ANTHROPOLOGY OF GLOBAL
JIDAHISM

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HONORS THESIS

Anthropology of Global Jihadism

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A thesis presented on features of Global Jihadism including recruitment tactics, methodology, belief and socialization practices. Presented from an anthropological perspective, and interpreted analyses from various scholars.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GLOSSARY

Hadith sayings connected with or attributed to the prophet Muhammad, preserved and written down after his death

Islam monotheistic religion, representative of Muslim culture, means 'surrender'

Jihad divinely sanctioned warfare with the objective of either expanding Islam or defending it

Mujahid(een) fighter (s) in the jihad

Prophet Muhammad – the messenger of the God Allah

Qur'an the holy book of Islam

Terrorism a strategy of violence designed to inspire terror within a particular segment of a given society

Salafist a member of a strictly orthodox Sunni Muslim sect advocating a return to the early Islam of the Koran and Sunna

Shari'a the Divine law of Sunni Islam

Sufism is the obscure dimension of the Islamic faith, the spiritual path to mystical union with God

Sunna the Way of the Prophet Muhammad, the basis for Sunni Islam

Abstract

Jihadism necessitates interpretation rather than strict classification; its historical relevance, contemporary use in Media, official and legislative use within Islam, and spiritual importance to Muslims provides a different meaning in each context. Global Jihadism is a recent phenomenon frequently associated with international terrorism targeted at the West. Jihadists have no observable profile; individuals known to be in association with these organizations come from heterogeneous backgrounds and nationalities. Characteristics can be offered that suggest likely recruits such as cues in terms of socioeconomic class, education and background, however, there is no direct evidence of strict attributes that represent the population. Identifying and screening jihadist recruits is exceedingly problematic for this reason, for both counterterrorism efforts and in distinction methods for how Jihadist organizations gain momentum. Determining what venue, whether Internet or face-to-face interaction, organizations choose in the selection process also depends on strategy and risk-assessment measures. This paper considers many aspects of the interpretation of Jihadism and how it is represented as a global phenomenon.

JIHADISM

Jihad is a particularly complex term, having gradually changed its meaning since its foundation. "Interpreted as 'holy war' conversely this definition is associated moreover with the Crusades, and is rejected by Muslims. In Arabic, the word's literal meaning is 'striving', 'exerting oneself' or 'struggle' in regards to the Qur'an, and with regards to 'one's religion'.[1]

Muslim jurists and legal scholars use the term as "warfare with spiritual significance", consisting of military action with the objective of "Islam's expansion, and defense".[2] Supporting this notion, Terrorism in association is looked at as a "product of a combination of Islamist ideology and the idea of Jihad".[3]

However many Muslims still affirm that Jihad is "exclusively spiritual", and its meaning is rather peaceful. Taking into consideration perspectives of what the term means to Muslims, scholars, judiciaries and presentation in Media establishing its significance to respective groups is important to this discussion.

Jihad can be discussed in several different contexts, however, there are two distinct usages that provide perspective to many arguments to Jihad's true meaning: the first being 'greater jihad' and the second being 'lesser jihad' or in simpler terms, non-violent vs. violent jihads. 'Greater Jihad refers to sacrificing "for the greater good and charge against a large number of the enemy in an

[1] Cook 2005: 1

[2] Cook 2005: 2

[3] Bakker 2006: 1

attempt to cause them distress".[4] Greater jihad, or 'internal jihad' is discussed to a greater extent than 'lesser jihad' for its consideration of spiritual 'fighting in the cause of Allah' in what can be perceived through violent and non-violent methods. In the Qur'an, we have this statement:

"Not equal are those believers remaining [at home] - other than the disabled - and the mujahideen, [who strive and fight] in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred the mujahideen through their wealth and their lives to those who remain [behind], by degrees. And to both Allah has promised the best [reward]. But Allah has preferred the mujahideen to those who remain [behind] with a great reward" (Qur'an 4:95).

Mujahedeen in respect of 'lesser jihad' refers to the 'fighters', known for their "good deeds" and interpreted as "those who engage in working for the common good, as well as engaging their passions in battle"[5]. An emphasis for being Mujahid is placed on an inner spiritual battle both individual in ambition and outwardly intended in improving society and offering aid for all of God's creatures.

