This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King’s Research Portal at https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/

**Jihadist Radicalisation in the United States**
**Testing a Model of New Religious Movement Conversion**

Kleinmann, Scott Matthew

*Awarding institution:*
King’s College London

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

**END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT**

Unless another licence is stated on the immediately following page this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence. [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

**Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 28. Jul. 2020
Jihadist Radicalisation in the United States: Testing a Model of New Religious Movement Conversion

Scott Matthew Kleinmann

King’s College London
Department of War Studies
29 September 2017

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
ABSTRACT
There is no consensus regarding the causes of radicalisation. Some scholars argue that the failure to understand the phenomenon stems from poorly developed theoretical models. Given the shortcomings of radicalisation theories, a few scholars from the terrorism studies and social psychology of religion disciplines posit that religious conversion theories might be better suited than radicalisation models to explain why people join the jihadist movement. Specifically, these scholars hypothesise that the well-known New Religious Movement conversion theory—Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model—might be applicable to radicalisation.

This thesis tests asks the question: What causes radicalisation? More specifically, it asks: can the ‘World Saver’ model can account for radicalisation to jihadism? The study uses a two-phase mixed methods approach to answer this question. Phase-one is a qualitative, exploratory study which examines the backgrounds and experiences of six Al Qaeda-linked participants to determine if they are congruent with the model’s seven conditions. Phase-two builds on these exploratory findings with a quantitative study of 160 Muslims living in the US general population. Phase-two evaluates the participants’ scores on instruments that measure the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model, their perceptions about the role of jihad in Islam, and their willingness to participate in illegal, violent political action and legal, non-violent political activism. This thesis also explores the overrepresentation of Muslim converts in jihadism by comparing convert and non-convert participants.

The primary findings suggest that ‘World Saver’ is a valid model of behavioral radicalism, in that it predicts willingness to participate in illegal, violent political action. However, there is not a significant relationship between experiencing the model’s conditions and holding a militant interpretation of jihad. Therefore, Lofland and Stark’s model is not a valid model of cognitive radicalism. The analysis also finds that being a Muslim convert is not a significant predictor of behavioral or cognitive radicalism.
For Cory, Emily, and Madeline
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing this thesis was a monumental task. From enrollment, to upgrade, viva, and finally submitting corrections, the process took more than six years. I could not have completed it without love, support, help, and even goading from more people than I can count. These people deserve my extreme gratitude.

Most of all, I have tremendous appreciation for my wife, Dr. Cory Kleinmann, for her love, dedication, sacrifice, and assistance along the way. She was always there as an editor, a sounding board, a challenger, and debater, or even just to listen to me blather on about the ideas in my head.

I would not have finished this degree without my first supervisor and friend, Professor John Bew. He stepped in to be my new advisor when I needed help the most. His support, encouragement, advice, friendship, and humor made this thesis possible.

The support and advice of my friends and colleagues Professor Neil Shortland and Dr. Ian Elliott were also invaluable to this thesis. Their ideas and endless knowledge of psychology and social science are heavily reflected in the methods and analysis of my work. Their friendship and help means more to me than they know.

The methodological rigor of this thesis also owes much to the advice and help of friends and colleagues Daniel Snook and Professor Erin Kearns. I owe a deep gratitude to Daniel for the hours of patient tutoring, advice, and help with statistics he provided me throughout 2017. Likewise, Erin’s expert knowledge of survey design improved my methods by leaps.

For his intellectual guidance, I must thank Dr. Scotty Flower, my surrogate advisor for teaching me how to think about religious conversion beyond radicalisation. I am also indebted to him for bringing me on to the Minerva research team. Dr. Joel Day, a friend, colleague, co-author, and academic kindred spirit was also a part of this process. I learned much from him about the intersection of religion and violence. The same can be said about Dr. Milena Uhlmann. Her knowledge of religious conversion and radicalisation is inspiring. Her support and friendship carried me through the degree.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my colleagues and friends at ICSR Dr. Shiraz Maher and Dr. Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens for their friendship and support. A special thanks is owed to Dr. Maher for his support during my viva. Thank you also to Professor Peter Neumann for his initial support as my supervisor and for offering me a position at ICSR.

Likewise, I owe a special thank you to Professor John Horgan for his mentorship during my tenure as a Minerva researcher at UML and GSU. I would like to thank my mentor and teacher at Georgetown, Professor Bruce Hoffman for writing a letter of recommendation for admissions to KCL. Thank you to Professor Wim Meeus for his scholarly work on the ‘World Saver’ model and for lending me his original questionnaire—both foundations of my thesis. I appreciate the hard work of Dr. John Morrison and Dr. Paul Gill, my examiners, who gave me a challenging and rewarding viva. Finally, I must give thanks to my cousin Jill Barczak for her thorough proofreading of my thesis and my cousin Dr. Doug Voigt for his friendship and support as a fellow KCL doctoral student.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.................................................................6

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW..................................................45

CHAPTER 3: OPERATIONALIZING THE THEORY.................................88

CHAPTER 4: EXPLORATORY TEST....................................................120

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE TEST..................................................204

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION...............................................257

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION.............................................................285

APPENDIX A: BOP LETTER OF APPROVAL..................................291

APPENDIX B: PRISONER SURVEY..................................................292

APPENDIX C: QUALTRICS SURVEY...............................................345

APPENDIX D: STATISTICAL CHARTS.............................................394

BIBLIOGRAPHY...............................................................................404
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In June of 2003, federal prosecutors in Northern Virginia indicted 11 men for plotting to travel abroad to wage jihad against the US and its allies. The FBI dubbed the men the ‘Virginia Jihad Network’ and started surveilling them in early 2000 when they purchased assault rifles and began training on small-unit military tactics. Most of the men knew each other from Dar-al-Hijra mosque or from the local community college. They were a group with diverse backgrounds—including five Muslim converts—but all were connected by their reverence for the local Muslim scholar, Ali Al Timimi, and Randall Royer, a veteran of the Bosnian jihad with connections to the global jihadist movement. The group spent many nights together listening to Al Timimi speak about jihad at Dar-al-Hijrah mosque and bonding during paintball games with Royer in the woods near Washington, DC. Days after Al Qaeda’s attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, Al Timimi called the group to a secret meeting, where he told them that the US was at war with Islam. He urged the men to follow the call to jihad and seek military training from the Pakistani jihadist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) before going on to fight jihad. By the following month, seven members of the group had traveled to Pakistan to undergo weapons training in terrorism camps. The FBI subsequently arrested the men in 2003 after they returned to the US.¹

The ‘Virginia Jihad Network’ was one of the first major terrorism cases in the US following the September 11 attacks. Although the plot occurred more than a decade ago, its co-conspirators are a reflection of the nearly 400 people charged with jihadist-related terrorism in the US since then. While the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were born abroad, few terrorist plots targeting America since then have been international. Rather, like the ‘Virginia Jihad Network,’ they are domestic. From 2001-2016, 85 per cent of the individuals charged with jihadist terrorism offenses in the US are homegrown. The plots developed on US soil, comprised primarily of American citizens or permanent residents, who radicalised in the US. Moreover, as with the ‘Virginia Jihad Network,’ a disproportionate number of jihadist defendants in the US are Muslim converts. Though converts comprise only 20 per cent of the American Muslim population, a third of those charged with

jihadist terrorist offense in America are Muslim converts. More than half of the members of the Virginia cell were converts.\(^2\)

At some point in their lives, the men of the ‘Virginia Jihad Network,’ like each of the nearly 400 other homegrown American jihadists, likely went through a change that moved them from ostensibly non-violent individuals to willingness to support or engage in violent terrorism.\(^3\) Social scientists often refer to this change as *radicalisation*. Scholars and policy makers disagree about whether these changes represent shifts in attitudes or behaviors, or both. Similarly, while social scientists have identified some of the mechanisms in this process, they still do not have a complete answer for why or how these changes occur.\(^4\)

Identifying the processes and mechanisms of homegrown jihadist radicalisation in America is the premise of this thesis. This thesis argues that current radicalisation process models present insufficient theories to explain the radicalisation of jihadists in the US. In many cases, the existing models are poorly conceptualised because scholars built them from second-hand anecdotal accounts of radicalisation. Moreover, they lack empirical testing. However, it appears that religious conversion theories might be applicable to the study of radicalisation and better able to explain radicalisation than current models. Religious conversion and radicalisation seem conceptually alike, in that people experiencing both phenomena appear to go through similar changes in their thoughts and behaviors. From this perspective, it is plausible that Muslim converts are overrepresented in jihadism because religious radicalisation parallels religious conversion. Converts, who are already in a state of cognitive and behavioral transition, may be primed for radicalisation. Most importantly, however, is that religious conversion models appear conceptually superior to radicalisation models. The social scientific study of religious conversion is over a hundred years-old\(^5\) and the theories and models of conversion are built on solid empirical evidence and are well-tested.\(^6\)


\(^3\) New America Foundation, “Terrorism in America After 9/11”.


\(^5\) For example, one of the earliest works was by psychologist William James: “The varieties of religious experience.” (1902).

This chapter proceeds in five parts. First, it briefly explains the body of literature on radicalisation process models, before discussing their shortcomings. Next, it outlines the primary objective of this thesis: to test a model of religious conversion to determine if it is applicable to homegrown jihadist radicalisation in the US. Third, it summarises the specific religious conversion theory which this thesis tests: Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model. Subsequently, this chapter describes the problem of Muslim convert overrepresentation and how it may relate to the overall issue of jihadist radicalisation. Fourth is a presentation of the research design, sources, and the methodology. Finally, this chapter presents the operational definitions that guide the research in this thesis.

Theories of radicalisation

The study of radicalisation has evolved significantly since researchers began to explore the issue in the 1970s. The earliest explanations for why people engage in terrorism focused on individual psychologies, personalities, and cognitions. These theories suggest that the minds of terrorists are different than people in the general population. Psychologists first posited that terrorist behavior was the result of pathologies, such as psychopathy and sociopathy. Later theories added narcissism and paranoia to the list. These psychologists argued that terrorists are remorseless, aggressive, self-centered, and violent. Terrorism, then, is the result of uncontrollable psychological impulses. Others argued that terrorists possessed certain personality traits. These scholars no longer viewed terrorists as mentally ill. Nevertheless, their view that terrorists had innate characteristics such as aggression, intolerance, and suspicion still gave credence to the idea that terrorists have little agency in their path to violence.\(^7\) By the 1990s, individual-level theories of radicalisation matured, giving way to more nuanced psychological theories suggesting that individual cognitive styles and choices resulted in terrorism.\(^8\)

The first Palestinian intifada and growing anti-Americanism in the Middle East throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, changed the thinking of radicalisation

---

scholars. They listened to the rhetoric coming from terrorists and angry activists, and began to see underlying structural issues as the cause of radicalisation. Terrorism scholars began to posit that poverty, lack of education, dictatorial regimes, occupation, and Western intervention and influence in traditional Islamic societies were causing feelings of deprivation, anger, and alienation. This era of scholarship led to theories which postulated that there was a culture war between Western and Islamic Societies. Israel’s occupation of Palestine has radicalised generations of Muslims around the world; neo-colonialism and globalisation have fomented a ‘clash of civilisations’ between the West and the Islamic world; ghettoisation of Muslim immigrants in Europe, failed integration, and Islamophobia caused terrorist attacks.

However, beginning in the mid-2000s, terrorism scholars began to come to the realisation that there was a serious problem with radicalisation theories which focused only on individual psychology or structural strains. Researchers could not identify a single terrorist profile which could point to underlying psychological or socio-economic motivators for terrorism. Moreover, scholars began to notice that many people have the same psychological and structural experiences as terrorists but do not go on to commit acts of political violence. Therefore, terrorism scholars began to come to a consensus that radicalisation is not mono-causal. Rather, it is a complex process involving many variables, which over time move people towards violent thoughts and actions.

With this new perspective, several scholars built radicalisation process models which attempt to explain how many different factors working together move people from non-radical to radical. These new models introduced a complex series of stages, in which cognitive mechanisms and social factors interact in a process of radicalisation. For example, Randy Borum’s heuristic four-stage model explains

---

12 Horgan, The psychology of terrorism; Sageman, Leaderless jihad.
how terrorist groups play off of deprivation, use social movement framing, and in-group, out-group psychology to identify enemies and justify violence. Likewise, Fathali Moghaddam pieced together established psychological theories, such as relative deprivation and moral disengagement to develop a five-stage model in which a metaphorical narrowing staircase successively brings fewer and fewer people closer to violence with each step. Similarly, the NYPD and Thomas Precht developed four stages where individual background factors and experiences collide with religious and identity exploration and socialisation. These process models tend to fall within two categories: top-down and bottom-up processes. For example, Quintan Wiktorowicz offers a top-down model which explains how a UK-based Islamist movement reaches out to perspective joiners through pre-existing social networks and indoctrinates them through framing and intensive socialisation in movement activities. Conversely, Marc Sageman posits a grass-roots process, where groups of friends and family members increasingly isolate themselves and radicalise through intensive interaction and group-think in small cliques.

**Problems with radicalisation models**

Many of these process models continue to be influential theoretical frameworks for understanding radicalisation. However, despite their innovation over earlier psychological and structural radicalisation theories, scholars still have not come to agreement on the mechanisms within these processes that drive people to involvement in terrorism. Frustrated with the lack of progress in the field, in 2014 Marc Sageman wrote: ‘After all this funding and flurry of publications, with each new terrorist incident we realise that we are no closer to answering our original questions about what leads people to turn to political violence. The same worn-out questions are raised over and over again, and we still have no compelling answers. It

---

seems that terrorism research is in a state of stagnation on the main issues." While less pessimistic than Sageman, John Horgan has equally expressed his frustration with the state of theorizing radicalisation. As he explains, ‘Arrival of a non-political, objective analysis of this problem [understanding terrorism] was a rare enough phenomenon prior to 9/11. Today, depressingly, it seems even further from our grasp than ever before.’

There are two persistent problems in terrorism research which stifle attempts to better theorize radicalisation. First, very few scholars have built radicalisation process models on empirical observations. As John Horgan laments, ‘What psychological theorising on terrorism does exist is frequently built on unreliable, invalid, and unverifiable data, frequently as a result of a lack of effort to “go native.”’ Most frequently, scholars build their models from secondary media sources which are often biased and sensationalised. Moreover, without firsthand observations and interviews, secondary sources leave scholars to subjectively presume how individuals’ experiences affect their cognition and if and when individuals have cognitively embraced an ideology or decisions to commit acts of terrorism. Likewise, as Alex Schmid explains, ‘Such phase or stage models generally have one important drawback: they were constructed on the basis of relatively few cases where young men…actually ended up (Islamist) terrorists, neglecting all of those individuals in similar situations who did not go through all of these stages despite similar starting positions…’ Overcoming this conceptual shortcoming requires ethnographic observations or a control group of participants who have not radicalised.

The second problem is that scholars tend to generalise their radicalisation theories from other disciplines without testing them. For example, the Borum.

---

21 Horgan, *The psychology of terrorism*, 33.
22 Horgan, *The psychology of terrorism*, 42.
Moghaddam, NYPD, and Precht theories are nothing more than a miscellany of sociological and psychological theories shoehorned into hypothetical models. While generalising is a building block of the scientific method, moving from the hypothesis to theory requires rigorous empirical testing—a process which none of these scholars have done. As Sageman contends, “Most of these studies are necessarily superficial because they lack the rich data to check on the validity of their findings from their respective fields to terrorism.” Horgan agrees, suggesting there is an ‘inability (or perhaps unwillingness) to build on previous research’ Lacking sufficient testing, many existing radicalisation models, therefore, appear to be nothing more than hypotheses which the field continues to perpetuate as viable theories.

**Is a model of radicalisation necessary?**

The persistent problems with radicalisation models have led some scholars to criticise the ability of process models to theorise the complex phenomena of radicalisation. For example, Walter Laqueur argues that since there is no single radicalisation pathway, attempting to develop a ‘general theory’ of the radicalisation process is a futile endeavor. Likewise, Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun suggest that phase or stage models are too static to describe a dynamic process like radicalisation, writing that phase models ‘assume that radicalisation is a linear process that follows more or less slavishly a development from phase one to phase two, three, and four, regardless of background, political, cultural and social conditions in the country or region at the given time, and regardless of the individual’s personal history and life path.’

While Laqueur, Veldhuis, and Staun are right to argue that radicalisation is a multifaceted, non-linear phenomena, they are wrong to suggest a process model is too simplistic to explain why people become involved in terrorism. The complexity of

---

25 Moghaddam, “The staircase to terrorism.”
26 Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalisation in the West*.
27 Precht, “Home grown terrorism and Islamist radicalisation in Europe.”
28 Sageman, “The stagnation in terrorism research,” 571.
29 Horgan, *The psychology of terrorism*, 34.
the phenomena is exactly why radicalisation theory requires a process model. We know that there are many factors working together over time that affect radicalisation. Without a multi-factor model to organize those mechanisms and processes, we will not understand how those factors affect each other to cause radicalisation. What the field of terrorism studies needs is a process model that is dynamic and flexible, but not so vague that it explains both everything and nothing at all. Such a model is not an impossibility. In fact, researchers in the fields of religious social science have developed dynamic models to explain how cultural, social, psychological, and religious processes affect religious conversion.32

**Religious conversion theory as a model of radicalisation**

Recently, scholars from terrorism studies and the disciplines of sociology and psychology of religion have begun to posit that religious conversion theories might be better suited for explaining jihadist radicalisation than the previous terrorism-focused models.33 Unlike radicalisation models, most religious conversion scholars developed their conversion theories from years of in-depth ethnographic research, building on nearly a hundred years of previous social science research into religious conversion.34 Moreover, scholars have tested some conversion theories many times.35

Specifically, Borum suggests that one of the most well-known New Religious Movement (NRM) conversion theories—John Lofland and Rodney Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model—might be applicable to radicalisation. Lofland and Stark claim that seven accumulating conditions, together, are necessary and sufficient mechanisms to affect conversion to new religious movements, colloquially known as cults. As

---

34 For example, one of the earliest works was by psychologist William James: “The varieties of religious experience.” (1902).
35 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?
Borum contends, ‘Though the model was modestly developed nearly a half century ago to narrowly explain enlistments into a relatively small West Coast cult, its conceptual utility is already leaps ahead of most contemporary thinking about radicalisation into violent extremism.’

Lofland and Stark’s model is conceptually superior to radicalisation process models precisely because it fills the gap left by radicalisation theories. The two authors developed the model after two years of ethnographic observations with participants who joined the movement and those who did not. This method allowed them to identify the salient conditions associated with cult conversion and less important factors which everyone experiences. Moreover, researchers have operationalised and tested the ‘World Saver’ model on new religious movements more than 25 times since its inception in 1965.

Building from Borum’s suggestion that religious conversion theory is a promising avenue for future research into radicalisation, this thesis asks the question: Is Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model useful to apply to jihadist radicalisation? The thesis argues that the seven conditions in the ‘World Saver’ model are sufficient to affect jihadist radicalisation. While there are dozens of religious conversion models, this thesis employs Lofland and Stark’s model, because it has received the most rigorous testing. Researchers have operationalised and tested the ‘World Saver’ model on new religious movements more than 25 times since its inception in 1965.

To explore the hypothesis that the ‘World Saver model’ can explain radicalisation, this thesis tests Lofland and Stark’s model to determine how jihadists experience the model’s conditions and if those conditions can statistically predict jihadist radicalism. To my knowledge, this thesis is the first empirical study to apply Lofland and Stark’s conversion theory to the problem of radicalisation. While a number of scholars have suggested that the ‘World Saver’ model is applicable to radicalisation, none have tested Lofland and Stark’s theory empirically to determine

---

36 Borum, “Radicalisation into violent extremism I: A review of social science theories.”


how jihadists experience the model’s conditions and if those conditions are valid predictors of radicalisation. In this regard, this thesis makes a significant theoretical contribution to the literature on radicalisation as the first empirical study to test the ‘World Saver’ model on jihadist radicalisation.

Considering the novelty of this thesis’ theoretical approach, it is important to differentiate it from two similar studies. First, Borum recognises that Quintan Wiktorowicz’s ethnographic research on a UK Islamist group produced very similar results to Lofland and Stark. Most notably, three of the mechanisms in Wiktorowicz’s model—*cognitive openings, religious seeking, and culture and commitment*—bear an uncanny resemblance to Lofland and Stark’s *tension, religious seeking, and intensive interaction* conditions (further explained below). As Borum notes, ‘The parallels with Wiktorowicz’s contemporary observations of a Western Islamist movement are striking.’ Despite these similarities, Wiktorowicz minimally cites Lofland and Stark (three citations) and quotes them only once. However, Wiktorowicz presents his research as a work of inductive ethnography, rather than a qualitative *a priori* test of a theory. Regardless, like the ‘World Saver’ model, scholars have not operationalised or tested Wiktorowicz’s parallel model either.

Second, is an article by Neil Ferguson and Eve Binks. The two authors note the similarities between religious conversion and radicalisation. They identify two key works in religious psychology—John Lofland and Norman Skonovd’s ‘Conversion Motifs’ model and Lewis Rambos’s ‘Holistic Model’—which they suggest are good starting points for applying religious conversion theory to radicalisation. However, the aim of the article is not to test the proposed models, but rather to start a conversation about considering radicalisation through the lens of religious psychology. Indeed, the two authors do not attempt to offer any new empirical evidence to support their claims or develop a model of their own. Instead, the article is meant as a comparative literature review.  

Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ Model

Before explaining how this thesis tests Lofland and Stark’s model, it is first important to explain how the ‘World Saver’ model is relevant to jihadist radicalisation and how the conditions of the model act as mechanisms which move people from ostensibly ordinary citizens to accepting the beliefs and behaviors associated with deviant religious movements.

Lofland and Stark originally developed the ‘World Saver’ model to explain why people joined a millenarian cult. Scholars refer to cults as New Religious Movements (NRM). In popular discourse, the term *cult* is often a pejorative term applied to unpopular or misunderstood religions. However, in the study of religious psychology and sociology a cult is merely an objective classifier for a particular type of religious movement. ‘Stark and Bainbridge argue that a cult is a new or innovative religious movement that is in high tension with the dominant social-cultural religious institution.’

From this perspective, as an NRM conversion theory, Lofland and Stark’s model has particular relevance for the study of radicalisation. As Lorne Dawson explains, ‘after all, prior to 2001, the most infamous instances of religiously inspired mass violence had been perpetrated by new religious movements.’ Indeed, other scholars have already noted the parallels between the jihadist movement and cults. Most notably, Day and Kleinmann point to the tension between traditional Islamic religious institutions and the jihadist movement, due to its innovations in Islamic doctrine—key elements of a new religious movement.

Lofland and Stark developed ‘World Saver’ to explain the recruitment and conversion into Divine Precepts (DP), a group the authors later revealed as the Unification Church or the ‘Moonies’. The Unification Church came to the United States from Korea in 1959, where the movement already had over 5,000 followers. However, within 10 years, Americans began to view the Unification Church as a

---


deviant cult, due to its innovations on Christianity, communal living, and the demands the movement placed on its followers’ material and social lives.  

**Value-added Model**

Like existing radicalisation models, the ‘World Saver’ model describes a process of change. During their research, Lofland and Stark noticed that some of the people who engaged with the Unification Church joined the movement, while others lost interest and left. The two researchers concluded that joining the Unification Church was the result of a value-added process of accumulating conditions and situations that funneled prospective converts closer to joining. This funnel ‘systematically reduces the number of persons who can be considered available for recruitment, and also increasingly specifies who is available’.  

Those who experienced the prescribed conditions and situations moved toward conversion; those who did not, moved away. This process consists of seven factors that are divided into predisposing conditions, which are the result of socialisation prior to contact with the Unification Church and situational contingencies that result from socialising with the movement.

**Tension**

The first condition of the model is tension—a predisposing condition that describes frustration from deprivation. Failed material and spiritual ambitions; unexplained experiences, like hallucinations or divine encounters; relational problems; sexual frustration; concealed homosexuality; and social anxiety or physical insecurities are all forms of tension, which Lofland and Stark described.

**Religious Problem-Solving Perspective**

Lofland and Stark argue that experiencing tension gives individuals a reason to act on their frustrations and improve their situation. However, there are many ways to solve problems in one’s life. The authors contend that the type of coping mechanisms that people choose to deal with problems depends on their problem-

---

43 Ibid., 863.
44 Ibid., 864.
solving perspective. This frame of reference explains the causes of life’s difficulties and prescribes how one should resolve them. Only people who have a religious problem-solving perspective will explore the religious solutions which religious movements offer to those who join.46

Lofland and Stark found that the people who joined the Unification Church perceived their problems as spiritual. These converts did not believe that their prior religions traditions provided solutions to their problems. However, they ‘still had a general propensity to impose religious meaning on events’.47 Many of the joiners were previously not religiously practicing. Yet, prior socialisation led them to believe that religion was the cause of, and solution to, their problems.48

**Religious Seeking**

Where individuals’ prior religious traditions are not sufficient for resolving tension, Lofland and Stark argue that people with only a religious problem-solving perspective will become religious seekers, who look for religious solutions elsewhere. Religious seeking may take a number of forms. Some people may ‘church hop’. Others may explore cults, mysticism, or just vague notions of spirituality. A few may move between the traditional and the occult. Regardless of their path, religious seekers are looking for a new spiritual paradigm that can explain their situation.49

**Turning Point**

Exploring new religious solutions does not mean that one will be willing and able to act on them. A person must be structurally available to move in a new direction. Lofland and Stark found that this availability was the result of a turning point, ‘in which old obligations and lines of action were diminished and new involvements became desirable and possible’ just prior to, or concurrently with contact with the Unification Church.50

---

46 Ibid., 867.
47 Ibid., 868.
48 Ibid., 868.
49 Ibid., 868.
50 Ibid., 870.
Lofland and Stark did not identify an archetypal turning point amongst Unification Church coverts. Rather they found that it could be any experience that ‘increase[s] [a] pre-converts awareness of and desire to take some action about his problems, at the same time giving him a new opportunity to do so’.\textsuperscript{51} For example, recovering from a long bout of illness, losing one’s job, divorce, or failing out of university. These experiences are an opportunity to make a fresh start free from prior obligations, which may have hindered one’s ability to join the Unification Church in the past.\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{Cult-Affective Bonds}

While a person may be searching for a new religious paradigm and may be structurally free to make a religious change, the seeker still needs a mechanism that can lead him or her toward one particular system of beliefs. This transition usually requires that ‘an affective bond must develop, if one does not already exist’, with someone in the movement who can expose the seeker to the Unification Church.\textsuperscript{53} Where these bonds are strong enough, the seeker may begin to engage with the movement.\textsuperscript{54}

Most of the people who joined the Unification Church already had pre-existing relationships with another person in the movement. In other cases, seekers formed bonds with members soon after initial contact. ‘Bonds that were unsupported by previous friendships with a new convert often took the form of a sense of instant and powerful rapport with a believer’.\textsuperscript{55} Lofland and Stark argue that these social bonds were important for creating a ‘positive emotional interpersonal response’ to the Unification Church message and the group.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Extra-cult Affective Bonds}

Lofland and Stark found that not all individuals who developed affective bonds with Unification Church members joined the movement. One barrier to joining the Unification Church was having several, strong \textit{extra-cult affective bonds}. Just like

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 870.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 870.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 871.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 871.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 871.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 871.
cult-affective bonds, these relationships can be with friends, family, or other associates, except that these individuals have no affiliation with the movement. Such attachments act as a social and ideological counterbalance that convinces the religious seeker that the status quo or some other religious interpretation is preferable to the Unification Church.57

**Intensive Interaction**

Finally, the authors noticed that not every individual who joins the Unification Church becomes a total convert who is willing to become a ‘deployable agent’ on behalf of the movement.58 Lofland and Stark argue that moving from verbal commitment to realigning one’s identity with the movement requires intensive socialisation with other members. Once a seeker decides to join the Unification Church he or she begins a ‘concrete daily and even hourly’ regimen of physical interaction with the Unification Church members designed to ‘reinforce and elaborate’ on the Unification Church’s belief systems.59

Anecdotally, many of the conditions which Lofland and Stark posit in their model are also evident in the short example of the ‘Virginia Jihad Network’ at the beginning of this chapter. For the group, Al Qaeda’s attack on America on September 11 was a catalytic turning point. The group believed that America’s response to the attack would be a war on Islam. With the perceived religious war on the horizon, jihad became imminent for the men. Moreover, the group’s connection to jihadist ideology and its conduit to terrorist training camps were the members’ pre-existing relationships with jihadist scholar Ali Al Timimi and Bosnian jihad veteran Randall Royer, who Lofland and Stark would refer to as cult affective bonds. Lastly, their willingness to become ‘deployable agents’ on behalf of the jihadist movement appears to be the result of intensive interaction in discussion about jihad with Al Timimi at the mosque and socializing on the paintball field with Royer. While there is not enough publicly available information on each of the members of the group to identify all of Lofland and Stark’s conditions in the members of the ‘Virginia Jihad Network’, it is plausible that closer examination would also reveal

57 Ibid., 872-873.
58 Ibid., 864.
59 Ibid., 873.
evidence of tension, religious problem-solving perspectives, and religious seeking. Nevertheless, the short anecdote paints a compelling picture of how a New Religious Movement conversion theory might explain radicalisation to jihadism.60

The overrepresentation of Muslim converts in jihadism
The anecdote of the ‘Virginia Jihad Network’ illustrates another important question that Lofland and Stark’s model may answer about jihadist radicalisation. Of the 11 members of the group, five were Muslim converts. Considering that Muslim converts comprise only a fifth of the Muslims living in the US, it seems unexpected that more than half of the members of a group of Muslim friends from a local mosque were converts. It becomes even more surprising when one reflects on the probability that five Muslim converts would end up as part of the same terrorist plot. After all, only about 400 persons have been indicted for jihadist terrorism plots in the US since 2001.61 However, the disproportion of Muslim converts involved in jihadism in America is more than anecdotal. In fact, converts comprise 30 per cent of the individuals indicted for jihadist terrorism in the United States, despite the fact that they represent only 20 per cent of the general Muslim population.62 Similar disproportions of converts are involved in jihadism in Europe.63 However, scholars have not yet figured out why this phenomenon occurs. This thesis additionally seeks to answer the question: can the Lofland and Stark model explain why converts are overrepresented in jihadism?

If one views radicalisation to jihadism as a religious conversion, it might seem reasonable to suggest that Lofland and Stark’s theory, which purports to explain why people convert to a new religion, might also explain why people join a violent religious movement like jihadism. It might also provide some insights into why Muslim converts are overrepresented in the movement. Indeed, Wim Meeus, a Dutch researcher, who in 1991 tested Lofland and Stark’s model on adolescent converts in the Netherlands, explained in a later article that the identity changes converts experience via the ‘World Saver’ process, are similar to the identity

61 New America Foundation, “Terrorism in America After 9/11.”
62 Ibid.
changes that jihadists experience during radicalisation. From this perspective, radicalisation to jihadism appears very much like a conversion.  

Leah Farrall also made this observation in her study of Muslim converts who radicalised to militant Salafi Islam in Egypt. Quoting Meredith McGuire, Farrell explains that religious conversion is a ‘Transformation of one’s basic meaning system,’ that alters the way one sees him or herself in the social context. This description of conversion mirrors what terrorism scholars call ‘cognitive radicalisation,’ in which one’s belief system changes from moderate to extreme, affecting the way a person sees oneself in relation to the world. Farrall goes on to explain that this change is a slow dynamic processes that makes ‘starts, stops, and diversions and even reversals.’ She concludes that the similarities in the processes and transformations that occur during both phenomena lead her to consider that radicalisation to militant Salafism is best described as a religious conversion.

Like Farrall, James T. Richardson notes that diversions are common in religious conversions. In fact, he argues that some converts are serial converters who try out many religious belief systems before settling on one, if they ever do. Likewise, Lewis Rambo and Steven Bauman explain that conversion is an ‘ongoing process of transformation.’ Therefore, if we consider radicalisation to jihadism as a religious conversion, and recognise that conversion is often an ongoing cycle with diversions and reversals, it may suggest that Muslim converts are overrepresented in jihadism because, as converts, they are already in the cycle of conversion and may not yet have settled on a belief system. Joining the jihad is just another diversion in the process of conversion. Conversely, non-converts may require an additional catalyst to enter this cycle and move from Islam to jihadism. In this regard, Muslim converts are primed for conversion to jihadism compared to non-converts. If Lofland and Stark’s model represents this cycle of conversion, we might expect to see that

---

67 Farrall, “Navigating lived experience: reflections from the field,” 125.
converts experience the conditions of the model more frequently or at greater intensity than Muslims who were born into the religion.

Whether Lofland and Stark’s model can explain why Muslim converts are overrepresented in jihadism is the secondary research question of this thesis. More specifically, this thesis attempts to determine if Muslim converts experience the seven conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model differently than non-converts. If so, do the differences explain why Muslim converts are more likely to radicalise than non-converts?

**Research design**

So far, this introduction has identified two significant problems in the field of radicalisation research. First, existing radicalisation process models are conceptually weak compared to Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model. However, the latter has never been tested to determine its applicability to radicalisation. Second, Muslim converts are overrepresented in jihadism in the US. However, there is not a satisfactory answer for why this phenomenon occurs. From these two unresolved issues emerge the two general research questions of this thesis:

1. Can Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model explain radicalisation to jihadism?
2. If so, do Muslim converts experience the model’s seven conditions differently than non-converts? Relatedly, if there are differences, do they explain why Muslim converts are more likely to radicalise than non-converts?

These questions are complex and largely unexplored. Therefore, it is not yet clear which specific research questions to ask and which hypotheses to test. Answering these questions requires a robust, mixed method research design which first qualitatively explores the general research questions and identifies more specific ones, before moving on to quantitative hypothesis testing to seek generalizable answers to the questions.

