the edge of violence
a radical approach to extremism

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What is to be done with the millions of facts that bear witness that men, fully understanding their real interests, have left them in the background and rushed headlong to meet peril and danger... ?
Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 1862[1]

The path that some individuals take to a point at which they may be willing to kill others and themselves in the name of Islam is today's most pressing security concern. It is a journey that is still too poorly understood despite dozens of theoretical models and profile studies. What is clear is that there is no such thing as a typical terrorist, and no such thing as a typical journey into terrorism.[2]

The journey into terrorism is often described as a process of 'radicalisation'. However, to be a radical is to reject the status quo, but not necessarily in a violent or even problematic manner.[3] The process of radicalisation is obviously a problem when it leads to violence, and most obviously to al-Qaeda inspired terrorism. But the last decade in particular has also seen a growth in many types of non-violent radicalisation. A successful counter-terrorism strategy must be based on a clear understanding of these distinct forms of radicalisation.

Separating different types of radicalisation is not an easy task. There is an overlap in the ideologies and goals of many radical groups and individuals including Islamist groups, religious conservative movements, and ultra-orthodox organisations and individuals.[4] Differentiating between these types of radicalisations is extremely important because targeting the wrong people can breed resentment and alienation, and erode the very freedoms Western governments want to preserve. Violent radicals are clearly enemies of liberal democracies; but non-violent radicals might sometimes be powerful allies.

The method
This report seeks to cast light on how and why some types of radicalisation can develop into violence, while others do

not, how they relate to each other, and what implications this has for social and security policy. To answer these questions, the report compares two phenomena:

- *Radicalisation that leads to violence* ('violent radicalisation'). This is a process by which individuals come to undertake terrorist activity, or directly aid or abet terrorism. To understand this process, 58 in-depth profiles of 'homegrown' terrorists were created. They were drawn from seven cells across Canada and Europe. The appellation 'cell' is applied to a group of individuals, some of which have been convicted of terrorism-related crimes. Thus, 'cells' can also include individuals who were ultimately found innocent of terrorist-related crimes. For the purposes of this research, terrorists are only those individuals who have been found guilty of various terrorist related offences.[5] Throughout the paper, these individuals are referred to as 'terrorists'.
- *Radicalisation that does not lead to violence* ('non-violent radicalisation'). This refers to the process by which individuals come to hold radical views in relation to the status quo (see annex 2 for a full definition of 'radical') but do not undertake, or directly aid or abet terrorist activity. In order to understand this process, 28 radical profiles were created, of which 20 were interviewed in depth, in Canada and Europe. Throughout the paper, these individuals are referred to as 'radicals'.

The report compares and contrasts these two types of radicalisation across a range of personal and social characteristics, attitudes to religion, society and violence, and examines the nature and extent of the relationships between them.[6] In order to understand how far these findings apply within Muslim communities more generally, a representative cross section of 70 young Muslims in Canada was also interviewed. In addition, 75 interviews were carried out with a range of local and national experts to supplement the research (including Imams, journalists, academics, community leaders and government officials).[7]

Most research in this area is based on recycling old, publicly available information about known terrorists. As one academic noted recently, most terrorism experts have never been anywhere near a terrorist or individuals with radical views.[8] This project differs from previous research in two ways. First, terrorists are compared to a 'control group' of non-terrorists. By doing so, the research aims to isolate patterns and traits that might help distinguish between these phenomena. Second, exploring the relationships between

radicals and terrorists allows for a deeper understanding of the broader network of people, ideas and relationships within which they sit.

This research, like any in the social sciences, cannot perfectly predict human behaviour, which defies aggregation, generalisation and categorisation. It is inherently unpredictable. Indeed, the categories used here are permeable. A small number of individuals can and sometimes do pass from one category to another. Consequently, this study is illustrative rather than predictive, the findings should not be used as the basis for profiling terrorists and radicals.

However, the research does represent an empirical insight into a social phenomenon, and contributes towards a more nuanced understanding of behaviour across radicalised individuals, the nature and the cause of al-Qaeda inspired terrorism, how that threat relates to other social trends and the role of security and social policy in responding.

The focus of the research

The report covers five countries: the UK, Canada, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, focusing on the phenomenon of 'home-grown' al-Qaeda inspired terrorism in these countries. Canada was included in this group and became the principal locus of a significant amount of the fieldwork for two reasons.

First, immigration and integration polices provide an important backdrop to the study of radicalisation to violence. The threat, particularly in Europe, has become indirectly intertwined with concerns over immigration and integration, an area where Canadian policy is often held up as a model for success. But this perception is changing. Recent data show that some immigrant populations in Canada today are worse off in socio-economic terms than their predecessors, despite a long established points-based immigration policy that encourages highly skilled migrants and an image of Canada as a multicultural beacon.[9]

Second, current Canadian society reflects the multicultural ideals of the late Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. This policy, first instituted in 1971, aims to support the cultural development of ethno-cultural groups, overcome barriers to full participation in Canadian society, promote creative interchange and assist all new Canadians in acquiring at least one official Canadian language.[10] However, there is debate over the extent to which continued high levels of immigration and increasing diversit —

including religious — are placing unsustainable pressure on this model.

These questions are relevant for every liberal democracy. Despite very different political and social contexts in Europe, similar debates are taking place: about immigration and integration policy and what role they play in radicalisation; about perceptions of relative disadvantage or frustrations of social mobility; about the possibilities and limits of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue; about what ideas can enter the public realm. The focus on Canada therefore allows for an exploration of these questions from a unique vantage point.

Terrorism is not associated with any single culture, religion or group identity. This report focuses on the radicalisation of people who are Muslim, and terrorism committed in the name of Islam. It does not of course imply that followers of Islam inherently turn to violence. Rather, al-Qaeda inspired terrorism is currently considered to be the main national security risk to Western countries and represents a manipulation of Islam.

Summary of findings
Social and personal characteristics

Terrorists, radicals and young Muslims had all experienced some degree of societal exclusion, had a distrust of government, a hatred for foreign policy, many felt a disconnection from their local community, and many have had an identity crisis of sorts. Of particular note was a high level of distrust among young Muslims towards policing and intelligence agencies, with obvious implications for counter-radicalisation efforts. However, young Muslims and radicals also felt genuine affection for Western values of tolerance and pluralism, system of government, and culture. Terrorists, on the other hand, were unique in their loathing of Western society and culture. Interestingly, radicals were more likely than terrorists to have been involved in political protest, to have studied at university (and studied humanities or arts subjects) and to have been employed.

Religion and ideology

Terrorists (at least those in our sample) had a simpler, shallower conception of Islam than radicals, although terrorists themselves would certainly disagree. Radicals were more likely to recognise their own ignorance and stress the importance of context, reflection and learning. They

were as familiar with so-called jihadist scholars as terrorists, but drew on a variety of other sources too. Certain ideas which are sometimes associated with terrorism were, in fact, held by large numbers of people who renounced terrorism. Many radicals, and indeed young Muslims, supported the application of Sharia law and the Caliphate — but usually in an aspirational or nostalgic sense. Terrorists were set apart less by their adherence to a particular school of thought than by their adoption of a specific set of ideas: an exclusionary 'us versus them' ideology, and a rejection of 'the other', which often results in an unwillingness to engage with social or political elements of Western society. It is difficult to disentangle precisely how far religion inspires violence or legitimises/obligates it: for different people it appears to serve slightly different purposes.

Violence, war and jihad
Radicals refused to defend violent jihad in the West as religiously obligatory, acceptable or permitted. The same was true of the young Muslim sample. Young Muslims rejected al-Qaeda's message and often use simple, catchy sayings from the Qur'an or Hadith to express that rejection. However, there was widespread support among radicals and young Muslims for Iraqi and Afghan people 'defending themselves' from 'invaders', framed in the language of self-defence, just war and state sovereignty. Furthermore, Western Muslims travelling abroad to fight was not seen as obligatory, or something to be encouraged, but neither was it denounced outright: this is a difficult grey area for many. Muslims who supported violent 'resistance' to forces in Afghanistan or Iraq cannot and should not be put in the same radical category as those who support the use of violence within Western borders. There are potential allies among radicals who denounce terrorism at home, but support the principle of violent Jihad overseas as a natural extension of just war theory. Nonetheless, individuals who travel overseas to actually take part in military operations will, and should, remain of concern to security services because of the potential skills, training, contacts and credibility they could bring back with them.

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

The journey to violence

The spread and acceptance of radical or violent ideas can be helpfully conceived as a social epidemic, because whether an individual comes to accept such ideas depends on how far their peers do and the extent to which they are seen as worthy of imitation. An increasingly important part of al-Qaeda's appeal in the West is its dangerous, romantic and counter-cultural characteristics. This aspect is often overlooked, but has important — and difficult — implications for how to tackle it.

Becoming a terrorist was not always a natural or linear progression from being a radical. Those who turned to violence often followed a path of radicalisation which was characterised by a culture of violence, in-group peer pressure, and an internal code of honour where violence can be a route to accruing status. Certain signs of radicalisation to violence are visible from this vantage point, for example: distribution of jihad videos, clashes with existing mosque authorities, debates between 'do-ers' and 'talkers', deep engagement in literature that explains how to determine a kafir and what is permissible once you know, and any criminal activity undertaken in this respect. These manifestations are potentially useful indicators for local police agencies, community leaders and members, and public servants involved in working to prevent radicalisation to violence.

Terrorism and radicalism in the community

Unsurprisingly, individuals considering violence often existed on the fringes of the community, especially when they believed violence is religiously obliged, because of their unwillingness to participate in organised groups or institutions and the desire to avoid detection. However, for some people considering violence — either in a cell or not — the credibility and status attached to violent activity motivated them to vocalise their activities and beliefs: there was talk, and it was picked up and argued over at the community level. This puts a high premium on community intelligence. Indeed, there was a strong sense that Muslim communities were undertaking self-policing within their own communities. Some in the community, including radicals, have come into contact with individuals contemplating violent acts, and successfully dissuaded them. Nonetheless, there are limits to what self-policing can achieve, particularly given that future terrorist cells might be more closed following high profile infiltrations.

Summary of recommendations

This research both validates some existing theories, and also points to a new way of understanding how the al-Qaeda inspired threat is changing in the West. It is becoming a combination of toxic ideology and youthful radicalism, something inherently anti-establishment which some young people find appealing. Radicalism and violence has always been an integral part of human life, and always will be.

Seeing the phenomenon in this way does not make the threat any less severe, nor any easier to challenge, but it does have specific implications for countering it. We propose the following recommendations which will help contribute to this task, aimed at all agencies, organisations, and individuals concerned with preventing terrorism across all countries considered in this study. They are based on three underlying principles. First, that al-Qaeda inspired terrorism in the West shares much in common with other counter-cultural, subversive groups of predominantly angry young men. Being radical and rebelling against the received values of the status quo is an important part of being young. Ways must be found to ensure that young people can be radical, dissenting, and make a difference, without it resulting in serious or violent consequences.

Second, that the best way to fight radical ideas is with a liberal attitude to dissent, radicalism and disagreement. This can de-mystify and de-glamourise terrorism without alienating large numbers of people. However — a liberal approach depends on independent voices setting out forceful counter-arguments against extremist ideas.

Third, that human behaviour is, and always has been, unpredictable and non-linear. While there are some interesting differences between terrorists and radicals, ultimately two people faced with the same situation react differently. Radicalisation to violence is no different. It can be managed, but not 'solved'. Governments must therefore focus on the things they can realistically change, while the lead role must be played by society — individuals, groups, organisations and communities — who can understand and respond to these complexities better.

Distinguish radical from violent

- Being radical is not always the first step on the path to violence. In fact, radicalisation that leads to violence can be distinguished by different indicators from those that indicate purely 'religious', non-violent radicalisation. Assuming that

radical views constitute the base of the terrorist pyramid can allow for counter-radicalisation strategies against large numbers of people who object entirely to al-Qaeda's methods.