"It should be emphasized that from the earliest period the notion of jihad (struggle) as a spiritual concept for individual Muslims was paramount. Two kinds of jihad were identified: the greater jihad (al-jihad al-akbar) and the less (al-jihad al asghar). The greater jihad is the struggle which man has to wage against his lower self and is, indeed, more meritorious than the military struggle conducted against infidels".[6] Contradictory to the second part of this statement is that military struggle is synonymous with internal jihad and is referenced frequently within historical records of the Crusades and military undertakings; such records include Sufi warriors.

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[4] Cook: 2005: 37

[5] Cook 2005: 38

[6] Hillenbrand: 2000

Sufi warriors participated in internal jihad, and are legendary for their military skill. The man who established the Sufi brotherhood offered his explanation of the dichotomy between greater and lesser jihad as follows:

"There are two types of jihad: the outer and the inner. The inner is the jihad of the soul, the passion, the nature, and Satan. It involves repentance from rebelliousness and errors, and abandoning the forbidden passions. The outer is the jihad of the infidels who resist Him and His Messenger [Muhammad] and to be pitiless with their swords, their spears, and their arrows killing and being killed. The inner jihad is more difficult than the outer jihad because it involves cutting the forbidden customs of the soul, and exiling them, so as to have as one's example the Divine commands and to cease from what is forbids. Whoever takes God's command as his example with regard to the two types of jihad will gain a reward in this world and the next. Bodily wounds on the martyr are just like someone cutting their hand—there is no real pain in it—and death with regard to the soul of a Mujahid who repents from his sins is like a thirsty man drinking cold water".[7]

Noteworthy to both perspectives, one being from a contemporary scholar and the other a devout Sufi militant leader, in similarity is their citing of individual action to either 'repent' or 'wage against oneself' reflecting a spiritual gain whether internal or external. However, their explanations are fairly contradictory, in particular the Sufi fighter who declares the 'inner jihad of the soul' as respective to true jihadism and 'outer' associated with infidels who resist the Prophet's message. While the modern scholar declares that the 'greater jihad' is more commendable than military action, it is suggested that greater jihad is indistinguishable to violent combat.

[7] Cook 2005: 45

Some scholars argue that greater and lesser jihad are synonymous and distinctive of armed struggle and battle. Conversely, greater jihad can be considered outside the realms of militancy and violence. Greater jihad in its spiritual form represents the "inward-seeking" motivations of moral self-examination and improvement as a human being. The struggle, thus, is not regarded as a military one in this translation or meaning, but as a spiritual battle.

Muslims who do recognize Jihad as linked to warfare ascertain its relation as a "legitimate representative of the Muslim community for the sake of an issue that is universally acknowledged to be of critical importance for the entire community against an admitted enemy of Islam".[8] However, they ascertain its relation to lesser jihad, or physical combat.

In this respect, let us consider this verse in the Qur'an:

"And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (9:5).

This verse is critical to jihadism as it relates to warfare, "a universal proclamation against all non-Muslims".[9] "The Qur'an nonetheless presents a well-developed religious justification for waging war against Islam's enemies" in as much as interpretation goes for lesser jihad.[10]

Cook observes that, "Although most verses in the Qur'an are unambiguous as to the nature of jihad prescribed—the vast majority of them referring to those who

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[8] Cook 2005: 3

[9] Cook 2005: 10

[10] Cook 2005: 11

believe, emigrate, and fight in the path of Allah (2:218)—some appear to describe a purely spiritual striving".[11] Islam allows for people to understand the world and themselves through guided practices and pillars of the religion. "Islam is a religion that teaches people how to transform themselves so that they may come into harmony with the ground of all being." [12] Islam consists of several spiritual traditions to bring individuals closer to god in non-violent methods. One in particular is the practice of Sufism, a practice that illuminates the "authentic expressions of Islam".[13]

Such scholars as Chittick and others suggest that Sufism is regarded as a self-reflective practice, involving revelations, frequent meditation and the constant search for the truth. "Sufis have looked upon themselves as those Muslims who take seriously god's call to perceive His presence both in the world and in the self. They stress inwardness over outwardness, contemplation over action, spiritual development over legalism, and cultivation of the soul over social interaction".[14]