This thesis uses a *complementarity* mixed methods research design. Mixed methods research employs two or more different types of data or data collection methods and allows researchers to compensate for weaknesses in the data or collection methods.
of one approach with the strengths of another approach. Using this method, the data collection and analysis in this thesis are divided into two phases. Phase-one is a small qualitative exploratory study which descriptively analyses Lofland and Stark’s model to determine if its seven conditions are congruent with the experiences of jihadists and if there are differences between Muslim converts and non-converts. This exploratory phase identifies more specific, pertinent research questions and hypotheses to test in phase-two—a quantitative study of Muslims living in the general population of the United States. Phase-two adds correlational and inferential analysis to the exploratory findings found in phase-one.70

Phase-one:

Phase-one begins with two general research questions:

1. How do jihadists experience the seven conditions of Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model?
2. Do Muslim converts experience those conditions differently than non-converts?

The exploratory study in phase-one relies on data from primary source questionnaire interviews with six homegrown Al Qaeda-linked prisoners who are incarcerated in US federal prisons. These Al Qaeda-linked prisoners represent an extremely rare and difficult to reach sample. The ethics application to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Research and Review Board (BRRB) requested to interview 71 Al Qaeda-linked prisoners. The BRRB approved 41 for participation. Six of the 41 prisoners agreed to participate. According to the US Federal Bureau of Prisons, this thesis is the first and only scholarly study to interview Al Qaeda prisoners in US federal custody.71 In general, there is a serious lack of primary source data in the field of terrorism studies. In 2013, Neumann and Kleinmann found only 15 per cent of research on radicalisation was based on primary source interviews.72 While the researchers who have conducted interviews of terrorists have certainly advanced our understanding of the terrorist mind-set, a recent search of journal indices and Google Scholar shows that there are no recent studies that include interviews of jihadist

71 Email with Jody Klein-Saffran, human subjects officer at Federal Bureau of Prisons.
terrorists who radicalised in the US.\textsuperscript{73} Therefore, these interviews represent a significant empirical contribution to the literature on homegrown radicalisation in the US.

The primary instrument used to collect data is a questionnaire adapted from Willem Kox, Wim Meeus, and Harm‘T Hart’s article ‘Religious Conversion of Adolescence: Testing the Lofland and Stark Model of Religious Conversion’.\textsuperscript{74} In 1991, the authors tested the ‘World Saver’ model on youth who joined new religious movements in the Netherlands and ‘found very strong support for the model.’\textsuperscript{75} The questionnaire is a combination of 127 closed-answer, multiple-choice questions and 10 open-ended questions. The questionnaire has six sections (i.e. background, personal experiences, spiritual history, relationships, more on relationships, beliefs). These sections roughly correspond to the seven conditions which Lofland and Stark theorise in the ‘World Saver’ model.

The data from phase-one were analysed using Template analysis. This method is a form of thematic analysis that can be used inductively or deductively. ‘Central to the technique is developing a coding template, usually on the basis of a subset of data which is then applied to further data, revised and refined’.\textsuperscript{76} Often the template begins with theoretically based \textit{a priori} themes. The themes are stratified in related levels that move from the general to the specific. The final template for phase-one is


\textsuperscript{75} Meeus, “Why do young people become Jihadists?,” 278.

composed of three levels of themes. In general, the first-level themes represent the seven conditions of Lofland and Stark’s model. Second-level themes are primarily based on Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation of those conditions. Third-level themes emerged a posteriori from the data.

Phase-two:

Phase-two of this study compliments the previous exploratory phase, by quantitatively testing 11 hypotheses that emerged from more specific research questions identified in the qualitative analysis. The questions ask:

1. Can the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions together predict willingness to participate in illegal, violent political action?
2. Can the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions together predict willingness to participate in legal, non-violent political activism?
3. Is there a significant positive relationship between experiencing the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions together and holding militant interpretations of jihad?
4. Do Muslim converts and non-converts experience the ‘World Saver’ conditions differently?
5. Does status as a Muslim convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and willingness to participate in legal, non-violent political activism?
6. Does status as a Muslim convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and willingness to participate in illegal, violent political action?
7. Does status as a Muslim convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and holding militant interpretations of jihad?
8. Does religiosity predict willingness to participate in legal, non-violent political activism?
9. Does religiosity predict willingness to participate in illegal, violent political action?

78 Willem Kox, Wim Meeus, and Harm’t Hart, “Religious conversion of adolescents”.
10. Does religiosity predict holding militant interpretations of jihad?

11. Does holding militant interpretations of jihad predict willingness to participate in illegal, violent political action?

Phase-two relies on a sample of primary source online surveys of 160, 18-65 year-old Muslims living in the United States. The participants were recruited through Qualtrics’ survey panel service, one of the world’s leading academic survey platforms and panel services. Survey-based research methods are growing more popular in radicalisation studies, but are still exceedingly rare. In their 2013 study, Neumann and Kleinmann identified only 18 radicalisation studies that used surveys as a primary research method.79

The primary source interviews in phase-one of this thesis have tremendous scholarly value. However, their value is not without limits. The small convenience sample of terrorists has little-to-no statistical value, which restricts the exploratory findings. Moreover, since phase-one only includes people who radicalised, without a control sample or comparison group of non-radicals, it is not possible to isolate the independent variables which contribute to radicalisation and those that do not. Phase-two overcomes the limitations of terrorist interviews by surveying a large sample from the general population to measure radicalisation with dependent variable scales that measure variation in radical beliefs and behaviors. When combined with instruments that measure independent variables (i.e. the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model), statistical analysis can look for inferential relationships between the variables. While it is not possible to know if the participants in the survey are terrorists or will become terrorists, phase-one compensates for this weakness by providing thick descriptions of the experiences of real terrorists.

Phase-two uses three instruments to collect data. The primary instrument is a variation of Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s ‘World Saver’ questionnaire.80 This instrument is a slightly different quantitative version of the questionnaire in phase-one. The second instrument is the Activism-Radicalism Intention Scale (ARIS). Sophia

---


Moskalenko and Clark McCauley developed the ARIS scale to measure political
mobilisation (behavioral radicalisation). The scale consists of ten items which
measure willingness to participate in legal, non-violent political action (activism)
and willingness to participate in illegal or violent political action (radicalism).81 The
third instrument measures cognitive radicalisation and is designed to show variation
in participants’ understanding of jihad on a scale from moderate to militant. C.
Christine Fair, et al. developed the scale for a national survey of Pakistanis
regarding their attitudes toward jihadism.82

To analyse the data in phase-two, this thesis used SPSS-24 statistical software suite
to run independent sample t-tests, Pearson correlation coefficients, and multiple
linear regressions between the independent variables from Lofland and Stark’s
‘World Saver’ model and the dependent variables from the ARIS and cognitive
radicalisation scales.

Definitions
To answer the research questions of this thesis, it is first necessary to understand
what the terms at the core of it mean. However, defining words and phrases like
radicalisation, terrorism, the jihadism movement, and homegrown is no easy task
since few scholars and policy makers agree on their meanings.

Radicalisation
Radicalisation is one of the most ambiguous of these terms. There are a plethora of
contradictory definitions for this word, in part because radicalisation can be used in
many contexts, and the word has both relative and subjective meanings. Moreover,
some scholars dismiss the notion of radicalisation entirely.83 The disagreement on
the definition of radicalisation has led Peter Neumann to note that the word has
become a generic catchall to explain, ‘what goes on before the bomb goes off’.84

81 Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley. “Measuring political mobilisation: The distinction between activism
82 C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro. "Islam, militancy, and politics in Pakistan: Insights
from a national sample." Terrorism and Political Violence 22, no. 4 (2010): 495-521
83 David R. Mandel, Radicalisation: What Does It Mean? (Toronto: Thinking, Risk, and Intelligence Group, No
Date), No page numbers.
84 Peter R. Neumann, “Perspectives on Radicalisation and Political Violence” (papers from the first international
conference on radicalisation and political violence, ICSR, January 17-18, 2008).
Therefore, it is necessary to untangle the meaning of radicalisation and develop a definition suitable for social science.

Most definitions describe radicalisation as a process of becoming radical. As Neumann explains, ‘The first part of this definition—the idea of radicalisation as a process—is not particularly controversial. No one who studies radicalisation believes that individuals turn into extremists overnight, or that their embrace is caused by a single influence’. What is debatable, however, is the relative nature of the term *radical*, which suggests that what is radical is opposed to what is moderate, normative, or status quo. David Mandel argues that the relativity of the word ‘indicates that agreement on what is to be defined as radical may be subject to “perspective effects”’. In other words, what one person or group construes as radical may not be radical to another. This may be particularly true in different cultural, national, or historical contexts. In this regard, the term *radical* is also subjective and attributive. Different groups may view one another’s way of life as threatening to their own and, therefore, label the other as a radical. Therefore, when conducting social science on radicalism, it is not clear from whose perspective the researcher should assess what is radical.

However, not everyone sees the relative and subjective definition of radical as problematic. Mark Sedgwick proposes that the word is still applicable to social science, so long as one defines moderate. Sedgwick suggests that the concept of *radicalism* ‘serves the useful purpose of indicating a relative position on a continuum of organised opinion’. Yet, this introduces new problems of identifying where on the continuum the line between radical and moderate lies, and on which continuum a researcher should assess radicalism.

---

87 Mandel, *Radicalisation*.
88 ibid.
89 ibid.
91 Sedgwick, “Confusion,” 481.
The solution to these problems is simpler than it might first appear. Most groups have multiple belief systems or agendas (i.e. continuums). These may be social, religious, cultural, or political agendas. Yet, as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) explains, the term radical is a political concept. And while the jihadist movement expresses religious motivations for its agendas, at its core the movement advocates political change on earth. Therefore, social scientists should assess the radicalism of the jihadist movement on a political continuum. Moreover, since this thesis focuses on homegrown jihadists in the United States, it is appropriate to identify radicalism’s position on the political continuum from a Western political perspective. Despite a wide spectrum of political beliefs in the West, the foundation of Western politics is broadly based on the ideas of the Enlightenment—liberal democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Therefore, those who approve of these principles are on the moderate end of the continuum, and those who wish to change them are on the radical end.

Yet, this definition of radical is still insufficient because it does not answer the question: ‘radical in what manner’? Generally, radicalism falls on two planes: radical thought and radical action. In cases of radical thought, individuals or groups may believe that extreme political changes need to occur, but they do not act on those thoughts or only engage in legal, non-violent political action. In other cases, actors pursue political change using any action necessary, including unlawful or violent behaviour. Many government definitions of radicalisation reflect this dichotomy between cognitive radicalisation, and behavioural radicalisation. For instance, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police defines radicalisation as ‘The process by which individuals — usually young people — are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views’. Conversely, the British Government

---

92 Ibid.
94 Mandel, Radicalisation.
describes radicalisation as ‘the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then to participate in terrorist groups’. Whereas the Canadian definition underlines the cognitive aspect of extreme beliefs and views, the British stress the behavioural aspects of supporting and/or joining a terrorist group. Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley help to further clarify this dichotomy. They separate activism—the legal expression of ideas—from illegal violent political action, which they call radicalism.

This dichotomy is the basis of one of the biggest disagreements in radicalisation studies. Psychologist John Horgan argues that limiting the definition to either cognitive or behavioural radicalism is a false dichotomy. Rather, he contends that individuals can be involved with terrorist groups without any ideological commitment or be radical without ever committing violence. Conversely, Peter Neumann contends that it is ridiculous to consider someone would engage in political violence without first holding an ideological philosophy which promotes such violence. Considering there is not yet an empirical resolution to this debate, this thesis suggests it is more constructive to test how Lofland and Stark’s model affects both cognitive and behavioural radicalism.

Terrorism

Radicals engage in many types of political violence. Groups with extreme political agendas regularly use riots and pogroms to coerce concessions from their government, to exact revenge on other ethnic groups for real or perceived political or economic advantages, or to overthrow regimes. Political movements also use insurgency and guerrilla warfare to wage revolution against domestic governments and to fight for independence from foreign occupiers. Governments may use political violence, conduct conventional war on other states, or may use the secret police, the military, or loyalist paramilitaries to intimidate their own citizens into

submission. This thesis specifically considers the type of political violence called terrorism.\textsuperscript{102}

Terrorism is a highly contested concept, which is not easily defined. Primarily, the term is controversial because groups often use it in a highly subjective manner to assign political and moral de-legitimacy and criminality to their enemies.\textsuperscript{103} As Alex Schmid explains, the label terrorist, is ‘often used to place one’s own group on a high moral plane, condemn the enemy, rally members around a cause, silence or shape policy debate, and achieve a wide variety of agendas’.\textsuperscript{104} The word terrorism is also contested because there are many types of terrorism. That is, terrorism not just stemming from different political ideologies, but also state and non-state actors. Therefore, it is not surprising that two of the most contentious points in defining terrorism are the roles of revolutionaries or ‘freedom fighters’\textsuperscript{105} and state violence. Those on the receiving end and some outside observers of state-sanctioned political repression, ethnic cleansing, or massacres, label those actions as terrorism. Similarly, governments or occupying foreign forces facing guerrillas, insurgents, or mass political mobs often identify their opponents as terrorists.\textsuperscript{106}

These disagreements mean that governments, international institutions, and even academics have not been able to reach a standard definition of terrorism.\textsuperscript{107} It seems that all anyone can agree upon is that terrorism is political violence against civilians meant to intimidate populations for political gain.\textsuperscript{108} Yet, many violent political actions fit this description, which has led Lenard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefer to ask, ‘Where does terrorism stop and other kinds of political violence begin’?\textsuperscript{109} For instance, what makes one group an insurgent, and another a terrorist?


\textsuperscript{103} Alex Schmid, “Terrorism—The Definitional Problem,” Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law 375 (2004): 395

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 397.


\textsuperscript{107} For examples of various national and international definitions, see: Ben Golder and George Williams, “What is Terrorism? Problems of Legal Definition,” University of New South Wales Law Journal 27 (2004).

\textsuperscript{108} Schmid, “Definitional Problem,” 403.

Schmid offers a formula, which helps to answer this question, and comes closer to developing a definition. He explains, ‘since there are also other forms of political violence, terrorism—the definiendum—is a subset of actions within the much larger category of political violence’. Therefore, Schmid argues that to develop a successful definition of terrorism, it is important to differentiate the concept from the other forms of political violence. In other words, by parsing the features or elements of different types of political violence, it is possible to reach a definition of terrorism through a process of elimination.

Examining the features of the various types of political violence demonstrates that terrorism is a distinct form of political violence. For instance, riots and pogroms are often chaotic, unorganised, and spontaneous. They are usually ignited by some catalytic event, suddenly causing violence to erupt in the streets. Moreover, the victims of such mob violence are often random, convenient targets who happen to be in the path of angry throngs. On the contrary, terrorism is organised, systematic, and instrumental. Many traditional terrorist organisations have an ‘identifiable chain of command’ that conceives operations, funds, and mobilises fighters to carry out attacks. Others have taken on ‘leaderless networks’ of loosely-connected cells that share an ideology, but are nonetheless inspired and motivated by the core leadership of a central terrorist organisation. Moreover, although the individual victims of terrorism may be random, the location or targets are not random or convenient. They are carefully chosen for their symbolism, and are ‘designed to have far reaching psychological implications beyond the immediate victim or target’. In other words, terrorist violence is not necessarily meant to directly punish its victims, but rather to send a message of fear and political intimidation to the survivors.

Though guerrillas and insurgents have organised structures and use violence to communicate political intimidation, they are also distinct from terrorism. These

111 Ibid., 401.
113 Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, 40.
114 Ibid, 38.
115 Ibid., 40.
116 Ibid., 35–40.
types of organisations are numerically large and are sometimes organised into quasi-
conventional military units that engage government forces in direct battle to gain,
hold, and govern territory. In contrast, terrorist organisations are much smaller, and
do not have the mass political support necessary to occupy or govern territory. Due
to their size disadvantage, terrorists avoid open battle with military forces, instead
preferring to clandestinely plan and carry out surprise attacks on civilian or non-
combatant targets to appear more powerful than they are.\textsuperscript{117} Perhaps most
importantly, international law recognises the legality of guerrillas who follow rules
of war—a privilege which international institutions do not afford terrorists.\textsuperscript{118}

Similarly, the victims of assassinations make this form of political violence distinct
from terrorism. Whereas terrorists are indiscriminate when choosing their victims,
assassins ‘draw a moral line between people who can and people who cannot be
killed’.\textsuperscript{119} Terrorists will kill anyone in order to sow fear that no one is safe.
Conversely, assassins kill political officials or organisation leaders for revenge or to
stop them from carrying out particular policies or actions.\textsuperscript{120}

Finally, terrorism is also different from state-level political violence. Though some
individuals or groups may label states as terrorists for conducting conventional war,
this type of violence is also distinct from terrorism. Principally, the difference is
international institutions recognise the legality of conventional war. Moreover, the
primary targets of this type of political violence are the opposing state’s uniformed
military personnel and infrastructure, not civilians.\textsuperscript{121} Though governments
sometimes carry out violent political repression and coercion against civilians, this
too is different from terrorism. Regardless of morality, states use this type of
political violence against citizens to exercise their sovereign political power and
authority, whereas terrorists use violence against authority to appear more powerful
than they really are.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{117} Tamar Meisels, “The trouble with Terror: The Apologetics of Terrorism—a Refutation,” \textit{Terrorism and
\textsuperscript{118} Schmid, “Definitional Problem,” 384.
\textsuperscript{119} Meisels, “The trouble with Terror,” 473.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 473.
\textsuperscript{122} Hoffman, \textit{Inside Terrorism}, 28, 37.
Considering the aforementioned distinctions, for the purpose of this thesis, terrorism is: organised, systematic political violence or the threat thereof, conducted by small non-state groups that do not have mass political support or international legal sanction, who indiscriminately attack civilians and non-combatants, but also choose symbolic targets to sow widespread psychological fear, which makes them appear more powerful than they are. Therefore, a terrorist is a person who participates in, plots, conspires, or provides material support for the aforementioned activities described as terrorism. The Al Qaeda-linked interview participants in phase-one of this thesis fit this definition of terrorists.

**The jihadist movement**

This thesis considers a stream of terrorism carried out on behalf of a political ideology known as global jihadism. The term stems from the Arabic word jihad, which means to strive or to struggle. Islamic scholars divide jihad into greater jihad and lesser jihad. Generally, greater jihad means to personally strive to overcome the temptations of one’s everyday life and to practice the five pillars of Islam. The lesser jihad is a militaristic struggle to protect God and the Ummah, a community of all Muslims around the world.123

Islam divides the world into the land of Islam (dar al-Islam)—geographic regions traditionally ruled and occupied by Muslims—and regions ruled by unbelievers, known as the land of conflict (dar al-harb).124 Islam further divides the lesser jihad between defensive and offensive jihad. When unbelievers invade dar al-Islam, a Muslim ruler can issue a religious edict or fatwa, calling on the religious to fight to defend Muslim lands from infidels. A prime example from modern times is the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Muslim rulers called for defensive jihad, prompting Muslims from across the world to travel to the region to fight the godless Communists. These fighters became known as the Mujahidin (the Arabic word for people who wage jihad [singular, mujahid]). Throughout this thesis mujahid is used interchangeably with the word jihadist.125

---

124 Ibid., 3
The Afghan jihad became a catalyst for a new global jihad. One of the early Arab leaders in this defensive jihad, Abdullah Azzam, saw the Afghan jihad as an obligation for all Muslims. Furthermore, he believed that Afghanistan was the first battle in a global war to take back the Muslim lands lost to infidels. Azzam writes, ‘This duty shall not lapse with victory in Afghanistan, and the jihad will remain an individual obligation until all other lands which formerly were Muslim come back to us and Islam reigns within them once again’. While Azzam only considered recouping lands lost to infidels, two other Arab mujahidin leaders, Ayman al Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden, had more ambitious plans for a global jihad.

Zawahiri and bin Laden were followers of the Egyptian ideologue Syed Qutb. As a Salafist (from the Arabic word Salaf, meaning, predecessors of Muhammad and his companions), Qutb believed that all societies were on the brink of self-destruction because man had strayed from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. He preached that society was in a state of Jihiliyya (Arabic for ignorance), and the only way to restore mankind was to return to a purist Islamic society where Muslims live in the way of the Prophets and companions. To achieve this, Qutb believed that a Muslim vanguard must fight an offensive jihad to overthrow apostate Muslim rulers, recapture dar al-Islam from Christians and Jews, and install a Muslim state known as the Caliphate (from the Arabic word Calipha, meaning successor), where, free from oppression, all men could choose to worship Islam of their own accord.

By the 1990s, Al Qaeda became that vanguard of global mujahidin. The foundations of this movement lie in Azzam and bin Laden’s establishment of an enlistment and logistic office and a training camp for thousands of mujahidin from around the world on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border in the mid-1980s to fight the Soviets. Through this network, Zawahiri, leading his own band of Egyptian mujahidin,

---

127 Sageman, Understanding, 2-3.
128 Ibid., 3.
129 Ibid.
130 Wright, Looming Tower, 32, 96.
befriended bin Laden. However, when the Soviet military withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, it was unclear what the men should do with their network of expatriate mujahidin.\textsuperscript{132} Although ‘the consensus … was to establish a base (\textit{al qaeda}), or a social movement to carry out a worldwide jihad’,\textsuperscript{133} Zawahiri and Azzam disagreed on whether they should fight a traditional defensive jihad to recuperate lost Muslim lands, or the offensive one which Qutb advocated. Eventually, Zawahiri persuaded bin Laden that the latter was necessary.\textsuperscript{134}

Over the next two decades, the Mujahidin network proliferated throughout the world. Many of these fighters returned home to found local mujahidin organisations and fight apostate domestic Muslim leaders, while the core of Al Qaeda carried on the global jihad from places like Sudan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Despite a geographical diffusion, the network of mujahidin, founded on a shared ideology, remains.\textsuperscript{135} Today, Al Qaeda exists on three planes. First, the core organisation continues the global jihad by planning and carrying out terrorist attacks around the world. Second, Al Qaeda works with many of the affiliated organisations, providing training, funding and other support for local operations. Finally, they offer inspiration, training, and sometimes funding to independent cells of mujahidin around the world.\textsuperscript{136} More recently, fission between core Al Qaeda and its once affiliate Al Qaeda in Iraq led to the development of the prominent jihadist movement, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Today, ISIS also maintains its own branches throughout the world. While Al Qaeda and ISIS disagree on strategy and tactics and are in violent competition for the support of affiliate jihadist groups, ISIS still remains ideologically part of the jihadist movement.\textsuperscript{137} Therefore, whenever the terms \textit{global jihad} [ism] or the \textit{jihadist movement} are used in this thesis, they refer to a movement of allied or competing organisations around the world, including independent cells, which believe that the entire world is in a state

\textsuperscript{133} Sageman, Understanding, 36.  
\textsuperscript{134} Wright, Looming Tower, 130-133; Sageman, Understanding., 18, 35-37.  
\textsuperscript{135} For an explanation of the proliferation of the jihadist movement see: Kepel, “The Origins and The Development of the Jihadist Movement”.  
of Jihiyya and that a violent offensive lesser jihad is necessary to replace all
governments with an Islamic state based on the life of the Prophet Muhammad and
his companions.\textsuperscript{138}

**Homegrown**

Prior to the 2005 London transport terrorist attack, often referred to as 7/7, most
Western governments considered the threat from the global jihad to be one of
*international terrorism*. That is, attacks that are planned, funded, and carried out by
terrorist networks based abroad.\textsuperscript{139} This assumption was predicated on the fact that
most of the major jihadist attacks and plots on Western targets until then—such as
9/11, the African embassy bombings, and Oplan Bojinka—had been planned and
carried out from places like Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Malaysia.\textsuperscript{140}

However, the diffusion of global jihadists after the Afghan-Soviet jihad means that
the movement also made its way to the West. Radical clerics in the West with
connections to the global jihad began preaching the jihadist narrative and recruiting
Western individuals to the movement.\textsuperscript{141} Moreover, thousands of citizens from
Western countries may have travelled to join the jihad in Bosnia, Chechnya, the
Philippines, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Somalia,
returning home with bonds to the jihadist movement. It was precisely this narrative
and jihadist network that led four British men to kill 52 people on London buses and
underground trains in 2005.\textsuperscript{142} When the details emerged that those men were
British citizens and grew up in the UK, Western governments began to realise that
they also faced a jihadist threat from *homegrown terrorism*.\textsuperscript{143}

Although on its face the meaning of *homegrown* may seem obvious, there are a few
details that render the term ambiguous. As Manni Crone and Martain Harrow
explain, at its core, the concept seems to imply ‘radicalised individuals born and

\textsuperscript{138} Sageman, *Understanding*.

\textsuperscript{139} Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 63-81.

\textsuperscript{140} The 9/11 Commission Report, 147, 172, 186, 193.

\textsuperscript{141} Examples include: Omar Abdel Rhaman, Abu Hamza, and Abu Qatada.


raised in the West’.\textsuperscript{144} This idea is in line with definitions by Peter Nesser, who argues that \textit{homegrown} means being ‘born and raised in Europe,’\textsuperscript{145} and Michael Genkin and Alexander Gutfraind who define the concept as ‘native-born citizens of the country that is being attacked’\textsuperscript{146} However, these definitions are too restrictive because some of the jihadists who have plotted to attack Western countries were not born there, but still have strong attachments to the country; they moved there as children or teenagers. Others were born in a Western country or have Western citizenship, but did not grow up there. Others still, were born and raised in the West, radicalised in the West, but as adults have plotted to travel abroad to fight jihad. These ambiguities suggest that there is a need to clarify what it means to \textit{belong} to the West.\textsuperscript{147} Thomas Precht helps to clarify the issue by offering a more broad definition that contends, ‘A distinctive factor of home grown terrorism is that it is carried out by persons who have had their formative phase, upbringing and cultural influence take place in the Western world’.\textsuperscript{148} Including immersion in Western culture as an indicator of homegrownness is appealing because what makes homegrown jihadists so interesting is they embrace an ideology that seeks to replace their own Western culture with an Islamic system.

Another detail that confuses the definition of homegrown, is individuals’ associations with a foreign terrorist organisation. Marc Sageman argues that a distinctive phenomenon regarding homegrown jihadists is their apparent lack of any links to international terrorism organisations. In other words, these individuals were ‘self-recruited’ or ‘self-started’ ‘leaderless jihadists’ who did not receive directive, training, or funding from abroad.\textsuperscript{149} However, Bruce Hoffman famously rebuked Sageman’s book in \textit{Foreign Affairs} arguing that, ‘although these informal local terrorists are certainly a critical part of the global terrorist network’,\textsuperscript{150} Al Qaeda

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{147} Crone and Harrow, “Homegrown Terrorism,” 8.
  \item \textsuperscript{148} Thomas Precht “Homegrown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe—From Conversion to Terrorism,” \textit{Research report funded by the Danish Ministry of Justice} (2007) 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{149} Sageman, \textit{Leaderless}, 125-146.
  \item \textsuperscript{150} Hoffman, “Myths of Grass-roots,” 134.
\end{itemize}
was still deeply involved in training and recruiting homegrown jihadists and planning their operations. Therefore, there is evidence that homegrown terrorists may be both independent from and dependent on international terrorist organisations.

Crone and Harrow attempt to clarify the disagreements on the definition of *homegrown*. They believe that the arguments can ‘be reduced to two separate dimensions: *belonging* and *autonomy*’. Belonging means belonging to the West. Their indicators of belonging include: place of birth, citizenship, formative years spent in the West, and if the person spent more than five years in the West. Autonomy means independence from a terrorist group. Indicators of autonomy are that the individuals did not have: international organisational attachment, jihad abroad, training abroad, and travel to a conflict zone. Based on these distinctions, Crone and Harrow offer four ideal types of terrorists:

1. *Internal autonomous*: These individuals are ‘self-started, self-trained, self-radicalised with a high degree of belonging to the West’.

2. *Internal affiliated*: They also have a high-degree of belonging to the West, but are either members or have received ‘economic or ideological support or training’ from a terrorist group.

3. *External autonomous*: They are ‘independent of terrorists outside the West and feel a low degree of belonging to the West’.

4. *External affiliated*: These individuals or groups are the archetypal international terrorists. They belong to foreign terrorist organisations and have no sense of belonging in the West.

The two authors then analysed jihadists involved in terrorist attacks and plots in the West from 1989-2008, ‘measured on the four indicators of belonging and four indicators of autonomy presented above’. Their findings suggest that a significant majority (95%) of these individuals *belong* in the West. However, just under half

151 Crone and Harrow, “Homegrown Terrorism,” 8.
152 Ibid., 10.
153 Ibid., 10.
154 Ibid., 9.
155 Ibid., 9.
156 Ibid., 9.
157 Ibid., 9.
158 Ibid., 11.
(45%) of the jihadists in the study were autonomous. These findings suggest that being homegrown is highly correlated with belonging to the country that the individuals are attacking. Yet, autonomy is less important. Homegrown jihadists may be either autonomous or attached. Therefore, this thesis considers jihadists who are either internal autonomous or internal affiliated types as homegrown.

Muslim Convert/Non-convert/Revert
Ostensibly, a Muslim convert is someone who adopts the beliefs and practices of Islam after leaving a previously-professed religion or no religion at all. A person converts to Islam by proclaiming the shahadda (Arabic for ‘testify’), and declaring that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is his final prophet. Conversely, a Muslim non-convert is someone who is born into Islam or who grows up in a family that professes to be Muslim, regardless of devoutness.

However, it is difficult to know when someone has truly embraced conversion to Islam. Professing faith or associating with a new religion does not necessarily mean that a person has actually converted. In fact, the literature on religious conversion makes a distinction between affiliating with a new religious group and converting. For instance, John Lofland and Rodney Stark differentiate between verbal conversion, such as declaring shahadda, and total conversion, which is exhibiting commitment through actions and rhetoric. Richard Travisano argues that a conversion only happens when a person experiences a radical change in his or her pervasive identity, which consists of: ‘(1) a person’s world view or life perspective (2) many aspects of one’s personality and (3) for a large number of conversions, prescribes how a person should relate to others and vice versa’. Changing religions without this radical identity change is to ‘alternate’ religions.

Assessing the degree or validity of a conversion requires both an objective and subjective analysis. Lewis Rambo suggests three levels of analysis for examining the results of conversion. First, the convert’s perception of his or her experiences matters. As Rambo argues, ‘The convert is aware of the results of his or her experiences, and the assessment of these results play an important role in facilitating or obstructing the trajectory of

159 Ibid., 13-14.
162 Ibid, 228.
Next, the religious community to which one converts also has a say in the authenticity of conversion. Most religions prescribe a set of beliefs, rituals, and behaviors for validating conversion. Rambo contends that ‘An assessment of the personas conversion’ must be ‘based on the internal criteria developed by the group.’ Third, scholars studying converts must evaluate the completeness of conversion based on the criteria set forth in their fields. Within the scope of this thesis and its methods, it is not possible to assess the degree or validity of participants’ religious conversion based on all three levels of analysis. Therefore, participants’ assertions of their conversion are taken at face value and recorded based on self-reporting.

Finally, it is also necessary to clarify the sometimes confusing term revert. Islam asserts that all humans are born as Muslims. In this regard no one can ever theoretically convert to Islam. Sometimes, former nominally practicing born-Muslims and converts (as described above) use the term revert to describe being born again and returning to the faith. This term may add confusion to the definition and often seems serve as a rhetorical device to justify the veracity of one’s faith. Therefore, this thesis eschews this term revert, in favour of the aforementioned definitions of convert and non-converts.

**Thesis Outline**

The remainder of this thesis proceeds in six chapters, which in their combination seek to answer the primary research question of this study: Can Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model explain radicalisation to jihadism? **Chapter two** reviews the literature relevant to this question. Since this thesis is ultimately a test of a religious conversion model’s applicability to the problem of radicalisation, the review considers both conversion and radicalisation bodies of literature. The review walks the reader through the evolution of religious conversion and radicalisation theories explaining their similarities, but ultimately shows that religious conversion models are conceptually superior to those designed to explain radicalisation. From there, the

---

164 Ibid, 59.
165 Ibid, 59.
review compares and contrasts the major religious conversion models to show that Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model is the most rigorously vetted.

Chapter three explores previous testing of Lofland and Stark’s model in order to identify the most rigorous operationalisation of the theory from which to test the model on radicalisation. It begins with a detailed description of the theory and how Lofland and Stark defined each of the seven conditions in their model. Next, the chapter considers how other scholars have operationalised the model, their results, and how their operationalisation affected their findings. This analysis concludes that throughout history, many scholars have failed to operationalise the ‘World Saver’ model in the way Lofland and Stark intended. The next section examines Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s test of the ‘World Saver’ model, which shows that the authors followed closely the theoretical framework, which Lofland and Stark designed, and thus found very strong evidence of the model’s validity. Finally, chapter three concludes with a discussion about the differences between the new religious movements on which Kox, Meeus, and Hart tested the model and the jihadists on which this thesis tests the model and how those differences require minor adjustments to operationalise the ‘World Saver’ for this thesis.

Chapter four represents phase-one, the qualitative exploratory test of the ‘World Saver’ on a small sample of Al Qaeda-linked jihadists. The chapter begins with a detailed methodology of the phase-one study. Next, it dives into answering the primary research question, which seeks to determine how the jihadist participants’ experiences compare to the seven conditions in Lofland and Stark’s model. The structure of the analysis is based on Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation of the model’s conditions. The cases are analyzed within the conditions, rather than case-by-case which puts the focus on the model’s conditions rather than on the participants. The chapter concludes by identifying several unresolved research questions that emerged from the exploratory study and require further quantitative analysis in the next chapter.

Chapter five presents the phase-two quantitative test of the ‘World Saver’ model. The chapter begins by building 11 hypotheses from the unresolved research questions that emerged from the exploratory study in the previous chapter. Next,
there is a detailed description of the phase-two methodology, followed by descriptive statistics and the formal hypothesis testing. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the quantitative findings.

Chapter six is a general discussion of the findings. The discussion combines the findings from phase-one and phase-two and discusses how they together answer the primary research questions in this hypothesis. The discussion also considers the findings in the context of other questions in the radicalisation studies field, such as whether radicalisation is a dynamic or linear process, whether or not there exists a ‘conveyor belt’ from activism to radicalism, and the role of ideology and religiosity in radicalisation.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The previous chapter presents Lofland and Stark’s religious conversion model as an alternative to terrorism-focuses process models to explain why people radicalise to the jihadist movement. This chapter seeks to better understand the similarities between religious conversion and radicalisation by reviewing the two bodies of literature. The first part of this chapter explores what social scientists say about how and why individuals religiously convert and how and why they radicalise. Through this process, the review attempts to identify the most promising explanations for the two phenomena in each field. Next, this chapter compares the processes, mechanisms, and outcomes of radicalisation and conversion to explore if the two are similar enough that the theories of conversion may be applicable to radicalisation. Finally, it considers the gaps in the literature to argue that Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model offers the most potential for studying the radicalisation because scholars have rigorously tested it and found it to be a valid model.

