Understanding Violent Radicalization amongst Muslims: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

Terrorism perpetrated by Muslims has become a global phenomenon that has significantly impacted upon nations throughout the world. Radicalization is the process of gradually subscribing to a violent ideology espousing terrorism. Existing research on the radicalization process has involved convicted terrorists and the study of their lives retrospectively to identify risk factors, triggers and catalysts for the emergence of radicalization. Models have been developed and theories have been applied to explain the process of radicalization. This review will summarize literature on radicalization and identify gaps in existing research. For example, radicalization has not been directly studied in its early stages, has not involved comparison with non-radical Muslims and, more specifically, the mechanics of ideological conversion has not been well researched.

Keywords: Muslim, Islam, radicalization, extremism, terrorism.

1.0 Introduction

Terrorism, a by-product of radicalization, poses a significant threat to societies across the Western world. Understanding radicalization is important to understanding and tackling this threat. Whilst radicalzation occurs amongst various religious and ethnic groups this paper will focus on the causes and processes involved in radicalization amongst the Muslim population in the West as this is the current threat faced globally. It will cover identified risk-factors (or causes), catalysts, theories, and process that have been discussed in the literature along the lines of radicalization. Where appropriate, gaps will be highlighted indicating the need for further research. Whilst this paper summarising current understanding in this field, it must be acknowledged that this field is still new and growing. Further, the combination of factors that lead to violent radicalization may differ from individual to individual. Gaps in existing research will be highlighted indicating the need for further erudite academic research.

2.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this review, the following definition of radicalization will be utilized, based on the combined product of other noteworthy definitions(Netherlands' General Intelligence and Security Service report, as cited in AVID (General Intelligence and Security Service), 2006; "Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus," 2011; European Commission, 2006; Mandel, in press; "Oxford Dictonary," 2012; Danish intelligence services (PET) as cited in Veldhuis & Staun, 2009; Veldhuis & Staun, 2009).

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'Radicalization is a process involving an individual or group whereby they are indoctrinated to a set of beliefs that support acts of terrorism, that can be manifested in one's behaviour and attitudes'. Radicalism however does not equate to terrorism. While radicalism typically precedes terrorism (Sageman, 2007, June 27; Silber & Bhatt, 2007) a radicalized individual may not necessarily intend to commit terrorism(Mandel, in press). However, some individuals who commit terrorism may circumvent the process of radicalization (Mandel, in press)which warrants attention in current research.

Since the definition of radicalism frequently utilizes terrorism as a key construct, the term 'terrorism' will also be defined. Unlike radicalization there is greater clarity in contemporary understanding regarding the definition of terrorism. According to the Council of the European Union and for the purposes of this review, terrorism will be defined as 'intentional acts that were committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation'(European Commission (EC), 2006)

3.0 Risk factors of radicalism amongst Muslims

3.1 Religious risk factors

There are five risk factor of radicalism that could be termed 'religious'.

3.1.1The Salafi/Wahhabi movement.

This movement has been considered by some to influence a shift towards radicalism. According to the International Crisis Group the Salafi movement, particularly the jihadist version (as opposed to the reformist version) opposes the West's oppressive military and political presence in Muslim lands and hence advocates for armed resistance(International Crisis Group (ICQ), 2007). Schwartz calls this offshoot 'neo-Salafism'(Schwartz, 2007). Members of the Wahhabi movement, while separating themselves from Salafis, share the neo-Salifist's extreme intolerance for 'infidels' or non-Muslims(Schwartz, 2007). How popular the jihadist channels of the Wahhabi/neo- Salafi movements are in Australia is unknown. Research investigating the prevalence of radical attitudes in the West appears non-existent.

3.1.2 Radical Muslim figures.

A number of contemporary Muslim figures have received increasing attention and have advocated that terrorism is an Islamically valid form of jihad. In the 20th Century, Syed Qutb who died in 1966 was a prominent Egyptian scholar who was believed to have been instrumental in laying the foundations of contemporary radical Islam(Calvert, 2010). Qutb's1964 book 'Milestones', advocated for the Muslims' need to use power to make God sovereign in the world, including both the 'decadent' Western and Muslim worlds(Qutb, 1964). Due to his execution, Qutb had no chance to explicitly promote violence. However, interpretations of his works following his demise have founded violent and radical agendas in Egypt and abroad(Qutb, 1964). There are other historic scholars who have contributed to modern radicalism including Abul A'la Maududi and Abd al-Salam Faraj(Hassan, 2008)and a misrecorded fatwa(S. I. Murshed, 2011) by 14th Century scholar Ibn Tayimiyyah (whose views influence Abdul Wahhab and the Wahhabi movement) was foundational in inspiring these 20th Century scholars in their radicalist views(Schwartz, 2007).

In terms of the contemporary context, two Muslim figures were prominent in the advocacy of terrorism who was both assassinated in 2011 by American forces: Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki.