He also adds that, "Sufism is an appropriate name for doing what is beautiful and striving after spiritual perfection, it is built on two foundations – Islam or submission to god and iman or faith".[15] The details of Sufism are intertwined with the teachings and practices of Islam. Similarly, Sufi's regard Muhammad as an inspiration to their spiritual experience. Pertinent to jihadism and its ideological framework is the self-examination in physical and spiritual form. The Prophet Muhammad is viewed as absolutely exemplary and the standard of the spiritual approach, wherein his life history is resonated in the actions and choices made through Islam and its followers.

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[11] Cook 2005: 32

[12] Chittick 2000: 6

[13] Chittick 2000: 11

[14] Chittick 2000: 23

[15] Chittick 2000: 19

HISTORY OF JIHADISM

The discussion of jihad necessitates a consideration of its foundation and the major figures involved in the history of Islam. The story of the Prophet Muhammad is of importance to this discussion, known as the person who founded Islam, as well as the creator of 'defense jihadism'. He is not a worshipped individual, however, his words, actions and messages delivered from God are aspects of his being that are significantly intertwined within the readings of the Qur'an, and the foundation and interpretation of Islam. Muslim scholars have documented his life by examining the extensive written texts, quotes and stories known as 'Hadith'.

Muhammad was born in 570 B.C. in Mecca, which is today Saudi Arabia.[16] His first few years of life were considerably unpleasant, orphaned by both parents and subject to living in Arabia, which at that time was a difficult place to reside. The absence of laws, directives and impartiality made life even more difficult, where security was fought for and survival not an easy task.[17] He led a fairly independent life acquiring respect and authority within Arabia while facilitating major political decisions. He gained access to the outside world, and removed himself from poverty through caravan trading, and through marrying into wealth.[18]

Muhammad lived in the midst of a region subject to turmoil and unrest, owed to the constant competition for supremacy and survival through warfare, proximity to major empires including the Byzantine in the north and Sassanid empire in the east. Even with his acquired wealth, he was unhappy with his circumstances and

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[16] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 3:03

[17] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 12:56

[18] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 26:22

contemplated life's purpose, troubled and seeking a spiritual truth, he began taking extended privations from society and frequent spiritual retreats. He would climb a lengthy distance for his meditative retreats and spiritual reflection. In 610 B.C. during one of his many retreats, Muhammad was sent a divine message by God.[19] His duty was then to share Gods message and to pass it on to the people around him to change their lives for the better.

Muhammad's revelations were to become the sacred text of Islam, the Qur'an and 'holy book'. However, in the early stages, his declaration of God's message was received kindly by some and rejected by others.[20] He removed himself from his original tribe and established one built upon ideology rather than kinship. The repercussions of this action led Muhammad to sanction 'defensive' methods in face of those who aim to hurt either him or his followers.

Muhammad's first encounter with battle transpired as a result of ideological disagreements between his old tribe of Mecca and his newly established group from Medina.[21] Muhammad won the battle, affording him a profound reputation in Medina and Mecca as well as subsequent enemies and those looking for vengeance. The Meccans were not the only people in disagreement with the Muslim religion; Jewish tribes and societies were also divergent in their judgment of Muhammad.[22]

These incompatibilities in ideological beliefs clashed during the third attempt of the Meccan army to lay destruction upon Muhammad and his followers. Muhammad discovered that he was betrayed by his Jewish counterparts during

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[19] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 32:13

[20] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 48:25

[21] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 1:09:34

[22] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 1:09:49

this battle, and later declared their treason be punishable by death.[23] Around eight hundred Jewish men were massacred on charge of treason for switching allegiances.[24]

Muhammad after defeating his previous tribe sequentially became known as one of the most powerful men of Arabia. Around this time in 627 B.C. he instituted the 'Sharia' law based on a moral code of justice and brotherhood, freedom and equality.[25] A set of laws that has been transformed over time and is known as something known much different today, "man's attempt God's will and implement it".[26]

As Cook has observed,"The Prophet Muhammad never formally declared a jihad, yet the many campaigns that he undertook on behalf of his faith are the prototypical Jihad wars."[27] Muhammad defined Jihad several times in the Qur'an as both 'exerting oneself whether defensively or spiritually', however, never included deliberate harm to civilians based on discriminatory aspects of religion, tribe or otherwise differing qualitie.s[28] Muhammad ratified defensive strategies in battle in defense, however, never sanctioned the killing of innocent people.

