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THESIS

**A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES: WHY SOME BRITISH
MUSLIMS TURNED TO TERRORISM AND FRENCH
MUSLIMS DID NOT**

by

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March 2010

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TO TERRORISM AND FRENCH MUSLIMS DID NOT**

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ABSTRACT

In 2005, France and England experienced violent events that emanated from their native-born Muslim populations. France experienced massive riots in many cities over a period of several weeks in the late fall. Britain was hit by terrorists on 7 July 2005, and an attack failed two weeks later on 7/21. Also since 2001, there have been over 200 terrorist convictions in Britain, many involving homegrown radicals. The events of 2005 illustrated the difference between two western European countries that have large Muslim populations. In Britain, a small minority of British-born Muslims turned to terrorism; in France large numbers of young French-born Muslims rioted. Utilizing social movement theory, this thesis argues that there were considerably more political opportunities for radicals to act in Britain than in France. This difference in opportunities can be explained through national policy and national political culture. Britain had allowed radical groups to develop within its borders, while France, based on historical experience, proactively discouraged such a development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2005, France and England experienced symbolic events with respect to their native-born Muslim populations. France experienced massive riots in many cities over a period of several weeks in the late fall. Britain was hit by terrorists on 7 July 2005 (hereafter 7/7) and an attack failed two weeks later on 7/21. Also since 2001, there have been over 200 terrorist convictions in Britain.¹ The events of 2005 illustrated the difference between two western European countries that have large Muslim populations. In Britain, a small minority of British-born Muslims turned to terrorism; in France large numbers of young French-born Muslims rioted. What accounts for the difference in outcomes between the two countries?

England and France share many similar traits that make the difference in the actions of their respective Muslim population all the more interesting. France has about 65 million people, while Britain has about 61 million. Both countries are liberal democracies with constitutional protections for religious minorities.² Both countries have large Muslim populations. France has five million Muslims, which equates to about 10 percent of the population. Britain has about two million Muslims, which is about 3 percent of the population. In both, the majority of Muslim population arrived from former colonies in the 1960s and 1970s, mainly for economic reasons.³

Given the considerable similarities between Britain and France, what explains the different actions on the part of their respective Muslim populations during the past ten years? Why did one country's Muslim population have a small minority turn to terrorism, while another had many turn to social unrest? What accounts for this difference?

¹ Michael Emerson, "Introduction and Summary," in *Ethno-Religious Conflict in Europe: Typologies of Radicalisation in Europe's Muslim Communities*, edited by Michael Emerson, 1–10, (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2009), 8.

² France has a strict church state separation. Britain has no constitutional protection for religious rights and even has a nominal state church in the form of the Anglican Church, yet its common law tradition provides much of this protection. Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16.

³ Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16.

A. MUSLIMS IN EUROPE: COMPETING VIEWPOINTS

There are competing viewpoints when it comes to the sources of Muslim radicalism in Europe. One viewpoint is that the radicalism within Europe is due to external sources emanating from the Middle East and North Africa, as well as host nation foreign policies. Those who subscribe to this view believe that conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Iraq fuel Muslim anger and resentment. Another view holds that the problem is cultural. In other words, Islam simply is not compatible with modern Western society and this incompatibility is what generates the radicalism amongst the Muslim population in Europe. Others feel that there are internal grievances within Europe that drive European Muslim anger. These grievances are generated from the relatively poor social and economic position of many Muslims in Europe. Finally, there are those who believe that the radicalism in Europe can best be explained through the paradigm of social movement theory that explores the intersection among collective grievances, political opportunities for action, mobilizing networks, and ideological frameworks. This study investigates these perspectives on Muslim radicalization in the cases of Britain and France.

Large numbers of Muslims began arriving in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s. They came primarily for economic reasons to take advantage of the post-war labor shortage. These Muslims were primarily single men and they were not expected to stay in Europe.⁴ Yet when economic recession hit in the 1970s, many European states began to close their borders to further immigration. European states closed their borders to further low skilled workers but allowed for the possibility of family reunions and political asylum. This had the ironic effect of creating a second wave of immigration during the 1970s as families were united.⁵

Instead of being primarily concerned with political and economic rights as immigrants, Muslims began to be concerned with social issues as families were united.⁶

⁴ Jytte Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

⁵ Fetzter and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 3.

⁶ Ibid.

This concern developed as they settled permanently in Europe. European governments suddenly had to contend with how to accommodate their Muslim populations. What religious accommodations should be made regarding education, prison and hospital services? How should discrimination be handled?

For decades, European governments were able to ignore their burgeoning Muslim populations, but in the 1970s were forced to recognize the need for change and accommodation. Muslims in Europe became a new interest group and European governments had to adjust to the unique challenge that Muslim populations, as well as Islamic political groups, posed for their political systems.⁷ While the various forms of political Islam have their roots in the Middle East and South Asia, Muslim migrants adapted these ideas to the European continent.

The suppression of political Islam in the Middle East and North Africa drove many Islamic radicals to Europe. Many came from Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco as their Islamic parties and groups were persecuted. It was these “radicals” that formed the roots of militant Islam in Europe.⁸ Most settled in the UK, France and Germany. They saw Europe as a place of refuge until they could foster change in their own country. A small minority would foster radicalism among the population within their host country.

The more militant Sunni Islamists were heavily influenced by Sayyid Qutb. Sayyid Qutb was an Egyptian radical Islamist who is widely credited with giving intellectual heft to radical Islamist ideas, in the 1960s. He gave voice to the politics of despair by offering a religious theory for how to counter it.⁹ Qutb’s political manifesto “Milestones” stated that Muslims faced a critical choice between participating in a secular political system, and thereby tacitly accepting its ungodliness, or separating and/or resisting. The leaders of a Muslim revolutionary vanguard would resist ungodly, or un-Islamic leaders and systems, with physical force and Jihad. The goal was to make

⁷ Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*, 3.

⁸ Alison Pargeter, *The New Frontiers of Jihad: Radical Islam in Europe*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 6.

⁹ Ibid., 8.

an Islamic society where no man was the subject of another.¹⁰ The revolutionary vanguard would transform the corrupt, secular regimes of the Muslim world and make them more Islamic. This goal became very possible in the eyes of many after the 1979 revolution in Iran.

To be sure, Islamic activism was present in Europe as the Muslim population grew in the 50s and 60s. As the European Muslim population grew, there were more calls for accommodation, which often met with native resistance.¹¹ It was the 1979 Iranian revolution that sparked an Islamic revival in Europe.¹² Although the revolution in Iran was a Shia Muslim revolution, many Sunnis saw that Islamic law could influence, and even govern a country. This, in turn, led many Sunni Islam states to engage an ideological battle that extended to Europe.

This revival was spearheaded by states such as Saudi Arabia, which felt threatened by the example set in Iran, augmenting the historical enmity between the two states. Sunni states would compete for influence in Europe through the building of mosques. For example, in Britain, there were 51 registered mosques in 1979; in 1985, there were 329. In France, the number of mosques rose from 136 to 766 during the same period.¹³

This competition for the hearts and minds of the Muslim community from within was to also taint relations with their host countries. As Pageter states, “The vast majority of Muslims in Europe had no interest in the radical groups. Many saw Islam as a mere religion, as something that they did on set occasions but not as a way of life.”¹⁴ Yet the Salmon Rushdie affair was to change this for many.

¹⁰ This entire paragraph is largely taken from Chapter 3 of *Milestones*. It is important also to note that Al Qaeda’s main theorist, Al Zawahiri, was taught by Sayyid’s brother Mohammad. Thus, Al Qaeda’s ideology can be seen as an outgrowth of the Islamist view advocated by Qutb. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (1964), 34–39.

¹¹ Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*, 8.

¹² Pageter, *New Frontiers of Jihad*, 17.

¹³ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴ Pageter, *New Frontiers of Jihad*, 52.

The Salmon Rushdie affair is a good example of how politically motivated Islamic groups sought to mobilize Muslims in Europe. In 1988, Salmon Rushdie authored *The Satanic Verses*, a novel that offended many Muslims. Yet little spontaneous reaction took place within Europe.¹⁵ Instead, many Islamic political groups exploited the controversy over the book to enhance their own credentials as defenders of the British Muslim community.¹⁶ They sought to stir up Muslim protests and call for the book's banning, among other things. It was noted by one commentator at the time that many of the protests were joined by young British Muslims who were not particularly religious, just dissatisfied with their socio-economic position in Britain.¹⁷ In 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini sought to insert himself into the controversy by issuing a death sentence in absentia for Rushdie. This competition for the Muslim political vote, as it were, led many in Europe to question this growing minority's dedication to liberal, Western values.¹⁸

The reaction set off by the Rushdie affair and other controversies regarding the integration of Islam into European society continues to this day. Sheffer argues that the increasing alienation of diaspora communities, political agitation by groups who seek to take advantage of various integration controversies, and strong ties to the home country contribute to diaspora terrorism.¹⁹ Indeed, one of the most important characteristics of diaspora terrorism is the renewed significance of ethnic identity, which can be enhanced when there are also religious differences.²⁰ Juergensmeyer also points out that when religion becomes involved, as it has in the case of the integration of Muslims in Europe, the issue becomes one of defending one's basic identity.²¹ Therefore, even when one identifies as a Muslim, among other sources of identification (i.e., British, father, son,

¹⁵ Pageter, *New Frontiers of Jihad*, 25–26.

¹⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷ K. Malik, "Born in Bradford," *Prospect*, October 2005.

¹⁸ Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*, 6–7.

¹⁹ Gabriel Sheffer, "Diasporas and Terrorism," In *The Roots of Terrorism*, edited by Louise Richardson, 117–132, (New York: Taylor and Francis, LLC, 2006).

²⁰ Ibid., 125.

²¹ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 164.

etc.), a perceived attack on that identity can result in a desire to identify more strongly with that identity and to defend oneself against such attacks. This was the dynamic at play in the Rushdie affair. This battle continues today as new controversies arise over such things as honor killings, marriage law, and freedom to wear the veil.

Thus, the problems of economic inequality and difficulties with integration have been utilized by Islamic leaders in Europe as well as so-called native Europeans to mobilize their constituencies to their political causes, as was alluded to in the Rushdie affair. So-called native Europeans exploit the difficulties with integration to foster more nativist policies like restrictions on immigration and less accommodation for minorities. The problems within the Muslim community do not arise from Islam per se. As Roy states, associating violence with Islam in Europe just because those committing the violence happened to be Muslim is wrong. Instead, it is more appropriate to classify the terrorism within the Muslim community as arising from more traditional forms of youth violence.²² This means that Islam today is similar to leftist politics in the 1960s. Islam just happens to be the one common factor amongst many disaffected youth, who largely remain apolitical, with only a few becoming politically agitated enough to engage in terrorism, according to Roy.

As Sageman points out, young militants in Europe do not compare themselves to those back in the old country. Their comparison, and subsequent source of discontent, is with their host country.²³ In other words, even though some political agitation may be fostered by outside groups, local issues are the main driver for conflict and mobilization for militant Muslims in Europe. Some authors, such as Cesari, argue that because political Islam started in the Middle East, it cannot be separated from conflicts there.²⁴ The problem with Cesari's analysis is that it attributes wholly outside motives to groups within Europe that may be merely sponsored from the outside. In other words, a group

²² Olivier Roy, "Al-Qaeda in the West as a Youth Movement: The Power of a Narrative." in *Ethno Religious Conflict in Europe: Typologies of Radicalisation in Europe's Muslim Communities*, edited by Michael Emerson, 11–26, (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2009), 11.

²³ Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 83.

²⁴ Jocelyne Cesari, "The Securitization of Islam in Europe." *Euro-Islam.Info*. April 2009. www.euro-islam.info/2009/05/11/the-securitization-of-islam-in-europe (accessed May 31, 2009).

may utilize wholly local political opportunities and concerns to mobilize local Muslims, even though the mobilizing group may have outside ties to countries such as Saudi Arabia. Cesari is right to point out that outside groups may seek to shape and mold local movements. Yet, the predominant form of organization among European Islamic radicals is local.²⁵

While the political mobilization of European Muslims was fostered by the political Islam imitating from the Middle East, it is today dominated by local groups. These groups seek to mobilize European Muslims to support a particular cause. Therefore, the view that the source of Muslim radicalism in Europe is due to conflicts in the Middle East is only partially correct. It is important to look at the possibility that Muslim radicalism, if not wholly due to conflicts in the Middle East, could have something to do with Islam itself.

The view that Islam is one of the main drivers of Muslim violence, if not its sole source, is rooted in the fundamental clash between Islam and Western society. This “clash of civilizations” theme is symptomatic of a culturalist point of view.²⁶ This view holds that Islam represents a closed set of beliefs, values contained within a common area, society, and history. Islam is seen as a unitary concept that can explain almost anything related to Muslims in almost any context. This concept confuses religion with culture and does not recognize that values and practices are constantly in flux. Thus, somehow Islam is seen as a coherent whole that is incompatible with the West. It is important to note also that in many cases Islamic Fundamentalists justify their own practices and beliefs through the idea of a clash of civilizations. They, too, believe that Islam is incompatible with the West and is in conflict with the West.

If this essentialist point of view were to carry any weight, then the reason radical movements thrive in Britain rather than in France has to do with the respective Muslim

²⁵ Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad: an Exploratory Study*, Report, (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2006), 33.

²⁶ Olivier Roy provides a good overview of the arguments against the culturalist point of view, especially by the likes of Bernard Lewis and other Orientalists. Samuel Huntington “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993. Olivier Roy, “Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah” (New York: Columbia University Press), 9–10.

populations' historical relationship with Islam. This can partially explain the differences, as the Muslims in each country migrated from countries whose populations had differing outlooks when it came to the role of Islam in society. British Muslims largely migrated from South Asia and take a much more traditional view of Islam, while French Muslims came largely from North Africa and take a more secular view of Islam's role in society.²⁷ This is only one possible reason, however, and the reasons for the differing levels of radicalization are varied and complicated, but primarily related to the political, not the religious. This is especially true when it comes to European Muslim elite discourse.

The current European Muslim elite discourse often revolves around what level of integration or assimilation should take place. Klausen outlines four main themes in this respect: secular integrationist, Anticlerical, Volunteerist, and Neo-Orthodox.²⁸ Those Muslim leaders that think Islam can be integrated into Western society as a mainstream religion are the secular integrationists. Those Muslims that feel that Islam is compatible with Western society but do not want such integration to be institutionalized, such as national Islamic organizations or representative bodies, are the volunteerists, or Euro-Muslims. They see Islam as primarily a secondary identity and would prefer religion remain a private matter. Those that feel that Islam is incompatible and do not want to be assimilated are the Neo-Orthodox. Finally, those that feel that Islam is incompatible with Western norms but favor assimilation are the Anti-clericals.

