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British Muslim Youth:
Identity, Structural Grievances,
and the Radicalization Process

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF OPERATIONAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

December 2017

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism is one of the many threats to states, which struggle to defend their citizens. Governments, security services, academia, and the media throughout Europe disregarded the threat of terrorist attacks—up until the attack on 9/11. Al Qaeda could not have conducted the attacks on 9/11 without a significant contributions from dedicated militants. The Hamburg cell of al Qaeda attackers illustrates the significant security issues that have developed in Europe. Since the attacks, British efforts to counter extremist ideology have included a mix of engagement, counter- radicalization, and tactical counterterrorism efforts. The various disciplines within the security enterprise understand the Islamic radicalization process differently. Counter-terrorism experts continue to focus on the factors motivating individuals towards radicalization. Recently, second-generation Muslim citizens have committed attacks in the European Union, specifically the United Kingdom. This begs the question: are Britain's Muslim youth more susceptible to recruitment and radicalization by violent extremist groups than other citizens? If so, what motivating factors may "push" or "pull" them to become radicalized and potentially commit acts of terror?

This paper will analyze identity as well as perceived, or real, local grievances as "push" or "pull" factors that could be framing the worldview of young British Muslims, leading to social mobilization and possible future conflict. The British example raises the following questions: Are British second-and third-generation Muslims more drawn to violent extremist ideology than other citizens or immigrant groups? If so why? What factors motivate such commitments (social, religious, cultural)? Is the British government using an approach that supports the Muslim community and reduce their grievances? Are social polices pluralistic? Do they support inclusion and assimilation of British youth into the larger society? Do British

counter-terror policies effectively deter and prevent Muslim youth from becoming radicalized? This research examines conditions for the large and growing Muslim diaspora groups within the UK.

The basic human needs/grievance model of social mobilization and conflict best explains the dynamics of the radicalization and mobilization process within British Muslim youth. The British government must address real or perceived grievances, and craft laws and policies that help forge a British Muslim identity in which the Muslim youth community can better integrate. Counter-terrorism experts need to apply their insight toward identifying existing and future social mobilization factors that could result in planned or spontaneous conflict within the Muslim community.

Background

The attacks on 9/11 by al Qaeda could not have materialized without a significant and dedicated European component. American Muslims as a whole have successfully integrated into society and therefore, gained some insulation from the appeal of radical ideologies. As a result, they generally enjoy a better economic status than their European counterparts. Sizeable Muslim communities in Western Europe have developed relatively recently, largely the result of waves of immigration that began after World War II. Virtually all European countries host a Muslim minority. Although no official data exists, most estimates put the total number of Muslims living in Western Europe at about 15 million.[1] The new wave in Muslim immigration to Europe has created some problems that come from any large influx of immigrants, with socio-economic difficulties driving much of the tensions with the native population. In addition to local grievances as a result of economic conditions, largely due to labor laws unfavorable to immigrants, tensions between the Muslim community and native citizens have carried religious undertones.

The November 13, 2015 coordinated terror attacks in Paris that killed 137, and wounded 368, and the June 3, 2017 London Bridge attack, have stirred up fear, ignorance, and intolerance in some Europeans towards the religion of Islam, or in some cases, any religion. Another crucial factor generating tensions within the UK is the emergence of Islamism or political Islam in its many different manifestations, within Muslim communities in virtually every European country. Political Islam is a global and diverse movement in which individuals attempt to gain power and influence by manipulating many of the tenets of the religion of Islam for their own benefit. Islamist groups exploit deficits within the socio-economic and religious environment to mobilize and radicalize second-and-third-generation Muslims in the UK.

Academic and counter-terror experts' interest in Muslim youth, Islam, radicalization and Islamic-inspired terrorism exploded in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. For example, Muslim youth have been linked in academic literature to an identity crisis, the result of failed British multiculturalism, segregation, racism, and alienation due to living in parallel communities which predispose youth to radicalism and extremism. Follow-on generations of Muslim immigrants to Europe have struggled between their cultural roots and their host nation integration. This makes Muslim youth particularly susceptible to Islamist groups' extremist messaging aimed at exploiting their alienation within the larger European society. This paper examines the theories of identity crisis and collective grievance as psychological and structural mobilizing factors in second-generation British Muslims as potential pathway's to radicalism.