Osama bin Laden, a Saudi citizen fought alongside the US in Afghanistan against the Russian invaders(Scheuer, 2011). Later Bin Laden formed and led the terrorist organisation Al Qaeda. He signed a fatwa advocating the killing of American military and civilians("Bin Laden, others sign fatwa to 'kill Americans' everywhere," 1998). AlQaeda was involved in several attacks on the U.S. including embassies, a navy ship and the attacks on September 11, 2001 where New York's twin towers were destroyed, and Washington's pentagon was attacked(Scheuer, 2011).

Anwar al-Awlaki was also recognized as a prominent advocate for terrorism as a form of jihad. Hassan writes that al-Awlaki, a talented orator fluent in English and Arabic, publicly denounced terrorism after September 11, 2001 but was later branded as the 'bin Laden of the internet' because of the extremist ideology he began preaching and the fact that his lectures that pervade the internet**.**

3.1.3 The justification of Muslim Terrorism.

Firstly, in exploring how radical Muslims justify their terrorist ideologies, a comparison will be made between violent radical movements in the Muslim world and the Western world.

In the Muslim world, the radical movement arose during the 20th Century after colonized Muslim countries (in Africa, Middle East, and Asia) gained independence and became nations controlled by corrupt, oppressive or authoritarian regimes(Hassan, 2008). Due to the significant struggles in the development of such nations, prominent works by Abul A' la Maududi, SayyidQutb, and Abdul Salam Faraj, idealising the Islamic state and advocating violent uprising, precipitated the rise of militant groups within Muslim countries(Hassan, 2008).

Several prominent justifications have been identified by extremist figures to advocate terrorist activities targeting Western populations. One argument used by terrorists is retaliation against the presence of foreign armies in Saudi Arabia, the holy land. Attacks on army bases in Saudi Arabia and Al Qaeda's attacks on September 11, 2001(Schwartz, 2007) were based on the hadith of the prophet Muhammad, "Two religions shall not co-exist in land of the Arabs"(Lewis, 2003). A second argument is the West's involvement in the wars with Muslim countries. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), in their statement after the 2004 Jakarta bombings that targeted Australians and the Australian embassy, mentioned they were punishing Australia for being involved in killing Muslims in Iraq(Ramakrishna, 2005).

Secondly, in considering how radical Muslims justify their terrorist ideologies, misinterpretations of Islam have to be considered. Commonly, terrorist groups misuse the term *jihad*, which they purport to be carrying out. Mainstream Muslim scholars define *jihad* as a struggle against sin that can sometimes be manifested by actual fighting provided this is governed by rules(Chertoff, 2008). Such rules would include not harming civilians or non-combatants(Doi, 1984), and waging war to remove persecution only as a last resort(Afsaruddin, 2007). Terrorist groups ignore the specific restrictions of *jihad* but fight the West on the basis of this 'justification'(Chertoff, 2008). Rather Al Qaeda argue they are not bound by the *sharia* restrictions on jihad since they perceive a war to be a 'just war'(Martin, 2010).

Other terms of Islamic texts commonly misunderstood among terrorist organisations are *al-wala' and al-bara'*. For example, al-Awlaki, refers to these terms several times as a foundation of his ideology(Al-Awlaki, 2010). Linguistically al-wala means "loyalty, devotion or love" and is used in Islam to refer to love for the sake of Allah, His messenger, the believers and those worthy of Allah's pleasure(Mohamed, 2009).

Similarly, al-bara' linguistically means "extrication, free from anything or anyone, devoid of blame or hate" and is used in Islam to refer to being free from transgressing God's laws, disbelieving in God, associating partners with god, and anything that is destructive(Mohamed, 2009).

While the correct interpretations indicate Muslims should largely live peacefully with non-Muslims, extremists misinterpret these concepts to justify Muslims/non-Muslims enmity leading to war, aggression, and killing non-Muslims in the so-called name of (Mohamed, 2009).

3.1.4 Perceived scholarly authority.

There is a problem with perceived scholarly authority and its interaction with radicalization. Anwar al-Awlaki's worldwide audience is a clear example that lay Muslims may not exercise the necessary discernment in identifying genuine scholars of Islam. However, even beyond the internet, there are not always clear scholarly bodies or hierarchies that are acknowledged as having supreme erudition. Hence, fringe 'scholars' can still gain attention and following, further promoting the radicalist cause.

3.1.5 Religious experiences from a developmental perspective.

Transitional religious experiences (TREs) have been identified to commonly precede radicalization(Awan, 2008).Two forms are associated with radicalization because they eventuate in hyper-religiosity: intensification and adoption/transition. Intensification is an escalated movement in religious commitment, i.e. becoming more religiously observant. Adoption/transition is a movement from no religious belief or conviction, to belief and conviction, such as in conversion. Such a change could be sudden or gradual. TREs are inexact predictor ofradicalization. However they are observed to occur in the background of known radicals. For example, in the case of two terrorists, Asif Hanif and SajidBadat they experienced gradual TREs in their adolescence, then some years later a sudden transition experience that closely accompanied radicalization(Dodd, Vasagar, & Branigan, 2003; Johnson, Carrell, & McGirk, 2003). Awan comments on the link between TREs and radicalization(Awan, 2008). A lag occurs between a TRE and radicalist inclination in many if not all terrorists. Awan suggests a catalyst of some sort, like an abrupt transition experience may be responsible, although he provides no clarification of what such an experience might be. Awan also asserts that before the TRE, an individual experiences confusion and crisis, with Islam being found as the solution. These inferences seem to be speculation however. It still remains uncertain which antecedeents instigate a TRE and why only some TREs lead to radicalization.