These various views show that Muslims in Europe differ greatly in their politics. Some, like the Anticlericals and the Neo-Orthodox hold to an essentialist view of Islam, but differ as to what this means with respect to state relations. This difference in views is a reflection of personal belief as well as a reflection of the nature of church state relations. Societies like the Dutch and British that favor a separation of church and state see high levels of support for Neo-Orthodox and Volunteerist viewpoints, while countries with a strict secular government like France see high levels of support for secular integrationist views.²⁹ Thus, it should be clear that as there is no single viewpoint

²⁷ Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*, 95; Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 77.

²⁸ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 87.

²⁹ Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*, 95.

regarding what it means to be a Muslim in Europe, the various viewpoints are also shaped by the respective national political cultures. European Muslim utilize and are shaped by the opportunities present in their given society, which is what social movement theory would predict, as will be shown below.

Social movement theory, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, incorporates many of the arguments that were found to explain only part of the issues related to Muslim radicalism in Europe. Social movement theory holds that political opportunities shape the mobilization of aggrieved people based on a theme or set of themes that resonate with the aggrieved citizens. Social movement theory is careful to point out that grievances are only one factor among many. Grievances are simply not sufficient for people to become mobilized on a consistent basis. The Rushdie affair above is a good illustration of this point. Many Muslims were offended, but no spontaneous reaction took place. It took political groups to recognize political opportunities available in the Rushdie affair to organize Muslims in mass political action. If grievances alone were sufficient, then those who hold that Islam is incompatible with the West, and that conflicts in the Middle East drive much of the Muslim radicalism in Europe, would have a much better case and there would be spontaneous protests against such alleged affronts to Muslim dignity as the *Satanic Verses*. Instead, political organizations had to mobilize people using other themes, besides the alleged affront to Muslim dignity. Indeed, social movement theory also accounts for how Islam can be used as a motivating factor. In this respect, it does account for Islam playing a role in the radicalization of European Muslims. The redemptive and reformative themes of religion, in this case Islam, are a powerful theme that can unite and mobilize people, provided these themes resonate with people personally.

Social movement theory therefore is a much better frame for determining what may lie behind the differences between British and French Muslim populations. It incorporates many of the elements of the other theories into a coherent, dynamic whole. Social movement theory provides the basis for this paper's main claim: the political

opportunity and resources for organizing exists in a much greater degree in British Muslims than it does in French Muslims. This accounts for the difference in mobilization outcomes between the two countries.

B. METHODOLOGY AND ROADMAP

This thesis will compare Britain and France to show that social movement theory can partially explain the presence of terrorism in Britain and the lack of it in France over the last few years. Yet other factors such as foreign policy, counterterrorism policies and structures play a role too. There are differing levels of political opportunity and radical mobilization in each country, with Britain having a much larger radical Islamist presence. It is this larger presence of radical organizations in Britain that can mobilize British Muslims by using the themes of militant Islam. The same structures do not exist in France. Nor does the French government allow such organizations the political space in which to operate.

This thesis will analyze social and economic statistics of both countries to determine, if any, possible causes for the differing reactions among the populations. This will be done through the utilization of social movement theory. Each country will be viewed through the lens of social movement theory in order to show that the conditions for the development of terrorism were more prevalent in Britain.

Chapter II will discuss the theoretical tenants of social movement theory, specifically, and most especially, political opportunity structures. This discussion will highlight how political opportunities often are what give radical organizations the space with which to conduct their operations. These organizations also must be structured in such a way that they can take advantage of those opportunities. The discussion will then turn to the relation between organizations and individuals as seen through the radicalization process. It is the radicalization process that turns an individual from a law-abiding citizen to one who is willing to engage in violence for the sake of a political cause. While there is no single path to becoming radicalized, it is important to see the broad outlines of the various processes in order to see the key role organizations can play in such a process.

Chapter III will discuss the socio-economic situation of British Muslims to determine what the factors were that led so many British Muslims to turn to terrorism. The data will show that the opportunities for political protest and potential political violence existed in Britain. The views of Muslims within the British Muslim community will be analyzed to show that the terrorists were rogue actors but they were also part of a larger dissatisfaction within the British Muslim community. This will be conducted using Rand Corporation's data on Muslim views, Pew Center data on Muslim views, and the recently released Gallup Coexist 2009 poll of Muslim attitudes in Britain, France and Germany.³⁰

This data will be used in combination with detailed case studies of the terrorist cells that perpetuated the 2005 attacks and the attempted transatlantic bombing plot, to determine what the primary motivators were for their turn to violence. The case studies will be conducted by using press accounts, interviews of suspects available in the press, and government and private analysis of the events. These case studies will show that the terrorists came from the discontented masses of British Muslims. They were partially motivated by the international Jihadist narrative.³¹ The data will furthermore show that it was the presence of radical groups, as well as the unique political opportunities present in Britain as a result of its political system and foreign policy during the last few years, that fostered the development of terrorism.

Chapter IV will discuss France and its Muslim population. The data on French Muslims presents a difficult problem. The French government does not keep detailed data on its minority populations as a matter of policy, in order to contribute to integration. Yet some analysts have done some work on French Muslims, which will be useful.³² The available French government data will be combined with the data on Muslim views from

³⁰ David Aaron *In Their Own Words: Voices of Jihad* (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 2008); Gallup-The Coexist Foundation, Muslim West Facts Project. *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations*. Poll, (Washington, D.C.: Gallup, 2009); and, The Pew Global Attitudes Project *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*. Pew Research Center Project, (Washington, D.C.: The Pew Research Center, 2006).

³¹ Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 24.

³² Justin Vaisse, *Unrest in France, November 2005: Immigration, Islam, and the Challenge of Integration*. Presentation to Congressional Staff (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2006).

the Gallup poll discussed above. This social data will be combined with press accounts of the views of the French Muslim rioters, as well as interviews conducted by various scholars, to determine the overall views of French Muslims with respect to French society.

The French data will show that the reason France has not seen the level of terrorist violence that England has since 2000 is that the political opportunities and organizational factors were just not present in France. While French Muslims do consistently rank far below their ostensibly native counterparts in almost every socio-economic measure available, and experience high levels of discrimination, the political opportunities and space for radicals to operate does not exist to the degree it does in Britain. The riots in France were a result of socio-economic discontent and not the result of violent political agenda. Additionally, the French state has been extremely proactive with respect to monitoring and deterring radical groups.

Finally, the thesis will conclude in Chapter V with an overview of the arguments presented in this paper. Then, Chapter V will discuss the ramifications of organizations presenting the salient difference between Britain and France. Because discontent exists within any society, and the narrative presented by international Jihadist organizations like Al Qaeda are available to anyone with an Internet connection, it is important for nations to focus on careful targeting of the organizations capable of motivating action. The French example shows that the state can play a significant role in deterring and countering radical groups by reducing political opportunities and proactively monitoring and deterring radical elements within a given population.

Thus, there is no reason to think that Islam is the primary factor in modern terrorism in Europe or in other locations. More often than not terrorism is the result of political opportunities and the presence of organizations capable of radicalizing masses of discontented Muslims. Islam is incidental to the discussion.

C. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS

This paper will cover the general pattern of political opportunities and mobilization routes taken within Britain and France as they relate to Muslims within each country. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss or address the various strains of

political Islam in any specific detail. Although it is true that a specific ideology can play a role, it is incidental to the claim of this thesis. Militant Islam is treated as a framing device, which may or may not have resonance with a given Muslim population. This thesis is also limited by secondary or tertiary research. The opportunity to conduct primary research did not exist for this thesis. Thus, this paper is constrained by those limitations that are commonly experienced by papers utilizing secondary and tertiary sources. Every effort was made to address obvious and not so obvious bias in sources.

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II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

A. SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

Generally speaking, terrorism experts agree that terrorism is the result of group processes and not the result of individual pathologies. However irrational terrorist behavior may appear to others, it has generally been agreed that pathology is not the explanation for terrorist behavior; psychology may help explain one terrorists actions but not another's.³³ In other words, the individual profiles of terrorists vary so much that there can be no overarching psychological theory for terrorist motivation. Individual-level explanations, especially psychological explanations for terrorism, have generally been discounted by experts such as Horgan, Della Porta and Victoroff, among others.³⁴ As Victoroff repeatedly points out in his critique of psychological explanations, it is not that psychology does not potentially offer insights into motivating terrorist behavior, it just that there is to date little evidence to indicate that it does.³⁵ In other words, the utility of individual and psychological explanations for terrorism is extremely limited. The research is neither deep nor broad enough. Thus, it is important to turn to group processes and psychology for likely explanations for terrorist's motivations.

When considering the group processes that terrorist experts utilize, it is especially useful to use social movement theory as a way to consider how people become motivated to engage in terrorism. As Tilly points out, terrorism is often the byproduct of other social movements.³⁶ Roy argues that the types of Muslim terrorism seen in Europe can best be considered a form of dissent and therefore related to other social movements,

³³ Jerrold M. Post, "The Psychological Dynamics of Terrorism." In *The Roots of Terrorism*, edited by Louise Richardson, 17–28 (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, 2006), 615.

³⁴ Donatella Della Porta, "Introduction: On Individual Motivations in Underground Political Organizations." In *Social Movements and Violence. Participation in Underground Organizations*, edited by Donatella Della Porta (London: Elsevier, 1992); John Horgan. *The Psychology of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and, Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 1 (February 2005), 3–42.

³⁵ Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist," 3–42.

³⁶ Charles Tilly, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists." *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1, Theories of Terrorism: A Symposium (March 2004), 5–13.

especially social revolutionary movements of the left.³⁷ Ross also points out that terrorism can result from organizational splits; one group may believe that violence may be the only way to reach group goals.³⁸ Crenshaw agrees with Ross and points out that terrorist groups share many characteristics of other social movement groups.³⁹ Thus, it is clear that in many ways terrorism can be considered a form of social movement.

The leading proponents of social movement theory argue that the key to understanding why social movements develop are three main factors: political opportunities, mobilization structures, and framing processes.⁴⁰ Social movement theorists do not deny the powerful role of collective grievances, but they insist that grievances alone are not sufficient to explain social mobilization. It is instead the interactions between these three main factors are what shape and mold political movements.

Political opportunities are rules set up by the governing system, levels of discontent, economics, social conditions, etc. within a country. As Tarrow puts it, political opportunities are those consistent, but not necessarily permanent aspects of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by effecting their expectations of success or failure.⁴¹ Political opportunities are those things within a country that both encourage and restrict the development of social movements. In other words, political opportunities are the rules of the game, external to the social movement.⁴² Thus, a proportional representation system would demand far less organization on behalf of a minority group if its only goal were to be represented.

³⁷ Olivier Roy, "Al-Qaeda in the West as a Youth Movement," 11–21.

³⁸ Jeffrey Ian Ross, "Structural Causes of Oppositional Political Terrorism: Towards a Causal Model." *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no. 3 (August 1993), 317–329.

³⁹ Martha Crenshaw. "An Organizational Approach to the Study of Terrorism." *Orbis* (Fall 1985: 465–485), 466.

⁴⁰ Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes - Toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements," In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 1–22 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴¹ Sydney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 85.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 77.

Likewise, a national system, wherein parties compete nationally, rather than locally, such as that in France, would demand much more dedicated organizing to even be heard at the national level.

Theorists that focus on political opportunity highlight five main dimensions of political opportunity, as it relates to social movements: (1) opening of access to participation for new actors; (2) evidence of political realignment within society; (3) the appearance of influential allies; (4) emerging splits within the elite; (5) a decline in the state's capacity or will to repress dissent.⁴³ Greater access is usually related to a partial opening, as citizens with no political access or full are unlikely to have incentives to act.⁴⁴ Thus, in Europe, Muslims who experience partial recognition of their religious rights, or demands for equity in relation to other societal groups, like Jews, such as in Britain, are more likely to see an opportunity to gain more, whereas in states that deny any place for religion in politics, such as France, reduce the opportunity for Muslim groups to mobilize against the state.

Evidence of shifting alignments provides opportunities through the increased importance of certain elements of governing coalitions. Tarrow uses the example of how the increased importance of Democratic Party "inclusionists" created the opportunity for the Kennedy Administration to seize the initiative on the black civil rights movement.⁴⁵ This was due to the defection of many Southern White voters to the Republican Party in the 1950s. This shift in power created the opportunity for the black civil rights movement because they saw the opportunity of national support in the form of the Democratic Party.

Divided elites provide an explicit opportunity for emerging movements. This factor is closely related to a decreased will to repress as divided elites can seek the support of groups seeking change. Groups previously repressed or denied access can suddenly find their fortunes change as a division within the elite can provide them with

⁴³ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 76.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 77.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 78.

the opportunity they seek. With respect to this particular study, opportunities can result when elites are divided as to the best way to accommodate Muslim minorities.

Influential allies can also play a large role in the success or failure of a social movement. Established religious groups can provide support to emergent religious groups because they see common cause in issues of values and religion in public life. Likewise, as Roy argues, some Muslim groups can find support in radical left organizations as they both seek to challenge the ruling establishment.⁴⁶

The arrangement of the state and its repressive capacity can greatly influence the course of challengers. As was pointed out earlier, a strong centralized state will encourage challengers to mobilize nationally, while a federal state can encourage mobilization at the local level, as a federal system provides multiple targets at the base.⁴⁷ Yet this is not the entirety of the issue, because structure does not explain how a centralized or federal state accommodates challenges. As Fetzer and Soper point out in their study of Muslims and the state, it is the historical pattern of church-state relations that explains much of Britain and France's reactions to the demands of their respective Muslim minorities.⁴⁸ Indeed some of the nature of accommodation and willingness to repress or include movements is highly contingent on the politics of the day.⁴⁹

Mobilizing structures are those collective vehicles, informal and formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action.⁵⁰ If no collective vehicles exist to take advantage of the political opportunities, little action will take place. For example, in a democratic country groups of people may have ample access to affect change in the political system but are unable to because there is no organization capable of harnessing this desire to change. The opportunities exist but the capabilities do not.

⁴⁶ Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 46–49.

⁴⁷ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 81.

⁴⁸ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 18–19.

⁴⁹ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 83.

⁵⁰ Adam, McCarthy and Zald, "Introduction," 1–22.

A prime example of mobilizing structures at work is the black church during the civil rights movement in the United States. As Morris points out, the black church was the dominant institution within black society. The church provided the organizational framework for most of the economic, political and educational endeavors of black society, prior to, and during the civil rights movement.⁵¹ The black church provided social and economic services that were largely denied to blacks prior to the civil rights movement. Through this structure, blacks were able to mobilize and provide the institutional and moral support the civil rights movement. The church provided a common organizing principle that allowed the civil rights movement to mobilize masses of blacks throughout the American south. Without this organization, the grievances of American blacks may not have been sufficient to mobilize blacks for change.