In 2009, religious sociologist Lorne Dawson attempted to begin a dialog between scholars studying religious conversion and those studying radicalisation. He remarked that social scientists in his field ‘have noted parallels between their findings and Islamic terrorism and other forms of political radicalism for decades’.167 Dawson went on to explain that, like people who become jihadists, those who join new religious movements were ‘subject to certain well-recognised social psychological processes of influence, over varying degrees of intensity and potential coerciveness’, leading to their conversion.168

Radicalisation scholars have begun to put forth this argument as well. In 2011, Randy Borum argued that religious conversion theories—such as Lewis Rambo’s ‘Holistic Model,’ Lofland and Skonovd’s ‘Conversion Motifs,’ and Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model—might offer more productive theoretical frameworks for exploring radicalisation than the current terrorism-focused models. In particular,

168 Ibid, 3.
he notes that the ‘conceptual utility of [Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’] is already leaps ahead of most contemporary thinking about radicalisation’. Also noticing ‘the process of religious conversion has many similarities with the processes involved in radicalised conversion’, Neil Ferguson and Eve Bink suggest that the ‘Conversion Motifs’ and ‘Holistic Model’ frameworks may be well suited to help scholars understand radicalisation.

One reason that conversion theories may provide more insight than radicalisation theories is they are better developed. Religious conversion process models have been around for over 50 years, allowing social scientists to test and conceptually tweak them. Conversely, radicalisation process models are relatively new, most emerging in the early-to-mid 2000s. Moreover, few, if any, have been empirically validated.

Conversely, researchers have found consistent empirical support for Lofland and Stark’s conversion model. In 1991, Kox, Meeus, and Hart tested the model with a control group. ‘In a discriminate analysis they were able to classify 89% of the respondents correctly as members of the group of converts or the control group’. In other words, based on respondent surveys, the model could predict which respondents were converts and which were not. To date, no radicalisation model has yielded such predictive qualities. Recently, the paper’s second author, Meeus, has argued that the radical identity change he observed in the convert study is the same change that happens when individuals transition to jihadism. As a result, Meeus believes that the Lofland and Stark model may explain jihadist radicalisation.

The relatively new realisation that there are parallels between the theories of religious conversion and radicalisation means that the topic remains largely unexplored. In fact, there are scarcely three peer-reviewed journal articles on the

---

171 Ibid, 21.
173 Ibid, 278.
174 Ibid, 279.
subject. However, the following literature review of the two phenomena shows that religious conversation and radicalisation scholars have reached nearly identical conclusions regarding the affective processes, mechanisms, and outcomes of the two phenomena. Both describe dynamic, multi-stage, multi-factor processes. Scholars from both disciplines have also arrived at similar descriptions of these processes. Remarkably, their models share most of the same processes and mechanisms. Moreover, the manifestation of the two phenomena are similar in that they both can lead to a range of outcomes from mere affiliation and/or participation in a group to fundamental change in an individual’s identity and worldview.

The following literature review first addresses the conversion literature before moving on to discuss the radicalisation literature. Finally, this chapter compares the two bodies of literature to argue that Lofland and Stark’s model is well suited to explain radicalisation.

Conversion Literature
Descriptions of religious conversion are not new. In fact, some of the earliest accounts of conversion come from the Bible. The stories of Ruth and Saint Paul are arguably the most famous. In modern times, 16th century Spanish missionaries provide some of earliest confirmed descriptions of conversion in their writings about the indigenous peoples of Latin Americans adopting Christianity. However, the study of religious conversion, as we know it now, largely developed in the 20th century when social scientists such as G. Stanley Hall, Edwin Starbuck, and William James began to apply their knowledge from the disciplines of psychology to understand how and why people change from one system of religious beliefs, values, behaviours, and identities to another. Others soon began to contribute from the fields of sociology and anthropology.

The multi-disciplinary nature of religious conversion studies means that there is a broad ranging literature on the subject. Moreover, the various theoretical frameworks describe conversion to a wide variety of religions. Some focus on traditional world religions, while others concentrate on new religious movements, known colloquially as cults. A few also attempt to offer an overarching generalisable theory of conversion. These differences make direct comparisons between theories difficult. To make sense of this cacophony of works, it is helpful to organise it in a way that allows for comparisons within and across disciplines and conversion types. One way to make such a comparison is to categorise the literature into: micro-level, macro-level, and meso-level analyses. Micro-level analysis sees innate traits, experiences, and thought processes that are specific to the person converting as causal factors for the change. Conversely, macro-level sees conversion as a result of the structural forces of society, culture, or religion on individuals or groups. Meso-level fills the gap between these two, by looking at how interaction between people and groups causes individuals to convert.

**Micro-level Conversion Literature**

The nature of micro-level analysis, and its focus on the individual, means that the discipline of psychology tends to dominate this body of literature. Within the micro-level, two major themes emerge that attempt to explain why people change systems of religious beliefs. The first theme posits that individual psychological processes drive the phenomenon. For instance, psychoanalytical theory relies on earlier work by Freud to argue that the conflict between the predisposition for indulgence and the constraints of religion stems from the inner clash between id, ego, and superego.¹⁷⁹ Psychoanalytic theory postulates that religious faith, rituals, and relationships satisfy the pathology of vulnerable persons. Similarly, archetypal theory posits that religious symbols are ‘compelling renditions of the human predicament’ that satisfy the needs of the human psyche.¹⁸⁰ These symbols drive conversion by fulfilling longings and desires that are embedded in a person’s mind.¹⁸¹ Likewise, students of

---


¹⁸⁰ Rambo, “Theories of conversion,” 266.

conversion have advanced the concept of ‘self’ to explain the behaviour. Identity theory posits that ‘urbanisation, modernisation, secularisation and…pluralisation’ have stressed ‘old notions of self, relationships, communities, and convictions’ causing individuals to seek religion to consolidate their worldview. 182 Expanding on this theory of conversion, Alan Roland argues that Western identity theories of joining new religious groups are culturally biased and focus too much on the occidental understanding of self as the individual self of the ‘autonomous person who makes rational calculations’ to seek religious change. His research in Japan and India found that the ‘family-self’ is more important in Eastern psychology. These findings led him to conclude that group and family decisions are more important in religious conversions in the East than individual rationality.183

The second theme within micro-level conversion literature is that changing religions is an effect of social cognition and perception. ‘The universal human need to find meaning in life is the basis of attribution theory’.184 Fulfilling this need can often drive individuals to seek spiritual or intellectual meaning from religion. Where one set of beliefs can no longer satisfactorily explain life and the world, individuals may ‘adopt[t] a new system of attributions’.185 Comparably, individuals also develop or assume narratives about themselves, the spiritual and temporal worlds, and how they fit within both, in order to makes sense of life. To account for changes and new experiences that can no longer be explained, narrative theory proposes that some individuals create new stories. This ‘[b]iographical reconstruction and the resulting narrative give new meaning to a person’s definition of self, identity, relationships, and God’.

patterns’. 187 Attachment theory posits that religious conversion is an attempt to fill the role of the inadequate primary care giver. 188

The above review of micro-level theories points to a number of inadequacies in accounting for why people change religions. One problem with micro-level conversion theories is they are too simplistic. Arguing that innate human desires alone account for religious conversion ignores social and cultural variables that we know are also at play in religious transformation. 189 Moreover, theories, which posit that conversion is rooted in subconscious psychological processes, do not give enough credit to the cognitive processes of humans. Yet, models which purely consider social cognitive processes, also give too much credit to human agency and an individual’s decision to seek conversion. There is healthy debate within the conversion studies discipline regarding the active or passive nature of religious conversion. While the discipline leans heavily— theoretically and empirically— toward active conversion, it also recognises the important role that religious organisations play in recruiting and socializing potential converts. 190 Micro-level theories also portray conversion as an acute event. Yet, social scientists now know that conversion is a dynamic process, rather than a single event. 191 Finally, micro-level conversion theory lacks explanatory power. Most of these works aim to explain why psychological, spiritual, and, intellectual needs drive people to seek religious change. However, they generally do not describe how the transition occurs. A more robust theoretical framework should explain how individuals convert, offer a more nuanced and balanced argument about the interplay between rational and active religious seeking and organisational recruitment, and describe conversion as a process. 192

**Macro-level Conversion Literature**

187 Rambo, “Theories of conversion,” 267; See: Kirkpatrick, “A longitudinal study of changes in religious belief”.
Macro-level theories examine how entire cultures and societies encounter and adapt or change belief systems and identities. Conversion scholar Lorne Dawson explains that early macro-level explanations saw converts as socially and economically deprived people seeking to better their situation. However, with the arrival of the 1960s, a number of middle-class, educated, young people began converting to new religious movements, leading some to the notion that ‘relative deprivation’ was cause of conversions. This perspective argues that, ‘If people think there is a discrepancy between social rewards they feel entitled to and the rewards they are getting or they believe others are getting…there will be an incentive to launch or join a movement that promises change of compensation’. The relative deprivation argument remains popular in the public’s mind to explain what drives people to new religious movements because it ‘seems very plausible; [and] in many ways it conforms to our personal experiences’ with people who join these groups.

Others argue that globalisation is responsible for the spread of religion. Evolving communication technology and cheaper and faster modes of international travel make it much more likely and easier for religious seekers and religious movements to come into contact. Historically, religion was spread via colonisation and trade. This often required a large investment on the part of organised religious bodies and sponsoring imperial governments to send missionaries. Exposure to new religious messages and the resulting conversions were therefore limited to the sanctioned orthodox religion being promoted and the capacity of missionaries to reach rural indigenous people. Globalisation now affords ‘New Religious Movements, Islamic Reform and Revitalisation Movements and Charismatic Christianity’ opportunities to contact and recruit new adherents anywhere in the world.

Prior to globalisation, as world religions such as Christianity and Islam began to spread across the globe, they came into contact with local religions, often leading to mass conversions or mutations of indigenous beliefs. Robert Horton explains this interaction in his study of small-scale African societies, in what some scholars refer

---

194 Ibid, 5.
to as *intellectualist theory*. Horton explained that African societies consisted of a microcosm, which ‘was the daily world that occupies most of the community’s energy’ and a ‘macrocosm—the wider world that was a less developed’. The general role of religion was to explain and control daily life. When global religions began to penetrate African microcosms, those societies ‘sought to expand their myths, rituals and symbols to include the macrocosm’, resulting in conversions.

Post-colonial conversion theory offers a more nuanced understanding of the interaction between world and indigenous religions. Imperialism’s overwhelming ‘military, economic, and cultural power… shaped societies, cultures, economies, and subjectivities of oppressed peoples all over the world’. Mass indigenous conversions to Christianity in places like Africa, Asia, and Latin America are often described as ‘“colonisation of the mind and spirits” of the dominated peoples’. However, some scholars argue that indigenous peoples, religions, and culture are not always passive actors in religious conversion. Rather, sometimes the indigenous beliefs influence the imposing religion. More often than that, a syncretic hybrid religion emerges that amalgamates local traditions with global religion.

Macro level explanations are also too simplistic. Like micro-level theories of conversion, they focus on *why* a person converts to a new religion, but leave us wondering *how* the transformation occurred. These theories also suffer from a number of logical flaws. For example, if structural forces, such as social and economic deprivation, globalisation and colonisation cause religious conversion, we should expect that everyone exposed to those experiences would convert. Yet, it is obvious that some people and groups do not convert when faced with poverty, imperialism, missionaries, or globalism. Likewise, as Dawson explains, relative

---

196 Rambo, “Theories of conversion”, 264-265.
198 Rambo, “Theories of conversion”, 264-265.
199 Ibid, 262.
200 Ibid, 262.
deprivation ‘theory explains everything and yet nothing. Because it cannot discriminate effectively between those who think this way and those who choose to act on their perceptions…’ Therefore, it seems that macro-level theories alone cannot explain why people convert to new religions.

**Meso-level Conversion Literature**

Meso-level conversion theory offers a more complex explanation for conversion by bridging the gap between micro- and macro-level analysis to explain how psychological, structural, social, and cultural factors interact to influence religious conversion. Much of the meso-level literature is dominated by the fields of religious sociology and religious psychology. These fields of research on religious conversion can be divided into classical and contemporary paradigms. The previous micro-level theories discussed reflect the classical paradigm, in which ‘predisposing psychological factors are examined as precursors to religious transformation.’ Conversely, the contemporary paradigm which comprises the meso-level research focuses on contextual and situational factors, rational process, and active seeking as mechanisms for conversion. Situational factors which may influence an individual’s conversion may include personal crisis and identity conflicts, which cause individuals to seek religious solutions; social networks, which can introduce people to new religious ideas and institutions; socialisation, which determines how and where individuals tend to seek solutions; and rational choices, which may affect an individual’s decision to continue engaging with a new religious group and finally commit to staying. The past 50 years of psychology and sociology of religion research has had much to say on these topics from the contemporary paradigm.

One of the most debated topics in contemporary research on conversion is the nature and manifestation of conversion. This debate focuses on three related questions. First, what constitutes a religious conversion? Does simply joining a new religious group signify a

---

conversion? Henri Gooren, Greil, and Greil and Rudy argue that few studies differentiate between recruitment to a new religion and conversion. John Lofland and Rodney Stark differentiate between recruitment, which they refer to as verbal conversion, where a new adherent makes a verbal commitment to join a religious group and total conversion, where a new adherent fully converts in rhetoric and behavior. Rambo makes a distinction between the commitment to convert and the consequences of the conversion.

Second, how much different must the new group be doctrinally or theologically to count as a religious conversion? Lewis Rambo posits five typologies: a tradition transition, where a person changes from one religion to another; an institutional transition is a change of denominations within a religion (e.g. Catholic to Lutheran); during an intensification a person’s faith becomes more devout or intense, but he or she does not change religions; and Affiliation involves a person with none or nominal religious faith joining a religious group. These typologies are based on Richard Travisano’s differentiation between alternation and conversion identity changes. Travisano sees religious affiliation as part of one’s identity. It defines one’s social situation, role, and behavior. He contends, ‘conversions are drastic changes in life,’ which redefine or reorganize one’s biography, and occur when one breaks with one’s past identity. By contrast, alternations are merely transitions within one’s identity. In this regard, Travisano would consider Rambo’s institutional transition and affiliation types examples of conversion. Whereas, institutional transition and intensification are nominal changes to one’s pervasive identity and are therefore only alternations.

Third, what changes does a person experience during a religious conversion? As explained above, Travisano contends that a conversion is a radical change to one’s pervasive identity. Similarly, David A. Snow and Richard Machalek argue that conversions replaces

209 Lofland and Stark, “Becoming a world-saver”
one’s universe of discourse—‘a broad interpretive framework’ through which ‘people live and organize experience’—with another universe of discourse.214 Others suggest that there are many different kinds of changes people experience during a conversion. For example, Robert Thouless argues that a conversion can be an intellectual change, a social change, or a moral change.215 Kenneth I. Pargament outlines three different types: A spiritual conversion, in which ‘the individual experiences a connectedness with a power that goes beyond his or her own self-contained world’; a religious group conversion, whereby the convert develops a sacred devotion to a group or its leader; and a universal conversion, in which a person develops a sacred devotion to the ‘natural or social world,’ rather than to a spiritual figure or group.216 Palutzian et al, argue that the outcome may differ based depending on the religion.217

The motivations for conversion are another important topic in the meso-level psychology and sociology of religion literature. Lofland and Norman Skonovd offer a typology of six conversion motifs which explain the varied motivations for conversion, including: intellectual curiosity, spiritual or mystical experiences, to maintain affectional relationships, revivalism, and coercion.218 Similarly, Epstein proposes four principal motivations: ‘the need to acquire pleasure and avoid pain, to possesses a conceptual system, to enhance self-esteem, and to establish and maintain relationships.’219 Other motivations, include: fulfilling emotional needs,220 the human yearning for transcendence,221 power,222 and spiritual growth.223

---

The contemporary paradigm tends to view conversion as an active process in which the convert seeks conversion.\textsuperscript{224} In 1985, Richardson first noticed this shift from passive to active approaches to conversion research, arguing conversion research was beginning to stress active human volition over passive determinism as the cause for conversion.\textsuperscript{225} Indeed, the concepts of the active seeker\textsuperscript{226} and rational choice\textsuperscript{227} became important elements in contemporary religious conversion theory throughout the 1970s and 80s. However, only a few years later, in 1988, Kilborne and Richardson reported back on the literature, noting that there had not been a full swing to the activist perspective in conversion studies. In fact, many scholars, particularly those researching new religious movements, continued to view converts as passive actors in the process of conversion. However, the nature of the passivity changed. Previously, conversion was viewed as deterministic, based on psychological pathology. By the 1980s, however, researchers of new religious movements viewed converts as unwitting victims of predatory socialisation.\textsuperscript{228} Long and Hadden noted that the passivist perspective approach in new religious movement research was dominated by two models: brain washing and social drift.\textsuperscript{229} However, more recently researchers are beginning to note that conversion can be passive, active or a combination of both. Rambo argues that the mode is dependent on the individual convert and the religious group involved.\textsuperscript{230}

There is significant debate in the contemporary sociology and psychology of religion about the role of stress and crisis in conversion.\textsuperscript{231} Classical conversion research in the micro and macro-level literature saw stress and strain as either deterministic in one’s psychology or as the result of structural causes. Meso-level literature tends to view stress as holistic and stemming from a combination of many different strains, cultural, personality, political, and

social interactions. For example, Michael Hogg’s uncertainty-identity theory argues that when people find themselves in an uncertain situation, they seek out groups to join to reduce their uncertainty by consolidating their identity with the group’s.

A consistent finding in meso-level sociology and psychology of religion research is the role of social networks and socialization in religious conversion. Lofland and Stark reported in 1965 that new recruits often joined through pre-existing social affiliations. Similarly, Stark and Bainbridge point to three groups in which social networks played a central role in conversion. Their own study of Mormons showed that the successes rate of recruitment increased from 0.1 per cent to 50 per cent when missionaries switched from door-to-door recruitment to recruiting through friends and family. A meta-study by Greil and Rudy found conversion to eight of the 10 groups they studied involved an affective bond between the recruit and a member of the group. Rambo is less certain about the role of pre-existing social bonds for recruitment and argues instead that it depends on the missionary style of the group in question.

Meso-level literature tends to argue that conversion is a process. In the past 50 years dozens of meso-level process models have emerged to explain why individuals change religions, or join new religious movements. A number of them stand out as being the most influential in that they are heavily cited and have significantly inspired other models.

One of the earliest and perhaps the most widely cited conversion models is John Lofland and Rodney Stark’s 1965 study of the new religious movement, Divine Precepts (DP), later revealed as the Unification Church. In what is known as the ‘World Saver’ model, the two authors argue that whether or not a person converts to the Unification Church depends on seven necessary and sufficient ‘value-added’

---

238 Snow and Phillips, “A critical assessment,” 430-447; In 1980 Snow and Philips say it is the most cited. Today it has 884 peer citations on Google Scholar.
factors—meaning that they are ‘successively accumulating factors, which in their total combination seem to account for conversion’. In this ‘funneling’ process, the addition of each factor at the same time reduces the available number of potential converts in the total population and makes individuals experiencing the accumulating factors more likely to convert.

Lofland and Stark argue that two of the seven factors are preconditions that make a person susceptible to conversion: tension and a problem-solving perspective. Tension is generally some type of frustration from failed ambition. While some people continue to live with tension, others seek various temporal mechanisms to cope with it. These people are not likely to convert. However, others who have religious problem-solving perspectives become religious seekers. Additionally, these religious seekers must also be at a turning point in life—the first of the four situational contingencies—where they are ready to accept new opportunities. From there, potential recruits must have cult affective bonds, or relationships to Unification Church members, which are stronger than extra-cult affective bonds. These six factors are enough to affect verbal conversion. Total conversion additionally requires intensive interactions with cult members and cult activities.

Whereas Lofland and Stark built their model on observations of how hippies in Northern California joined a new religious movement, Alan Tippet constructed his 1977 Conversion as a Dynamic Process model from an anthropological study of group conversions of Oceanic peoples to Christianity. Tippet considers his model to be a ‘schematisation,’ rather than a fully conceived theory.

Tippet conceptualised conversion as four stages with two points of decision. The first stage is a Period of Awareness, in which individuals and their groups ‘become aware of another way of life, another behavior pattern, or another set of values apart from his traditional context’. A number of situations may induce this stage,

---

239 Lofland and Stark, “Becoming a world-saver” 863.
240 Ibid.
241 Ibid, 864-873.
243 Ibid, 207.
including natural developments, external coercion, internal crisis, or external advocacy from missionaries. This phase culminates with a *Point of Realisation*, where potential converts begin to understand that it is possible to transition to the new way of life; it also ushers in a *Period of Decision*. In this stage, group members must: totally reject or accept the conversion, accept syncretic conversion, or split into acceptors and rejecters. For those who accept, there will be a *Period of Incorporation*. During this phase, new converts will undergo dogmatic training and acculturation to fix new religious norms. ‘The transition is ritually effected by…an act of incorporation’, such as a baptism. The climax of this stage is the *Point of Encounter*, where the group commits to the new beliefs and terminates the old. In the final stage, converts deepen their faith in the *Period of Maturity*. Tippet contends that this model is dynamic, in that groups may experience the stages in different orders. It is also terminal, in so far as with the period of maturity the conversion is final.

With James Downton’s 1980 ‘Evolutionary theory of spiritual conversion and commitment’, the theory of conversion swings back to the Lofland and Stark model. Downton derived 10 stages and 28 steps from his study of the new religious movement Divine Light Mission that attempts to fine-tune the ‘World Saver’ model. The ten stages of the model are also value added, as ‘each step tends to limit the alternatives available at the next step until the individual finds himself at a decision point with only one alternative to choose from’. The most obvious parallels between Downton and Lofland and Stark’s models are the initial period of frustration or dissatisfaction, religious problem-solving perspective, and religious seeking. However, Downton adds that the seeker must also accept the movement’s problem-solving perspective. Accepting the new perspective may be the result of Downton’s other addition of a state of personal futility, in which the potential convert realises his current paradigm is not working. An important component from the ‘World Saver’ model that seems to be missing in Downton’s conception is the power of countervailing social bonds to obstruct the conversion. Another

---

244 Ibid, 211.
247 Ibid, 387.
significant difference from the Lofland and Stark models is Downton’s emphasis on counter-culture and drug use. For instance, Downton argues that eastern philosophy pervasive in the hippy counter-culture and psychedelic drugs shaped the religious perspective and seeking experience in individuals who joined Divine Light Mission.  

Lewis Rambo has argued that previous conversion theories are too restrictive to fully account for the conversion process. He contends that static models that focus on a single discipline and describe the conversion and recruitment of a single, specific religious group at a particular point in history are not flexible enough to account for the wide variety for factors and contexts that affects conversions or joining new religious movements. Rambo maintains that a holistic model of conversion should consider cultural, social, and personality factors, as well as the role of religious experiences.

Therefore, Rambo took from the Lofland and Stark, Tippet, and Downtown models to construct a modified seven-stage model for evaluating religious conversions. The first stage, Context, considers the ‘total [cultural, social, individual, and religious] environment in which the conversion takes place’. Following the earlier models, Rambo also believes that potential converts experience a period of Crisis. Likewise, he contends that the disequilibrium of a crisis facilitates a Quest. However, this state is slightly different than the religious seeking that Lofland and Stark describe, as people may respond actively or passively depending on their structural availability and motivation structures. During the quest, the potential convert may Encounter an advocate or missionary. Here Rambo states, ‘A different dynamic is operative when’ the potential convert is actively seeking, rather than if an advocate approaches the potential convert. If the potential convert reacts positively to the invite, he or she will begin a stage of social Interaction, where the individual first experiments with the group’s ideas and practices. This phase is both active and passive, as the potential convert must make an active decision to participate. Equally, however, the group will usually try to socially or ideologically encapsulate the new recruit from

---

248 Ibid, 384.
249 Rambo, “holistic model,” 52.
250 Ibid, 54.
countervailing social networks and competing religious perspectives. Finally, the individual must make a Commitment to convert. Rambo says that in most cases the new convert must participate in some kind of ritual designed as a ‘public demonstration of status change’. Rambo also argues that to determine the Consequences or outcome of the conversion one must evaluate both the convert’s and the group’s satisfaction with the transition, as well as make an academic evaluation based on normative values of one’s scholarly discipline.

Still unsatisfied with Rambo’s attempt to develop a broadly applicable holistic model, Henri Gooren surveyed the literature once more, selecting the best traits from nearly 20 conversion models to develop the ‘Conversion Career’ model. He argues that conversion models should be longitudinal and measure the process throughout various stages and benchmarks in life. He further contends that his model does not attempt to ‘locate the basis of conversion at either the individual, organisation, or social levels…instead it will identify many factors operating at each of the three meta-levels’. Such factors he argues may be personality, social, institutional, cultural, or contingency, which he describes as random meetings and events. In no chronological order, he outlines the model’s five dynamic levels of religious involvement. Pre-affiliation is the potential convert’s ‘world view and social context’ when the individual first makes contact with the religious movement. Affiliation is the process of becoming a formal member. Conversion is the ‘comprehensive’ personal change of worldview and identity. Confession is akin to Tippet’s Period of Maturity, where a convert has solidified his or her position as a true believer. At the Disaffiliation stage group members either apostatise or become non-active believers.

Although meso-level models are largely seen as an advancement from earlier micro and macro-level theories, they are not without criticism. For instance, Tippet’s framework is not

251 Ibid, 58.
252 Ibid, 59-60.
253 Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 348-349.
254 Ibid, 350
255 Ibid, 351.
256 Ibid, 350.
257 Ibid, 350.
259 Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 350.
suited for explaining conversion in the West. It is based on the premise that entire villages will decide to convert together.\textsuperscript{260} Modern Western society is far too individualistic for his model to be of much use. It probably could not explain why a person in New York or London adopts Islam, for instance. Likewise, Gooren’s model is far too vague to have and real explanatory value. He refuses to commit to a level of analysis or any specific factors that might affect conversion. Therefore, in his attempt to construct a generalisable theory, he loses too much specificity to be valuable.\textsuperscript{261}

The primary criticisms of Rambo’s model deal with his failure to address a number of factors that could influence conversion. Gooren and Joshua Iyadurai argue that Rambo largely ignores the role of theology and religious experience in the conversion process.\textsuperscript{262} Gooren also contends that Rambo glosses over the role of gender, mentioning it only once. Likewise, Gooren is unsatisfied with Rambo’s treatment of age in the model. He argues that an effective models should “distinguish between conversions at various moments in the individual life cycle.”\textsuperscript{263} Khan and Greene note that, despite the large amount of attention Rambo’s model has received, very few scholars have tested it empirically.\textsuperscript{264}

Lofland and Stark’s model has also received its fair share of criticisms. More than a decade after he published the original model with Stark, Lofland revisited his theory, conceding that the situational conditions of the model are too general to be useful. He singled out turning point, suggesting ‘everyone can be seen in one or more ways at a turning point every moment of their lives’.\textsuperscript{265} He also found that in subsequent years religious problem-solving perspective became much less relevant as a factor in conversion, as non-religious people were beginning to convert.\textsuperscript{266}

David Snow and Cynthia Philipps offer perhaps the most scathing criticism of the ‘World Saver’ model. Their test of the model on members of the Nichiren Shoshu Buddhist movement in America uncovered conceptual problems with the model. Most prominently,

\textsuperscript{260} Tippet, “Conversion as a dynamic process.”
\textsuperscript{261} Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 351.
\textsuperscript{263} Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 345
\textsuperscript{266} John Lofland, John, “Becoming a World-Saver” Revisited,” \textit{American Behavioral Scientist} 20, no. 6 (1977): 805-818.
they asserted that any data gathered from participants who had already converted would be biased by the participants' retrospective interpretations of their lives. They argued that if conversion changes one’s universe of discourse, conversion would cause a convert to reinterpret his or her life and perceptions about problems in his or her life prior to conversion as well as motivations to convert. However, this criticism may be unfair since Lofland and Stark’s study was ethnographic and followed converts throughout the process.

Henri Gooren also offers insights on the conceptual weaknesses of the ‘World Saver’ model. He argues that the funneling process is too static and specific to account for variations in conversion. Moreover, he contends that Lofland and Stark largely ignore the role of prior socialisation and do not put enough emphasis on spiritual conversion. Rather, the focus is on stress and socialisation.

Testing of the World Saver model has also sometimes not provided empirical support for all of the model’s stages in the order the authors theorise. For example, Inaba did not find evidence for all of the mechanisms, leading him to suggest that the ‘World Saver’ is not cumulative, but a set of conditions. Likewise, Kox, Meeus, and Hart did not find the model to be cumulative since participants in their study did not have to meet all of the conditions to convert and no correlations were found among the variables. However, their method of measuring the order in which participants experienced the models conditions is suspect since they did not have temporal data.

**Radicalisation Literature**

Like conversion literature, there is a large body of works scattered across many disciplines, which explain why people radicalise. Moreover, it also describes a wide variety of ideologies and cognitive and behavioral radicalisation, making it equally difficult to compare. Categorizing the radicalisation literature into the same micro, macro, and meso-levels analysis helps to make comparisons within and across

---

269 Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 338.
270 Kox, Meeus, and t’Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model.” 238.
disciplines. It also allows for comparisons between the radicalisation and conversion literature.

**Micro-level Radicalisation Literature**

Analysis of radicalisation at the micro-level has several perspectives. The most common of these views, as Sageman writes, ‘is based on the assumption that there is something different about terrorists that makes them do what they do’.271 The first micro-level perspective argues that these differences lay in terrorists’ psychology.272 The ruthless and outcast nature of terrorists leads some scholars to think that psychosis—when an individual does not know reality from imagination—or, psychopathy/sociopathy—when an individual is remorseless and acts only in self-interest—motivates terrorists.273

However, there are a number of flaws in the psychotic/sociopath/psychopath hypotheses. As Martha Crenshaw contends, one problem is that, unlike self-interested sociopaths, terrorists are altruists. Terrorists rarely give selfish reasons for their actions; rather they often argue that they are fighting to defend the oppressed masses.274 Another flaw in this framework is that psychotics and sociopaths are unpredictable, untrustworthy, and impatient. Therefore, they are unfit for terrorism. As Irish terrorist William Mackey Lomasney said, mentally ill terrorists are ‘such stupid blundering fools that they make our case appear imbecile and farcical’.275 In fact, empirical research rarely supports the hypothesis that terrorists are mentally ill. Psychologists have tested a number of left-wing German, Islamist, Irish Republican, and anti-colonial nationalist terrorists for these psychological traits and concluded that very few terrorists are mentally ill.276 However, Gill and Corner argue social scientists have overgeneralised this finding. They find, conversely, ‘some types of terrorist may be more likely to possess certain psychological traits more than the

---

271 Sageman, *Leaderless*, 16.
273 Ibid.
general population. Nevertheless, mental disorders are not likely ‘predictors’ of terrorism.\textsuperscript{277}

Therefore, psychological models of radicalisation have moved more toward psychoanalytical and cognitive approaches. Psychoanalysis is based on Freudian theories of psychology. Rather than having innate personalities, humans develop their identities during childhood and adolescence.\textsuperscript{278} Psychological trauma during this period, such as abuse, neglect, fragmented families, or over-controlling parents can damage the self-concept, leading to the ‘injured self’.\textsuperscript{279} People with damaged identities cannot reconcile the positive and negative aspects of their identities. Rather, they see the good and bad as ‘split’ into the ‘me’ and ‘not me’.\textsuperscript{280} Jerald Post contends that ‘an individual with this constellation idealises his grandiose self and splits out and projects onto others all the hatred and devalued weaknesses within’.\textsuperscript{281}

Psychoanalysis has spawned a number of theories on terrorist behaviour. Narcissism theory argues that individuals experiencing splitting develop grandiose self-images and seek external enemies or scapegoats to blame for their life problems. Post contends that the absolutist \textit{us versus them} rhetoric of extremist movements is very attractive to these individuals.\textsuperscript{282} Post also points to the relevancy of identity theory, which argues that those with damaged self-esteem very often have desperate desires to belong to groups and consolidate their identities.\textsuperscript{283} After a life of rejection or neglect, joining a terrorist movement fulfills this psychological need. Belonging to a terrorist group that sees itself as an elite vanguard of the truth gives an individual a sense of identity, importance, self-worth, and even superiority. Post likewise argues that individuals with early psychological trauma who experience splitting project their bad self via paranoia and suspicion as a self-defense mechanism. These

\textsuperscript{277} Paul Gill and Emily Corner, “There and back again: The study of mental disorder and terrorist involvement.” \textit{American Psychologist} 72, no. 3 (2017): 239.
\textsuperscript{278} Victoroff, “The Mind,” 22.
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid.
individuals are prone to adopting the apocalyptical conspiracies that terrorist groups promote, which help to justify violence against the ‘other’. 284

Cognitive capacity and style are other psychological micro-level factors that may lead to radicalisation. Cognitive capacity affects how individuals anticipate outcomes, follow rules, calculate risks, and control impulses. Cognitive style controls the way a person thinks, makes decisions, and perceives bias and prejudice about the world around him or her. It also determines how flexible or intolerant an individual is to ambiguity. 285

These functions can plausibly lead a person to terrorism in a number of ways. For instance, there is considerable empirical evidence to show that cognitive capacity and style affect violent behaviour. Studies show that the aggressiveness of political leaders, racism, and ethnocentrism may be associated with cognitive style. Cognitive style may also lead individuals to thrill-seeking behaviour. The romance of planning, training for, and carrying out terrorism may be a powerful allure to persons with a particular cognitive style. Others with reduced cognitive flexibility may feel the urge to use violence in revenge of personal, political, or social humiliation. 286

Although many of these psychoanalytical and cognitive models make convincing arguments for why people who join terrorist groups may be different from others, psychologist John Horgan argues that searching for typical terrorist traits is futile. 287 In a controlled psychological study of Palestinian terrorists, Ariel Merari was unable to identify a standard terrorist psychological profile. Rather, he finds that suicide bombers, non-suicide terrorists, and terrorism organisers all experience different levels of ego strength and personality types. 288 Similarly, in separate studies, Sageman and Bakker investigate the social backgrounds and demographics of

285 Ibid., 26-27.
286 Ibid., 27-29.
terrorists and conclude that there is no terrorist profile.\textsuperscript{289} Instead of looking for a single profile, Peter Nesser contends that terrorists fit within five typologies—the entrepreneur, impressionable whiz kid, misfit, drifter, and affiliates or supporters.\textsuperscript{290}

Rather than arguing that terrorists are psychologically or socially different from others, another micro-level perspective—rational choice theory—contends that some individuals turn to terrorism as a strategic choice. Since extremists operate at the fringes of politics, by nature they often lack mass political support. Their cause is usually too extreme or too focused on the grievances of a minority group to attract enough following to change the status quo through legitimate means. With few political options, Martha Crenshaw writes, individuals within groups may rationally ‘select terrorism as a course of action from a range of perceived alternatives’.\textsuperscript{291} Choosing terrorism makes activists appear more powerful than they actually are. Through coercion and fear, individuals within a group may believe that they can bypass democratic means to change.\textsuperscript{292}

\textit{Macro-level Radicalisation Literature}

While micro-level theories look at how individual differences and decisions lead to radicalisation, macro-level models take the opposite approach. They show how structural forces in society and culture cause people to become violent. From this perspective, individuals and groups turn violent for religious or ideological reasons; in reaction to economic or political distress and oppression; or from the threat of a globalising world.