Identity and Radicalization as a process

Radicalization as a process has increasingly become associated with Muslim youth as a precursor to Islamic inspired violence towards the West. The terrorism literature reveals a recurrent theme of testing whether Muslim youth have become oriented towards the British state or towards some transnational organization, or solely toward religious affiliation, or

identity politics. Olivier Roy and others have noted that many terrorist recruits report that they perceived a strong connection to the worldwide community of Muslims before they decided to participate in terrorism. Roy goes on to argue that the sense of community within the Islamic Diaspora more than rivals that of the local secular community. In their uprooted and alienated condition many Muslims reassess what Islam means for them.[2] Europe has attracted large numbers of Muslim political and economic refugees from the Middle East and South Asian countries in the past decade. Many immigrants and their children fail to integrate as a result of: identity crises, discrimination, lack of government fair-housing and employment policies, limited education opportunities, and continued friction as a result of failed multiculturalism. As second, and third-generation Muslims they no longer identify with their heritage country. Feeling marginalized and often times excluded by the host nation, they are growing resentful of the host society. As a result, a small minority choose to accept the ideology of violence defining themselves by a radical form of Islam; though small in numbers, they can make a large impact. Casual factors in the radicalization process and models widely vary among academics and counter-terrorism security experts. Dr. Peter Neumann, Director of International Centre for the study of Radicalization at King's College London (Cutler, 2011), has said, "While varying models have been developed to describe the process by which individuals develop extremist worldviews, three elements are common to each model: grievance, ideology, and mobilization." In the European context, an examination of the various radicalization models as put forth by Sageman and Wiktorowicz illuminates the phenomenon of 'homegrown terrorism" and highlights mobilizing factors that could resonate with second-generation British Muslims and "push" or "pull" them towards extremism.

Sageman (network theory) & Wiktorowicz (framing Theory)

      Both Sageman and Wiktorowicz contend that violent radicalization predominately

derives from who you know, in other words, people transmit radical ideas through social

networks, violent radicalization takes place within small groups, where bonding, peer pressure,

and indoctrination gradually changes the individual's view of the world. Both theorists

therefore focus their ideas on the power of small communicative communities to create shared

worlds of meaning that shape identity, perceptions and preferences.[3] Radicalization as a

process, surpasses any specific national, political, religious, or ideological group. However,

currently analysts examine radicalization as a phenomenon that leads to homegrown terrorism.

Just as the nature of warfare and resistance movements have varied throughout time, so have

explanations of radicalization.[4] The current conception of foreign born, foreign trained terrorists

has shifted in recent years to the current conception of second, and third-generation immigrants,

born in Western countries becoming radicalized and attacking their host nation. Sageman and

Wiktorowiczs' non-linear models of radicalization both present models of radicalization that

could explain how immigrants in Western host nations who struggle with multiple identities can

become radicalized. Wiktorowicz suggests that activists emerge through a number of steps,

typically initiated by a personal crisis, which can lead a person to question previously held

beliefs. Wiktorowicz's study with members of splinter group of Hitzb ut-Tahrir (HT) known as

al-Muhajiroun highlights his theory of four processes that lead a person to join an Islamic

extremist group. These four processes are: cognitive opening, religious seeking, frame

alignment and socialization. Wiktorowiz's study shows that grievances and discontent do not

automatically lead to action. Instead, he describes radicalization as a social process that results

from interaction with and within a radical group—a process by which a young Muslim is

gradually convinced that the perceived injustices require the individual to engage personally,

and that violence is religiously sanctioned.[5]

       Like Wiktorowiz, Sageman discards conventional notions of poverty, psychological

disorders or personal problems as primary motivational factors behind terrorism. Sageman

suggests radicalization emerges from the interplay of four factors, three cognitive and one

situational. Cognitive factors include a moral outrage at violence or discrimination aimed at

Muslims as part of the persecution of the Muslim community writ large. The invasion of Iraq,

or anti-Muslim Western intervention in Muslim nations can stir up moral outrage, which

extremist groups seek to do.

Another cognitive factor, called framing involves how Muslims interpret the world. For

example, Islamists employ a line of messages that the West is waging a "war against Islam."

Western security and intelligence agencies have labeled this the "single narrative."

Third, the message must resonate with personal experience, such as personal moral

violations, such as discrimination or unemployment. These three cognitive factors can easily

reinforce each other. All of these can reinforce the perception of a conspiratorial, global attack

on Islam.[6] Sageman emphasizes the interactions of like-minded people as crucial in the

radicalization process.[7] The final factor labeled "mobilization through networks," involves

validating and confirming one's ideas and interpretation of events with other radicalized people.