Similarly, the Islamic Revolution in Iran was built around Shia religious structures. The origins of the Islamic Revolution in Iran were in the urban middle class that sought the removal of the despotic Shah. Instead of leading the revolution, the urban middle class was quickly pushed aside by the power of the Shia clerics and their ability to mobilize masses of poor and rural Iranians.⁵² The far more political middle class was unable to assume the lead in the face of the power of the Shia religious establishment, which consisted of thousands of devoted followers willing to follow the dictates of their clerics, an established organizational structure, a presence in every corner of society, and experienced in mobilizing masses of people. This mobilizing ability and power allowed the Shia religious establishment to take over the revolution and imbibe it with the religious fervor that was to create the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.

Another example is that of the parallel Islamic sector in Egypt. When the formal political system remained closed to parties and Islamic groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s and 1980s, an informal network of social service, athletic, and

⁵¹ Aldon Morris, "The Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement: The SCLC as the Decentralized, Radical Arm of the Black Church." in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*, edited by Christian Smith, 29–47 (New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁵² M. M. Salehi "Radical Islamic Insurgency in the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979." in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*, edited by Christian Smith, 47–66 (New York: Routledge, 1996).

educational organizations developed.⁵³ This informal network allowed Islamists to organize and recruit outside of the view of Egyptian authorities.

Mobilizing structures can be things such as political parties or religious groups. The key is that these structures seek to translate individual concerns into collective action according to their viewpoint. For example, Islamic radical groups often use mosques, community organizations, and cultural societies, to recruit young Muslims that are religiously minded to follow their particular radical ideology.⁵⁴

Mobilizing organizations tend to use one of three basic types of collective action: violence, disruption and convention.⁵⁵ Violence is the most likely to encourage repression and reaction from the state, but it requires fewer resources. Convention is usually based upon the modes of contention expected in a given society. Thus, national- or state-specific modes of mobilization and contention are extremely important. In other words, if most collective action takes the form of demonstration or strikes in a particular state, then a social movement in that state will likely use those modes as a way of mobilizing and engaging support. Disruption is when movements seek to keep authorities off balance. The sit-in and demonstration were originally disruptive tactics used by protest movements such as the American civil rights groups and Ghandi against British discrimination in South Africa.⁵⁶ Over time, these tactics became institutionalized and expected. Disruption, therefore, is where innovation in the symbolic protest of social movements takes place.

Finally, framing processes are those collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action.⁵⁷ They give people a reason to mobilize for action. Framing processes point out a grievance that can be alleviated by joining an organization and forcing change. The key to the framing

⁵³ Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 13.

⁵⁴ Quintan Wicktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 23.

⁵⁵ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 104.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 97.

⁵⁷ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, "Introduction," 1–22.

process is frame alignment. Frame alignment is when social movement leaders seek to use frames that identify an injustice, attribute that injustice to outside forces and propose solutions to the injustice that resonate with a target population.⁵⁸ The framing process must resonate, though, in order for action to occur.

A good example of this phenomenon is that of the civil rights movement in the United States. The civil rights movement borrowed heavily from the already established American discourse on “rights” as a mode of discourse.⁵⁹ The framing of the struggle for civil rights was a bridging device that used the traditional American discourse around rights to mobilize already aggrieved blacks as well as whites who were sympathetic to the denial of equal rights to blacks.⁶⁰ It was also the use of non-violent struggle that helped frame the struggle as a peaceful, righteous demand for equal treatment under the law. The more violent the reaction by white southerners, the more righteous the struggle appeared. Thus, framing is a dynamic process with the social movement reacting to and fostering reaction from the larger culture. In the case of the civil rights movement, it was the use of the language of rights and non-violence that made its theme resonate with a large portion of the American population. If the civil rights movement had resorted to violence, all its talk about civil rights would have been seen as unreasonable. Similarly, the civil rights movement was able to compound the effect of its rights as framed against the more violent reaction by some white southerners.

B. RADICALIZATION PROCESS

Terrorist experts point out that terrorism is often preceded and motivated by a set of grievances, but that these grievances are not sufficient by themselves. People must be motivated to act in a violent manner. Moghaddam points out several factors can foster the development of terrorism: group isolation, perceived need for radical change, perceived lack of means to effect change, perception of societal or political illegitimacy,

⁵⁸ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 123.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

among others.⁶¹ Ross holds that terrorism develops in conditions of unrest, high levels of grievances, counterterrorism failure, and support among the population.⁶² These grievances can be poverty, lack of political opportunity, discrimination, or anything that will motivate people to take violent action. People often do not have to act upon grievances they personally experience. As Gurr points out, “Poverty is seldom invoked by militants to justify their actions. Rather they claim to act on behalf of groups that are repressed or marginalized by dominant groups.”⁶³ If poverty and political grievances were sufficient to motivate radical action, it is likely that the world would be plagued by constant conflict. Instead, what is seen is that the incidences of terrorism are rare.

Richardson puts the issue of grievances and framing even more starkly when she states, “For someone who rankles at injustice, identifies with the disadvantaged, and wants to help them, becoming a social worker is a more typical career path.”⁶⁴ It takes something more to become a terrorist than simple grievances. Grievances are ubiquitous and terrorists are not. Instead, grievances for the terrorist become a political and framing opportunity to be exploited in recruiting new members to the cause. Thus, the grievance, whether it is poverty or repression, is incidental.

It is, as Post points out, incumbent upon the group leader to frame a grievance in such a way that terrorism is the answer.⁶⁵ This is where the dynamics between the group and the individual meet. The process of radicalization or turning individuals into terrorists involves pushing an individual towards identifying with the group and melding

⁶¹ Fathali M. Moghaddam, “Cultural Preconditions for Potential Terrorist Groups: Terrorism and Societal Change.” In *Understanding Terrorism: Psychosocial Roots, Consequences and Interventions*, edited by Fathali M. Moghaddam and Anthony J. Marsella, 103–118, (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2004), 107.

⁶² Ross, “Structural Causes of Oppositional Political Terrorism,” 31.

⁶³ Ted Robert Gurr, “Economic Factors” In *The Roots of Terrorism*, edited by Louise Richardson, 85–102, (New York: Taylor and Francis, LLC, 2006), 87.

⁶⁴ Louise Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy; Understanding the Threat*, (New York: Random House, 2006), 45.

⁶⁵ Jerrold M. Post, “The Psychological Dynamics of Terrorism.” In *The Roots of Terrorism*, edited by Louise Richardson, 17–28 (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, 2006), 18.

his personality with that of the group.⁶⁶ As the personal identity fuses with the group the struggle becomes more personal. This is especially intensified in religious groups as they believe they have a moral obligation and a religiously sanctioned justification for their actions. While some argue that the use of religion as a motivator for terrorist violence represents a new form of terrorism, religion remains simply one motivation among many possible motivators.⁶⁷

With respect to radical Islamists in the West, the radicalization process can take many forms. Jenkins theorizes that jihadist recruits in Western countries are part of a marginalized immigrant subculture or are personally cut off from family or friends.⁶⁸ The radicalization process can begin at a mosque led by a radical Imam, an informal Islamic association, in college, in prisons and on the Internet.⁶⁹ One way that the process of becoming a radical Islamist could be through a series of steps:

The process starts with incitement—a message that commands and legitimizes violent jihad—and it combines self selection and persuasion by jihadist recruiters. Volunteers are recruited into a universe of belief, not a single destination. Eager acolytes may coalesce into an autonomous cell, as did the original Hamburg group that later carried out the 9/11 attack, or they may join an existing local group. Individuals may be moved along to training camps or be persuaded by jihadist exhortation to act on their own.⁷⁰

What is important to remember is that since the radical Islamist message is widely and increasingly distributed, and connections between groups like Al Qaeda and local

⁶⁶ Martha Crenshaw, “How Terrorists Think: What Psychology Can Contribute to Understanding Terrorism” In *Terrorism: Roots, Impact, Responses*, edited by Lawrence Howard, 71–80 (New York: Praeger, 1992), 74–75.

⁶⁷ Walter Lacquer has argued that in recent years religiously motivated terrorism has formed a “new” form of terrorism. He has claimed that terrorism has reached a new stage of destructiveness due to the availability of weapons of mass destruction, combined with the apocalyptic views of many religiously motivated terrorists. Historians aside there is nothing new about terrorism in this age or any other. He is right to point out the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, however. See Walter Lacquer, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁶⁸ Brian Michael Jenkins, *Building an Army of Believers: Jihadist Radicalization and Recruitment*. testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment (Washington, DC: Rand Corporation, 2007), 3.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

radicals appears random, the level of radicalization in a given society would depend upon the number of access points where recruiters can meet potential radicals.⁷¹ It is also important to remember that while there is no single path toward radicalization, the broad patterns of radicalization can be discerned.

Terrorism, therefore, can be seen as the result of the processes and dynamics highlighted by social movement theories. Analysts often focus on the grievances of the radicalized Muslims, but little attention is given to the underlying structures that enable these individuals to act. Individuals can and do self-radicalize, but more often than not it is the presence of an organization that truly fosters the radicalization process. Social movement theory provides a way to conceptualize how radicalization occurs in a given society.

For example, political opportunities can explain how radical groups are able to operate within a state. These groups are able to organize and facilitate the radicalization of willing recruits. When elites are divided as to how to respond or repress such radical activity the political opportunity for terrorism exists.

Organizations capable of taking advantage of such opportunities must be present and allowed to operate in order for radicalization to take place. These organizations can utilize the widespread grievances of a population by tailoring their frame in such a way that action, in this case violent action, is the method of choice. Thus, if a large segment of the population feels alienated, disadvantaged or repressed, the appeal of a radical message is that much greater.

Thus, social movement theory provides the best overall theoretical structure for viewing the radicalization process. In order for the radicalization process to occur it is necessary for there to be political opportunities present for radical groups to exist and to promulgate their message. Radical groups that can reach out and mobilize a population that is susceptible to their message must be present. Grievances must be shaped by these groups utilizing frames that resonate within the target population. Individuals within the

⁷¹ Jenkins, *Building an Army of Believers*, 5.

target population for whom the radical message resonates, must increasingly identify and find solidarity within the radicalized group. Without these elements, it is unlikely that radicalization will occur on a regular basis.

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III. BRITAIN

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter will discuss British Muslims and how a small minority of them turned to terrorism. This chapter will show that the dynamic relationship between the British state with respect to its Muslim population provided political opportunities for radical Muslim groups. As per social movement theory, the elites in Britain were divided as to what to do with respect to the British Muslim population. They were also unable and unwilling, in some cases, to go after radical Muslim groups because they did not see them as threats. These radical groups, in turn, capitalized on these political opportunities as well as the relatively poor economic situation and alienation of British Muslims to recruit members. This recruitment led to the mobilization of a portion of the British Muslim population based on a radical Islamic frame. Eventually, some members became radical enough to support and participate in terrorist activities.

It is the argument of this chapter that were it not for the broad presence of radical groups like the Al Muhajiroun movement, and the inability of the British government to suppress radical groups, due to internal divisions and lack of capacity, British Muslims would be less likely to turn to terrorism. The presence of radical Muslim groups and charities provides the mobilization gateway terrorist groups need to find and socialize their recruits. In fact, the Al Muhajiroun movement is linked to the fertilizer bomb plot in which five British men received life sentences.⁷² It was officially disbanded in 2004 but reconstituted itself as different groups that continue to operate in Britain.⁷³ At the very least its support for, and avocation of, violence certainly creates an environment where violence is tolerated by a portion of the population. It is held up as an example of how radical groups in Britain socialize young Muslims into the world of radical Islam.

The terrorists involved in the 7/7 bombing, the 7/21 attempted bombing, and the transatlantic airline plot, all followed a roughly similar radicalization path. This

⁷²Jamie Doward and Andrew Wander, "The Network." *The Guardian Online*. May 6, 2007. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/may/06/terrorism.jamiedoward> (accessed February 3, 2009).

⁷³ Ibid.

radicalization path is similar to that followed by other radical Muslims in Britain in that a radicalized conduit, whether it was a political movement or a charity, was present to help channel them toward radicalization and, ultimately, terrorism. It should be noted, though, that the path to radicalization varies greatly. The claim of this paper is that, if it were not for the political opportunities present in Britain, the radicalization process would not be facilitated and accelerated by groups and networks. Indeed, the 7/7 bombers were linked to several individuals in the wide-ranging CREVICE investigation who were, in turn, linked to Al Muhajiroun.⁷⁴

In the end, it will be shown that were it not for the presence and active mobilization of British Muslims by radical groups, the terrorism problem within Britain would be significantly different. For example, the French government cracked down on Muslim extremists after multiple bombings in the mid-1990s. Since then its problems with radical Islamic groups have been limited. The British Government has been slow to awaken to the troubles within its Muslim community. It is likely that the same levels of discontent would exist, even without the presence of radical Islamic groups, but the likelihood of terrorism would be less due to the lack of organizations able to facilitate the radicalization process.

B. BRITISH MUSLIM CONDITIONS

Compared with the majority population of Britain, British Muslims are socially and economically much worse off. According to a 2003 report by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia on employment, British Muslims had unemployment rates higher than 20 percent, compared with 6 percent in the broader population of Britain.⁷⁵ Two-thirds of British Muslims live in low-income housing. A quarter of British Muslims live in overcrowded housing, compared with 2 percent of

⁷⁴ Raffaello Pantucci, "Ban on U.K. Radical Islamist Group al-Muhajiroun Raises Free Speech Questions," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation) VIII, no. 3 (January 2010), 4–6.

⁷⁵ "Comparative Report: Migrants, Minorities, and Employment," European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, October, 2003, taken from Jocelyne Cesari, "The Securitisation of Islam in Europe," *Euro-Islam.Info*, April 2009, <http://www.euro-islam.info/2009/05/11/the-securitization-of-islam-in-europe> (accessed May 31, 2009), 9.

white British citizens.⁷⁶ British Muslims who are in the labor force also tend to earn less than their white counterparts in Britain, with over 50 percent of Muslims earning less than \$1,200 a week.⁷⁷ British Muslims, who account for about 3 percent (2 million) of the British population, make up 8 percent of the prison population.⁷⁸ All these factors paint a picture of a Muslim population that has, at the very least, an economic and social life that is significantly different than that experienced by mainstream British society.

British Muslims' attitudes, according to polling data and interviews, largely comports with the above data. British Muslims experience is one of "hopelessness," as one London Imam described it.⁷⁹ Young British Muslims have identified more readily with their religion than with their particular ethnic group or even with the British state.⁸⁰ When asked if they felt they were doing well or saw that their conditions would be improving, only 7 percent felt that their place in British society would be improving.⁸¹ Furthermore, according to Sophie Gilliat-Ray, due to the level of racism in parts of British Society, young Muslims' feelings of belonging to British society are weak.⁸²

Additionally, it is not just the views of Muslims that is a factor in this discussion; it is the views of both British Muslims and their non-Muslim fellow citizens. How each sees the other is vitally important as it helps flesh out the level of perceived discrimination. According to the Gallup Coexist Index, 26 percent of the British public as a whole views people of other faiths (non-Christian) as a threat, while only 3 percent

⁷⁶ European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, "Comparative Report," 10.