When Osama bin Laden declared war on America, he did so by invoking Islamic scripture. Therefore, many reacted to the attacks on 11 September by looking for something about Islam to explain Al Qaeda’s motivations. This point of view has spawned a large body of literature on how theologies and ideologies radicalise individuals. These scholars argue that the source and justification for terrorism

\textsuperscript{290} Peter Nesser. “Profiles of Jihadist Terrorists in Europe” in \textit{A Future for the Young: Options for helping Middle Eastern Youth Escape the Trap of Radicalisation} ed. Cheryl Benard. (Santa Monica, California: Rand, Working paper, 2005), 39-47.
\textsuperscript{291} Crenshaw, “Strategic Choice,” 8.
\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., 11-12.
comes directly from religious texts or ideological doctrine. They may claim, for example, that devout Muslims attack the West because the divine word of God commands them to. Others, such as Mark Juergensmeyer contend that religion creates a ‘world view or paradigm of thinking that defines the context and conditions of all knowledge’. This viewpoint causes individuals to see political issues and their solutions through a religious lens.

Globalisation is another macro-level force that some argue radicalises individuals. Recent technological advances in transportation and communication now allow people, ideas, and commerce to travel further and faster than ever before. These advances increase immigration, allowing people to more easily move to follow economic prosperity and political freedom. It also promotes the freer flow of goods and expanded markets for manufacturers to new countries. For many people, this logistical and information revolution is positive. It creates wealth, cross-cultural understanding, and opportunity.

However, globalisation can also challenge traditional value systems and threaten to erode national identities. With increased global trade and information flow also comes an influx of Western consumer goods and ideas. Western clothing, music, and cinema import foreign ideas and values that often contradict the traditional culture and values of the receiving country. Benjamin Barber believes that the Westernisation that globalisation promotes creates a ‘McWorld,’ that drives conflict between the Western and Islamic worlds. Muslim fundamentalists perceive the impending Westernisation as a threat to Muslim society. Barber argues that conflict arises when Muslim fundamentalists resist Westernisation by waging jihad in defence of Islam.

Globalisation also brings many Muslims to Europe where they now struggle to integrate. Scholars like Robert Leiken argue that the consequences of failed

---

293 Timothy Furnish, “Beheading in the Name of Islam,” Middle East Quarterly, (Spring 2005), 51-57
295 Ibid.
297 Ibid.
integration and confrontation with homogeneous secular Europe, creates a population of ‘angry Muslims’ in Europe.298 Retaining their cultures and often unwelcomed by native Europeans, many Muslim immigrants settle in Muslim enclaves in cities rather than integrate. Compared to the general population of Europeans, these new immigrants and their descendants have difficulties finding employment and have lower socio-economic status. Many also feel left out of the political process that, in some cases, wages campaigns against outward signs of Muslim identity by implementing bans on the head coverings and mosque minarets. These factors fuel perceptions that Muslims in Europe face institutional discrimination.299

The alienation of Europe’s Muslim immigrants leads to radicalisation in a number of ways. First, anti-Muslim sentiment and policies are a rallying cry for Islamist political organisations in Europe, which use these grievances to mobilise anti-Western sentiment and radicalise the European Muslim community.300 Alienation from Western culture also leaves many young Muslims with no sense of national identity. They cannot relate to the cultural traditions of their parents, nor do they see themselves as Europeans. Instead, these young disaffected Muslims from all over the Muslim world often identify with a globalised version of Islam. Olivier Roy argues that this new Islam is, ‘a closed scripturalist, conservative view of Islam that rejects the national and statist dimension in favour of the ummah, the universal community of all Muslims, based on Islamic Law’.301 This neo-fundamentalist Islam is the same ideology that the global jihadist movement espouses.302

However, Muslims also experience marginalisation in the Islamic world. And many politicians believe that poverty, deprivation, and poor education in those places are the root of radicalisation.303 Politicians base such policy prescriptions on relative deprivation theories. Scholars like Robert Gurr304 and Alan Richards305 contend that

---

299 Veldhuis and Staun, Islamist Radicalisation, 31-32.
300 Ibid.
301 Roy, Globalised, 1.
302 Ibid.
304 Veldhuis and Staun, Islamist Radicalisation, 33.
young men in poor urbanising countries with youth bulges, frustrated by the lack of opportunities, turn to terrorist movements. When there is no work, there is increased opportunity to take part in terrorism, which may be the preferred choice to economic marginalisation. 306

Along with socio-economic deprivation, policy makers and academics also consider the effects of political marginalisation on radicalisation. For decades, the West fostered un-democratic authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world that exported Islamist militancy outside of the country in order to direct attention away from domestic issues. However, this democratic deficit created blowback evinced by Al Qaeda’s justification for war on the West due to its support for Middle East dictators. The attacks on 11 September prompted many to conclude that the lack of democracy in the Muslim world had caused terrorism.307

Despite their popularity amongst policy makers, macro-level theories suffer from a number of deficiencies. The most obvious flaw in these arguments is one of logic. Many people in many countries are exposed to supposed macro-level factors of radicalisation, but very few become terrorists. Empirical evidence does not seem to support some of these theories either. A widely cited empirical study by Alan Krueger and Jitka Malcova finds no causal link between terrorism, poverty and education.308 In fact, several studies find that many terrorists come from educated, middle class backgrounds.309 Similarly, Katerina Dalcora’s study finds no evidence for a causal relationship between Islamist terrorism and democratic deficit. If anything, the rising tide of global jihadists in Europe brings into question the utility of democracy in preventing terrorism.310

306 Veldhuis and Staun, Islamist Radicalisation, 33.
Meso-level Radicalisation Literature

Meso-level analysis presents a more dynamic approach that shows how individual factors, relationships between people and groups, and structural forces work together to cause radicalisation. Theories in the genre usually recognise that there are many pathways to joining violent movements. For instance, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko posit 12 different potential mechanisms of political radicalisation. Similarly, John Horgan identifies six ‘risk factors’ for radicalisation. And Horgan, with Max Taylor, argue that for each individual radicalising, the setting of ‘events, personal factors, and social/political/and organisational context’ will be unique, and will change as the person moves into, through, and out of involvement in violent activism. Meso-level analysis also tends to see radicalisation as a multi-stage processes. For instance, ‘staircase’ and ‘conveyor belt’ models by Fathali Moghadam and Zeno Baran, as well multi-stage models by Marc Sageman, Quintan Wictorowicz, and Horgan assert that a number of mechanisms progressively (though not necessarily linearly) move individuals toward radicalisation.

From the meso-level perspective, there are two major theoretical frameworks that describe the pathways and processes of radicalisation: social movement theory (SMT) and social psychology. SMT argues that in order to expand their influence, movements need to grow their body of supporters. To do so, they mobilise resources and actively exploit political opportunities to recruit new members through pre-existing social networks and pools of like-minded individuals. The SMT concept of ‘framing’ explains how movements manipulate common structural grievances and personal relationships to create an alternate reality about the world befitting their narratives. In other words, ‘[structural strains] rarely speak for

313 Horgan, “From Profiles to Pathways,” 84-85.
themselves’. Rather, authoritative figures within movements use bias to ‘frame’ structural grievances as injustices, assign responsibility for those injustices, and explain what the movement can do to seek justice. ‘Key to mobilisation, according to this perspective, is whether the movement’s version of ‘reality’ resonates or can be brought to resonate with the movement’s potential constituency’, through frame alignment.

A few scholars have applied SMT to explain radicalisation. Donatella Della Porta uses SMT concepts to explain violent extremism in her studies of left-wing European militants. She found that movements often recruit from personal networks and ‘pre-existing sentiment pools…of individuals who already share the same grievances’. Similarly, Wiktorowicz uses SMT to describe how the jihadist group, Al-Muhajiroun (AM) recruits adherents. He finds that certain micro- and macro-level mechanisms such as traumatic life events or moral outrage from structural strains can cause individuals to reevaluate their life paradigms. When these individuals seek life answers through religion and develop or have pre-existing social bonds with AM, they might become targets for recruitment. Through those social bonds, potential recruits come into contact with movement activists who frame the recruits’ moral outrage or traumatic life events as grievances and victimisation that need redress. Through discussion and debate, movement activists try to convince recruits that AM’s values and objectives can offer solutions to their grievances. If the recruits and the movement achieve ‘frame alignment’, they will likely begin a stage of intense group socialisation to prepare them for violent activism.

Borum suggests that SMT is ‘one of the most promising frameworks’ for understanding the radicalisation process. Research by Jayyette Klausen and Scott Kleinmann finds that a large portion of individuals involved in jihadist terrorism in

---

318 Dalgaard-Nielsen, Social Movement Theory, 6.
319 Ibid, 6.
323 Borum, “Radicalisation into Violent Extremism I”.
the UK and US are linked to a small number of movement recruiters. Studies by Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens show precisely how the jihadist movement mobilises Western youth to fight by framing their narrative specifically to align with that demographic. To be sure that radicalisation is not the result of structural grievances alone, a controlled study by the Change Institute finds that Western Muslims with no exposure to jihadist narratives share many of the same grievances as terrorists, but are opposed to terrorist violence.

The second meso-level framework, social psychology, sees the radicalisation process as a bottom-up phenomenon. In his recent radicalisation literature review, Borum explains how social psychology affects group behaviour: 1) Groups foster more extreme individual attitudes and opinions; 2) Groupthink lends to biased and irrational decision making; 3) In-group sentiments often lead to negative biases about out-groups; 4) Individuals often join groups to benefit from perceived incentives, such as social affiliation, sense of meaning, excitement, or to fulfill survival needs; and 5) Pressure from other group members to conform to group norms controls group behaviour. For example, Michael Hogg’s research on uncertain identity theory finds that individuals with uncertain identities seek out groups with high levels of entitativity, such as extremist groups with strict ideologies. Identifying with the group reduces self-uncertainty and prescribes how one “should think, feel, and do.”

Three prominent radicalisation models rely on social psychology. In their ‘pyramid model’, McCauley and Moskalenko posit five social psychology mechanisms that could move individuals from ideological supporters to violent activists: group polarisation, group isolation, group competition, group condensation, and group

fissioning.\textsuperscript{329} Central to the framework presented by Taylor and Horgan is the concept of the ‘community of practice’. This social environment of ‘collective learning’ and group norms shapes the group’s ideology and behaviour.\textsuperscript{330} Horgan adds that group isolation and individual incentives, such as peer approval and the possibility of progressive responsibility can also move a group toward violent behaviour.\textsuperscript{331} Similarly, Sageman argues that radicalisation results when peer pressure from members within small informal ‘cliques’ ratchet up radicalism through groupthink and self-reinforcement. Once the group has reached a sufficient level of cognitive radicalisation, he argues, its members might try to establish a connection to the larger movement via social networks in order to participate in violent activism.\textsuperscript{332} Research by the New York Police Department\textsuperscript{333} and Peter Neumann and Brooke Rogers provides some empirical support for social psychology in radicalisation. They observe that movement recruiters and radical Imams are losing influence due to community and police scrutiny. Instead, when individuals socialise with other activists at ‘radical incubator hangouts’, such as hookah bars, bookstores, and cafes, they ‘create shared worlds of meaning that shape identity, perceptions, and preferences’.\textsuperscript{334} In turn, these groups of friends radicalise together.

\textit{Convert Radicalisation Literature}

Although the body of literature on the radicalisation of Muslim converts is relatively sparse, it largely builds upon the meso-level general radicalisation models just discussed. From the social psychology perspective, a few scholars argue that Muslim converts are drawn to radical movements by perceived social incentives. For example, Olivier Roy theorises that many converts who embrace radical Islam are poor, working class, ethnic minorities, drawn to Islam by the religion’s universal ummah, which welcomes all races.\textsuperscript{335} Similarly, Emmanuel Karagiannis and Alison Pargeter assert that converts often have romantic ideas about the ummah. Seeing

\textsuperscript{330} Taylor and Horgan, “A Conceptual Framework,” 590.
\textsuperscript{331} Horgan, “From Profiles to Pathways,” 88-89.
\textsuperscript{332} Sageman, Leaderless.
\textsuperscript{334} Peter R. Neumann et al., \textit{Recruitment and mobilisation for the Islamist militant movement in Europe}, (London: ICSR, 2007), 46.
\textsuperscript{335} Roy, “Globalised Islam”.

74
themselves as part of this community, they may develop an in-group identity and feel vicariously victimised by the oppression of Muslims in other countries. By joining the jihadist movement, converts may find direction by fighting in defense of their Muslim brethren.336

Empirical convert research offers some support for this perspective. For instance, Kleinmann finds that about 90 percent of the convert jihadists in his study radicalised in groups.337 More specifically, Karagianis describes how Muslim friends slowly convinced David Courtallier to convert to Islam and then travel to a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan.338 Emerson Vermaat’s case study of the Hofstad group similarly shows how Jason and Jermaine Walters conspired to commit acts of terrorism after the two brothers began regularly socialising with other radical Muslim men.339

In support of SMT, Kleinmann, Pargeter and Karagiannis all show how radical recruiters and preachers use outreach to frame radical Islam to American and European Muslim converts.340 Specific evidence shows how convert jihadists Jermaine Lindsay, Dhiren Barot, and Zachary Chesser all radicalised after listening to the lectures or studying and works of Al Qaeda-linked preachers, Abdullah El-Faisal, Abu Hamza, and Anwar Awlaqi. Michael Taarnby and Pargeter both suggest that converts might be more vulnerable to frame alignment because they are a ‘blank canvas’, and do not have the linguistic or cultural context to know recruiters or clerics are manipulating them.341 In line with Wiktorowicz’s theory that life trauma may cause individuals to seek new paradigms that could lead them to directly to movement recruiters, Kleinmann’s study of jihadists in the US finds that 59 per cent of Muslim converts compared to 10 percent non-converts experience personal trauma prior to radicalisation.342

Comparing Conversion and Radicalisation literature

The above literature review suggests that Dawson and Meeus were probably correct in their assessment that there are parallels between conversion and radicalisation processes. Determining precisely how similar, and whether or not a conversion model might explain radicalisation, however, requires a closer comparative analysis of the various affective processes, mechanisms, and outcomes of conversion and radicalisation. Therefore, the following section of this chapter takes a closer look at the similarities and differences in the processes, stages, mechanisms, and outcomes of the various conversion and radicalisation theories to assess if conversion theory might be applicable to the study of radicalisation.

One of the first noticeable similarities between conversion and radicalisation theories is they both describe processes that occur over variable time periods. In fact, social scientists describe both as dynamic, multi-factor processes of psychological, structural, and social factors working together. As we have seen, most influential conversion theories—such as Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ and Rambo’s ‘Holistic Model’—are multi-stage process models. This is because, as Lewis Rambo posits, ‘factors involved in the conversion process are multiple, interactive, and cumulative’. Likewise, according to Neumann, ‘virtually all academic models of radicalisation—such as Fathali Moghadam’s ‘staircase’, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko’s ‘pyramid’, or Zeyno Baran’s ‘conveyor belt’—conceptualise radicalisation as a progression which plays out over a period of time and involves different factors and dynamics’. These models also recognise that there is no single process or route into religious conversion or radicalisation.

Remarkably, scholars from both conversion and radicalisation studies offer very similar descriptions of these processes. Because there are many pathways into conversion and radicalisation, and because the processes and mechanisms are dynamic and vary with each situation, academic models of conversion and radicalisation do not line up perfectly. Moreover, each author tends to use different

343 Dawson, “Opening a dialogue,” 1; Meeus, “Why do young people become Jihadists?”
344 Lofland and Stark, “Becoming a world-saver”; Rambo, “holistic model”.
347 Horgan, The psychology of terrorism, 87; Rambo, “holistic model,” 48.
names for the various stages of their models. Nonetheless, four similar superordinate stages emerge from the various process models that describe conversion and radicalisation.

The first noticeable stage in both processes is a period of pre-affiliation. This stage describes an individual’s situation before he or she moves towards making spiritual or ideological change. In both processes this phase accounts for the context of an individual’s micro-and macrocosm. From the conversion models, Gooren also uses the term pre-affiliation to describe this stage as ‘the world view and social context of potential members of a religious group in their first contacts to assess whether they would like to affiliate themselves on a more formal basis’. Tippet calls it a period of awareness and Rambo refers to it as context. Similarly, in the radicalisation models, one might consider this stage parallel to Moghadam’s ground floor and NYPD and Precht’s pre-radicalisation stage. Taken together, two of Taylor and Horgan’s process variables, setting, events and social/political/organisational context, also neatly describe this period. During this stage, as Tippet and Moghadam both explain, an individual may also become aware of other ways of life or value systems and assess that his or her current situation is not ideal.

Many of the conversion and radicalisation models also describe what one might consider a stage of identification. During this period, individuals realise that there is a need for change and begin looking for solutions. Often, they begin exploring new groups and ideas and experimenting with new identities. From the radicalisation perspective, Moghadam’s first and second floors align well here. He explains that at this stage, individuals heading towards radicalisation ‘try different doors in search of solutions to what they perceive as unjust treatment’. Likewise, Precht’s

348 Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 350.
349 Tippet, “Conversion as a dynamic process,” 207.
355 Moghaddam, “The staircase to terrorism,” 163-165.
356 Ibid, 163.
conversion & identification and NYPD’s self-identification stages contend that radicalising individuals sometimes find Salafism behind one of those doors and begin to experiment with it.\(^{357}\) Congruent with the radicalisation models, Downton’s stages II-V\(^{358}\) and Rambo’s quest and encounter\(^{359}\) describe how people in the process of converting develop religious seeking behavior and begin making contact with new religious groups. At some point during the exploration and experimentation, Tippet’s period of decision and Gooren’s affiliation stage maintain that individuals may decide to formally join the new group.\(^{360}\)

Conversion and radicalisation models also agree that for individuals to assume a new set of beliefs, values, and behaviors, they require a period of indoctrination. At this point in the process models, individuals begin deeper socialisation with the group. Here, the new group will present its ideas, values, behaviors, and goals to the new affiliates and try to persuade the individual to join the group and accept its ideas. In Rambo’s interaction stage, he explains how religious groups indoctrinate recruits by socially and ideologically encapsulating them to remove outside countervailing influences and demand personal behavior modification.\(^{361}\) In Tippet’s incorporation period, converts also undergo catechism to prepare for baptism.\(^{362}\) These lessons serve as a form of indoctrination and acculturation. During this period, Downton’s stages VI-VII also outline how recruits begin to participate in rituals, do service for the group, and dress and act like members in order to detach from their ego and embrace the movement’s perspective and identity.\(^{363}\) From the radicalisation perspective, Moghadam’s third and fourth floors\(^{364}\) and Precht and NYPD’s indoctrination stages all explain how radicalising individuals begin periods of intense socialisation in isolation from outside influences.\(^{365}\) Moghadam argues that during this period of isolation, terrorist groups indoctrinate recruits through a climate of fear, secrecy, and othering of outgroup members.\(^{366}\) Like the convert

\(^{357}\) Precht, “Home grown terrorism,”35, 36; Sibler and Bhatt, Radicalisation in the west,” 30, 31.

\(^{358}\) Downton “An evolutionary theory of spiritual conversion and commitment,” 384-387.

\(^{359}\) Rambo, “holistic model,” 53-56.

\(^{360}\) Tippet, “Conversion as a dynamic process” 208, 209; Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 350.

\(^{361}\) Rambo, “holistic model,” 56-58.

\(^{362}\) Tippet, “Conversion as a dynamic process,” 210-212.

\(^{363}\) Downton “An evolutionary theory of spiritual conversion and commitment,” 388, 389.

\(^{364}\) Moghadam, “The staircase to terrorism,” 165, 166.

\(^{365}\) Precht, “Home grown terrorism,”36, 37; Sibler and Bhatt, Radicalisation in the west”

\(^{366}\) Moghadam, “The staircase to terrorism,” 36, 37.
models, the radicalisation models all agree that the goal of indoctrination is to make the joiner accept the group’s worldview and adopt its identity.

Finally, most of the conversion and radicalisation models describe a stage in which joiners exhibit their commitment to the new group. During this period, new members often carry out some kind of ritual act to signify their full incorporation and become deployable agents of the group. Rambo’s commitment stage describes mandatory ‘rituals of rejection, transition, and incorporation’. In Tippet’s incorporation period, these rituals were usually baptisms. Gooren refers to this stage as confession, when the convert develops a ‘missionary attitude’ toward nonmembers’. In radicalisation models, like Precht’s action stage and NYPD’s jihadisation stage, new members accept their ‘obligation’ or ‘duty to participate in jihad’. This may be through a pledge of allegiance or oath. In religious radicalism, where violence is itself often ritualistic, new adherents may also confirm acceptance of the new ideology by training, planning, and carrying out an attack.

Within these stages, both conversion and radicalisation scholars describe a number of factors or mechanisms that push or pull individuals through the conversion and radicalisation processes. The factors that affect these processes also appear to closely mirror each other. First, recruitment via pre-existing social networks is a key factor. Empirical studies of both populations show, whether a terrorist group or a new religion, most people join because a friend or family member who was already an active member introduced them to the group. A second factor that appears to influence both processes is that a person who is converting or radicalising often develops an affective bond with a member of the group. Interviews of terrorists and converts often reveal strong emotional attachments and feelings of love, comradery, and solidarity amongst group members. After an individual develops those initial

---

367 Rambo, “holistic model,” 58
368 Tippet, “Conversion as a dynamic process,” 210-212.
369 Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 350.
371 Precht, “Home grown terrorism,” 37; Sibler and Bhatt, Radicalisation in the west,” 43.
bonds, he or she is often exposed to *intense socialisation* with the new religious or terrorist group. For converting and radicalising individuals, this period also usually involves some form of social or ideological encapsulation, whereby group members create an echo chamber, isolating themselves from outside countervailing influences.\(^{375}\) Those most susceptible to conversion or radicalisation also seem to begin this process as *seekers* with few or weak religious or ideological alignments. In other words, they are often ‘unchurched’.\(^{376}\) As Dawson explains, ‘In many cases, the lack of prior religious education and family life seems to leave [them] more open to alternative…explanations of the world’.\(^{377}\) Finally, some individuals may be drawn to both new religious groups and radicalism by *direct rewards*. Be it status, salvation, self-esteem, or excitement and adventure, in some cases both converting to a new religion and joining a radical movement seems to fulfill some individual need.\(^{378}\)

In many ways the processes of conversion and radicalisation also manifest similarly. As Ferguson and Binks explain, ‘Both conversion and radicalisation are arguably a transformational process whereby the individual goes from believing and adhering to and/or practicing one set of values/teachings, to believing in, adhering to, and practicing another set of values/teachings’.\(^{379}\) However, this transformation is not always total or complete. For both radicalisation and conversion, the transformation may manifest in a range of cognitive and behavioral outcomes, from affiliation or participation with a group to full adoption of it values, beliefs, and practices, or somewhere in between.

Richard Travisano argues that religious conversion is recognisable by an objective and a subjective change in a person’s life. He writes that ‘The occurrence of an objective break is not difficult to ascertain; the convert joins a group or movement’.\(^{380}\) Lofland and Stark refer to this kind of religious change as a ‘verbal conversion’, where an individual makes a verbal commitment to affiliate or


\(^{377}\) Dawson, “Who joins new religious movements and why,” 149

\(^{378}\) Dawson, “Who joins new religious movements and why,” 149

\(^{379}\) Ferguson and Binks, “Religious Conversion Motifs,” 21.

\(^{380}\) Kox, Mecus, and t’Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 228.
participate with a new religion. He or she may even demonstrate the conversion through some kind of ritual to signify membership. However, affiliation and participation do not necessarily mean that a new member has fully adopted the group’s beliefs and values. The convert may stay affiliated but never fully internalise the new belief system; he or she may gradually accept those beliefs as their own over time; the individual may merge his or her old identity, beliefs, and values with the new; or leave the group. In fact, about 90 percent of people who join new religious movements leave within two years.

Travisano contends that it is much more difficult to determine when an individual has made a subjective break with their old belief system and embraced a total conversion. He and other conversion scholars argue that the result of a full transformation is a radical change in an individual’s identity and worldview. Travisano ‘defines conversion as a change of someone’s general or ‘pervasive’ identity’. Likewise, David Snow and Richard Machalek believe that the mark of a total convert is ‘a radical change in [their] universe of discourse’. They define a universe of discourse as ‘a system of common or social meanings...[that]...provides a broad interpretive framework in terms of which people live and organise experience’. As Kox, Meeus, and Hart explain, a full ‘conversion, then, is a revision of one’s world view such that one’s self-image and notions as to how to deal with others undergo radical change’.

This range of outcomes—from affiliation and/or participation to fundamental change in an individual’s identity and worldview, to even leaving the group—is also evident in the radicalisation process. For instance, John Horgan has observed that some individuals affiliate or even participate with radical/terrorist groups but ‘do so without any clear ideological basis’. Moreover, some people leave the group all together. For those individuals who do fully adopt the group’s radical

---

381 Lofland and Stark, “Becoming a world-saver,” 864.
385 Snow and Machalek, “The convert as a social type,” 265.
386 Kox, Meeus, and t’Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 228.
388 For a discussion on disengagement see: John Horgan, Walking away from terrorism: accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements, Routledge, 2009; Horgan, The psychology of terrorism 136-154.
ideology, the fundamental change in their pervasive identity seems to closely mirror the change that is evident in total religious converts. In an excellent example of this universe of discourse change during radicalisation, Omar Bakri describes how fully indoctrinated members of Al Muhajiroun (AM) think and act: ‘when the thought occupies you, [it] becomes the thought that was behind your action. The thought is manifest in your action, your behavior, your discussion, your debate’.  

He went on to explain that after AM indoctrination, ‘A member of the group is an identical copy of the way I think, and he has my adopted culture, and he teaches it to people’. Bakari’s words seem to confirm that, like conversion, the processes of radicalisation can also cause new members’ world view and identity to become one with the group’s.

For individuals moving toward both religious conversion and radicalisation, affiliation with a new group and adopting the group’s belief and value systems, need not occur simultaneously, nor is either outcome mutually exclusive or mutually inclusive. Travisano argues, ‘A person can join a religious group without radically changing his or her perspective on life’. He contends, ‘The term ‘conversion’ is warranted only if the two kinds of breaks [objective and subjective] occur together. To join a group without undergoing radical change in worldview, is to ‘alternate’ rather than to convert’.  

Likewise, Horgan posits that affiliation with a radical group and adopting that group’s ideological perspective does not always occur simultaneously. He contends that, ‘some recruits first become ideological, which in turn, serves as a stepping-stone to involvement with a group and subsequent action; other recruits become ideological after they first engage in violent action’. Like Travisano’s stance on the term convert, Horgan does not believe the term radicalised is warranted by the mere fact that someone is involved with an ideological group.

One obvious difference between conversion and radicalisation that may seem important is the role of violence. Many definitions of radicalisation refer to a
progression towards ideologically driven violence. And when we refer to racialisation, we are generally referring to involvement in terrorist groups, which are in fact, ‘violent by design’. Conversely, few mainstream religions profess violence as their 
raison d’etre. Moreover, only infinitesimal portions of religious converts carry out violence in the name of their new religion. Therefore, on its face, the violent outcome of the radicalisation processes may preclude one from making valid comparisons between conversion and radicalisation.

However, this difference may only be superficial. John Horgan observes that, ‘the vast majority of those who hold radical beliefs are not necessarily going to express that commitment via violent action...’ For instance, some Islamist groups that support terrorism in places like Iraq, Syria, Somalia, etc., but do not believe that Muslims should partake in violence in Western countries. Likewise, Dawson contends that some converts join movements that never intend to become violent, but at some point move in a violent direction. For this reason, Taylor and Horgan and Dawson point to endogenous group dynamics as the potential cause of violence, rather than a group’s ideology. Accordingly, Horgan argues that ‘we should not just ask why and how people become involved in violence, but also how and why the individual ‘assimilates’ the shared values and norms of the group, and how and why he or she then ‘accommodates’ the new reality with new experience from being involved in and engaging in activities’. Moreover, that these two questions may actually be ‘separate and distinct’. Consequently, violence may not be an important distinguishing factor when comparing the outcomes of radicalisation and religious conversion.

Comparing conversion models to radicalisation models shows that the two are nearly identical in every way. They are both dynamic, multi-stage, multi-factor processes. Those processes incorporate nearly indistinguishable stages. The

394 Schmid, A conceptual discussion and literature review, 17-18.
396 Ibid, 10.
397 Horgan, The psychology of terrorism, 84.
398 For instance, al-Muhajiroun and Hizb-ut Tahrir.
401 Horgan, The psychology of terrorism, 85.
402 Ibid, 85.
mechanisms that push or pull people through those stages appear to be the same. And both can result in a range of outcomes from mere affiliation to total identity change. These similarities would suggest that the various models from both disciplines are mutually applicable. However, as Ferguson and Bink point out, ‘While the search for understanding how an individual can become radicalised…is in its infancy, the search for a model of the conversion process…is not new and many well-researched suggestions have been made regarding this process’. Accordingly, regardless of mutual applicability, it is more productive to build from the already operationalised, tested, and fine-tuned conversion theories, than it is to start from scratch with radicalisation models.

**Gaps in the Literature**

The above literature review points to a number of theoretical, methodological, and empirical gaps in the study of radicalisation that are not as evident in conversion literature. First, radicalisation theories suffer from the fact that few of the models are based on empirical evidence. Horgan makes this point regarding psychological theories of terrorism, saying, ‘What psychological theorizing does exist on terrorism is frequently built on unreliable, invalid, and unverifiable data, frequently due to a lack of efforts ‘to go native’”. One could argue that this statement describes the weakness of radicalisation theories in general. Conversely, conversion theorists have largely built their models from detailed ethnographic studies of religious groups. For instance, Lofland and Stark spent roughly two years with members of Divine Prospects. Downton conducted interviews over five years with Divide Light Mission. And Tippet’s model is based on years of observations as a missionary. Quintan Wiktorowicz’s study of Al Muhajiroun is a rare example of a radicalisation model built from in-depth observations.

Another problem with radicalisation models is few differentiate between different types of extremism. The subject of Wiktorowicz’s study is not necessarily a violent

---

404 Horgan, *The psychology of terrorism*, 42.
405 Neumann and Kleinmann, “How Rigorous is Radicalisation Research?”.
406 Lofland and Stark, “Becoming a world-saver.”
407 Downton, “An evolutionary theory of spiritual conversion and commitment.”
408 Tippet, “Conversion as a dynamic process.”
409 Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*. 

84
terrorist group, but rather an extremist political activist movement. Yet some of its members have gone on to commit terrorism.\footnote{Ibid.} Allison Pargeter lumps these groups together.\footnote{Pargeter, \textit{New Frontiers}.} Only Kleinmann distinguishes between Muslim converts and non-converts.\footnote{Kleinmann, “Comparing”.} As a result, it is still unclear what makes extreme thinkers turn to violent action, and if there is something different about converts that makes them more prone to radicalisation than born Muslims. To the contrary, Lofland and Stark’s conversion theory has been tested on a broad range of new religious movements with varying beliefs, values, and practices, suggesting that it might also be applicable to different types of extremism.

Even if it were possible to generalise the causes of violent radicalisation from those studies, several empirical and methodological concerns remain. Very few of the radicalisation theories have been operationalised and tested. This is because, ‘Only to an exceptionally limited degree have a small number of social scientists, including psychologists, conducted primary research to gather reliable data on convicted and or active terrorists.’\footnote{John Horgan, \textit{The psychology of terrorism}, Routledge, (2004), 37.} In fact, as Neumann and Kleinmann find, only about 45 per cent of studies on radicalisation use primary source data. For example, Kleinmann’s 2012 study primarily relies on media accounts as evidence.\footnote{Kleinmann, “Comparing”.} Even fewer rely on surveys or interviews of terrorists.\footnote{Even fewer rely on surveys or interviews of terrorists.} These empirical shortcomings are not prevalent in conversion research. As explained above, the Lofland and Stark and Rambo models have been operationalised and empirically tested.\footnote{Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model”; Khan and. Greene, “Seeing Conversion Whole”.} The empirical superiority of conversion literature should not be surprising. It is obviously much easier to interview religious converts than radical terrorists.

A lack of scientific control samples and comparison groups is also a problem in radicalisation research. Neumann and Kleinmann find that less than five per cent of radicalisation studies use control samples.\footnote{Neumann and Kleinmann, “How Rigorous Is Radicalisation Research?” 372, 373.} The \textit{Change Institute} and Wiktorowicz’s study are two meso-level exceptions that use control groups to
validate their findings. However, there are no empirical studies that use separate control samples to study Muslim convert radicalisation.\textsuperscript{418} Conversely, researchers first used control samples to test Lofland and Stark’s model over 40 years ago.\textsuperscript{419}

**Filling the Gaps**

By using Lofland and Stark’s conversion model to explain radicalisation, this thesis fills some of the aforementioned gaps in the literature. Unlike radicalisation process models, Lofland and Stark built their model on empirical observations. Moreover, it has been operationalized and tested many times, including studies that use control groups.