3.2 Muslim identification

Muslim identification has been linked in various ways to radicalization. Threats to a group or its values evoke strong defensive reactions. Furthermore, identification leads to strong attachment with other Muslims, and when combined with Muslim suffering and altruistic intentions, can elicit efforts to defend or protest Muslim suffering. Both phenomena can manifest in violent acts of terrorism. What follows is a discussion of the consequences of Muslim identification.

3.2.1 Mechanics of identification.

Strong identification with the Muslim ummah (global community of Muslim followers) is one factor in the development of radicalization. Two relevant theories that address this phenomenon are the self-categorisation theory(Turner, 1982, 1984)and the social identification theory (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, De Vries, & Wilke, 1988; Tajfel, 1979). These theories overlap on several relevant dimensions. The theories serve to explain how people define themselves by their group membership and as such derive positive self-esteem from their group identity.

Further, whatever group identity is salient determines how they think and behave(Ellemers et al., 2002; Tajfel, 1979). When a group comes under attack or threat, the group member will derogate out-groups(Tajfel, 1979) and favour in-groups(Smurda, Wittig, & Gokalp, 2006). Hence Muslims in the West are in an ironically unique situation.

3.2.2 Empathy and altruism.

A Muslim's strong connection with the Muslim ummah may contribute to their radicalization. If an individual possesses a strong connection to the Muslim ummah, they are deeply empathic of the suffering of their 'brothers and sisters' in Islam around the world. These sufferings often occur at the hands of western governments, either directly or indirectly (such as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya), and thereby (according to fallacious extremists' reasoning like Anwar Al-Awlaki(2010)*,* the people who support, i.e., elect these governments are also guilty and legitimate targets for attack.

It is further argued that empathy for Muslim suffering may need to be coupled with altruism before a Muslim radicalizes(Awan, 2007, 2008; S. M. Murshed & Pavan, 2009). There are two types of altruism:

- pure altruism where the individual gains by the cause being served by others, not necessarily obliging him or herself to shoulder the task; and
- impact philanthropy(Duncan, 2003), where the individual feels compelled to act personally in support of the just cause.

Perhaps both types of altruism encompass radicalization (since a radicalized individual might subscribe to a terrorist ideology without being willing to commit acts of terrorism), but the more dangerous form occurs in impact philanthropy when the individual feels driven to perpetrate acts of terrorism.

Egerton (2011)argues beyond altruism asserting that. political imaginary is important. This term is used to describe how an individual sees themselves as active fighters in a global battle with the West. Egerton highlights how factors such as the media and propaganda of terrorist movements play a vital role in radicalization.

3.3 Association with radicals.

Certain intricacies of social networking also place individuals at risk of radicalization. For example, terrorists in Europe have been found to share similar demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, age, place or residence and recruitment(Bakker, 2006). Furthermore Veldhuis and Staun, (2009)have posited that radical networks are akin to other social networks whose members, according to McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, (2001)typically share similar attitudes and behaviour. These social values are requisite of social interaction(Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954)and facilitate the formation of friendships. Sageman(2004)argues that friendship bonds are critical to group radicalization. However one might not necessarily need to be partially radicalized to befriend radicals.

The social influence of a group can also play a role in radicalizing an individual. Radical groups would typically contain authority figures who, as has been found in artificial settings, naturally yield a power to elicit obedience (Milgram's obedience studies (1963, 1974; 1992)). This dynamic can in fact serve to prevent radicalism, if charismatic leaders with good connections advocate peace. However, it can also have the opposite effect. Separate to leadership, the group itself can elicit strong obedience. People can feel compelled to act in ways desired by the group to earn praise, avoid punishments, and receive behavioural confirmation(Coleman, 1990). Further, as has been found in Asch's(1951, 1955)laboratory experiments, people may possibly conform even if they lack strong personal conviction.

3.4 Western relations with and policies regarding the Muslim world.

Another broad risk factor is the perceived injustice of western policies towards Muslim countries. This is thought to create anti-Western sentiment and provoke radicalization(Awan, 2008; Veldhuis & Staun, 2009).

Using the British context as an example, the BBC's opinion poll of Muslims showed that the majority felt the 'war on terror' was actually a war on Islam. The British government also found in their independent studies that there was an apparent relationship between British foreign policy in the Middle East and growth of terror cells(Townsend, 2006). In the United States, grievance in the country's military involvement in Afghanistan was found to highly relate with the notion that the U.S. was engaged in a war with Islam, generating a favourable (minority) opinion regarding Al Qaeda(McCauley, 2011).

Prevalent academic literature has not directly addressed whether terrorists are also dissatisfied with international policy. However, in further investigating Western relations with and policies regarding the Muslim world the following issues are pertinent.