- This does not mean that all radical ideas are positive — some may represent a social threat or even a long-term threat to the democratic order. But they should be tackled as social problems, not as a 'subset' of the al-Qaeda threat.
- Silencing radical views must be considered as a last option because banning radical voices will neither prove effective nor lessen their appeal in the long-term. However, a liberal approach to debate and freedom of speech also requires strong counter-arguments. Preaching that incites violence or hatred against others on the basis of religion or race is both a security and social threat and should be met with a judicial response. Radical ideas that do not break the law should be given air, but they should be debated and renounced. Government, but more importantly, independent voices — including Muslims — must set out counter arguments as to why particular radical or extremist ideas are wrong.

De-mystify and de-glamourise al-Qaeda

- The al-Qaeda brand needs to be stripped of its glamour and mystique by emphasising the incompetent and theologically incompatible side of al-Qaeda inspired terrorists — including through the use of satire, although this cannot come from the government.
- The concepts of Jihad, terrorism and radicalisation must be de-mystified and de-stigmatised through a series of open, local level debates. People want and need to talk about them openly.
- Governments must keep their messaging about what constitutes 'good' or 'bad' Islam to a minimum. Official badging of ideas or initiatives can damage legitimacy. However, governments will, inevitably, talk about al-Qaeda inspired terrorism and Islam. Where they do, communications should emphasise the terrorists' shallow and Manichean conception of religion. Although it has been used in a number of countries, the slogan 'Islam is peace' should not be the dominant theme of messages: 'Islam is just' more closely represents the position of Muslim communities.

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Limit and focus prevention more

- Prevention work aims to prevent individuals becoming involved in or supporting al-Qaeda inspired terrorism. It is an increasingly important part of counter terrorism work and must remain a priority. However, mission drift must be avoided. Prevention work should be limited to interventions where there is a clear, identified danger of groups or individuals undergoing radicalisation *to violence*. Broader social concerns within Muslim communities, such as discrimination, integration or socio-economic disadvantage, should not be part of a counter-terrorism agenda, as this serves to isolate communities.
- Prevention work must import multi-agency approaches from successful counter-gang techniques. There is some common ground, at least for some individuals, with gangster lifestyles, both in the nature of group or gang recruitment, and also in inter and intra-group dynamics.
- Government and Muslim community groups should create and encourage programmes that offer exciting alternatives to al-Qaeda. A significant proportion of young Muslims — like many young people — will want to dissent and rebel, and the idea of being part of an international jihadi movement can be exhilarating. Governments must be more radical and daring in devising ways of engaging young people in non-violent alternatives that respond to this desire. For example, schemes that allow young Western Muslims to volunteer in those countries they are most concerned about, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, could be considered.

Choose diverse working partners

- Governments and policing agencies should work with radicals in certain instances where there are specific tactical benefits, for example in local de-radicalisation programmes. In some cases — especially when working with an individual who believes violence is religiously obligated, or may be tempted by these ideas — non-violent radicals can some-times have the credibility needed to convince them otherwise.
- Governments should encourage the growth of available sources for young Muslims through national language proficiency tests for Imams.
- Governments should work with non-religious leaders. Radicalisation to violence is not purely a religious phenomenon. Therefore religious leaders are not the only

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individuals that can be useful partners: local social workers, teachers and sports coaches with local street credibility are also important. This is especially true in local partnership policing where it is important to work with people who know the scene and have a good local reputation.

Improve future research

- Future academic and policy research intended to improve understanding of the growth of radicalisation and terrorism must be improved in four ways: it should generate more primary research; apply greater rigour in data analysis especially through the use of more proxy 'control' groups; become more multidisciplinary; and distinguish clearly between questions of ethics ('is this right?') and questions of evidence or efficacy ('is this correct' and 'does this work?').

1 background

Muslim communities in the West

Muslim communities across Western Europe, as with any ethnically, historically, and socially diverse group, are mixed.[11] Muslim immigration to Western Europe is historically broad, spanning from labour-driven immigration after the Second World War, to predominantly political and asylum-driven immigration over the last 20 years. Muslim immigration in Canada is a more recent phenomenon, only beginning in significant numbers from the early 1990s. Due to this, Canada has fewer Muslims than most Western European countries, both in absolute and relative terms. Given current trends, however, this difference is decreasing and Canada is tentatively forecast to reach European-levels within one or two decades.

In general, Canadian Muslims fare better than their Western European counterparts on a number of socio-economic indicators. The little social research in Western Europe that disaggregates populations on the basis of faith suggests Muslims achieve below average educational outcomes, especially attainment and completion rates; and that the differences increase at more advanced stages of education. In stark distinction, Canadian Muslims enjoy consistently above average higher education outcomes, in large part due to Canadian immigration policy.[12]

Occupationally, Muslims are the most disadvantaged faith group in the Western European labour market.[13] Muslims on average experience higher unemployment rates compared to national averages, and more often than not, their occupations are not compatible with their levels and fields of education.[14] In respect of housing and poverty, there is marked clustering of communities that has resulted in the ghettoisation' of some areas, leading to social tensions. Ghettoisation is less pronounced in Canada, although employment trends are similar to Western Europe with the unemployment rate of Canadian Muslims double the national average.

Discrimination, and the perception of discrimination, has been a problem in both Canada and Europe. A number

of polls in Europe suggest the perception of poor inter-religious relations, and sense of threat from the 'other'.[15] In Canada, Muslims (generally) have a positive view of Canada, and non-Muslim Canadians (generally) have a more favourable view of Muslims. Nonetheless, 30 per cent of Muslims in Canada still report unfair experiences resulting from discrimination.[16]

It is important to note the complexity that lies behind these figures. No single facet of identity: class, ethnicity, or religion, itself explains the experience of individuals and communities. Indeed, the differences between ethnic groups are less significant than those between richer and poorer groups.[17] Equally, the experience of specific Muslim communities is as powerfully impacted by their country of origin as it is by their faith.

Why do people radicalise?

Radicalisation is the process by which 'individuals are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views'.[18] Radicalisation that leads to violence remains a particularly problematic subset of this wider phenomenon. As counter terrorism increasingly shifts to preventing the radicalisation that leads to violence, it is important to understand how it relates to other forms of radicalisation. A variety of disciplines, ranging from economics to psychiatry, have been trying to explain what causes radicalisation and how that can lead to violence.[19]

Causes of radicalisation

It is now common to refer to 'permissive' causes, those attributes which do not directly cause radicalisation, but make it more likely to occur.[20] These factors act at three levels; global, state, and socio-cultural. Global factors include geopolitical affairs, foreign policy decisions and military interventions. Many global factors have led to the sense among some Muslims that the West is on a crusade to oppress the Muslim world.[21] At the state level, Muslim communities living in Western democracies share certain experiences, including educational, professional and economic disadvantages. Some scholars suggest that radicalisation emerges among Muslims that fail to integrate culturally and economically, from feelings of marginalisation from state and social structures, and from resulting real and

perceived discrimination.[22] Socio-cultural factors are a complex mixture of characteristics relating to ideology, culture and identity. One popular theory argues that Western Muslims, often second or third generation immigrants, are unable to reconcile their Western identity with their heritage identity, and are constantly managing two sets of norms.[23]

The role that ideology and religion plays in radicalisation is contentious. Some commentators — including prominent Muslims — stress that Islam specifically needs to undergo reform at its roots, because there are passages within the sources of Islam — the Qur'an, Hadith and Shari'ah[24]– which could be interpreted as permitting or commanding terrorism of the kind carried out by al-Qaeda.[25] However, other research has shown that Islamic religiosity can lead individuals to reject and actively discourage violence, often through moral and social sanctions.[26]

From radicalisation to violence
The identification of permissive factors helps to explain why radicalisation might occur, but it does not explain the processes by which some people who experience those factors come to justify violence within this process. There are a number of theories used to explain how radicalisation leads to violence.

The rational choice model argues that terrorism can be 'rationally' selected from a range of tactical options as the one most likely to achieve the aims of the individual or group.[27] Martha Crenshaw argues that, given a failure to mobilise support, terrorism can be the likeliest way to set the political agenda.[28] This model has been useful in dispelling the myth that all terrorism is the expression of mental illness — especially psychopathology. Indeed, recent authoritative demographic studies of terrorists demon-strates that there is no common personality type or developmental trait, nor are there common background conditions.[29]

Stage models attempt to understand the process of radicalisation to violence as a series of discrete stages. The New York Police Department, for example, suggests four distinct and successive phases: pre-radicalisation, self-identification, indoctrination and jihadisation.[30] Moghaddam by contrast uses the metaphor of a staircase, where each floor represents a necessary psychological condition for the next.[31] The literature on stage models encounters two challenges. First, there is no clear consensus on what factors

drive an individual's progression from one stage to the next. Second, many stage models tend to structure radicalisation to violence as a linear progression, while other models suggest a more complex and concurrent interaction of factors and processes at the same time.[32]

Social movement theory, conversely, attempts to integrate social and historical conditions, dynamics of groups and organisations, and their relation to society and personal leadership, membership, ideology into one framework. There have been several powerful implications of social movement theory. For example, it has revealed that people are often drawn into movements for reasons other than those directly related to the aims of the group itself, and that the group can serve to articulate, shape, and emphasise grievance.[33] It has also shown that informal friendship and family networks act alongside, and often interact with formal groups.[34]

The literature discussing the process of radicalisation offers valuable insights into the process, and has helped to dismiss a number of misconceptions. Nonetheless, there remains no grand theory: there is no typical terrorist profile, neither is there a typical journey of radicalisation into violence. There are many different, and sometimes opposing, models offered, to which there are always important exceptions. Most importantly, the current literature overwhelmingly concentrates on the relatively small number of known terrorists, from which most conclusions about profiles, stage models and permissive factors are drawn. In scientific terms, conclusions are based on looking at the outliers, without comparing them to the hundreds of thousands of people who experienced the same permissive factors, came into contact with the same people, read the same books, and had the same background, but radicalised (or not) in a very different way.[35]

The current threat of terrorism and radicalisation

The current threat of terrorism and radicalisation can be broadly gauged by three indicators: the size of the terrorist threat and the prominence of a country in the al-Qaeda narrative; the size and activity of radical or ultra-orthodox groups; and the degree of community support.

In respect of the immediate terror threat in the countries studied, the UK faces the most severe threat. Arrests for al-Qaeda inspired terrorism for 2007/08 included 231 in the UK, 78 arrests in France, four in the Netherlands and three in Denmark in 2008.[36] In Canada, al-Qaeda

inspired terrorism remains the security service's first security priority, and Canada has been identified repeatedly in al-Qaeda propaganda as a legitimate target because of its involvement in Afghanistan.

Authorities are increasingly concerned about the pool of individuals and organisations that might be sympathetic to the goals of terrorists.[37] This includes a growing segment of religious and political groups — including Salafists (Wahhabist), Deobandis, Tablighi Jamaat and Hizb ut-Tahrir — as well as 'political Islamist' organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e-Islami.[38] These groups can be considered both 'radical' in that they seek far-ranging changes to society that are often hostile to core liberal democratic principles, and 'ultra-orthodox' because of the high degree of rigidity in their theological interpretation and their resistance to 'innovations'. The radical, ultra-orthodox element is thought to be between 5 per cent and 15 per cent of the Muslim population in each country in this study.[39]

The relationship between radical groups and individuals, and those who commit terrorist acts is unclear. Broadly speaking, there are two opinions. A number of academics and commentators argue that radical groups — even when non-violent — provide an environment of intolerance that gives the inspiration and tacit support for terrorist activity and serves as a recruiting ground. On the other hand, an equally large number of academics and commentators argue that non-violent radicals provide an important buttress *against* violent action and are best able to stop individuals getting involved in terrorist activity. This argument is difficult to resolve, because it is rarely based on actual evidence. In reality, as this paper argues below, both are taking place simultaneously.