This primarily defensive stance is exemplary and reflects his gesture of compromise toward the tribe with which he had been in constant battle. By coming to terms on ideological differences and settling the dispute through peace, "his message of justice and using means of peace and reconciliation as a means of delivering the message was beginning to attract huge numbers of

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[23] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 1:46:22

[24] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 1:50: 19

[25] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 2:06:14

[26] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 2:07:09

[27] Cook 2005: 2

[28] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 2:32:48

converts".[29] In 632 B.C. Muhammad died from old age and up until his final years he was known as one of the most, if not the most, powerful ruler of all of Arabia.[30]

Inopportunely what Muhammad set into motion as a peaceful and conciliatory religious community was split apart no more than a century later. A split that still resonates today in different interpretations of Muhammad's messages, the writings in the Qur'an and the association between the spiritual and physical battle Muslims struggle to recognize.

Cook points out that, "Islam has become the majority faith only in territories that were conquered by force. Thus, the conquests and the doctrine that motivated these conquest—jihad—were crucial to the development of Islam". [31] Both scholars and journalists contend that global jihadism seems enticing as an expression of devotion to Islam and the desire to emulate the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad's actions during his life have been interpreted in many different ways as spiritual or practical in the face of any enemy of Islam. Unfortunately, the ambiguity of written texts and quotes by Muhammad and his followers has allowed contradictory understandings of the Qur'an and the Prophet's objective in distinguishing ideological differences, and defending Islam and its disciples.

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[29] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 2:41:22

[30] Kermani 2011: "Prophet Muhammad Complete Life Story" 2:48:17

[31] Cook 2005: 13

RECRUITMENT TACTICS

The jihadi militant methodological approach to recruitment is quite multifaceted. The common perception of how extremist groups gain momentum is through brainwashing or pathological pressures, however, recruiting mujahid fighters is much more complex. As experts in this field have observed "a common misperception about extremist groups is that they enlist any willing person they can put their hands on. In reality, recruiting is very dangerous".[32] While this may seem counter-intuitive to viewers of nightly news programs, scholars who have studied these networks have brought to light just how complex and dangerous the recruitment process actually is in practice.

Risk assessment is an important factor considered during the recruitment process, particularly to avoid any chance of enlisting an informant. The risk of infiltration is high and worry that a low quality recruit could comprise the group is troublesome insofar as being able to differentiate between deliberate deceptions or a low level of commitment is necessary.[33] To avoid informants entering these radical networks requires groups to acquire knowledge about recruits; however, there is a greater limitation on accessing information to ensure commitment and trustworthiness. In comparison to non-violent networks…

Thomas Hegghammer, the author of *The Recruiter's Dilemma*, has noted "recruiters maximize the likelihood of successful persuasion by seeking subjects with certain qualities, such as past activity, resources and engagement with politics".[34] In terms

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[32] Hegghammer 2012: 3

[33] Hegghammer 2012: 4

[34] Hegghammer 2012: 5

of past activity, Hegghammer especially means that veterans of jihadi militant groups are given preference, as long as they can prove their previous involvement. Of course, in practical terms, financial resources are desirable, however, networks and physical and mental skills are given more favorable consideration. Socioeconomic status is not a major factor in a recruiter's decision, as recruits come from a range of socioeconomic class backgrounds.