Sageman argues the current al-Qaeda inspired wave of terrorism should be regarded as a social

movement, not as a coherent strategy directed by a hierarchical organization.[8] Both Sageman

and Wiktorowizs' models provide a sound framework to understand how the narratives and

ideology of local and global violent extremists and conveyor belt groups like HT can resonate

with second, and third-generation British Muslims. An independent research group working for

the Change Institute validated much of Wiktorowiczs' social movement theory. During

interviews with large numbers of Muslims across four European countries, researchers

attempted to find key tenets of militant messaging that had the potential to resonate with broad

segments of Europe's Muslim communities. In sum, according to the research group these

focus groups strongly reject the violent methods of militant Islamism; however, they share the grievances and problems highlighted in the militant propaganda. This demonstrates a vulnerability that militant groups seek to exploit.[9]

As minorities in a pluralistic and multicultural society like the UK, young British Muslims repeatedly face racism, discrimination, marginalization, socio-economic and social-identity challenges, which fall into the categories of "cognitive and situational factors" that Sageman argues lead to radicalization. Understanding the radicalization process, requires also considering the influence of Islamism as a doctrine in Europe which exploits the factors can lead to radicalization of young British Muslims.

Political Islam; Islamism in Europe

To better understand the differing methods by which Islamist groups operate in Europe, Lorenzo Vidino uses three subcategories: violent rejectionists, non-violent rejectionists and participationists.[10] The term violent rejectionists, often referred to as jihadists, refers to individuals and networks that, often linked to or inspired by al Qaeda, reject participation in the democratic system and use violence to advance their goals. Non-violent rejectionists include individuals and groups that openly reject the legitimacy of any system of government not based on Islamic law, but do not, at least publicly and openly, advocate the use of violence to further their goals. Finally, Vidino calls participationists those individuals or groups that adhere to that strand of Islamism that advocates interaction within society at large, both at the micro-level through grass roots activism, and at the macro-level through participation in public life and the democratic process.[11]

An example of a purportedly non-violent group operating throughout Europe is Hizb al-Tahir (HT). HT, or the "Liberation Party" seeks to propagate an "Islamic" way of life by reestablishment of the caliphate. HT preaches a "clash of civilization" ideology to its members,

criticizing Western societies as immoral and destructive. Moreover, its rhetoric aligns with global jihadist messaging: it connects individuals' local grievances, perceived racial, religious and socio-economic discrimination to the perceived global injustices faced by Muslims globally.[12] HT has demonstrated skill in exploiting the Internet and YouTube to promulgate its message.

Dr. Peter Neumann, Director of International Centre for the study of Radicalization at King's College London (Cutler, 2011), has said, "While varying models have been developed to describe the process by which individuals develop extremist worldviews, three elements are common to each model: grievance, ideology, and mobilization." Others have opined that U.S. Foreign policy and the Britain's support in those endeavors lends itself to furthering the narrative of extremist groups and can lead to radicalization. As a tactic, Islamist groups have used and perverted Islam to meet political aims, therefore religion has played in key role in the mobilization strategy and narrative of extremist groups use in recruiting.

Sageman's (2008) Four Prong (non-linear, emergent) model of radicalization best explains why young British Muslims may be drawn to the narrative of radical extremists groups like al-Qaeda and HT. Local groups like HT in the UK continue to pose security challenges for British officials. British officials have routinely struggled with maintaining a balance of collective security, privacy, and respecting the civil rights of "activist" groups like HT.

"Conveyor Belt" and "Gateway" groups: Hizb ut-Tahrir, HT (Party of Liberation)

Unlike many Jihadi groups, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) officially eschews violence, saying it prefers to achieve its goal of a new caliphate through persuasion, protests, and political organizing. Counter-terrorism experts must continually assess the importance of conveyor belt and gateway radical groups like HT and their ability to assist in the radicalization process of British Muslim youths. These groups turn individuals by stages, into sympathizers, supporters,

and ultimately active members of terrorist organizations. Despite its publicly avowed commitment to nonviolence, analysts in the West continue to view the movement as part of the wider ecology of Jihadism.[13]

Hizb ut-Tahrir has succeeded in Europe and Britain specifically because it marketed its message to the mixed or "hybrid" sense of identity of second, and third-generation European Muslims, some of whom feel a sense of alienation from their Western host nation and their heritage nation. HT rhetoric encourages followers to view their identity in global terms, as Muslims struggling on behalf of co-religionists worldwide rather than citizens of their host country. For this reason, analysts regard its activities as a barrier to the assimilation of European Muslims.[14] This ideology attempts to connect the diverse local grievances, including perceived racial, religious, and socio-economic discrimination, to the perceived that Muslims all over the world face. Because the goals of HT resemble those of al Qaeda, policymakers must not minimize the dangers posed by groups like HT. These groups have called for Muslims to "reject Britishness or a British identity and embrace a transnational identity centering on the *Umma,* (community of Muslim believers)" as eloquently expressed by one of the 7/7 bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan in his video confession.