Among the broader population, the greater the community sympathy, the easier it is for conspirators to avoid detection. The extent of this sympathy and what role it actually plays is unclear. Evidence tends to come from national level polling, which can be misleading and hard to interpret. For example, in the UK, surveys have variously depicted that between 2 per cent and 20 per cent of British Muslims held some sympathy with the motives of those who carried out the 7/7 London attacks.[40] It is not clear how large — or important — this group might be.

The policy response
Counter terrorism work is often conceptualised as a four-tier pyramid: at the top (tier 4) are individuals who are actively

seeking to break the law and must be dealt with using an enforcement approach based on disruption; tier 3 includes those who hold or advocate extremist views or are in the process of becoming extreme and must be dealt with using an interventionist approach; tier 2 comprises individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and involves a targeted approach of providing guidance and support; and finally, tier 1 includes the entire community and focuses on ensuring equal access to public services, social and economic integration and preventing discrimination.

An increasingly significant part of counter terrorism work focuses on tiers 1–3, and is known as 'prevention' work. The UK, the Netherlands and Denmark in particular have developed a number of initiatives in this area, although each country has adopted different priorities. For example, the Danish government prioritises employment with regards to integration, especially of women and young people, while Dutch agencies are concerned with the long-term social threat of groups who preach segregation and withdrawal from Dutch society. In the UK, by contrast, although 'preventing violent extremism' covers numerous areas, emphasis is placed on building community resilience and fighting al-Qaeda. A number of lessons can be drawn from these experiences.

First, tier 1 priorities of improving integration and community cohesion are valuable objectives in their own right. Placing them under the context of counter terrorism strategy securitises these issues and can alienate target communities instead of engaging them. Thus, labeling of policy can have implications for effectiveness.

Second, it is inherently difficult to measure the success of 'prevention' work. Measurement tends to focus on process driven indicators (investment, number of people involved, deadlines hit) as opposed to outcome driven (for example, the extent to which people change their views). Constricted public finances in the coming years will make developing methods of measuring effectiveness even more important.

Third, prevention work depends on local partnership, which entails a number of pressures on policy makers, local public servants and those in the community. An inevitable difficulty lies in the need to identify individuals in the process of radicalisation and those vulnerable to its ideology. Community leaders may be uncomfortable and unable to distinguish genuine radicalisation to violence from natural youth rebellion and expression. Those in the community, including councilors, teachers, social workers

and Imams can also resent being asked to 'spy' on individuals. While community level information is crucial in prevention work, valuable projects can be tainted with the perception that they are merely mechanisms to gather intelligence.

Fourth, the messenger is as important as the message. Prevention work must come from independent voices and entails difficult decisions about who are appropriate partners. The majority of Muslims do not see one organisation as representing their interests. Thus, governments can struggle to engage beyond those who shout the loudest into community grassroots. Those with non-violent radical opinions may have the most traction with vulnerable individuals, but there are difficulties and potential long-term consequences working with such individuals and groups. At the same time, a partner's credibility may be undermined if they are perceived to be too close to the Government.

2 findings

This chapter sets out the key findings of the research. In sections one to three terrorists and radicals were compared across a number of characteristics: education; political views; experience of protest and dissent; psychology; religion; ideology; terrorism; and violence. In section four, the journey of radicalisation to violence is re-examined. In section five, the relationship between radicalism and terrorism within the community is explored. Where illustrative, young Muslims are also included in the analysis where it provides further insight.

Terrorists and radicals: personal characteristics

This section compares and contrasts educational, economic and social characteristics of terrorists and radicals. Because of the small sample size, however, these differences are indicative, not statistically significant.

Education and employment

Educational attainment and employment stability differed between the terrorist and radical groups. Radicals were more likely than terrorists to attend university, and less likely to be 'drop outs'.[41] Moreover, in agreement with recent sociological research,[42] terrorists were more likely to hold technical or applied degrees — medicine, applied sciences and, especially, engineering. Radicals, by contrast, were more likely to study arts, humanities and social science. Finally, radicals were slightly more likely to have been in employment than terrorists.[43]

Whether one had an Islamic upbringing did not differ significantly between radicals and terrorists. Few terrorists and radicals had a 'devout' upbringing, more had a 'moderate' Islamic upbringing, and most did not have a religious upbringing at all.[44]

Political views and relationship to the state

Anger at Western foreign policy is frequently used to explain terrorist activity. For terrorists, the extent of this feeling was intense. One example comes from Momin Khawaja, a Canadian citizen found guilty of involvement in the UK fertiliser bomb plot, who wrote in an e-mail, 'when the kuffar amreekans invaded Afghanistan, that was the most painful time in my whole life'.[45]

However, this opposition was not unique to terrorists. Foreign policy was a major and consistent grievance among radicals and young Muslims, where disapproval was nearly unanimous. For the young Muslims in particular, there was great mistrust concerning the objectives of the war in Afghanistan, as one said: 'it is for everything besides what they are telling us... it's the ideology of a Muslim they don't want'.[46]

Experience of protest

While all groups shared frustrations, terrorists often refused to engage in the political process or even peaceful protest. Conversely, many radicals channeled their energy through community or political work. Radicals were more likely to have been involved in political protest — well over a third compared with under a quarter of terrorists. For example one radical volunteered at a local correctional facility, counselling inmates[47] and another travelled to Afghanistan to set up various community programmes, to 'contribute in the way that I can'.[48] One even went to Iraq to repel the coalition forces' shock and awe offensive in 2003 as a human shield.[49]

Discrimination and the West

Perceptions of discrimination, either personal or against Muslims generally, is frequently viewed as a permissive cause of terrorism.[50] Many Canadian and European terrorists cited this as a reason for action.[51] But feelings of discrimination did not set terrorists apart. Discrimination was also prevalent among our sample of young Muslims, although to a lesser degree. Most felt that, post 9/11, suspicion and distrust of Muslims had increased. One young Muslim claimed to havebeen unfairly dismissed from his job, while a number had experience of facing barriers in employment.[52]

Identity and psychology

The 'dual identity' theory argues that second or third generation Muslims in the West are unable to identify with either their national or ethnic identity, and find comfort in the simplicity of extremist ideology.[53] Some element of an identity crisis did appear common among terrorists. Several experienced a religious awakening following a period of hedonism, partying and drinking.[54] However, radicals, as well as many young Muslims, shared the exploration of one's identity. During accounts of their journey towards adulthood, the majority of radicals emphasised the struggle in reconciling their Islamic heritage with the mainstream society they live in. In this context, they recognised that religion provides 'clear' answers, structures and rules to follow.[55] A number of radicals did not have a strong religious upbringing and reported turning to a fairly devout — but peaceful — Islam during a period of contemplation.[56]

Attitudes about the West

Radicals and many young Muslims were almost unanimously critical of particular government policy (especially foreign policy), the media and security related measures. However, they were able to balance these views with a genuine affection for Western society and its values. Terrorists, on the contrary, displayed a hatred for Western society and culture, which was often mirrored by admiration for an idealised Sharia-compliant society. Radicals and young Muslims did not — especially if they had spent time in a Muslim majority country.[57]

Ideology and religion

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

Critical thinking and learning

Although radicals did sometimes accuse the terrorists of 'not even knowing Islam',[58] they more frequently described them as 'warped',[59] following a 'shallow and baseless',[60] 'do it yourself'[61] or 'pamphlet' version of Islam.[62] However, this did not mean terrorists were less devout or that religion was

unimportant — they themselves would almost certainly dispute this account.

Radicals, on the contrary, appeared to recognise their own ignorance, had a better appreciation of nuance and stressed the importance of context, reflection and learning. Radicals and the majority of young Muslims both spoke about the importance of learning to overcome one's own lack of knowledge, drawing on the importance the Prophet Mohammed placed on reflection.[63] One radical quoted the Qur'anic verse: 'Seek learning, even if it is in China.'[64] Unsurprisingly therefore radicals and the majority of young Muslims emphasised the importance of context, particularly in references to interpreting certain Qur'anic texts, especially the so-called 'blood verses', which speak specifically of war, including the oft-quoted 'slay the idolaters wherever you find them' (Surah 9, ayat 5).[65]

Ideology and ideas

Even if radicals did not believe that terrorists are devout, terrorists themselves believed they were, and were keen to demonstrate that devotion to others. While one fairly common theme among all cells in which terrorists have been found was some engagement with Salafist or Wahabbist inspired ideology, more significant was their attitudes to specific theological concepts: a) a rejection of Western society, rules and norms, which leads to supremacism and an exclusionary, discriminatory approach to non-Muslims, expressed in the concepts of takfir and kuffar; and b) the notion that religion sanctions and sometimes even obligates a violent response in the face of current events, expressed in the idea that violent jihad is 'fard al ayn' (see annex for short definitions).

As a result, the centrality of takfir and kuffar has often been viewed as a dangerous idea. However, many radicals and young Muslims agreed that non-Muslims can be described as 'kuffar'. The term itself is probably less helpful than particular interpretations of it. What distinguished terrorists from radicals was not accepting or rejecting the idea of labelling non-Muslims as kuffar *per se*, but whether it became a way to de-humanise non-Muslims. Dehumanisation is an important psychological strategy to side-step these innate moral guidelines and can flip an individual from a 'person' to a 'non-person'.[66] This can be illustrated by the fact that the extreme interpretation of takfir and kuffar becomes an excuse for action. Even at an early stage, this indicates that the 'higher duty' of jihad frees

one from the constraints of man-made laws and its enforcers.

All of the cells in this study in which terrorists are found tried to find religious justification for their action. Surprisingly, this was sometimes time-consuming and difficult, involving arguments and disagreements among individuals. In a typical example, one member of the Vollsmose cell desperately sought religious justification for an attack in Denmark: emailing many sources, ultimately unsuccessfully.[67] The source had to be sound — he was disappointed that the legitimisation he received was 'from the heart' and not from the Qur'an.[68] The difficulty of attaining such sanctioning is an important brake on action — and an important tool to prevent terrorism.

Caliphate and Sharia law

Two specific ideas are often associated with radicalisation to violence: the caliphate and Sharia law. The re-creation of an Islamic caliphate, or imposition of a caliphate in Europe, and the application of strict Sharia law is often at the heart of terrorist ideology and is a key element of al-Qaeda ideology.

However, among radicals, both of these concepts were popular. The caliphate was viewed as something of an un-realisable dream, completely impracticable, but something to aspire to, a matter of 'nostalgia' for Muslims.[69] Indeed, knowledge about what it means in detail was often extremely limited.[70] Likewise, Sharia law was popular across all groups,[71] seen as a beautiful concept, which was misunderstood, driven by a negative media depiction.[72]

Scholars and texts

Terrorists typically drew on a narrow band of thinkers, and four names frequently appear: Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammed Ibn Wahhab and Abdullah Azzam. However, the vast majority of radicals in the sample were also familiar with these writers, with two important differences. Radicals shared an interest in the respected 'scholars' of Islam such as Ibn Taymiyya or early political Islamists such as Sayyid Qutb, but not in more militant jihadi thinkers such as Azzam, who make direct calls to action in reference to today's circumstances, for which there is little scope for interpretation. Second, radicals recognised the importance of the context in which the authors found themselves at the time of writing. For example, many radicals acknowledged that Qutb's writings contained harsh ideas, but interpreted

these as a response to Qutb's imprisonment and torture.[73] Radicals also distinguished themselves from terrorists as they drew on a broader range of scholars.[74]

Attitudes about terrorism
A simple distinction between what terrorists, radicals and even young Muslims think about terrorism is not possible.

Jihad in the West
For terrorists, the common justification for undertaking jihad in the West revolved around the idea that Islam and the Ummah, the world's Muslim community, are under attack and must be defended.[75] Terrorists considered it to be a religious obligation to use violence in what they argue is a defensive and reactive undertaking.