While the literature review shows that there are a number of conversion models to choose from, Lofland and Stark’s model seems better suited than the other models for a number of reasons. First, Lofland and Stark’s model is more developed than Rambo’s because it has been around longer and has been more rigorously tested with a control group.\textsuperscript{420} Second, the ‘World Saver’ model is conceptually a good fit for studying jihadi groups. As Greil and Rudy argue:

\begin{quote}
Lofland and Stark’s original process model was based on observations of a group which was regarded as deviant by society and which demanded of new members a radical change in social roles. Those studies which have found the Lofland and Stark model most adequate have been those which have addressed themselves to movements which share these features...where it has not proven to be an adequate description, this may not be because the model is a bad one but because the organizational context is different from which Lofland and Stark observed.
\end{quote}

Similar to the unification Church which Lofland and Stark studied, jihadism has been viewed as more deviant than perhaps any other recent religious movement. Joining the jihadi movement also requires a discontinuation of social roles. Becoming involved in violent extremism often requires breaking off contacts with non-jihadi friends and family and operating clandestinely.\textsuperscript{421} More specifically, jihadism’s doctrine of takfiris and Al-wala' wa-l-baraa encourages cutting ties with, hating, or even killing those who are not

\textsuperscript{418} Change Institute, *Studies into violent radicalisation*; Wiktorowicz, *Islam Rising*.
\textsuperscript{420} Gooren, “Reassessing conventional approaches to conversion,” 345.
jihadists.\textsuperscript{422} In this regard, jihadism shares many of the traits of the Unification Church, albeit in the most extreme sense.

Finally, testing the ‘World Saver’ model on radicalisation answers an outstanding question in the field of radicalisation studies. Both Borum and Meeus have argued that the Lofland and Stark model should be tested on radicalisation. Using the ‘World Saver’ model to study radicalisation will make significant theoretical contribution to the literature.\textsuperscript{423}

Specifically, this thesis employs Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation of Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model. While many scholars have operationalised the ‘World Saver’ model, David Zehnde argues, Kox, Meeus, and Hart offer one of the most rigorous tests of ‘World Saver’.\textsuperscript{424} Primarily, this is because the three authors designed their study to fix many of the conceptual and methodological shortcoming of previous studies. For example, Kox, Meeus, and Hart measure change in their participants and differentiate between conversion and alternation. Moreover, the authors used a validated survey instrument and a matched control group to their test, where others have not.\textsuperscript{425}

This thesis builds on Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s research by employing an adapted version of their survey instrument on a sample of jihadists and a control sample of Muslims living in the US general population.

\textsuperscript{425} Kox, Meeus, and t’Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 229, 238.
CHAPTER 3: OPERATIONALIZING THE THEORY

Introduction
As the literature review in the previous chapter illustrates, Lofland and Stark’s religious conversion theory is well suited to explain the processes of jihadist radicalisation. Not only does their ‘World Saver’ model describe the same affective processes, mechanisms, and outcomes as many radicalisation process models but, unlike radicalisation models, ‘World Saver’ has been rigorously tested and validated. Since the two scholars published their model in 1965, dozens of other researchers have tested it. However, the way researchers have operationalised the model varies considerably. While some studies stayed very close to Lofland and Stark’s original descriptions of variables, others have taken enormous creative liberties when developing measures.

The wide variety of ways in which researchers have operationalised the model leads us to the obvious question: which ‘World Saver’ test should we apply to study jihadist radicalisation? This chapter answers that question by analysing the previous tests of the model and identifying the most rigorous.

This analysis proceeds in four parts. First, this chapter outlines in detail Lofland and Stark’s model. Next, it examines how researchers have operationalised and tested it. Through this process it becomes evident that many researchers who have tested ‘World Saver’ have inadequately operationalised the model in their studies, leading to mixed results. Third, this chapter explains that Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation, stands out as the most rigorous test of the ‘World Saver’ model to date. The group of researchers identified the failures of previous tests and operationalised the model with a control group and validated measures to develop a predictive test of religious conversion. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing what changes are required to Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation to make it relevant for studying jihadist radicalisation.\textsuperscript{426}

Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ Model

\textsuperscript{426} Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model.”
Lofland and Stark developed ‘World Saver’ to explain the recruitment and conversion into Divine Precepts (DP), a group the authors later revealed as the Unification Church or the ‘Moonies’. The Unification Church came to the United States from Korea in 1959, where the movement already had over 5,000 followers. Their stated mission was “‘restoration of the world’ to the conditions of the Garden of Eden by 1967”. The Unification Church required that members ‘devote their lives to spreading “God’s New Revelation” and preparing for the new age of theocracy’, by living communally, giving their money and time to worship, and recruiting new members. By the time Lofland and Stark published their 1965 study, the movement had already attracted over 150 new members in the US and many Americans were beginning to view the Unification Church as a deviant cult.

**Value-added Model**

During two years of observations, Lofland and Stark noticed that some of the people who engaged with the Unification Church converted, while others lost interest and left. The two researchers concluded that converting to the Unification Church was the result of a value-added process of accumulating conditions and situations that funneled prospective converts closer to joining. This funnel, ‘systematically reduces the number of persons who can be considered available for recruitment, and also increasingly specifies who is available’.

Those who experienced the prescribed conditions and situations moved toward conversion; those who did not, moved away. This process consists of seven factors that are divided into predisposing conditions, which are the result of socialisation prior to contact with the Unification Church and situational contingencies that result from socialising with the movement.

**Tension**

Tension is a predisposing condition that describes frustration from deprivation. It is ‘best characterised as some imaginary, ideal state of affairs and the circumstances in

---

428 Ibid., 863.
429 Ibid., 863.
430 Ibid., 863.
431 Ibid., 864.
which these people saw themselves caught up’. Failed material and spiritual ambitions; unexplained experiences, like hallucinations or divine encounters; relational problems; sexual frustration; concealed homosexuality; and social anxiety or physical insecurities are all forms of tension, which Lofland and Stark described.

While prior tension was necessary for conversion, Lofland and Stark did not believe that it was sufficient for conversion to the Unification Church because these frustrations did not stand in stark contrast to the problems the general population experience regularly. The difference, if any, they concluded, might be that the pre-converts reported experiencing tensions acutely over long periods.

**Religious Problem-Solving Perspective**

While tension gives individuals a reason to act on their frustrations and improve their situation, there are various avenues to deal with problems in one’s life. The type of coping mechanisms that people choose to deal with problems depends on their problem-solving perspective. This frame of reference explains the causes of life’s difficulties and prescribes how one should resolve them. Only people who have a religious problem-solving perspective will take the next step toward joining a new religious movement.

In modern times, most people view their problems from a secular perspective and likewise seek temporal solutions. Social or political activism is one avenue by which people can cope with racism, discrimination, or oppression. People with personal afflictions may turn to psychologists and psychiatrists, who can offer counselling or medicine. Family, friends, and support groups can also comfort those suffering grief or battling addiction. Others may turn to self-help books for guidance, or do nothing at all. Problem-directed approaches, such as divorce, job change, or putting the problem out of mind with distractions or substance abuse are the most common secular coping mechanisms.

---

432 Ibid., 864.
433 Ibid., 864-865.
434 Ibid., 867.
435 Ibid., 867.
436 Ibid., 868.
The people who joined the Unification Church perceived their problems as spiritual. While many Unification Church converts did not believe that their prior religions traditions could sufficiently explain their predicaments, they ‘still had a general propensity to impose religious meaning on events’.437 It is not to say that these individuals were necessarily religiously practicing. Many were agnostic or nominal believers with no apparent dogma. Nevertheless, prior socialisation led them to believe that religion was the cause and solution to their problems.438

**Religious Seeking**

Where individuals’ prior religious traditions are not sufficient for resolving tension, Lofland and Stark argue that people with only a religious problem-solving perspective will seek religious solutions elsewhere. Religious seeking may take a number of forms. Some people may ‘church hop’. Others may explore cults, mysticism, or just vague notions of spirituality. A few may move between the traditional and the occult. Regardless of their path, religious seekers are looking for a new spiritual paradigm that can explain their situation.439

The two authors did not find that religious seekers’ prior ideology must be congruent with the Unification Church’s. Though the public saw the Unification Church as a deviant, fundamentalist movement, converts did not usually come from fundamentalist backgrounds. Rather, they had a variety of religious views and were open to new ideas. The only noticeable ideological predisposition amongst Unification Church converts was that most had a penchant for the teleological. Therefore, Unification Church’s claim to offer members the purpose of life was probably quite attractive to them.440

**Turning Point**

Exploring new religious solutions does not mean that one will be willing and able to act on them. A person must be structurally available to move in a new direction. Lofland and Stark found that this availability was the result of a turning point, ‘in

---

437 Ibid., 868.
438 Ibid., 868.
439 Ibid., 868.
440 Ibid., 869.
which old obligations and lines of action were diminished and new involvements became desirable and possible’ just prior to, or concurrently with contact with the Unification Church.441

There was no archetypal turning point amongst Unification Church coverts. What is most important is that the turning point experience ‘increase[s] [a] pre-converts awareness of and desire to take some action about his problems, at the same time giving him a new opportunity to do so’.442 One Unification Church member had just recovered from a long bout of illness. Another had just ended a failed business venture and was now unemployed. Others had recently divorced or failed out of university. In each case, the individual needed a fresh start and was free from prior obligations, which may have hindered his or her ability to join the Unification Church in the past.443

**Cult-Affective Bonds**

While a person may be searching for a new religious paradigm and may be structurally free to make a religious change, the seeker still needs a mechanism that can lead him or her toward one particular system of beliefs. This transition usually requires that ‘an affective bond must develop, if one does not already exist’, with someone in the movement who can expose the seeker to the Unification Church.444 Where these bonds are strong enough, the seeker may begin to engage with the movement. 445

Most of the people who joined the Unification Church already had pre-existing relationships with another person in the movement. In other cases, seekers formed bonds with members soon after initial contact. ‘Bonds that were unsupported by previous friendships with a new convert often took the form of a sense of instant and powerful rapport with a believer’.446 Such strong affection sometimes emerged from sexual infatuation. Whichever the case, these social bonds were important for creating a ‘positive emotional interpersonal response’ to the Unification Church

441 Ibid., 870.
442 Ibid., 870.
443 Ibid., 870.
444 Ibid., 871.
445 Ibid., 871.
446 Ibid., 871.
message and the group. The recommendation from a friend gave the Unification Church instant credibility. In fact, in many cases religious seekers did not intellectually buy into the movement’s message, but converted because they had an affective social bond to a current member. Thus, the decision to join was more about ‘coming to accept the opinions of one’s friends’, than intellectual or ideological congruence with the movement.

**Extra-cult Affective Bonds**

Not all individuals who develop affective bonds with Unification Church members joined the movement. One barrier to joining the Unification Church was having several, strong extra-cult affective bonds. Just like cult-affective bonds, these relationships can be with friends, family, or other associates, except that these individuals have no affiliation with the movement. Such attachments act as a social and ideological countervailence that convinces the religious seeker that the status quo or some other religious interpretation is preferable to the Unification Church.

To affect conversion, religious seekers needed to have weak or distant relationships with non-Unification Church members or neutralise them. Most people who joined the Unification Church were already ‘social atoms’, who had recently migrated and had few or weak social relationships in their new location. If the religious seeker had positive attachments, geographic distance, or strained relationships, it reduced their influence on the seeker. Others just chose not to speak of their conversion plans with non-Unification Church members. Where religious seekers had acquaintances, those connections were neither intimate enough to know about the conversion, nor did the acquaintance feel entitled to intervene. In other cases, the extra-cult attachments ‘were to other religious seekers who… encouraged continued investigation or entertainment of the [Unification Church], rather than exercising a countervailing force’. Seekers who met all of the previous conditions and neutralised the influence of extra-cult attachments, often verbally converted to the Unification Church. However, if a seeker had an enduring “emotional attachment to

---

447 Ibid., 871.
448 Ibid., 871.
449 Ibid., 872-873.
450 Ibid., 872.
451 Ibid., 872.
an outsider who was physically present” during initial engagement with the Unification Church, he or she would not join the movement.452

**Intensive Interaction**

Not every individual who joins the Unification Church becomes a total convert who is willing to become a ‘deployable agent’ on behalf of the movement.453 Lofland and Stark argue that moving from verbal commitment to realigning one’s identity with the movement requires intensive socialisation with other members. Once a seeker decides to join the Unification Church he or she begins a ‘concrete daily and even hourly’ regimen of physical interaction with the Unification Church members designed to ‘reinforce and elaborate’ on the Unification Church’s belief systems.454

Intensive interaction was extremely effective at influencing total conversion. Therefore, ‘[Unification Church] members gave highest priority to attempts to persuade verbal converts (even the merely interested) to move into the cult’s communal dwellings’.455 In communal living, members could give verbal converts constant exposure to the Unification Church’s beliefs and values. In this close proximity, when a new member had doubts about the Unification Church, committed members were there to instantly reassure the convert of the veracity of his or her beliefs, effectively bringing a convert’s identity in line with the Unification Church’s.456

**Tests of the ‘World Saver’ Model**

Since Lofland and Stark published ‘World Saver’ in 1965, dozens of researchers have tested the model. The vast majority of these studies come from the 1970s, following the counterculture movement in America—a time when experimentation with new ideas, philosophies, and unconventional spiritualties was in vogue. As a result, most of the studies test the model on converts to obscure new religious movements such as the Unification Church, the Jesus movement, and Heaven’s Gate

452 Ibid., 873.
453 Ibid., 864.
454 Ibid., 873.
455 Ibid., 873.
456 Ibid., 874.
(known at the time as the UFO cult). A few explore conversion to emerging sects, like Pentecostalism and Mormonism.\textsuperscript{457}

How closely researchers followed Lofland and Stark’s model varied greatly. Many of the studies conducted full tests of the model’s seven conditions and situations. However, about half of the studies only conducted partial tests of the model. This thesis disregards studies that consider two or less of the conditions and situations, as they are not a useful assessment of the model. The way researchers operationalised the model also varied considerably. While, some studies stayed very close to the original descriptions of variables, others took enormous liberties when developing measures.\textsuperscript{458}

The wide variety in the manner in which researchers have applied ‘World Saver’ means that the results have been mixed. A number of studies confirmed all of the model’s components as necessary and sufficient for conversion. These studies tended to be the ones that stuck closest to Lofland and Stark’s description of the conversion process. A few completely rejected “World Saver”. However, the vast majority of researchers who tested the model found evidence to support most, but not all of the conditions and situations as causal mechanisms for religious conversion.\textsuperscript{459}

The following section explores some of the ‘World Saver’ tests\textsuperscript{460} with three questions in mind: first, how have researchers operationalised the model? Second, what evidences have these studies found to support or reject the model? Third, what can we say about the validity of these findings vis-à-vis the researchers’ operationalisation of the conditions and situations and the measures used to test them.

\textit{Tension}


\textsuperscript{458} Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 230.

\textsuperscript{459} Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 230; Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 313.

\textsuperscript{460} I chose the empirical tests of ‘World Saver’ “from reviews by Greil and Rudy and Kox, Meeus, and Hart. Additionally, I searched journal indexes and google scholar for ‘World Saver’ tests published after 1991.
Researchers have operationalised tension in various ways. Some argue that tension is frustration or deprivation stemming from the real or perceived gap between the ideal and actual state of one's life. These researchers tested for feelings of emptiness, unfulfilled purpose, meaninglessness, and lack of direction. They sometimes connected these feelings to drug and alcohol abuse or personal insecurities. 461 Others expanded tension to include structural strains from prior traditional religious experiences. For instance, Baer and Harrison explored participants’ ethical, social, economic, and political frustrations with the culture and policies of the Mormon and Roman Catholic Churches.462

Most studies find that individuals experience tension prior to their religious conversions. Some of the studies find substantial levels of tension. For instance, Baer found that over 91 per cent of the converts to the Aaronic Order experienced a state of moral dissatisfaction with their former religion.463 Likewise, Max Heirich found that 83 per cent of the university students in his study were under a great deal of stress prior to converting to Catholic Pentecostalism. A further 50 per cent recently experienced a major ‘role shift’.464 In other studies, the proportion of participants exhibiting tension was not as high, but was nonetheless a majority.465

Despite these findings, some researchers rejected tension as a necessary condition for religious conversion on empirical grounds. A few of the studies found no significant evidence of tension. As Austin explained, without ‘somewhat more generous interpretations’ of the condition, he could only find one convert participant who met the criteria for tension.466 Other studies could not find a causal link

466 Austin, “Empirical adequacy of Lofland's conversion model,” 284.
between tension and conversion. Seggar and Kunz found problems that might be
construed as tension, but ‘fewer than 60% had those problems immediately
preceding conversion, suggesting no link’.\footnote{Seggar and Kunz, “Conversion: evaluation of a step-like process,” 181.}
Heirich rejected tension because it was
equally observable in his control group.\footnote{Heirich, “Change of heart,” 664.}

Some researchers also expressed hesitations about the conceptual nature of tension. Balch and Taylor argued that considering feelings of meaninglessness as a causal condition for conversion is tautological because psychic deprivation is self-generated by those looking for meaning to life. The more people look for meaning in life, the more questions they have about life, and the more meaninglessness they feel.\footnote{Robert W Balch and David Taylor, “Seekers and Saucers The Role of the Cultic Milieu in Joining a UFO Cult,” \textit{American Behavioral Scientist} 20, no. 6 (1977): 839-860, 854.} Snow and Phillips also questioned the conceptual soundness of tension, explaining conversion involves a redefinition of life before and after conversion. Therefore, researchers who find evidence of tension when retrospectively questioning a convert are only recording the biographical reconstruction of the convert’s life.\footnote{Snow and Phillips, “Lofland-Stark Conversion Model,” 435.}

However, empirical concerns about tension may be unwarranted. Stark and Bainbridge argue that the presence of tension in converts may be the result of how deviant society views the religious group in question. They contend that ‘deprivations will be of greater significance in the recruitment process to the extent that society… is hostile towards deviant religious groups thus making it costly to join one’.\footnote{Stark and Bainbridge, “Networks of faith,” 1382.} This hypothesis may explain why studies of ‘born again’ Christians and Mormons (i.e. not perceived as being particularly deviant) did not find evidence of tension.\footnote{Seggar and Kunz, “Conversion: evaluation of a step-like process”; Austin, “Empirical adequacy of Lofland's conversion model”.

The problem of tension being the result of biographical reconstruction can be overcome as well. For example, collecting data from more objective third-party sources, such as friends or family of the convert or the media (if the convert is high}
profile), and comparing that data to control group of non-converts would reveal if feelings of tension preceding conversion were real or retrospectively constructed.

**Religious Problem-Solving Perspective**

Researchers operationalised the religious problem-solving perspective condition in two ways. Following Lofland and Stark’s approach, some looked for signs that converts were prone to seeing spiritual forces, rather than secular matters, as the source and solution of their problems. For instance, Richardson, White, and Simonds asked participants if they had tried psychiatric or political avenues to alleviate their troubles or if they prayed for help. Other researchers tried to determine if converts had prior socialisation that would ideologically predispose them to the new movement. For example, both Heirich and Harrison measured Mass attendance and prior commitment to the Catholic Church in converts to the Catholic Pentecostal movement. Similarly, Balch and Taylor and Lynch explored the possibility that converts had pre-existing interests in mysticism and the occult. Lynch believed that because many of his participants were already interested in cosmology and tarot cards, they were already latent occultists before joining the Church of the Sun. Balch and Taylor explained that their informants were already part of a ‘cultic milieu’ that was common in Southern California at the time. These earlier interests in the occult predisposed them to later joining the UFO cult.

By more broadly operationalising the religious problem-solving condition to include ideological predisposition, Greil and Rudy found that all but one of the studies in their systematic review of ‘World Saver’ tests showed evidence of prior religious problem-solving perspective. Nonetheless, some of the studies could not agree that there was a causal link between conversion and prior religious problem-solving perspective. Snow and Phillips argued again that one’s perception of prior-religious perspective is tainted by the biographical reconstruction that occurs in conversion.

---

477 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 313.
Others argued that the idea that ‘people join a religious movement whose ideology makes sense to them’ is not a surprising or significant finding.\textsuperscript{478} Moreover, claiming that ideological congruence is necessary to convert to religions that are similar (e.g. Roman Catholic to Catholic Pentecostalism) is tautological.\textsuperscript{479}

The fact that several studies rejected prior religious problem-solving perspective as a necessary condition for conversion does not preclude us from considering it as part of the conversion process. Many of these studies did not find compelling evidence of this condition because they operationalised it poorly. Lofland and Stark were clear that ideological congruence between old and new belief systems was not a necessary condition of conversion in their model. Potential converts just had to be open to new ideas.\textsuperscript{480} Thus, it is not surprising that studies which expected to find ideological pre-disposition did not find it.

Furthermore, Snow and Phillips’ contention that evidence of prior perspectives is tainted by retrospection is due to their failure to develop measures that can accurately capture this condition. The model hypothesises that converts will reject psychiatric and political solutions in favour of spiritual ones.\textsuperscript{481} These concepts can be measured objectively by asking participants about past psychiatric or psychological counselling, political activism, and their propensity to pray for resolution.

\textit{Religious Seeking}

Most studies measured religious seeking by looking for evidence that converts had actively searched for new belief systems. In some cases, “church hopping” was seen as an indicator of active searching.\textsuperscript{482} Harrison asked Catholic Pentecostal converts if they had spent time attending meetings, workshops, prayer groups, and informal social events.

\textsuperscript{478} Ibid., 314.
\textsuperscript{479} Ibid., 314.
\textsuperscript{480} Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 869.
\textsuperscript{481} Ibid., 867-868.
dinners to learn about the movement.\textsuperscript{483} Others explored involvement in the “occult milieu”.\textsuperscript{484} Snow and Phillips just asked participants whether or not they self-identified as religious seekers.\textsuperscript{485}

Empirical results were mixed. Roughly half of the studies surveyed found evidence of religious seeking.\textsuperscript{486} Harrison found that 70 per cent of his joiners were seeking a religious group to resolve loneliness.\textsuperscript{487} Likewise, in Lynch’s study ‘nearly 60% of those formally interviewed … gave inward or spiritual development as a reason for participating in the Church of the Sun’.\textsuperscript{488} One particular divergence from the original model was the idea that seekers are ‘floundering about among religions’.\textsuperscript{489} Blach and Taylor rejected this view, arguing that we should replace that image with one of a person ‘who is socially oriented in the quest for personal growth’.\textsuperscript{490} In many cases, seeking was characterised by curiosity rather than desperation.\textsuperscript{491}

However, there were a few studies that did not link religious seeking to conversion. Snow and Phillips and Seggar and Kunz, just did not find the empirical evidence to substantiate the claims that religious seeking is integral to joining a new religious movement.\textsuperscript{492} The latter found that missionaries led potential converts to meetings, rather than active seeking.\textsuperscript{493} Moreover, Snow and Phillips once again dismissed religious seeking as a rationalisation coloured by converts’ reformed perceptions of the world.\textsuperscript{494}

The lack of empirical and conceptual support for religious seeking among some scholars might be attributed to three factors. First, as Greil and Rudy explain, ‘The majority of the groups in which no pattern of seekership was found are those in which the process of change found within the groups is better described as

\textsuperscript{483} Harrison, “Preparation for Life in the Spirit,” 400.
\textsuperscript{484} Balch and Taylor, “Seekers and Saucers,” 848; Lynch, “Toward a theory of conversion,” 896.
\textsuperscript{486} Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 313.
\textsuperscript{487} Harrison, “Sources of recruitment to Catholic Pentecostalism,” 56.
\textsuperscript{488} Lynch, “Toward a theory of conversion,” 896.
\textsuperscript{489} Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 869.
\textsuperscript{490} Ibid., 851.
\textsuperscript{491} Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,”
alternation than conversion’. In other words, these researchers did not find evidence for a factor in conversion because there was no conversion. Second, by only measuring for self-designation as a seeker, Snow and Phillips set themselves up to claim that their evidence was tainted by retrospection. Lofland and Stark suggested that there were specific actions seekers would take (e.g. church hoping, attending meetings, and reading) that can be objectively measured as seeking. Finally, Greil and Rudy suggest that ‘A pattern of seekership seems more likely to precede conversion when the group involved advocates a communal lifestyle, or when the group involved is stigmatised by the community at large and when the conversion involves a radical discontinuity of social roles’. As these groups are not as likely to operate in the open, people who want to join must seek them out. The groups that did not show evidence for seekership were not communal or stigmatised.

**Turning Point**

The operational definitions of turning point were extremely inconsistent throughout the various studies. Lofland and Stark imagined this condition to mean structural availability for involvement in a new religious movement. Harrison kept with the spirit of the original definition by measuring participants competing commitments (e.g. school, family, and romantic relationships) as an indicator of availability for involvement in the Pentecostal Movement. However, his measures are a lot narrower than those in the original model. Snow and Philips and Lynch attempted to broaden the concept to include cognitive availability. For instance, Lynch explains that respondents regarded reading the foundational text of the Church of the Sun as being a major turning point in their lives that opened their mind to the movement. Similarly, Snow and Phillips argued that a turning point may be indicated ‘by some illuminating insight or heightened or renewed by faith…[that] comes after contact with the movement and exposure to its world view’.

---

495 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 315.
498 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 315.
500 Lofland and Stark,”World Savers,” 870.
501 Harrison, “Sources of recruitment to Catholic Pentecostalism,” 58.
Despite these inconsistencies, there was a fair amount of empirical support for turning point’s role in the conversion process. As Greil and Rudy report, ‘Most of the individuals described in the case studies we examined report that contact with the group with which they affiliated came at a turning point in their lives’.\textsuperscript{504} Harrison’s data showed that among student participants, the higher their class year and more committed to studies they became, the less favourable they became to joining the Catholic Pentecostal movement on campus. For instance, while ‘80 per cent of freshman had a favourable initial reaction to the movement’, only 53 per cent of seniors and 39 per cent of graduate students were interested in joining.\textsuperscript{505}

However, the turning point condition also has detractors. Not surprisingly, Snow and Phillips once again dismissed turning points as being the result of subjectivity. First, they contend that the ‘concept is ambiguous. Whether a particular situation or point in one’s life constitutes a turning point is not a given, but is largely a matter of definition and attitude’.\textsuperscript{506} Next, they returned to the argument that the experience is the product of retrospective reporting. Finally, they contend that their respondents rarely defined turning points as objective events, but rather subjectively as ‘the point at which members come to align themselves with the movement emotionally, cognitively, and morally—seeing themselves as one with the group’.\textsuperscript{507}

Snow and Phillips’s contentions seem to stem from a fundamental misreading of Lofland and Stark’s definition of turning point. With no ambiguity, the original authors meant this situational factor to be an objective point were one ‘line of action was complete’ and where there where new ‘possibilit[i es]’ and ‘opportunit[i es]’ to ‘do something new’ become available.\textsuperscript{508} Lofland and Stark posit: loss of a career, moving houses, and ending or dropping out of school as possible turning points. These points do not suggest a subjective intellectual awakening, but rather events that can be objectively measured to overcome the problem of retrospective rationalisations.\textsuperscript{509}

\textsuperscript{504} Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 315.
\textsuperscript{505} Harrison, “Sources of recruitment to Catholic Pentecostalism,” 59.
\textsuperscript{507} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{508} Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 870.
\textsuperscript{509} Ibid., 870.
**Cult Affective Bonds**

Following Lofland and Stark, most researchers operationalised cult affective bonds by measuring whether friends or family were already in a group of recruited converts, or if their conversion was the result of missionary proselytisation. Measuring these bonds often meant asking members who introduced them to the movement and counting pre-existing relationships in the group.\(^{510}\) For those with no pre-existing bonds, researchers asked people to explain their initial emotional reactions toward members of the group.\(^{511}\)

Most of the studies concluded that cult affective bonds were an influential factor in joining a new religious group. As the authors of one study put it, ‘None of the hypothetical precipitants of conversion are regarded as more important than the development of a positive, interpersonal tie between the prospect and one or more movement members’.\(^{512}\) In most cases, affective bonds within the movements were pre-existing. Moreover, pre-existing attachments were usually a conduit for recruitment. In fact, in some of the groups, pre-existing relationships accounted for the recruitment of nearly every member. For instance, Inaba found that ‘affective bonds facilitated conversion’ in more than 96 per cent of the Jesus Army.\(^{513}\) Snow and Phillips could only identify two members of Nichiren Shoshu that reported being recruited by strangers.\(^{514}\)

Researchers found that pre-existing social ties to religious groups are so influential in recruitment because seekers trust those attachments to allay their concerns about joining. As Heirich finds, ‘After encountering the Pentecostals about 1/3 of the seekers turned to persons they trusted for reactions...40 % of the friends and advisers contacted were themselves Pentecostals’, who overwhelmingly gave them positive feedback about the movement.\(^{515}\) This biased advice from in-group

---


\(^{513}\) Inaba, “Conversion to New Religious Movements,” no page number.


\(^{515}\) Heirich, “Change of heart,” 667.
attachments ideologically encapsulates seekers from making informed decisions about joining. Harrison showed that in some cases trust in biased information from friends and family is so strong that it can overcome intellectual hesitations about the group or its ideology. Speaking of his friend in the group, one seeker explained, ‘first I was sceptical…but I’ve known this kid all his life and I figured well…and I believed him’. While such stories were common among the studies, Stark and Bainbridge showed that this phenomenon is more than anecdotal. By analysing Mormon conversion records, they found that Mormon missionaries were only successful 0.1 per cent of the time when trying to recruit strangers. Yet, when friends or relatives initiated recruitment, the success rate rose to 50 per cent.

In a few cases, converts did not have pre-existing relationships in the groups that they joined. However, those individuals stayed with the group because they developed an immediate bond with one or more member shortly after coming into contact with the group. Often these people reported feeling at home or were drawn to the kindness and warmth of the other members. Others reported infatuation with the leader. In a survey of the Ananda movement, Norquist ‘asked what was the single most important factor keeping them in Ananda, 61 % chose “fellowship with other devotees”, while an additional 25 % chose their relationship with [the leader]’.

**Extra-cult Affective Bonds**

The operational definition of extra-cult affective bonds remained consistent with Lofland and Stark’s description of the condition in most studies. Most researchers tried to understand two points in the social lives of converts. First, were they social isolates before joining the movement? Second, did they sever their extra-movement bonds during their conversion? To measure these points, researchers often asked participants how many affective ties they had before joining a movement and if those ties remained after conversion.

---

516 Harrison, “Sources of recruitment to Catholic Pentecostalism,” 58.
517 Stark and Bainbridge, “Networks of faith,” 1386.
519 Stark and Bainbridge, “Networks of faith,” 1384.
The findings were mixed. For those who did find that converts had few extra-movement ties, the proportion was high. For instance out-group social ties became weaker in 98 per cent of The Jesus Army converts.\textsuperscript{522} Ninety-eight per cent of Richardson, White, and Simond’s sample also reported that they saw friends from outside the group less often since joining.\textsuperscript{523} These weaker ties also seemed to increase the influence of the group. For example, 92 per cent of ‘socially encapsulated’ recruits in Heirich’s study followed through with conversion compared to only 70 per cent of the recruits who had not severed outside ties.\textsuperscript{524}

In one interesting case, individuals had very strong supportive extra-cult bonds, but still joined the UFO cult (Heaven’s Gate). However, Balch and Taylor found that these individuals lived in a ‘seekers milieu’ where parents and friends encouraged individuals to go off with open minds to seek the meaning of life. Although these friends and family were not members of the UFO cult, they were fellow seekers, thus they did not serve as a social or ideological countervailing force.\textsuperscript{525}

However, there was also evidence against the notion that weak countervailing social ties make people more available for joining a new religious group. Far from neutralising out-group ties, Snow and Phillips found that joining Nichiren Shoshu improved converts’ relations with extra-movement attachments.\textsuperscript{526} Likewise, Richardson, White, and Simonds found that members of the Jesus Movement became closer with their parents after joining. Moreover, the parents of Jesus Movement members tended to approve more of their children’s lifestyles after converting to the movement.\textsuperscript{527}

Snow and Phillips argue that there may be a few reasons that severing extra-cult bonds is important for conversion to some groups but not others. First, some groups are more evangelical than others. Therefore, every family member and friend

\textsuperscript{522} Inaba, “Conversion to New Religious Movements,” no page number.
\textsuperscript{523} Richardson, et al., “Conversion to fundamentalism,” 51.
\textsuperscript{524} Heirich, “Change of heart”.
\textsuperscript{525} Balch and Taylor, “Seekers and Saucers,” 850-851.
\textsuperscript{526} Snow and Phillips, “Lofland-Stark Conversion Model,” 441.
\textsuperscript{527} Richardson, et al., “Conversion to fundamentalism,” 51.
outside of the group is a target of proselytisation. In these groups, converts will maintain close relations with out-group members. Second, they argue that communal groups are more socially ‘greedy’. Extra-movement ties are barriers to breaking away and living communally. Not only is it impossible to tend to those relationships from isolation, but also friends and family attachments are likely to contest seekers’ plans to move into isolation and advise against joining the group. Likewise, when a group is seen as deviant or even harmful/criminal, breaking ties may be necessary to ‘neutralise the stigma frequently associated with participation’ or to cover up the group’s activities.\(^{528}\) Therefore, it may not be surprising that researchers studying evangelical, non-deviant groups like Mormons, Nicheren Shoshu, or Charismatic Christians did not find severing out-group ties necessary for conversion.

**Intensive Interaction**

The final situation in the ‘World Saver’ model offered two components to explain conversion. The first was that new members would undergo a period of intensive interaction. Secondly, that intensive socialisation transitions verbal converts to total converts who become deployable agents for the movement.\(^{529}\) Most of the studies operationalised the first component by assessing if new members were subject to frequent, regular, and intensive interaction with other committed group members. However, aside from the anecdotal, very few explored the corollary that such interaction would affirm the commitment of the individual to become an active member.