3.5 Socio-economic factors: Experienced deprivation, experienced affluence, and perceived relative deprivation.

Socio-economic disadvantage is also identified as placing an individual at risk of radicalization(Murshed & Pavan, 2009; Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). For example, Murshed and Pavan present detailed statistics depicting the serious unemployment predicament of Muslims compared to other groups in many European nations(Murshed & Pavan, 2009). Muslims may also be less educated, and live in poorer housing in Europe(European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), 2006) preventing them from integrating with mainstream society(Veldhuis & Staun, 2009).

However, many terrorists in the West come from affluent, well educated backgrounds (Bakker, 2006; Berrebi, 2003; Kruger & Maleckova, 2003; Sageman, 2004). Hence, the greatest risk factor, especially in the West, is not actual disadvantage but perceived disadvantage of fellow Muslims, locally or internationally.

3.6 Personal experiences

Personal experiences of perceived discrimination or rejection have also been hypothesized to induce radicalization. Findings have shown that when people are ostracized or treated badly they frequently exhibit hostility toward others irrespective of whether they were the perpetrators of their maltreatment or not(Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Strucke, 2001)and it also leads them to decrease demonstration of pro-social behaviour(Twenge et al., 2001).

3.7 Criminal activity

Criminal activity and more specifically imprisonment are correlated with radicalization (Awan, 2008). Inmates typically have little knowledge about what Islam might really say about terrorism so are vulnerable to misinterpreted teachings from seemingly more 'learned' brothers or imams in prison (Awan, 2008). Cohesive groups can form as a result of the effects of confinement, similar personalities and backgrounds, and the need for safety and morale(Trujillo, Jordan, Gutierrez, & Gonzales-Cabrera, 2009).This accelerated form of prison radicalization has been framed as a form of recidivism (Awan, 2008).

3.8 Globalisation and modernisation

With globalisation, the Muslim *ummah* becomes more accessible, through technology and the internet. Hence Islamic ideologies including radical ideologies can spread more widely internationally(Veldhuis & Staun, 2009).

Modernisation has been argued by Roy(1994, 2004)to elicit a response that makes Muslims radicalize. This is because when modernisation is applied to Islam it is perceived that Western culture and values are being imposed onit.

This consequently sparks outrage amongst some Muslims. Roy argues that such Muslims respond by moving in the direction of radical Islam to avoid modernized Islam as much as possible.

3.9 Racism and Islamophobia

Racism and Islamophobia have been implicated in placing Muslim individuals at risk of radicalizing. The Muslim Public Affairs Council reported that American Muslim Youth suffer from an identity crisis because of their perceptions of racism towards them in America(Beutal, 2007). They argue that the disenfranchisement experienced by youth as a result of Islamophobia leaves youth questioning their self-identity.

Racism is also prevalent in Australia. Australian Muslim youth may therefore also adjust to such marginalisation by adopting a radical view. In Australia, there are indications of racism towards Muslims and Islamophobia. In the months immediately following September 11, 2001, 5,056 Australians in Queensland and New South Wales were telephoned about their feelings towards minority groups(Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, & McDonald, 2004). It was found that 30% would be concerned if a relative were to marry a Muslim, and a further 24% were 'greatly' concerned. This trend significantly exceeded that of other minority groups mentioned in the study relating to intergroup marriages. Surveys on racism conducted between 1999 and 2011 of over 12 000 Australians have shown that 48.6% of Australians harbour anti-Muslim sentiments at least twice as much as for other groups(Dunn, 2011). This suggests that negative sentiments are held regarding Muslims in Australia. However the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 is likely to have inflated these percentages.

Violence towards Muslims in Australia is also evident(Isma3 - listen: National consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australian, 2004) For example, Kabir (2007)notes that after September 11, 2001, Muslim women wearing the traditional Islamic dress have been intimidated, verbally attacked and sometimes physically attacked as well. Mosques were also attacked, including two in Brisbane, Queensland, one of which burnt to the ground(Kabir, 2007).This atmosphere in Australia might serve as a risk factor for some Muslims to radicalize.

3.10 Cultural identities

The way an individual values their cultural identity may also place them at risk of radicalization. Awan (2008) highlights that a number of known terrorists came from backgrounds where they were comfortably embedded in majority western culture. Why this might pre-dispose one to radicalizing is unclear. Awan infers that a radical's rejection of western culture stems from a realisation of the perceived flaws of western culture, such as hedonism and capitalism, and that conflict between these values and the individual's value system prevents the radical from assimilating further and drives them in an opposite direction Minority culture or ethnic background presents similar concerns.

Awan (2008) argues that minority culture is perceived as stifling with respect to constriction of freedom of choice, creativity and experimentation. Radicals are also known to criticize minority culture for its contentment with residing in the West(Awan, 2008).

A focus on the flaws of both Western (majority) culture and minority (ethnic) culture leaves religion as the only viable option, which is seen as perfect and as cultivated. While Awan (2008) argues that this pathway leads to radicalization such a pathway might also lead to non-radicalized religiosity.