　　None of the radicals or young Muslims admitted to believing that violent jihad in the West is religiously obliga-tory, acceptable or permitted. It was consistently rejected using the following arguments (in order of popularity):

• 'A contract or a 'covenant' has considerable weight in Islam, and must be respected.' This argument was seen as having considerable effectiveness.[76] As one radical put it: 'The Qur'an is very clear. They tell you when you go to a foreign country which is not your country, the law of the land apply [sic] to you.'[77]
• 'Islam does not permit the killing of innocent civilians.' The risk of accidentally killing innocent civilians, Muslim or otherwise, is too great.[78] As one put it, 'you can't just go into a shopping mall (even in America) and destroy it, and say it is Jihad'.[79] This can act as a bar on those who are not personally opposed to violence, as one pointed out: 'When the time comes for fighting, we will fight of course but we are not going to be the ones to make the first move, because we are not allowed, you understand?'[80]
• 'Violent jihad does not help the advancement of Islam.' The idea that violent jihad does not advance the cause of Islam held considerable weight within the Muslim community, although it should be viewed as a defence against violence in addition to, not instead of, other arguments.[81] As one said, 'what benefit would there be if I go an kill someone?'[82]

　　Throughout our interviews, Qur'anic verses and Hadiths were cited as providing 'catchy messages' which reject violence. The two most popular were: 'in war, we are

not even allowed to chop down a tree;' and 'Mohammed said if one person calls another a kafir, then surely one of them is.' As research consistently shows, messages which 'stick' need to be simple and human.

Jihad in the East

Although radicals did not defend jihad in the West, their views about the legitimacy of undertaking 'defensive' jihad overseas were more complex.

For radicals and young Muslims, the idea of jihad was often primarily seen as a peaceful idea– a striving or inner struggle. A number of young Muslims referred to the personal struggle of living in Western society and avoiding its temptations as being one's internal jihad, particularly avoiding drinking. Nonetheless, most agreed that there are several jihads, including violent, which are sometimes justified. Many found the idea of Islam being *only* and *exclusively* pacific to be one-dimensional. The majority thought that violent jihad in defence of one's land, property, religion or family is no different from any other 'just war': when you are under attack, you fight back — often drawing comparisons with the French resistance in the Second World War.[83] Thus defensive jihad was commonly framed as a matter of fairness — usually with no reference to religion whatsoever.[84] The only difference was 'we call it jihad', but anyone in the same situation would do it.[85] As such, the majority of radicals and young Muslims supported — in principle — the idea of Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan fighting to defend their country.

West meets East

The legitimacy of *Western* Muslims going to Muslim majority countries to fight to 'defend Islam' was more complicated. While not encouraged, there was some support for the *motives* of individuals who do — it is widely considered a legitimate thing to do and so cannot easily be denounced. Those who went to these countries to fight were often described as young men wanting to do something good, but channeling their energies in the wrong direction. Some interviewees didn't even describe people who fight in Iraq or Afghanistan as traitors, or even extremists, but rather people who deserve some admiration for having courageously left their easy life to fight for justice.[86]

The research suggests therefore that Islam was not viewed by radicals or the majority of young Muslims as a

pacifist religion, but rather based in part on 'justified violence', where violence must be conducted according to Islamic law and jurisprudential thinking, and is subject to strict rules and conditions that govern when, where and how it is used. This is a better way to frame distinctions between terrorists and radicals.

The journey of radicalisation into violence

There is no single, predictable path to terrorism. The reality is that everyone has different personality traits — faced with the same stimuli, two people react differently.[87] As such, it is useful to analyse what factors or conditions make terrorist activity more appealing as a solution vis-à-vis alternatives.

Five elements are often overlooked, but which suggest that a significant part of the phenomenon shares much in common with other extremist or youth movements:

• emotional 'pull' to act in the face of injustice
• thrill, adventure and coolness
• status and internal code of honour
• peer pressure
• the lack of alternative sources of information

The process of accepting radical or violent ideas is akin to other social epidemics in that the influence of one's peer group is critical. Radicalisation depends on how far one's peers accept such ideas and the extent to which they are seen as worthy of imitation. The unfortunate reality is that characteristics of modern day terrorists — rebellious, impulsive, and risk taking — means the idea of the al-Qaeda terrorist can be appealing to some young people.

Emotional pull

For many people violent jihad is about emotion — not intellect or reasoning. As one radical pointed out: 'some people, they don't take the time to study it; they don't want to listen to anybody because they are emotional...''[88] Three common features illustrate the emotional pull: the relative lack of Islamic knowledge most home-grown terrorists possessed; the significance of vitriolic and engaging narratives based on the notion of Muslims under attack all around the world, by evil, scheming Western interests; and the ubiquity of action movie style jihadi videos, the gorier the better.[89]

Adventure and being cool

A number of home-grown terrorists within the sample group found the idea of violent jihad attractive for non-religious reasons: because they believed it to be cool and exciting. The dangerous, exciting and counter-cultural element is an increasingly important part of al-Qaeda's appeal.

This aspect is often overlooked but can be demonstrated by examining how violent jihad was marketed to those who might be vulnerable to recruitment and the way it is discussed. Terrorist training camps are strikingly similar to other adventure activities that attract young people (especially those interested in guns). One radical told us for example that someone tried to recruit him by telling him they were off 'to the forest with a 9mm to fire off a couple of shots'.[90] Similarly a Parisian sermon from 2002 read: '*Le Jihad, c'est mieux que les vacances à Los Angeles. C'est l'aventure. On mange, on découvre le paysage. En plus, on aide nos frères.*'[91] Indeed some individuals were attracted by other radicals' stories of excitement, exotic landscape and guns, with very little religious engagement at all.[92]

Status

Anthropological and social psychological research shows that groups of (especially) young men have informal 'codes of honour' and internalised rules by which they operate. These codes of honour are often connected to disengagement: individuals who do not fit in socially often adopt a strategy of disengagement, and develop subcultures that provide an alternative route to self-esteem.[93] In studies of street gangs, for example, it has been argued that when young men cannot take pride 'in a prestigious job, nice house… their reputation on the street is their only claim to status'.[94]

Cells in which terrorists are found are no exception. In every cell studied, an internal code of honour existed, in which status appeared to accrue to those demonstrating defiant or violent tendencies and language: the more radical, the higher the standing in the group. Appearance and personal experience were as important as formal religious knowledge. Previous conflict experience abroad, or the perception of 'battle hardiness', including the charisma and gravitas derived from such experiences, were particularly important. The typical leader was often slightly older, always charismatic and with a smattering of Arabic.[95] As evidence of this dynamic, Danish intelligence officers have observed that undertaking preventative talks with target individuals

can have the unintended effect of increasing their status and credibility within the radical milieu — almost as a rite of passage.[96]

Peer pressure

How words and outward shows of bravado turn into a willingness to act remains the most difficult question. Lessons from other disciplines are again useful here. In psychology literature it is well established that in-group competition can be important in pushing members of the group towards more extreme positions (in a variety of non-religious settings). This is known as 'group extremity shift' or 'group polarisation', where discussions within a group lead to an enhancement of an initially dominant position.[97]

The power of peer pressure in such settings is considerable. In groups where status is tied to being radical, individuals will compete and there is a risk of spiralling into one-upmanship. In-group competition to be the most radical led the Weather Underground to terrorism.[98] This is common in all social movements, particularly radical ones, which often split internally between 'do-ers' and 'talkers'. McCauley and Moskalenko, in a broad study of terrorism, call this 'fissioning': when tensions among group members lead to splintering of groups, the newly emerged groups will often take radical action against former allies to establish their new group norms as superior.[99]

This dynamic is also visible in cells reviewed in this research. Many cells referred to Muslims who complain of 'yoghurt' Muslims who are only Muslims in name, but do not take action while bad things happen to other Muslims.[100] Others boasted about the likely impact of their planned attacks to each other, comparing them to other attacks, their language becoming markedly more violent over time. Some cells even split, each side accusing the other of lacking the guts to actually act.

Alternatives

Radicalisation to violence involves a lack of alternatives that could have acted as a diversion. Many of the radicals inter-viewed admitted toying with the idea of violence at one point in their lives, but explained why they ultimately did not resort to it: most significant were the importance of having good role models when growing up,[101] family members with religious knowledge,[102] access to lots of texts,[103] coming into

contact with Sufi ideas,[104] and hearing internationally renowned scholars speak at conferences.[105]

Terrorism in the community

One of the most difficult questions for security services and other agencies is the relationship between radicalism or extremism in the community at large and terrorist activity. Does the latter spring from the former? This section focuses primarily on Canada, but offers a useful insight into the dynamics at the community level.

There was little evidence among the data analysed to suggest that people advocating violence were anything more than a very small minority. It is also noted that many of those described as violent were not seen as a particular threat to the Canadian — or even the US — mainland, as they aspired towards violent action in Muslim majority countries overseas.

Interviewees were divided over the prevalence and trajectory of different types of radicalisation within Muslim communities (and therefore over whether or not it was problematic).[106] Most agreed that there was some degree of radicalism within their own community. However, inter-viewees generally thought that radical views were a healthy and natural part of airing issues and allowing people to make informed decisions. A number of young Muslims were questioning and debating controversial areas within their religion and society, including suicide bombing and jihad.[107] This is neither unusual nor surprising given the amount of attention the subject receives in the media. As one radical noted, 'you don't need to reject your faith or jihad... you need people who will discuss the real issues of jihad'.[108]

Visibility

The crucial point is how far, and in what ways, people considering violence do brush up against other, non-violent elements in society, because this can offer new intervention points to prevent it. Interviewees observed that people con-sidering violence existed on the fringes of the community, partly because of their unwillingness to participate in organised groups or institutions, and also because they wanted to avoid detection.[109] One radical tried to speak to young men he thought might be considering violence, but they were not always welcoming: 'I've told them... "my centre door is open, let's step outside"... They don't come over... because their mentalities are already gangster, most of them to begin with.'[110]

However, this does not mean that people who might be considering violence were invisible or unknown to people in the community. Indeed, while they might be secretive and keep a low profile, they do nonetheless talk. As one radical noted, 'I may have come across them, I may have overheard them, they may have dropped hints, but they are very secretive.'[111] It appears that, given the credibility and status attached to violent activity among some sectors of the community, individuals are tempted to let people know about their activities and beliefs, partly because it is a route to acquiring status. One radical told us, 'the fact the people are in that mentality maybe open their mouths a little bit too much, and it makes it back to me'.[112]

Moral oxygen or moral policing?

A vital question is whether or not community level dynamics help create conditions that allow terrorism to emerge ('moral oxygen'), or prevent it ('moral policing'). It appears that both happen simultaneously.

Radicals reported a significant amount of direct, active contact with potentially violent individuals in a counselling or leadership role, displaying a willingness to discuss ideas and also to challenge them. Radicals and community leaders reported a high level of knowledge about what was occurring within their immediate vicinity, and having access to 'their own' intelligence. Interviewees described a process of active discouragement of individuals who are displaying violent tendencies:

A person came to me... and said 'I want to go to Jihad'. I looked at him and said, 'why?' He said 'to give life for'. I said 'We need [a]live people here... listen to me... You are wanting to contribute something to Islam? We need a person to help us out in the mosque![113]

There was some evidence that a proportion of young, potentially violent extremists are willing and able to listen to other opinions and information, if they come from a respected figure in the community. Two radicals had personally counseled young people against fighting overseas, while a number of others had debated or argued with individuals promoting violent action. As one radical interviewee reported, 'people come to you and say "I'm thinking of doing something, going overseas and protecting our people, brothers and sisters, fellow Muslims"'.[114] Some success has been achieved by using arguments based

around recognising young people's desire to contribute but trying to channel that through non-violent means:

[When they say they want to go and fight] I met a few guys like this, I'm not sure I convinced them, but you know I tell them 'you are here, you are in a better position to serve Islam than if you go there... Other thing you have vote, you vote. You can send to the newspaper a letter. You can go for rallies'.[115]

Interviewees further noted a community desire to report on those whose behaviour or views appear dangerous: 'If I would know that somebody in my community doesn't like Canada, talks bad about Canada or wants to harm Canada in any way, I'll be [the first] one to report that person.'[116] Young Muslims suggested Imams considered extreme would also risk being ejected by the community.[117]

It is important to note that for some people, the threat of being watched and the consequences did contribute to self-policing. As one radical pointed out (about Hizb ut-Tahrir), 'if someone like that shows up at your event, then you know for sure heat's gonna be on you, the light's gonna be on you, so [you] don't want that'.[118]

However, community policing is not a panacea. One interviewee noted that there was 'a lot of denial' within the Muslim community, and that some leaders have 'no idea' about the al-Qaeda ideology or what it means.[119] Other interviewees felt that some Imams have created a culture conducive to supporting or sympathising with violence, preaching vitriolic (and sometimes inaccurate) sermons. This sense of tacit support was also observed within the broader community, which again provides a moral infrastructure — even if indirectly, for individuals who turn violent:

So on the passive Islamist stream you have all these non violent things but still enough fervour, there is so much fervour in that activity because it is ongoing, it's daily, they are teaching it, they are learning it, promulgating it, so this will give a foundation for a person to either step over the line.[120]

Given that many radicals sympathised with the motives of Muslim Canadians wanting to travel overseas to fight — although without necessarily supporting or encouraging them to do so — this may help to create the group dynamics that can encourage some to take it a step further, by promoting the idea that fighting to defend one's faith is a noble thing to do.[121]

3 recommendations

There are no easy solutions when dealing with radicalisation to violence and it cannot be solved through any mechanistic policy response.[122] Three principles need to be applied to help prevent al-Qaeda inspired terrorism.