Because of their activist agenda, non-violent but extremist messaging, the British authorities have struggled to find a strategy to counter this activity while adhering to civil liberties. As a result, the government has begun to rely on counter-terror groups like Quilliam to counter the group's messaging in Britain. Groups like Quilliam offer an effective counter to local extremist ideology. However, the main thrust of counter-terrorism in Britain as put forth by the Home Office remains the British Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST).

Focus and terrorist Threats in the UK (CONTEST)

The United Kingdom's strategy for Countering International Terrorism – Annual Report (Home Office, 2010), identified four threats that the UK and its interests abroad face as a result of international terrorist groups: (1) al-Qaeda core leadership group; (2) al-Qaeda affiliates; (3) al-Qaeda inspired threats; and (4) other terrorist groups.[15] These four sources of threat make up the focus of the British Counter-Terrorism Strategy, also known as CONTEST. The Home Office report notes that contemporary terrorist groups claim a religious justification for their actions and have wide ranging religious and political agendas. This report discusses four categories of strategic factors that have driven international Islamist terrorism: (1) conflict and instability, (2) Ideology, (3) technology, and (4) radicalization.[16] Britain's CONTEST employs two models of policing in combating Islamic terrorism: "high policing" or "hard power and "low policing" or "soft power" strategies respectively. CONTEST strategy seeks to reduce the increased isolation, and exclusion of Muslims as the basis of grievances. The program divides government efforts into four goals: Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare the country in the event of potential terrorist attacks.[17] In addition to addressing the social and psychological forces driving extremism and the ideological grounds on which radicalization and terrorism pose a threat, such as socio-political grievances. [18] Preventive measures and a "low policing" "soft power" approach constitute the core of the British model. This community based counter-terrorism approach seeks to impact Muslim communities in positive ways, improve communications, marginalize extremists and favor social integration. The Home Office report, *Preventing Violent Extremism*: *A Strategy for Delivery*, concluded the UK is already carrying out programs domestically to address the underlying socio-economic factors that cause poverty and inequality and addressing perceived grievances through wider policies to promote equality and tackle racism in the Muslim community.[19] The employment of low-policing strategies

coupled with effective government policies aimed at tackling social grievances, to deter

ideologies behind radicalization, must begin at the local community level. Well thought-out

policies that empower Muslim communities and help policy makers and security professionals

grasp the complexities of Muslim identities are of central importance. Future policies must

further the goals of mutual acceptance and diversity of Muslim minorities to promote the

coexistence of Muslims and support their Islamic faith identity.

Pre-conditions to Radicalization: Identity

Muhammad Anwar claims that young British Muslims report contentment with their

identity and citizenship status.[20] Young Muslims appear to employ multiple identities. Some

identify themselves through their personal traits, others mention their name, nationality,

ethnicity and heritage. In contrast, Choudry asserts that the path to radicalization for young

Muslims often involves an identity crisis, dissatisfaction with old answers and belief systems,

and the striving for new ones.[21] King and Taylor argue because homegrown terrorist plots since

2002 have involved mostly second, and third-generation immigrants and converts to Islam,

analysts must study the way in which identity issues connect to radicalization.[22] For example,

second, and third-generation British Muslims routinely face discrimination they must routinely

manage their "Britishness" or Western identity and their heritage identities to become

comfortable with their position in society. Radicalization may stem from this burden of

managing a dual identity. For young British Muslims these struggles can lead to a crisis.

Religion, such as Islam, provides crucial support as an identity as much as a traditional faith.

Furthermore, social psychology research has shown that when faced with this crisis, two levels

of response occur.

At the individual level, people could react by hardening their attitudes and increasing

their convictions. At the group level, the simple act of joining a well-defined group has been

shown to reduce uncertainty.[23] King and Taylor suggest that identity crises serve as significant

catalysts in the radicalization process.[24] Models of radicalization such as Sageman's can prove

useful in helping government agencies and counter-terrorism experts understand the individual

and social challenges of young Muslim minorities in Britain, so that they can detect, deter, and

prevent further home-grown terrorism.