⁷⁷ The Economist, "Britain and its Muslims: How the Government Lost the Plot," *The Economist*, (February 28, 2009) 59–60.

⁷⁸ Analyst, Jane's Islamic Affairs, "Rage and Britain's Young Muslims," *Janes.com*. September 01, 2006, <http://search.janes.com/search/> (accessed April 15, 2009).

⁷⁹ Zachary Shore, *Breeding Bin Ladens: America, Islam, and the Future of Europe*, (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 15–16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸¹ This data comes from 2009. It is reasonable to make the assumption that over the years attitudes among British Muslims have not changed significantly. Gallup-The Coexist Foundation, Muslim West Facts Project, *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations*, Poll, (Washington, D.C.: Gallup, 2009).

⁸² Cited in Dilwar Hussain, "The Impact of 9/11 on British Muslim Identity," in Ron Greaves, Theodore Gabriel, Yvonne Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith, *Islam and the West Post 9/11* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 128.

of British Muslims feel the same way.⁸³ When asked various questions about what their views of Muslim women wearing the headscarf were, the British public, as opposed to their Muslim fellow citizens, was twice as likely to negatively associate the headscarf with fanaticism, oppression, and discrimination against women.⁸⁴ Interestingly, 45 percent of the British public as a whole believes that, in order for British Muslims to be fully integrated, they must learn to accept public comments that they perceive as offensive. Only 9 percent of British Muslims agree.⁸⁵ This reveals yet another gap in how the British view each other. It would seem that the British public attitude is that minorities are being overly sensitive to public slights. This could translate into a broad lack of sensitivity toward legitimate Muslim concerns regarding propriety and respect for religious symbols.

British Muslims have more negative views of Westerners than even some countries in the Middle East. According to one poll, British Muslims were more likely than Egyptian Muslims to view Westerners as selfish, arrogant, and violent.⁸⁶ In fact, British Muslims ascribe a much greater percentage of negative traits upon Westerners versus what Westerners bestow upon Muslims.⁸⁷ British Muslims and the British public as a whole agree that relations between the West and the Muslim world are bad. A quarter of the British public views Muslims as the cause of troubled relationship, while nearly half of British Muslims believe Westerners are to blame.⁸⁸

The British public appears to be wary of its Muslim fellow citizens. British Muslims readily identify with their faith at least as much as with their country.⁸⁹ This seems to have translated into a perceived loyalty gap, with 49 percent of the British

⁸³ Gallup-The Coexist Foundation, *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009*, 18.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁶ The Pew Global Attitudes Project. *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*. Pew Research Center Project, (Washington, D.C.: The Pew Research Center, 2006), 6.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁸⁹ Gallup-The Coexist Foundation, *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009*, 19.

public questioning the loyalty of their Muslim fellow citizens.⁹⁰ According to a Pew Global Attitudes study, a majority of the British public views being a devout Muslim as potentially conflicting with living in a modern society, while British Muslims appear evenly split on the issue.⁹¹ This suggests that British Muslims are unsure of how being a Muslim can be accommodated with participating in modern British society.

It is also suggestive of the identity politics involved in being a Muslim in British society. As is true for most people, religion is only one aspect of their lives. Half of mainstream British society perceives British Muslims as potentially disloyal. Thus, a British Muslim may feel that they have to defend or justify their faith unnecessarily. This also can lead some Muslims to identify even more with their faith, as they are already being judged and classified solely on that basis. Given the other data cited above regarding British Muslims, high identification with their religion, and the conflict between faith and integration, becomes all the more stark.

Additionally, British Muslims interact within a society that has conflicting views with respect to religion. Britain does have a national church in the form of the Anglican Church. This informs much of the debate regarding the role and place of Islam within British society.⁹² On the one hand, there is a hostile attitude toward Islam, as it represents a foreign religion. On the other hand, accommodation for Muslims receives the support of religious leaders within the Anglican Church because they both find common cause on several values issues. This in turn fosters a level of division in elite attitudes as they see some aspects of even radical Muslim groups' efforts in British society as legitimate, especially with respect to education.⁹³

Based on the data above, it is clear that relations between British Muslims and the British public as a whole are, at best, strained. British Muslims appear alienated from the mainstream of British society. They feel that their prospects for improvement are low

⁹⁰ Gallup-The Coexist Foundation, *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009*, 20.

⁹¹ The Pew Global Attitudes Project, *The Great Divide*, 3.

⁹² Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 18–19.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 54–55.

and that British society just does not understand their issues. Social movement theory would see these strained relations as a motivational potentiality that would need political opportunities in order to mobilize support.⁹⁴ In this environment, radical groups, such as the Al Muhajiroun movement can, and do, find significant political opportunities as their very existence can attest. They capitalize on the latent discontent within the British Muslim community by treating the discontent as a recruitment opportunity.

C. MUHAJIROUN MOVEMENT

The Al Muhajiroun movement in Britain provides an interesting case study of how a militant, radical Islamist groups operates in a western society. By reviewing the case of the Al Muhajiroun movement one of the processes by which British born Muslims become radicalized will be clearer. This paper will then compare the radicalization of the 7/7 terrorists and others who were foiled to show that a similar path to radicalization was followed.

The Al Muhajiroun movement, which is an offshoot of the Hizb ut-Tahrir movement, is a transnational, militant Islamic group based in Britain. When Al Muhajiroun split off from Hizb ut-Tahrir, it took many disaffected Hizb ut-Tahrir members and soon became the most visible Islamic movement in Britain.⁹⁵ It was assessed, prior to its disbandment in 2004, to have about 160 formal members, with over 700 followers who take religious lessons from the group and occasionally participate in activist activities, and nearly 7000 contacts in the Muslim community who occasionally attend lessons.⁹⁶ Al Muhajiroun is not as extreme as Al Qaeda, but it does support violent causes and can be considered a part of the radical fringe of the British Muslim community.⁹⁷ The majority of Al Muhajiroun activists are Britain-born Muslims; therefore studying its recruiting process should provide insight into how British Muslims become radicalized.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 99.

⁹⁵ Wicktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 10.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Wicktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 5.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Wiktorowicz argues that the radicalization process involved with the Al Muhajiroun and other radical movements involves three key steps: a cognitive opening, recognition of group as a credible source of Islamic interpretation, and socialization into the group. Once these three steps are complete individuals become ready to engage in high-risk activism.

A cognitive opening is when an individual becomes more open to new ideas and old beliefs and modes of thought are questioned. Activists attempt to foster this opening through community outreach. As Wiktorowicz argues, individuals rarely awake with a sudden desire for radical ideas. Instead, the process of radicalization involves being open to radical ideas in the first place. When radical Muslims begin talking about Zionists, Crusaders and the need for violence to oppose them, most Muslims tune them out.⁹⁹ Therefore, activists seek to create an opening through social networks and outreach efforts. They seek to create a sense of crisis that can be alleviated through the platform of the group. As Wiktorowicz states, “In the West, many Muslims have experienced an identity crisis that makes them question what it means to be a Muslim in a non-Muslim country.”¹⁰⁰ This identity crisis for a large segment of British Muslims, created by poor socio-economic conditions, alienation, and in some cases outright racism, provides a broad recruiting pool from which radical groups seek to draw support. Activists utilize this discontent to steer would-be recruits toward Al Muhajiroun’s way of thinking.

A Muhajiroun activist illustrates how this process of socialization and the exploitation of cognitive openings works in the British Muslim community.

An older member of al-Muhajiroun, for example, recalled his earlier life in a rough section of London. He was involved in crime at the time, and some friends of his family, who belonged to al-Muhajiroun, worked to bring him “back to Islam.” They focused on addressing his criminal activities and getting him to reexamine his life. Eventually they convinced him to “shape up,” and he started attending movement lessons. Today as an activist in al-Muhajiroun, he repeats the same process for others in his community. He works in his old neighborhood with disadvantaged youth who knew him before he joined the movement and he uses his

⁹⁹ Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 85.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 86.

transformation as a role model. He argues that the purpose of his interactions is not recruitment per se but to bring them to Islam. Several of these youth have since joined the movement.¹⁰¹

It was involvement in drugs and the desire to have him “shape up” that created a cognitive opening for the activist. It could just as well been estrangement from family or an experience of outright racism that creates a cognitive opening exploitable by radicals.

A cognitive opening facilitates the movement of a would-be radical, but it alone is not sufficient. An organization must be there to take advantage of that opening. It is argued that in open political systems, such as that found in Britain, a formal organization is the best way to facilitate recruitment.¹⁰² Al Muhajiroun has multiple regional groups that coordinate the activities of local groups. Each local group, in turn, makes its own decisions as to how best to implement the overall strategy of the group. A good example of this is Al Muhajiroun’s seeking to tap into the British Muslim concern over Islamic education. At the local level, they seek to provide this service through an offering of lessons in the Quran and Islamic teachings.¹⁰³ Clearly, this education will be provided according to the ideology of Al Muhajiroun. Yet it is the ability of this group to tap into local concerns over Islamic education that provides it with its recruitment opportunity. Moreover, it is these legitimate efforts in education, that help divide British opinion regarding the nature of groups like Al Muhajiroun, as stated above.¹⁰⁴

As for Al Muhajiroun’s claim to a more authoritative and credible source of Islamic authority, much of it rests on the charismatic leadership of Omar Bakri Muhammed. He is seen as more credible than other sources available to British Muslims because of his knowledge and encouragement of questions.¹⁰⁵ Many British Muslims,

¹⁰¹Wicktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 94.

¹⁰² Ibid., 106.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 113.

¹⁰⁴ See page 31.

¹⁰⁵ Wicktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 160.

especially the young, seek a more politically oriented Islam than that of their parents.¹⁰⁶ Al-Muhajiroun, and groups like it, provides this political Islam.

The third factor that Wiktorowicz highlights in his study of al-Muhajiroun is the socialization process. Al Muhajiroun demands intense involvement of its activists. Much of Al Muhajiroun's ideological platform is the same as other fundamentalist Islamic groups. It demands propagation of the faith, enjoining the good and forbidding evil and work to reestablish the caliphate.¹⁰⁷ Merely joining the organization is not enough; activists must act on their beliefs.¹⁰⁸ The socialization process outlined by Wiktorowicz can be equated to the radicalization process outlined in Chapter II. Group members are drawn in and through intense involvement in Al Muhajiroun activities, come to identify more with the group than themselves.

The British government gives radical groups an opportunity by not cracking down on their radical message and support for violent Islamic activism. This allows Al Muhajiroun, and other radical groups, to take advantage of the grievances and alienation felt by the British Muslim community in order to expand their influence. They are able to then capitalize on cognitive openings that allow their radical ideology to provide an answer for the ills of British Muslims. Through socialization, they encourage activism on the part of members. While there is no single path for any radicalization, the case of Al Muhajiroun provides insight into how a radical group can facilitate the process. As was pointed out in Chapter II, radical groups can intensify and shape local discontent, sometimes toward terrorism.¹⁰⁹

D. 7/7 BOMBERS

At 0850 London time on July 7, 2005, three nearly simultaneous explosions occurred: two on the Circle Line and one on the Piccadilly Line. Almost an hour later, at 0947 London time, a fourth and final bomb went off on the upper deck of a number 30

¹⁰⁶ Pargeter, *New Frontiers of Jihad*, 144.

¹⁰⁷ Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 177–178.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰⁹ Refer to page 21.

bus in Tavistock Square. The death total would be 56 people, including the four bombers, and 700 wounded, some severely.

According to the Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7 July 2005, “The backgrounds of the 4 men appear largely unexceptional.”¹¹⁰ Mohammad Sidique Khan, at age 30, was the oldest of the group and appears to have been the ringleader. Shezhad Tanweer and Hasib Hussain, 22 and 18, respectively, hailed from Leeds, just like Khan. Jermaine Lindsay, 19, was the outsider of the group, born in Jamaica and raised in Britain. All were Muslim, with Lindsay converting in 2000. The three Leeds bombers, Khan, Hussain, and Tanweer, grew up in a part of town that was densely populated and deprived, with 10,000 of the 16,300 residents in the worst 3 percent of households nationally.¹¹¹ But the three were actually above average in income for the area.¹¹² Khan joined the staff of a local school to help special and disadvantaged youth in 2001. Tanweer went to school until 2002 and worked at his father’s fish and chip shop until late 2004. Hussain attended school off and on until June 2005. Lindsay, after his conversion in 2000 to Islam, began associating with troublemakers at school, but was praised for his quick study of Arabic and the Quran. In 2002, his mother left Britain for the United States and he was left behind. That same year, he left school and lived on the dole while doing odd jobs selling phones and Islamic books.

Even given the relatively normal background of the four bombers, there were subtle signs that they had begun to move towards extremist views around 2001. Khan, the leader of the group, was highly regarded by the parents of the students he taught at in Leeds.¹¹³ He was described as quiet and extremely good with the young children in the

¹¹⁰ House of Commons *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005* (Home Committee Report, HC 1087, London: The Stationary Office, 2006), 13.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² As was pointed out earlier, terrorists do not have to be deprived or poverty stricken. It is rather where they place their group affiliation that matters. In the case of Khan, it is clear that he felt that he should reach out and help those in his community that did not have the good fortune that he did. Indeed, he may have been better off than others in his local community but compared himself with mainstream British Society.

¹¹³ Milan Rai 7/7 *The London Bombings, Islam, and the Iraq War* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 25.

area.¹¹⁴ Khan also worked to rid the streets of drugs, which were a particular plague during the time he was working at the primary school. Unemployment was at 40 percent for Muslims in the area, and drug use had increased. He was able to make some progress, enough at least to be noticed by the husband of a local teacher, who was a member of parliament.¹¹⁵

According to an interview with one of Khan's friends, Khan appears to have become sympathetic to radical Islamic preaching due to the visit of a radical preacher in 1999, which was the same preacher that appeared to convert Lindsay to Islam, Abdallah al Faisal.¹¹⁶ His move to radicalization likely began shortly after the 2003 invasion of Iraq when he suddenly became much more observant, and distanced himself from old friends. He began spending more time with Hussain and Tanweer, who he mentored at a local gym.¹¹⁷

Tanweer appears to have become more extreme around mid-2002. Islam became a major focus of his life during this time and he lost interest in school.¹¹⁸ It seems that for Tanweer, the factor that led to his conversion to radical Islam took place shortly after 9/11. After 9/11, many Muslims felt even more discrimination and questioning of their loyalty by other British. This led many to assert their identity even more and "go back to Islam."¹¹⁹

Hussain undertook a Hajj visit to Saudi Arabia with his family in 2002. After this trip, he started wearing traditional Muslim clothing and became openly supportive of Al Qaeda, calling them "martyrs."¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Rai, *7/7 The London Bombings*, 25.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 27.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 82.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁸ Official Account of Bombings in London, 15.

