inability to recognise the necessity of understanding the Quran as Furqan [the true criterion]. This mindset has always existed in Muslim consciousness in relation to reading and understanding the text. Muslims in the West have seen signposts such as the Iranian revolution, Rushdie affair and so on, all which have converged to bring latent interpretations into public and popular consciousness. The UK government helped to encourage the spread of literalist ideologies as part of a broader geopolitical [Cold War] strategy of countering Iran -- offsetting Khomeinism by promoting Wahhabism [in the 1980s]. A failure to

²⁷² UK interviewee #2

²⁷³ Denmark interviewee #26

²⁷⁴ Pew global attitudes survey 2007

*understand this [in context], [a] lack of spiritual maturation and a dumbing down of Islamic discourse [and] ... [some] lack psychological, social, familial integrity. And a rupturing of relationships, lack of connections, inner moderation, identity and a lack of love [lead to susceptibility to violent radicalisation].*²⁷⁵

The above description by a UK Imam provides a critical insight into the context and processes that have been central in the development of the violent radical ideologies that are central to this study. We describe this ideological framework as a proto-ideology or ideational framework, in that it is evolving, not fully formed and individual radicals may disagree in relation to some strands, or employ some or all of the components to underpin motivation and a call to action.

The development of this ideational framework can be understood within a regional and global context, shaped and employed by a range of ideologues, organisations and events that are commonly associated with the jihadist movement. The ideologies outlined below can be and have been adapted, adopted and understood to a lesser or greater extent via specific dynamics of the research countries and other relevant contexts and conflicts around the globe to which they seek to provide meaning.

The ideational framework is characterised by a reliance on selective and literal interpretations of Islamic texts and employed in support of political causes and strategic necessities. Whilst the ideology appropriates concepts found in Islamic thought and is often characterised as ‘Salafi’ due to its reliance on literal understandings of text independent of contextualised interpretation, it is a political framework that has been developed outside of Islamic jurisprudence.

This world view has commonly been promoted by individuals with little or no formal theological training but possessing a rhetorical flair and is commonly adopted and used by individuals within a social network / movement context and influenced by radical movement interlocutors. Its claims to legitimacy and descriptive influence are underpinned by both the promotion of and belief in violently zealous representations and interpretations of more commonly held beliefs and narratives that are described above. It is also true that the relationship of many of the more radical interviewees to the detail of these terms is variable, with many not engaging or noting the concepts directly. However it is also clear that the key reference points below resonate with many of the sentiments and concerns expressed by more radical interviewees, in particular in explaining narratives of alienation, exclusion and anti-imperialism.

It should also be noted that whilst a selection of key ideological concepts and narratives are disseminated via propaganda material found on a range of internet platforms there is a lack of evidence relating to the potential role of the internet in developing radicalised world views, beyond a facilitation of access to propaganda, operational resources and alternative information sources. There is emerging evidence however that the internet may play an ‘echo chamber’ role in the construction of collective and individual radical identities.

It is also important to recognise that other groups and individuals may also share and /or articulate some of the strands without it necessarily making them radical or leading to direct

²⁷⁵ UK interviewee #11

violence. For example, individuals may see some of the precepts as valid in the context of the Middle East conflict (some interviewees expressed this view) but not applicable elsewhere.

Emerging from the analysis and the fieldwork, the core ideology of violent radicals can be seen to consist of the following components:

1: *Takfir* (excommunication from the faith) of Muslim leaders for failing to rule by the entirety of the Sacred Law (Shari'a) and, in some cases, of the generality of Muslims for their complicity in this misrule or for failing to practise or believe in a form of Islam acceptable to violent radicals. It may be expressed in rhetorical and admonitory registers without any detailed theory of concomitant action, which is noticeable in the writings of Sayyid Qutb and Abu'l A'la Mawdudi in their use of the term "the Age of Ignorance" (jahilliya) to describe present-day Muslim societies rather than the pre-Islamic Arabs as was the case traditionally. It is also crucially *not* enacted as an official legal process but as an informal process often driven by sectarian and other political considerations.

Any Muslim declared an apostate is stripped of moral status and legal protections and becomes liable to extra-judicial punishment and even violence. The detailed exposition of takfir against several Muslim groups in British society - Sufis, Shiites and pietist Salafis - was a speciality of Abdullah Faisal's discourse. Others like Abu Hamza, Omar Bakri Mohammed or Abu Qatada were more likely to provide the general theological rationale for it.

2: *jihadism*. Rather than as an ethically-circumscribed concept of moral struggle and just war, this conception of jihad requires - against the late medieval consensus in Islam - three elements. jihadism is (i) a permanent and (ii) individual obligation that may be (iii) called for by non-state actors. While terming jihad as a 'way of life' may have formed part of the rhetorical sloganeering of Islamist movements from the early twentieth century onwards, it was the Soviet-Afghan jihad in which the concept was given concrete form by Abdullah Azzam and others back in the UK when this idea was also carried back to Britain during the 1980s. The development of this concept informed all strands of the jihad movement during the 1990s.

Such a concept crucially places the conduct of a violent moral struggle as a tenet of faith that simultaneously becomes a strategic necessity and objective. The power of this twin track concept may have ramifications when considering the relative influence or otherwise of organisational strategic direction when assessing the nature of terrorist attacks, their strategic logic and direction, and enables the possibility of an increased autonomy of action of individuals, cells and social networks based on the ideological belief in violent jihad.

3: *The World as the Abode of War (Dar al-Harb)*. This means that states in *both* the Muslim world and the non-Muslim world are presumed to be hostile enemies at war with Islam and Muslims until the rule of Shari'a is established in the Muslim world. For some groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain this did not justify any action undertaken to further the cause even if they directly contravene basic ethnic and moral provisions in Islamic law. However some extremist preachers did certainly encourage their followers to use criminal means to fund jihadist causes from the early 90s onwards.²⁷⁶ The power of this concept when employed by violent radicals can also be seen in its ability to provide conceptual coherence to the

²⁷⁶ Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *The Suicide Factory* (London; Harper Collins, 2006), 70.

narratives of political marginalisation and alienation commonly described by our interviewees.

5: *The Principle of Indiscrimination between Civilian and Military Targets.*²⁷⁷ This is seen as a tactical necessity in asymmetric warfare as no terrorist organisation can by definition directly confront the military forces of the state conventionally. Through its weakness it may be obliged to hit non-military targets. This is justified either through an argument of culpability -- civilians support or serve in the military, civilians are military reservists (used in the case of Israel) or civilians pay taxes to or vote for governments that oppress the Muslim world -- or by a version of the "collateral damage" argument.

4: *Attacking the Far Enemy.* This involves a strategic switch from targeting the 'near enemy', or apostate Muslim governments, particularly Saudi Arabia, to attacking America and its Western allies directly whose power the apostate Middle Eastern governments were seen to be reliant on. Both the 'near' and 'far' enemies fit within the paradigm of the World as the Abode of War. The strategy is tactically justified in order to create the Islam-West polarisation necessary to draw support to the cause of re-establishing Islamic rule and ending Western influence in the Muslim world.

This strategy depends on the calculation that nationalist tendencies within the jihadist movement will be minimised and that a pan-Islamic sentiment will be mobilised as an asymmetric reaction to the 'war on terror', manifested either by the use of direct superior US-led military force in the Muslim world or through the use of allied forces in proxy conflicts. Elements of the jihad movement had already taken up this strategic switch in the early 1990s, notably in the 1993 attack on the World Trade Centre, but its accelerated momentum was certainly galvanised by al-Qaeda's declaration to that effect in 1998.²⁷⁸ The military invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan have weakened the distinction between the 'near' and 'far' enemy as American and allied troops may be attacked there, justified as part of a defensive jihad to protect the Muslim homelands. This concept has clear ramifications in the promotion of this ideational framework to diaspora population in Western Europe.

6: *Suicide Bombing.* This tactic comes out of the principle of indiscrimination and is similarly justified as a necessary tactic of asymmetric warfare, due to the poverty of alternative and more powerful means of force. As suicide is intrinsically a mortal sin in Islam, suicide bombing is recast as "self-martyrdom" on the basis of the intent to sacrifice oneself for the cause. The first contemporary suicide attack against a civilian target was in 1981 by the Lebanese Islamic Da`wah Party, but the tactic was refined by the Marxist Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka during the 1980s. Taken up by Lebanese groups in the same decade and later on by Palestinian groups in 1993, it was taken up on a more global and intensive scale by al-Qaeda and has become a principal tactic in Iraq. An argument is made by some Islamists for a Palestinian exception to the rule against suicide bombing, on the basis that many Israeli citizens serve as reservists in the Israeli army. This argument for Palestinian exceptionalism becomes more difficult to sustain as al-Qaeda-influenced jihadism continues to erode the distinction by applying the tactic on the basis of the same criteria very widely outside of that 'exception'.

²⁷⁷ We owe the phrase "principle of indiscrimination" to Mohammad-Mahmoud Mohamedou, *Understanding al-Qaeda; The Transformation of War* (London; Pluto, 2005).

²⁷⁸ Bruce Lawrence (ed.), *Messages to the World; The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (London; Verso, 2005), "The World Islamic Front", 58-62.

7: Killing of Muslims. This is justified on the grounds that either (i) they are complicit through either voting for or by paying taxes to Western governments or apostate Muslim governments or (ii) they oppose the establishment of an Islamic state or (iii) they are collateral damage but may be considered paradoxically as martyrs to the cause. This issue has proved controversial within al-Qaeda and takfiri jihadist circles because ‘attacking the near enemy’, or fellow Muslims, has quickly lost its support. This can be seen in the disassociation by both Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza in 1997 from the Group Islamic Armé (GIA) over its massacres of fellow Algerian Muslims it had denounced as apostates. A similar debate occurred in 2005 between Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, the erstwhile leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, the second-in-command of al-Qaeda, over whether Shiite Muslims could be targeted or not. Zawahiri thought it was divisive, but was unable to prevent Zarqawi from pursuing it. Overall the majority of al-Qaeda’s and the wider takfiri jihadist tendency’s victims are Muslim by faith. In the ideological matrix, it is a secondary issue that logically emerges out of the debates on takfir, the merits of attacking either the ‘near’ or ‘far’ enemy and of attacking military or civilian targets.

