The Politics of Identity: The Roots of Radicalization and Home-grown Terrorism
Amongst Second and Third Generation Immigrants in Europe

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Abstract

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Jihadi terrorism in Europe is a growing and ever-changing threat.  Radicals embracing a

militant brand of Islam were once an external threat, planning missions abroad before traveling to

their Western targets.  Jihadi terrorism has since evolved into an internal threat with the

emergence of loose-knit homegrown terrorist organizations.  Second and third generation

immigrants have increasingly turned to militant Islam, radicalizing against the very society into

which they were born and raised.  This phenomenon is complex, stemming from an identity crisis

in which second and third generation immigrants do not feel a sense of belonging to their

European host societies, nor their ethnic countries of origin.  Radical Islam provides a sense of

dignity and purpose to youth that oftentimes feel marginalized and discriminated against.  There

they also find a badly needed sense of identity derived from the greater Islamic community and

its fixed value system.  Radicalization is a threat to social cohesion in Europe, and requires a

nuanced and precise counter-terrorism policy that will increase trust and communication between

groups.

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Table of Contents

## Introduction

In recent years, Europe has witnessed a growing number of terrorist attacks by second and third generation immigrants. These terrorist attacks have come from individuals who were radicalized not in their parents' countries of origin, but within the context of their host-European societies. These young and educated citizens do not have strong ties to their parent's country of origin; yet they feel equally unaccepted by societies in Europe. In many cases the individuals were not raised in as Islamic, but later chose to pursue religion for its identity and community components. Second and third generation immigrants may appear to be better integrated than previous generations, but deep-seeded feelings of marginalization and resentment still remain. In this paper I will argue that second and third generation immigrants in Europe are experiencing a crisis of identity that leads them increasingly towards the adoption of a deepened religious identity and ultimately radicalization. The threat of Islamic terrorism, which was once primarily external, has come to represent a predominantly internal threat with the emergence of homegrown Islamic terrorism in Europe. Using the Netherlands as a case study, I will analyze how one nation is dealing with its homegrown threat. Finally, I will argue that a counter-terrorism policy involving communication and cooperation from Muslim communities will be the most precise and effective tool to combat radicalization.

There is much confusion surrounding the meaning behind the label 'Muslim'. The term is used regularly as an adjective, as a noun, and as a generalization encompassing an entire multi-ethnic population. Many in the West envision Muslim identity as a monolithic community of identical members, all with a propensity for religious extremism. Others use the term 'Muslim' to categorize entire immigrant communities, whose histories may connect only loosely to Muslim

majority countries of origin.   Such individuals may not actually define themselves in large

measure or at all in terms of their Muslim religion (Mandaville 2009, 492).  In this paper I will

use the term 'Muslim' to refer to the religious beliefs of an individual or group of people.  Not all

immigrants from Muslim majority countries consider themselves to be Muslim, and this should

be taken into account when referencing their identity.

"Terrorism" is another key term with a diverse range of interpretations.  There is, as yet,

no universally agreed upon definition of terrorism.  However, for the purposes of this paper,

terrorism refers to "the commission of violence or the threat to commit violence aimed at human

life/ or the infliction of serious material damage disrupting social processes with a view to

effecting changes in society and/or influencing political decision making" (van Hulst 2006, 10).

Militant Islam stems from a narrative in which Muslims are oppressed, attacked, and humiliated

by the West (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010, 798).  Terrorism and acts of violence are therefore viewed

as both legitimate and necessary, given the superiority of Western military power.  Militant Islam

is a religiously sanctioned fight commissioned in order to emancipate Muslims from Western

oppression (Ipid., 798).  Individuals arrive at a militant interpretation of Islam through a process

of radicalization.  Radicalization is a process wherein "individuals adopt extreme political, social

and/or religious ideals and aspirations, where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of

indiscriminate violence" (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 38).  Radicals seek far-reaching changes in

society that conflict with the pre-existing order, and are willing to directly support or engage in

violent acts.


## From External Threat to Internal Threat


Traditionally, Islamic terrorism in Western Europe has been perceived as an external

threat, emanating from other, more troubled, parts of the globe.  Europe is, of course, no stranger

to terrorism or terrorist threats.  The West has given birth to many domestic terrorist networks including separatist groups, which have inflicted varying degrees of damage in their pursuit of autonomy.  Militant jihadism, however, is perceived as an imported threat from Muslim majority countries.  Homegrown jihadi terrorism is far more destructive, involving mass casualty bombings of civilian targets.  Their grievances are also more difficult to address.  While western separatist groups have clearly articulated objectives targeted at the domestic government, Islamic terrorists have a diverse range of transnational and oftentimes equivocal grievances that cannot be resolved unilaterally (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 33).   The growing threat of Islamic terrorism in Europe has evolved through three distinct phases: the transnational phase, the proliferation phase, and finally the homegrown phase.

In the 1980's and 1990's, transnational Islamic networks constituted the vast majority of terrorist threats on the European continent.  Acts of terrorism were committed by individuals living outside of Europe, who organized operations within their community before traveling to their Western targets (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010 33).  Transnational networks are complexly structured organizations, with a clearly delineated hierarchy.  They have a distinctly international focus and frequently operate across borders and continents, many having some contact with Al Qaeda, whether direct or indirect in nature (van Hulst 2006, 15). Such well-organized groups are generally funded and primarily operated externally, despite the fact that their targets are European.  Given the external nature of the threat, the most effective means of combating this phase of terrorism involved heavy surveillance of the networks and strong external border controls.