¹¹⁹ Rai, *7/7 The London Bombings*, 83–84.

¹²⁰ Official Account of Bombings in London, 15.

Lindsay was also influenced by the extremist preacher, Abdallah al Faisal. He attended at least one lecture and listened to tapes from other lectures by Faisal. He was active in Muslim circles in the Drewsbury area and likely met Khan sometime around 2003–2004.¹²¹

The three men from Leeds, Khan, Hussain, and Tanweer, also frequented the local gym together, described as the “Al Qaida gym,” as well as a local bookstore, in which they watched extremist videos.¹²² The gyms and the local bookstore were considered centers of extremist activity by other locals. None of the mosques of the area were assessed by the Official Report of the London Bombings to have harbored extremist views. But, many of the local mosques were started by first generation immigrants and were viewed by the local youth as old men clubs.¹²³ Thus, it is entirely likely that as a sign of protest, and as a matter of necessity, the radical elements in Leeds focused on congregating in gyms and bookstores.

It is through his local interaction with the youth of Leeds that Khan was able to form what some considered a gang in the local area called the Mullah Crew. This gang was admired and feared in the local area, with one of Khan’s neighbors fearing retribution for talking about him after the London bombings.¹²⁴ Khan worked with Tanweer to perform “strong arm” social work through the Mullah Crew, which had a measure of community support.¹²⁵ The community support was likely due to the fact that the strong-arm social work was aimed at keeping the local youth from turning to crime and drug use, which was, as stated earlier, plagued by unemployment and a significant drug problem. This gang met underneath one of the local mosques and organized outdoor activities, which kept Khan, Tanweer and Hussain away from the Leeds area for days at a time, which served to further isolate them from their community.

Other factors played a role in the radicalization of the core group of Khan, Tanweer, and Hussain. In 2001, riots broke out in northern England between young

¹²¹ Official Account of Bombings in London, 18.

¹²² Ibid., 16.

¹²³ Rai, 7/7 *The London Bombings*, 95–96.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 102.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 101.

Muslim men and whites in the area. The riots were triggered by rumors that white racist groups, such as the National Front, were organizing against the Asian youth of the area. Many Asian youths in northern England began forming groups to protect their communities.¹²⁶ Thus, given the economic and social problems of the communities of Muslims in northern England during this time, it is likely that the riots led to feelings of further alienation from the rest of British society. The 9/11 attacks and subsequent invasion of Afghanistan and the highly unpopular invasion of Iraq likely contributed to a sense of being under siege.

There was no single factor at work, or one single source of grievance for any of the 7/7 bombers. There were multiple grievances at work in their lives, from the situation in their local community to their association with radical groups in the Leeds area. Nevertheless, their sense of sense of alienation and the radicalization that developed in response likely led Khan and Tanweer to seek to do something about their situation. It is also possible that they sought outside support. In 2003, Khan was assessed by British Security services to have received some training in Pakistan during a two-week visit.¹²⁷ It is unknown precisely who he met or what training he received; at the very least it is likely he was likely encouraged to act on his increasingly radical beliefs. Later, in late 2004 and early 2005, both Khan and Tanweer visited Pakistan, where, according to British intelligence assessments, they could have received training in explosives. British security services were aware of the possibility that Khan and Tanweer had contact with Al Qaeda, but were unable to act further on this information due to the sheer volume of suspected terrorists.¹²⁸

Based on the evidence it is likely that the core group of Khan, Tanweer, and Hussain were radicalized prior to any contact with Al Qaeda members. They all appeared to be influenced greatly by local conditions, which were exasperated by outside

¹²⁶ Rai, *7/7 The London Bombings*, 92.

¹²⁷ Official Account of Bombings in London, 20.

¹²⁸ Intelligence and Security Committee. *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005* Committee Report 6785 (London: Crown, 2006), 33.

events such as 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq. Thus, the idea that European Muslims are radicalized due to outside conflicts related to Muslims only partially explains the 7/7 bombings.

The invasion of Iraq was likely seen as the final straw and indication that the West was at war with Islam. Indeed, there was significant opposition to the Iraq war and many in Britain felt that the Iraq war was partially the cause of the London bombings.¹²⁹ As Pargeter argues, the 7/7 bombers had been active in radical circles well before the Iraq invasion and as in the case of Khan, even before 9/11.¹³⁰ After all, Khan's statement, released after the attacks, claims, "your democratically elected governments continuously perpetrate atrocities against my people all over the world."¹³¹ It is unlikely, given such a statement, that a change in British foreign policy would have assuaged Khan's anger at the British state. Therefore, one of the causes of the London bombings appears to be the internal politics between British Muslim citizens and their government as well as the availability of access to radical networks within Britain and abroad. Without local contacts, it is unlikely that British born Muslims would have been able to walk into an Al Qaeda training camp in Pakistan and ask for assistance.

In this light, the video statement by Khan, released after the London bombings, which is accompanied by Al Qaeda's deputy leader, Al Zawahiri, is put in better perspective. Al Qaeda was likely aware of the attacks and decided to claim some of the credit, even though it was largely the product of local radicalization. Al Zawahiri's comments were likely designed to give the impression that the bombings were a wholly Al Qaeda driven operation, when in fact it was the product of local radicalization.

E. 7/21 BOMBERS

While the 7/21 would-be bombers, Ibrahim, Omar, Mohamed, and Osman, were not native born British, they had all been in Britain for over a decade. Indeed, they were radicalized while in Britain. They tried to repeat the attack of the 7/7 bombers by

¹²⁹ Rai, *7/7 The London Bombings*, 8–9.

¹³⁰ Pargeter, *The New Frontiers of Jihad*, 154–155.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

attacking the same targets: the underground and a red bus. This attack received less press attention because the attackers were not native born and they had different backgrounds than the 7/7 bombers.¹³² Yet, their radicalization while in Britain is strikingly similar.

The leader of the 7/21 bombers, Ibrahim, was born in Eritrea and came to Britain in 1990. He was known to be involved in gang culture and petty crimes. In 1998, he became increasingly involved in radical Islam in London through the Finesbury park mosque, a notoriously radical mosque, led by radical preacher Abu Hamza Al-Masri.¹³³ Sometime in 2003, he is alleged to have traveled to Sudan to undertake militant training.¹³⁴ In 2004, he was arrested after an altercation as he was trying to distribute Islamic literature. In early 2005, he travelled to Pakistan and, upon his return, it is speculated that he hatched the plan to attack the underground.

Omar and Mohamed were both born in Somali and came to Britain in the 1990s. Omar drifted into militant Islam in the late 1990s. Mohamed drifted toward militant Islam around 2003, and his views became increasingly radical. Both men became friends with Ibrahim, while attending the Finesbury Park mosque.¹³⁵ Both cut themselves off from friends and family as they became more devout, often quitting jobs that interfered with their religious duties. It has been assessed that one of the reasons they were attracted to radical Islam was that they were “vulnerable” personalities, as in the case of Omar, and disadvantaged, as both were in the care of social services at one point or another.¹³⁶ It is likely that the Finesbury Park Mosque and its social network gave them the sense of belonging and purpose that their lives were lacking. It is also likely that radicals associated with the Finesbury Park Mosque also took advantage of the cognitive openings created by their search for religious meaning in their lives.

Osman came to Britain in the late 1990s and claimed asylum from Somalia, even though he was born in Ethiopia. Upon moving to London, he became more devout and

¹³² Pageter, *The New Frontiers of Jihad*, 159.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 160.

¹³⁶ Pageter, *The New Frontiers of Jihad*, 160.

withdrawn. He too was an attendee of the Finesbury Park mosque and follower of Abu Hamza Al-Masri.¹³⁷ There were two other alleged conspirators in the 7/21 bombing; one claiming to be forced to be involved and another acquitted of conspiracy to murder charges.¹³⁸

The 7/21 bombers were all radicalized in a manner similar to how al-Muhajiroun recruits its own members. The 7/21 bombers were recruited by Mohammed Hamid, who styled himself as “Osama Bin London.”¹³⁹ Hamid ran a stall on London’s Oxford Street where he handed out radical Muslim literature and issued invitations to prayer group meetings at his house. The prayer meetings often revolved around discussing British and American foreign policy as well as watching extremist videos. He also took young men on paint ball and outdoor trips, which echoes the activities of the 7/7 bombers. In fact, Hamid and Ibrahim were both arrested outside of the Oxford Street stall in 2004 for acting aggressively towards the public and verbally abusing a police officer.¹⁴⁰

The 7/21 case provides an interesting view of the radicalization process in Britain. While none of the 7/21 bombers were native born, they were radicalized while in Britain. They were not agents sent by Al Qaeda. If anything, they were normal immigrants who, through alienation and lack of opportunities drifted into radical Muslim circles. Eventually, they became radical enough to attempt the 7/21 bombing. In their case, the radicalization element is obvious in the Finesbury Park mosque and Hamid. The timing of the trips to Pakistan and the similarities of the attacks also suggest broad network connection between the 7/7 and 7/21 bombers. This, in turn, suggests the presence of a broad mobilization network within Britain.

¹³⁷ Pageter, *The New Frontiers of Jihad*, 161.

¹³⁸ The two other alleged bombing conspirators were Asiedo and Yahya. Asiedo turned himself in in 2007 and pleaded guilty to conspiracy. Asiedo became involved in militant Islam but claims he was forced into participating in the attack by Ibrahim, which is why he abandoned his bomb the day of the attack. Yayha was involved in the same circles as the bombers but was in Ethiopia at the time of the bombings. He did admit to providing information for the bombers. Pageter, 161–162.

¹³⁹ Charlotte Gill, ‘Osama Bin London’ Muslim Fanatic ‘Trained 21/7 Bombers.’ *Mail Online*. October 11, 2007. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-486836/Osama-bin-London-Muslim-fanatic-trained-21-7-bombers.html> (accessed February 3, 2010).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

While the source of grievances and specific mode of radicalization differ between Al Muhajiroun recruits, the 7/7 bombers and the 7/21 bombers, the similarities are striking. In each case, it was the open and freely operating presence of radicals that shaped a message that resonated with the would-be radicals. These radicals were able to capitalize on informal social networks surrounding mosques. Due to the conflicting and ambivalent views of the British toward Muslim religious organizations, as well as lax counterterrorism enforcement, these networks and organizations were allowed to operate and recruit openly in Britain. This is also true for the in the transatlantic bombing plot.

F. TRANSATLANTIC BOMBING PLOT

In August of 2006, British authorities arrested 24 men, whom they accused of being involved in a massive and complicated plot to blow up flights between Britain and the United States using liquid explosives. The plot, had it been successful, would have been the largest act of terrorism since 9/11, according to some security officials.¹⁴¹ Later in 2008, three of the accused men, Abdulla Ahmed Ali, Assad Sarwar, and Tanvir Hussain, were convicted of conspiracy to commit murder. A second trial that ended in September 2009 found the three men guilty of a conspiracy to bomb airliners. They each received the maximum sentence in Britain, which is life imprisonment.

The background of the three accused men, as well as that of alleged Al Qaeda connections with which they were accused of having contact with follows the pattern shown above. In each man's case, he was radicalized while in Britain through local organizations and charities. Although in this instance there were more outside connections, the local element was paramount for the development of the plot.

Rashid Rauf was assessed as one of the masterminds of the plot and the key connection between the British-born Muslims and Al Qaeda in Pakistan.¹⁴² Press reports claimed that Rauf had regular contacts with senior Al Qaeda leaders, such as Amjad

¹⁴¹ Andrew Testa, *Trans-Atlantic Aircraft Plot (2006)*, September 14, 2009, *New York Times Online*, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/t/terrorism/2006_transatlantic_aircraft_plot/index.html?scp=1&sq=2006%20airline%20plot&st=cse (accessed December 22, 2009).

¹⁴² NEFA Foundation. "Bojinka II: The Transatlantic Liquid Bomb Plot." *NEFA Foundation*. April 2008. http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/Bojinka2_LiquidBombs.pdf (accessed December 22, 2009), 11.

Hussain Farooqi, Abu Faraj al Libi, and Abu Ubayda al Masri.¹⁴³ Additionally, Rashid Rauf's father founded the Crescent Relief organization in Britain in 2000. This organization had its assets frozen in August 2006 upon suspicion of misuse of funds in support of terrorism operations.¹⁴⁴ The Crescent Relief organization was previously under suspicion due to irregularities and possible connections with other charities linked to terrorism by United States authorities.¹⁴⁵

Rauf's background is strikingly similar to the other cases reviewed. His father immigrated to England in the 1960s and opened a bakery.¹⁴⁶ He was not very religious or political. He was more likely to go to the gym or play soccer than go to the mosque.¹⁴⁷ In 2002, Rauf's uncle was stabbed to death in what appeared to be an honor killing for "sexual misconduct" and Rauf fled to Pakistan.¹⁴⁸ He was arrested in August 2006 by Pakistani officials in connection with, and interrogated regarding involvement in, training camps along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. British authorities requested his extradition in August 2006 because of his suspected involvement in his uncle's murder.¹⁴⁹ Eventually, Pakistani charges were withdrawn and, in late 2007, Rauf escaped police custody.¹⁵⁰

Abdulla Ahmed Ali's, also known as Ahmed Ali Khan, was born in London. He was considered the local leader of the airline plot by British officials, while Rauf was the point of contact for the group with Al Qaeda.¹⁵¹ Ali's parents moved to Britain from Pakistan in the 1960s. In the 1980s, the family went to Pakistan for six years before returning to east London in 1987. According to court records, Ali became radicalized as early as age 15. It was only later, however, while at college, that he became politically

¹⁴³ NEFA Foundation. "Bojinka II," 11.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴⁶ "Who are the Bomb Suspects?" *Times Online (London)*, August 11, 2006.

¹⁴⁷ Cahal Hilmo, Ian Herbet, Jason Bennetto, and Justin Huggler, "From Birmingham Bakery to Pakistani Prison, the Mystery of Rashid Rauf," *The Independent*, August 19, 2006.

¹⁴⁸ NEFA Foundation, "Bojinka II," 15.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 17.

¹⁵¹ NEFA Foundation, "Bojinka II," 10.

active. He handed out leaflets and attended demonstrations. After graduating college, he began volunteering with the Islamic charity Crescent Relief in east London. In January 2003, he travelled to a refugee camp for Afghans in Pakistan. British authorities claimed that the instructions for the plot were obtained during Ali's time in Pakistan.¹⁵² Ali claimed that the 7/7 bombing and Al Qaeda's message in general were his inspirations.¹⁵³

Assad Sarwar was 28 years old and married. He arranged the logistics of the plot. After dropping out of Brunel University, Sarwar met Abdulla Ahmed Ali while doing charity work in Pakistan with the Islamic Medical Association in late 2002. He returned to Britain in May 2003 and drifted through two further short-term jobs as a postman with Royal Mail and for British Telecom.¹⁵⁴ He said he met up with Ali again in 2003 and again in 2006 at lectures in east London. Sarwar also attended Islamic study groups run by Tablighi Jamaat, a Pakistani missionary group.¹⁵⁵ In between, Sarwar returned to Pakistan for two months in October 2005 aiding survivors of the earthquake in Kashmir.