Nearly every study that tested for intensive interaction found evidence that rigorous socialisation was part of the conversion process. For example, Austin explained that members of the Christian Crusaders were required to attend regular Bible study and nightly group dinners.\(^{530}\) Lynch found that members of the Church of the Sun attended ‘symbolic social rituals’ aimed at promoting group cohesion and formation of the individual self-concepts.\(^{531}\) Snow and Phillips showed how Nichern Shoshu assigned a mentor to newly inducted members. The mentor’s job was to socialise

---

530 Austin, “Empirical adequacy of Lofland’s conversion model.”
and keep the new member focused on learning how to practice and proselytise. As the two authors wrote, ‘Members were constantly reminded, “if the link between the new member and the junior group members is cut off”, then “the new member is…likely to fall away”’. 532

While almost all of the aforementioned researchers claimed to find evidence that this social interaction had made members total converts, they offered little in the way of evidence beyond anecdotes. Many of the studies seemed to take for granted that because a new member socialised with committed members or because the group had an interaction competent in its recruitment strategy, the result was total conversion.

As the above section shows, most of the empirical testing of the ‘World Saver’ model supports the seven conditions and situations which Lofland and Stark proposed. Where there is disagreement the differences seem to stem from four significant points. First, many of the studies that rejected the model took significant liberties in operationalising the conditions and situations and subsequently constructed measures that were not valid. In most cases, constructing objective measures would have overcome conceptual criticisms that the findings were subject to converts’ retrospective interpretations of their lives. 533

Second, the characteristics of the group under consideration appeared to affect the outcome of the test. The group for which Lofland and Stark developed the model was communal and considered deviant at the time. Research suggests that groups of this nature attract people with more personal problems and weaker social networks than conventional, non-communal groups like Mormons and Pentecostals. 534 The evangelical nature of a group may also determine how it recruits and the extent of converts’ in-group-and out-group ties. 535

---

533 Snow and Phillips, “Lofland-Stark Conversion Model”.
534 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?”
Third, some of the studies captured alternation between two like religions, rather than the ““radical” reorganisation of identity, meaning, and life” seen in true conversions. Therefore, some researchers did not find evidence that certain conditions and situations were necessary for conversion because they did not observe conversion.

Finally, very few of the studies compared their results to control groups. In some of the studies, the researchers admitted that without a comparable group of non-converts they had no way to know if their findings were significant. In other cases, researchers dismissed findings out of hand, speculating how the general population might experience the conditions without actually testing them on non-converts. Adding a control group would have alleviated these concerns.

**Kox, Meeus and Hart Test of ‘World Saver’**

In 1991, a team of Dutch researchers identified the inadequacies in past studies of ‘World Saver’ and operationalised the model to rectify the problems. First, Kox, Meeus, and Hart applied the model to the Unification Church and the Pentecostal Church in the Netherlands. The former is the same group that Lofland and Stark used to develop the model, thus negating problems related to the characteristics of the group. Second, they operationally defined conversion as a ‘radical change in life perspective’ and tested for this change to avoid confusion with alternation. Third, the three researchers added a control group of non-converts to their study and conducted significance tests of their results. Finally, they constructed valid measures that could objectively capture retrospective data, thereby resolving the problem of biographical reconstruction.

Overall, Kox, Meeus, and Hart found significant support for the model, writing that, ‘The model of conversion developed by Lofland and Stark permits us to predict conversion to religious groups quite well’. In fact, based on respondent surveys, the model could predict which respondents were converts and which from the

---

536 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 308.
538 Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 231.
541 Ibid., 238.
control group with nearly 90 per cent accuracy.\textsuperscript{542} The success of their test seems to be related to how they operationalised the seven conditions and situations to create valid measures.

\textit{Tension}

Factor analysis, Kox, Meeus and Hart identified two types of tension: \textit{personal problems} and \textit{social problems}. They further categorised personal problems into two sub-types: tension stemming from personal problems relative to one’s person, such as loneliness, lack of self-confidence, or inadequate self-acceptance, and problems with one’s situation (e.g. meaninglessness, boredom, or a lack of challenge). The authors defined social problem tension as problems, which are related to unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, criminality, and lack of housing or safety etc.\textsuperscript{543}

Tension showed to be a compelling factor in conversion. In particular, tension stemming from personal problems was most important. 67 per cent of the converts experienced personal problems, compared to only 20 per cent in the control group. They found that personal problems in the convert participants ‘are due primarily to dissatisfaction with their own personality. This unhappiness seems to go hand in hand with a relatively strong fixation on the self’.\textsuperscript{544} Conversely, converts were less preoccupied by social problems than non-converts.\textsuperscript{545}

\textit{Religious problem-solving perspective}

To operationalise religious problem-solving perspective for their test, Kox, Meeus, and Hart explained to participants the various political, psychiatric, religious, or maladaptive (e.g. binge eating, alcohol, smoking, and drugs, denial, etc.) coping mechanisms that many people use to resolve problems in their lives. Next, in an open-ended question they asked participants to explain how they deal with important problems. “Religious reflection” was taken to define operationally the prior perspective of the religious problem solving’ of participants.\textsuperscript{546}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{542} Meeus, “Why do young people become Jihadists?,” 278.
\item \textsuperscript{543} Ibid., 233.
\item \textsuperscript{544} Ibid., 238.
\item \textsuperscript{545} Ibid., 234.
\item \textsuperscript{546} Ibid., 233.
\end{itemize}
Kox, Meeus, and Hart found that having previously held a religious outlook was not an important pre-condition for religious conversion. They found ‘no differences between converts and non-converts on the matter of a prior religious problem-solving perspective’. 547 The authors believed that a lack of religious experience is more important for accepting new religious beliefs because people with no prior religious perspective do not require religious de-programming before they are socialised to the new ideology. 548

**Religious Seeking**

Religious seeking is a two-dimensional phenomenon: being passively open to new ideas and actively searching for a new group or philosophy. To capture those two dimensions in their measures, the authors first asked participants in an open question if they describe themselves as a person seeking new ideas. Next, they measured the amount of actual searching participants had done by asking if they had explored literature on religious groups or had attended or participated in religious meetings, courses, or groups. A participant who met the prior religious problem-solving perspective condition, self-identified as a seeker, and provided evidence of active seeking was defined as a seeker and actively searching—two separate variables in the analysis. 549

The responses from participants’ questionnaires showed that religious seekership is an indispensable condition that pre-disposes individuals to the conversion process. Across the board, more converts showed signs of religious seeking than non-converts. Converts (54 per cent) were much more likely than members of the control group (24 per cent) to say they were looking for new ways of solving their problems. Members of the convert group (91 per cent) were also much more likely than the control group (54 per cent) to say they had taken concrete actions in pursuit of new religious ideas. 550

**Turning point**

547 Ibid., 236.
548 Ibid., 238.
549 Ibid., 233.
550 Ibid., 234.
Kox, Meeus, and Hart operationalised turning point very similar to the way that Lofland and Stark described the condition in their article. The researchers measured this variable in two ways. First, they asked participants if they had recently moved houses, changed jobs or schools, or had a relationship breakup. Next, in an open question they asked about the ‘incisive happenings immediately preceding contact with the group (life events such as death of a parent, parents divorce, running away from home)’. Taken together, these two measures indicate the amount of stability and structural availability an individual has in his or her life.

Kox, Meeus, and Hart found that turning points are closely linked with the conversion. Converts were much more likely to experience a turbulent life than control groups. Specifically, converts were more likely than control group members to have recently moved houses and have more troubling life events than non-converts. One unsuspected result was that participants from the control group changed jobs more often than converts. The authors posited that rather than indicating instability, changing jobs was a sign of social finesse.

*Cult affective bonds*

Cult affective bonds are relationships between potential joiners and group members that may be pre-existing or develop after a prospective convert makes initial contact with the group. To measure seekers’ social attachments to the religious groups, Kox, Meeus, and Hart asked participants about how they first made contact with the group and if they had prior contacts. The researchers also recorded on a frequency scale how often participants had contact with members of any of the religious groups that they were studying. Participants who had pre-existing relationships or developed intensive, high frequency relationships immediately after joining, were taken as having cult-affective bonds within the group.

Not surprisingly, having a cult-affective bond to a member of the movement was a strong indicator for conversion. 80 per cent of converts had friends in the group.

---

551 Ibid., 233.
552 Ibid., 233.
553 Ibid., 234, 237.
556 Ibid., 238.
Developing these social ties ‘is very meaningful to people who experience little support from parents and peers’, the researchers posited.\textsuperscript{557}

\textit{Extra-cult affective bonds}

Conversely, strong ties to social networks outside of the group are hindrances to conversion and need to be lacking or neutralised to consummate conversion. To measure extra-movement bonds, or lack thereof, the researchers asked participants to indicate on a likert-type scale how much of their spare time they spent with and how much material or emotional support they received from their partner, close friend, mother, brother, sister, other relatives, friends, and acquaintances. The researchers also measured the reactions of the out-group ties to converts’ involvement with the movement.\textsuperscript{558}

The findings suggest that converts have extremely weak extra-cult social networks. Specifically, converts do not have many friends or receive much emotional or material support from their peers compared to the control group. Converts are also disconnected from their parents compared to non-converts. Nearly 80 per cent of converts indicated that they had no emotional support from their parents. Conversely, only 37 per cent in the control sample reported a lack of parental emotional support.\textsuperscript{559}

\textit{Intensive interaction}

Intensive interaction has two components. First, converts will go through a period of intensive interaction to socialise them to the movement. To measure this socialisation, Kox, Meeus, and Hart had converts indicate on a likert-type scale how often they interact with other members of the group. The more the interaction, the more likely that group members socialised the convert to their tenets. Secondly, intensive interaction will cause a radical identity change, transitioning verbal adherents to total converts. This change was measured on two points. First, ‘via a scale of “change of general ideas” [they] established whether or not converts had altered their ideas regarding school, work, and relationships’.\textsuperscript{560} Next, they used the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{557} Ibid., 238.
\item \textsuperscript{558} Ibid., 234.
\item \textsuperscript{559} Ibid., 234.
\item \textsuperscript{560} Ibid., 234.
\end{itemize}
same role-relation method that they used to measure extra-cult affective bonds to see if relationships with external social ties diminished following socialisation.\footnote{Ibid., 234.}

As Lofland and Stark predicted, socialisation changed converts general frames of reference. 67 per cent of converts had frequent interaction with group members. As a result, ‘converts (78 per cent) ideas regarding school, work, and other people have changed far more than those of non-converts (17 per cent)’.\footnote{Ibid., 234.} Furthermore, 60 per cent of converts experienced reduced contacts with old social networks compared to only 34 per cent of non-converts.\footnote{Ibid., 235.}

**Testing ‘World Saver’ on the Jihadist Movement**

Although Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s study offers one of the most rigorous tests of the Lofland and Stark model, replicating it on the jihadist movement first requires consideration of the historical, religious, and social-cultural contexts in which the jihadist movement operates and how that setting differs from other contexts in which this model has been applied in the past. One contextual difference is that Kox, Meeus, and Hart studied Christian groups. This thesis tests ‘World Saver’ on Muslims. These groups have different beliefs and cultural traditions that affect their adherents’ perspectives and worldviews. Second, Kox, Meeus, and Hart tested the model in 1991. This thesis considers jihadist cases from 2001 to 2011. Technology has changed significantly since then, affecting the way people socialise. Society has also changed during this period. The West has seen an influx of immigrants from the Muslim World. Meanwhile, geopolitical events have increased tension between Muslims and Westerners. These tensions leave many young Muslims unsure of their place in Western society. While such contextual differences are relatively small, they do necessitate slight modifications to Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s test when applying it to the post-9/11 jihadist movement.

Without doubt, Muslims living in the US live with all of the same problems that Kox, Meeus, and Hart describe in their test. However, the social-cultural and
religious contexts of post-9/11 America mean that Muslims in America experience a few additional sources of tension for which the authors did not account.

For instance, second and subsequent generations of Muslims and Muslim converts living in the West may struggle to reconcile the generational and cultural gap with foreign-born Muslim immigrants.\textsuperscript{564} The majority of Muslims living in America are first-generation immigrants.\textsuperscript{565} As in most immigrant communities, maintaining traditions and cultural practices is an important part of life. Often these traditions are carried over into immigrant versions of Islam, leaving them heavily flavoured with traditional cultural vestiges. Many imams still give sermons in their native languages and focus more on spirituality than the political and social problems facing the Western-born generations.\textsuperscript{566} As Wiktorowicz argues, Western-born Muslims who do not have these foreign language skills and who are seeking a version of Islam that speaks to their current social-political situation may find it difficult to relate to the practices of immigrant Islam. A failure to identify with traditional Islam may leave Western-born Muslims feeling alienated from their own heritage.\textsuperscript{567}

Compounding intra-cultural identity strains, Western-born Muslims may feel doubly alienated by racism and bigotry in America, and a ‘widespread perception among Muslims that they are not accepted by [Western] society’.\textsuperscript{568} These feelings of unacceptance are more than just perceptions. Survey data show that many Muslims in the US want to feel that they are Americans. However, few non-Muslim Americans believe that Muslims want to be part of American society. According to a Pew survey, more than half of American Muslims believe that other Muslims want to integrate into society. Yet, only 33 per cent of Americans believe that Muslims want to integrate. Adding to the tension, 28 per cent of Muslim American respondents to the Pew survey report being eyed with suspicion and nearly a quarter report being called offensive names as a result of their religion. This feeling of

\textsuperscript{564} Wiktorowicz, *Islam Rising*, 88.
\textsuperscript{566} Wiktorowicz, *Islam Rising*, 99.
\textsuperscript{567} Ibid., 99-100.
\textsuperscript{568} Wiktorowicz, *Islam Rising*, 88.
exclusion and discrimination may be why more than half of Muslim Americans feel that life is more difficult for them since September 11, 2001.\textsuperscript{569}

Global jihadist groups are able to fill this gap and offer a more intellectual and political version of Islam. As Olivier Roy points out, the neo-fundamentalist version of Islam that the global jihad prescribes is devoid of cultural vestiges. It seeks to return to a purist version of Islam before it was tainted by local traditions. This version of Islam advocates for a borderless global community of Muslims. Moreover, global Islam is highly political. It claims to address the concerns of young Muslims, by explaining the roots of their social and economic problems through a political perspective. The movement’s narrative connects issues like the unemployment and discrimination of young Muslims in the West to that of afflicted Muslims around the world like Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Iraq by blaming them on Western society and its crusade to destroy Islam.\textsuperscript{570}

Different religious contexts also affect the manifestation of religious problem-solving perspective in Muslim Americans. Kox, Meeus, and Hart asked participants to report if they used psychiatric, political, religious, or maladaptive coping mechanisms to deal with their tension. Their assumption that converts would choose either secular or religious coping mechanisms seems too absolutist to account for the nuance of Muslim beliefs.\textsuperscript{571} Based on those measures, it would seem that most Muslims living in America believe that there are only spiritual solutions to their problems, given that that 65 per cent of US Muslims pray daily.\textsuperscript{572}

However, religious, psychiatric, and political problem-solving perspectives are not mutually exclusive for Muslims living in the US. While Muslims pray to God for health and political redress, they also believe that politics and science are behind many of the world’s problems. For example, when asked about the causes of mental illness, a study published in \textit{The Journal of Muslim Mental Health} found that

\textsuperscript{569} Pew Research Center, “Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism,” 2, 6.
\textsuperscript{570} Roy, \textit{Globalised Islam}, 1; Wiktorowicz, \textit{Islam Rising}, 87.
\textsuperscript{571} Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 233.
‘Muslim Americans support biological and environmental factors influencing mental illness… At the same time, many Muslims may also support supernatural causes such as jinn and evil eye, and psycho-spiritual causes such as lack of obedience to God or illness as a test from God’.\textsuperscript{573} Another survey found that 69 per cent of American Muslims also prayed for resolve from mental health issues.\textsuperscript{574} Likewise, while US Muslims pray for political goals, such as ‘improving the world ‘ (59 per cent) and for the president and other world leaders (18 per cent),\textsuperscript{575} almost 90 percent of US Muslims also believe that they should be politically active.\textsuperscript{576} Such high levels of political involvement suggest that US Muslims believe activism can also resolve their problems. These contradictory views on the religious, psychiatric, and political causes and solutions for problems suggest that these perspectives overlap for US Muslims.

Historical differences also make it necessary to rethink the way we measure religious seeking. Religious seekers no doubt still visit churches, prayer groups, and meetings in search of new religious perspectives. However, technology has advanced significantly since Kox, Meeus, and Hart published their 1991 study, changing the way most people get their information about religion. Today most Americans communicate and learn about the world on the Internet. According to the World Bank, 87 per cent of Americans have access to the Internet. Not surprisingly, then, the Internet is probably the first place that people turn to when they want to learn about Islam.\textsuperscript{577}

For people seeking to learn about Islam online there is no shortage of information. One of the largest resources for learning about Islam is Islamic websites. A Google search for ‘How to convert to Islam’ returned over 11 million results.\textsuperscript{578} Many are designed to attract new followers to Islam and answer questions about the religion and becoming Muslim. One website, \url{www.whyislam.org} even offers a toll-free

\textsuperscript{575} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{577} World Bank, “Internet users (per 100 people),” 2015, \url{http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2}.
\textsuperscript{578} Google search, “How to convert to Islam,” August 24, 2015, \url{www.google.com}.

116
number for interested seekers to call or a live online chat session with a Muslim. Likewise, Islamic social media has grown exponentially in recent years. Seekers can now watch over 100,000 video lectures from Islamic clerics on YouTube, join the tens of millions of Muslims who have ‘liked’ Muslim Facebook groups, or even join Muslim-only dating and social networking sites. In fact, the Internet has become such an integral part of Muslim life that Olivier Roy argues that there is now a ‘Virtual Ummah’.

The massive presence of Islam online means that the Internet plays an important role in the way we understand conversion and radicalisation. Therefore, it is important to also account for evidence about online religious seeking when we apply the ‘World Saver’ model to understanding why Muslims join the jihadist movement. An additional item will be added to the survey that asks about internet-bound religious seeking.

Technological differences also affect the way Muslims develop affective bonds with the jihadist movement. The cult affective bonds that Kox, Meeus, and Hart measured were all real-world relationships. While movement bonds via family friends, acquaintances, and missionaries are still important for jihadist radicalisation, Marc Sageman argues that many people who join the global jihadist movement first encounter movement through virtual social networks.

Consequently, we also need to consider how individuals develop virtual affective bonds to the jihadist movement. These attachments are usually cultivated in online social media spaces where Internet users interact in chartrooms and personal chats, forums or message boards, and Facebook, etc. Though many of these individuals have never met each other in person, numerous studies show that virtual bonds can be even stronger than those in the real world. Sageman argues that these bonds are

---

581 There are hundreds of Facebook pages dedicated to Islam. Many of these pages have over 1 million “likes.” The “Islam” Facebook group, is the top group with over 9 million “likes.”
583 Roy, Globalised Islam,
584 Sageman, Leaderless, 84.
585 Sageman, Leaderless, 84.
strong for two reasons. First, the anonymity of the Internet often allows people to ‘self-disclose…which contributes to feelings of greater intimacy’. Second, the anonymity also means ‘there is very little cost associated with transaction on the Internet’. Individuals can say whatever or act however they want with little consequence. This phenomenon paradoxically makes social media a place where both love and hate flow freely.

When these social networks develop via jihadist social media, the bonds formed there can act as major conduits for jihadist recruitment. Religious seekers who initially turn to the Internet for information about Islam may end up on Salafi social media platforms where jihadists and jihadist sympathisers are often active. Although many of these websites host a variety of discussion topics from marriage to spiritual issues, many also discuss jihadism. The Dutch intelligence service AIVD, reports that some of these mainstream Salafi sites re-post jihadist propaganda from more secretive ‘core’ jihadist sites that are not indexed by search engines. Here, the casual religious seeker may meet his or her first jihadist. As relationships develop in this anonymous and low social cost environment, Internet users may begin to sympathise and engage with the jihadist movement.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that Kox, Meeus, and Hart offer the most rigorous test of Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model. While many researchers have tested the model, most have inadequately operationalised it and applied weak methodology in their studies. Many of the studies that rejected the model took significant liberties in operationalising the conditions and situations and subsequently constructed measures that were not valid. Others applied the model to inappropriate groups and captured alternation between like religions, not conversion. Moreover, very few studies used control groups, leaving researchers with no way to know if their findings were significant. Kox, Meeus, and Hart addressed all of these shortcomings when they operationalised the model and subsequently developed validated

---

586 Sageman, Leaderless, 114.
587 Ibid., 115.
588 Ibid., 115.
589 General Intelligence and Security Service, Jihadism on the Web: A breeding ground for jihad in the modern age, 8.
measures that could predictively test for religious conversion. Those valid measures offer a reliable test for this thesis to replicate on the jihadist movement.

Despite the strength of Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s measures, there are different historical, religious, and social-cultural contexts which need to be accounted for before applying their test to Muslims who join the jihadist movement. First, many Western-born Muslims face problems of alienation from traditional immigrant cultures and from the broader American society. Therefore, measuring tension requires additional indicators that can capture cultural alienation and issues racism and bigotry. Likewise, Muslims in the US appear to have nuanced perceptions about the causes and solutions of problems. Western Muslims meld Islamic beliefs with a modern understanding of science and politics to develop their problem-solving perspectives. Consequently, measuring for this condition cannot be zero-sum. A Western Muslim with a religious problem-solving perspective may also have psychiatric and political perspectives, so long as a religious perspective is the common denominator. Finally, technological advances have changed how individuals seek new ideas about religion and socialise. Accordingly, valid measures of religious seeking and cult affective bonds must ask respondents about virtual seeking and online relationships.
CHAPTER 4: EXPLORATORY TEST

Introduction
This thesis argues that Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model is well suited to explain why people radicalise to jihadism. Furthermore, chapter three contends that Kox, Meeus, and Hart offer the most rigorous operationalisation of the model. This chapter is the first attempt to test those assumptions. It is a qualitative, exploratory study that builds on Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation to determine if the ‘World Saver’ model is a validity theory of jihadist radicalisation.

This chapter represents the first phase of a two-phase mixed methods study. Phase-one presents an *a priori* exploratory test of Lofland and Stark’s model based on a sample of interviews with six Al Qaeda-linked jihadists who are incarcerated in US federal prisons. While this sample is small in absolute terms, few scholars have ever assembled more than a handful of jihadist terrorists for a study of this nature. Moreover, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), this thesis is the first scholarly study of Al Qaeda-linked prisoners held in BOP custody. Furthermore, because this is the first study to test Lofland and Stark’s model on jihadist radicalisation, it is not yet appropriate to assemble a large probability sample of jihadist participants because it is still unclear which specific research questions are relevant, which hypotheses to test, and which methods are best to test the model. Answering these questions requires a small exploratory study to determine if the model is applicable to the radicalisation and recruitment of jihadists before moving forward with a large-scale quantitative test of the theory. An exploratory study is not meant to be a final test of the model. Rather, a study of this type acts as a feasibility check to determine how a small sample of jihadists experience ‘World Saver’s’ seven conditions. Phase-one of this study will provide valuable insights about jihadist radicalisation and familiarity with how the phenomena relates to the ‘World Saver’ model, so that this relationship can be more fully investigated later in phase-two.

This chapter proceeds in three main parts. The first part outlines the research design and methodology in detail. It describes the measures, sampling and recruitment, and
explains method of analysis. Part two presents the findings. The findings are organised around the conditions of the model. All of the participants are analyzed together for each condition, rather than in independent case studies. This method places the focus on the conditions rather than the individual participants. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion which summarises the findings of phase-one and their implications.

**Methodology**

The following is an outline of the methodology for phase-one of this thesis.

**Research question**

Phase-one probes the possibility that Lofland and Stark’s model can explain jihadist radicalisation with two primary research questions:

1) How do homegrown jihadists in the United States experience the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model during radicalisation?
2) Do homegrown Muslim convert and non-convert jihadists living in the United States experience the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model differently?

**Research Design**

The nature of the above research questions guides the design of this exploratory phase of this study. Social science research is most often grounded in either inductive or deductive reasoning. ‘Inductive reasoning moves from the specific to the general. It moves from a set of particular observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all of the varied events under examination’. In this regard, inductive reasoning is most useful for building theories. Researchers start with few assumptions about the data and allow patterns to emerge. They then organise those patterns into theory, which they can later test.

---

Conversely, this study takes the deductive approach. It begins with a theory of religious change—Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model—and moves our understanding of religious change from the general to the specific, by testing the model on jihadist radicalisation. As Nicky Hayes explains, in qualitative deductive research ‘theory is used throughout: to derive research questions and predictions; to inform the data collection process; and to structure the qualitative analysis itself. As such, the approach can be used as an empirical, systematic test of a theory’. The same process guided the research design of the exploratory phase of this study. The research questions required the use of purposive participant sampling, informed the questionnaire design, and influenced the decision to use a priori thematic analysis to analyze the data.

Deductive research is most often confirmatory in nature. Confirmatory research, as Robert G. Jaeger and Tim R. Halliday explain, ‘proceeds from a series of alternative, a priori hypotheses concerning some topic of interest, followed by the development of a research design (often experimental) to test those hypotheses, the gathering of data, analyses of the data, and ending with the researcher's inductive inferences’. However, sometimes a theoretical framework does not yet have empirical backing or is not developed enough to construct reliable hypotheses. Other times, researchers may be using a theory to answer a new research question at an early stage of investigation. In these cases, ‘the author may not be attempting to achieve strong inference; the attempt is to determine what novel hypotheses might be generated from a previously unexplored…situation’. For such a scenario, exploratory research may be a more appropriate method of inquiry. Again, Jaeger and Halliday contend that ‘explicit hypotheses tested with confirmatory research usually do not spring from an intellectual void but instead are often gained through exploratory research. Thus, exploratory approaches to research can be used to generate hypotheses that later can be tested with confirmatory approaches’.

594 University of Southern California website, “research guids,” http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns
As explained, Lofland and Stark’s theory has never been tested on jihadist radicalisation before. Most prior tests have focused on individuals who joined new religious movements in the 1960s and 70s. Religious, cultural, and historical differences between those groups and jihadists mean that there are significant contextual variances that may limit our ability to construct reliable hypotheses to test in a confirmatory study. Therefore, we must first conduct an exploratory study of the ‘World Saver’ model before moving forward with formal confirmatory testing.

**Instrumentation/measures**

The primary instrument used to collect data is a questionnaire based on Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s article ‘Religious Conversion of Adolescence: Testing the Lofland and Stark Model of Religious Conversion’. I chose this questionnaire because Kox, Meeus, and Hart offer the most valid operationalisation of the model. However, during the data collection period I did not have access to the original questionnaire. I contacted the study’s first author and requested a copy of the original questionnaire so that I could replicate their study on my samples. However, Professor Kox did not respond to my request. Therefore, the questionnaire employed in this exploratory study is not the exact questionnaire that the authors used in their study. The authors describe their survey and its operationalisation, including key variables, and their measurement (i.e. nominal, ordinal, and interval) in great detail. This information is described in text as well as in a table. I replicated the questionnaire as close as possible using the information available in the article. Additional changes were made to reflect the needs of the new jihadist sample. For example, I added a question about their beliefs on jihad, their association with other jihadists, and their involvement in jihadist socialisation activities.

The questionnaire is a combination of 127 closed-answer, multiple-choice questions and 10 open-ended questions. The questionnaire has six sections (i.e. background, personal experiences, spiritual history, relationships, more on relationships, beliefs). These sections roughly correspond to the seven conditions of the ‘World Saver’

597 Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model.”
model. The background section asks participants about demographics and their status as a Muslim convert or a born Muslim.

The personal experiences section is largely meant to determine if the respondents are experiencing tension and identify their problem-solving perspective. This section has 35 multiple-choice questions that ask about spiritual, relationship, character, material, physical, psychological, emotional, and maltreatment difficulties that participants may have experienced prior to their terrorism-related arrest. For each question, the participants are asked to rate the severity and duration of their problem on a Likert-type scale and note their age range at the time of the experience. Next, a multiple-choice question asks participants to mark any number of six coping mechanisms they use to deal with problems in their lives. Following that, two open-ended questions ask participants to describe in detail the problems in their lives, and which solutions they found most effective in dealing with those problems. Finally, in an open-ended question, participants were asked to recall when they first became socially or politically active regarding issues in the Muslim community and the circumstances surrounding their activism.

The spiritual history section aims to capture participants’ religious seeking behavior. The section begins with three questions that ask participants about the importance of religion in their lives, the frequency of their prayer, and their religious services attendance. For each question, the participants are asked to rate their beliefs and practices on a Likert-type scale for two periods in their lives: five years before their terrorism-related arrest, and in the few months before that arrest. The purpose of asking these questions for two different time periods is to identify any changes that may have occurred as the result of radicalisation. I have used the five-year mark as a proxy for before and after radicalisation. While each person’s radicalisation experience is different, evidence from case studies shows that the radicalisation process typically lasts from a few months to 2-3 years. Therefore, asking about participants’ lives five years before their terrorism-related arrest should safely elicit information about the pre-radicalisation period, in most cases.598

---

choice question, participants were also asked to indicate where they had gone to seek more information about Islam. Finally, three open-ended questions asked respondents to describe the role religion has played in their lives, when they first learned about Islam, and if they had ever considered converting to other religions.

The first relationships section was designed to elicit information about the strength and quality of participants’ social networks. Seven multiple-choice questions ask participants to explain the reaction of friends and families to their religious conversion, how easy it is for them to make Muslim and non-Muslim friends, and how welcome they feel in the local Muslim community. A second set of questions asks participants to respond to Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s role-relation scale. The scale asks participants to rate their relationships with eight social attachment types (e.g. spouse, parents, friends) on a Likert-type scale. For each relationship type, participants are asked to rate the amount of free time they spend and the amount of emotional and material support they receive. Participants completed the role-relation scale twice. Once for the period of five years before their terrorism-related arrest and once for the period of a few months before the arrest. Finally, participants were asked in an open-ended question to describe the quality of their relationships with friends and family five years before their terrorism-related arrest.

The second relationships section was meant to identify participants’ personal relationships within the jihadist movement. It proved difficult to operationalise the concept of a jihadist. It was not practical to ask participants if they ever had contact with individuals from a list of dozens of jihadist organisations. Such a list could never be exhaustive. Moreover, the participants may not know to which groups their jihadist contact belong. In fact, the participants’ jihadist contacts may not be official members of groups at all. Therefore, I decided to develop an operational definition of a jihadist based on prominent academic descriptions of the jihadist ideology. However, using this method, I encountered an additional problem: the definition was too theologically technical for participants who may have little formal Islamic

education. Therefore, I decided on a definition that encompassed the theological and political aspects of *jihadism*, but was descriptive in nature. After consulting my colleague Shiraz Maher, a scholar of jihadist ideology at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR), I settled on: *An individual who believes that all Muslims are obligated to use or support violence to protect the Ummah in the name of Jihad.*

Using the above operational definition of jihadist, participants were asked in multiple-choice format to identify the person who first introduced them to jihadism (e.g. family, friend, imam), how close they were to that individual, and what portion of their friends and family were jihadists. Next, using Kox, Meeus and Hart’s role-relation method, participants were asked to rank the amount of free time and emotional support they receive from jihadists. Then, in an open-ended question, participants were asked to explain the details surrounding their first encounter with a jihadist.

The *beliefs* section was designed to measure participants’ intensive interaction with the jihadist movement and potential changes in their beliefs as a result of that interaction. In a multiple-choice question, participants were asked to identify all of the ways they had been exposed jihadism. Next, participants were asked to rate the amount of time they spent consuming or participating in eight types of jihadist socialisation on a Likert-type scale. They were then asked to explain detail in an open-ended question their exposure to jihadist information or media. Finally, participants were asked in three multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question to explain their personal definition of jihad. The multiple-choice questions about jihad were adapted from Fair, C. Christine et. al.

Ultimately, my decision to use this survey was the result of my overconfidence in a high response rate. My original intent was obtain a large sample of results and use the survey quantitatively. This miscalculation, along with the BOP’s suggestion that

---

600 Material support (the third variable in the role-relation scale) was excluded to prevent putting participants at risk of disclosing illegal behaviour.

I stick to close-choice questions greatly influenced my decision to include scaled questions. Fortunately, I decided to hedge my bets and include open-ended questions that reflected each section of the questionnaire. These choices left the phase one questionnaire with a number of strengths and weaknesses.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the questionnaire is its length. In the information packet, I suggested to participants that completing the survey may take up to two hours. It is highly likely that the length of the survey led to a reduction in my response rate. The length may have also affected the quality of the responses as well. In some of the responses, it appeared participants may have become tired and began to straight line their answers.

Another weakness is that the author originally designed the survey to measure recruitment and conversion to two specific religious groups. Joining a religious group is usually marked by an objective experience. One often makes a commitment verbally or through a ritual to be part of the group. In this regard, Kox, Meeus, and Hart were able to develop questions to ask participants about their interaction with other people who were objectively members or not members of the groups in question or to ask participants about their experiences before or after joining the group. Conversely, becoming a jihadist may not be as clear. The movement is not especially organised and does not necessarily require members to take an oath. Indeed, there are a number of terrorists who were merely inspired by the jihadist movement. Moreover, there is not likely an objective moment in time that a person becomes radical. It is a subjective experience. The differences between the groups in Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s research and the jihadists studied in this thesis made it extremely difficult to adapt some of the survey questions so that they could validly measure the experiences of jihadist radicalisation.

On the other hand, my decision to mix open-ended and closed-choice questions is a significant strength of this questionnaire. The scaled, closed choice questions offered a precise measurement of a number of concepts which have rarely been measured in radicalisation research. For instance, measuring the duration and intensity of tension experiences show the complexity in the ways people experience
tension differently, despite it being a ubiquitous human condition. Meanwhile, the open-ended questions allowed participants to give rich, thick descriptions of their experiences that would not be possible with quantitate data alone.