Identity does not always manifest itself as the *primary* motivating factor in the

radicalization process. An alternative precondition or motivating factor of home-grown

radicalization in Europe was identified in the work of Schuurman, Bakker, and Eijkman and

their study of the Dutch homegrown jihadist "Hofstadgroup." However, their research focused

on the structural conditions and factors influencing involvement in terrorism. Structural factors

influencing involvement refers to the social, cultural, economic, or (geo) political environment

in which people live.[25] They concluded when analyzing motivational preconditions, that

geopolitical grievances stood out. Conflicts involving Muslim populations, and the U.S. led

"war on terror," contributed to group participants' eventual adoption of radical and extremist

views.[26] The study also noted to the researcher's surprise, that clear indications of

socioeconomic inequality, the harsh tone of the Dutch integration debate, nor the lack of access

to the democratic political system directly motivated involvement in the group.[27] Muslim youth

and links to radicalism and terrorism in the West following the attacks on 9/11 and 7/7 have

become an area of interest for academia and counter-terrorism professionals.

British Muslim Youth: Identity and Radicalization (an alternative view)

Muslim youth in Britain have suffered alienation as a result of living in largely separate

or parallel Muslim communities largely as a result of British multiculturalism. Because of this,

the British debate over ways to control terrorism, radicalism and extremism must consider

policies that affect notion of identity, integration, and segregation, recognizing that life as a

"Muslim youth" in the United Kingdom entails very complex and psychological challenges. According to Hellyer, second, and third-generation British Muslims suffer an aggravated sense of isolation and alienation.[28] Hellyer goes on to claim that the contrasting requirements set by the family sub-cultures versus mainstream values, the lack of indigenous religious authorities, and socio-political Islamophobic dispositions have deepened the conditions of social exclusion and victim-hood of Muslims.[29]

Following the attacks on 9/11 and the subsequent attack in Britain commonly referred to as 7/7 the phrase used to describe the British perpetrators of Islamic-inspired terrorism was "home-grown terrorists" because they lived or were born in Britain. In an effort to understand home-grown radicalization, Muslim youth have become the domestic political focus of counter-terrorism in the United Kingdom. In the radicalization process analysts consider key triggers as central elements, such as identity crises. Similarly, belonging, fitting in, and loyalty have all become commonplace in discussions around British Muslim youth and their perceived vulnerability to radicalization and terrorism. Current terrorism literature investigates the loose association of identity crises in Muslim youth and the process of radicalization. The British terrorism literature seeks to assess whether Muslim youth have oriented their identity towards the British state, or towards some transnational organization or construction based on religious affiliation or identity politics.[30]

A study by Bouhana and Wikstrom (2011) addressed many of the assumptions on identity and its perceived causal relationship to radicalization and terrorism concerning Muslim youth in Britain. On issues of belonging, integration, Britishness, being Muslim, and belonging to the *Umma*, the study demonstrated that rather than adopting radical commitments based on a rejection of British values and ideas, the youth embrace the qualities of Britishness in a unique ways.[31] The youths of the study argue they found their faith compatible with their British

identity and values. Through expressions of their faith they were increasingly able to incorporate a British identity, both personally and communally.[32] These results refute the primordial approach to cultural identity and the grievance model of conflict. Orla Lynch in her article: *British Muslim youth: radicalization, terrorism, and the construction of the "other"* has suggested that second, and third-generation Muslims stand at a crossroads from which only they have the ability to define their future identity in Britain. She goes on to state that: "British Muslim youth are challenging their identities as constructed by government and the media, and creating space for the construction and reinforcement of their own identities."[33] In effect, they are creating identities on their terms, as they see themselves. The British government should work to identify and remove any structural or social roadblocks that could impede their efforts. Their success begins with the British majority recognizing and celebrating this new journey.

It should be noted however that the authors did recognize that Identity crises, discrimination, Islamophobia, loyalty to the *Umma*, immigration, and transnationalism all in some way play a role in the radicalization process for a small minority of Muslim youth. In addition to identity, discrimination and collective grievance represent casual factors that can move individuals and groups to mobilize into conflict.

Discrimination and Collective Grievance: pathways to radicalization

Perceived social, economic, and political discrimination can play a critical role in the radicalization process, and lead young British Muslims to mobilize in a spontaneous and potentially violent manner. Much like grievances experienced under authoritarian rule, even in democratic society's minorities who suffer real or perceived grievances can mobilize for collective action. Many Muslims in Europe believe that they suffer broad forms of social, economic, and political discrimination. A European survey confirms that Muslims across Europe perceive widespread negative attitudes toward their religion and at times experience

verbal and physical attacks.[34] Because Muslims have been underperforming in British

secondary education, low percentages study in institutions of higher education, leading to a

disproportionately higher unemployment rates. Low political representation is also problematic.