Tanvir Hussain, 27, from Leyton, east London, was described as a gifted sportsman by Abdulla Ahmed Ali, whom he met while studying at Waltham Forest College. Hussain later went to Middlesex University. He told the court he regularly drank and took drugs while a student and he had a reputation as a womanizer. Later, he became a devout Muslim; some friends even said he started showing signs of extremism.

There were five others who were accused of conspiracy to murder. Arafat Wahhed Khan and Waheed Zaman were found not guilty of the airliner plot, while Umar Islam was convicted of conspiracy to murder. A British Muslim convert, Donald Steward-Whyte was found not guilty of conspiracy to murder in the airline plot, but did admit to a conspiracy to commit a public nuisance.

It is clear that in the case of this terrorism plot the key factor was the mobilization power of the Islamic political and charitable organizations. As in the other case studies above, the individuals appear to have been radicalized by local Islamic groups prior to

¹⁵² The London Mail Online. *More on British Court Convicting Islamist Would-Be Airline Bombers*. September 07, 2009. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk> (accessed December 22, 2009).

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ "The Radical with a Perfect Cover," *The Sunday Times*, August 20, 2006.

any contact with outside terrorist organizations. It was through personal networks and the networks of the Islamic organizations that these individuals were brought into the world of radical Islam. In some cases, the individual was influenced by a close friend or even an influential cleric.

The sources of the individuals' grievances against the British state were also varied. There appears no single cause for their turn to terrorism. Instead, what can be said is that these individuals' contact with radical Islam, both in Britain and in Pakistan, caused them to turn to terrorism. Had they not been exposed to groups with the connections and ability to mobilize and shape their grievances, it can be argued that they would simply have remained aggrieved, alienated British Muslims instead of terrorists. Ali, as the leader and the man with the most ties to radical groups, was able to bring the others along toward a single goal, despite their differing grievances and reasons for associating with radical Islam.

This, too, highlights how the socialization process works and remained similar through all cases; an organization that was allowed to operate and even recruit openly in Britain was able to capitalize on that opportunity to mobilize discontented Muslim youth. In some cases, the most immediate radicalizing element was the small group or social circle. Yet it was the presence of larger groups that was essential to the development of the terrorist plots. It is unlikely, despite the availability of information over the Internet, that any of the above plots would have progressed as they had through self-radicalization alone. It was the presence of radical organizations in Britain that was vital.

G. BRITISH COUNTERTERRORISM

It is very informative to look at how the British counterterrorism system looked around the time of the 7/7 bombing. This will illustrate the difficulty the British government had in understanding the threat it had within its borders. It will also show that a political opportunity was handed to the Islamic radicals through the weak British counterterrorism system. Radical Islamists were allowed to operate more or less openly, which provided cover for the even more radical terrorist groups.

The British government was aware of the possibility of domestic Muslim terrorists prior to 2005. In 1998, eight British Muslims, with ties to Abu Hamza, were

arrested and convicted of being involved in a bomb plot by Yemeni authorities. In 2000, a Mohammed Bilal, who was born and raised in Britain, conducted a suicide attack at an Indian base in Indian Kashmir. Richard Reid, the “Shoe Bomber,” was arrested in December of 2001 after he tried to light explosives hidden in his shoe in a transatlantic flight to the United States. Richard Reid had converted to Islam in prison, but was radicalized by extremist elements hanging out near his Brixton mosque.¹⁵⁶

In 2003, two British born Muslims carried out suicide attacks on behalf of Hamas that resulted in the death of three Israelis. The martyr videos released after the attacks claimed the true villains of the world were Tony Blair, George Bush and the Israelis.¹⁵⁷

The result of all of the attacks by British citizens outside Britain was to increase the British governments concern about an attack within its own borders. By 2003, British Muslims had become Britain’s number one terrorist threat and MI5’s investigative targets would be increased by 300 percent.¹⁵⁸ One of the investigations launched between 2003 and 2005 would involve Khan and Tanweer at the periphery.

Operation CREVICE, as MI5 called it, began in 2003 with intelligence indicating the presence of an Al Qaeda facilitation network in Britain. In early 2004, additional intelligence was obtained which indicated that the persons being investigated were not merely facilitators but actively involved in planning a bombing operation.¹⁵⁹ These suspects also had affiliation with the Al Muhajiroun movement.¹⁶⁰ Operation CREVICE then became MI5’s top investigative target, warranting additional resources. According the Intelligence and Security Committee’s report on whether the London bombings could have been prevented, this operation “was the immediate priority and absorbed nearly all

¹⁵⁶ Robert Lambert, *Counter-Radicalization Programs: Tackling Terrorism and Hate Crime in London: A Brixton Case Study*. Topical Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment Multi-Agency and Air Force Research Laboratory Multi-Disciplinary White Paper, Air Force Research Laboratory, January 2010, 318–331.

¹⁵⁷ Steve Hewitt, *The British War on Terror: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism on the Home Front Since 9/1* (London: Continuum, 2008), 68.

¹⁵⁸ Hewitt, *The British War on Terror*, 69.

¹⁵⁹ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?: Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005* Committee Report 7617, (London: Crown, 2009), 7.

¹⁶⁰ Raffaello Pantucci. “Ban on U.K. Radical Islamist Group al-Muhajiroun Raises Free Speech Questions,” 4–6.

of MI5's resources."¹⁶¹ The investigation obtained information in February 2003 that the plot had become more serious, which resulted in the arrest of eight British men in April 2004. Five of the eight men were convicted on terrorism related charges in 2007. During Operation CREVICE, Khan and Tanweer were shown to be associates of the plotters, but not involved in the actual planning. Khan and Tanweer were not investigated thoroughly due to limited resources.

After the arrests in Operation CREVICE, MI5 received information about another plot, which ended up consuming considerable MI5 resources. The plot was to set off a possible dirty bomb, as well as coordinated bombs using limousines. The plotters were arrested in August of 2004. The plotters had ties to the radical Finesbury mosque in London and its now jailed cleric Abu Hamza.¹⁶² After the disruption of this plot, MI5 returned to investigating the nearly 4,000 contacts generated during Operation CREVICE, in addition to the contacts generated during the dirty bomb plot.¹⁶³

There were at least six other plots that MI5 was investigating that were also consuming considerable resources. In each case, MI5 had to prioritize its targets to prevent loss of life, while trying also to make sure every lead was followed.¹⁶⁴ This was a daunting task, but MI5 seemed to indicate that it had the situation under control.

The fact that Khan and Tanweer were mentioned as part of Operation CREVICE's investigation during the investigation into the London Bombings caused many people to question MI5 and the Metropolitan Police about their cooperation and investigative abilities.¹⁶⁵ The Intelligence and Security Report concerning the prevention of the London bombings stated that Metropolitan Police did not automatically inform MI5 when it received terrorist information, nor did MI5 have the legal power to

¹⁶¹ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?* 8.

¹⁶² Adam Fresco, "How Radical Islam Turned a Schoolboy into a Terrorist." *Times Online*. November 7, 2006. (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article628497.ece>)(accessed February 3, 2010).

¹⁶³ Fresco, "How Radical Islam Turned a Schoolboy into a Terrorist," 13.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁶⁵ Britain has a single police force with many local branches. The Metropolitan Police act as this local police force. It has numerous special branches that are designed to combat terrorism at the local and national level. The relationship between the Metropolitan Police and MI5 can be considered analogous to that between state and local police forces and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

pass the Metropolitan Police all the information it has on terrorist suspects.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, prior to 2005, it was not possible for MI5 to provide coverage for 52 people deemed essential targets; reasonable coverage was provided for only 6 percent of the overall known threat.¹⁶⁷ Part of the problem was that early on in the CREVICE investigation Khan was dismissed as a peripheral figure and not worth the investigative resources. Had he been followed up on then authorities would likely have him followed to Pakistan, where he likely met with Al Qaeda figures.¹⁶⁸ The British security services were simply overwhelmed by the sheer amount of plots and persons under investigation to focus on all the leads they had.

The British government was caught largely unaware by the domestic threat brewing within its borders. As the Intelligence and Security Committee report states, "...across the whole of the counterterrorism community the development of the home-grown threat and the radicalization of British citizens were not fully understood or applied to strategic thinking."¹⁶⁹ The Committee report also argues that there was not an appreciation for the speed with which radicalization occurs. The Official Report into the London bombings largely echoes this conclusion by arguing that there was little to indicate that these individuals were being radicalized.¹⁷⁰ These conclusions are understandable but flawed.

The British government knew it had a potential threat within its borders well before 9/11 and certainly before the war in Iraq.¹⁷¹ It knew that the Iraq war would heighten the risk for terrorist attacks, yet it did little to address this potentiality. Instead, it focused on placing blame away from foreign policy, which would have shown that its policies potentially heightened the terrorist threat. Part of the problem too was the

¹⁶⁶ Intelligence and Security Committee Report, *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?*

¹⁶⁷ Rachel Williams and Richard Norton-Taylor, "7/7 Bomb Attacks: Police and MI5 Cleared of Blame," *guardian.co.uk*. May 19, 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/may/19/july7-ataks> (accessed May 28, 2009).

¹⁶⁸ David Brown "UK Source Examines Police, MI5 Officers' Failure to Stop 7/7 Terrorism Suspects." *Times Online*. April 29, 2008. <http://timesonline.co.uk> (accessed May 22, 2009).

¹⁶⁹ Intelligence and Security Committee Report, *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?* 43.

¹⁷⁰ Official Account of Bombings in London, 28–29.

¹⁷¹ Rai, *7/7 The London Bombings*, 164.

British governments' general lack of interest in its Muslim population, especially as a potential source of violence. Some within the government and police objected to banning radical groups like Hizb ut Tahir, viewing them as distasteful but not potential sources of radicalization.¹⁷² Therefore, it can be said that the British government, which at the political level ignored the repeated warnings, provided a political opportunity for radical groups like Hizb Ut Tahir and Al Muhajiroun to operate freely. Had they recognized the radicalizing effect of these organizations, and made an effort to curb their activities, they could have reduced the terrorist threat within their borders.

H. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the conditions of British Muslims and looked at select case studies to determine how and why some British Muslims become radicalization. It is clear that the grievances of British Muslims provide an opportunity that is exploited by Islamic groups. The radical Islamic groups utilize radical Islamic themes that capitalize on the Muslim alienation from British society. This finding follows the theory outlined in Chapter II regarding the similar relationship between how social movements work and how terrorists seek to recruit and radicalize their members. The Al Muhajiroun movement case study was a prime example of this phenomenon.

The Al Muhajiroun movement sought to mobilize British Muslims to support its own political agenda. The Al Muhajiroun movement is a radical movement that advocates the use of violence. Thus, it is not a step too far for some of its members, or members of other radical groups for that matter, to literally take up arms in pursuit of their goals. The Al Muhajiroun movement seeks to exploit cognitive openings to steer would be recruits toward their cause. They then demand high levels of involvement for their members that accelerates the socialization process, which in turn fosters their members' further radicalization as they increasingly identify with the group rather than as individuals.

Al Muhajiroun was able to operate because it provided legitimate educational services and British elites remained divided as to what to do about groups like Al

¹⁷² Rai, *7/7 The London Bombings*, 115.

Muhajiroun. On the one hand, these radical Islamic groups provided legitimate services to their communities. On the other hand, they espoused radical ideals. Thus, because the British public and officials were divided as to what to do about these groups, they were allowed to operate and build formal and informal networks within Britain that facilitated the radicalization process.

The 7/7, 7/21 and airline plot terrorists all followed a similar pattern that roughly mirrored the radicalization/mobilization process outlined in the discussion of the Al Muhajiroun movement. In fact, there was a striking similarity between how one Al Muhajiroun activist described his joining of that movement and the radicalization of Siddique Khan, the leader of the 7/7 bombers. Each terrorist experienced a cognitive opening that was exploited by the messages of radical Islam. In some cases, it was a radical friend associated with a larger organization, or an organization alone, that fostered radicalization. Their grievances varied even within terrorist groups. Some members cited Iraq as their reason for radicalization and others 9/11. Some members radicalized in the 1990s and others after 9/11. It took the presence of radical organizations to shape these various motivations into the terrorist plots outlined above.

It was the presence of radical Islamic political groups and charities that played a key role for most of the terrorists in the case studies. Without these groups, these young men may not have turned to terrorism. Because these groups and networks were present, the radicalization path was facilitated and accelerated. These groups provided the mobilization and framing that took advantage of the young Muslims' grievances. Through the subtle process of radicalization these young men turned to violence and ultimately terrorism. It is the presence of these radical Islamic political and charitable organizations that made the path to terrorism easier for British Muslims.

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IV. FRANCE

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter will discuss French Muslims and why they, largely, have not turned to terrorism or even radicalization. This chapter will show that the French government understood that, given the poor social and economic position of its Muslim immigrant population, French Muslims could provide a fertile recruiting ground for radical Islamists. The French government took proactive steps through the promotion of Muslim civic organizations, beginning in the 1990s. These steps, along with the state policy of *laïcité*, a strong French version of the separation between the state and religion, helped reduce the political opportunities for radical Islamists. Instead, a situation was created in which there were extremely limited political opportunities for radical groups to operate.

It is the argument of this chapter that the opportunities for radical Islamists to operate do not exist in France to the same level that they do in Britain. France, due to its history, has taken an aggressive approach toward discouraging the development of radical Islam within its borders. It has developed a counterterrorism force that heavily monitors and infiltrates potential radical Islamic groups. In addition, the Islamic political groups that do exist within France are largely subservient to the French state. The Union of Islamic Organizations of France is a good example of this tendency toward subservience in the Islamic parties. As the case of the 2005 riots will show, the Islamic political groups that do exist in France are so heavily identified with the state that many of the rioters lashed out at them as well as the French state.

The riots of 2005 were the result of economic and social problems that plague the largely Muslim slums that surround some large French cities such as Paris, Lyon and Marseilles. The riots can be seen as analogous to the Los Angeles riots following the Rodney King incident. They were the result of large portions of the French Muslim youth reacting against what they perceive as state oppression and discrimination. The riots were an expression of social and economic frustration, not political grievances. The

Muslim political parties in France could only attempt to stop the violence. They did not have the organizational or framing tools necessary to shape the conflict.