An additional concept that should also be included as a part of this framework is that of;

8: The return of the caliphate. This is commonly understood as a world government ruled by the precepts of Shari’a, beginning with the reestablishment of a caliphate somewhere in the Muslim world. The actual conceptualisation of the shape, place and form of the Caliphate is not consistent or clear. The employment of these concepts by violent radicals should be understood in the context of what is described as an overtly political ideational framework that has appropriated certain concepts in the Islamic faith for their purposes. For further discussion on the concept of the Caliphate and Shari’a as they are understood and employed in Islam please refer to the glossary.

This eight-piece jigsaw - that relates strictly to political violence and the denigration of the ‘other’, whether he or she is Muslim or not - is played into common Muslim beliefs and widespread narratives that should properly be understood to be points of commonality between the recruiter and the seeker or recruit. These are invoked in order to put into place the elements of this jigsaw, to see violent action as the only possible choice, as described by the Imam quoted at the beginning of this section.

10. WAYS FORWARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A social movement approach

Our view is that the proto-ideology of violent radicals possesses explanatory power derived from the employment of legitimate ‘mainstream’ narratives and benefits from a favourable context for the propagation of their ideas, notwithstanding the widespread rejection of violence. Intellectual counter-currents and narratives appear to have failed to directly address a key question in Muslim communities, namely why they / their co-religionists are experiencing hostility, discrimination and, in some cases violence, from others and states across the globe.

Not only are violent radicals able to offer an explanation for the recent historical experience of Muslims, they are able to point to a wide range of actions and events that reinforce the commonly held belief that Muslims are under attack and need, in some way, to ‘defend’ themselves. The reaction of individuals to this propagation in our fieldwork varies widely;

from attempts to keep religious belief separate from politics, to personal piety, to adoption of more radical views. However the centrality of the question of what it means to be a good Muslim for interviewees indicates that Muslim identity in whatever form is being reinforced.

Reviewing the rise of religiosity in the Muslim 'field' (we should note that this is a global phenomenon also evident in other religious denominations) we believe that the number of violent radicals, the extent of implicit and explicit support for some, if not all, of their ideology in some sections of Muslim communities, and a search for 'what it means to be a good Muslim' (including among those who would normally be described as 'cultural' Muslims) indicates that what we are seeing has some if not all the characteristics of a social movement.

A review of the literature on social movements identifies the key characteristics of social movements as²⁷⁹:

- Public protest or radical action; the use of unconventional or radical means to foster or halt change based on the assumption that change cannot be achieved within the system is central to the nature of social movements.
- Transformative events; social movements creating change through the process and impact of the movement rather than as a planned incremental programme of change.
- Collective activity; the nature of action, outlook and goals define movements through collective action whilst also constructing shared identities around these goals and beliefs.
- Voluntary association and social relationships; social movements are spontaneous and self organising, however the recruitment to social networks is a more complex dynamic process.
- Organised and spontaneous; in their inception they are spontaneous whilst the form that they take to perpetuate themselves may be as a formal organisation, an organisation of collective action or as a connecting structure or network.
- Political; by their very nature movements are contested politics and their members 'protester' and the aims of the movement political, with it necessary at some point to engage with those who hold influence within the system.
- Conflict; often seen as subversive, unwelcome or oppositional force that challenges institutionalised systems of power. The oppositional polarised nature also contributes to the generation of group identity and solidarity.
- Durability; the construction of collective identity within a movement is central to its longevity and durability, where personal identity comes inextricably bound with the circle of an active movement and the social relationships and identities forged there.

The social phenomena we are researching can be seen to clearly exhibit many of these characteristics. We believe that what we are observing in terms of common beliefs exhibits at

²⁷⁹ (see for example Towards a Million Change Agents, A Review of the Social Movements Literature, NHS Modernisation Agency <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/archive/00001133/01/million.pdf>)

least some of the characteristics of a social movement that unites people who may have different views on what – if anything – should be done to respond, from progressive engagement to retreat into piety through to activism or violence.

In addition there are a wider range of factors central to evaluating individual choices for participation in movements. Factors include motivational, rational, emotional, social or normative factors as well as behavioural, organisational and leadership factors, all of which influence the development of social networks and communities of practice, their development, direction and perpetuation. A key characteristic of social movements is their emotional complexity:

“social movement organisations, like any other organisation, are emotional arenas”; feelings shape and lubricate social transactions. Feelings contribute to and reflect the structure and culture of organisations. Order and control, the very essence of the organisation of work, concern what people do with their feelings²⁸⁰

How ‘recruitment’ occurs in such movements and networks, in particular to that of high risk activism, and how such networks perpetuate and develop may also hold valuable lessons for the study of violent radicalisation. McAdam’s model of high risk activism, drawn on by Quentin Wiktorowicz in his work, highlights how sustained and perpetuating commitment is reinforced once people have entered the ‘circle’ of an active movement and begun to forge social relationships and a shared identity with each other.²⁸¹ Once people are in the movement circle they are more likely to remain there by virtue of the cyclical dynamics of contact, interaction, socialisation, shared understandings, belongingness and community.

Such a model implies that sustainability is more a social and cultural matter than an institutional matter, although recognising the power of the latter is nevertheless a central component in understanding terrorist violence. People are held together by the ‘pull’ of commonly held aspirations and beliefs and the social ties they are able to forge with one another. The model also shows the dual role of belief, ideology and narrative, at both an early stage of mediating contact with activists through to the ongoing reinforcement of the identity of the network and its members. Whilst the model may have flaws or gaps in fully exploring contextual structural factors, whilst rational choice factors based for both the recruit (represented here as ‘biographical availability’) or the strategic logic of organizations when recruiting into high risk activism may not be given sufficient prominence to fully understand means of radicalisation and recruitment in full, when considering counter ideological approaches it provides a valuable insight into how ideologies, narratives and shared identities are developed and perpetuated in such a context and inform participation.

²⁸⁰ Towards a Million Change Agents, A Review of the Social Movements Literature, NHS Modernisation Agency <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/archive/00001133/01/million.pdf>

²⁸¹ For Mc Adam please refer to Towards a Million Change Agents, A Review of the Social Movements Literature, NHS Modernisation Agency <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/archive/00001133/01/million.pdf>
For Wiktorowicz please refer to Wiktorowicz, Quintan (ed), Islamic activism: a social movement theory approach (Bloomington, Ind; Indiana University Press, 2004) and Ranstorp, Magnus & Herd, Graeme P.; Approaches to Countering Terrorism; In *The ideological war on terror, Worldwide strategies for counter terrorism*; Anne Aldis and Graeme P. Herd (eds) (Routledge, Oxford, 2007)

Ways forward

The social movement in the context of the Muslim ‘field’ is extremely broad, where individuals and groups with some common grievances and aspirations engage in uncoordinated but collective action, though they may disagree on specific tactics and even specific end points.

In practical terms then, if violent radicals have been effective in building or ‘riding the wave’ of a social movement, in promoting powerful narratives that have resonance so that even those radically opposed to their ideology and actions feel they need to consider what it means to be a ‘good Muslim’, how should the Commission / Member States respond? The obvious policy option – developing and promoting counter ideologies is unlikely to suffice in itself.

It is notable that there was virtually no reference in our fieldwork to direct counter-ideologies or narratives which indicates that these have had little impact on the ground to date.²⁸² These counter ideologies and narratives vary widely; from a reassertion of the values of secular democracy (see for example <http://www.bmsd.org.uk/>), the reconciliation of the Islamic faith with the principles of democracy and life in western societies (see for example www.thecitycircle.co.uk), to Muslim ‘conservative’ and ‘reformist’ intellectual currents and discourse.²⁸³

These divisions are necessarily broad and quite fluid. ‘Conservative’ intellectual Islam eschews political activism and is often seen as quietist in approach. Most of the intellectuals and academics in this category come from traditional ulama backgrounds. They may not be as preoccupied with authenticity as radicals but they remain deeply critical of aspects of the ‘West’ and the modernity that goes with it. The ‘reformist’ current are not necessarily less critical of the offerings of ‘Western’ civilisation but see interpretation and innovative *ijtihad* as important underpinnings of a dynamic theology that is the true essence of Islam. Critically, while many would interpret this reformist current as calling for the modernisation of Islam, commentators point out that this is not something that reformists can be explicit about. This gives an important indication of how sensitive these issues are in the Muslim world and the current balance of ideological forces in the field.

Most reformists would accept that in the short run Islamic fundamentalism may have captured the hearts of many people in the Muslim world, but some argue that given the competition it faces from other, more learned, varieties of the religion, it is doubtful whether it can also capture the minds of most Muslims *in the long run* (our emphasis)²⁸⁴. Most reformists recognise, however, the huge contextual obstacles to reformation in Islam, including access to institutions and funding, an international environment that seriously undermines their message, opposition from the traditional, orthodox religious establishment, and opposition from some states. For this reason our assessment is that while there is no

²⁸² This finding may partly reflect the limited sampling size of the study

²⁸³ It should be noted that beyond figures like Tariq Ramadan, Abdul Hakim Murad (Timothy Winters) there are few dominant pan-European figures that are emerging to counter the pan-European coalescing of Islamist currents and although within specific member state contexts there are individuals that are driving a re-orientation of Islam appropriately contextualised for Muslims living as minorities in the West, there is a notably growing influence of figures from America with the most prominent individual being Sheikh Hamza Yusuf.

²⁸⁴ The New Voices of Islam, ed. Mehran Kamrava, 2006

shortage of other currents and counter ideologies, a central problem remains of how they are enabled, including funded, disseminated, how they gain access to the broader mass Muslim ‘field’ and can be reinforced.

In addition there is little, if any, historical evidence that ideology, whether radical, violent or otherwise, can be defeated solely by the employment of a counter-ideology. More often ideology collapses or comes to be seen as redundant as its explanatory power comes into question in the face of accumulating evidence that it is unable to explain²⁸⁵. Some commentators have argued for example that this is apparent in the case of cold war ideologies whereby the communist ideology of the East, rather than being directly defeated by counter-ideology, is instead viewed as having largely collapsed through being unable to satisfactorily explain to its peoples why a supposedly superior system of human economic organisation had proved unable to deliver material progress more effectively than the West.

One of the key characteristics of social movements is that they are precisely that – social and not state directed. These movements consist of a continual flow and development of ideas legitimated from *within*, and given the distrust of authorities; we would argue that there is little value in authorities directly attempting to develop counter-ideology. This is not to say counter-ideologies and currents should not be supported, but that states cannot be seen to be the key actor if they are to have legitimacy. Rather, policy options for the EC / Member States need to be predicated on understanding and responding to how people are mobilised into collective (but not necessarily centrally co-ordinated) action and how such mobilisation is spread and sustained.