3.11 Integration with society

Poor integration is also a risk factor of radicalization. A lack of political involvement is also seen as related to radicalization. Awan (2008)links poor political and socio-economic integration as a problem underlying people's entrance to radicalization.

The terrorists Hussain Osman, and Mohammed Bouyeri in Europe showed signs of despair in the democratic principles and process(Awan, 2008). This was associated with a sense of 'political impotence' arising from the perception that governments fail to listen to their people(Awan, 2008).

While Awan (2008), and Veldhuis and Staun (2009) did not directly show that radicals are of this nature, it was shown that European Muslims did not identify with the institutions meant to politically represent them and they did not perceive genuine efforts to involve and support Muslims(European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), 2006).Radicalization may therefore arise from political apathy.

3.12 Anomie

The psychological state of anomie is another factor that places an individual at risk of radicalizing. Marginalisation and alienation with Western society together with an absence of values and standards, and a sense of purposelessness are characteristics of 'anomie'. Awan (2008) argues that this state fuels a transitory religious experience that fails to fill the void. Hence satisfaction is found only when one turns towards radical Islamism which restores a sense of purpose. Concepts like martyrdom are idealized because they reinforce significance for a person's existence.

However, the link between anomie and radicalism seems unsubstantiated by Awan(2008). Unradicalized Islam gives a profound sense of purpose to its followers. Muslim adherents find that as believers, everything in their life is a test from God, and that for their belief they will be admitted into eternal paradise by God's leave. No sense of alienation should be found amongst adherents, as all Muslims share a holy bond as brothers and sisters in faith. If anomie does indeed lead to radicalization in some cases, it should be better understood why this does not always occur.

Similar to anomie, it has been hypothesized that people who radicalize have lost a sense of significance (Kruglanski et al., 2009). As a result they subscribe to radical ideologies that involve suicide as a means of martyrdom. Doing so restores significance with the promise of eternal paradise and immortality in the reverent minds of the surviving group members.

3.13 Psychological factors

There are a number of psychological factors that may also place an individual at risk of radicalizing. Cognitive dissonance is one such factor. It can play a role in radicalization, not necessarily in the cause of radicalism but the reinforcement of radical ideologies. Cognitive dissonance refers to the mental discomfort experienced when behaviour is not consistent with attitudes or beliefs (Festinger, 1957). Hence, speaking out in support of radicalism can reinforce those beliefs in one's mind. Additionally, cognitive dissonance also explains that the more one sacrifices for a belief, i.e. in their behaviours, the more they will subscribe to that belief. Making sacrifices is common amongst people who join a radical group, be it giving up past behaviours or separating from their families (even ideologically).

Some scholars have mentioned feelings of humiliation as contributing to radicalization (Stern, 2003, Stern, 1999, Juergensmeyer, 2000, Richardson, 2006). For example, Khosrokhavar (2005) argues for 'humiliation by proxy', in that terrorists are humiliated that their fellow Muslims are being oppressed and retaliate as a form of objection.

It has been well supported that no psychopathological profile exists amongst terrorists.Taarnby(2003)argues that terrorists require cognitive and emotional stability to `their plans to fruition which cannot be achieved with major psychopathology. However Sarwano (2008)mentions that suicide bombers are not the planners of attacks. This therefore does not rule out the possibility of mental instabilities in some cases.

Some researchers have also suggested that a personality profile cannot account for individuals who have become radicalized (Sageman, 2004, Bakker, 2006, Veldhuis and Staun, 2009, Horgan, 2008). However one hypothesis exists that authoritarian personalities might be more inclined to terrorist behaviour.   However, Veldhuis and Staun(2009) argue this should not be overestimated. Another hypothesis implicates narcissism as a factor in radicalization(Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). According to this hypothesis, narcissists, due to their grandiose self-perceptions, need to identify external enemies to blame for their own personal faults. Hence they are attracted to radical organisations that espouse hatred and enmity of certain others. However this hypothesis has not been supported (Veldhuis and Staun, 2009).

Frustration has also be been linked with radicalization. Dollard and colleagues' frustration-aggression hypothesis (1939) has been shown to apply in political violence and terrorism (McCormick, 2003). It asserts that when an individual's ideal is incongruent with their actual achievements, they become frustrated and become violent. This applies to situations of relative deprivation such as those that Muslims might experience contemporarily where the ideal is incongruent with actual treatment of Muslims.

3.14 Limitations of Research Concerning Risk Factors

There are some limitations concerning the evidence in support of identified risk factors. Such evidence is based on retrospective analyses of known terrorists (Veldhuis& Staun, 2009). This post-hoc information is used to predict radicalization ad-hoc. This presents methodological and theoretical limitations in the study of risk factors associated with radicalization. For example, no comparisons are made with individuals who are not terrorists, or who traversed the terrorist path but refused to go further (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009) rendering such finding poor in internal validity. Evidence is based on a very small sample of known terrorists resulting in findings that are dubious in terms of external validity (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). Furthermore, the interplay of risk factors and their influences on the individual are complex and therefore blur the contribution of specific variables that may place an individual as more at-risk of radicalization.