By the end of the 1990's, the external threat began to slowly weave itself into the threads of domestic society.  During this "proliferation phase", jihad veterans and radical ideologists from abroad began to approach local Muslim communities in Europe (van Hulst 2006, 16).  A charismatic recruiter would play an important role in gathering local groups of radicals, even sending some abroad to be trained for jihad.  During the proliferation phase terrorist networks

operated locally inside Europe, but maintained an international focus dominated primarily by the global struggle between Islam and the West.  Some of these internationally oriented local networks functioned as operating branches of the greater, transnational network while others only kept loose ties and a relatively high level of autonomy (Ipid., 27).  The proliferation phase marks a distancing in the presentation of a sound theological foundation used to legitimize terrorist motivations (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 33).  While transnational networks are thorough in their use of religious doctrine to justify their violence, their western counterparts have proved less well versed in theology.  Homegrown terrorists in particular are not religious scholars, but overzealous converts with little proximity to a nuanced religious belief.

In recent years, the threat from homegrown terrorist networks has come to the forefront of Europe's conscious.  Homegrown terrorist networks involve mainly young Muslim men aged 18-32, who become receptive to an extremist ideology disseminated by religious leaders and radical websites (van Hulst 2006, 17).  At work are a number of psychological, political, socio-cultural and religious factors that lead to the acceptance of an extremist ideology and ultimately radicalization.  These networks are local and autonomous, with only marginal, if any ties to groups such as Al Qaeda.  A jihadist network differs from a traditional terrorist network in that the former is loosely organized and possess a fluid structure.  The term 'jihadist network' refers to a loose-knit group of interrelated persons with at least a temporary common interest (van Hulst 2006, 14).  Their structure is less rigid than traditional terrorist cells, and oftentimes there is no hierarchy or clear leadership within the group.  The role of a charismatic recruiter can be critical for group membership, but not always.  Ideological interpretations of Islam are easily found on the Internet, with Al Qaeda serving as the chief source of inspiration for radicals in pursuit of global jihad (Vidino 2007, 579).  Materials for homemade explosives are relatively inexpensive, and instructions for assembly can also be found online.  Homegrown terrorist networks tend to favor domestic targets, and are generally not associated with a concrete religious or political agenda beyond that of Islam vs. the West.

Homegrown terrorist networks differ from their predecessors in many ways, but most notably in terms of group composition. Second and third generation immigrants make up a growing majority of homegrown terrorist groups. This is noteworthy because the sons and grandsons of Muslim immigrants have little to no affiliation with radical Islam prior to their adoption of an extremist ideology. While their parents tend to practice a traditional and moderate interpretation of Islam, second and third generation immigrants are drawn into a radicalization process that can appear seemingly out of nowhere. These young and well-educated citizens have a thorough knowledge of Western culture, the native language, and are seemingly well-integrated members of society (Vidino 2007, 581). However, the relative integration of second and third generation immigrants may bring with it higher expectations for the future. While first generation immigrants are generally at a significant disadvantage, the later generations have the language skills and cultural knowledge to be more optimistic about their chances for success. Second and third generation immigrants want to become active participants in society, and it is exactly for this reason that they are more sensitive to exclusion (Buiis 2009, 428).

The 2004 Madrid and the 2005 London bombings opened the eyes of many in Europe to the growing threat posed by homegrown terrorist networks. September 11th, although deeply unsettling, was orchestrated by an externally affiliated network. The men responsible for the attacks were not U.S. citizens, and many were in the country illegally at the time. The homegrown nature of the Madrid and London attacks ignited fear into the hearts of Europeans, whose fellow citizens had freely chosen to participate in acts of terrorism against the very society into which they had been born. Both attacks were carried out by local, autonomous networks and cost only a few thousand dollars respectively. The Madrid and London attacks proved that modern-day terrorist operations are inexpensive and easily executed, meaning that even inexperienced groups of motivated militants can carry them out (Vidino 2007, 589). A complete understanding of the complex causes and triggers of homegrown terrorism is therefore of the utmost importance.

Radicalization: The Modes and Motives

Recruitment by a charismatic, older leader is a key way in which young second and third generation immigrants become radicalized. Although a majority of radicalized individuals are familiar with the teachings of Islam on some level, the recruiter plays a key role in their transformation from moderate observer to extremist participant. Recruiters are generally mature individuals who are charismatic, have a deep knowledge of Islam, and oftentimes some experience fighting jihad abroad. However, the title of 'recruiter' may be misleading given the predominant function of their role. Recruiters do not go onto the streets fishing for any wayward and willing youth. Rather, the radicalization process is more akin to "a prestigious graduate school, extremely selective rather than eager to accept all applicants" (Vidino 2007, 585). Islamic doctrine and jihad propaganda are so widespread and easily accessible that recruiters need hardly to re-orient each newcomer to their religious and political beliefs. The autonomous radicalization of individuals has become increasingly popular, and thus the role of the recruiter is to determine the most promising among the recruits (Ipid., 585).