The evidence is that key factors in the mobilisation of social movements include;

- a. Rational factors – the value or gain for individuals in joining with others in a common endeavour;
- b. Emotional and moral factors – beliefs are often more powerful than personal gain /loss calculations and it is emotional rather than transactional bonds that bind movements together. Moral precepts relating to social justice can also be vital (for example in the attraction of some white Americans to the civil rights movement);
- c. Social / normative factors – historical, cultural, institutional conditions play a key role, social networks and communities of practice (whether radical or counter-radical) are important mechanisms;
- d. Behavioural factors – concrete forms of engagement beyond meetings / discussions sustain a movement as do shared rituals / practices that reaffirm ideological values;
- e. Organisational factors – are critical, enabling organisation (as opposed to organisations) is required – including people, money, time and infrastructure;
- f. Leadership – movements require leaders at multiple levels and one of their key activities is ‘framing’ or making sense of what is happening, giving meaning

²⁸⁵ For a parallel in relation to scientific paradigms see for example Thomas Kuhn, ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolutions’ (1962), a landmark publication in the sociology of knowledge and understanding of paradigms

and catalysing action, building and sustaining consensus on what needs to be done.

Building on what is known about these key factors in effective mobilisation our recommendations are underpinned by the following principles;

- a. They must offer rational benefits for participants. Interventions must have real benefits for the individuals and groups concerned – at the very least they should not be expected to resource the mobilisation themselves (if indeed they have the resources which is doubtful);
- b. They need to build on an ethical / moral / emotional appeal – and not simply be transaction based. The EC / Member States need to see their role as one of binding peoples and the state together in the interests of all populations – not seeing them as the passive subjects of state power;
- c. Interventions need to support and build social networks and communities of practitioners who are already dealing with radicalisation issues on a daily basis, but currently have little or no support or opportunity to exchange experience and develop their practice. Obvious examples are professionals dealing with radicalisation issues on campuses, in prisons and through civil society organisations;
- d. They need to encourage and support concrete involvement, not just opportunities to meet, discuss and raise awareness of issues;
- e. Interventions need to provide practical enabling support (funds, people, time, infrastructure)
- f. They need to bring to the fore the actual and potential leaders who espouse democratic values and reject violence in communities at different levels, local, regional, national, international, to stimulate, catalyse and strengthen the community's response.
- g. Interventions need to recognise that there are however at the same time within communities' moderate and progressive voices and resources that can be mobilised.
- h. Critically, as violent radical ideologies and narratives are being disseminated and promoted on a global and European level, as well as in Member States to varying degrees, policy responses need to be developed at pan-European as well as Member State level. This is most obvious in the case of the classification of and approach towards radical organisations, where Member State differences may allow violent radicals and their organisations to regroup in different settings, or encourage draconian measures against transnational organisations in some Member States which are seen as unnecessary in others.

With these guiding considerations, our policy recommendations are multi-layered and intended to offer a holistic response to an organic movement. They focus on three main potential fields of intervention; *currencies, communities and context*.

- *Currencies*; the beliefs, ideologies and narratives flowing through the Muslim ‘field’;
- *Communities*; individuals and key groupings and how they relate to this ideology in Muslims communities;
- *Context*; the context in which these communities live that reinforces some of the beliefs and assumptions about social hostility and discrimination that emerged across our fieldwork.

In each of these areas there are policy options and interventions that can be undertaken at EC and Member State (MS) level.

Currencies; the beliefs, ideologies and narratives

- Recommendations;
 - i. Conduct systematic and more robust national and EU-wide polling (EC). Our qualitative work indicates that violent radical ideologies have been able to build, align and interpenetrate other more ‘mainstream’ currents of thought, however the weaknesses of current polling literature make it impossible to quantify the extent to which violent radical narratives are being embraced. The methodological problems include timing, the influence of events such as attacks or high profile court cases and leading questions.
 - ii. Critical research on the significance of the Middle East conflict in narratives across the spectrum in the Muslim field (EC). This issue emerged as central both from interviews and the literature. Two immediate research issues stand out. The first is the question of whether perceived movement toward a resolution would actually have a powerful counter-radicalisation impact or not, given other recent events. The second is related to the felt sense of powerlessness among interviewees to in any way influence the approach of Western governments towards resolution. On the second there would be value in research to explore the scope for mechanisms to engage the Muslim and Jewish diaspora in dialogue with Member States / the EC on approaches towards the Middle East conflict.
 - iii. Identify theologians/Imams and significant religious voices who have effectively made the counter-radical case, specifically those from within Europe, but including those outside of Europe who have international legitimacy. Our UK fieldwork indicates that it is possible to counter radicalisation of institutions through detailed theological argument by theologians who are seen as more learned than violent radicals. Representing a spectrum of Islamic orientations, these theological and ideological counter-arguments, including those being developed by women, should be synthesised and made widely available,. Additionally, it requires a recognition that some Islamic orientations will provide a more effective counter weight than others (EC);

- iv. Support the propagation and effective dissemination of already existing counter narratives by some Muslims in Europe, specifically narratives exploring the concept of European/national Muslim identity and Muslims living in the West, through the provision of facilities and funding for conferences and papers to develop the debate (EC/MS);
- v. Support development programmes for the training of Muslim civic society leadership potential and associated networks to create an ideologically and theologically literate leadership and counter weight within community settings. This should specially include women and young people (EC/MS);
- vi. Assist in the development and alignment of networks of European and Member State Muslim theologians, religious and community leaders – including women and young people - who are alive to respective Member State contexts, and who are deemed to be legitimate authenticators of a counter discourse to that promoted by violent radicals. (EC/MS).

Communities

- *Recommendations*

- i. Provide funding and infrastructure to ‘progressive’ individuals, and organisations and for communities of practitioners (EC/MS). There is an identifiable pattern of states attempting to find, engage with and fund only ‘moderate’ or ‘mainstream’ Muslim organisations and ignoring committed and highly active ‘progressive’ voices and organizations; including those promoting secular values in the public sphere. Progressives will be of two important types – academics or intellectuals, and practitioners having to deal with radicalisation issues on the ground on a day to day basis, whether in youth/social work, the education sector or civil society institutions.
- ii. Clerics / Religious leaders – there is some evidence that some clerics and religious leaders are seen as ‘out of touch’ with younger members of the jamaat (congregation) and unable to meet their needs. In addition to making available the theological arguments so they can counter radical voices and influences, they can be offered information and advice on understanding the authorities and civic processes so they can offer practical advice and support to the jamaat on issues from housing to education to social and legal systems. (MS)
- iii. Rehabilitation of violent radicals – the violent radical narrative reconstructs ‘jihad’ as a permanent obligation and there is evidence from the literature and our interviews that radicals wishing to exit from the route they have gone down have little in the way of support or rehabilitation available. Former violent radicals can offer powerful counter-narratives from public platforms that are credible with individuals potentially attracted to violence. Exit and rehabilitation programmes should be made available that make this possible. As this is an issue in relation to violent radicals across the political spectrum these programmes should not be confined to

Muslim radicals but should cover all violent radicals of whatever persuasion wishing to move away from violence. (MS)

- iv. Dialogue with ‘moderate’, ‘mainstream’ and new Muslim organisations (EC/MS). It is obviously important for EC and Member States to continue dialogue with organisations representing or working on issues of interest to large sections of Muslim communities, but to recognise that this is only one strand of critical activity that needs to be undertaken. At EC level the composition of a dialogue group could be determined by nomination by Member States, advice from the recently established Experts Network and from the pan-EU study being completed on public authority cooperation with civil society organisations. Such a group should co-create an agenda focusing on supra-national issues that cannot effectively be addressed at Member State level; to prevent the ossification of such a group in a dynamic field, participation could be for a fixed term.
- v. In terms of where violent radical narratives are being effectively promoted, we believe these to include;
 - a. Prisons – where young males are susceptible to radical messages from their peer group or religious leaders (including self appointed leaders). The number of Muslim inmates and the relative absence of effective rehabilitation makes this a critical area for intervention. While the scope of chaplaincy services, specific to Muslim prisoners, needs to be enhanced, effective alignment with Muslim civil society organisations in this area will significantly aid rehabilitation and preventative efforts.
 - b. Further / higher education institutions – the UK evidence of systematic activity and promotion of radical ideologies on campuses to young Muslim populations make it imperative that education staff understand and are able to respond to systematic attempted indoctrination. Member States need to offer or strengthen guidance relevant to their context on integration, sources of information and support, external speakers and, in some cases, how to ensure that that a plurality of Muslim student organisations develop. The EC and Member States should also review formal and informal schooling/curricula and the training of teachers on issues including religious teaching, citizenship, anti-discrimination and, countering Islamophobia. In some cases the lack of regulation of informal but highly structured education will be a priority given the scale of provision and their reach.
 - c. Civil society organisations (CSOs) working with Muslim communities – given the socialisation role of women it is particularly important that Muslim women’s’ organisations in particular are supported and funded, alongside continued support for youth – specifically male focused – organizations.

- d. Mosques (Imams). Authorities will need expert advice and strong legitimators in communities of authority involvement. Mosques are a social hub of communities and a key communication mechanism and cannot be ignored. This is important even where specific mosques may not currently be seen by authorities as a useful partner; they need to be consulted and kept informed of authority plans as part of any wider process of communicating with communities. Authorities also need to recognise there is a dynamic process and change taken place in some mosques, which are being transformed to respond to the challenges of radicalisation alongside other social / family issues including those being raised and debated about the participation of women and young people in mosques.
- e. The media (national and international). The EC has already commissioned work on media and diversity and there are clearly issues of representation and negative reporting of the Muslim field. In addition to training of editors and journalists in discrimination issues there is scope for Member States to be proactive in preparing public figures, including Muslim individuals and organisations, for responding to the media in a co-ordinated way to crises and incidents that may lead to broad backlash against Muslim communities.

Context

- *Recommendations*

- i. In a context where a large number of respondents felt that they were living in increasingly hostile societies and were subject to discrimination, the EC should vigorously pursue the transposition of anti-discrimination legislation into Member State domestic law. This is a key action if the EC and Member States to build legitimacy and credibility with Muslim (and other) populations and reinforce that Muslims are entitled to the same rights and protections as others. (EC);
- ii. For the same reason, Member States should vigorously apply anti-discrimination legislation across the board in relation to vulnerable groups, including people of Muslim faith, supported by an established equalities body as required by legislation to address real and perceived grievances across the board. (MS)
- iii. The EC and Member States must make a reality of a diverse Europe underpinned by common values that values and enhances the actual and potential contribution of all its peoples. The ‘interculturalism’ agenda and its centrality and significance for the future of Europe needs to be more widely understood and promoted across Member States. (EC/MS).