First, al-Qaeda inspired terrorism in the West shares much in common with other counter-cultural, subversive groups of predominantly angry young men. Being radical and rebelling against the received values of the status quo is an important part of being young. Ways must be found to ensure young people can be radical, dissenting, make a difference, but which do not have serious or violent consequences.

Second, the best way to fight radical ideas is with a liberal attitude to dissent, radicalism and disagreement. This can de-mystify and de-glamourise terrorism without alienating large numbers of people. However — a liberal approach depends on independent voices setting out forceful counter-arguments against extremist ideas.

Third, humans are complicated. Human behaviour is, and always has been, unpredictable, and non-linear. Two people faced with the same situation react differently, and radicalisation to violence is no different. There is an exception to every rule about terrorist profiles, indicators of a threat, or characteristics of people vulnerable to recruitment. The threat of violent radicalisation can never be 'solved' or completely neutralised; it can only be managed. Governments must focus on the things it can realistically change, while the lead role must be played by society — individuals, groups, organisations and communities.

The following recommendations aim to inform difficult policy decisions for all agencies involved in counter terrorism work. They are applicable to a range of security, government, and non-government agencies across Europe and North America.

Distinguish radical from violent

Governments should distinguish between radicalisation that leads to violence and radicalisation that does not; they should be dealt with distinctly and accordingly

Assuming that radical views such as those noted above constitute the base of the terrorist pyramid can lead to security responses against people who object entirely to al-Qaeda's methods.[123] It is possible for people to read or have read radical texts, be strongly and vocally opposed to Western foreign policy, believe in Sharia law, hope for the restoration of the Caliphate, and even support the principle of Afghan and Iraqi Muslims fighting allied troops, while being extremely vocal in denouncing al-Qaeda inspired terrorism in the Western countries. These people can be important allies.

Radicalisation that does not lead to violence could be a positive thing, for example, if it leads people to become engaged in political and community activity. Political and social activism should be encouraged albeit within certain democratic and pluralist parameters. However, not all forms of radicalisation are positive — some may represent a social threat if their message involves intolerance or even a long-term threat to the democratic order. But they should be tackled as social problems, not as a 'subset' of the al-Qaeda threat.

Look for signs of violent radicalisation

There are a number of 'non-religious' behaviours and attitudes that indicate a shift towards violence. This could include aggressive conflict with existing mosque authorities about the legitimacy of violence, or an interest in literature about what one can or cannot do to 'kuffar'. These are signs that are potentially useful for community members, community leaders, public servants and local police agencies who are involved in preventing radicalisation to violence.

De-mystify and de-glamourise al-Qaeda

The idea of al-Qaeda is as important as the ideas it propagates. At least some of the appeal of terrorist activity is the notoriety, glamour and status that it brings. Removing this glamour is a key element of the battle of ideas. Young Muslims — like any other young people — will be drawn to radical ideas, radical books and radical thinkers. They will argue about them, and discuss them. Banning them often

merely adds to the appeal and does not prevent their circulation. Openness is a more potent weapon. It is extremely difficult for the government to play a lead role in this area. These recommendations are primarily aimed at non-government organisations and individuals.

The concepts of jihad, terrorism and radicalisation can be demystified through a series of open, local level debates
The issues of jihad and terrorism are frequently in the media. Muslims, like everyone, are going to discuss them. It is better to have them out in the open where voices and ideas can compete with each other, forcing the more extreme to justify their stances. Some of the most successful programmes in the UK focus on encouraging debate within communities, particularly among young people, with a concern for developing their ability to be critical of and challenge extremist arguments. An important element of their success is that they are led by those participating, and not dictated by security agencies.[124]

A liberal approach to debate and freedom of speech also relies on forceful counter arguments against extremism ideas, including from Muslim communities and individuals
While there should be a preference in favour of freedom of speech, some radical preaching that incites violence or hatred against others on the basis of religion or race is both a security and social threat and should be met with a judicial response. Western governments already have legislative powers to do this, and they must be applied.

However, silencing radical views must be considered as a last option because banning radical voices will neither prove effective nor lessen their appeal in the long-term. Instead, government and non-government agencies — including Muslims — must set out counter arguments as to why particular radical or extremist ideas are wrong.

Governments must keep their messaging about what constitutes 'good' or 'bad' Islam to a minimum
Governments will, inevitably, talk about al-Qaeda inspired terrorism and Islam. Where they do, communications should reflect the community's messaging about al-Qaeda inspired terrorism and Islam. Islamic terrorists are better described as criminals than as operatives, using a 'cut and paste Islam', 'pamphlet Islam' or 'do it yourself Islam'. The dominant

message from Western governments at present is that al-Qaeda inspired terrorism is encouraged by a warped reading of Islam, which is at core a peaceful religion. However, a message with more purchase among Muslims — is to say that Islam, like all religions, has peaceful and violent elements. But Islam has very clear rules about the use of violence, which is called for under certain, very carefully defined conditions, and should be applied in a just, fair and appropriate manner.

Communications to help strip the glamour and mystique
Messaging, from a range of organisations, should stress that most al-Qaeda-inspired terrorists are in fact incompetent, narcissistic, irreligious. In addition, satire has long been recognised as a powerful tool to undermine the popularity of social movements: both the Ku Klux Klan and the British Fascist party in the 1930s were seriously harmed by sustained satire. Of course, governments cannot be seen to satirise terrorist movements, but can offer support and information to those who might. This aspect therefore needs to come from non-government organisations and agencies.

Imams should be required to attain mandatory language proficiency to help ensure young people have access to a wide range of information and sources
It is impossible for the government to stop the flood of books, pamphlets and ideas via the Internet. A far better approach is to allow ideas to be aired, discussed and debated openly. To help do this, all new and existing Imams should be required to pass a national language proficiency test, and offered language training through existing educational institutions. These types of initiatives are already being created and implemented by some local communities themselves.[125]

Invest in new types of prevention work
Preventing individuals from becoming involved in or supportive of al-Qaeda inspired terrorism must remain a priority for Western governments. However, prevention work must avoid 'mission drift'. At present, prevention work covers a wide range of policy initiatives, including: targeted interventions for those deemed radicalised, challenging the violent ideology, supporting vulnerable young people, building community resilience to extremist ideology, and

even addressing various grievances. Prevention work should become more focused.

Prevention work should focus on targeted interventions where there is a clear, identified danger of groups or individuals undergoing radicalisation to violence
The primary focus of prevention work should be on targeted interventions in conjunction with community partners where there is a clear, identified danger of groups or individuals undergoing radicalisation *to violence*, and not seek to address other very broad, permissive factors that can feed many different types of radicalisation. Including social issues within an anti-terrorism agenda risks perpetuating the perception that radicalisation to violence is only a concern within Muslim communities, and not others. It also risks isolating Muslim communities and stigmatising social policy.

Broad social policy interventions should be employed to tackle underlying factors: these should not become part of a security agenda and should be clearly separated from police and intelligence work
Some Western Muslims, including Canadians, face economic and social difficulties, poor life chances, poor education and professional attainment, and challenges relating to integration and social cohesion. There is little evidence that these factors directly contribute to radicalisation to violence. Islamicising and securitising what are essentially social or economic issues can be divisive and unhelpful. Tackling these issues is a matter for social policy, not a tool to prevent radicalisation, and it is on this basis alone that social policy interventions should be conceived, explained and measured.

Most countries already undertake numerous interventions that contribute to prevention policy goals. Because prevention work covers so many areas of social policy, there is danger of replication of work and lack of coordination. Given wide variation, prevention work should be audited by one coordinating government body.

Prevention initiatives should adopt a 'multi-component' approach imported from successful counter-gang techniques.
Radicalisation to violence shares common ground, at least for some individuals, with gangster lifestyles, both in the nature of group or gang recruitment, and in inter- and intra-

group dynamics. Given this overlap, prevention-related activities must learn from successful gang-related techniques. There should be a formalisation of cooperation between prevention and counter-gang professionals on multiple levels: from mixed-personnel working units, to joint planning exercises, joint policy-planning seminars, and joint rehabilitation and anti-recidivism programmes in prison to senior staff transfer, collaboration and strategic planning.

The lessons from different gang intervention programmes are valuable for prevention work. For example, interventions that are purely curriculum-based (such as lectures on the dangers of gang membership) typically yield only short-term and modest change, as do pure suppression programmes (judicial responses, heavy surveillance, tough prosecution), such as Wisconsin's Proactive Gang Resistance Enforcement, Suppression and Supervision (PROGRESS). They only serve to displace gang activity.[126] Multi-component programmes that combine heightened policing and harsher judicial punishments with opportunities for a way out of gang life have demonstrated long-term success, especially when accompanied by all-community involvement from the police, social support services, charities, youth groups, local churches, parents' organisations, rehabilitation centres and schools.[127] 'Push' and 'pull' factors, combined with rigorous theological refutation of violent ideology, have already been used with some success in de-radicalisation programmes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.[128]

Governments and non-governmental organisations should create and encourage programmes that offer exciting alternatives, eg through partnerships with international charities or a programme similar to the US Peace Corps programme

There need to be more radical and daring ways to engage young people. For example, schemes that allow young Western Muslims to volunteer in those countries they are most concerned about, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, could be considered. Opportunities to travel and volunteer abroad can channel energy and a concern for others, and also take the glamour out of the al-Qaeda narrative, increasing appreciation of Western citizens for the rights granted in their own countries.

Choose a diversity of working partners

Western governments seek to build relationships with Muslim communities through partnerships. The decision about who to work with is often portrayed as a choice between 'moderates' (who are easy to work with) and 'extremists' (who have more credibility). Each of these views is open to challenge by media, commentators, public intellectuals and the Muslim community itself, often for different reasons.[129]

This is a false dichotomy. In different contexts and settings, different partners are useful: in local communities where face-to-face interaction takes place, personalities, local street credibility and local knowledge are vitally important. However, at a national level, the promotion of tolerance and diversity are more important considerations.

Wide engagement

Many individuals who claim to speak 'on behalf' of others do not. One scholar has recently noted that Canadian Muslim communities are undergoing a change in their perceptions of authority and representation.[130] The same can be said in Europe. It is therefore important to try and speak to those beyond the usual suspects. Engagement should always be as wide as possible, covering as many schools of thought as possible, and should make a special effort to include women. A recent report suggests that Muslim women are an undervalued group within counter-terrorism.[131] Many have the knowledge and skills to communicate and work with the most marginalised members of communities, and may be able to connect with women who are already supporters or potential perpetrators of extremist violence — something that was prominent in at least two of the cells studied.