In the United Kingdom, Muslims represent 3 percent of the population but have only 0.3

percent of the country's Parliament members and 0.9 percent of district councilors. As a result,

70 percent of British Muslims feel politically underrepresented.[35]

A report by Rand (2009) suggests identification with the broader Muslim community

plays a critical role in facilitating the concept of a collective grievance.[36] The connection brings

with it a sense of responsibility for helping Muslims they had never seen or met. Roy (2004)

argues the correlation between an uprooted and alienated condition, while feeling of connecting

with the greater Muslim community and to the radicalization process. The collective sense of

the "*Umma*" to socially mobilize marginalized Muslims emphasizes Islamist ideology, violent

extremist groups use this in recruitment. This "Duty to Defend" the collective "*Umma*" coupled

with a doctrine of "defensive struggle" against non-believers as a key part of their message

Jihadist recruiters use to mobilize and radicalize young Muslims. Therefore, analysis of the role

of structural social mobilization factors such as deprivation and collective grievances in

addition to the perversion of faith-based tenets of Islam, and their role in the radicalization

process must be considered.

Relative deprivation and intergroup inequality and terrorism

Counter-terrorism experts and politicians routinely discuss deprivation and inequality to

better understand individual pathways to radicalization. Ted Gurr defines relative deprivation as

the perceived discrepancy between the "values" people expect to achieve, such political

influence or material well-being, and their capacity for doing so. [37] As mentioned above the

British Muslim community has been experiencing "real" deprivation as the minority population

in Britain in the form of social discrimination, racism, unemployment, underrepresentation in local and state government, and reduced educational opportunities. But analysts disagree how these circumstances lead to radicalization.

Many politicians argue that poverty and lack of education cause terrorism.[38] A study by Edwin Bakker shows that most individuals engaging in terrorism came from a relatively low socio-economic background.[39] Conversely, Piazza finds no significant relationship between low economic development and terrorism.[40] A similar discussion or assumption also emerges with regard to education and terrorism. Many experts argue that terrorism attracts the uneducated. However, given the lack of any empirical data, it remains unclear whether poverty or lack of education can act as motiving factors for involvement in terrorism.

In the British Muslim community no clear evidence indicates that socio-economic inequality, lower educational opportunities, or reduced representation in the political landscape directly motivated involvement by young British Muslims to engage in terrorism. However, systemic socio-economic and ethnically-based barriers do heighten existing religious sensitivities. One third of British Muslims claim they, or someone they know has been subjected to hostility based on their religion.

These feelings of hostility that could translate into tacit support for violence, despite the moderate and tolerant nature of the majority. A poll of Muslims taken after the London bombings highlights the feelings of frustrations by many Muslims in Britain. In a poll conducted after the attack, 6 percent of the British Muslim community thought the attack was fully justified, and 24 percent claimed to have had some sympathy for the feelings and motives of the bombers.[41] The British government has followed a policy of multiculturalism with regard to its immigrant population over the last decade. A review of the community of Bradford, a Muslim community just outside London, highlights some of the short-comings of

this strategy, the failed assimilation of British Muslims, and the impact on their collective identity.

British Multiculturalism; the creation of "the other" (the Bradford context)

Most British citizen's view Muslims in terms of their difference from European British values. Muslims complain that the government categorizes them by their religious convictions and cultural expressions, particularly in any case of conflict with their national identity or "Britishness." The multicultural approach to immigration isolates Muslims from the greater society, which has led to feelings of alienation, therefore magnifying the difference between minority Muslim and host nation communities. British polices of multiculturalism have created "parallel communities" of Muslims and British citizens living apart from one another. The fractured community of Bradford from neighboring white housing areas reveals that clustering large populations of minorities can promote further mistrust and racial divides among Muslims and their host nation citizens.

A 2001 Census indicated that people of South Asian origin in Bradford--numbered nearly 88,000. Muslims, mainly of Pakistani, Kashmiri, or Bangladeshi origin (totaled over 75,000). Bradford residents have voiced a desire for greater social interaction with citizens from other backgrounds. However, many white British citizens used Bradford and other predominantly Muslim communities as examples of how the Muslims are "self-segregating" themselves from their host communities. The construction of minority ethnic segregation as a "problem" and British Muslims as alien, inward-looking "others" perpetuates, and indeed normalizes, the view that the responsibility for community tensions lies principally with the 'self-segregating' minorities.[42]

In Britain, the rhetoric of 'valuing cultural diversity' has become widely institutionalized, but the public record shows little evidence of effective policies and practices.