The other areas we would identify for potentially useful further research by the EC include;

- i. Identifying narrators and narratives that have been successful in countering violent radicals in local settings.
- ii. Research on the potential for counter-radicalisation through education.
- iii. Research on approaches and potential good practice in relation to counter-radicalisation by non-EU countries.

Studies into violent radicalisation Lot 2; the beliefs
ideologies and narratives

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Perspectives

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APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

The following is a glossary of a selection of the key terms of relevance to this report.

1. “Abusive Interpretation”

“The means of justifying violent action (that is never legitimate) by abusively referring to views, aspirations or beliefs which may, themselves, be legitimate and which it most often insidiously deforms.

It should also be noted that the Commission believes that “Terrorism is never justified. There is no such thing as “Islamic terrorism”, nor “catholic” nor “red” terrorism. None of the religions or democratic political choices of European citizens tolerates, let alone justifies, terrorism.”³²⁶

2. Terrorism

Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 Article 1 defines terrorism as specified acts *which*;

“given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation.”

i.e. violent actions that are conducted against a civilian population with the intention to influence opinion and action.

The acts are as follows (a) attacks upon a person's life which may cause death; (b) attacks upon the physical integrity of a person; (c) kidnapping or hostage taking; (d) causing extensive destruction to a Government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, a public place or private property likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss; (e) seizure of aircraft, ships or other means of public or goods transport; (f) manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport, supply or use of weapons, explosives or of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, as well as research into, and development of, biological and chemical weapons; (g) release of dangerous substances, or causing fires, floods or explosions the effect of which is to endanger human life; (h) interfering with or

³²⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council concerning Terrorist recruitment; addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation, Brussels, 21.9.2005 COM(2005) 313 final

disrupting the supply of water, power or any other fundamental natural resource the effect of which is to endanger human life; (i) threatening to commit any of the acts listed in (a) to (h).

3. Radicalism

Defining one's system of belief as being unique and true in a universal sense. Common characteristics in religious contexts;

- the religious is seen as being the master role pervading and subordinating all other aspects of the life of an individual, and
- the person strives for religious perfection.³²⁸

Alternatively a radical may be described based on the aims of their beliefs and may include;

- someone seeking thorough and drastic reforms and changes to either a political/religious tradition or to the political/religious status quo
- someone seeking a fundamental return to roots or origins

Radical Islam or Islamism may therefore be described as a radical movement that seek to change their societies and transform them through a political and social revolution to return to their cultural and religious roots and origins.

4. Violent Radicalisation;

The European Commission defines violent radicalisation as;

“The phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism“³²⁹

5. Fundamentalism

A strict adherence to the fundamental principles of beliefs often characterised by a strict or literal interpretation and observance of religious texts. Fundamentalism is a broad spectrum ranging from the apolitical, personal pietists to those insistent upon the practice of public piety and the implementation of their literal interpretation of texts, to those who see within the texts a blueprint for a political theory and a state to provide a framework for public piety.

6. Narratives

How past events... are perpetuated, disseminated and experienced in a particular culture not as political events but as narratives that transcribe historical facts into moral or immoral acts and vehicles of social values. They also link the lives of individuals with past and future events and values and action.³³⁰

³²⁸ McGuire, Meredith; Religion. The Social Context, 2001; 149-194

³²⁹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council concerning Terrorist recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation. Brussels, 21.9.2005 COM(2005) 313 final

³³⁰ Khachig Tololyan; Cultural narrative and the motivation of the terrorist in; in Terrorism, Critical Concepts in political science, David C. Rapoport ed (Routledge, Oxford, 2006)

7. Ideology

“a logically coherent system of [ideas or beliefs] which, with a more or less sophisticated conception of history, links the cognitive and evaluative perception of one’s social condition – especially its prospects for the future – to a programme of collective action for the maintenance, alteration or transformation [and provides justification for a particular action].”³³¹

8. Islamism/ Political Islam

Islamism is a precise ideology that justifies the requirement to consider Islam both as a faith-based way of life and as a political theory of the state (*al-din wa-l-dawla*). It seeks to establish an Islamic state, however defined, in which the sovereignty of the divine is affirmed and legislation is based on the Shari’a, however defined. It entails both a process of politicisation of the faith and reification of the moral and legal norms within Islam. The process involves the establishment of political parties and movements that seek to form a government either through violent revolution or (/and) democratic elections.

9. Salafism/ Wahabbism

Salafism in its modern-day manifestation is a diverse movement characterised by its adherence to a strong emphasis on monotheism and a commitment to the reform of the late medieval Sunni consensus in theology, mysticism and law, typified by Salafism’s attack on following received scholarly opinion (*taqlid*). It advocates a return to proto-Islam, or the practices and thought of the first three generations of the religion. It often classifies as reprehensible innovation in belief and practice many aspects of traditional Sunni Islam, Islamic modernism and Shi’ism. It has liberal, more rationalising tendencies as typified by the Egyptian reformers like Abduh and Rashid Rida, and more literalist and conservative tendencies represented by Saudi Arabian Wahhabism, a tradition that dates back two hundred years. Other proto-Salafi streams were widespread in the Muslim world from Africa to Asia; some of these were closely aligned in their outlook like the Indian Ahl-i Hadis.

The two streams – liberal and Wahhabi – have come much closer together since the 1960s chiefly through the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia, and these ideas have been spread around the Muslim world and the Muslim diaspora since the 1970s, efforts that were financially backed by an oil-rich Saudi Arabia. Thus modern-day Salafism consists largely of Wahhabi theology with a spectrum of views influenced by Islamism and Wahhabism on issues of religious practice, politics and economics. In sociological terms, Salafism is fissiparous like unchurched Evangelical Christianity producing small communities based around charismatic religious leaders (sometimes religiously trained, sometimes lay) who align themselves with more senior scholars who stand at some point within the Salafi spectrum. The Islamist movements, like the Brotherhood, have tended, however, to keep their modern centralised formal organisation intact while being particularly influenced by aspects of Wahhabi theology and worship.

This movement agrees that all Muslim countries should more fully embody the law and practice of Islam in state and society, but it differs on how this is to be achieved. The pietists emphasise preaching (*da’wa*) and education, and support the status quo, which includes the

³³¹ Mullins, Willard A. (1972) "On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science." *The American Political Science Review*.

Saudi religious establishment. The politicians tend to advocate that political change is necessary to achieve this, and argue that the pietists are too disconnected from current affairs to answer the political crises in the Muslim world. The politicians have been identified with the Sahwa sheikhs, Salman al-'Awda and Safar al-Hawali, particularly during their anti-establishment period in the 1990s. The jihadists argue for the violent overthrow of corrupt Muslim regimes, with some arguing, like al-Qaeda, that the priority is the attack "the far enemy", the West, directly.

The jihadi movement itself is split on whether to work in nationalist or global frameworks, to target civilians or not, to target Muslims or not, and on the permissibility of suicide bombing and on the nature of takfir. The pietist-politico-jihadist division among the Salafis (Wiktorowicz 2006) only became manifest after the Gulf War of 1990-91 over the controversy about whether Saudi Arabia should have supported the use of American troops to oust Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The three categories represent ideal types rather than rigid categories and represent possible subject positions within the broad Salafi movement.³³²

10. Deobandi & Barelvi

Deobandi and Barelvi are terms used in South Asia (usually pejorative as both claim to be the real *ahl al-sunnah wa-l-jama'ah*) that arose in the late 19th century as responses to colonialism and are named after Sunni theological tendencies associated with two North Indian towns; Deoband where a reformist madrasa/seminary was established in 1867, and Bareilly where a movement led by Ahmad Riza Khan sought to provide a rationale for traditional Sunni religiosity.

Deobandis believe that Islam has been corrupted by popular religion and especially popular Sufism (although they accept the validity of a refined, scripturalist Sufism). They often advocate a politics based upon a strict adherence to public ethics and underpin the Islamist movements of South Asia such as the Jama'at-i-Islami. Their espousal of social reform is also reflected in the Tablighi Jama'at movement. Deobandi madrasas are usually known as dar al-'ulum and stress the teaching of scriptural exegesis and the transmission of the traditions (hadith) of the Prophet. In Pakistan, Deobandi madrasas and networks have played an important role in the development of jihadi and sectarian (anti-Shi'a) ideology and action. The term Deobandi is often conflated with both Salafi and Wahhabi although strictly speaking they are distinct.

Barelvis stress the vitality of the existing traditions of Sunni Islam. They stress the veneration of the Prophet and saints and place an important emphasis on Sufi practices. They tend to be politically acquiescent and loyalist. They tend not to support violent politics and are known for being philo-Shi'a at least in rural locales.

11. Jihad

Jihad which is a complex term variously conceived as moral struggle or as just war ethically defined in its aims and conduct and pursued for rational goals only when peaceful means of conflict resolution have been exhausted. Most jurists either define jihad as defensive warfare or see earlier notions of offensive warfare as inapplicable in the modern context.

³³² Q. Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29; 207-239, 2006.

12. Jihadism

Jihadism is distinct from the concept of Jihad as described above. Jihadism is an ideological movement that sees jihad as a perpetual and individual obligation that may be called for by non-state actors. It emphasizes the need for violent struggle and overthrow of existing Muslim governments to meet its aim of established true Islamic governance and ousting Western influence and thus sees world politics largely as the struggle between the West and the Muslim world. Its ideological and strategic focus is upon violent struggle itself; by contrast, it has no clear Islamic vision of modern state and society, unlike Islamism.

While the movement may claim historical antecedents to the origins of Islam or to various anticolonial struggles, it emerged in its current form during the 1980s when international Muslim brigades were formed to help the Afghans remove the Soviets from their country. Out of this experience emerged an transnational mobile vanguard that would seek to defend Muslim lands from attack and from which the ideology of jihadism was first articulated.

The broad jihadist movement became split in the 1990s over (i) whether fellow Muslims were legitimate targets (ii) whether civilians should be attacked or not and (iii) whether to attack the near enemy ("Muslim states") or the far enemy ("the West and its allies"). Over the period of its emergence the jihadist movement has become strongly but not exclusively dominated by Salafi theology and law, and can be described as a subset of that movement although it has also been heavily influenced by the classic Islamist model of conflictual civilisational politics.