Security and/or police agencies should work with radicals or extremists in certain local instances where there is a clear tactical benefit, such as when an individual believes that religiously sanctioned violence is obligatory

Police ought to form 'tactical partnerships' with radicals when useful, but such engagement should not evolve into a 'permanent strategy'.[132] This is especially true in local partnership policing where it is important to work with people who know the scene. For instance, some individuals who are considering that violent jihad is a religious obligation might respond well to the religious guidance of a well-respected Salafist scholar. Psychology literature has

demonstrated that different messengers can yield different results: people are more influenced by an argument made by a fellow group member than the same argument made by an out-group member.[133]

Security and/or police agencies must encourage community self-policing and information sharing alongside traditional covert operations

'Community self-policing' describes the action taken by communities themselves to spot radicalisation to violence and take measures to stop it. It is vital because key behaviours and indicators are most visible at the local community level, and those within the community, not the police, have considerable leverage to challenge violent ideologies and provide information to security services. The research also suggests there is a lot of potential for sharing of information, particularly as communities become more knowledgeable about the threat. Police and/or security services must seek to work with members of the community with a history of working in this area (not necessarily those in official leadership positions) as equal and trusted partners who can provide important information and advice, not as informers.[134] As partners, they should also be given access to information about the threat of al-Qaeda inspired terrorism to help communities be more aware of what is taking place.

Partnership policing might entail working with people who have real traction among young people within a community — those who can access others considering violence, which could mean those who come from sections of the community regularly described as extremist, fundamentalist and subversive, and who might hold views about terrorism overseas that are unacceptable — while vigorously denouncing terrorism in the West. These individuals can be important allies.[135] Some individuals or groups will be beyond the pale of effective partnership working, because of their particularly virulent ideology or their untrustworthiness. There are potential allies among radicals who denounce terrorism at home, but support the principle of violent Jihad overseas as a natural extension of just war theory. Nonetheless, individuals who travel overseas to actually take part in military operations will, and should, remain of concern to security services because of the potential skills, training, contacts and credibility they could bring back with them.

Governments must work with non-religious leaders
Radicalisation to violence is not purely a religious phenomenon. Therefore religious leaders are not the only individuals who can be useful partners. Local social workers, teachers or sports coaches with local street credibility are also important. At the local level, a person's school of thought is less important than their style, street knowledge and credibility. Governments could work with reformed former jihadists to de-radicalise others at risk. People who have been involved in crime, for example, former street gang members, can also be employed.

The importance of transparency
All governments are in a difficult position. By trying to disseminate information about their positive work they risk fuelling the very conspiracy theories they seek to debunk. The best way to counter mistrust and misperceptions is not through government led campaigns, but through increased transparency, which allows people to reach their own conclusions and can help positive ideas spread through networks. It is through word of mouth that (often inaccurate) ideas about security policy spread, and it is difficult for government to counter such views even when they are demonstrably false. Rumours must be countered through networks and word of mouth, rather than government information campaigns.

There must be a policy of 'maximum disclosure' for known cases and issues of controversy.
Of course in many instances transparency and openness about sources of intelligence is not possible for security reasons. However, there are some useful examples, which can be applied elsewhere. In Denmark, for example, intelligence agencies publish an unclassified assessment of their judgement of the threats facing the country. In Northern Ireland, the policy of 'maximum disclosure' of providing families with everything known about killings during The Troubles — even if the police could not convict a suspect — could be employed in respect of terrorism cases. Sharing such information with trusted community leaders would help encourage independent voices at the local level who can counter false claims about police or security work.

Improve future research

Counter-terrorism research has become a cottage industry: there is at least one book about terrorism published every six hours.[136] This vast output obscures major weaknesses, as 'it exists on a diet of fast-food research: quick, cheap, ready-to-hand and nutritionally dubious... while the field may appear to be relatively active and energetic, growth in key areas remains stunted and halting'.[137] There are four major weaknesses which should be addressed by the research community and should inform the criteria for government-sponsored research.

Research on terrorism must produce more primary data

The first, and most obvious, problem with research in terrorism studies is that remarkably few of the contributions offer any new primary evidence or data, relying instead on secondary sources. The majority of studies are 'glorified literature reviews', with 80 per cent of research based solely or primarily on already published material.[138] Furthermore, the nature of terrorism and those committing terrorist acts is changing quickly. Focusing not only on terrorists themselves, but also on wider communities provides for targeted research: people who had contact with terrorists, people who were members of the same community or mosque, and people who have seriously contemplated violent extremism.

Research on terrorism must analyse the data more rigorously, especially through the use of more proxy 'control' groups and grounded theory

Where primary research is undertaken, it is characterised by a lack of rigour in analysis; there is a heavy reliance on journalistic approaches, often using anecdotes to prove theories, which lack the validity and reliability generally expected within mainstream social science research.[139] Only 10 per cent of articles published in the core terrorism journals post 9/11 have relied on inferential statistical analysis, where data are not organised and deployed descriptively to support a thesis, but patterns are interpreted, with a control element, in the statistics themselves.[140] Core terrorism studies research must introduce more sophisticated techniques of data analysis.

Research on terrorism must be more multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary

Core terrorism studies do not borrow sufficiently from methodologies and approaches from other disciplines related to violence and terrorism.[141] Terrorism and radicalisation are social phenomena, the products of social, cultural and political forces. There are many disciplines — from sociology to psychology, economics, international relations, organisation theory, theology and philosophy — that can be deployed in understanding them. More disciplines must be exploited in understanding terrorism, and there should be more collaboration of disciplines in research.

Research on terrorism must question its underlying political–normative biases

Terrorism studies have been charged with being 'counterinsurgency masquerading as political science'.[142] A consequence is that academic scholarship is often composed within a paradigm that points naturally toward the eradication of terrorists, if not radicals more widely. It is important to divorce moral sentiments about whether terrorists and radicals are *right* or *wrong* from the analysis of the mechanisms of the phenomenon of radicalisation itself. Moral questions of, say, engagement with radicals are important, but should be explicitly recognised as moral dilemmas that are distinct from the question of what actually works. It may not be morally acceptable to deploy methods that are known to be effective to counter radicalisation; these are two separate matters that should be treated as such.

Terrorism is not a distant matter of historical record, but deeply shapes the daily world in which we, the researchers, also live. Researchers must be circumspect, self-aware and explicit about the political–normative biases that inevitably underpin their interpretation.

annex 1 research methodology

Aims of the project
The original stated aims of the projects were to:

- identify the factors that drive violent and non-violent mobilisation in Muslim communities across five countries (Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the UK)
- investigate the differences and similarities in characteristics and attitudes between terrorists and radicals
- investigate the scale and nature of interactions between these groups
- investigate the differences and similarities in the norms, attitudes and legitimisation of terrorists and radicals towards violence and various aspects of extremist ideology
- set out the relevance of our findings for public policy

Data collection
We collected a great deal of data from many different sources. For simplicity, we have categorised our data as coming from two broad sources: archival research and field research.

Archival data
The archival data were obtained through an in-depth literature review of security services reports, trial information, books, academic publications and various media publications, such as internet blogs and local newspapers. These came from Canadian, English, French, Danish and Dutch sources.

Field data
The data gathered through field research were obtained through focus groups, ethnographic-type observations, and interviews. In total, 166 interviews were undertaken between 2007 and 2009. We conducted 75 interviews with security and intelligence experts, senior government officials,

community leaders, activists, academics, religious scholars and journalists. Of these, 36 were conducted in Canada, and 39 in the UK, France, the Netherlands and Denmark. We interviewed 20 radicals in Canada and Europe; and 71 young Muslims in Canada.

As this research focused on the radicalisation of Muslim individuals, a large portion of our interviews were carried out with Muslim people. In order to make meaningful comparisons throughout this report, we chose to categorise Muslim participants into one three groups: 'terrorists', 'radicals', and 'young Muslims'. As with any research on violent extremism, such partitions and labels are contentious. After a careful review of the literature we settled on various criteria in order to categorise participants, as discussed below.

Terrorists

'Terrorist' is used to describe anyone who has been convicted of a terrorist-related crime. We created detailed profiles of 58 terrorists, all of whom have been part of a cell in the countries under question. No terrorists were interviewed for this research, therefore the profiles are based on a combination of primary data sources such as translated court transcripts and interviews with people who knew them, supplemented with reports in the public domain.

It is important to make a clear distinction between terrorists and those individuals who were arrested for being considered as part of a cell, and then were later released, acquitted or had stayed charges. The appellation 'cell' is applied to a group of individuals, some of which have been convicted of terrorism-related offences. Thus, 'cells' can also include individuals who were ultimately found innocent of terrorist-related crimes. For the purposes of this research, *terrorists are only those who have been found guilty of various terrorist related offences, or, in a few cases, these numbers include individuals who are still at large, have been deported, have been convicted in countries other than those in which they operated or* in absentia. It does not include any individual who may have been arrested in connection with a cell, but was subsequently either not charged, or charged and acquitted.

Radicals

Radical is a label that is used for individuals who are considered by interviewees, mostly members of the Muslim

community, as holding 'radical views' of varying degrees. None of the 'radicals' in our sample have been convicted of taking part directly or indirectly in any terrorist activity. We interviewed 20 radicals in total: eight in Europe and 12 in Canada. A further eight profiles were created in a similar way to the terrorists. It is worth noting that many more potential radicals were solicited for this research, but refused to participate.

'Radical' is obviously a relative term: it is used for someone who merely expresses significant dissent from prevailing norms. Hence, it was necessary to become familiar with the norms of Muslim communities in each country, as these norms represent the baseline on which radicalism can be determined. When starting this research, we used a threshold model to determine whether participants qualified for this category. If one or more of an individual's views differed sufficiently from the orthodoxy on one or more key questions of religious, social, political or cultural organisation, and the rectitude of the use of force, they are a 'radical'. We defined orthodoxy from the perspective of the country in which those individuals were found, thus radicals rejected certain key tenets of liberal democratic values of the countries in which they lived. These were, broadly:

- the relationship between church and state (eg a desire to install a Caliphate would be a 'radical' designation)
- the role of religion in law (eg a desire to impose full orthodox Sharia law would be a 'radical' designation)
- the use of force (eg a defence or support of those actively and violently resisting Coalition forces in Iraq would be a 'radical' designation)

The specific threshold of 'radical' in any of these senses was not set in stone at the beginning of the study, and during the study it was moved, when necessary, to maintain a rough relational ratio between a wide mainstream, and narrower margins of radicalism. It was also recognised that 'radicalism' describes not only the view itself, but also the force with which the view was held. An individual actively agitating for the implementation of Sharia law would be more 'radical' than a passive supporter. An individual who recognised the full authority of the Canadian government, but who welcomed some form of Sharia law in their lives, would not be a radical at all. In order to ensure some degree of objectivity in the sample, the decision about who was radical was further based on an anonymous reading of the transcripts of the interviews by two or more researchers.

Several caveats should be noted about the label 'radical'. We recognise that some of our participants would not necessarily accept the appellation 'radical' in a negative sense. We do not attach any value judgement to the term. We also accept that 'radical' encompasses a very large and diverse spectrum of beliefs. This group includes apolitical religious conservatives ('ultra-orthodox') and active political Islamists, among others. In many respects these are very different groups, and the term 'radical' is useful as it captures a wide range of views that are distant from the mainstream.

Young Muslims
The 'young Muslim' group are those participants selected to represent the young adult population of Muslim communities in Canada. Because the research was focused on Canada, we only conducted interviews with young Muslims in Canada. Most of the interviews with people in this category took the format of 'focus groups', which involved a total of 71 individuals. Two focus groups were conducted in Montreal (in French), another four focus groups were conducted in Toronto (in English). In Toronto, one focus group was conducted only with Muslim converts. Each group was designed and recruited by an independent recruiting company to include a diversity of religious beliefs that broadly reflected the diversity of the various Muslim communities in those cities.