In the end, it will be shown that the difference between Britain and France lies primarily in the level of political opportunities available to radical groups. France largely denies opportunities for radical Islamic groups to operate, much less influence a significant portion of the population. Thus, the level of radicalization is significantly lower in France. French Muslims are not without their social and economic grievances but, as was stated earlier, this is insufficient without the political opportunities to organize and mobilize support for radical causes.

B. FRENCH MUSLIM CONDITIONS

The social and economic position of the French Muslim population is significantly lower than that of the rest of France. France has about five million persons of Muslim origin, which is about 10 percent of the population, who are concentrated in the three large French cities of Paris, Lyon, and Marseilles. Because they are concentrated in major urban centers, French Muslims are an extremely visible minority, despite only being around 10 percent of the population. French Muslims are twice as likely as the general population to be unemployed.¹⁷³ Even when education and skill levels are factored in (many Muslim immigrants came to France as low or unskilled labor), French Muslims are twice as likely to be unemployed.¹⁷⁴ Due to the high levels of unemployment and concentration of immigrants, something like a ghetto phenomenon has developed in the areas where French Muslims live.¹⁷⁵ These areas are in the suburbs of the major cities and are called the *banlieues*.

Azouz Begag, a former researcher at the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* and former Minister for Equal Opportunities in France describes three phases

¹⁷³ Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse. *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2006), 32.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 36.

of the ghettoization of French Muslim *banlieues*: indifference, frustration, and rage.¹⁷⁶ The first phase occurred during the boom years and height of immigration, from 1945-1975. During this phase, Muslim immigrants were brought in to help alleviate the labor shortage, often living in shantytowns or temporary housing set up on the outskirts of the cities. The second phase occurred once the economy contracted and the poor areas that housed the immigrant labor sunk even further into poverty, as the unemployment rate went up and blame was placed on them for taking jobs. Indeed, it was during this time that Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National Party grew in popularity. Its platform of anti-immigration and anti-Muslim rhetoric has only gained electoral support since the 1980s.¹⁷⁷ The third phase, the phase of rage, occurred in the 1990s when young Muslim children of the immigrants vented their anger at a system that excluded them and kept them mired in poverty. The crime rate throughout France rose, especially in and around the *banlieues*, during this time.¹⁷⁸ The three phases illustrate the historical roots of some of the frustration that modern French Muslim feel.

The situation within the *banlieues* perfectly illustrates the situation for a most French Muslims. The *banlieues* are dominated by public housing. By way of comparison, 17 percent of the general population lives in public housing while greater than a third, and in the case of North African immigrants up to half, live in public housing.¹⁷⁹ This concentration of people in isolation from the rest of the society, through unemployment and discrimination has fostered gang culture and protest culture as a reaction.¹⁸⁰ Begag has characterized this evolving gang culture as one that is completely isolated from politics and their ethnic group. Instead, because of the social and economic isolation they experience, they identify more with their specific neighborhood and age

¹⁷⁶ Azouz Begag, *Ethnicity and Equality: France in the Balance* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 39.

¹⁷⁷ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 66.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 66–67.

¹⁷⁹ Laurence and Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, 36.

¹⁸⁰ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 67.

group.¹⁸¹ These youth are “hollowed out” to the point where they no longer feel multiple identities; they only identify with their specific neighborhood or even building.¹⁸²

Despite these social and economic issues, French Muslims seem to feel more integrated than their British coreligionists. According to the Pew Research Center, French Muslims are split nearly evenly on whether or not they identify more with their religion or with their country of residence.¹⁸³ In contrast, 81 percent of British Muslims identified first with their religion. Furthermore, nearly 80 percent of French Muslims want to be a part of French society through the adoption of French customs.¹⁸⁴ As Laurence and Vaisse point out, poll after poll shows French Muslims seeking integration and expressing confidence in the French government.¹⁸⁵ In order to determine how on the one hand French Muslims can experience such poor economic and social outcomes and yet express confidence in integration and the French state, a look at the French policy of *laïcité* must be taken.

The French policy of *laïcité* can be compared to the American policy of separation of church and state. Yet, for the French, it means much more. According to Fetzer and Soper, *laïcité* comes in a soft and hard variety.¹⁸⁶ The hard *laïcité* variety holds that religion should be completely banned from public life. This means public officials should keep their religion out of politics and no public space should incorporate religious symbols. The soft version of *laïcité* holds that the state should be impartial with respect to religion and should only encourage free expression of religion. Generally, *laïcité* has meant that in France little to no accommodation is made for religious groups outside of certain narrow accommodations, such as prison and military chaplaincies.

¹⁸¹ Begag, *Ethnicity and Equality*, 94.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 95–96.

¹⁸³ Jodie T. Allen, “The French-Muslim Connection.” *Pew Research Center Publications*. April 2006. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/50/the-french-muslim-connection> (accessed February 14, 2010).

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Laurence and Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, 47.

¹⁸⁶ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 74.

Religion, in general, is not popular in France due to the influence of *laïcité* and a national political culture that believes religion is dangerous in the political sphere.¹⁸⁷

The role of religion in French society also reflects that of French Muslims, who are generally Muslim in name only. Although French Muslims are more likely to practice their faith than the Catholic majority, there have been increasing trends toward secularization.¹⁸⁸ Thus, according to social movement theory, not only would potential radicals have to contend with a political culture that is hostile toward religion in general, but also an increasingly secularized Muslim minority that is more concerned with economic matters than those of concern to radical Muslims. Any radical Muslim group, if it was allowed to operate, would have a difficult time framing its message in such a way that it resonates with the concerns of French Muslims. It is important, therefore, to look at how the Muslim political organizations within France work within the French political system, especially in light of *laïcité*.

C. UNION DES ORGANISATIONS ISLAMQUES DE FRANCE (UNION OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS OF FRANCE)

One of the most prominent French Muslim organizations is the *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France* (Union of Islamic Organizations of France) (UOIF). As Laurence and Vaisse describe the UOIF, it is one of the main grassroots forces in contemporary French Islam.¹⁸⁹ The UOIF has struggled in recent years due to its pursuit of a “clientist” strategy of seeking state recognition and by joining the French Council of the Muslim Religion, one of the main bodies through which the French state interacts with its Muslim citizens.¹⁹⁰ Despite this, the UOIF still encompasses about 250 Muslim civil society and economic associations in France and exercises control over about 13.5 percent of prayer spaces in France and even has its own theological seminary in

¹⁸⁷ Laurence and Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, 63–64.

¹⁸⁸ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 76–78.

¹⁸⁹ Laurence and Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, 104.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Burgundy. Due to its size as well as its visibility, it is important to study the role that the UOIF plays within French Muslim society, much in the same way that the Al Muhajiroun Movement was studied in Britain.

The UOIF was founded in 1983 as a counterweight to the heavy influence, at that time, of the Great Mosque of Paris, which was still the primary focus of French government interaction with its Muslim population. It is seen by many as the “Moroccan axis” to the Great Mosque’s Algerian axis.¹⁹¹ The UOIF gained considerable attention in 1989 when it provided legal council to several of the young Muslim girls who were expelled for wearing headscarves to school. At that time, it was the main voice of protest against the government’s plan to ban the headscarf from French Schools.

Currently, the UOIF is known mainly for its annual gathering of French Muslims. The UOIF began its annual conference on Muslim life in France in the 1980s and has seen attendance grow to as large as 30,000 in 2005.¹⁹² This conference regularly addresses issues of concern to French Muslims such as discrimination and support for the Palestinian cause. The UOIF is particularly known for its influence with the Muslim youth of France through various affiliated organizations like the Young Muslims of France and Muslim Students of France.

The main sources of controversy regarding the UOIF are the level of its foreign funding and its ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. It is unknown whether or not the organization receives one-third or two-thirds of its funding from overseas, but its leaders have nevertheless publicly expressed a desire to decrease the level of foreign funds.¹⁹³ The UOIF has also sought to downplay any relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, and its leadership has even stated, with respect to the relation between Islamic and French law, “No one can say that religious law is comparable to the law of the Republic.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Laurence and Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, 105.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 106.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 107.

The UOIF is clearly important as an organization, but it is also important for what it represents with respect to this paper's argument. The UOIF represents one of several Muslim organizations that are more or less unified at the national level through the French Counsel for the Muslim Religion.¹⁹⁵ The French Counsel for the Muslim Religion acts as the overall elective body that represents the French Muslim polity within the French Republic.

The French state has taken a very activist role with respect to its Muslim population. It was the state that first began organizing French Muslims politically in 1990.¹⁹⁶ These efforts would later coalesce into what became the French Counsel for the Muslim Religion in 2003. Participation among the French Muslim population in the elections to the French Counsel for the Muslim Religion is very high, with 80 percent of Muslim attendees at places of worship participating in the elections in 2003.¹⁹⁷

It is this participation in a structure created and integrated within the state, along with the French *laicite* ideal, that has largely moderated French Muslim views. As is clear above, the UOIF has expressed itself as simply a representative body and not as a movement per se. The large French Muslim bodies are concerned mainly with garnering votes within the representative counsel. Indeed, French Muslims channel many of their complaints with the French state through the national representative body.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, in a poll taken in 2005, over 55 percent of French Muslims expressed confidence in the abilities of the French Counsel for the Muslim Religion to act as the Muslim community's advocate.¹⁹⁹

Thus, French Muslims may have considerable opportunities to interact with the state; the French government has expressly encouraged such interaction, but the political opportunity to mobilize support for radical groups does not exist. The various Muslim representative bodies are mainly designed to address religious and political concerns,

¹⁹⁵ Fetzner and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 91.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Laurence and Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, 137–139.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 162.

within the *laicite* framework. These groups are the ones that are proscribed and permitted to speak for French Muslims. Thus, there is a constraint upon the development of any additional parties, radical or otherwise. In this sense, the political opportunities radical groups would need, as per social movement theory, do not exist. There are no elite allies to draw from for radical Islamists as the elites have been co-opted by the French state. Indeed, any radical parties that do form must work within the moderating framework of the French Counsel for the Muslim Religion. Even if a radical Islamist group were to develop, it would have to operate within a national political framework that discourages overt appeals to religion; if anything, it severely restricts the role of religion in politics.

Yet, as one French Muslim journalist put it, “For most young people, the religious [and political] question is of secondary importance; their principle desire is for social and economic integration.”²⁰⁰ While groups like the UOIF acting through the French Counsel for the Muslim Religion act as guides to French Muslims’ political aspirations, the main source of discontent for the French Muslim population remains social and economic. This discontent was to play itself out in the 2005 riots that swept France in the fall of that year. The Muslim political organizations were powerless to repress the rage, and in fact were, in many cases, victims of it themselves.

D. 2005 RIOTS

On October 27, two French Muslim youth were electrocuted after fleeing from an identity checkpoint in a Paris suburb. Their deaths caused nearly three weeks of violence throughout France. The violence was to total over 200 million Euros, with nearly 9,000 cars burned and over 2900 people arrested. The rioters were primarily unemployed French Muslim youth from the *banlieues*. In the aftermath of the riots, two main themes erupted as to what caused them: the riots were “the French Intifada,” the riots were the result of the frustration felt by French Muslims with their social and economic position.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Laurence and Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, 162.

²⁰¹ Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke. “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood.” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2007: 107–121.

The conclusion that the riots were some sort of Muslim Intifada has been roundly rejected by most scholars, even though its power as an explanation continues in popular culture. As Vaisse of the Brookings Institute noted, the only thing Islam had to do with the riots was that the primary perpetrators of the violence happened to be Muslim.²⁰² Indeed the Muslim rioters were enacting a decades old form of protest by burning cars. This lack of an Islamic presence was even more noticeable when it came to groups like the UOIF. The UOIF issued a fatwa to end the violence on November 6, 2005. This fatwa met with little success, as the riots were to continue for another two weeks.

Over the last 30 years French protestors, especially those from the *banlieues* have burned cars as symbols of the social mobility denied to them.²⁰³ Prior to the riots there were over 98,000 cars burned throughout France.²⁰⁴ In Strasbourg, France, several cars are burned every New Years Eve. In this sense, the violence surrounding the riots in 2005 was unique if only for its intensity.

Indeed, there was almost no agenda to the violence at all, other than frustration at the social and economic position of many Muslims. As Begag stated, very few of the rioters were in contact with the press at all.²⁰⁵ This was due to the fact that many French journalists lacked contacts within the *banlieues*, in addition to the fact that many young French Muslims were poorly educated and lacked the training, experience and leadership with which to articulate a set of demands.²⁰⁶ According to Begag, the rioters were expressing their frustration with discrimination and a lack of opportunities. As Hargreaves puts it, “These ritualized attacks on automobiles, symbols of the social mobility denied to inhabitants of the *banlieues*, and on police forces seen as

²⁰² Justin Vaisse, *Unrest in France, November 2005: Immigration, Islam, and the Challenge of Integration*. Presentation to Congressional Staff, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2006.

²⁰³ Alec G. Hargreaves, “An Emperor with No Clothes.” *Social Science Research Council: Riots in France*. November 28, 2005. <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Hargreaves/> (accessed February 10, 2010).

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Begag, *Ethnicity and Equality*, xxiv.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., xxv.

representatives of an exclusionary social order are symptoms of deep-seated problems which have been festering for decades, above all poverty, unemployment and widespread ethnic discrimination.”²⁰⁷

The overall conclusion that can be drawn from the 2005 riots was that the violence illustrated the lack of political opportunities for radical Islamic groups. When mainstream groups like the UOIF tried to intervene to stop the violence they were ignored. The rioters’ primary concern, which is reflected by the general grievances of French Muslims, was economic and social discrimination. If ever there were an instance in which a radical Islamic group could make inroads within the French Muslim youth, it would have been during the riots. This did not happen, in part due to the fact that there were no radical groups present to take advantage of this opportunity, as well as little political room within which additional parties could act. The French Counsel of the Muslim Religion essentially monopolized all political space for Muslim parties in France. Thus, any radicals would have to contend with an established political order, but also with a general hostility toward religious, never mind radical, parties. It was also due to the robust French counterterrorism structures, which will be discussed in the next section.

E. FRENCH COUNTERTERRORISM

Part of the reason France has not seen a terrorist attack in over a decade is due to the experience of its counterterrorism system.²⁰⁸ During the 1980s, France experienced a wave of state-sponsored terrorism. Groups such as Abu Nadal and Hizballah were active in France during this time. Hizballah alone conducted 13 attacks during this period. During the 1990s, terrorist groups began recruiting young, alienated French Muslim youth in the suburbs.²⁰⁹ This was seen as especially dangerous, especially after the Algerian military annulled the 1991 election when it appeared that Islamists were to win. The former colony received the support of France, which, in turn, caused France to be a prime target for groups like the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The GIA targeted

²⁰⁷ Hargreaves, “An Emperor with No Clothes.”

²⁰⁸ Charles Rault, “The French Approach to Counterterrorism.” *CTC Sentinel*, January 2010: 22–25, 22.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

foreigners in Algeria, especially French, during its campaign of terror. It also brought terrorism to France with the attack on the Paris Metro in 1995.