Autonomous radicalization has been greatly spurred on with the advent of the Internet as a tool for promoting jihad. The Internet provides an unevaluated forum through which religious authorities play a very limited role, and the scope for personal interpretation is abundant (van Hulst 2006, 29). Doctrine is loosely interpreted to serve as propaganda for the motives of extremists. Emotive reports and videos are circulated, allowing second and third generation immigrants to identify personally with the oppression, suffering, and abuse of Muslims all over the world. The Internet may also serve as a practical tool for recruiters, networks, and individuals alike. Recruiters can use Internet chat-rooms as a means to fuel discussion and single out promising individuals for radical jihad. In one-on-one chat sessions the potential recruit can be targeted individually and persuaded to join a pre-established terrorist network. Autonomous

networks can also find their origin with the help of Internet chat-rooms. Although many local networks are made up of groups of childhood friends, or neighborhood acquaintances, the Internet provides a forum for individuals with similar interpretations to band together. Handbooks on jihad, combat methods, and expertise on homemade explosives are can be easily accessed online and provides valuable information at a distance for autonomous individuals and groups. Western converts to radical Islam are especially in need of these virtual training camps, as they have no other network with which to access this level of expertise (van Hulst 2006, 50). With easy accessibility to the Internet and rampant Islamic propaganda, it should come as no surprise that the phenomenon of self-radicalization is a growing threat.

It is essential to bear in mind that not all radicalized individuals will pursue acts of terrorism. Radicalization is already a rare case, but individuals supporting, aiding, or participating in acts of terrorism is even rarer (Velduis & Bakker 2009, 5). Most Muslims living in Europe today are moderate, some not practicing or identifying with Islam at all. It is evident that radicalization increases the potential for violence action, but it does not de facto necessitate violence, as most radicals are not terrorists (Mandel 2009, 102). Although few who embrace such an extreme ideology will turn to violence, its growing popularity is indicative of deeper societal problems. Whether or not the polarization of society manifests itself in immediate violence, the threat of possible terrorist attacks will always loom as long as societal cohesion is undermined (van Hulst 2006, 8). Even if acts of terrorism were to cease tomorrow, the pre-established association between Islam and violence will continue to pose problems for integration. The radical actions of a small minority continue to have an effect on public opinion, namely the negative perception of Islam as posing a threat to Europe.

Where does this implicit association between Islam and political violence find its genesis? Some believe that there exists an innate incompatibility between Islam and Western values. Many see Muslims in Europe as reacting against modernity, a clash of civilizations, or the confusion brought on by globalization. Others argue that Muslims hate the West out of

ignorance of what the West is (Fukuyama 2006, 12).  This can hardly be the case, given the fact that homegrown terrorists are radicalized on European soil, and come to attack the very societies that their brothers and peers have learned to embrace.  Most second and third generation immigrants are seemingly well-integrated individuals that become radicalized only after feelings of continued exclusion by the West.

When their best attempts at integration fail, many second and third generation immigrants turn to an Islam of their own invention.  The roots of radical Islam are not the byproduct of doctrine, nor are they inherent within the cultural system (Fukuyama 2006, 10).  Rather, frustrated young fanatics with little to no knowledge of traditional Islamic teachings turn to a radical interpretation that suits their needs.  There is huge cope for individual interpretation, which when combined with an insufficient command of Arabic and religious ignorance leads to a simplistic, incoherent ideology (van Hulst 2006, 32).  The Koran requires extensive historical and linguistic knowledge in order to interpret, a task which only Imams and scholars have the time to undertake.  Consequently, individual Muslims are dependent on the interpretations of Imams and their fellow peers in order to choose amongst the multitude of views and interpretations.  For young Muslims with no knowledge of traditional Islamic teachings, the Internet provides radical websites with which individuals can take a "cut-and-paste version of Islam from Koran quotations which they reshape into a revolutionary pamphlet of global violent jihad" (Ipid., 31).  The roots of radical Islam do not lie explicitly within the Koran, nor are they an assertion of traditional Muslim culture, but are rather manifestations of modern identity politics (Fukuyama 2006, 10).

The identity crisis plaguing second and third generation immigrants is largely the result of geography and cultural juxtaposition.  It is interesting to note that religious affiliation does not surface as a source of controversial identity politics in traditional Muslim societies.  Rather, affiliation with Islam is more or less assumed and individuals draw their identity from other sources, such as family (Fukuyama 2006, 10).  In a predominantly Muslim society there is no

need for individuals to re-assert their identity as 'Muslim'.  Once apart from traditional Muslim

societies their adherence to Islam becomes a source of distinction.   The responsibility to

reinforce one's identity as Muslim now rests with the individual, and in many cases becomes a

source of friction between the minority and majority populations  (Ipid., 10).  Young western

Muslims find themselves adhering to traditional religious beliefs in a society that is decidedly

secular.  This friction can cause feelings of insecurity and confusion over identity, resulting in the

re-assertion of their religious affiliation with increased zeal.  Radicalization is a way for subjugate

Muslim youth to reassert an identity within a non-Muslim context (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 41).