Caveat about categories
These categories are necessarily crude, and do not capture the many nuances necessary. Most notably, no two radicals were the same; they ranged from one who was under constant surveillance by security service, to another who was vehemently peaceful but actively supported suicide bombing in Iraq and hoped to create an Islamic Caliphate in Canada. Indeed, on certain subjects, certain 'mainstream' Muslims were more radical than the 'radicals'. All of these points were taken into consideration during our analyses.

Methodology
Recruitment and interviews of radicals
In order to recruit Muslim people who met the criteria of being radical, we adopted a targeted recruitment strategy. This identification process was based on a review of

literature about Muslim extremism in Canada, which included security services reports, trial information, books and academic publications. However, most of the participants were found through internet reports and media publications, especially local newspapers. Additional information was collected from journalists, and religious and community leaders. Once people were identified as meeting the criteria of terrorist or radical; we contacted them directly, informed them of this study, and explained how we planned to categorise and label people for the purposes of analysis, and that the aim of the study was to assess the differences between violent and non-violent radicalisation. In some cases, snowball sampling occurred: people we interviewed suggested or directly referred us to other potential radicals.

We met people who agreed to participate in our research for an in-depth semi-structured interview. During this interview, we asked participants demographic information, and for information about their youth, their involvement (if any) in politics, their religious inspirations, their views about theological concepts, their opinions about violence, their knowledge of extremist literature, and their interactions with violent members of their community. We digitally recorded and transcribed the interviews.

Recruitment of young Muslims
We conducted a series of focus groups in Toronto and Montreal for which participants were recruited by a research agency using random telephone solicitation and internet advertising. All participants were aged between 18 and 30 and were selected on the basis that they considered themselves practicing Muslims, were politically minded and had spent at least three years living in Canada. The groups were designed to include a diversity of beliefs and religiosity — for example, at least two participants in each group prayed five times a day. We separated groups by gender for the purpose of cultural sensitivity and to mitigate inter-gender influence. One focus group with Muslim converts was recruited with the help of contacts made during our fieldwork. The same themes explored in the semi-structured interviews mentioned above were asked during the focus groups.

Data analysis
Data gathered during the interviews and focus groups were analysed in a qualitative manner, borrowing certain

techniques from grounded theory methodology.[143] Grounded theory is well suited for investigations of more general questions, where no *a priori* hypothesis is to be tested. Rather, theory is generated from the data.

All of our interviews were recorded, anonymised and transcribed professionally. We thus had over 100 interviews to analyse. We undertook a separate process of coding sections of each interview (characteristics and attitudes, religion and ideology, interaction and relationships, organisations, and journey to jihad). Following grounded theory methodology, we did not set out looking for anything specific, but looked instead for general themes that were relevant to the phenomenon under consideration, and any significant similarities and differences between and/or across groups. In this way we sought to allow themes to emerge.

The first step was to mark key points with a series of codes, which are extracted from the text. The codes are grouped into similar concepts in order to make them more workable. From these concepts, categories were formed, which are the basis for the creation of a theory. The coding process followed five steps:

1 Read through each interview and code each phrase that is relevant to the phenomenon. Adopting a process called 'deductive coding', we looked out for common ideas, theories, concepts, emotions and the differences between the two groups on similar issues. For instance, for religion and ideology, we coded views on key concepts such as the legitimacy of violent jihad, the Caliphate, Sharia law and Takfir.
2 Pull each code out and list it separately in a new document, with the data source reference number (interview number and page number) and put similarities together.
3 We then analysed codes for commonalities, noticeable differences, emerging themes. We then found links and associations that allowed us to create broader headings under which we placed certain codes that were more important than others (this is sometimes called 'axial coding').
4 We then focused on a handful of key codes, which are clearly vital to understanding the phenomenon studied. This is called 'selective coding'. From this we developed concepts from which we generate theories.
5 Throughout, we compared codes, revisited the data, and refined the codes.

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

Objectivity, reliability, validity

To ensure that our own bias is not reflected in the research, researchers who undertook the interviews in Canada did not complete the analysis. Once an interview was completed, the anonymous recordings were professionally transcribed, and labelled with a number. That way, researchers undertaking the analysis did not know who was who, and thus did not bring preconceptions about any given individual. As noted above, at least one of the researchers coding had no prior knowledge of the background literature and theories surrounding this subject, and thus coded 'blind'. All European interviews were also anonymously coded for the analysis and all identities were kept anonymous.

Our terrorist profiles also drew on publicly available sources — primarily newspaper articles. There was therefore a danger — particularly where stories immediately follow an arrest — that they would subsequently prove to be inaccurate. We sought to ensure reliability by triangulating data, by seeking alternative sources for contentious issues, and where possible by confirming certain details through primary interviews.

Finally, to ensure validity, we have used a lot of direct source quotation throughout the report to ensure the interpretations are transparent. Where appropriate, excerpts of raw data, in the form of extended quotations, alongside the researchers' accounts of them are included. Unfortunately, this summary version is not able to cite these sources in full due to legal reasons at the present time.

Data protection and ethics

There were a number of difficult ethical concerns that we had to overcome in this project. We therefore convened a steering group to act as an ethics panel for the project, whose members advised on all matters of ethical concern.

The project required us to work with sensitive issues of a religious and cultural nature. For this reason, we drew extensively on the expertise, advice and experience of this

group — the members of which were selected on the basis of their reputation in the field as well as their knowledge of specific national, ethnic and religious perspectives. We complemented the advice from the committee by carefully designing the research to take into account potential sensitivities, such as appropriate dress, conduct and protocols during meetings, the timing of activities, and how to access and approach certain groups (including women and young people).

In this project there was the potential for researchers to be required to work with sensitive materials. A first issue was securing the trust of the individuals we planned to interview and guaranteeing confidentiality. During the course of the research, we respected the confidentiality of all of the people involved in the research process (partners, interviewees and others) — unless they had given their express permission to do otherwise. We made it clear to each person before they were interviewed what our research was about and who was funding it, although stressing the independence of our work. We ensured them that all research participants understood how far they would be afforded confidentiality and were able to reject the use of data-gathering devices such as digital recorders. All conditions relating to freedom from coercion, confidentiality, secure data storage, and anonymity were followed. Data needed to be stored securely because of the possibility that we held contentious and private information. Data were stored securely and limited access granted.

annex 2 glossary of terms

'Al-Qaeda inspired' terrorism Under intense pressure since 2001, al-Qaeda no longer possesses a global organisational network. Its role is, instead, as 'inciter in chief' — *al talia al ummah* — the vanguard of the ummah. This report therefore uses the phrase 'al-Qaeda inspired' to describe the various cases of terrorism that may have had negligible or no logistical or tactical interaction with al-Qaeda, but which have, nonetheless, bought into al-Qaeda's narrative of global jihad, and affiliated themselves with al-Qaeda's strategic objectives.[144]

Azzam, Abdullah (1941–1989) A Palestinian theologian. Azzam was both an influential scholar and a key practical organiser of the Afghan Mujahideen's resistance of the Soviet military occupation. Intellectually, Azzam was influential in constructing a narrative of a global struggle in defence of Islam. Practically, Azzam fought with the Afghan resistance groups, and actively recruited for, and funded, the Mujahideen resistance.[145] He is considered a key mentor and teacher of Osama bin-Laden.

Caliphate Historically, a system of governance established by Muhammad's disciplines as a continuation of the political authority he established; in contemporary Muslim discourse, a theocratic political unit, often taken to mean one that that would unite all Muslim nations under one global ruler. It is, therefore, a central concept in trans-national Islamist revivalism.

Hadith 'Report of the words, teaching and deeds of Muhammad and other early Muslims.'[146]

Ibn Taymiyyah (d 1328) 'A prominent and controversial Syrian thinker, theologian, Hanbali jurist, and political figure. His intellectual activities, preaching, and politics resulted in persecution and imprisonment.'[147]

Islamism A spectrum of ideologies united by the claim that Islam has a political as well as religious manifestation. 'Islamists' are committed to the establishment of a political entity governed by the precepts of Islamic law as a normative base. However, the word Islamism is fraught with difficulties and any simple definition is to be avoided. Indeed, some self-pronounced 'Islamists' do recognise the value of the separation between church and state.[148]

Jihad Within a Qur'anic context jihad is a struggle 'in the way of Allah'. This struggle can take different forms. The 'greater jihad' is a general and personal struggle to live a virtuous life — a 'struggle against oneself'.[149] The 'lesser jihad' is a legal category of warfare, and the only one permissable within Islamic jurisprudence.

Kafir 'Rejecter': a person who does not believe in Islam. A person who, therefore, 'rejects' the truth. The plural (used in this report) is 'kuffar'.

Qur'an 'The book of Islamic revelation; scripture. The term means "recitation". The Qur'an is believed to be the word of God transmitted through the Prophet Muhammad.'[150]

Qutb, Sayyid (1906–1966) An Egyptian author, educator and thinker. A prominent figure within the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, Qutb wrote widely on the social and political role of Islam. Qutb's work, especially his criticism of Western materialism and violence, has been influential in the formation of al-Qaeda's dualistic West versus Islam narrative, and the presentation of a Western attack against the Muslim world. Senior al-Qaeda strategist Ayman al-Zawahiri was especially influenced by Qutb's work.

Radicalisation According to the UK's Contest strategy, 'radicalisation is one of the four strategic drivers for terrorism identified in the first part of this strategy: in the context of this strategy radicalisation refers to the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then to join terrorist groups'.[151]

Salafism A Sunni Islamic movement that emphasises the importance of the example of the Salaf, or 'pious ancestors'. Salafis hold that the first three generations of

Muslims represent an important example of appropriate Islamic practice.

Shari'ah 'God's eternal and immutable will for humanity, as expressed in the Qur'an and Muhammad's example (Sunnah), considered binding for all believers.'[152] Within a Qur'anic context, Shariah means 'God's Path', and is used to describe both a formal system of Islamic law and, more widely, an Islamic way of life including ethics. Shariah is 'a long, diverse, complicated intellectual tradition', rather than a 'well-defined set of specific rules and regulations that can be easily applied to life situations'.[153]

Takfir An Islamic legal term describing the act of declaring someone else to be a kafir. Contemporarily, the doctrine of takfir holds that 'Muslims whose beliefs differ from the *takfiri's* are infidels who must be killed'.[154] It therefore serves as a vital justificatory device for indiscriminate violence by extremist groups. Takfirism was declared a heresy within Islam in the 2005 Amman message.

Terrorism The report recognises that there is no uncontested or uncontroversial definition of terrorism. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in *Definitions of Terrorism,* argues that 'the question of a definition of terrorism has haunted the debate among states for decades'.[155] Noting that there has been no terminological consensus between the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, the UNODC's exasperated conclusion is that terrorism is 'the Gordian definitional knot'.[156] In a widely cited treatment of the definition of terrorism, Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman analysed 109 definitions, containing 22 definitional dimensions.[157]

Wahhabism A political ideology originating from eighteenth-century thinker Abd-al-Wahhab. Wahhab was principally concerned with a 'revival' of Islam through the removal of corrupt innovations, and returning to the core teachings of the Qur'an and Sunna, and the core example of the original righteous generations (Salaf).

Notes

1   F Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*.

2   C McCauley and S Moskalenko, 'Mechanisms of political radicalization: pathways toward terrorism'.

3   RCMP, *Radicalization: A guide for the perplexed*.

4   For example, the 2007 Environics poll found that Muslims under 30 held more 'radical' views on a range of subjects than those over 30.

5   19 in Canada, 39 in Europe. In a few cases, these numbers include individuals who are still at large, have been deported, have been convicted in countries other than those in which they operated or *in absentia*.

6   Throughout the paper we use the terms 'terrorist', 'radical' and 'young Muslims' for the different categories within our sample group (see annex 1 for definitions). Where terrorists, radicals or young Muslims are discussed who were not part of our sample group, we take care to distinguish clearly between them.

7   36 in Canada and 39 in Europe (there were also a small number of follow up interview with the same individuals).