13. Near and Far Enemy

Once the notion of jihad against unjust, unIslamic rule is posed, a tactical distinction is made between the far enemy (usually the US and European powers) who intervene in the Middle East and the Muslim World, and the near enemy (Muslim governments who collude with the far enemy). The terms origins are commonly traced from the writings of Sayyid Qutb and the radicalisation of sectors of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The struggle against both near and far enemies has been an aspect of jihadi rhetoric since the 1960s, but the stress even in the rhetoric of al-Qaeda was upon the near enemy first (articulated by the Gama'a Islamiyya in Egypt and in anti-Saudi diatribes) but at least since the famous 1996 fatwa and especially since 9/11 the emphasis shifted to the far enemy. Iraq and Afghanistan are good examples where both are seen to operate and can be attacked equally.³³³

14. Territory of Islam (*dar al Islam*), Territory of War (*dar al harb*) and Territory of Contract (*dar al 'ahd*)

Although these terms are used normatively, it would be misleading to consider the classical juristic theory as dividing the world into such spheres. Jurists seek to establish legal norms and rationally order their universe. The reality is often quite distinct. There are further problems of definition. Is dar al-islam the abode wherein resides a majority of Muslims? Or where the rulers are Muslims? Or where the norms of the shari'a are implemented? Or where the ruler carries out the obligations of defending legal norms as expounded in classical texts

³³³ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2005)

by al-Ghazali and al-Mawardi? Non-Muslim territory is not simply even dar al-harb in the absence of treaty arrangements. For the classical theory, it would be useful to refer to Shaybani's *kitab al-Siyar*.

In the modern period, things have become complicated as the radicals and jihadis do not seem to find dar al-islam anywhere in the world, thus justifying tactically dividing the world into areas of temporary truce (*dar al-sulh* or *dar al-'ahd*) and of perpetual jihad. Hizb ut-Tahrir has in the past referred to Europe as dar al-'ahd. Liberals like Tariq Ramadan complicate things further by introducing the concept of dar al-shahada in Muslim minority contexts in the West where Muslims are required to practice and 'testify' to their faith.

15. Ummah

In the context of Islam, the word Ummah is used to mean the "Community of the Believers" (Ummaht al-mu'minin), and thus the whole Muslim world. In practice, it can be used to describe sub-Ummahs or sub-nationalities.

16. Caliphate

Classically, the caliphate is the political institution of leadership succeeding the Prophet. The early period of the first four rightly-guided caliphs (*al-khulafa' al-rashidun*) is considered a golden age particularly by Salafis and Sunnis generally. In the early period, the caliph possessed both political and spiritual authority and hence power. But by the mid-'Abbasid period, with the rise of a scholarly religious class of 'ulema, authority bifurcated; the caliphs retained sovereign power and authority, while the 'ulema acquired authority to expound on religious issues. With the waning of 'Abbasid power and the rise of successor sultanates, the caliphate declined in power and authority and became merely a 'head of the Sunni community' and was effectively abolished by the Mongols with the sack of Baghdad in 1258. The institution was revived rather late in history in the 19th century by the Ottomans who made a claim to be the rightful leaders of Sunni Islam at a time when their political power was waning. In the modern period, the institution was then abolished by Kemal Ataturk with the abolition of the Ottoman state and the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1924.

Islamists and jihadis who seek to establish a caliphate conceive of a multi-national super-state headed by an autocratic ruler of all Sunnis worldwide and think that this institution was destroyed by Western imperial powers in the modern period. They seem oblivious of the fact that the institution was effectively dead in the 10th century.

17. Shari'a

Shari'a is the dynamic body of Islamic religious law. The term means "way" or "path to the water source"; it is the underlying law of God that provides a legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Muslim principles of jurisprudence.

There is no strictly static codified set of laws of Shari'a. The Fiqh is the system of devising laws, based on the Quran (the religious text of Islam), hadith (sayings of Muhammad), ijma' (scholarly consensus of 'ulema), qiyas (legal reasoning) and centuries of debate, interpretation and precedent. It is through such process that Shari'a may be 'discovered'.

18. Takfir

In Islamic law, takfir or takfeer is the practice of declaring unbeliever or kafir, an individual or a group previously considered Muslim. The act which precipitates takfir is termed the mukaffir. In July 2005, leading Muslim clerics gathered in Amman at the International Islamic Conference and released a statement denouncing takfir and emphasizing that it is not possible to perform takfir on any group of Muslims who believe in Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, the five pillars of Islam³³⁴, and do not deny any of the necessary articles of the faith. The clerics further emphasized the commonalities between the Sunni, Twelver Shi'a, Zaydi, Ibadi, and Sufi schools, and stressed their inclusion in a common Muslim community.

19. Kafir

Kafir is an Arabic word literally meaning "ingrate". In the Islamic doctrinal sense the term refers to a person who does not recognize the exclusive unity and divinity of God and the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad and hides, denies, or covers the truth. In cultural terms, it is a derogatory term used to describe an unbeliever, non-Muslims, apostate from Islam and even Muslims from different sects. It is usually translated into English as "infidel" or "unbeliever."

20. Martyrdom

The concept of 'Martyrdom' has come to be attributed to those who sacrifice themselves or have been victims as part of a cause or a belief. The Arabic terms shahid means both a witness and a martyr as the fighter killed in a cause bears testimony to the truth of his cause and his death symbolises that truth. Their death is used and interpreted by others in order to convey values, ideas and messages in support of a cause, related or otherwise whilst also conferring meaning on individual self sacrifice.

Suicide bombings are often described by their supporters to be 'martyrdom operations' ('amaliyyat istishhadiyya). But increasingly the critical press does use the phrase 'suicide operations' ('amaliyyat intihariyya).

21. Raafidi

Raafidi is a derogatory term used to describe Shi'a Muslims. It is derived from the Arabic word (Rafada) which means refused. The characterization stems from the belief that Shias have 'refused' to recognize the two rightly-guided caliphs Abu Baker, and 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab and have therefore deviated from the right path. In the Iraqi and Arab context, 'safawi' is also being used as a term of abuse for the Shi'a.

³³⁴ The five pillars of Islam are the two testaments of faith (shahadatayn), the daily prayers (Salat), Almsgiving (Zakat), Fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm), and the Hajj Pilgrimage

APPENDIX C: WEB RESEARCH

URLs

URL	Language
http://alsayf.com	Arabic
http://ansaar.30mb.com/	Arabic
http://clearinghouse.infovlad.net/showthread.php?p=30123	Arabic
http://ekhlass.org	Arabic
http://emara.goodbb.net/	Arabic
http://forum.mpacuk.org/	English
http://forums.islamicawakening.com/	English
http://groups.msn.com/AdDawatusSalafiyahTheCalltotheWayOftheSalaf/	English
http://groups.msn.com/Christianity-VS-Islam/	English
http://groups.msn.com/Islam/	English
http://ifees.org.uk/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1	English
http://islam21.net/main/	English
http://jihadalkaida.yoo7.com/	Arabic
http://saaaid.net/Warathah/hmood/2/	Arabic
http://spubs.com/	English
http://Ummah.net/forum	English
http://worldofislam.info/	English
http://www.4newmuslims.org/indexe.htm	English
http://www.abubaseer.bizland.com/	English
http://www.al-boraq.com	Arabic
http://www.aljamaat.org/	English
http://www.al-jamiah-al-islamiyyah.org.uk/	English
http://www.altartosi.com/	Arabic
http://www.aqsa.org.uk/	English
http://www.azharacademy.org/	English
http://www.cageprisoners.com/	English
http://www.centralmosque.org.uk/	English
http://www.coej.org/	English
http://www.en.altartosi.com/	Arabic
http://www.examinethetruth.com/	English
http://www.fisabilillah.org/	English
http://www.fosis.org.uk/	English
http://www.freewebs.com/overigeinfo/	English
http://www.guidedways.com/forum/index.php	English
http://www.halalmc.co.uk/about_hmc/overview.html	English
http://www.hanein.info/vb	Arabic
http://www.harunyahya.com/	English
http://www.hizb.org.uk/hizb/	English
http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/EN/	English

http://www.hounslowmosque.co.uk/menuone.htm	English
http://www.ihrc.org/	English
http://www.imam-alasr.com/index.htm	English
http://www.imws.org.uk/	English
http://www.indianmuslim.org.uk/	English
http://www.interpal.org/	English
http://www.iqratrust.org/	English
http://www.isb.org/about.htm	English
http://www.islamicawakening.com/	English
http://www.islamic-college.ac.uk/	English
http://www.islamicforumeurope.com/live/ife.php	English
http://www.islamic-foundation.org.uk/	English
http://www.islamicgarden.com/	English
http://www.islamic-relief.com/	English
http://www.islamicthinkers.com	English
http://www.islamic-world.net/	English
http://www.islamic-world.net/	English
http://www.islamonline.com/	English
http://www.jamiatuk.com/	English
http://www.jimas.org/	English
http://www.karimia.com/	English
http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/	English
http://www.kingstonmosque.org.uk/	English
http://www.lancashiremosques.com/default.asp	English
http://www.londonmuslimcentre.org.uk/	English
http://www.mabonline.net/	English
http://www.mcb.org.uk/	English
http://www.mcec.org.uk/	English
http://www.mcwg-arqam.org.uk/about.php	English
http://www.mjah.org/	English
http://www.mpacuk.org/	English
http://www.mssuk.net/frontpage/index.htm	English
http://www.muslimdirectory.co.uk/	English
http://www.muslimhands.org/Site/Pages/Home	English
http://www.muslimheritage.com/	English
http://www.muslm.net/vb	Arabic
http://www.mwht.org.uk/	English
http://www.salaam.co.uk/	English
http://www.shahjahanmosque.org.uk/	English
http://www.sicm.org.uk/	English
http://www.smwa.org.uk/smwa/sitepages/index.htm	English
http://www.sufimuslimcouncil.org/	English
http://www.taha.co.uk/	English
http://www.tawhed.ws/	Arabic
http://www.thepathtoparadise.com/	English

http://www.Ummah.com/forum	English
http://www.Ummah.com/waragainstislam/	English
http://www.uwt.org/	English
http://www.wamy.co.uk/bd_about.htm	English
http://www.watein.com/	Arabic
http://www.world-federation.org/default.htm	English
http://www.ymouk.com/0501/	English
http://www.ymuk.net/	English

Web monitoring sites consulted

Organisation	URL
Counterterrorism Blog	http://counterterror.typepad.com
Evan Kohlman website	http://www.globalterroralert.com
Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Centre	http://www.e-prism.org
Intelcenter	http://www.intelcenter.com
Jihadunspun	http://www.jihadunspun.net
Jihadwatch	http://www.jihadwatch.org
Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)	http://www.memri.org
Northeast Intelligence Network	http://homelandsecurityus.com
Simon Wiesenthal Centre	http://www.wiesenthal.com
SITE Institute	http://siteinstitute.org
Stratfor	http://stratfor.com
The Jamestown Foundation	http://www.jamestown.org
Internet Haganah	http://haganah.org.il

In addition to policy and monitoring initiatives, there is also an emerging technological response to extremist websites. For example the 'Dark Web project'³³⁵, currently at research stage at the University of Arizona, uses "spidering machines" that crawl through the Internet obtaining data from extremist websites and claims to possess the largest collection of online terrorist data in the world. The programmers have developed computer science techniques for assessing the threats associated with various Web sites and forums and are developing a coding scheme for multimedia analysis.³³⁷

Analysis and web dynamics

The web analysis highlighted a number of interesting dynamics which were not necessarily pertinent to the aims of the study but may be useful to inform future web research. These are divided into four categories:

- Access
- Audience

³³⁵ Hsinchun Chen, Jialun Qin, Edna Reid, Wingyan Chung, Yilu Zhou, Wei Xi, Guanpi Lai, Alfonso A.