4.0 Catalysts of Radicalization

The previous discussions outlined various factors thought to place an individual at risk of radicalizing. This section will discuss catalysts of radicalization. Catalysts, while not being a direct cause, accelerate or instigate an individual to radicalize or become more radicalized. They are a key feature of Veldhuis' and Staun's model.

4.1 Recruitment

Undoubtedly, recruitment of an already somewhat radicalized Muslim can accelerate their journey towards terrorism. Naturally however, one needs a consolidated relationship with the group's members before he or she joins them(Sageman, 2004).

However, Johnson and Feldman (1992)and Post (1987)have noted that young people who are in search of completing their identities are vulnerable to the lure of being part of a radical group as, according to Sageman (2004)it affords strong loyalty and solidarity among its members.

4.2 The role of radical media and the internet

Radical media can teach individuals the misconstrued evidences of terrorist ideologies and expose individuals to their propaganda. Furthermore, the uncensored internet can easily introduce a radicalizing individual to such media(Weimann, 2006), and to like-minded radicals(Postmes & Baym, 2005; Roy, 2004). While some denote the internet as playing a minor role in the radicalization process(Stevens & Neumann, 2009; Veldhuis & Staun, 2009) others identify it as a significant catalyst (AVID, 2006).

4.3 Trigger events of radicalization

Trigger events of radicalization are another type of catalyst described by Veldhuis and Staun's root cause model (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). For example issues at either the social or individual level that act as triggers that might call for revenge or action. These may be the arrest of a group member, perpetual failure to gain employment or reach one's goals, a 'religious retreat' that motivates a group or individual to fight (Silber and Bhatt, 2007), or even watching a violent film that causes psychological disturbance (Veldhuis and Staun, 2009). Individual triggers may potentially be numerous, and include:

- disruptive events like the death of a loved one;
- experience of discrimination, injustice or imprisonment;
- inability to gain employment;
- social events that might be important and relevant depending on how the individual perceives them and their environment such as an influential speech or publication (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009)

Triggers can also include events that call for vengeance or reaction such as attacks on other in-group members or on the group (like attacks on Islam), contested elections, and lack of political opportunities(Crenshaw, 1981).

5.0 Theories of Radicalization

This section will highlight several theories that serve to explain radicalism. Social identity theory and self-categorisation theory have already been discussed in a previous section and focus on Muslim identification. Other theories that are of relevance to radicalization are moral disengagement, terror management theory, and uncertainty reduction theory.

5.1 Moral disengagement

In the process of radicalization, individuals' sense of morality becomes reversed, making committing terrorism a moral obligation instead of a forbidden crime. Bandura (1973, 1990, 1986) outlined a model that explains this transformation. Bandura argues that while moral standards can be strong, they can also be changed through disengagement.

A related model was developed by Sprinzak (1991, 1990, 1995). Sprinzak argues 3 sequential cognitive stages of radicalization. In stage 1, the 'crisis of confidence', individuals hold less confidence in their governments and disagreement arises with certain policies or rulers.

This is manifested through alternative efforts to change the political process such as protesting. In stage 2, the 'conflict of legitimacy', individuals begin to challenge the legitimacy of the government. More extreme forms of protest emerge. In stage 3, the 'crisis of legitimacy', everyone associated with the government is delegitimized, depersonalized, and dehumanized.

5.2 Terror management theory

Terror management theory is about fear of mortality, whether conscious or unconscious, resulting in a corollary hypothesis: fear of mortality affects one's defence of a worldview (Basset, 2005). Because a worldview can provide transcendence from death, through belief in an afterlife, people will cling to these worldviews if death is made more salient in an effort to alleviate death-related anxiety and ruminations (Greenberg et al., 2003). As such individuals seek closeness of those with similar worldviews and retract from the companionship of those that challenge those worldviews. It follows also that when one's worldview is threatened or even if one's self-esteem is lowered, anxiety over death increases.

Savage and Liht (2008)apply this theory to young British Muslims whose worldviews are challenged by mainstream British culture, which in turn makes such Muslims feel, whether real or perceived, alienated or subordinated. Their reaction is to identify even more strongly to a radical religious worldview and the *ummah* which alleviates their death anxiety and raises their self-esteem.

This theory appears incomplete. Firstly, this hypothesis assumes that a radical religious worldview is the only worldview that would alleviate such negative feelings. The original, non-radical religious worldview could provide transcendence of death and provide sufficient relief. However, ironically, it is suggested that refuge is found in a more radical worldview in even greater contrast with Western culture than the person's original worldview. Rationality would argue that one would abandon their alienating worldview for one more compatible and less at odds with Western culture. However it might be that the original worldview is so tied to self-concept that it would be impossible to abandon.