A study of Bradford highlights that the multicultural policies of Britain have failed to promote integration of Muslim immigrants into British society. In fact, housing policies, discrimination, and racial stereotyping continue to promote 'parallel communities' and 'self-segregation' of British Muslims within the host nation. This phenomenon will continue to hinder the ability of Muslims to forge a national identity and be accepted into the pluralistic British society, thereby reinforcing an identity of the 'other'. Local Islamist groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir use this 'other' identity rooted in the alienation of second, and third-generation Muslims to socially mobilize and radicalize disenfranchised Muslims. The London Bomber Mohammad Sidique Khan demonstrated that he embraced the radical narrative of groups like HT and its ideology.

The London Bombers and the self-starter phenomenon

The case of the London Bombers has identified a possible distinct and novel trend of terrorism known as the "self-starter" cell. This term refers to groups that have little or no affiliation with the original Al Qaeda network, and whose attacks seem spontaneous. Analysts attribute this "self-starter" phenomenon largely to social dynamics as well as radical Islamic ideology and rhetoric. The autonomy that these militants exhibit provides the crucial distinction that separates them from radicals recruited by more well-known pathways. All the bombers were British, three of Pakistani descent and one Jamaican immigrant who had converted to Islam. All had grown up in Leeds area, a working class neighborhood populated by Muslim immigrants. Mohammad Siddique Khan held the highest profile in the community of the four bombers. Khan was not raised in a strictly religious household, and he was a strong student who was enrolled in higher education at a local university. Some described Khan as a "model immigrant" based on his seemingly well-integrated lifestyle. Other reports suggested that, like many second-generation European Muslims, he experienced some tension over his identity. Shehzad Tanweer, a second participant, also came from a family of means and attended college.

These facts seem to contradict explanations based on low socio-economic status and lack of education. To better understand the Khan's motivating factors his videotape testimony offers some insight. During his testimony Khan openly rejects his national identity in favor of the global *umma* and justifies his violence with the claim that his brothers and sisters are under attack: He framed his actions as inherently defensive. This *framing* of his anti-Western worldwide views provides a key indicator that he had been recruited and fallen prey to the ideology of Islamists groups, most likely as a result of the Internet. Khan said: "Our driving motivation doesn't come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer. . . .Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetrate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible"

Global Islamist ideology employs the theme of vicarious suffering prominently, and it clearly contributed to the radicalization of the London bombers.[43] In the European context, systemic socio-economic, ethnic, and religious-based discrimination clearly supports the propaganda of Islamist groups seeking to strengthen a rejection of Western society.

According to Farhad Khosrokhavar and his interviews with Al Qaeda affiliates in European prisons, Islam "crystallizes" the rejection of the West for many alienated and radicalized Muslims. He observes that "Islam lends itself well to being a religion of the dominated or of those who are being crushed by "Western arrogance." [44] The London bombers best represent what Lorenzo Vidino would call violent rejectionists. Acting as violent rejectionists and inspired by Al Qaeda rhetoric, the group rose up against their infidel government, using violence to advance their goals. This shows that political Islam has taken root in Europe. Furthermore, that it has the potential to socially mobilize and radicalize marginalized or alienated young Muslims by effectively framing their worldviews.

Conclusion

      Recent terror attacks in Britain have forced the British government to consider the national security threats posed by the alienation of members of an ethnic minority community. Identity crises, discrimination, Islamophobia, loyalty to the *Umma*, immigration, and transnationalism, have become entangled with terrorism and the radicalization process. Almost one third of the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world today live as religious or cultural minorities in non-Muslim states. Nearly 1.8 million Muslims have become an integral part of British society. Over 50% of them are British born and the majority of them are British citizens. Within this population, 33% of Muslims were under 16 compared with 20.2% in the same age group for the general British population.[45] Western states, including Britain have made progress in accepting Muslims as equal citizens. However, racial discrimination and Islamophobia remain major concerns for Muslims in Western nations.