¹ Bonillas, and Marc Sageman, 'The Dark Web Portal: Collecting and Analyzing the Presence of Domestic and International Terrorist Groups on the Web', University of Arizona, 2004. Available at: <http://ai.arizona.edu/research/terror/index.htm>

³³⁷ One tool is a mathematical formula that measures the "infectiousness" of ideas on a Web forum. The formula takes into account such parameters as the number of postings, the volume and duration of a conversational thread, and the number of members actively participating. It then generates a "thread score" that is tracked over time. Some ideas peter out, while others hit a tipping point. The system also uses keyword and textual analysis to quantify and track the level of violence and racial hatred expressed on a Web site or forum—a measure that can be used to determine which groups might be most threatening and to alert investigators to follow up.

- Influence
- Interaction

Access

While websites and blogs are unrestricted, a number of forums such as alhesbah.com include password only areas which are accessible only to a small number of select users. However, we were able to gain access to another prominent jihadi forum ekhlass.org.³³⁸ Our research found that users who challenge jihadi and radical posts are banned from forums and are often named and shamed. One forum even has an icon which indicates that the user has been banned, serving as a warning to others that those whose views are contrary to the ones being promoted, will be prevented from participating in discussions – and hence opportunities for countering radical rhetoric is limited. Contrary views are tolerated in most of the English language sites we reviewed, but usually face vociferous challenges from a small number of key forum ideologues.

Extremist websites are also prone to being discontinued either by force or by choice. Even during the course of the research some of the sites that we had monitored ceased their operations. This also made it difficult to follow other research because in most cases the links that they cited were no longer active.

Language is an important part of access. The most radical forums that we reviewed were solely in Arabic. Some had mirror English forums, which were far less popular. Therefore fluency in the Arabic Language is essential to engage in or read many online discussions. European Muslims are thought to have relatively low levels of Arabic fluency, particularly in the UK where the majority of the Muslim population are from Bangladesh and Pakistan, compared to Muslims in France who come from Arab speaking countries in the Maghreb. However, anecdotal evidence from our interviews and stakeholder consultations suggests that learning Arabic is becoming increasingly important and widespread among young Muslims in Europe through both formal and informal education, motivated by a desire to read the Quran and Hadith in the original language.

Access also impacts on the debates that occur online, which subsequently impacts on the utility of the website as a site of open source data. For example jihadist media is easily accessible through mainstream video sites such as youtube.com, but the comment and debate on mainstream sites such as this is bipolar, less ideological, more acerbic and frequently dissolves into tit-for-tat insults. While this dialogue does not provide much useful data for detailed analysis the level of activity indicates the importance and emotion that jihadist and Islamist material generate among the wider population. An exchange between two viewers in the U.S., one a Muslim, below a video of Abu Musab Al-Zaqawi is a typical example:

EAM080: F*ck allah and all radical muslims. May my marine brother kill them all!!!!

³³⁸ Ekhlass.org is named as one of the top four jihadi forums in the world in addition to al Hesbah, al Boraq and al Firdaws. Al Firdaws was down for the duration of our research. Al Boraq is publically available in Arabic. Ekhlass.org went down on 26th September after research had been completed.

ddkkw: ur marine brother will get killed by us god willing just like all ur 3800 troops f*ck jesus n all marines n americans allah is great

EnglishCrusader88: Just keep living in denial, bitch... Everything you say is just pathetic and weak.

ddkkw: just keep believeing ur weak govt u coward, allah is great n we will be victorious

EnglishCrusader88: Weak government? Yeah, that's why the USA is the only Superpower in the world... Stupid shit.

There are some exceptions where a viewer will outline a more considered view but such responses are in the minority. For this reason we did not give significant credibility to the debates on these sites, however, it does highlight the negativity, lack of understanding and respect, Islamophobia and anti-West sentiment that exists and is exacerbated in anonymised online contexts. This is a dynamic not necessarily unique to jihadi media items.

Audience

Web portals offer varying levels of information about their audience and even within websites this information can vary and be inconsistent. For obvious reasons, the majority of users of web forums and blogs exercise their right to anonymity so the only data for analysis is their 'user name', which sometimes reveals information about the ideological disposition of the user. It should also be noted that the vast majority of people who read forum threads do not post replies and therefore do not contribute any other visible data other than the fact that an individual clicked on the thread and is likely to have read it.

With a lack of information it is difficult to determine the audience profile for a given site especially given the fact that websites are generally accessible from any computer from any country in the world.

Influence

There is considerable debate as to the role and influence of the Internet as an agent of radicalisation. There is no doubt as to the effectiveness of the Internet as both a facilitator of communication and disseminator of information and, given its multimedia capabilities, it certainly cannot be matched by any other communication medium.

However, many argue that the role of face-to-face interaction along with social and family networks are far more important in inculcating radical or violent radical ideas in individuals. Empirical analysis and case studies conducted to date indicate that this is the case. Sageman's study of 394 jihadi terrorists found that two-thirds of those who joined the jihad did so collectively with their friends or had a friend already in the jihad, another fifth had close relatives already in the jihad. He notes:

Over time, there is a general shift in values: from the secular to the religious; from the material to the spiritual; from short-term opportunity to long-term vision; from individual concerns to communitarian sacrifice; from apathy to active engagement; from traditional morality to specific group morality; and from worldly gains to otherworldly rewards. This transformation is possible only within intense small group face-to-face interactions.³³⁹

³³⁹ Sageman, M., 'Islam and Al Qaeda', Chapter 6 in Pedahzur, A. (ed), *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism – The globalisation of martyrdom*, 2006, p. 128.

The UK's MI5 note that exposure to radical ideas may come from reading radical literature on Islamic and other subjects or surfing the Internet, but more often radicalisation seems to arise from local contacts and from peers.³⁴⁰

Many other organisations and individuals also support the thesis that the Internet plays a key role in radicalisation.³⁴¹ For example, the UK Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights noted that “many who have become radicalised have little knowledge of either Arabic or Islam, what knowledge they do have is either from ‘recruiters’ seeking to radicalise youngsters or from radical Internet sites”.³⁴² The European Policy Centre, in a paper of the radicalisation of Muslims in Europe notes that:

The Internet plays a key role in the radicalisation process and has become one of the most important tools for Al-Qaeda to spread its message and recruit young Muslims for the global jihad. It has created a sense of belonging to a global, virtual Ummah. There are vast numbers of jihadi websites with videos and pictures of terror attacks and kidnappings, guidelines on how to build and use bombs, and information on where to buy explosives, as well as handbooks on Al-Qaeda's strategies.³⁴³

A well-researched report by the Dutch National Coordinator for Terrorism claims that the internet can create ‘autonomous radicalisation’ and that the use of the internet sustains the process of radicalisation by ensuring ideology supply.³⁴⁴ Another report from the Dutch institute AIVD, notes that:

The discussions on the internet also allow other Islamic youths to develop a positive stance towards radical Islam, quite independently from their parents and their direct environment, and to come into contact with youths participating in activities based on radical-Islamic opinions or who even organize such activities themselves.”³⁴⁵

Transcripts from recent trials have provided some evidence as to the internet use of radicals. In a recent case the Judge concluded "It would seem that internet websites have become an effective means of communicating such (extremist) ideas".³⁴⁶

It should also be noted that there is an increasing body of literature on the sociology and psychology which, although in its infancy as a social science, provides some interesting theoretical concepts. Castells in particular has noted that the Internet can act as an ‘identity

³⁴⁰ Countering International Terrorism: Tackling Radicalisation, <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page31.html>

³⁴¹ For all the books, journals and papers written on the subject, few list more than a handful of web sources. Those that are listed are either the usual suspects (GIMF, Hezbollah, Al Qaeda in Iraq) or out of date, such as alneda.com or azzam.com.

³⁴² Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, Review of Counter-terrorism Powers, HC 713, Stationery Office, 21 July 2004: 13.

³⁴³ Dittrich, M., EPC Working Paper No. 23: Muslims in Europe: addressing the challenges of radicalisation, March 2006, p. 31.

³⁴⁴ National Coordinator for Terrorism, *Jihadis and the Internet*, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, February 2007, p. 9.

³⁴⁵ *Recruitment for the jihad in the Netherlands – from incident to trend*, AIVD, 2006, p. 15. It is, however, unclear what evidence the report's findings are based on other than the statement “The investigation of the AIVD into the phenomenon of recruitment in the Netherlands has provided a better insight in the recruitment strategies of radical Muslims and Islamic organisations involved, in the international context in which they operate and in the underlying causes and mechanisms. In addition a lot of information and insights on this topic were exchanged with foreign security and intelligence services.” (p. 5).

³⁴⁶ ‘Internet Jihadist Jailed for Ten Years’, *The Guardian*, 5.7.2007.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/terrorism/story/0,,2119590,00.html>

oasis' for individuals who are under physical or psychological threat in their day-to-day environments while also acting as an echo chamber for their own ideas.³⁴⁷

Unfortunately, there is poor evidence base on which to form robust conclusions on the influence that autonomous Internet access and interactivity with its content can have on an individual.³⁴⁸ Bunt notes that measuring the impact of this material is problematic and that people sympathetic to this material might express it in different ways but it certainly does not mean that everyone who reads these sites goes off and does jihad.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ See Castells, M., *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002 and Castells, M., *The Power of Identity: The Information Age – Economy, Society and Culture: Volume 2*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

³⁴⁸ A forthcoming book, *Leaderless Jihad* by Marc Sageman, outlines a thesis that individuals become radicalised by sharing moral outrage online via chat rooms. The book is due out in March 2008 from University of Pennsylvania Press.