5.3 Uncertainty reduction theory

In situations of uncertainty, individuals are more likely to categorize themselves with a group that reduces their uncertainty. Savage and Liht (2008) appear to argue that Muslims in the West are facing situations of uncertainty like the conflict between Muslim and Western values occurring in the minds of Muslims in the West. Other examples include the atmosphere of Islamophobia and prejudice against Muslims. Hogg (2004) asserts that uncertainty is best reduced when adopting the arguments of a group, as this is less vulnerable to critique than ordinary individual opinions. Furthermore, Savage and Liht (2008) explain the migration to extremism as a reaction to uncertainty.

This occurs because the best group to categorize one's self within situations of uncertainty are those: with high entitativity, (highly homogenous groups that enforce strong conformity to the group prototype); that differ the most from other groups on dimensions pertaining to the uncertainty; and which have characteristics held by radical Islamic groups. Hence this theory can explicate why individuals might turn to radical groups in the present day. Savage and Liht (2008) go on to explain what might occur in the radicalization process leading to a 'terrorist' identity. In such groups, deindividuisation and dehumanisation of out-groups occurs. Furthermore, moral reasoning is perceived as having lifted from the individual and is shouldered by the group. This makes it easier to kill out-groups' members when they have been debased akin to animals. This component aligns with the theory of moral disengagement.

There are several shortcomings of this theory. The self-categorisation process can occur just as strongly to many of the non-radical branches or interpretations of Islam as to radical Islam that are similarly homogenous, demanding conformity, and different from Western culture on areas of uncertainty, for example the *Jamaal Tabligh*, or *Sufi* orders. Additionally, while in militant groups, dehumanisation and deindividuisation can very well occur.

An adolescent who has the need to identify with a group on the sole basis of uncertainty needs can just as easily identify with non-radical Islam as radical Islam. Hence this does not properly distinguish the entrance into radicalization compared to becoming a devout Muslim of other groups.

6.0 Models of Radicalism

The previous section discussed several theories that serve to explain radicalization. This section will highlight various models that have been used to explain radicalization.

6.1 Integrated model

Savage and Liht(2008) integrated three theories, terror management, uncertainty reduction and social identity theory to develop a 6 stage model of radicalization. In stage 1, tension from values creates self-uncertainty. In stage 2, this uncertainty is interpreted as the absence of a (cultural) worldview.

In stage 3, a fringe group is joined to handle the incongruities that the individual holds with mainstream society. In stage 4, the social identity becomes more important and in turn increasing value is placed on inter-group comparisons. In stage 5, the out-group is delegitimized, and Islam is raised as the superior group, due to current historical events/factors. Finally in stage 6, radical ideologies are accepted.

6.2 Wiktorowicz's model

Radicalization in this model is seen as a four-step process. At step 1, cognitive opening - an individual becomes receptive to the possibility of new ideas and worldviews (but this might encompass discussion and debate). At step 2, religious seeking- the individual seeks meaning through a religious ideology. At step 3, frame alignment - the public representation proffered by the radical group 'makes sense' to the seeker and attracts his or her initial interest. At step 4, socialisation - the individual experiences religious lessons and activities that facilitate indoctrination, identity-construction, and value changes (Wiktorowicz, 2004).

6.3 PET model

Another model of radicalism is the PET model. The Danish Intelligence Services developed and published the (PET, 2009, as cited in Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). It is a top down model, where the person is radicalized by others. It is a 4 phase model. Phase 1 involves a person open to radical ideas meeting the radicalizer. At phase 2, gradual change in religious behaviour and other behaviour occurs. At phase 3, the individual withdraws from family, friends and society to a group of like-minded individuals, and at phase 4, the individual is desensitized to violence and combat by watching videos. This radicalization model is advantageous in its separation into distinct stages that can be addressed for deradicalization (Veldhuis and Staun, 2009).

6.4 NYPD model

Unlike the PET model, the NYPD (New York Police Department) model is a bottom up process where the individual instigates radicalism (Silber, 2007). It is also a 4 phase model. Phase 1 is Pre-radicalization: the departure point from the individual's former life.

Phase 2 is Self-identification: when extremist ideologies (in this model- Salafism) are researched and old identity is gradually lost, and as such the individual associates more with like-minded individuals. Phase 3 is Indoctrination: gradually being persuaded about extremist beliefs resulting in complete acceptance, and Phase 4, Jihadization: where the individual perceives the onus on themselves to participate in extremist missions, hence planning such missions commences.

6.5 Root cause model

In contrast to other models, Veldhuis and Staun (2009)formulated a model based on root causes; not stages. There are three levels, macro, micro social, and micro Individual each with root causes and catalysts. On the macro level, causes are political, economic and cultural in nature including issues like international relations, poor integration, poverty, and globalisation and modernisation. Catalysts are trigger events, as has already been discussed. The micro social level encompasses issues with social identity, social interaction and group processes, and relative deprivation. Catalysts include trigger events and recruitment. On the micro individual level there are several possible personality characteristics (authoritarianism and narcissism) and personal experiences (like perceived discrimination, need for or restoration of significance) as well as psychological processes like cognitive dissonance, strategic choice, and certain emotions. This model addresses various causes, but fails to integrate them. Further, it would be helpful to classify which causes, alone or in combination, are necessary or sufficient for radicalization.