Hegghammer has also shown that recruiters "exploit pre-existing social links, since these offer better information about a recruit's unobservable qualities and provide leverage over the candidate".[35] Social links can include family, friends or any known associates that can either vouch for the recruit's credibility, and confirm qualities of commitment or lack thereof. It has been suggested by some scholars that the majority of recruitment for jihadi fighters is through kinship relations; friends in association with jihadism, veteran mujahid or "pre-existing social bonds to members already involved".[36]

Recruiters examine indicators of commitment and trustworthiness through gathering information on the prospective recruit, through vouching by known associates, and through multiple characteristics and individual traits that are suggestive of loyalty and dependability.[37] In general, scholars have found that desired qualities in a prospective member include such disparate things as: devotion to Islam, ideological commitment, maturity, a willingness to sacrifice and fight, obedience, and ability to conceal information, good health, patience, intelligence, prudence, truthfulness and an ability to observe and ability to conceal

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[35] Hegghammer 2012: 5

[36] Bakker 2006: 12

[37] In Hegghammer's 2012 study he investigated QAP recruiters methodology techniques for recruiting and concluded that out of the 260 individuals within his sample, the majority were of Arab descent, and originating from either Saudi Arabia or South Asia, were a large part of Global Jihadism is represented.

oneself.[38] Any of these individual qualities is not given any specific precedence over the others, as a result they are collectively considered during the recruitment process.

Thus, current research shows that the process of evaluating recruits requires an arduous screening procedure. The initial evaluation of a prospective recruit involves uncovering personal characteristics including their cultural heritage, ethnicity, personal piety, ideological commitment, occupation and previous jihad experience. Hegghammer has noted, "to observe these signs, recruiters needed to already be in direct contact with the recruit", which obviously puts the usefulness of online communication into relative perspective.[39]

Evaluating cultural heritage can be done by asking the recruit directly or by finding out through known associates and family members. There is stronger preference given to individuals of Arabic decent, with Asian, African and Western features seen as a strong negative for recruiters. It has been argued that because of the predominance of Arab individuals within the global jihadi movement, jihadism fuels Arab prejudice.[40] This kind of racial bias is easily perceived in some of the news coverage we have in the United States and in Europe.

Personal piety is essential for acceptance in these radical organizations. Whereas skipping prayer, smoking regularly, and watching pop-culture films are regarded negatively, reading the Qur'an regularly, weeping while reciting the Qur'an, and frequent minor pilgrimages to Mecca are considered positive cues, "[an] effective signal was the ability to weep during prayer, as this is hard to fake and viewed as a

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[38] Hegghammer 2012: 6 Signs in Hegghammer's article include any form of dress, behavior, and language that would suggest genuine worthiness. Hegghammer also includes differentiating sigsns such as symbols and cues (cogential features) (conventional gestures, dress or statement)

[39] Hegghammer 2012: 10

[40] Hegghammer 2012: 7

commendable expression of piety in Muslim societies".[41] Prospective recruits should not be overly pious, however, since individual piety should not overshadow their commitment to mujahid tasks.

Ideological commitment from a political outlook, such as approval of violent activism, and verbal declarations of ideological support, is looked at in a positive light.[42] Recruits who are unemployed or employed in the religious sector are sought after for the likelihood of them staying, and for lack of another commitment. Past detainees are assumed to be less attractive to jihadi organizations; however, recruits that have been exposed whether through felonious behavior or suggestive extremist implications, are accepted for their trustworthiness, and "outweighed by risk of individual being tracked".[43] Thus the unemployed and delinquents are given proper consideration for recruitment as well.

As previously mentioned, preference is given to mujahid veterans and those with jihad experience who can prove their involvement and loyalty. Identifying a jihad veteran is multifarious and difficult to do without proper interrogation, wherein there is no insignia, uniform, ring or emblem that indicates an individual with jihad experience. "Jihad experience is signaled through a cluster of primarily verbal signs that are complex and counterintuitive, and thus difficult to mimic".[44] To discern an informant from a veteran, recruits must prove their experience through solicit signs which occurs through engaging in conversation or discussing topics about foreign jihad fronts in large groups.[45] These signs include body

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[41] Hegghammer 2012: 12

[42] Hegghammer 2012: 10

[43] Hegghammer 2012: 10

[44] Hegghammer 2012: 10

[45] Hegghammer 2012: 11

language and learned ways of approaching topics in consideration of militant experience.

Mujahid fighters are looking for three types of experience: 1) knowledge of people, places and events specific to the conflict in which the recruit claims to have taken part 2) weapons proficiency where skills are acquired through training camps, and 3) familiarity with jihad culture.