**Sampling**

This study uses purposive sampling. This type of sampling is necessary when the researcher needs to target a very specific, rare, or deviant population that random data collection is not likely to capture. In this case, in order to test the ‘World Saver’ model on jihadist radicalisation, I needed to collect data from jihadists. Undeniably, jihadists represent untypical cases that are rare in the general population. The best way to sample this population is through purposive criterion sampling. Criterion sampling simply involves selecting cases that meet certain inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Muslim converts and non-converts who have been convicted of jihadist terrorism-related offenses in the US from 2001 to 2011 are the selection criteria for this study. Convicted jihadists were chosen because they are the easiest and safest jihadists from which to collect data. Jihadists who are actively fighting jihad are necessarily clandestine or too dangerous to approach. Others are deceased and are not available to provide data. Former jihadists are often willing and ready to speak to researchers. However, most have already shared their stories. Moreover, the astute researcher must consider selection bias when collecting data from individuals who are no longer radical. Incarcerated jihadists, conversely, are more likely to have left the jihad against their will and may still be radical. Moreover, they are confined in a controlled setting that is less dangerous to the researcher.

The year 2001 is an appropriate starting point because 11 September 2001 represents a watershed event in the jihadist movement. I chose 2011 as a cut-off date because my IRB application to the Federal Bureau of Prisons began in 2013. Due to the length of time it takes to convict, sentence, and process prisoners, no one

---


convicted after 2011 was available for participation. Furthermore, the population is geographically limited to the US because, during this period, the US had convicted more jihadists than any other Western country, including the highest numbers of Muslim converts.\textsuperscript{604}

Within these constraints, there are more than 171 possible cases of individuals who have been convicted of jihadist terrorism-related offenses. The 2011 Henry Jackson Society report \textit{Al Qaeda In the United States} provides a list of the individuals who were convicted of, or killed in jihadist terrorism in the US from 2001 until 2011. Of these cases, approximately 40 individuals were Muslim converts.\textsuperscript{605} From this population, the cases are further filtered to derive a research sample based on two criteria. First, the cases must fit the definition of ‘homegrown’. Finally, the individual must have been involved in terrorism. The most obvious evidence for this variable is a conviction for a terrorism-related charge in a court of law. After selecting out cases that do not meet the selection criteria, there are approximately 100 individuals who have been convicted of jihadist terrorism-related offenses remaining in the sample.

\textbf{Recruitment}

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) holds the majority of the 100 individuals who fit my inclusion and exclusion criteria. The BOP requires researchers seeking to interview prisoners in their custody to apply and obtain approval from the Bureau Research and Review Board (BRRB). The first step in this process is to provide the BRRB with a list of proposed prisoner participants. From the 100 Al Qaeda-linked jihadists who fit the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 71 are in BOP custody. Some of the 100 jihadists have already been released from prison. Others are held in state prisons. Moreover, because my proposed sample includes individuals who have been involved in terrorism, some are held under Special Administrative Measures (SAMs), which restrict their ability to communicate with researchers. To determine which prisoners were on SAMs, the BRRB sent my list of 71 proposed prisoners to the BOP’s counter terrorism intelligence unit for vetting. The counter terrorism

\textsuperscript{604} Bjelopera and Randol, “American Jihadist Terrorism,” 24; Karagiannis, “European Converts,” 104.
intelligence unit returned a list of 41 Al Qaeda-linked prisoners approved for participation.

These 41 Al Qaeda-linked prisoners were held at 41 different BOP facilities across the United States. Financial and logistical constraints precluded me from traveling to these facilities to conduct face-to-face interviews. After discussions with the BOP Human Subjects Research Officer, she suggested that I conduct a mailed questionnaire. On 3 April 2014, I submitted my proposal to the BRRB. On 2 June 2014, the BRRB approved my research. Next, the BOP Human Subjects Research Officer had to contact each of the 41 facilities and request specific approval from each institution’s warden. On 4 December 2014, I was notified that I could begin posting the questionnaires to participants.

On 15 December 2014, I began posting the questionnaires to the Al Qaeda-linked prisoners. I posted 41 envelopes directly to the prisoners using their addresses at BOP facilities. Each prisoner received one package, which included an introduction letter, consent for voluntary participation form, and the questionnaire. Each package included a self-addressed, stamped return envelope, so that participants could return the questionnaires without personal cost. Participants were instructed that the questionnaire should take one to two hours to complete. However, they were free to complete the questionnaires at their leisure.

The response rate to my questionnaire was very low. Two prisoners contacted me via email to ask questions about my study. After providing more information about my research, one prisoner agreed to participate and one declined. Eight additional envelopes were rejected and returned. In the end, only six prisoners returned completed questionnaires. Four of the participants were Muslim converts; two were non-converts. The low number of responses obviously raises questions about sampling bias. These six interviews represent only a small portion of the 100 jihadists in the original sample. Therefore, it is unlikely their stories are representative of all homegrown jihadists. One must ask why these six individuals agreed to respond to the survey and others did not. It is possible that these individuals wanted to tell their story or were no longer radical or never radical at all. Such bias are likely to affect the results of this study. Others may not have
participated because they are concerned about the legal ramifications of participating in the study. It is also interesting to note that converts were significantly overrepresented in the responses. Their disproportionality may reflect cultural bias in this study. Although, it is a study of homegrown radicalisation, understanding how immigrants become radicalised to jihadism in the US is an important part of the puzzle. Immigrant perspectives are not well represented in this study.

Data Analysis
Qualitative researchers have a number of options to choose from when analyzing data. There are dozens of social science methods available to researchers. The method of choice depends largely on the researcher’s discipline, the research questions, and the data under analysis. The following are some of the primary qualitative methods used in the religious psychology and religious sociology disciplines:

The phenomenological approach is one of the most fundamental methods in qualitative social sciences. As Fredric Wertz explains, ‘the aim [of phenomenology] is to faithfully conceptualise the process and structure of mental life, so situations are meaningfully lived as though they are experienced, with nothing added and nothing subtracted’.606 This approach limits researchers’ interpretation of events and phenomena to how the participants describe them. Phenomenology does not permit theories or hypothesis. Rather it is a description of a phenomenon from the participant’s perspective. However, researchers can inductively construct theory from the participants’ phenomenological descriptions. While this method may be useful in early theory building, the lack of deductive analysis in this approach means that it would have limited utility for this study, which seeks to test Lofland and Stark’s theory.

---

Similarly, *narrative analysis* ‘aims to explore and conceptualise the human experience as it is represented in textual form’.*607 The foundation of narrative analysis is that ‘people live and/or understand their lives in storied form, connecting events in the manner of a plot.’*608 Analyzing these narratives requires the researcher to focus on the participants’ interpretations of events not the factual record of those events. From these narratives, researchers theorise how humans construct meaning from reality. While this study is interested in participants’ narratives of their lives and how those narratives relate to their radicalisation, it specifically avoids constructed realities. As Snow and Machalek argue, religious change causes people to reinterpret their ‘Universe of Discourse’. As a result, their life narrative changes. Snow and Phillips further argue that this change means that empirical evidence for many of the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model is not evidence of past experiences, but rather biographical reinterpretations resulting from religious change.*610 On the contrary, this study seeks to collect concrete, objective empirical evidence to avoid the dilemma of perspective effects.

*Discursive analysis* is another form of interpretive qualitative analysis. Linda McMullen explains that discursive analysis ‘focuses on how sentences are put together, how conversion or talk-in-interaction is structured to how sets of statements come to constitute objects and subjects, to how discourse can be understood in relation to social problems, structural variable, and power’. Although, discursive analysis can be a deductive tool, it is most commonly used for inductive analysis. Moreover, like, narrative analysis, discursive analysis deals with interpretation of constructed meanings. Therefore, it is not useful for this analysis.

---

608 Ruthellen Josselson, “Narrative research: constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing story.”
Grounded theory is another foundational method in qualitative research. Grounded theory is an inductive approach to data analysis that begins with no *a priori* theoretical assumptions. Researchers code data looking for emerging categories and patterns. Along the way, they create and compare analytical notes that become more abstract and theoretical with each coding. As Charmaz explains, ‘grounded theory begins with collecting inductive data, but relies on moving back and forth between data gathering and analysis’ as theoretical themes emerge. Collection and analysis continues until the data is saturated and no new themes emerge. Like the phenomenological approach, grounded theory is limited to inductive research designs and is not applicable to this study.

This study uses Template analysis. This method is a form of thematic analysis that can be used inductively or deductively. It can also be used with most kinds of qualitative data. ‘Central to the technique is developing a coding template, usually on the basis of a subset of data which is then applied to further data, revised and refined’. Often the template begins with theoretically based *a priori* themes. The themes are often stratified in related levels that move from the general to the specific. For deductive template analysis, research begins with preliminary coding of a subset of the data (e.g. one interview). Initial themes are derived from operationalised themes within the study’s theoretical framework. During preliminary coding, the researcher highlights themes from the data and begins to stratify them to build an initial template. The researcher then ‘appl[ies] the initial template to further data and modif[ies] as necessary’. A final template is then applied to all of the data. Nevertheless, narrower sub-themes may still emerge from the data that need to be captured.

Template analysis is useful for this phase of the study for a number of reasons. First, template analysis allows for deductive testing of the Lofland and Stark model. The seven conditions of the model compose the first-level of themes. The data are

---

614 Brooks, Joanna, Serena McCluskey, Emma Turley, and Nigel King. "The utility of template analysis in qualitative psychology research."
analyzed to identify those themes and confirm their relevance to the radicalisation experiences of the participants. Second, template analysis allows also allows us to apply Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation of the model to the data. Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation of the seven conditions mostly compose the second-level themes. Finally, template analysis allows for exploration of the model on a jihadist sample, because it still allows a posteriori or observed themes to emerge from the data.615

**Coding Template**

The final template is composed of three levels of themes. In general, the first-level themes represent the seven conditions of Lofland and Stark’s model. Second-level themes are primarily based on Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s operationalisation. Third-level themes emerged from the data. Below is the final template used to code the data:

- **Turning point**
  - Parents’ divorce
  - Moved house
  - Changed job
  - Crisis
    - Death of a loved one
    - Relationship breakup
- **Tension**
  - Social Problems
    - Oppression of Muslims
  - Situational Problems
    - Racism
    - Bigotry

---

- Death of a loved one
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
  - Personal Problems
    - Insecurity
- Religious Seeking
  - Dissatisfaction with religion
  - Self-definition as a seeker
  - Active seeking
    - Islam seeking
    - Jihad seeking
- Religious problem-solving perspective
  - Psychological
    - Maladaptive
    - Identity change
  - Political activism
  - Socialising
  - Prior religious socialisation
    - Prayer
    - Belief
    - Attendance
- Intensive interaction
  - In-person
  - Online
- Extra-cult affective bonds
  - Weak or few
  - Strong
  - Neutralised
  - Negative reaction to conversion
  - Problems with Muslim community
- Cult affective bonds
  - Pre-existing bond
Develops bond
- In person
- Online

Frequency of contact

Change in relationships
- Diminished extra-cult bonds
- Improved extra-cult bonds

Change in ideas
- Work
- School
- Religion
- Relationships
  - Politics
  - Jihad

Coding
The data was coded using the NVivo 11 for Mac program. The template was loaded into the program. For each theme an Nvivo ‘node’ or ‘sub-node’ folder was created. Additional ‘sub-node’ folders were created for new themes that emerged from the data. Since the original questionnaires were complete in ink, they had to be scanned as image PDFs. However, image PDFs are not compatible with NVivo 11 for Mac. Therefore, I had to transcribe each questionnaire in Microsoft Word and upload it to NVivo for coding. The data was coded by highlighting and dragging text into corresponding ‘node’ folders.

Anonymity
A foundation of human subject research is maintaining participant anonymity. Protecting participants’ identities is especially important for prisoners, whom are considered a vulnerable population. Maintaining anonymity becomes even more important and difficult when the participants’ cases have received substantial media coverage, as the Al Qaeda-linked participants in this study have. Even small details about the participant might reveal his or her identity. Therefore, participants in this study are referenced with unisex code-names only. Moreover, I have disguised
participants’ gender by using both personal pronouns in every reference (e.g. [he/she]). To further protect the participants’ identities, I also stripped identifying titles (e.g. mother, father, brother, sister, boyfriend, girlfriend) or pronouns from any mention of other individuals within participants’ social networks.

Validity

Validity can be a problem with data collected from questionnaires. Participants may lie or omit data in their responses. Since the researcher is not in the room with the participant, he or she cannot press the participant for truth or look for behavioural cues that signify dishonesty. Lying or omitted responses can be particularly prevalent when the researcher is asking about sensitive subjects or criminal behavior, such as terrorism and jihadism. Fortunately, there is a large amount of publicly available information about participants in this study to use for external validation. Often friends, family, or law enforcement have already chronicled the participants’ lives in the media. Information about the participants’ crime is also available in court documents and police reports. Therefore, in many cases, it is possible to corroborate and validate participants’ responses through secondary sources. In phase-one of this study, secondary sources were particularly useful for validating information about participants’ relationships with other jihadists and their exposure to jihadist media such as jihadist websites, etc. In several cases it was evident that the participants were not forthcoming in their questionnaire responses, since I was familiar with many of the details of their cases. I had spent years familiarising myself with the evidence in the participants’ cases. When they did not answer as I expected, it was often evident to me that their story did not match the evidence of the case. I was often able to validate their responses with secondary sources. For example, in one cases a participant responded that [he/she] had no contact with other jihadists. However, there were wiretap transcripts of [him/her] discussing jihad with other jihadists.

A limitation of secondary sources, however, is maintaining participants’ anonymity. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) demands that participants’ identities be protected. Therefore, secondary sources cannot be cited, as they would immediately identify the participant.
Limitations
This study has a number of limitations. First, as an exploratory study, it cannot make generalisations about the data or casual inferences between the seven conditions of Lofland and Stark’s model and radicalisation. The analysis must be descriptive in nature only. Second, the response rate to the questionnaire was very low. Only six participants responded. The low response rate raises obvious questions regarding selection bias and further restricts any generalisations. Third, at least two of the participants were regularly dishonest in their responses on matters of jihad. As explained above, the validity of their responses was often easily validated via secondary sources. This led to lots of missing data. However, those two respondents appeared to answer the majority of the non-jihad related questions genuinely. Therefore, there was still valuable and valid data that could be gleaned from the questionnaires. More importantly, however, is that these participants were Al Qaeda-linked individuals. Scholars have never interviewed these Al Qaeda-linked participants before. Moreover, very few researchers have primary source data from homegrown Al Qaeda operatives at all. This makes the valid portions of their data extremely rare and valuable and worth including in the analysis.

Findings
Below are the findings from this exploratory study of Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model:

Tension
Tension is the first of the predisposing conditions in the ‘World Saver’ model. Lofland and Stark describe tension as frustration or deprivation stemming from the real or perceived gap between the ideal and actual state of one’s life. Although the two authors argue that tension is a necessary catalyst that puts an individual on the path to joining a religious movement, on its own, they did not find it sufficient to cause religious change.616

616 Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 864
As mentioned, Snow and Phillips are highly critical of tension as a predisposing condition of the model. Their primary contention is that if there is no control group with which to compare findings, then there is no way to determine if tension is a significant factor in religious change. They also contest Lofland and Stark’s assertion that, while many Americans suffer from all types of frustrations and deprivations, people who joined the Unification Church experienced those tensions at a higher magnitude and for longer periods of time. Finally, Snow and Phillips contend that when participants retrospectively recall experiences of tension from before their religious change, that recollection is merely the result of reexamining their lives through the perspective of the new religion.617

To identify tension in the Al Qaeda-linked participants, they were asked if they had experienced any number of 35 different personal, social, or structural problems. For each problem, they were asked to indicate the duration of the problem and the intensity of the problem. Empirically, we should expect the six participants in this study to describe any number of serious spiritual, character, psychological, material, or social problems in their lives prior to their radicalisation. For jihadists, these problems might also include racism, bigotry, or alienation from both the Islamic community and American society in general. To overcome suggestions that these problems are the result of perspective effects, there should be concrete examples of tension. Moreover, there should be evidence that these problems are especially unique to the participants.

Analysis of the six questionnaires shows that tension was present in almost all of the Al Qaeda-linked participants. Five of the six participants described severe and often traumatic personal, structural, or interpersonal strains that deeply impacted the direction of their lives. Moreover, many of the participants described multiple sources of tension. The data shows that on average, participants reported 13 problems per person. By comparison, Snow and Philipps identified just three problems per person in their study.618 The rate of tension amongst Al Qaeda-linked participants in this study is consistent with Bear and Heirich, who found that upwards of 80 per cent of their samples described tensions prior to their

conversions. Observations of tension in this sample exceed the 67 per cent that Kox Meeus and Hart found in their Dutch converts to the Unification Church and Pentecostalism.\textsuperscript{619} Moreover, contrary to Snow and Phillips’ assertions, in many cases, the participants described concrete examples of very severe, long-lasting problems that seem beyond subjectivity.\textsuperscript{620}

Using Kox, Meeus and Hart’s three sub-factors of tension as first-level themes (i.e., situational problems, personal problems, and social problems), template analysis identified five sources of tension that, in combination, were common to all but one of the participants.\textsuperscript{621}

\textit{Situational problems}

Kox, Meeus, and Hart define situational problems as ‘problems relative to one’s situation.’\textsuperscript{622} In other words, they are exogenous problems that often stem from interpersonal conflict or structural strains. Situational problems were the most pervasive type of tension amongst the respondents. In particular, analysis of participant responses identified three common situational problems.

\textit{Death of a loved one}

The loss of a loved one was a common source of tension amongst the Al Qaeda-linked participants. Four of the six participants reported experiencing acute emotional distress from the death of a family member. For example, Sam repeatedly mentioned the death of [his/her] family members, and how the loss left [him/her] lonely. [He/she] explained: ‘Emotional distress came about with the death of several family members…I never had any friends. My [sibling] was my only real friend …[He/she] passed away when I was 24’.\textsuperscript{623}

Although death and loss are a normal part of life, the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported especially severe and long-lasting grief. For instance, three of the four participants who reported the death of a loved one, ranked the magnitude of their

\textsuperscript{621} Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 233.
\textsuperscript{622} Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 233.
\textsuperscript{623} Participant questionnaire with C132
grief as *very severe* on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from *very mild* to *very severe*. One participant reported that the grief was *severe*. Moreover, three of those four participants reported that the feelings of grief lasted more than five years. The fourth reported that the grief lasted between one and five years.

The magnitude and duration of the death-related grief that the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported is unusual. For comparison, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV (DSM-IV) ‘includes a diagnosis of bereavement-related major depression two months following a loss’.624 The DSM-V is also considering adding a more serious diagnosis of Pervasive Complex Bereavement for severe distress, feelings, and thoughts about the death continuing after six months.625

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse in childhood was another widely reported source of situational tension. Again, four of the six participants reported some form of sexual abuse as a child. Shannon explained that the experience of sexual abuse as a child was so traumatising that [he/she] has tried to forget that period of [his/her] life. Shannon recalled, ‘I blacked out the worst of what happened to me when I was 7-9 years old. I was raped by my [parent]… I really don’t feel anything about that because I blacked out most of it and don’t remember what happened in full details’.626

Shannon further explained that throughout [his/her] life, [he/she] attempted to cope with the trauma of sexual abuse with drugs and alcohol. ‘I did all kinds of drugs and kept doing them for many years [after the rape]. There were periods of time, though, that I didn’t do drugs. But I always went back to the drugs. I also drank a lot throughout the years’.627 Another participant, Sam, also related how [his/her] sexual assault as a child continues to cause emotional distress today. Sam recalled ‘Sexual abuse: I was told to perform oral sex on a 12-year-old relative. This has affected me

---


626 Participant questionnaire with C131

627 Participant questionnaire C131
since then’, [he/she] explained. Although the details are less clear, Kelly, a Muslim convert described an experience, wherein [he/she] ‘discovered homosexuality’ ‘in catholic school’ from ‘priests and monks’. Kelly’s remarks appeared to implicitly suggest a sexual assault.

Contrary to the examples of tension that Snow and Phillips described in their study (e.g., feelings of unhappiness, having a disorganised life, feeling like a loser), reports of sexual assault are objective events that should be immune from suggestions that they are the result of conversion-induced retrospection. The participants in this study did not describe, for example, the morality of their victimisation, a perspective that may be subject to change after conversion. Rather, they only described the sexual abuse itself. Moreover, considering only about a half of one per cent of American adolescents have been sexually assaulted, it is notable that four of the six respondents in this study reported sexual assault as children. It might be absurd to question the magnitude of experiencing sexual assault. Nevertheless, of the three participants who answered the question, all reported that the resulting stress was severe or very severe on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from very mild to very severe.

Physical and Emotional Abuse
Three of the six participants also reported experiencing physical and/or emotional abuse. Sam’s questionnaire response provides the most detailed account of such abuse. [He/She] described a life of abuse, beginning at just five years-old and continuing until [He/She] was nearly 40 years-old. Sam wrote:

‘[The emotional abuse] came from all angles—kids making fun of me at school, bullying, parent as I was growing up, [sibling], step [parent] family members, the [spouses], and my [parent]…

My [parent] remarried to a devil who treated my [sibling] and me very poorly emotionally. I was threatened by [him/her] and forced to marry [his/her] [sibling]. I was beaten by [him/her] every day for 4 years…

628 Participant questionnaire C132
629 Participant questionnaire C106
I went through my three marriages before my arrest. I was abused only physically by the first one but emotionally by all of them...

I was beaten nearly every day by first[spouse]. Suffered a broken nose, busted lips, blacked eyes and cuts on my face to do punches, possible fractured tailbone due to steel-toe boot. Could not sit for weeks...

Married [my child]'s [parent]. Emotionally abused by [him/her]—together 3 years. Married again. Emotionally abused—together 4 years. Married again to my current [spouse]—Emotionally abused by [him/her]. Physical abuse to my [child]. Together 6 months before arrest.632

Although child abuse and domestic violence are widespread in America, the number of participants in this study who reported abuse is especially significant. Nationally, America’s child abuse victim rate was 9.1 per 1,000 in 2013. In 2012, the domestic abuse rate in the US was 5.0 per 1,000, respectively.633 Comparatively, the instances of abuse amongst the participants in this study are exceedingly high. Three of six respondents reported being abused as children or victims of domestic violence. All three participants described their experiences as very severe on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from very mild to very severe. The abuse was also long-lasting. Two participants reported that the experiences lasted more than five years. The third reported one to five years of abuse.

Racism/Bigotry

Despite the high levels of racism and religious bigotry that Muslims and people of color experience in the United States, these factors were not particularly severe amongst the Al Qaeda-linked participants.634 Four of the six participants noted experiencing racism or religious bigotry. However, all but one of those rated the experience as very mild or mild. When asked to explain in detail problems they had

632 Participant questionnaire C132
experienced in their lives, only Kelly, wrote about racism [he/she] experienced in school.635

*Personal problems*

Personal problems were also prevalent amongst the participants. Kox, Meeus, and Hart define this sub-type of tension as problems relative to one’s person.636 They are endogenous problems, such as lack of self-confidence or inadequate self-acceptance that may ultimately be the result of life experiences, but they have been internalised in the individual’s psychology, rather than being immediate responses to external experiences. Therefore, personal problems were often difficult to parse from situational problems because some are likely the result of the situational experiences in which the participants found themselves. Admittedly, personal problems are also more subjective than situational problems because the participant is describing a feeling rather than an event. Nonetheless, the participants in this study consistently reported feelings of insecurity with a high degree of magnitude and over long periods of time.

*Insecurity*

Four of the six Al Qaeda-linked respondents described strong feelings of insecurity, social rejection, or low self-esteem. For many, the feeling manifested as a long-held sense of poor self-image. As Kelly explained, ‘I did not think of myself as particularly [good looking] as a child, and I did not have decent clothing. Also, I was not very good at communicating with people. So, I was mostly quiet’.637 Kelly explained that [his/her] feelings of insecurity lasted more than five years. Likewise, Pat and Sam reported feeling rejected by peers their entire lives. Pat described [his/her] feeling as a *severe* ‘sense of not belonging in society’.638 Sam lamented, ‘I never had any friends and was always shunned and hated by everyone so I kept everything to myself’. Sam further explained that [he/she] was ‘hated in school’. Continuing, ‘I grew used to it [being hated]. It became a normal thing to me. I didn’t expect anything different. Same with family. It became a normal thing for me. I

---

635 Participant questionnaire C106
637 Participant questionnaire C106
638 Participant questionnaire C123
never knew anything different’. Sam described [his/her] feelings of rejection as very severe on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from very mild to very severe. The feelings of insecurity that many of the participants expressed stand in sharp contrast to other Americans. A Gallop Poll of American self-image found ‘Most Americans appear to have a reasonably good self-image’. In fact, just 11 per cent of Americans rated their self-image as ‘just fair or poor’. By comparison, 89 per cent reported feeling good or excellent. It is interesting to note that all of the participants who reported sexual, emotional, or physical abuse, except for one, also described feelings of rejection and low self-esteem. This finding is consistent with research, which finds that sexual abuse and domestic violence often result in low self-esteem in victims. The research on abuse also finds that maltreated children are less liked by their peers. Therefore, the feelings of social rejection amongst respondents may have more to do with their history of abuse than being the result of conversion-induced biographical reconstruction, as Snow and Phillips suggest.

**Social Problems**

The third sub-type of tension that Kox, Meeus, and Hart identify is social problems. This category does not describe social problems that an individual might experience his or herself, but rather the individual’s concern about social problems in the world (e.g., injustice, the environment, the economy, etc.). The Al Qaeda-linked respondents in this study consistently mentioned tensions stemming from their concern for the oppression of Muslims worldwide.

**Oppression of Muslims**

---

639 Participant questionnaire C132
Four of the six participants reported feeling upset about the treatment of Muslims around the world. They often spoke of love and affection for fellow Muslims in other countries and feelings of severe pain and sadness for Muslim suffering at the hands of non-Muslims. For example, Pat wrote: ‘I always favored the “underdog” for me, the issue of the USSR in Afghanistan was the pivotal point…my heart went out to them’.

For others, the tension came from feelings of anger and the urge to help suffering Muslims. Shannon’s response shows how the killing of Palestinians caused [him/her] a range of emotions from sadness, to anger, and a desire to help.

[He/She] explained:

\[
\text{I had reverted to Islam in 2008… I was just starting to really get into my religion and came to love my brothers and sisters. Sometime after I began learning, the Zionists in Palestine started bombing the Palestinians killing many innocent brothers and sisters. I watched online as they were being bombed. All brothers and sisters could do was pray and cry from there Ummah in Palestine. That’s when I became radical.}
\]

\[
\text{I will always remember I was sitting on my couch in my front room watching the brothers and sisters and babies getting killed. I heard the screams and the crying, while outside my window I heard the neighbors with their children talking and laughing. It’s like no one cared about the Ummah being killed. I became very angry and wanted to do anything I could to help my Ummah.}
\]

Sam also expressed feelings of anger and injustice, and the desire to take action to prevent the oppression of Palestinians. [He/She] explained:

\[
\text{I had increasingly become interesting in the war, especially since the 08, 09 conflict between Hamas and Israel. The more videos I watch, the more I wanted to do something to help. I would make comments on videos and upload many videos. This happened about 3 months after my conversion…One of the main reasons I was posting jihadi}
\]

644 Participant questionnaire C123
645 Participant questionnaire C131
videos is because I became angry at seeing military videos of them sitting behind their tank talking obscenities telling all to die and seeing videos of Israeli soldiers with high power weapons pointed at kids with rocks.646

Kelly’s frustrations regarding the maltreatment of Muslims were somewhat more general than the other participants who spoke about this issue. Rather than giving any specific example of killing or oppression, Kelly expressed contempt for what [he/she] believed is a global Christian conspiracy against Muslims and a double standard regarding the right to self-defense against aggression. Kelly explained,

_The general posture of Europeans and Americans seems to be that Islam itself represents and [sic] existential threat to European and American values. As well as their governments take aggressive postures against Muslims worldwide [sic]. I believe that much of this is power politics and greed, but much of it is Christianity and defense of that. Currently there is a continuous propaganda war against Islam out of fear of Islam that is not justified. Under those circumstances any European or American would assert the right to self-defense, yet when the Muslims assert the right the world condemns it._647

While the participants’ concern for the suffering of Muslims might be easily dismissed as the result of their radicalisation, all of them, except Kelly, can point to a precise moment before their engagement with the jihadist movement where they began to experience tension from this social problem. This point is important because it provides further evidence to suggest that the participants’ feelings about the plight of Muslims was not influenced by their radicalisation. On the contrary, it seems that this tension was the catalyst that moved these individuals further toward radicalisation. They witnessed the oppression and then became enraged. In fact, Pat explained that [he/she] joined the Mujahdin to fight soviet tyranny after hearing about the suffering of Afghans. Similarly, Sam and Shannon only began reaching out to others online about their frustrations after witnessing injustice toward

---

646 Participant questionnaire C132
647 Participant questionnaire C106
Muslims. This outreach is where Sam and Shannon would subsequently meet the Al Qaeda recruiters who brought them into the movement.\textsuperscript{648}

Although it may not be possible to conclusively state that tension is a necessary factor in radicalisation, nearly all of the participants described situations and feelings that are congruent with Lofland and Starks’ definition of the condition. Equally important is that the participants in this study provided evidence that is contrary to Snow and Philips’ criticisms.\textsuperscript{649} Their situational problems were often unique or excessive compared to the experiences of other Americans. Moreover, the respondents often described objective, concrete examples of their problems, which cannot be easily construed as perspective effects. Finally, the participants provided empirical evidence that the magnitude and duration of their problems were severe and long-lasting.

One explanation for the prevalence of tension in the Al Qaeda-linked sample, is the nature of Al-Qaeda’s ideology. A number of authors argue that since there is a higher social cost of joining groups which society sees as deviant, the ‘deprivations will be of greater significance in the recruitment process’ of such groups.\textsuperscript{650} The fact that Al Qaeda is so deviant may explain why the frustrations and deprivations of the participants were so severe compared to the findings of other researchers who have tested ‘World Saver’ on less deviant groups.\textsuperscript{651}

**Religious problem-solving perspective**

Religious problem-solving perspective is the second predisposing condition in the ‘World Saver’ model. Lofland and Stark contend that people will not make a religious change if they find alternative solutions to resolve the tension that they are experiencing. The two authors assert that people generally see three sources as the causes of, and solutions to, their problems: 1) psychological 2) political and 3) religious. Only individuals who have been socialised to believe that problems are

\textsuperscript{648} Participant questionnaire C123, C131, C132
\textsuperscript{649} Snow and Phillips, “Lofland-Stark Conversion Model,” 433-435
\textsuperscript{650} Stark and Bainbridge, “Networks of faith,” 1382.
\textsuperscript{651} Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 308, 312-314.
spiritual in nature will have a religious problem-solving perspective and seek religious change to solve those problems.652

Once again, Snow and Phillips were critical of the religious problem-solving perspective condition. The two authors argued again that conversion causes individuals to ‘reinterpret their past by redefining some aspects of it as more problematic’.653 Consequently, they contend that individuals only see their problems as religiously oriented after their conversion.

To identify problem-solving perspectives, the Al Qaeda-linked participants were asked about their histories of religious beliefs and practices and what methods they used to resolve problems in their lives. If Lofland and Stark’s model holds for jihadists, there should be evidence that participants had prior exposure to religious beliefs that led them to see the world from a religious perspective. Earlier research finds that Muslim Americans ascribe a wide array of causes and solutions (e.g. political, biological, environmental, religious) to medical, social, and political problems.654 Therefore, we should expect to see that participants hold a range of problem-solving perspectives concurrent with their religious problem-solving perspective. Finally, evidence of religious problem-solving perspective should be tangible and objective to avoid criticism that the radicalisation itself had shaped the participants’ religious perspectives.

Generally speaking, there is evidence to find that all but one of the Al Qaeda-linked respondents in this study held a religious problem-solving perspective at least five years prior to their arrest for terrorism-related offenses; all were previously socialised to religion; and all but one reported being religiously active at least five years prior to his or her arrest. Moreover, nearly all of the participants demonstrated many types of problem-solving perspectives. Not only did these individuals see religion as a source and solution to problems, often they had multiple ways of dealing with major problems, including psychological, physiological, political,
social and identity. Although Kox, Meeus and Hart did not find religious problem-solving perspective to be a reliable condition, the findings of this study regarding religious problem-solving perspective are consistent with most of the research on the ‘World Saver’ model.655

Prior Socialisation

To determine prior religious socialisation, the questionnaire asked the Al Qaeda-linked participants to explain how they first learned about Islam.

Pat explained that [he/she] was first exposed to Islam through a family connection:

In [year] my [parent] started seeing a [person] who was Muslim. I observed [him/her] praying and fellowship with my older [siblings]. Two of whom had become Muslim by [year]. By [year] I was living with one of these [siblings] and falling into sway. It was again, a sense of acceptance and belonging.656

Alex was brought up in the Islamic faith of [his/her] family from early on:

I first learned about Islam as a small child in school as well as from frequent trips to the mosque with my [parent]. When I was about 17 years-old, I began to attend different classes each week.657

Cory’s parents also raised [him/her] from birth to be a Muslim:

I learn about Islam since I was a child. Was taught from birth that Islam was the truth and all I have known and believe [sic].658

Shannon was never dogmatic, but always believed in a greater power:

As I said, I never ascribed to any particular religion but I’ve always believed in God.659

Kelly was introduced to Islam through Nation of Islam missionaries:

655 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 314; Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 237.
656 Participant questionnaire C123
657 Participant questionnaire 110
658 Participant questionnaire 134
659 Participant questionnaire C131
In high school as a catholic in world history and religious classes I remember Islam being mentioned as infidels and the enemy in the crusades. When I was a teen I saw members of the so-called “Nation of Islam” selling their newspapers on the street. After graduating high school when I was 18, I joined the Nation. In [year] the leader and founder Elijah Muhammad died and his son Wallace Muhammad inherited the leadership and directed the members to follow the Sunnah. From that point I began to follow Sunni Islam.\textsuperscript{660}

Sam was also introduced to Islam via a family connection:

My [parent] is married to a Muslim [person], but [he/she] does not practice. [He/She] has been married to [him/her] since [year]. So, gradually since then, I did become more aware of Islam.\textsuperscript{661}

**Importance of Beliefs and Frequency of Practices**

In order to develop a better picture of the extent of their prior religious socialisation, the questionnaire also examined the strength of the participants’ religious beliefs and practices, historically. First, going back five years from their most recent arrest, each participant was asked to rank the importance of religion in their lives. Religious importance was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from very unimportant to very important. As table 1 shows, five of the six respondents reported that religion was either important or very important in their lives.