The appeal of a transnational Muslim identity is even more apparent when compared with

the continued relevance of national identity in Europe.  Immigrants to Europe are not easily

accommodated into the blood-and-soil criteria that are only accessible to native ethnic groups

(Fukuyama 2006, 14).  In this way the adoption of a true national identity in Europe is even less

attainable than in America.  American national identity has always been more political in nature,

based on civic principles that are accessible to all.  Although there is some debate as to the

emergence of a 'transnational' European identity, this idea is still in its infancy and stems from

the head of the European project rather than from the heart of the people.  Very few Europeans

are willing to subordinate their national identities, which continue to "hang around like unwanted

ghosts" (Ipid., 14).  Thus, the relative inaccessibility of the European national identity makes the

adoption of an Islamic transnational identity even more appealing to Muslim immigrants.

Second and third generation immigrants to Europe often find themselves with no firm

sense of belonging.  They do not have the same cultural ties to their ethnic country of origin that

recent immigrants have.  Oftentimes, second and third generation immigrants are also alienated

from their parents in that their identity struggles are not shared with prior generations.  First

generation immigrants generally haven't made a psychological break with their country of origin

and are still closely linked to the cultural community (Fukuyama 2006, 11).    Although second

and third generation immigrants may have some cultural affiliation with their ethnic country of

origin, they cannot fully identify with a society they have never or only sporadically experienced (Belarouci 2009, 9). At the same time, second and third generations are born on European soil, but still are not altogether accepted by members of the host society (Veldhuis & Bakker 2009, 19). Feeling rejected by the host society despite integration attempts creates feelings of bitterness, resentment, and insecurity as to which group they identify more with. Conceptualizing radical Islam as a form of identity politics is crucial to understanding why second and third generation immigrants are especially susceptible. Militant Islam provides a fixed value system that with it brings a sense of identity, dignity, and meaning to a lost generation (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010, 800). Stuck between two cultures, they are able to find a pre-packaged identity in transnational Islam.

Second and third generation immigrants oftentimes feel that their parent's traditional adherence to Islam is insufficient in meeting their needs. Younger generations reject what they see as a provincial religiosity, which is inflexible, unsophisticated, and has failed to adapt to a changing cultural climate (Mandaville 2009, 498). Many traditional mosques in Europe hold little appeal for youth, have no out-reach programs, and offer little help in terms of maneuvering through European societies successfully. They do not address the topics with which youth are most concerned. By failing to adapt, mosques alienate the next generation of young Muslims and force them to look elsewhere for answers. Traditional Islam offers little in terms of political directives, and frustrated Muslims come to view their parent's religion as hopelessly passive, desiring instead to distinguish themselves through a more assertive identity (van Hulst 2006, 36). Rejecting the moderate Islam of their parent's generation is viewed as an alternative solution to the trials of integration. Radicalization is also seen as a proactive means of altering the societal dynamics in their favor.

For individuals suffering an identity crisis, discrimination within the host society can serve as a catalyst for radicalization. In many cases second and third generation immigrants have made attempts to integrate themselves into the host culture but nonetheless continue to feel

excluded, mistrusted, and confronted with xenophobic reactions from non-Islamic natives (Buijs 2009, 425). Oftentimes the media plays a significant role in confirming the feeling that Muslims are second-class citizens in Europe. Many view the media with suspicion, as it is generally biased in its portrayal, resulting in the tendency for Muslims to turn to Arabic broadcasters and the Internet instead (Ipid., 429). Western media outlets rarely seek to give a balanced account of Muslims in Europe, but rather seek out sensationalist stories. In October 2007 a young Dutch Muslim entered a police station in Amsterdam, stabbing two police officers before being shot and killed in self-defense. The man, Bilal Bajaka, was a suicidal schizophrenic who had just left a psychiatric clinic where he was being treated for mental problems. The hysterical assumption was that the man was an Islamic extremist, even though it was widely publicized that Bajaka was not, in fact, radicalized (Veldhuis & Bakker 2009, 4). Given that Bajaka was of Muslim decent, there was an implicit association between his religion and radical violence.

Far less attention is given to the violent and overtly racist reactions of right-wing anti-Muslim youth and politicians. In the Netherlands, a group known as the Lonsdale youth was charged with attacking an Islamic primary school in early 2005. Although an investigation was launched, the Intelligence Service in the Netherlands concluded that although the Lonsdale youth were guilty of eroding social cohesion, they did not pose a considerable threat to the democratic order (Veldhuis & Bakker 2009, 26). This is a hypocritical response to a serious problem. Undoubtedly, if it had been a Muslim gang attacking a Christian school, the public reaction and outcry for justice would have been considerable. The Dutch politician Geert Wilders is famous in the Netherlands for his anti-Muslim agenda, having compared Muslim immigration to a tsunami wave, the Koran to Hitler's Mein Kampf, and publicly questioning the loyalty of Dutch politicians with an Muslim background (Ipid., 26). Wilders even went as far as releasing an anti-Islamic movie called "Fitna" in early 2008. The Dutch authorities feared an outbreak of violence on the part of Muslims protesting the film, but instead eloquent members of the Muslim community stepped forward to explicitly distance themselves from radical extremism. Violent

manifestations never materialized, but the Muslim community was still viewed with suspicion prior to and after the press release.  It would seem that regardless of the actual frequency of violent incidents, Muslims will always be associated with the tendency to respond violently to every political incident (Ipid., 3).  It is this sort of assumption that leads to the marginalization of young Muslims from the very society in which they are trying to integrate.