      As minorities in a pluralistic and multicultural society like the UK, young British Muslims consistently face racism, discrimination, marginalization, socio-economic and social-identity challenges, those cognitive and situational factors which Sageman argues may lead to radicalization. Local grievances such as low employment rates, lower income, bad housing conditions, and reduced access to education act as potential social mobilizing factors and to conflict. The propaganda of transnational and local Islamic groups like al Qaeda and HT operating in the UK use these grievances as recruitment tools. Today, most Muslim immigrants remain pessimistic about their economic futures as a result of failed multicultural and segregationist policies of the British government. Moving forward, targeted governmental policies should be developed at the national and local levels to tackle Islamaphobia, disadvantage, poverty, and deprivation among Muslims and other minority communities in Britain.

To counter the extremist messaging, Britain and its CONTEST program must continue to support existing groups like Quilliam to expose and counter the false messaging put forth by local and transnational Islamists groups. To assist groups like Quilliam, British leaders must identify, connect, and empower local Muslim leaders to compete with the message of radical extremists groups. To meet this objective, British government must engage in a broad way with the Muslim community and reflect the diversity of the community.

Most academics agree that the motivation and decision to engage in the radicalization process remains an individual decision. Furthermore, identity crisis and structural grievance factors like: unemployment, racism, segregation, and alienation as a result of failed multiculturalism have the potential to serve as social mobilization factors which could result in conflict or move an individual towards radicalization. Additionally, depravation and creation of the "other" as a social identity due to the segregation and Muslims living in parallel communities also promotes alienation, and mobilization of a group or an individual towards a radical agenda.

As illustrated by Mohammad Sidique Khan and the London Bombers, political Islamist messaging is resonates in the UK with second-generation Muslims. The recent phenomenon of the "homegrown terrorist" or "self-starter" terrorist is represents a third wave of terrorism in Europe.

Notes

[1] The exact number is highly debatable and virtually impossible to establish with certainty. 15 million is the number estimated by the 2004 U.S. Department of State International Religious Freedom Report.

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[4] Michael King & Donald M. Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23:4, (2011) 602-622

[5] Anja, Dalgaard-Nielsen, "Violent Radicalization in Europe: What We Know and What We Do Not Know," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33:9, (2010) 797-814

[6] Ibid, pg 608

[7] Ibid, pg 608

[8] Ibid, pg 608

[9] Anja, Dalgaard-Nielsen, "Violent Radicalization in Europe: What We Know and What We Do Not Know," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33:9, (2010) 797-814

[10] Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe* (2005)

[11] Ibid

[12] Presidential Task Force, The Washington Institute, (2009)

[13] Pew Research Center "Radical Islamist Movements: Jihadi Networks and Hizb ut-Tahir" (2010)

[14] Ibid, pg 4

[15] Home Office, *The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism*, op. cit. (2011)

[16] Ibid

[17] Bonino, Stefano, "Policing Strategies against Islamic Terrorism in the UK after 9/11: The Socio-Political Realities for British Muslims," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 32, No 1, March 2012

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[19] Ibid, pg 18

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[21] Choudry Tufyal, *Role of Muslim Identity Politics in Radicalization: A Study in Progress* (London: Department for Communities and Local Government). (2007)

[22] Michael King & Donald M. Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23:4, (2011) 602-622

[23] Ibid, pg 612

[24] Ibid, pg 612

[25] Bart Schuurman, Edwin Bakker & Quirine Eijkman "Structural influences on involvement in European homegrown jihadism: A case study," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2016.

[26] Ibid. pg 13

[27] Ibid, pg 13

[28] Hisham Hellyer, "British Muslims: Past, Present and Future," *The Muslim World*, 97, No 2 2007, pp 225-258

[29] Ibid.

[30] Mandeville P. "Muslim Transnational Identity and State Responses in Europe and the UK after 9/11: Political Community, Ideology and Authority" Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies

[31] Bouhana, N and P. Wikstrom Al Qaeda Influenced Radicalization; A rapid Evidence Assessment Guided By Situational Action Theory. UK Home Office, Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (2011)

[32] Ibid

[33] Lynch, Orla, British Muslim Youth: radicalization, terrorism, and the construction of the "other"; *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 6 Issue 2, (2013)

[34] P. Davis, & K. Cragin, "Social Science for Counterterrorism, Putting the Pieces Together," *A Rand Study*, National Defense Research Institute, 2009).

[35] Ibid. pg 86

[36] Ibid pg 90

[37] Bart Schuurman, Edwin Bakker & Quirine Eijkman. "Structural influences on involvement in European homegrown jihadism: A case study," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2016.
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[40] James, A, Piazza, "Rooted in Poverty: Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no.1 (2006): 159-60
[41] Ibid
[42] Ibid, pg 37
[43] Ibid
[44] Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).
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