Jihad culture is comprised of the numerous battle hymns sung and taught during training and socialization. Poetry is memorized that commemorates victories, famous battles, and conquests. War stories are told from the time of the prophet Muhammad as a reminder to keep mujahid fighters loyal and involved. Of the numerous traits listed, jihad experience is one of the few characteristics that cannot be imitated by an informant. The "only way for an informant to pass as a veteran through these three investigative characteristics would be to 'socialize extensively with veterans', and even then it would be a considerable challenge to mimic the jihad experience and culture".[46]

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[46] Hegghammer 2012: 10

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Disconcerting to counter-terrorism organizations and the world alike is how the jihad network is gaining political and ideological control and influence over extensive territories. Particular scholars claim the Internet to be the conspicuous culprit for allowing jihadist groups to gain momentum in numbers and power, "jihadists now use the Internet and other new media technologies that have helped open jihadist participation to anyone, anywhere".[47] The Internet is certainly a vector to get the message of global jihadism across to anyone interested in the matter, however, to confirm it is the largest source of recruiting and involvement would be to overstate the Internet's role in the spread of global jihad in our era. "Jihadi Internet propaganda has inspired individuals to approach organizations, but there are very few known cases of established groups soliciting new recruits online".[48]

Current research shows that recruiters and recruits typically establish connection in four types of locations, social gatherings, private homes, prisons, and private lectures hosted by imams. In some countries "where there are few public entertainment options other than the shopping mall, private homes arguably constitute a relatively more important arena for socialization than in many other countries".[49] Networks are established "through close friendships made at mosques or other religious centers, the tighter these groups become, the more extreme their views and the more alienated they become from society".[50]

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[47] Khosrokhavar 2009: 18

[48] Hegghammer 2012: 8

[49] Hegghammer 2012: 8

[50] Ranstorp 2010: 34

Mujahedeen also connect with prospective recruits through orthodox mosques. Similarly, through participation in prayer, conversation or various activities it is likely the jihadi recruiters will come in contact with youth interested in the jihadi mission.

As I have already mentioned, Jihadi organizations tend to give preference to veteran Mujahid fighters. However, in addition, veterans are valuable to Jihadi groups for their prior experience as a fighter, as well as for their knowledge of effective methods in recruiting, "returning jihadists have the potential to function as operators/managers for [jihadi operations]. They function as an experienced and motivated 'first-tier' group able to tap into the pool of 'second tier' Muslim youth and exploit 'third tier' Muslim communities or elements thereof".[51] Veterans are especially favorable for preparing youth recruits for battle and for their familiarity with the induction process; their role is similar to a mentor and individual respected for his/her experience in the field.

As observers of this process have noted, screening for prospective mujahid fighters does not exclude criminals for they have already been exposed to radical perspectives and contribute to fundamentalist positions and can be expected to be trustworthy for that reason. Thus, recruitment of detainees and lawbreakers takes place within prison walls, particularly those who have been convicted or terrorism-related activities, crimes, and Islamic radicals convicted for regular felonies likely to encourage others to follow extremist ideology.[52]

In addition to social interaction in prisons, mosques and other face-to-face relationships, "various media play a role in catalyzing radicalization. Especially the

[51] Ranstorp 2010: 34

[52] Ranstorp 2010: 35

Internet and newsgroups offer access to recruitment broadcasts and can bring 'second-tier' youth into contact with gatekeepers and their organizations".[53]

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

As we have seen, jihadi social networks are created through the facets I have examined; through meetings in locations teeming with disconsolate and alienated youth, prisons brimming with incensed convicted individuals and in mosques, lectures and private homes with groups devoted to Islam. In anthropological terms, global jihadism can be looked at as a 'community of practice' for the collectivity and goals mujahedeen embraces and the realization of belonging.