Discrimination against Muslims in Europe has also taken the form of reduced opportunities for employment.  While there is undoubtedly a middle class developing, immigrant populations are still at a significant socio-economic disadvantage in relation to their native counterparts (Buis 2009, 424).  In the Netherlands there are more and more Moroccan youth undertaking higher levels of education, but that share is only 20 per cent as compared with the native Dutch average of 50 per cent.  Furthermore, the unemployment rate among Moroccans in the Netherlands is a staggering 22 per cent, while native Dutch citizens suffer from only 6 per cent unemployment (Ipid., 425).

The implicit discrimination that is assumed when presented with higher unemployment statistics is detrimental to the morale of immigrants.  Whether or not they are less qualified, immigrants feel at an unfair and impenetrable disadvantage.  Muslims with a high level of education often experience feelings of "relative deprivation", in which there is a perceived discrepancy between what people feel they deserve and what they can actually get.  Relative deprivation is "the disparity between aspirations and achievements" (Murshed & Pavan 2011, 266).  When worsening economic prospects are combined with experiences of perceived discrimination in employment, it is not surprising that Muslims conclude that their aspirations have been thwarted by a xenophobic job market.  In 2005 a Dutch experiment was carried out in which 150 CV's were sent out, half under a traditional Dutch name and the other half under a foreign/Islamic-sounding name.  The 75 Dutch CV's won 69 interviews, while of the foreign CV's only 33 persons were invited for an interview (Ipid., 273).

The stress of unemployment and the accompanying feelings of discrimination can further individual motivation for radicalization. Young people with similar experiences of injustice and racism band together around membership in this new group, together embracing a religious identity to substitute the national identity unavailable to them (Belarouci 2009, 10). As a result of perceived discrimination, some Muslims may chose instead to isolate themselves from society, developing a socially nihilistic worldview which oftentimes leads the use of violence in order to express their discontent" (van Hulst 2006, 34). The rejection of the society that has seemingly deserted them is understandable, whether or not it is based in objective fact. There is little doubt that Muslims in Europe are marginalized to some extent, whether in the media, during day-to-day social interaction, or in terms of employment opportunity. Both the real and perceived discrimination leads to anger, resentment, and the desire for a community that can identify with their grievances and objectives.

The Islamic community is based on the idea of a transnational *Umma*, in which all members adhere to the same universal doctrine. Muslims share a sense of transnational religious solidarity, in which the suffering of any single group becomes the plight of all. This collective identity "helps explain the increased tendency towards Islamic radicalization in Western European countries, and particularly among the youths born and raised in such countries" (Murshed & Pavan 2011, 266). Although surely marginalized, second and third generation immigrants surely have not be victimized to the same extent that Muslims in Bosnia, Palestine, and other parts of the globe. When group grievances become individual grievances, it is not their own suffering that will motivate western Muslims to radicalize (Ipid., 265). In the most extreme cases, this sense of collective identity will create an intrinsic motivation that justifies revenge against the countries and citizens seen as responsible (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 42).

Ultimately, the road to radicalization is not fixed and can never be completely understood. The radicalization process is unique to every individual, and heavily dependent on the subjective experiences of the recruit (Veldhuis & Bakker 2009, 5). While there are clearly

trends on the road to radicalization, the process is the result of a combination of causal factors that react differently with each individual.  Only a limited number of the Muslims living in Europe become radicalized, and even fewer make the leap extremism and violence (van Hulst 2006, 11).  Despite the fact that the roots of radicalism in second and third generation immigrants can never be fully understood, work in this area will go a long way not only to counter terrorism but to further social cohesion and integration in Europe.

## The Netherlands: A Case Study

The contemporary history of migration to the Netherlands holds many similarities with other Western European countries.  Temporary guest workers arrived in the late 1960's and the early 1970's to help fill gaps in the economy.  Guest workers were encouraged to maintain their cultural identity in order to prevent integration into Dutch society.  The assumption was for guest workers to return home, but many settled permanently in the Netherlands and eventually a process of family reunification took place (Veldhuis & Bakker 2009, 8). In the late 1970's the government initiated a number of legal and institutional provisions in order to guarantee the equal treatment of Islam as one of the minority religions in the Netherlands In the 1980's Islamic practices such as ritual animal slaughter, the call to prayer, and the recognition of Muslim festivals and dietary restrictions were formally allowed as legislation was adjusted (Buijs 2009, 426).  The Netherlands embraced a multicultural approach that, despite its good intentions, allowed immigrants to live in the country without fully integrating into Dutch society (Kelley & Morgenstern 2006, 2).  In an attempt to reverse societal divisions, concepts such as 'good citizenship' and 'civic legislation' were emphasized in the mid 1990's and civic integration courses became compulsory to help ensure a more successful integration into Dutch society.

However the levels of "socio-economic, geographical and cultural segregation were said to be far deeper in Dutch cities than anyone dared admit" (Buijs 2009, 427).