France learned during the 1980s and 1990s how to combat international terrorism. As Shapiro and Suzan put it, France was a haven for terrorism during the 1980s and 1990s.²¹⁰ By the 1990s, France had learned enough to prevent planned attacks on the World Cup, the Strasbourg Cathedral and on the U.S. embassy. France learned, long before 9/11, that Islamic terrorism was international and that its own Muslim youth could be exploited in the struggle.²¹¹

The French government's philosophy when it comes to counterterrorism has been one of delegitimization.²¹² It believes that terror should be treated as a criminal matter in order to avoid treating terrorism as an act of war. It simply views it as a violent form of extremism, regardless of the motivating factor. This is especially true since France has been exposed to a variety of terrorisms, from separatists in Corsica, to leftists during the 1970s and 1980s, to modern Islamic extremists. France did not always see terrorism or terrorists in this way but, during the 1980s and 1990s, it decided that its previous policy of accommodation needed to change to one of suppression.²¹³

In the 1980s, steps were taken to combat terrorism by creating many units to oversee counterterrorism efforts and coordinate responses. France centralized how it adjudicated terrorist cases as well, based on the lessons it learned in the 1960s. During the Algerian war of independence, France set up a separate court system made up of military officers, which came to be seen by many as a tool of repression.²¹⁴ In 1986, France created a system for dealing with terrorism that left prosecution and adjudication within the regular legal system but allowed for longer sentences, based on the unique

²¹⁰ Jeremy Shapiro and Benedicte Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism." *The Brookings Institution*. March 1, 2003. http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/articles/2003/spring_france_shapiro/shapiro20030301.pdf (accessed February 14, 2010).

²¹¹ Rault, "The French Approach to Counterterrorism," 23.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Shapiro and Suzan, "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism."

²¹⁴ Ibid.

nature of terrorism.²¹⁵ France also uses a law that makes it a crime to be associated in any way with a terrorist plot, no matter how remote the association. It is also a crime to intend to commit a crime. Clearly, the powers of the French legal system are far reaching when it comes to dealing with terrorism.

Even with the far-reaching laws, what has made France's counterterrorism efforts truly effective has been the proactive and flexible response that it has been able to mount against modern terrorist networks. French counter-terror agents are given wide latitude to infiltrate and even incite groups, which is legal if it is done in order to prevent larger terrorist acts.²¹⁶ In addition, the judicial magistrates work closely with intelligence and police agencies and, over time, have developed relationships that have yielded considerable results.²¹⁷ The French population also is fully supportive of measures that would be seen as violations of civil rights in the United States and Britain.²¹⁸ Indeed, the French public, having spent decades coping with the threat of terrorism, see terrorism as something to be managed and not solved.²¹⁹ This provides the French government with wide latitude to manage its struggle against terrorism.

F. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the conditions of French Muslims and provided insight into why there has been no significant turn to terrorism by the French Muslim population. French Muslims experience significant levels of economic and social exclusion from mainstream French society. This exclusion is accompanied by a level of support for the French government and system that is not seen in Britain, however. In many ways, the situation for many French Muslims is bad enough that they have become depoliticized and intensely micro-territorial, as was shown with the gang mentality in the *banlieues*. It was also shown that, beside the lack of a fertile recruiting ground, radical Islamist groups

²¹⁵ Shapiro and Suzan, "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism."

²¹⁶ Rault, "The French Approach to Counterterrorism," 24.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Shapiro and Suzan, "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism."

would have to contend with a heavily secular society and a Muslim society that is also secular or at the very least tending toward secularism.

French Muslim parties also contribute to the lack of terrorism. French Muslim political parties are heavily dependent upon and subservient to the French state. When the riots took place in 2005 they were utterly powerless to shape, much less hinder the outbreak of violence. For that matter, the riots of 2005 go further to show that the primary concern and focus of French Muslim grievances is in the social and economic realms. There exist, in the parlance of social movement theory, little mobilization potentialities in France.

France, by co-opting the Muslim parties that do exist within the French Council of the Muslim Religion, essentially shut the door to radical groups. Any new Muslim parties would be subject to intra-community competition from the start, which would moderate their views. Additionally, French society would be loath to sanction or tolerate any radical groups operating outside the established framework.

If this were not enough to discourage radical Islamist from operating, the French have developed a flexible and proactive counterterrorism system that has considerable powers when it comes to dealing with and preventing terrorism. France developed this system over years of dealing with many varieties of terrorism.

What this shows is that there is little political opportunity for Islamic radicals to operate in France. The French Muslim population is more concerned about local economic and social matters to get involved with, or relate to, the global struggles of Islamic extremism. The French Muslim parties, who do command the support of many French Muslims, even if, as was shown with the 2005 riots, they are sometimes ineffective, are solidly mainstream in their politics. Combine this with the national ideology of *laïcité*, and the result is a lack of political opportunities for radical Islamic groups to exploit. Additionally, should Islamic groups find it possible to operate in France, they would eventually face the French counterterrorism apparatus. This apparatus has considerable power to prevent terrorism and infiltrate groups prior to a terrorist act.

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V. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

This thesis looked at four possible explanations of Muslim radicalization in Europe: cultural irreconcilability, internal grievances, external conflicts, and social movement theory. The cultural theory argued that Islam itself was the source of radicalization in Europe, but the cases of Britain and France cast doubt on this theory because, in each country, the views of Muslims with respect to the role of Islam in society is different. As was pointed out, when Muslims migrated to Britain they brought with them a very conservative outlook toward Islam and the state, while French Muslims from North Africa were far more secular. In this sense, it was not Islam but the attitude toward its role in society that mattered. Moreover, many of the terrorists turned to terrorism through Islam, but it was a highly political and radicalized form of Islam. French Muslims, when they rioted, were rioting based on social and economic issues. Islam played no role other than serving as a general identifier of the rioters. When religious groups tried to intervene, they were ignored. Thus, radical Islam does exert some influence but it is not sufficient to explain the differences between Britain and France.

This thesis also looked at internal grievances as a source for the differences between Britain and France. To a significant extent, both Muslim populations experienced social and economic estrangement from mainstream British and French society. The idea that internal grievances alone explain the difference partially explains why French Muslims rioted in 2005, but it does not explain British terrorists who often cited external reasons for justification. Therefore, internal grievances can only partially explain the differences between Britain and France.

External factors were also discussed throughout this thesis. For British Muslims, external factors played a much more significant role, if statements of the terrorists themselves are to be taken seriously. External factors do seem to go a long way in explaining the differences between the two countries. Britain was closely allied with the

United States during the war in Afghanistan, as well as in Iraq. Several terrorists in Britain identified 9/11 and/or Iraq as their motivation for joining radical circles. France, on the other hand, participated only in the war on terror and took a visible role in opposing the Iraq war. On the surface, this argument could provide some explanatory power for the differences between the two countries. Yet, it was shown that, in many cases in Britain, the radicalization process occurred well before these events. It was also unclear how significant these events were, as often the radicalization of British Muslims was due in large part to the social circles in which terrorists participated. In other words, outside factors could have played a precipitant cause that only furthered the radicalization already taking place. External factors only partially explain the differences.

Social movement theory, which argues that political opportunities shape the mobilization of aggrieved people based on a theme or set of themes that resonate with the aggrieved citizens, provides the most comprehensive framework for evaluating the findings of this thesis. Social movement theory is careful to point out that grievances, whether internal or external to a state, are only part of the explanation for why people mobilize. Grievances are simply not sufficient for people to become mobilized on a consistent basis. If grievances alone were sufficient, then those who hold that Islam is incompatible with the West, and that conflicts in the Middle East drive much of the Muslim radicalism in Europe, would have a much better case and there would be regular, spontaneous protests against alleged affronts to Muslim dignity. Instead, political organizations must mobilize people using other themes, beside the alleged affront to Muslim dignity. Indeed, social movement theory also accounts for how Islam can be used as a motivating factor. In this respect, it does account for Islam playing a role in the radicalization of European Muslims. Religion, in this case Islam, is a powerful theme that can unite and mobilize people, provided it resonates with people personally.

Social movement theory therefore is a much better frame for determining what may lie behind the differences between British and French Muslim populations. It incorporates many of the elements of the other theories into a coherent, dynamic whole. It is this dynamic that provides the basis for this paper's main claim: the political

opportunity and resources for organizing exist in a much greater degree in British Muslims than in French Muslims. This accounts for the difference in mobilization outcomes between the two countries.

The cases of Britain and France lend credence to this approach because it was shown that, in each case study of terrorists operating in Britain, it was the presence of a radical group or charity that helped foster the radicalization of British Muslims. The Al Muhajiroun movement was used as an example of a radical Islamist organization operating more or less openly in Britain. Al Muhajiroun was able to capitalize on the concerns of British Muslims to recruit individuals. As people became members of Al Muhajiroun, the organization made increasing demands on their time that increasingly socialized the members toward the Al Muhajiroun's radical agenda. Thus, Al Muhajiroun is a good example of how social movement theory can explain why British Muslims turned to terrorism and French Muslims did not.

Al Muhajiroun was allowed to operate openly in Britain for over 10 years, despite its radical rhetoric. It openly advocated violence and supported radical Muslim causes worldwide. Due to divided elite attitudes and poor counterterrorism enforcement, it was able to capitalize on the grievances of the British Muslim population because it was given the political opportunity to operate. It brought members into its fold by tailoring its message in a way that resonated with prospective members individually. It then radicalized them. In this sense, it provides the template for the other British cases.

British Muslims came to radicalization through organizations such as Al Muhajiroun. In the case of the 7/7 bombers, it was Khan who helped radicalize the other members of his terrorist cell. Yet it was also shown that Islamist networks were assessed to play a part in the 7/7 bombers' radicalization. This was true also of the 7/21 bombers. They, too, had ties to radical organizations through radical mosques. The Transatlantic Bombing plot also showed ties to radical Islamic groups. In each case, it was the presence of the radical organizations that helped foster and encourage terrorism.

The British government realized too late that it had a problem within its borders due to the ability of radical groups to operate more or less openly. Because British society

saw some of the activities of the radical groups as legitimate, and because elites remained divided as to the proper course, if any, to take regarding the suppression of these radical groups, a political opportunity existed for radical groups like Al Muhajiroun to exploit. The exploitation of this opportunity created further opportunities as informal networks were created centered on these formal radical groups. The result was a large network of radicals that was difficult for British counterterrorist forces to combat.

In France, there were virtually no radical groups openly operating. In addition, the political culture in France had, for years, shaped political Islam into a force subservient to the state. Thus, any grievances that the French Muslims felt, whether internal or external, were channeled into Muslim political groups, which were already part of the French political structure. In other words, regardless of the level of grievances in France, French Muslims had no ability to mobilize in response. The 2005 riots only proved this point.

The 2005 riots were a spontaneous, unorganized response to the death of fellow *banlieues* residents. When French Muslim groups tried to shape and reduce the violence, they were met with derision by the protestors. The riots were a response to decades of economic and social exclusion, not to political issues. Given the overwhelmingly political nature of terrorism, this is a significant point of difference between Britain and France. For many French Muslims, their grievances are not seen as political in nature. Thus, even if radical groups were to exist in France, they would face an uphill battle in finding a theme that would resonate with the French Muslim population.

This, too, is in keeping with the predictions of social movement theory. Social movement theory holds that, even if organizations and political opportunities exist, it is highly unlikely a movement will sustain itself if its message does not resonate. Part of the explanation for the difference between Britain and France is also this lack of theme resonance.

In reviewing the British and French case studies, several things become clear. It is clear that social movement theory provides the best overall explanation for the differences in outcomes between British and French Muslim populations. It is also clear

that at the root of the differences between the populations are the political opportunities that were available to radical Muslim groups to utilize. It is also clear that there was a significant lack of theme resonance for French Muslims, which also contributed to the difference in outcomes.

B. POLICY IMPLICATION

The most obvious result of this study is that by reducing political opportunities, through robust counter-terror regimes and state influence over Muslim political groups, states can reduce terrorism. This conclusion must be tempered, however. The kinds of counter-terror policies enacted in France would hardly be tolerated in the United States, where they would be seen as violations of civil rights.²²⁰ The level of grievances within the United States' Muslim population is considerably lower than that in Europe.²²¹ The circumstances of the American Muslim population are considerably different from their coreligionists in Europe. Economically, American Muslims are as well, or better, situated as mainstream American society. Nevertheless, radicalization remains a problem in the United States.²²²

The lesson that should be drawn is that policy makers should reduce the political opportunities through careful consideration of the unique situation of their Muslim populations. They should do this in a way that discourages radicalism while not singling out Muslims per se. As was shown above, the constant grouping of Muslims together as a monolithic block and treating radicalism as a Muslim problem tends to create the very problem policy makers are trying to avoid. Instead, policy makers should encourage a political discourse that discourages these groups from operating and reduces the frame resonance among their Muslim population. Mainstream groups that denounce violence should be encouraged. Yet, policy makers should recognize that the radicalization process is a varied one that eludes precise policy proscriptions. Thus, law enforcement

²²⁰ Shapiro and Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism."

²²¹ David Schanzer, Charles Kurzman, and Ebrahim Moosa. *Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim Americans*. National Institute of Justice Report (Durham, North Carolina: National Institute of Justice, 2010), 9.

²²² *Ibid.*, 1.

and counterterrorism agencies should be given the flexibility and tools necessary to go after the problem proactively. Reacting to the problem after it has already had time to develop, as was the case with Britain, only leads to worse problems later.

C. AREAS FOR FUTURE STUDY

The research in this study can be enhanced in several ways. Utilizing social movement theory, scholars should broaden the comparative study undertaken here to determine if the conclusions reached within this theses hold. A comparative study of multiple European countries, as well as a study comparing the Muslim populations of Canada and the United States, would be beneficial. These comparative studies would help determine whether political opportunities, more often than not, determine the level of terrorism in a given society.

Additionally, scholars should consider interviewing those that have left terrorist groups to determine what factors led them to do so. In this way, the question of whether state policies affect the choices of would-be terrorists to continue with a radical organization, or leave it entirely. Jacobson's study of terrorist dropouts, *Terrorist Dropouts: Learning from Those Who Have Left*, is a step in that direction.²²³ Scholars should build upon his work and analyze country-specific dropouts to determine if state policies are effective.

In the final analysis, it is important for scholars and policy makers alike to recognize that state policy can have a significant impact on whether or not an environment conducive for the development of terrorism develops within their borders. The transnational threat of terrorism is real, but more often than not terrorists build on local opportunities and grievances. By determining the level and nature of government policy effects in this realm, better policies can be developed that discourage the development of terrorism.

²²³ Michael Jacobson, *Terrorist Dropouts: Learning from Those Who Have Left*, Policy Focus Paper (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Middle East Policy, 2010).

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