"The domain: A community of practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people".[54]

"The community: In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other".[55]

"The practice: A community of practice is not merely a community of interest—people who like certain kinds of movies, for instance. Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction".[56]

Such factor as emotional vulnerability, feelings of anger, alienation, marginalization and longing for a sense of community are just a few causes that

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[54] Wenger: NCDDR.org

[55] Wenger: NCDDR.org

[56] Wenger: NCDDR.org

help explain why recruitment is feasible and the expansion of jihadi networks continues to intensify. It has been observed that the media also plays a role in further dividing our society: "stigmatization and political polarization of Muslim communities through public debate contribute to an atmosphere where young Muslims feel detached from society and search for an identity, including in the violent strains of Islam".[57] Thus, there shared feelings of discrimination and marginalization by a society or societies cannot warrant violent action, but can certainly influence a discontented youth's decision to join a group that acknowledges their frustration, and makes them feel wanted and accepted.

As has been frequently noted by scholars and journalists, "disenfranchised Muslim youth are particularly susceptible to radicalization, alienated from society or even multiple societies with few socioeconomic opportunities, their sense of belonging is lost. A search for identity commences that can lead towards a path of radicalization".[58] Mujahidin fighters have created a community of practice based on their ideological resemblances, ethnic backgrounds and reciprocal positions of discontent within Western hegemony. In political and socioeconomic terms, the lack of employment attributed to factors of a state's insufficient infrastructure, accruing economic costs to sustain communities after wars internal and external in nature, and influence of socioeconomic restrictions based on class status have been looked as significant contributing factors to the expansion of global jihad movements. "High levels of unemployment, and lack of opportunity reinforce the sensation of disenfranchisement and contribute to radicalization".[59] Under these circumstances, young people with mindsets such as these are vulnerable to coercion and the influence of extremist views.

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[57] Ranstorp 2010: 31

[58] Ranstorp 2010: 31

[59] Ranstorp 2010: 32

Several scholars would argue that a sense of victimization contributes to the numbers of people who convert to jihadism within Muslim communities and in the West. That "humiliations and distress of the Muslim underclass" seeks inclusion wherever it may be found.[60] Additionally, individuals who are discontent with current attempts to stir action within politics or the social realm may begin to believe that conventional approaches are ineffective and therefore choose activities that will produce immediate and tangible results.

Furthermore, an individual's affinity with victims can be used as a means of validation in the recruitment approach through personal evidence whether related to war, torture during imprisonment, or the loss of a family member, which can enhance identification with the marginalized groups. In anthropological terms, kinship, familial and relational ties draw upon duty and upbringing to influence this decision, "the common denominator influencing individuals' embracement of their own radicalization—at any level—is a sense of positive expectation, as long as commitment and dedication to one's socialization further and further into the movement remains positive for the follower, the process eventually results in the formation of a new—or at least effectively consolidated—identity".[61]

Veterans play a crucial role, not only in their involvement but knowledge of recruiting, establishment and maintenance of networks. Veterans take role model positions through jihad experience, stories and interpersonal ability to relate to newcomers'. As Hagden notes, "Role models serve as a source of authoritative legitimacy for the justification of violent reaction, sustaining the individual's commitment to the group to the point of actually engaging in violent acts".[62]

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[60] Khosrokhavar 18

[61] Horgan 2008: 92

[62] Horgan 2008: 88

Accommodation and assimilation is a systematic process, "organized mobilization usually occurs in four sequential steps: formation of mobilization potential, activation of recruitment networks, arousal of motivation to participate, and removal of barriers to participation".[63] The sense of gradual progression, and belonging results in greater involvement and commitment, "characterized by a slow marginalization away from conventional society and toward a much narrower society where extremism becomes all encompassing".[64] Once the mobilized community has been established, networks are expanded and participants become willing and available, the last steps are to assure recruits commitment through the process of induction and screening.

Consumed with the group's emotional appeal, supported by familial relations, exhausted from life's shortcomings, faced with alienation by multiple societies, recruits find resolve and purpose. Hagden adds that, "Increased commitment and ever-greater and ever-focused involvement will carry with it the realization that in difficult or challenging times, the need to "stick it out" is paramount".[65] Additionally, the need to avenge family members; desire to defend community interests and spread the jihadi mission.