On November 2, 2003 Mohammed Bouyeri, a well-educated Moroccan Muslim, murdered filmmaker Theo van Gogh on the streets of Amsterdam. Armed with a handgun, Bouyer shot van Gogh eight times, killing the Dutch artist on the spot. Van Gogh had directed a film written by the Somali-born member of Parliament Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The film challenged the abuse of women in the Islamic world by projecting verses of the Koran onto the bodies of naked women wearing only a veil (Veldhuis & Bakker 2009, 19). The highly controversial film had been heatedly discussed in radical chat rooms frequented by members of the Hofstad group, a jihadist network that included Bouyeri. The men agreed that the suitable punishment for both van Gogh and Hirsi Ali was death (Vidino 2007, 583). Bouyeri claimed that the ritual slaughter of van Gogh had been his "religious duty" in a letter pinned to the body (Ipid., 583). At his trial, Bouyeri stated, "what moved me to do what I did was purely my faith. I was motivated by the law that commands me to cut off the head of anyone who insults Allah" (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 41).

With the murder of van Gogh, the country was confronted with the threat of homegrown terrorism on Dutch soil. The public was shocked that the attack was conceived and carried out, not by an external enemy, but by a man born and bred in the Netherlands (Buijs 2009, 423). Bouyeri was the child of Moroccan immigrant workers, who settled in the Netherlands during the 1970's and never learned Dutch. Bouyeri graduated from the area's best high school, and was a successful student that advanced easily from secondary school to college, taking high-level courses in accounting and information technology (Leiken 2005, 125). However, behind the façade of a well-integrated citizen, Bouyeri had an unruly temper, and was given a seven-month jail sentence for a violence-related crime (Ipid., 125). Bouyeri emerged from jail a radical Islamist, and began using an Internet pseudonym to translate and distribute radical Islamic texts (Veldhuis & Bakker 2009, 20).

The murder of van Gogh had far-reaching effects felt throughout the Netherlands. Not only was the attack religious in motivation, it was framed as an attack on the freedom of speech, threatening openness and social cohesion (Buijs 2009, 422). Such an act has implications for the whole of society, not merely the victim's immediate family. There was a collective public outcry of confusion and anger. On the night of the murder a large crowd gathered in central Amsterdam to pay tribute to van Gogh and pledge support for freedom of speech by making noise for seven minutes. The murder of van Gogh was followed by a caustic, crusade-like reaction against the amassed Islamic presence within Dutch society. An unprecedented number of anti-Islamic acts and statements were cast into the fore, with the Dutch government conspicuously absent from the mounting tensions (Murshed & Pavan 2011, 273). In the first month following the murder there were 174 documented incidents of racially motivated violence, in 60 per cent of the cases the victims being Muslim (Buijs 2009, 435). Many observing from outside the Netherlands were shocked by the strong public reaction, the tone of the debate, and the use of anti-Islamic sentiments following the murder. The country had seemingly "lost its collective temper and panicked" (Ipid., 422).

Bouyeri had been a member of a jihadist network called the Hofstad Group, which typifies the current trend of loose-knit structure and individual radicalization. The Hofstad Group had no recruiter in the traditional sense, but was led by a Syrian man in his 40's named Redouan al-Issar. Al-Issar did not play a role in radicalizing members, as all the members had converted to Islam on their own. Bouyeri was one of the core members who invited al-Issar to teach and lead discussions in their Amsterdam apartment. The group was comprised of forty to fifty young men from various Dutch cities, who came to exchange views and tapes on jihad (Vidino 2007, 583). Hofstad was both an exclusive and a private organization. There was a core group of fifteen to twenty members, and new participants were only welcomed if invited by a high-ranking existing member.

The Hofstad group developed an egalitarian spirit, wherein every member was free to act on his own, and there was no clear hierarchy of members. For example, it is believed that Bouyeri conceived of his attack on van Gogh independent from Hofstad. The group had no discernable political aims and was devoid of any concrete goals. In chat rooms the members fantasized about the establishment of an Islamic state, but lacked any rational strategy with which to bring this about. The Hofstad group was rather driven by an irreverent attraction to violence, in which the execution of blasphemous political figures served as their only priority (Vidino 2007, 587). Hofstad is so loosely organized that they are best characterized as a "jihadist network": a core group lacking a formal structure, with flexible membership and fluctuating leadership. The jihadist network is an example of the evolving trend in Islamist terrorist networks, although at the time prosecutors had a difficult time proving that Hofstad and other loosely connected networks constituted a terrorist organization as detailed by the Dutch penal code (Vidino 2007, 588).

In March 2006 a Rotterdam court agreed that the Hofstad group, despite lacking a hierarchical structure, was to be considered a terrorist organization. After Bouyeri was shot and detained, twelve other members of the Hofstad group were arrested and charged with belonging to a terrorist organization with the explicit intention of targeting Ayaan Hirsi Ali and other Dutch political figures. The Rotterdam trial brought an end to the Hofstad group, as most of its key members received jail terms of up to fifteen years (Vidino 2007, 588). The unique organization and nature of the Hofstad group made the hearing controversial, and ultimately changed the legal precedent of what constitutes a terrorist network in the Netherlands. The Crimes of Terrorism Act criminalized membership in a terrorist organization, recruitment for jihad, and amended the intent to commit a terrorist act as a more serious offense (Buijs 2009, 436).