6.6 Roy

Similar to Veldhuis and Staun's model, Roy (2004) emphasizes macro factors like the root-cause model coupled with top-down processing in his explanation of radicalization. Roy mentions displacement from immigration and urbanisation, as well as the conflict between western and parental Islamic culture that in turn distresses young Muslims in the west. While many respond in positive ways, Roy asserts that a fringe follows the extremists' response of indoctrination into terrorism as a form of jihad.

7.0 Radicalization as a Rational or Strategic Choice

Amidst the host of risk factors and theories, it should not be ignored that radicalization may be the outcome of a rational or strategic choice.

Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler (2006) analyse why an individual would continue to be a part of a radical group as a strategic choice, from cost-benefit analysis based on spiritual incentives.They studied UK's Al-Muhajiroon group, an extremist Islamic group that disbanded in 2004, but continued on in the form of two other groups. This analysis is important because the group, like other possible radical groups, demands a high cost/risk associated with participations. Such costs and risks included:

- significant time commitments in the group's activities and as such being unable to work adequately;
- monetary contributions;
- discord with family over participation;
- risk of temporary expulsion if involvement was not satisfactory;
- preparation for contribution to study circles;
- protests and preaching in sensational ways and hence risk of fines and arrests; and
- backlash from inappropriate, preached messages. The costs and risks were quite high.

Some of these costs/risks were framed in ways that further legitimized the group.

For example, just as preachers of truth, like the prophet Muhammad was criticized and suffered for his cause, they too undergo similar criticism and suffering which are affirmations they are doing what is correct. The incentives were also high which Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler argue motivated these individuals to remain a part of this radical group. These included:

- exclusive entrance into paradise and salvation from hellfire,
- establishment of a British Islamic state,
- fulfilling one's religious duty: to support 'jihad' and oppressed Muslims; and
- to enjoin good and forbid evil; and re-establish the caliphate.

Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler's theoretical framework is consistent with the PET model for radicalization, where the group or external person radicalizes an individual. While this model might apply for some individuals, it does not explicate why other individuals radicalize first before joining a radical group as described in the NYPD model.

Similar to the concept of strategic choice is Clarke's and Cornish's (1985) Rational Choice Theory. They argue that individuals are always seeking to be rational asserting that the decision to engage in terrorism is a product of rationality. Applied to radicalization, this theory would posit that ideological conversion is a rational one. However cognitive biases may be operating that make it appear a rational choice. No literature was found on cognitive bias and distortion on this issue.

8.0 Discriminant Factors between Violent and Non-Violent Radicals

It is important to note that some factors belong exclusively to violent-radicalization, others are shared with non-violent radicalization, and other factors belong exclusively to non-violent groups. Bartlett and Miller(2011)conducted interviews with terrorist groups and non-violent radical groups in Western nations to identify similarities and difference between the two groups.

In terms of ideology, Bartlett and Miller found that terrorist ideas about Islam tend to be simplistic while non-violent radicals acknowledge their lack of knowledge and appreciate contextual consideration behind texts, and their own reflection and learning. Even though they are aware of the positions of scholars propagated by terrorist groups, they also seek Islamic information from other sources. Terrorists clearly supported violent 'jihad' in the West. Non-violent radicals do not support jihad in the West however they defend the right for people whose lands are occupied by others to fight their just war.

In terms of societal views and engagement, Bartlett and Miller (2012) found that while terrorists exclusively loathe the West, non-violent radicals admire certain Western values. Both groups however experienced societal exclusion, disconnection from their local community, and identity crisis. They also display a distrust for their government, and hatred towards foreign policy, Further, because terrorists assert an 'us versus them' mentality, and reject 'others' (i.e. those who aren't terrorists) they are thus unwilling to engage socially or politically with their society.

Finally, in terms of pathways to radicalization, Bartlett and Miller found that there was a greater probability that terrorists would hail from a culture of violence, where status was acknowledged through violent behaviour and in-group peer pressure (toward radicalization) was experienced.

9.0 Conclusion

Research in the area of radicalization involves studying known terrorists and extracting common or seemingly significant factors that influence the trajectory towards radicalized expressions of Muslim belief. Terrorists are individuals at the end of the radicalization process. Based on the preceding review, no academic literature was found that investigated those individuals in the process of radicalising or who abandoned such an ideology[3].

Furthermore such retrospective forms of research appear to be flawed as such designs are prone to fallacious reasoning including hindsight bias. Future research needs to give greater emphasis to the early and middle phases of radicalization. Studies need to be conducted that focus on specific pathways that lead to extremist approaches. Cross-sectional investigations focussing on the lives of terrorists during early adulthood are scarce, in particular, the period of adolescence. Programs that are directed toward this age group to prevent radicalization, would benefit from research undertaken directly with adolescents.

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[3] There is however two autobiographical accounts of Muslim men who were involved in radical organisations and then deradicalized: Husain, E. *The Islamist: Why I joined radical Islam in Britain, what I saw inside and why I left*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 2007. Nawaz, M. *Radical: My journey from Islamist extremism to a democratic awakening*: Virgin Books, in press.

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