³⁴⁹ Bunt, G., *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments*, London, Pluto, 2003.

APPENDIX D: FIELDWORK FRAMEWORK

IDENTIFIED BELIEFS IDEOLOGIES AND NARRATIVE FOR EXPLORATION DURING FIELDWORK

1. BELIEFS & IDEOLOGY

Salafist Ideology;

- Distinctions between jihadi Salafism v Political and Purist strands of Salafism

Interpretations, relevancy and understandings of key ideological points should be tested interviews including;

- Takfir
- Jihad and the use of violence
- Killing of Civilians
- Suicide Bombing
- Any perceived distinctions between Political Islam/ Islamism

Other ideologies;

- Clash of Civilizations
- Socio-economic justice
- Far right ideologies

2. NARRATIVES

Some key narratives may include approaches to and adoption of the following;

- Threat to Muslim Ummah and Muslim world
- Uniting of Muslim Ummah
- Decadence / corruption by 'Western' Culture
- Cultural pollution, moral decay or 'Muslim sinfulness'
- Westoxification
- Conspiracy against Islam
- The repression and humiliation of Muslims, ethnic cleansing; including Balkans, Chechnya and China, Israel
- jihadist leaders e.g. Osama bin Laden
- Historical context
- Interpretation of there being a 'Golden Age of Islam' (Millennial vision)
- Religious discrimination and social justice issues
- View of the 'secular' state, 'Jahilliya' leadership and society
- Ethics, religion and politics as holistic rather than separate spheres
- Reinterpretation of history and glorification of Jihad

- Jihad v. Islamism
- The ‘Cult of Martyrdom’
- Non-Muslim legitimating narratives e.g. anti-globalisation, colonialism, conspiracy theories
- Women and family
- Near and far enemy

Many narratives may be shared with non radical or non violent groups and people. Researchers should be alert to the commonalities as well as the differences within such narratives, including why those who may share narratives do not embrace violence.

Narratives are complex and wide ranging. Please refer to the circulated glossary document titled radicalisation and narratives for an overview. Narratives may be shaped and adapted in relation to;

- Age/ perceptions of youth
- Reactions to status quo
- Attitudes towards violence
- Specific events
- Important external actors and views of the ‘other’
- Specific grievances and perceptions of victimhood
- People and individuals
- Group identities (from immediate to transnational)
- Ideologies/ faith
- Personal drive/ love/ solidarity/ Duty
- Specific symbolic places / settings
- History of resistance/ criminality
- Territory
- The significance of Warrior roles

In addition to texts and the spoken word, narrative may be reinforced by specific imagery that has a resonance for the group.

• 3. WAYS FORWARD

One of the central aims of the study is to develop recommendations for the combating of radicalisation. All interviewees may be asked directly about their observations on current strategies and possible ways forward. As part of this we provided the Commission with a range of potential areas of exploration during the study. These include;

‘Moderate’/alternative or progressive voices and narratives including;

- Alternative non violent ‘radical’ narratives
- Internal community based rebuttal narratives, including public debates on Islam and the use of violence
- European project ‘inclusion’ narratives
- ‘European Muslim-ness

- Promoting/ engaging with progressive/ moderate voices
- National identity ‘inclusion’ narratives
- Female narratives
- Gender based strategies – women as ‘cultural transmitters’
- Cohesion/ integration policies and programmes
- Reassertion of Multiculturalism
- Reflective strategies – what are the perceived shortcomings of the “West”?
- ‘European Muslim-ness
- Oppositional (Clash of Civilisation thesis)
- Reassertion of the primacy of the ‘The Secular State’
- Support for ‘exit’ strategies for jihadists
- Other – e.g. the arts and cultural bridge building
- Deconstruction narratives

INTERVIEWEE DATA FIELDS (GUIDELINE)

1. Those who have renounced Violence		
Field 1	Field 2	Common Themes
Personal background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and date of birth • Place of residence • Family history / situation • Education • Place of birth • Socio economic history inc. Employment Religion – history of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal experiences and perspective of being a Muslim in western Europe • Perceptions of parents and families experiences as migrants in Western Europe
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How • Why • Perpetuation/ Sustainability • Where • Beliefs, Ideologies and Narratives (including Fiqh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideology • Identity • Tipping point • Non Muslim legitimating narratives/ ‘Kaleidoscope’ issues? • Countries visited • Literature exposed to
Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of radicalisation • Date of recruitment • Length of ‘service’/ activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre 9/11 (1980-2001 – includes consolidation of Iran, Afghanistan I, Rushdie affair, Iraq I, WTC I, AQ embassy attacks and U.S.S Cole, Al-shifa plant attack) • Post 9/11 (includes Iraq II, Afghanistan II, WTC II)
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencers • Places of exposure to narratives • Places of recruitment • Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites • Personalisation • Individuals • Groups • Media consumption • Education • Role of Imams

Renouncement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When • Factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External e.g. 9/11 • Personal including influence of Family • Alternative interpretations rejecting violence
Counter Violent Radicalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and perceptions of interventions • Recommendations 	
Martyrdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who they identified as Martyrs • What Martyrdom conveys • Observations on Martyrdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What meaning specific martyrs convey to them

2. Non Radicalised Muslim youth		
Field 1	Field 2	Common Themes
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and date of birth • Place of residence • Family history / and relationships • Education • Socio-economic history inc. employment • Countries visited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal experiences and perspective of being a Muslim in western Europe • Perceptions of parents and families experiences as migrants in Western Europe
Faith and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of exposure to Faith • Interpretations and experiences of faith (including other faiths) • Engagement • Identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muslimness v. national identity • Integration v. assimilation • Secularism v. freedom of worship • Media consumption • Education & curriculum
Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places and history of exposure • Perceived prevalence of radicalisation • Perceptions of radicalisation • Reasons for rejection • What rejected • Why rejected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance themes • Islamic interpretations • Perceptions of Imams • Role of popular culture
Counter Violent Radicalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and perceptions of interventions • Recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles of narrative and ideology • Different backers and initiators of interventions (e.g. government or community)

3. Members of Muslim groups considered ‘radical’		
Field 1	Field 2	Common Themes
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and date of birth • Place of residence • Family history / and relationships • Education • Socio-economic history inc. employment • Countries visited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and tension
Faith and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of exposure to Faith • Interpretations and experiences of faith (including other faiths) • Engagement • Identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muslimness v. national identity • Integration v. assimilation • Secularism v. freedom of worship • Education & curriculum • Media consumption
Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group involvement • Philosophy • Beliefs, Ideology and Narratives • Issues • Salient subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretations of ideology and issues • Priority of issues raised Understandings of group identity and solidarity • Literature exposed to and key texts • Key individuals • Role of Imams
Violent Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of exposure • Perception of violent radicalisation • What rejected • Reasons for rejection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions and attitudes toward violent narratives and groups. • How they feel it relates to their groups and ideas
Countering Violent Radicalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and perceptions of interventions • Recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated and perceived support for counter initiatives • Links to own ideas • Success and failures

4. Those arrested and in legal processes / penal systems		
Field 1	Field 2	Common Themes
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and date of birth • Place of residence • Family history / and relationships • Education • Socio-economic history inc. employment • Countries visited 	
Arrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where in process • How • Why • Who 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islamicised interpretations • Types of support received during process including who
Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy and Ideology • Narratives • Key Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radicalism v. Violent Radicalism • Media consumption • Education & curriculum • Role of Imams
Exposure to radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to arrest • During process • In prison • Ideology and types of radicalism exposed too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassessment v. Reinforcement • Grievance
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences and Perceptions of interventions • Recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success • Failures

5. Parents / Families of those killed through actions or arrested an in legal process		
Field 1	Field 2	Common Themes
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and date of birth • Place of residence • Family history / and relationships • Education • Socio-economic history inc. employment • Relationship to primary subject • Faith and the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal experiences as migrants in Western Europe and responses and thoughts on offspring's perceptions of this
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Causes • Recruitment • Symptoms • Result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries visited • Media consumption • Education & curriculum • Role of Imams • Popular culture
Radicalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of beliefs • Attempted counter strategies 	
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support networks • Family relationships • Recommended approaches 	
Countering Violent Radicalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and perceptions of interventions • Recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated and perceived support for counter initiatives • Links to own ideas • Perceived success and failures

6. Converts of non Muslim heritage		
Field 1	Field 2	Common Themes
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and date of birth • Place of residence • Family history / and relationships • Education • Socio-economic history inc. employment 	
Faith and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of exposure to Faith • Conversion • Engagement • Identity 	What narratives do they resonate with? -> need to categorise interviewee if possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries visited • Media Consumption • Education & curriculum • Role of Imams
Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of exposure • Views on radicalisation • Rejection 	Are they a target for radicalisation
Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muslim faith • Family • Peer group 	

7. Women Specific Issues		
Voices – do they condone violence and what is their justification	What is their relationship to male figures; father, brother, son etc	Radicalisation in women, are there differences?
Representations of women and role of women in narratives		

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEWEES

In order to maintain anonymity of interviewees all interviewees have been identified by first names, pseudonyms or numerically only. All interviews lasted between approximately 1 – 4 hours.

United Kingdom

Stakeholder Consultees

Name	Organisation
Abid Raja	Counter Terrorism Command, New Scotland Yard
Ali Miraj	Conservative Party Policy Review
Ansar Ahmed Ullah	Swadhinata Trust, M M S & Associates
Azar Ali	Executive Member, Sufi Council of Britain
Barry Lowen	Engaging with the Islamic World Group, FCO
Bob Lambert	Counter Terrorism Command, New Scotland Yard
Charles Tripp, Dr.	Dept of Politics and Intl. Studies, SOAS
Dilwar Hussain	Islamic Foundation
Fareed El-Shayyal, Dr.	Muslim Institute of Higher Education, attached to the Islamic Foundation
Faz Hakim	Commission for Racial Equality. Former Downing Street Advisor
Ian Crichlow, DC	Association of Constables and Police Officers National Community Tension Team
Irshad Baqui	Islamic Foundation
Kevin Toolis	Journalist
Lord Carlyle	House of Lords

Max Steinberg	Elevate Housing Trust in Burnley
Michael Gove MP	House of Commons
Mizan Raja	Islamic Circles
Nasreen Suleiman	Journalist
Vikram Dodd	Journalist, The Guardian

The following list is drawn from the 30 UK interviews conducted and represents those that produced rich and salient data for the purposes of the study and are referred to in this report. Field columns have been populated with data where known and Islamic leanings as specified /acknowledged by the respondent are provided albeit with a recognition that classification is invariably subjective.