The Dutch approach to counter-terrorism is considered a broad approach. The policies seek to address the chain of events that precede acts of terrorism, implying that "terrorism should not be dealt with as an isolated phenomenon, but in combination with interfacing phenomena like

radicalization and recruitment" (Akerboom 2003, 4).  By identifying early-warning signals and

taking action at the earliest possible stage, the broad approach aims to prevent the radicalization

process from occurring, rather than simply taking repressive measures once a terrorist becomes

active (Buijs 2009, 435).  The two-pillar approach contains preventative and repressive measures,

the former strengthening communities and the later tackling hotbeds of radicalization (Ipid., 436).

The Dutch approach to counter-terrorism also assumes a situation of asymmetry, referring to the

fact that Islamist activists are acting in accordance with different rules and standards than the

Dutch government (Akerboom 2003, 4).  Asymmetry also implies an inequality of arms, because

jihad fighters consider themselves to be at war with the West, whereas the Dutch government is

using peacetime instruments to combat terrorist violence (Ipid., 4).  Following the murder of van

Gogh, the increased tensions prompted the government to initiate a three-year public awareness

campaign focusing on communication with youth via different channels (Jongman 2009, 32).

Although the Netherlands is not free from the threat of homegrown terrorism and radicalization,

the situation has improved with the adoption of new counter-terrorism policies.


## Policy with Precision


Radicalization and homegrown terrorism is a growing phenomenon that requires a

nuanced approach to counter-terrorism policy.  Indeed, the wrong counter-terrorism model can be

" as dangerous as terrorism itself" (Saggar 2009, 387).  The multi-faceted, and at times

subjective, catalysts resulting in the radicalization process are extremely sensitive to policies that

explicitly target Muslim communities.  The wrong strategy could easily exacerbate the problem,

leaving second and third generation immigrants feeling even more marginalized.  It is of the

utmost importance that a balance is achieved between the public safety and potentially

discriminatory policies.

The primary danger in terms of a failed counter-terrorism policy is the possibility of initiating a boomerang effect. When counter-terrorism measures do not achieve their desired goals, the policies can instead cause unintended side effects in which governments, security communities, and the targeted population all suffer (Sagaar 2009, 382). Unfortunately, even when precision is achieved it is likely that all Muslims will, to some extent, feel the effects of counter-terrorism policies (Ipid., 382). One way to minimize the danger of a boomerang effect is to increase communication and cooperation between groups. Counter-terrorism should a joint effort, wherein Muslim organizations and moderate religious leaders take an increased role policing extremism within Muslim communities (Kelley & Morgenstern 2006, 5). It is the communities in which individuals are radicalized that are best able to identify at-risk groups and conceive of an effective solution. Moderate forces within the community are best able to serve as antenna, in order to identify radicalization processes at the earliest possible stage (Akerboom 2003, 8). The building of trust between groups is crucial, as the quality of the intelligence received by the West will undoubtedly reflect the level of confidence felt by Muslim communities. There is a distinct lack of trust to be remedied on both sides, Muslim youth in particular doubting the legitimacy and fairness of government policies (Kelley & Morgenstern 2006, 2).

Open channels of communication between Muslim communities and the majority population would also help to further integration and ameliorate feelings of marginalization. There are grievances on both sides that need to be addressed, lest they continue to fester, turning from resentment to discrimination in time. Muslim communities in particular hold many grievances against the West in terms of alienating and oppressive foreign policy decisions that are perceived as powerful Western nations taking advantage of less powerful Muslim nations (Sagaar 2009, 388). If they have not felt individually discriminated against, many relate to the political humiliation suffered by Muslims around the world at the hands of the West. This narrative is at least partially nested in the subjective imagined world, but the desire for vengeance that manifests

23

as a result is very real. Although the majority of these grievances are emotional and disjointed, through them political Islam has created a coherent and overarching worldview (Ipid., 389).

The failures and shortcomings of multiculturalism in Europe need to be debated, reassessed, and rebooted. Many still view multiculturalism "as a framework for the coexistence of separate cultures rather than a transitional mechanism for integrating newcomers into the dominant culture" (Fukuyama 2006, 14). Maintaining two separate, parallel societies will be the death of social cohesion in Europe, whether or not it is done intentionally. The polarization of society into different ethnic, cultural, and religious groups creates a fractioned population, in which certain groups become identified as 'the enemy' (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 39). Hesitance to integrate on the part of the host society may have something to do with the fear of eroding national identity. Europe's troubled history with nationalism is such that discussions concerning national identity are either off-limits or frowned upon, but the issue needs to be addressed given the diversity of contemporary European societies. It should be made clear that multiculturalism requires a sustained effort from both sides. Defection from participation will not result in the preservation of culture, but the pervasion of violence.