8   R Jackson, 'The core commitments of critical terrorism studies'.

9   Canada's immigration rate represents 8.7 per cent population growth over ten years, or 23.1 per cent over 25 years (or 6.9 million people). See Citizenship and Immigration Canada, www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/menu-fact.asp (accessed 1 Mar 2010).

10   As described in Will Kymlicka's, 'Immigrants, multiculturalism and canadian citizenship'.

11   In the UK alone, British Muslims represent 56 nationalities, speak over 70 languages and attend more than 1,500 mosques.

12   A Mujahid and A Egab, 'A profile of Muslims in Canada'.

13   Open Society Institute, *British Muslims and Education*.

14   Statistics Canada, *2001 Census of Canada Topic Based Tabulations: Selected cultural and labour force characteristics*.

15   Pew Global Attitudes Project, *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims view each other;* J Esposito and D Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a billion Muslims really think*.

16   Ipsos Reid Public Affairs, *Representation of Muslims in the News.*

17   S Fanshawe and D Sriskandarajah, *You Can't Put Me in a Box*.

18   RCMP, *Radicalization*

19   Notably PK Davis and K Cragin (eds), *Social Science for Counterterrorism*.

20   D Noricks, 'The root causes of terrorism'.

21   Ibid.

22   M Phillips, *Londonistan*; M Stroink, 'Processes and preconditions underlying terrorism in second generation immigrants'.

23   O Roy, *Globalised Islam: The search for a new Ummah.*

24   See the glossary of terms in annex 2 for specifications of usage.

25   Q Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim extremism in the West*.

26   P Sookhdeo, *Understanding Islamic Terrorism: The Islamic doctrine of war*; M Taarnby, 'Understanding recruitment of Islamist terrorists in Europe'.

27   A Merari, 'Terrorism as a strategy of insurgency'.

28   M Crenshaw, 'The logic of terrorism: terrorist behaviour as a product of strategic choice'.

29   R Pape, *Dying to Win: The strategic logic of suicide terrorism*.

30   M Silber and A Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The homegrown threat*.

31   F Moghaddam, 'The staircase to terrorism: a psychological exploration'.

32   McCauley and Moskalenko, 'Mechanisms of political radicalisation'.

33   J Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*; A Dalgaard-Nielsen, 'Studying violent radicalization in Europe II'.

34   E Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their characteristics and the circumstances in which they joined the jihad*.

35   J Githens-Mazer, 'Casual processes, radicalization and bad policy'.

36   Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report TE-SAT*; Home Office, *Statistics on Terrorism Arrests and Outcomes in Great Britain, 11 September 2001 to 31 March 2008*.

37   M Levitt, *The Radical Dawa in Transition: The rise of Islamic neo-radicalism in the Netherlands*.

38   Ibid.

39   Ibid.

40   J Slack, 'Almost a quarter of Muslims believe 7/7 was justified'.

41   We had information on 30 terrorists and 21 radicals.

42   D Gambetta and S Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad*.

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

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

45   *R v Khawaja*.

46   Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

47   Interview 11, 16 Oct 2009.

48   Interview 10, 21 Oct 2009.

49   Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

50   Noricks, 'The root causes of terrorism'.

51   A poem written by a member of the Hofstad network, Jason Waters, and posted on the site DeBasis, cited in A Benschop, 'Jihad in the Netherlands'.

52   Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009; interviews 51–61, 22 Sep 2009; interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009; especially, 'There is a certain fairness at the societal level, but not for employment.' Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009.

53   O Roy, *Globalised Islam: The search for a new Ummah*; D Taylor and W Lewis, 'Terrorism and the quest for identity'; D Hussain, 'Identity formation and change in British Muslim communities'.

54   S O'Neill, 'Ramzi Mohammed: father of two who left a suicide note'. Mohammed Boujeri and Menad Benchellali are also well known examples.

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

56   Interview 5, Jan 30 2009.

57   Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009. 'The Taliban, they're crazy for what they do to women'; Interview 3, 10 Mar 2009.

58   Expert interview 6, 20 Feb 2009.

59   Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

60   Interview 3, Mar 10 2009.

61   Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

62   Interviews 40–50, 4 Nov 2009.

63   Interview 19, 4 Apr 2008.

64   Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

65   Ibid.

66   S Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The modern denial of human nature*; A Bandura, 'Mechanisms of moral disengagement in the exercise of moral agency'.

67   Expert interview 30, 25 Jun 2008.

68   Court transcript 3, translated: *Danish Government v Vollsmose Cell*.

69   Expert interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

70   Interviews 62–70, 22 Sep 2009.

71   Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

72   Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

73   Interview 4, 5 Mar 2009.

74   Interview 19, 4 Apr 2008.

75   Expert interviews 13–23, 2–4 Apr 2009

76   Interview 5, 30 Jan 2009; interview 20, 26 Jun 2008; interviews 13–14, 26 Jun 2008; interview 16, 3 Apr 2008.

77   Interview 7, 22 Sep 2009.

78   Interview 19, 4 Apr 2008.

79   Interviews 71–81, 5 Nov 2009.

80   Interview 10, 21 Oct 2009.

81   Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

82   Interview 19, 4 Apr 2008.

83   Interviews 30–39, 22 Oct 2009.

84   Interview 6, 24 Apr 2009.

85   Interviews 40–50, 4 Nov 2009.

86   This, of course, is supported by various religious texts. Anwar Awkali quotes the Hadith of Muslim: 'anyone who takes care of the family and wealth of a mujahid will receive half the reward of the mujahid'.

87   The New York Police Department has a model which suggests that the journey to terrorism goes through four stages: grievance, mobilisation, indoctrination, then trigger or spark. Alternatively, Moghaddam proposes a six-stage process. When reviewed in detail, certain models contain stages that contradict stages in other models. Furthermore, certain models, such as Sageman's, go against the fundamental idea that radicalisation is a progressive linear stage-like process. If research on radicalisation is to inform policy makers and security services, such a proliferation of models, incorrect factors and lack of agreement is problematic.

88   Interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

89   Court transcript, *Danish Government v Vollsmose cell*; A Benschop, 'Chronicle of a political murder foretold: jihad in the Netherlands'.

90   Interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

91   Jihad is better than a holiday in Los Angeles. It's an adventure. You eat, you discover the countryside', from A Laidi and A Salam, *Le Jihad en Europe: Les filières du terrorisme islamiste*.

92   Expert interviews 33–41 (interview 39), 6 Dec 2008; M Benchellali, 'Les Français de Guantanamo tentent de s'expliquer'. This reference refers to both Sassi and Benchellali were incarcerated without trial in Guantanamo Bay and were

subsequently cleared of terrorist activity on their return to France — but their stories do offer an insight into the phenomenon.

93   D Poutain and R Robins, *Cool Rules*.

94   Pinker, *The Blank Slate.*

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

96   Expert interview 17, 2 Apr 2008.

97   M Hewstone and W Stroebe, *Introduction to Social Psycholog*y.

98   McCauley and Moskalenko, 'Mechanisms of political radicalization'.

99   Ibid.

100   A Benschop, 'Chronicle of a political murder foretold'.

101   Interview 3, 10 Mar 2009.

102   Interview 4, 5 Mar 2009.

103   Interview 1, 23 Apr 2009.

104   Interview 9, 3 Nov 2009.

105   Interview 10, 21 Oct 2009.

106   A vital component of the prevalence of extremist thinking is the role that organisations play, particularly in relation to the themes outlined above. Our understanding based on interviews is that they are present but not majority views (please see discussion below).

107   Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

108   Interview 6, 24 Apr 2009.

109   Interview 4, 5 Mar 2009; interview 5, 30 Jan 2009.

110   Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

111   Interview 4, 5 Mar 2009.

112   Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

113   Interview 2, 28 Oct 2008.

114   Interview 5, 30 Jan 2009.

115   Ibid.

116   Ibid.

117   Interviews 61–70, 22 Sep 2009.

118   Interview 3, 10 Mar 2009.

119   Interview 1, 23 Apr 2009.

120   Interview 12, 4 Nov 2009.

121   Expert interview 10, 5 Nov 2009.

122   J Chapman, E Edwards and S Hampson, *Connecting the Dots*; and HWJ Rittel and MM Weber, 'Dilemmas in a general theory of planning'.

123   C McCauley, *Terrorist Group Persistence and Dynamics*.

124   DCLG, *Building Community Resilience: Prevent case studies*.

125   Conversation with Hussein Hamdani, 20 Jan 2010.

126   F Ebensen and DW Osgood, 'Gang resistance education and training (GREAT): results from the national evaluation'; EJ Fritsch, TJ Caeti and RW Taylor, 'Gang suppression through saturation patrol, aggressive curfew, and truancy enforcement: a quasi-experimental test of the Dallas anti-gang initiative'; and G Hagenbucher, 'PROGRESS: an enhanced supervision program for high-risk criminal offenders.

127   Boston's Operation Ceasefire and the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP) evidences the possible impact of this approach. See AA Braga et al, 'Problem-oriented policing, deterrence and youth violence: an evaluation of Boston's Operation Ceasefire'; and A Spergel, *The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project in Chicago*.

128 D Noricks, 'Disengagement and deradicalization: processes and programs'; R Gunaratna and M Bin Ali, 'De-radicalization initiatives in Egypt: a preliminary insight'.

129 G Griffiths-Dickson, *Countering Extremism and the Politics of Engagement*.

130 K Karim, 'Changing perceptions of Islamic authority among Muslims in Canada, the US and the UK'.

131 B Spalek, S El-Awa and Z McDonald, *Police–Muslim Engagement and Partnerships for the Purposes of Counter-Terrorism: An examination*.

132 L Vidino, 'Europe's new security dilemma'.

133 DM Mackie, LT Worth and AG Asuncion, 'Processing of persuasive in-group messages'.

134 R Lambert, *The London Partnerships*.

135 See for example, M Desai, *Rethinking Islamism: The ideology of the new terror*; M Bright, *When Progressives Treat with Reactionaries*.

136 CA Thayer, 'Terrorism studies: the dismal science?'

137 A Silke, 'The devil you know: continuing problems with research on terrorism'.

138 Ibid.

139 A Silke, 'An introduction to research on terrorism'; A Gordon, 'Terrorism and knowledge growth: a database and internet analysis'.

140 A Strauss and J Corbin, 'Grounded theory methodology: an overview'.

141 Thayer, 'Terrorism studies'.

142 AP Schmid and AJ Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts and data bases, theories and literature*.

143 Strauss and Corbin, 'Grounded theory methodology'.

144   See D Kilcullen, 'Countering global insurgency' in *Accidental Guerrilla* for an apt description of al-Qaeda's overwhelmingly inspirational and ideological role in the post-2001 context.

145   Perspectives on World History and Current Events, 'Abdullah Azzam', www.pwhce.org/azzam.html (accessed 1 Mar 2010).

146   Oxford Islamic Studies, 'Fard al-Ayn', www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e624 (accessed 1 Mar 2010).

147   JL Esposito (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*

148   GE Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*.

149   D Streusand, 'What does jihad mean?'

150   Esposito (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*

151   Home Office, *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: The UK government's strategy for countering international terrorism*.

152   Esposito (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*

153   H Janin and A Kahlmeyer, *Islamic Law: The Sharia from Muhammad's time to the present*, p 3.

154   D Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*.

155   UNODC, 'Definitions of terrorism', www.unodc.org/unodc/terrorism_definitions.html.

156   Ibid.

157   Schmid and Jongman, *Political Terrorism.*

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The path into terrorism in the name of Islam is often described as a process of radicalisation. But to be radical is not necessarily to be violent. Violent radicals are clearly enemies of liberal democracies, but non-violent radicals might sometimes be powerful allies.

This report is a summary of two years research examining the difference between violent and non-violent radicals in Europe and Canada. It represents a step towards a more nuanced understanding of behaviour across radicalised individuals, the appeal of the al-Qaeda narrative, and the role of governments and communities in responding.

Due to an ongoing terrorism trial, involving individuals who were subjects of this research, we are not able to publish the full details of the research at this time. But the lessons from the research stand and they are of acute relevance to the fight against violent extremism.

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