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Education	Profession	Islamic leanings	Location	Nationality
Interviewee #1	40s	Male	Graduate	Medical	Salafi. Former jihadist	London	UK
#2	40	Male	PhD & Graduate	Policing	-	London	UK
#3	40	Male	Graduate	Community Activist	Salafi. Anti extremist	Birmingham	UK
#4	40	Male	PhD Student	Community Activist	Salafi pietist	London	UK
#5	40	Male	Graduate	Medical	Salafi politico	London	UK
#6	39	Male	Graduate	Community Activist	Muslim Association Britain	London	UK
#7	40	Male	Graduate	-	Hizb ut-Tahrir	London	UK
#8	50	Male	Post –Graduate	Community	-	London	UK

				activist (Radical Middle Way), writer/journalist			
#9	30	Female	Graduate	Community activist - Forward Thinking Project	-	London	UK
#10	30	Male	Graduate	IT Sector Community activist - Muslim Council of Britain	-	Luton	UK
#11	39	Male	PhD	Imam Creative arts sector	-	South East	UK
#12	30	Male	-	-	Salafi. Former jihadist	Birmingham	UK
#13	20	Male	-	-	Former Hizb ut-Tahrir	Sheffield	UK
#14	40	Male	Graduate	Community activist	Former jihadist	Birmingham	UK
#15	20	Male	Graduate	Solicitor	Jamaat-e Islami	London	UK
#16	36	Female	Graduate	Community and political activist- Anti war movement	-	Birmingham	UK
#17	41	Male	-	Youth worker	-	Leeds	UK
#18	35	Male	PhD	Iman, Lecturer,	Salafi. Former	London	UK

				Community Activist	jihadist		
#19		Male		Plumber	Ex jihadist	Luton	UK
#20	28	Female	Graduate	Managerial	-	Reading	UK
#21	40	Female	Graduate	Film Director	-	Leeds	UK
#23	25	Female	Graduate	Teacher	-	London	UK

Denmark

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Education	Profession	Islamic leanings	Location	Nationality
Interviewee # 1	27	Male	University	Student , Psychology	Member of Muslim Youth Organisation: Munida	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Moroccan background
# 2.	29	Male	University	Doctor	Member of Munida	Copenhagen Area	Danish Pakistani background
# 3.	23	Male	University	Student, Law	Member of Munida	Copenhagen Area	Turkish born. In Denmark since 1988
# 4.		Male	University	Student, Engineering	Spiritual/Sufi groups	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Pakistani background
# 5.	47	Male	University	Schools integration advisor	Family and life during upbringing in Iran	Copenhagen Area	Iranian
# 6.	22	Male	College	Applied for The Danish Army	Working with shiaonline.dk	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Syrian/ Palestinian background

# 7.	25	Female	Vocational training	Photographer and shop assistant	Member of Munida	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Jordanian background
# 8.	32	Female	University	Schools integration consultant	Family members and friends Quran school	Copenhagen Area	Palestinian/ Lebanese
# 9.	26	Female	University	Teacher	Quran School and family	Copenhagen Area	Palestinian/ Lebanese
# 10.	29	Female	University	Student	Member of Munida	Copenhagen Area	Palestinian/ Syrian
# 11.	27	Male	University	Marketing	Member of an Islamic organisation	Copenhagen Area	Danish Moroccan background
# 12.	18	Male	University	Student, engineering	Member of Munida	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Afghan background
# 13.	24	Male	University	Student	Member of Islamic Society	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Moroccan background
# 14.	40+	Female	College	School integration consultant	Upbringing in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia	Copenhagen Area	Danish Pakistani background
# 15.	16	Female	College	Student	Family and Quran school	Odense	Turkish
# 16.	17	Male	College	Student	Family, Quran school and discussion club	Odense	Iraqi/Lebanese
# 17.	23	Male	University	Teacher	Member of Munida	Kokkedal	Palestinian/Lebanese
# 18.	18	Female	College	Student	Family and Quran school	Copenhagen Area	Danish Pakistani background
# 19.	22	Male	Vocational	Student + work	Refugee camp in S.	Copenhagen	Iraqi

			college		Arabia and Quran school	Area	
# 20.	18	Female	College	Student	Family and Quran school	Copenhagen Area	Iraqi
# 21.	24	Male	Vocational college	Machinist	Member of Munida	Copenhagen Area	Danish Pakistani background
# 22.	28	Male	University	Teacher. Private school for muslim pupils	Member of Munida	Copenhagen Area	Danish Moroccan/Polish background
# 23.	17	Female	School	Works in a supermarket	Family	Aarhus	Palestinian/Lebanese
# 24.	17	Male	School	Works at a restaurant	Family and Quran school	Aarhus	Palestinian
# 25.	17	Female	College	Student	Family	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Turkish background
# 26.	18	Male	School	Transport chauffeur	Shia online club	Copenhagen Area	Danish Iraqi background
# 27.	26	Male	University	Student	Family and Quran school	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Algerian background
# 28.	22	Male	University	Student + work	Family and Quran school	Copenhagen Area	Moroccan
# 29.	25	Female	University	Maternity leave	Family and Arabic language studies	Copenhagen Area	Danish. Moroccan background

France

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Education	Profession	Islamic/ political leanings	Location (city/ region)	Nationality/ heritage
1. Interviewee #1	45	Male	University	Immigrant support services	Former radical	Grenoble	Moroccan
2. Mustapha	50	Male	University	Social worker	Progressive inter faith work	Grenoble	Algerian
3. Malek	54	Male	High school	Industrial trade unionist	Social justice	Lyon	French Algerian
4. Foudil	70	Male	University	Chaplain. Educator for delinquent youths	Progressive inter faith work	Lyon	Algerian
5. Abdulkarim	32	Male	Seminary training	Manager of Paris prayer room	Member of UOIF	Paris	French Moroccan
6. Alhonsi	40	Male	Primary school	Imam at mosque in Villeneuve	UOIF sympathizer	Grenoble	Algerian
7. Salima	43	Female	University	educator	Alawiyya	Grenoble	French Algerian
8. Comander Bernard Godard	55	Male	University	Islam Specialist. Office of Religions, Ministry of Interior	N/A	Paris	French
9. Léïla	36	Female	University	Academic: Semiologist and Psychoanalyst	N/A	Tunis	Tunisian
10. Dr Moussa	55	Male	University	Sophrologist	Alawiyya	Lyon	French/Algerian

11. Interviewee #11	28	Male	Primary school	Unemployed	Jihadist sympathizer	Annemasse	French Algerian
12. Azzedine	41	Male	University	Social worker	Secular	Chambéry	French Algerian
13. Nadia	39	Female	Primary school	Housewife	Salafist	Paris	French Algerian
14. Hocine	39	Male	Vocational training	Data processing	Fundamentalist sympathizer	Paris	French Algerian
15. Sydney	27	Male	University	Student Psychology	Convert	Grenoble	French
16. Samia	28	Female	University	Media manager	Secular	London	French Algerian
17. Medhi	24	Male	Secondary school	Warder	Atheist	Chambéry	French Algerian
18. Mounia	40	Female	University	bio-chemist	Salaifist sympathizer	Paris	French Algerian
19. Mohammed	58	Male	Primary school	Retired	Social justice	Chambéry	French Moroccan
20. Nora	31	Female	University	Teacher	Secular,	Paris	French Algerian
21. Youssef	27	Male	University	Student, Religious Law	UOIF sympathizer	Annemasse	French, born in Morocco
22. Mounir	28	Male	University	Student, anthropology	atheist	Lyon	French, born in Morocco
23. Karim	25	Male	University	Student, economics	UOIF sympathizer	Lyon	French Algerian
24. Hicheme	30	Male	University	PHD Student, political science. Journalist	Modernist	Lyon	French Algerian
25. Nassima	23	Female	Primary	Cashier	Moderate	Grenoble	French Moroccan

			school				
26. Saida	25	Female	Primary school	Cleaner	Moderate	Grenoble	French Algerian

Germany

Stakeholders

Prof. Dr. Werner Schiffauer	Europa-Universität Viadrina, Comparative Cultural and Social Anthropology
Prof. Dr. Jamal Malik	Erfurt University, Islamic Studies
Hamed Abdel-Samad	Erfurt University, Scientific Staff Member
Burkhard Schnieder	Ministry for Domestic Affairs, Northrhine-Westfalia
Dr. Korkut Buğday	Ministry for Domestic Affairs, Northrhine-Westfalia
Mounir Azzaoui	former spokesman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland - ZMD), Founding member Working Group Green Muslims (Arbeitskreis Grüne Muslime)
Aiman Mazyek	Secretary General of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland - ZMD)
Ali Ceylan	Religious instructor and imam in different mosque associations
Julia Gerlach	Journalist (expert on Muslim youth groups in Germany)
Souad Mekhennet	Journalist (expert on radicalism among Muslims in Germany)

30 interviews were undertaken with Muslims of different orientations. Anonymity of respondents has been observed for all respondents. The sample that was designed for the fieldwork in Germany intended to include a broad spectrum of orientations, which were put into the following broad categories;

1. Violent radicals / Radicals / moderate Islamists

- members / sympathisers of legal radical groups / organisations / movements
(Salafiya, Wahhabiya)
- members / sympathizers of illegal / banned radical groups / organisations
(Hizb ut-Tahrir, Caliphate State, Adl-wal-Ihsan)
- non-affiliated radical persons
- members of moderate Islamic / Islamist organisations / groups
(IGMG, Muslim Brotherhood)

2. Persons who have renounced violence or radicalism (former violent radicals)

- former members of radical organisations
- individuals without any organisational ties who had formerly supported radical views and violent actions

3. Non-radicalised Muslim youth

- members of radical groups / organisations, who are not radicalised themselves
- members of community organisations (Islamic, cultural)
- individuals without any organisational ties or boundaries

4. parents / relatives / friends

- of radicals
- former radicals

5. Community representatives / community experts

- having contact to and knowledge about radicals / former radicals