If multiculturalism is to succeed, the host society will need to cultivate a more nuanced perspective of the situation at hand. If the media and the general population react hysterically to every instance of religiously motivated violence, act of terrorism, and foiled terrorist plot, the panic will interfere with policy decisions and embolden acts of retaliation. Acts of homegrown terrorism in particular are damaging to the society at large because they heighten preexisting tensions and exacerbates feelings distrust towards Muslims in Europe, resulting in their continued exclusion from society (Vidino 2007, 489). As shocking and damaging as acts of homegrown terrorism are, there is the need for a greater level of social resilience in which the public could dismiss Islamic terrorism as a relatively rare phenomenon, which does represent the greater Muslim community (Sagaar 2009, 397). Indeed, multiculturalism has not failed completely. The vast majority of Muslims living in Europe are not followers of radical Islam, and a growing

number are integrating into society with higher levels of education and a growing middle class. Although acts of homegrown terrorism do reflect problems in society, they should not be given more attention than is due.

To avoid a boomerang effect, counter-terrorism policy should be formed and implicated with as much precision as possible. Muslim communities require confidence that cooperation with counter-terrorism policies will not lead to "proverbial fishing expeditions" in which all Muslims are implicated and must suffer the consequences (Saggar 2009, 393). The fact that homegrown terrorists in Europe have, for the most part, been relatively well-integrated citizens implies that many radicalized Muslims were at one time sympathetic to the West. Most Muslims in Europe surely retain more than one identity, and naturally become further socialized into one group over time (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 39). It is therefore essential that counter-terrorism policies don't provide the emotive raw materials to distance Muslims from their sense of belonging to Europe. A balance must be found between securing the nation from the homegrown terrorist threat and contributing to feelings of victimization within the Muslim community (Wright-Neville 2009, 97).

Neglecting precision could mean marginalizing a new generation of Muslim immigrants, and radicalizing those that were previously sympathetic to the West. Many take a universalist approach to Islam, concluding that it is a monolithic belief system that holds little room for personal interpretation. However, four general categories can be used to conceptualize the scope and magnitude of differences between groups (Mandaville 2009, 498). Liberal pluralist Muslims view Islam as compatible with other value systems, and see assimilation into non-Muslim societies as possible. Communal pluralist Muslims maintain that Muslim identity is distinctive, and therefore requires the continued adherence to tradition, but finds points of commonality between other value systems. Communitarian Muslims tend to restrict social interaction to Muslim circles, emphasizing the primacy of Muslim identity and religious practices. Finally, radicals adhere to a literal interpretation of religion wherein Non-Muslim social and political

systems are considered illegitimate.  Any wayward counter-terrorism policy has the ability to marginalize mainstream Muslims, potentially isolating them from society (Mandaville 2009, 504).

## Conclusion

Social control theory emphasizes the role that isolation plays in the justification of deviant behavior.  Isolation is both a precursor and a necessary precondition for radicalization. Social control theory theorizes that individuals are more likely to become involved in deviant behavior to the extent that they are detached from society (Kirby 2007, 424).  On the one hand, high levels of conformity to social norms and values are found in individuals closely linked to the society they live in.  On the other hand, it is argued that as the bond one feels towards society begins to breakdown, the risk of social deviant behavior increases.  The more an individual is isolated, the less constrained they are by societal norms, and the individual is free to adopt their own value system which justifies the use of radical violence (Ipid., 424).  In the Netherlands, the Dutch Ministry of Defense has focused on improving channels of communication between Muslims and non-Muslims, with the aim of targeting and integrating at-risk communities. Behind the new policy lies the rationale that if an individual feels Dutch, they are less likely to attack other Dutch citizens (Wilner & Bubouloz 2010, 39).

Feelings of hopelessness and despair can easily lead to isolation and the desire to radicalize.  Hopelessness is the "known absence of legitimate means to marshal and express widely held grievances" (Saggar 2009, 392).  Despair refers mainly to "a loss of patience with available routes through which to express grievances rather than their complete absence" (Ipid., 393).  Marginalization, discrimination, and other problems plaguing young Western Muslims are not likely to disappear overnight.  Legitimate means of political activism need to be established in

order to give Muslims an alternative to isolation, resentment, and radicalization.   In a recent

study comparing radical youth and democratically active youth, both groups expressed some

distrust of Dutch society, centering mainly on foreign policy decisions that were seen as having

negative consequences for Muslims (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010, 809).  The politically active youth

focused on efforts to improve their situation, whereas the more radical youth did not believe in

their ability to effect change through traditional political channels (Ipid., 809).

In this paper I argued that terrorism in Europe has gone from an external to an internal

threat.  Second and third generation immigrants have increasingly turned to radicalization, and

even acts of terrorism, in recent years.  Although this generation may appear to be better

integrated than prior generations, they continue to feel excluded from the majority population in

terms of identity and equal opportunity. The religion of Islam offers a social community and a

distinct identity outside the boundaries of race and country of origin.  The process of

radicalization has effectively ensnared a growing percentage of second and third generation

immigrants in Europe.  I outlined the relationship between the host society, the individual, and the

institution of Islam, which compels many youth to radicalize.  Militant Jihadist groups not only

recruit their members, but also rely on the attractiveness of a brotherhood community to persuade

their members.  Using the Netherlands as a case study, I shed light on one's country's unique

struggle with radicalization and homegrown terrorist attacks.  In summary I recommended a

counter-terrorism policy with an emphasis on communication and cooperation between Muslim

and majority populations.  A counter-terrorism policy with precision will have the best chances of

success as well as a limited detrimental effect on the Muslim community as a whole.

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