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[63] Hegghammer 5

[64] Horgan 2008: 89

[65] Horgan 2008: 89

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PROFILING TERRORISM

Thus far I have provided an extensive review of specific characteristics interrelated with global jihadism. However, I have not portrayed the archetypal Mujahid individual, due to the little evidence that Mujahid has a profile, Hagden claims that, "the frustration that no terrorist profile has yet been found—not only between members of different terrorist movements but also among members of the same particular movement".[66]   The same tribulations counter-terrorism organizations face are comparable to Mujahedeen recruiters in that they do not know who they are looking for.

There is an expectation that terrorists have distraught lives grounded in criminality and radical traits that they originate from extremes in socioeconomic status, lack in occupation and are primarily male. Stereotypes solidify any detail of determining terrorist profiles, and in any case are unreliable in context and accurate description. "Determining jihadi terrorist groups or cells is no simple task as these 'groups' are often no more than ill-defined networks of people".[67] The issue is essentially that terrorists are heterogeneous in kind and that nationality, ethnicity and religion cannot define or constitute the sole basis of an individual's association with radical practices.

As Banks observes, the issue with profiling is that it relies "on a generality about an entire group, whereas suspect descriptions denote the particular characteristics of a specific perpetrator".[68]   Narrowing characteristics down to aspects such as

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[66] Horgan 2008: 83

[67] Baker 2006: 16

[68] Banks 2004: 1205

eye, hair or skin color in appearance drastically limits those who can be suspect. This is relevant when establishing individual crimes, however, terrorism is all encompassing and widespread.

Misinterpretation of terrorist profiles is frequent in part due to how terrorism is represented by the Media, the maintenance of discriminatory viewpoints, and cultural unfamiliarity. "The overt fear inspired in the public by terrorist acts may be, in the absence of conclusive scientific data, attributable to the impact of media coverage".[69] The Media, some scholars could argue, instills more fear into the public concerning the act of terrorism than the actual act itself. As an outlet to propagate violent actions, create a name and instill fear, Media molds the inaccuracy of terrorist profiles more than any output of information. "The terrorist tailors both to insure media dissemination of both the act and an underlying message to achieve terror-inspiring effect".[70]

Sensationalizing individual terrorists acts based on 'ideological agendas seems to appear most often in headline news. However, "state-sponsored terror-violence is exceedingly more harmful and more threatening to the stability of world order than non-state-sponsored individual or small group terror-violence."[71] The idea that individuals are threatening national security produces a significant overreaction and demand to target individualized acts.

Generalizations about a group of people limits proper explanations, "not only about the balance between liberty and security, but also about the fairness of antiterrorism efforts that burden innocent Arabs and Muslims to a much greater extent than other innocent people". [72] The generalization that jihadism as it is

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[69] Bassiouini 1981:2

[70] Bassiouini 1981: 3.

[71] Bassiouini 1981:8

[72] Banks 2004: 5

associated with violent activism, motivated through ideological beliefs and instrumentalized through religion, figures in headline news about most terrorist attacks originating from societies with a predominately Muslim population. As Bassiouini has observed, "The pervasive and indiscriminate use of such convenient labels as terrorism continues to obscure the field of inquiry".[73] It is unfortunate that many people, ordinary citizens, in Western cultures tend to associate Muslism by virture of thire dress or appearance with Islam as an 'insufferable' religion and may too easily consider devout Muslims as potential terrorists. These perceptions can take place in public spaces; in airports, in side streets and in coffee shops.

It is also unfortunate that Media nurses the stereotypes of marginalized cultures and societies because, as we have seen, this prepares the terrain for recruitment. Simplifying a term such as jihadism that is clearly complex, with an intricate history, and reshaping its meaning to say something entirely different is very problematic.

Thus far, I have laid the groundwork of Jihadism and its many interpretations. I have concluded that it is both incorrect to strictly constitute jihadism as violent as this would go against ideological beliefs of its spiritual potential and also to associate jihad as purely transcendent and non-violent would be inaccurate as well. Jihad does involve a battle, however, a battle that is specific to each individual and what they are fighting for in the ideological sense through spiritual or physical means. To define jihadism as stringently associated with terrorism is inaccurate when considering how its meaning has evolved in the history of Islam. Sensationalizing terrorist acts, profiling terrorism, and labeling individuals as Jihadi distorts our global percception of Islam, Jihadism and its respective meanings.

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[73] Bassiouini 1981:2

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