Next, participants were asked to note how often they prayed five years before their most recent arrest. The frequency of prayer was measured on a nine-point Likert-type scale from never to more than five times per day. Again, the table shows that four of the six participants reported praying at least once per day. Three of those individuals prayed five times per day or more. Only two reported praying never or less than once a month.

Finally, the questionnaire asked the participants to remember how often they attended religious services five years before their most recent arrest. Religious

\textsuperscript{660} Participant questionnaire C106
\textsuperscript{661} Participant questionnaire C132
service attendance was measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale from *never* to *more than once per day*. This time, results were more mixed. Half of the sample reported regular attendance of once per week or more, while the other half of the participants attended religious services once per year or less.

Table 1: Religious beliefs and practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>How important was religion?</th>
<th>How often did you pray?</th>
<th>How often did you attend religious services?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>&lt;1x month</td>
<td>~ 1 x year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>&gt; 5x day</td>
<td>&gt;1x day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>&gt; 5x day</td>
<td>&gt; 1x week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>&lt; 1x day</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>5 x day</td>
<td>&gt; 1x week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Almost never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-Identified Problem-Solving Perspectives

Another way this study measured participants’ problem-solving perspective was by asking them to consider their lives about five years before their most recent arrest and explain how they coped with problems in their lives. Each participant was asked to choose between any number of six coping mechanisms: 1) Social coping, e.g. talking about their problems with friends or family 2) Physiological coping, e.g. illegal drugs, alcohol, exercise, or sex 3) Religious coping, e.g. praying, speaking to religious officials, attending religious services, trying out a new faith, visiting a psychic or other superstitious practices 4) Political coping, e.g. joining a political movement, participating in a political activity, attending a protest or rally, contacting a legislative representative 5) Psychological coping, e.g. counseling, therapy, legally prescribed psychiatric drugs 6) identity coping, e.g. attempting to remake their self-image.

As table 2 shows, three of the six Al Qaeda-linked participants reported using religious coping mechanisms. Four reported social coping. Two participants reported physiological and identity coping mechanisms. Only one participant reported using psychological or political coping mechanisms. One participants did
not respond to the question. The table also shows that half of the participants used multiple types of coping mechanisms. If we exclude the one participant who did not answer the question, on average, participants used 2.4 coping mechanisms each.

### Table 2: Coping mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Physiological</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanno</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Problem-solving perspectives identified through template analysis

Several problem-solving perspectives also emerged from qualitative coding. Template analysis was applied to an open-ended question in the questionnaire using Lofland and Stark’s three basic problem-themes: 1) religious problem-solving 2) political problem-solving 3) psychological problem solving. Additional themes emerged for social coping and maladaptive coping. Analysis shows that many of the participants described religious and political problem-solving behavior. However, there was very little evidence for psychological problem solving.662

### Religious problem solving

Three of the six participants described religious problem-solving behavior. Often, they attributed changes in their lives to God. For example, Sam saw spiritual forces as the cause of [his/her] problems. [He/she] blamed God and [his/her] sinful life for the death of [his/her] [sibling]. Sam explained:

As a child I believed in heaven and hell, God and Angels and believed Satan existed but it did not affect my everyday life. I drank

and sinned and who knows what else with no fear of consequences...After my [sibling] passed away, I became angry with God. But really all my life I never really was religious even though I went to church.  

Conversely, Shannon expressed feelings that God resolved [his/her] problems. Due to [his/her] reckless life of alcoholism, drug abuse and suicidal ideation, Shannon suggested that [he/she] should have already died. However, [he/she] explained that interventions from God had saved [his/her] life:

There has [sic] been a few times where I believe god has saved me before I reverted to Islam. I used to wonder why he saved me. But I never doubted it was him who saved me. When I came to Islam it all made sense to me. He didn’t want me to die a non-Muslim. Not that I think he will let me die now but I believe my actions are pre-ordained. Only he knows what will become of me.

Similarly, Alex and Cory attributed their happiness and positive changes in their lives to their devotion to Islam.

Alex:  
The religion of Islam played a huge, and positive role in my life. Islam makes my life very easy, I am filled with happiness all the time because I am always seeing how Islam helps my growth and understanding these are things that continuously change my life for the better.

Cory:  
Religion played a big role in my life as it teaches about ALLAH that almighty whom we are connected to. Religion changed me and I am working hard to go to paradise.

---

663 Participant questionnaire C132  
664 Participant questionnaire C131  
665 Participant questionnaire 110
I live by the Sunnah of my prophet Muhammad and Quaran. My religious beliefs have always adequately fulfilled my understanding of the wonderance ISLAM taught us about any areas in the Quaran.

Political

Three of the participants also described political problem-solving behavior. For all three of these participants, the political problem-solving behavior stemmed from their desire to help Muslims suffering from oppression. Pat described that [he/she] felt that going to fight in Afghanistan would resolve the tension [he/she] was experiencing. Pat explained:

I always favored the “underdog.” For me, the issue of the USSR in Afghanistan was the pivotal point... Looking back now, I see that by joining the resistance I thought I would be fulfilling all of my conflicting interests, i.e. family values of resisting tyranny, country and couture by fighting the USSR and religious obligation.

Shannon described how angry and helpless [he/she] felt watching videos of Israelis killing innocent Palestinian women and children. Shannon felt that [he/she] could help [his/her] fellow Muslims by spreading jihadist propaganda and reaching out to other jihadists in an attempt to get involved. [He/She] explained:

I would find brothers through a site that would post videos on YouTube to flag. I’d watch the videos and reach out to the brothers that uploaded the videos. The videos were about jihad and showed things like IEDs being set off by troops that invaded Muslim lands and showed some suicide bombing and Juba (the Mujahidin sniper) shooting the invading troops. One video I watched every day is called “unites States of Islam.” This was like what helped me to stay focused on jihad.

666 Participant questionnaire 134
667 Participant questionnaire C123
668 Participant questionnaire C131
Similarly, Sam was enraged by watching videos of Muslims suffering from the effects of war. [He/she] recalled, ‘I wanted to do something to help. I would make comments on videos and upload many videos. This happened about 3 months after my conversion’. 669

**Other problem-solving themes**
Social coping and maladaptive coping problem-solving themes also emerged from the data.

**Social coping**
Three Al Qaeda-linked respondents explained that socialising with and speaking to friends and family about their problems was an effective solution for dealing with tension. As Cory recalled:

*Before my arrest, I would have to say we would have used the social coping method. My family and friends are very close. We spent a lot of time together as a social group. We would study our religious to have a better understanding of our beliefs and values and in doing so we can be closer.* 670

Alex relied on both speaking with clergy and friends and family to solve problems. [He/she] stated:

*I have always found the solutions that were the most effective to be praying, speaking to a religious official, attending religious services and talking with Friends or Family members. I used those solutions to cope with my most difficult problems and found them to be very useful at other times as well.* 671

Pat also reported that socialising with family helped with [his/her] feelings of

---

669 Participant questionnaire C132  
670 Participant questionnaire 134  
671 Participant questionnaire 110
Speaking with loved ones was most effective, but was limited in effect by the understanding any of us might have had at the time. In other words, I didn’t truly know all the was wrong with me to be able to explain it honestly. Also, going on vacation with my loved ones was the most effective of overall feeling of being loved and needed of belonging [sic].

Maladaptive
While many of the participants sought positive solutions to their problems, others turned to more self-destructive coping mechanisms. For example, both Pat and Shannon reported abusing alcohol and drugs to deal with problems. Describing how [he/she] dealt with [his/her] memories of childhood rape, Shannon explained, ‘There were periods of time though that I didn’t do drugs. But I always went back to the drugs. I also drank a lot throughout the years’. While, Sam specifically, denied using drugs or alcohol to deal with [his/her] problems, [he/she] turned to self-harm instead:

I held everything in and never really spoke to anyone about anything. I had to make myself look strong like I had no problems. Anytime I became angry, sad, upset, or even sometimes happy, I never showed it. Rarely did I cry or show any anger in front of other people. I used to punch my leg until someone saw the bruises and asked me who was abusing me. I lied and told them I was kicked in the leg in the skating ring in a fall. When no one was around I would slam doors, kick walls, and punch walls, scream and cry. Of course I would end up injured in many cases but it was my release of emotions without people seeing. I did not want to show that I am weak. To this day I am the same on a lesser scale.

672 Participant questionnaire C123
673 Participant questionnaire C131
674 Participant questionnaire C132
The above data point to four important findings. First, nearly all of the Al Qaeda-linked participants were religious at least five years before their arrests for terrorism-related offenses. There is a commonly held belief amongst many religious conversion and radicalisation scholars that most people who join new religious or jihadist movements were ‘unchurched’ before they joined. As Dawson explained, ‘cult involvement seems to be strongly correlated with having fewer and weaker ideological alignments. Most researchers now discount Lofland and Stark’s suggestion that converts to NRMS were probably pre-socialised to adopting a religious problem-solving perspective. The data actually suggests that the ‘unchurched’ as Stark and Bainbridge call them, are more likely to join’. Similarly, Wiktorowicz argues that ‘those who were vulnerable to radicalisation…only had a superficial religious background’. However, the data from this study shows that religion played an important role in the lives of nearly all of the Al Qaeda-linked participants in this study at least five years before their terrorism-related arrests, a period that precedes radicalisation for most of the participants.

Second, the data shows that all but one of the participants held a religious problem-solving perspective. The participants either self-reported having a religious problem-solving perspective or evidence of this factor emerged during thematic analysis of their questionnaires. This finding is important because many previous tests of the ‘World Saver’ model have rejected the premise that religious problem-solving perspective is a necessary factor for religious change. Even Kox, Meeus, and Hart did not find the factor to be a reliable predictor of religious change.

Third, many of the participants exhibited multiple ways of attributing the causes and solutions to problems. One respondent reported using up to five coping mechanisms to deal with problems in [his/her] life. The wide array of methods participants used to cope with their tension suggests that one’s problem-solving perspective is much

more complex than previously thought. Shannon’s response to the question: ‘Which solutions to problems in your life were most effective? Which solutions were not effective?’ provides some insight into the complex ways with which people deal with their problems. [He/She] answered:

This is kinda not a real easy question. Because I’ve used drugs of all kinds but I quit all of the drugs except for the pain pills when I left America in 2009. I also used to drink. For many years before I reverted to Islam in 2008 I smoked cigarettes from the age of 13 til I left America in 2009. I guess for like 5 or 6 months before I got arrested I was completely into my religious practices. I messed up though because I quit learning about my religion and went straight to Jihad. I was always talking to others online about jihad and that’s all I thought about. I would get up in the morning and get on line [sic] and stay online all day and most nights. I would always wait for my most beloved brothers to come online so I could talk to them. I quit worrying or dealing with my life outside of the internet.678

Shannon’s statement reveals at least four different types of coping mechanisms, including: maladaptive (i.e. drugs, alcohol, and tobacco), religious (i.e. devotion to religious practices), political (i.e. jihadism), and social (i.e. speaking to others online).679 These results suggest a different way of looking at the religious problem-solving condition. In the modern, secular world, religious people may ascribe temporal and spiritual causes to problems. Therefore, it may be more realistic to argue that it does not matter so much which problem-solving perspectives individuals have, as long as one of those perspectives is religious.

Finally, it seems unlikely that the participants’ religious problem-solving perspectives were the result of perspective effects. If religious change had caused the participants to ‘reinterpret their past by redefining some aspects of it as more problematic’, as Snow and Phillips argue, one would expect respondents to downplay the importance of their religious beliefs and practices in the past so that

678 Participant questionnaire C131
679 Participant questionnaire C131
they could claim the religious change made them more religious. However, that does not seem to be the case. Most of the participants reported being highly religious at least five years before their terrorism-related arrests. Moreover, nearly all of the participants could point to a specific, concrete date or age of their religious socialisation that was many years before their radicalisation.

**Religious seeking**

Religious seeking is the third and final predisposing condition in Lofland and Stark’s model. When an individual’s prior religious tradition is insufficient to resolve his or her problems, Lofland and Stark contend that the person will ‘[search] for some satisfactory system of religious meaning to interpret and resolve his discontent…and [take] some action to achieve this end’. Individuals who are searching for religious meaning and take action to find it are religious seekers. Once again, however, Snow and Phillips questioned whether ‘conversion led to a reconstruction of personal biographies such that converts came to reevaluate their lives prior to joining’ as religious seekers.

To find evidence that Al Qaeda-linked participants had lost faith in their previous religion and actively sought to find answers elsewhere, the questionnaire asked participants to explain the role religion has played in their lives, whether they had ever explored other religions, and if they had sought information about Islam and jihadism. Specifically, participants were asked about their online seeking behavior.

Evidence for religious seeking was mixed. All of the respondents reported actively searching for further information about Islam in general. Three of the six participants also admitted to partaking in activities to learn about jihadism. Much of this seeking behavior occurred online. However, the data do not show the full picture. External validation finds that not all of the participants were forthcoming about their involvement in jihadism. Some of the participants did not answer questions about jihadism, others lied in their responses. Therefore, while the data only show that three of the six of the participants are engaged in jihadist seekership, in reality, there may be others who engaged in such activities.

---

**Dissatisfaction with Prior Religious Traditions**

The first step to religious seeking that Lofland and Stark describe is a sense that one’s prior religious beliefs cannot adequately resolve one’s problems. At least four of the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported feeling this way. For Kelly, Christianity appeared to be the cause of [his/her] problems. Kelly recalled that [he/she] had a ‘Loss of confidence in the church [when] I discovered racism among the congregants and lack of their sincerity in my personal wellbeing’.  

Religion seemed to be a source of tension for Pat, too. [He/She] described feeling torn between commitment to religion and family, saying: ‘A sense of purpose and belonging is what I was seeking…I felt that I was somehow a hypocrite and needed to pick a side: Family guilt trips and dogmatic pressures that seem to be generally supported by the religious community at large’.

Other participants described feeling discouraged by what they felt was an incoherent message or failure of clergy to engage them in Christianity. As Sam recounted,

*I chose Islam as my religion because even though I never enjoyed going to church I knew there was a God and I believed in angels and the prophets… Any time I asked questions to religious leaders they never responded the same way and many could not really answer my questions. When I started studying Islam it just made a lot of sense to me. It made more sense than Christianity ever did and explained things to me that Christianity could not do so.*

Likewise, Shannon explained,

*I felt the people for the most part are hypocrites. They say their religious yet they go against their own teachings from the Torah and Bible. Also the bible has changed so much over time but the Quran has never been changed since it was written over 1400 years ago.*

---

683 Participant questionnaire C106  
684 Participant questionnaire C123  
685 Participant questionnaire C132
Muslims live their lives according the Quran and our prophet’s teachings.\textsuperscript{686}

Active Seeking-Islam

Next, it was necessary to determine if the participants had actively sought out ‘some satisfactory system of religious meaning’, as Lofland and Stark describe.\textsuperscript{687} To measure active seeking, the Al Qaeda-linked participants were asked about seeking within Islam in general with the question: ‘In the past, where did you go to get information and learn about Islam’? As the table shows, nearly all of the participants reported seeking out information about Islam from multiple sources. The most popular source for information was from friends and the mosque (5), followed by Internet clerics, and Internet forums, and books (4), and family and public events (3), as shown in table 4.

![Table 3: Seeking Islamic information](table_3)

For some of the participants, online religious seeking was an obsessive behavior. Some of the respondents reported spending hours per day online reading about Islam and speaking with other Muslims. Sam’s experience provides a good example of religious seeking. [He/She] related:

\textit{I did not become interested for my own personal reasons until 2008.}

\textit{Then I researched Islam for an English report. After the report was turned in I researched Islam for myself. After the report was finished I would stay up late at night after work after my son was asleep and}

\textsuperscript{686} Participant questionnaire C131

\textsuperscript{687} Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,”
do nothing but talk to people online about Islam, watch videos, read websites. The time I had set aside for schoolwork was replaced by research of Islam. However, this did not affect my grades or my ability to perform on exams and homework.688

While all of the participants reported searching for answers about Islam, in general, this behavior does not necessarily confirm that the religious seeking factor was instrumental in the respondents’ religious change. After all, the argument of this thesis is that the ‘World Saver’ models accounts for radicalisation to jihadism, not conversion to Islam. Further confounding the issue, is that there is no scholarly consensus that there is a distinct division between Islam and jihadism. Some scholars argue that jihadism is an extreme version of Islam, while others argue that it is separate and distinct. Moreover, jihadists see themselves as Muslims.689 Therefore, it is difficult to determine if an individual seeking information about Islam was actually seeking or finding information about jihadism or vice-verse.

Active Seeking-Jihadism

In order to parse Islamic seeking from jihadist seeking, the participants were also asked separately if they had actively searched for information about jihadism and if so, where. Only three of the participants admitted to jihadist seeking behaviors. As table 4 shows, those three respondents used several sources to learn about jihadism. The most popular were friends, social media, and video and audio lectures.

688 Participant questionnaire C132
Participants’ responses show that much of the jihadist seeking often took place on the Internet where the materials were widely available. Shannon’s description of searching for videos and other jihadists online was not unusual amongst the three participants, and offers a good example of jihadist religious seeking. When asked to explain in detail where [he/she] went to find out more about jihad or discuss the topic, Shannon replied:

I really like this question—I first was introduced to jihad by watching videos and then I actively looked for others (brothers) that believe in jihad after I saw what the Zionists were doing to my Ummah in Palestine. That changed my life I believe because I hurt so bad as did so many other brothers and sisters to see our Ummah suffering and being killed indiscriminately by the Zionist bombs. All I wanted was revenge and I encouraged my brothers to kill any Zionist that came into contact with them. I made pages a few times on YouTube and other sites devoted to jihad. When I watched jihad videos I reached out to the brothers that uploaded them and requested they accept me as a friend. This is the way I became and stayed interested in Jihad.\(^{690}\)

What is particularly salient about Shannon’s description of jihadist seeking is that [he/she] specifically explains [his/her] seeking was driven by [his/her]

\(^{690}\) Participant questionnaire C131
tension from social problems (i.e. empathy for the suffering of Palestinians). Moreover, learning more about jihadism and connecting with jihadists was a ‘life changing’ event that seems to have resolved the tension.691

Without the complete and truthful responses of all of the respondents, it is difficult to know the full extent of Al Qaeda-linked participants’ religious seeking behaviors. Nonetheless, the available data suggest that Greil and Rudy’s assertion that ‘a pattern of seekership seems more likely…when the group involved is stigmatised’ seems well founded.692 The nature of Al Qaeda means that the group’s supporters rarely operate openly. For the most part, jihadist recruitment has moved underground or to the Internet where recruiters and propagandists can more easily operate beyond the reach of law enforcement.693 This is likely why much of the jihadist seeking behavior amongst the participants took place online or through friend networks.

It is also important to note that three of the six Al Qaeda-linked respondents reported very specific, concrete examples of active seeking. As mentioned, Snow and Phillips contend that reports of religious seeking would be based on reevaluations of one’s life after religious changing.694 This might be a fair criticism of the participants’ reports of dissatisfaction with prior religious traditions. Those recollections could be subjective feelings that may serve to justify the participants’ religious change. Conversely, it seems difficult to argue that reports of searching for information about jihadism online, watching jihadist videos and lectures are the result of ‘reconstruction of personal biographies’.695 Rather, these are tangible activities that suggest participants were actively involved in religious seeking.

**Turning point**

A turning point is the first situational factor in the ‘World Saver’ model. In order for an individual to make a religious change, he or she must be ready and available structurally and socially to make that change. Therefore, Lofland and Stark argue

---

691 Participant questionnaire C131
692 Greil and Rudy, “What have we learned from process models of conversion?,” 315
that shortly before coming into contact with the new religious movement, an individual must have experienced a pivotal change in his or her life. For example, Kox, Meeus, and Hart suggest that such events might be moving houses or changing jobs. In reality, a turning point could be any number of life events where a person has ended one phase of his or her life and is ready to move on to another phase. Nevertheless, Snow and Phillips object to the conceptualisation of the turning point factor. They contend that the term is ambiguous and the events described as turning points are too subjective and likely the result of retrospective analysis.

The data show that five of the six Al Qaeda-linked participants experienced changes that are suggestive of a turning point. From the questionnaire responses, two types of turning points stood out as common experiences.

**Death of a Loved One**
The first turning point was the recent death of a loved one. Four of the six participants described the death of a loved one shortly before their engagement with jihadism. For these participants, the death was not only a source of tension (as discussed above), but it also seems to have created a situation that allowed them to seek changes in their lives. For instance, Sam explained that [his/her] sibling was [his/her] only friend in life. When [he/she] died, Sam had no one left to confide in. Moreover, the death made Sam question [his/her] prior religious beliefs. Shortly afterwards, Sam began seeking information about Islam and having conversations with other Muslims online, where [he/she] first came into contact with jihadists.

**End of a Romantic Relationship**
Another common turning point was the end of a romantic relationship. Two of the participants described how a failed relationship changed their lives. As Sam explained, ‘I went through my 3 marriages before my arrest. I was abused only physically by the first one but emotionally by all of them. By the time the third one ended, I never wanted to be married again. I wanted nothing to do with

---

699 Participant questionnaire C132
relationships’. While Sam did not abstain from relationships as [he/she] thought [he/she] would, shortly after [his/her] third marriage ended, Sam became romantically involved with another person [he/she] met online. This time Sam’s lover was an Al Qaeda recruiter.

The end of Shannon’s relationship had the same result. [He/She] recounted:

I was living with my [boyfriend/girlfriend] for about 7 years before I left America. I left America about 2 months before I was arrested. When I was living with my [boy/girl]friend for the first few years were got along great. Then a time came when I was informed that my [boyfriend/girlfriend] was having sex with my [sibling]. Needless to say I was devastated when I heard that. But I stayed living with [him/her]. I naturally lost respect and love for [him/her]. That’s when I joined different sites to meet [men/women]. [boyfriend/girlfriend] went to work early in the morning and stayed at work ’til 7 or 8 at night. While [he/she] was at work I stayed on the Internet all day.

While searching for romance online as [his/her] relationship failed, Shannon also met an Al Qaeda recruiter. Left with the choice of staying with [his/her] [boyfriend/girlfriend] or leaving the country to meet [his/her] new Al Qaeda love interest, Shannon decided to leave the United States and train for jihad.

Very few of the participants experienced the turning points which Kox, Meeus, and Hart hypothesised (i.e. job change and moving houses). One exception was Kelly, whose turning point encompasses both moving house and changing jobs. Due to a job change, Kelly’s spouse had to move across the country. However, Kelly’s job required [him/her] to stay behind. He recalled,

I spent most of my time with my [spouse] and children. I was their sole supporter and mostly working when I was not with them. We

---

700 Participant questionnaire C132
701 Participant questionnaire C132
702 Participant questionnaire C131
703 Participant questionnaire C131
planned to move from [name of state] to [name of state] and because of my work I had to stay in [name of state] for a year before I could join them in [name of state]. During that time I lived with my [spouse’s] [parent] and spent more time at the mosque and more time with a few Muslim friends’. 705

External data suggests that Kelly’s radicalisation occurred during the period while [his/her] spouse was away, leaving Kelly more time to socialise with [his/her] jihadist friend.706

What is evident from the turning point examples above is that they are all objective events that can be directly traced to a pivotal moment in the Al Qaeda-linked participants’ lives that brought them into contact with the jihadist movement. The end of old romantic relationships led Sam and Shannon to new romantic relationships with hardened Al Qaeda operatives. A job and move gave Kelly the reason and opportunity to spend more time with a jihadist friend.707 These events stand in contrast to the emotional, cognitive, and moral turning points which Snow and Phillips argue are ‘constituted by illuminating insight or by heightened or renewed faith’. 708

Cult affective bonds

In order for someone to join a religious movement, Lofland and Stark contend that he or she needs to have an affective personal connection with the group. The person might have a pre-existing affective relationship with a member of that group, or he or she may develop an emotional bond with someone from the movement after an initial meeting. Whichever the case, without this second situational factor, religious change is unlikely. 709

To determine if the participants in the study had an affective bond with another jihadist, the participants were asked how they first came into contact with the
jihadist ideology and to describe the extent of their relationship with other jihadists. Thematic codes ‘pre-existing bond’, ‘developed bond’, and ‘frequency of contact’ were also applied to other participant statements to identify other data relating to cult-affective bonds elsewhere in the questionnaire. Additional measures were added to determine if participants’ bonds with jihadists developed online or in person.

Analysis of the questionnaires finds that four of the six participants reported having an affective bond with a jihadist prior to radicalisation. For two of the respondents, the relationships were pre-existing. Two other participants developed relationships with jihadists after their first encounter. The relationships that developed later were made online. Additionally, external sources confirmed that two other participants had close pre-existing relationships with jihadists.

**Table 5: Cult affective bonds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Who introduced you to jihadism?</th>
<th>How close were you to this person?</th>
<th>How old were you when you met him/her?</th>
<th>How many members of your family are jihadists?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Imam/cleric</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Very few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>Online relationship</td>
<td>Very close</td>
<td>44-45</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Online relationship</td>
<td>Very close</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-existing Bond**

In their study, Lofland and Stark found that most of the people who joined the Unification Church ‘moved through pre-existing friendship pairs or nets’.\(^{710}\) Comparatively, only two of the respondents in this study reported being introduced to jihadism via pre-existing social networks. For example, Pat’s sibling was a

---

jihadist. Pat recalled moving in with [his/her] jihadist older sibling before ‘falling into sway’. 711 When asked to explain the details surrounding [his/her] first encounter with jihadism and who first introduced [him/her] to the concept, Kelly also explained that [his/her] best friend was a jihadist:

The one person who I considered my "best friend" apparently felt that way [was a jihadist]. [He/She] did not tell me about how [he/she] felt and I had very little contact with [him/her] 5 years before my arrest. I first became aware of how [he/she] felt after I was arrested and had to listen to conversations with [him/her] that were recorded surreptitiously. Nevertheless I am in prison because I called [him/her] my best friend and the government claims that I had to have known how [he/she] thought because of that. 712

Kelly denied [his/her] knowledge of the friend’s ideology. However, transcripts from undercover recordings show Kelly discussing jihad with [his/her] friend. Likewise, external data also show that Alex and Cory had pre-existing close friendships with jihadists.

Developed Bond

Lofland and Stark found that people who joined the Unification Church without a pre-existing bond to a member, often developed an immediate, powerful, and sometimes sexual attraction with a member soon after coming into contact. 713 This finding is consistent with the way many of the participants in this study developed bonds with other jihadists. Three of the participants reported developing close, affective relationships with jihadists after the first meeting. The instantaneous attraction that Lofland and Stark describe is very clear in Shannon’s description of [his/her] first encounter with a jihadist. [He/She] recalled:

I joined a couple of sites online to find [men/women]. While I was checking my mail on one of the sites a [brother/sister] saw I was

711 Pat noted in his questionnaire that other members of [his/her] family were jihadists. External sources confirmed that [his/her] sibling was a jihadist.
712 Participant questionnaire C106
online and [he/she] instant messaged me. I’d ask what [he/she] was looking for. [He/she] said something silly like ‘I was looking for trouble’. [He/she] then asked if I was Muslim because that site was mainly all Muslims. I said no. Then [he/she] asked what was my religion I told [him/her] I didn’t ascribe to any particular religion but I do believe in God and I fear him. [He/She] then stated [sic] telling me about Islam. We talked online for a couple of weeks. [He/She] told me a lot about Islam. After [he/she] told me so much I decided that Islam is the best religion its [sic] not a religion where you go to church once a week then run around sinning the rest of the week. Islam is a way for life. You live your life every day worshiping Allah and follow the way of our prophet. I really believe Islam is the best religion and Muslims are the best people.

I met a [brother/sister] that made me feel like jihad is the only way to live as a Muslim. It’s like Muslims against all the non-Muslims. I was taught to be gentle to the Muslims and harsh to the non-Muslims. My [brothers/sisters] in Al Qaida would tell me stories about how Muslims won wars against the Jews and Christians. [He/She] made me see I could be a great benefit to the Ummah because I don’t look like the typical Muslim and I could be around non-Muslims without them knowing I am a Muslim so they won’t suspect me of anything and I can blend in. I admire my [brothers/sisters] that are striving for jihad. They are the most loving and religious of all my Ummah. All I thought about before I was arrested was jihad and how I could make a difference to my Ummah and give them something that that would make them happy. I felt that assignment my brother gave me to kill that [person] would make him happy and I would be rewarded by going to Jinnah (paradise).  

Although Shannon only spent a few months interacting with jihadists online, [his/her] intense feelings of love and camaraderie for ‘brother and sister’ jihadists is

---

714 Participant questionnaire C131
palpable in the above passage. When asked how [he/she] would rate [his/her] relationship with the person who introduced [him/her] to jihadism, Shannon stated: ‘Very close. I love my brothers and sisters and I still love them’.\footnote{715} In fact, Shannon loves them so much, [he/she] expressed a willingness to kill to make them happy.

Sam’s experience was similar. [He/she] met a jihadist online. Although Sam was initially skeptical that the jihadist might be a federal agent trying to entrap [him/her], Sam apparently overcame that hesitation, married the person, and left the country to live with [him/her]. Sam recalled:

\begin{quote}
It was five months after I converted to Islam. I was contacted by this [person] who later turned out to be my [spouse], telling me to contact another [brother/sister]. We started talking and at first [he/she] mentioned to me al-wala- wal bara. He told me that it’s the obligation of over [sic] Muslim to migrate to a place that is not at war with Muslims. It was not taught to me that all Muslims must fight jihad but men were and women could help if needed. I did not know if I could trust [him/her]. I thought it was quite odd that the very day we started speaking [he/she] started speaking about jihad in depth. I thought [he/she] was a Fed.\footnote{716}
\end{quote}

**Frequency of Contact**

Kox, Meeus, and Hart measured the frequency of contact between participants and their friends in the group to determine the strength of the participants’ relationships with the group.\footnote{717} This study also attempted to ascertain the magnitude of the relationship between the participants and the jihadists who radicalised them using Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s role-relation method. On a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘none’ to ‘a great deal’, participants were asked to recall the amount of spare time that they spent with the jihadists who introduced them to jihadism, and

\footnotetext[715]{Participant questionnaire C131\footnote{716}Participant observation C132\footnote{717}Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 233.}
the amount of emotional support those jihadists provided them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Spare Time</th>
<th>Emotional Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 6 shows, the participants who responded all spent a substantial amount of time with their jihadist attachment. However, despite the feelings of love and camaraderie that the participants sometimes expressed for these relationships, they reported receiving very little emotional support.

Most of the research on the ‘World Saver’ model found *cult affective bonds* to be an important factor in religious change. In fact, Snow and Phillips found it to be the most significant factor in their study.\(^{718}\) Having or developing a relationship with a jihadist seemed to be a significant factor for the participants in this study too. Although several of the respondents were not truthful in their questionnaires, three of the six participants freely admitted to having a close relationship to a jihadist. A fourth admitted to being best friends with a jihadist, but denied knowing the friend held such beliefs. Considering this data along with corroborating external information on the remaining participants, it is evident that all six of the participants had pre-existing relationships with a jihadist or developed such a relationship during their radicalisation.

**Extra-cult affective bonds**

The third situational factor in the ‘World Saver’ model states that an individual must have few or weak extra-cult bonds or neutralise those bonds to make a religious change.\(^{719}\) In most cases, Lofland and Stark found that the people who joined the

Unification Church were ‘social atoms’. Often, they were disaffected with, or geographically distant from family. Others purposely cut themselves off from people outside of the movement. Whatever the case, people undergoing religious change do not have strong social network.

To determine if the participants in this study had weak social networks before radicalising, their social attachments were measured with four methods. First, the questionnaire applied Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s role-relation method, whereby the participants rated the amount of spare time they spent with a standard set of people in their social networks and how much material and emotional support the participants received from each of those people five years before their most recent arrest. Next, Muslim convert participants were asked to indicate on a scale how their families and friends reacted to their conversion. Third, participants scored their relationships with their local Muslim communities. Finally, an open-ended question asked participants to describe the quality of their relationships with family and friends five years before their most recent arrest.

Overall, the participants in this study were very socially disconnected. They spent very little time with other people, and the quality of those relationships was poor. At least half of the participants experienced problems with their local Islamic community that made it difficult to integrate. Moreover, convert participants’ family and friends did not react positively to their conversion. In some cases, the participants’ religious conversion further weakened their social networks.

**Personal Networks**

To measure the strength and quality of participants’ personal networks, they were asked to rate relationships with eight types of social connections (i.e. partner, non-Muslim friends, mother, father, siblings, relative, Muslim friends, and acquaintances) on a five-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 0= never, 1=little, 2= somewhat, 3= much, 4=a great deal.) For each social connection, respondents were asked to consider their lives five years before their most recent arrest and indicate how much of their spare time was spent with each of those connections and

---

720 Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 872
721 Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model.” 234
how much materials and emotional support they received from them. For each participant the mean was calculated for spare time, material support, and emotional support.

The participants’ responses on the role-relation scales show that they were all extremely socially isolated five years before their most recent arrest. Table 7 shows the amount of spare time participants spent with others. The spare time mean ranged from 1 to 1.875. The mean spare time score for all for the participants is 1.5. In other words, on average, the respondents spent little time with other people.

Participants reported receiving even less material support from their social networks. Table 8 shows that the material support mean score ranges from 0.125 to 2.6. Only one participant reported receiving more than a moderate amount of material support from his or her personal network. The mean material support score for all for the participants is 1.14. Again, on average, participants reported little material support from friends, family, or acquaintances.

The participants also reported low amounts of emotional support. The mean score for emotional support ranges from 0.125 to 3.37. Only one of the participants described receiving much emotional support. The remainder received very little emotional support. The mean emotional support score for all for the participants is 1.16. Therefore, on average participants received little emotional support from their social networks.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Non-Muslim Friends</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Sibling</th>
<th>Relative</th>
<th>Muslim Friends</th>
<th>Acquaint</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Non-Muslim Friends</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Sibling</th>
<th>Relative</th>
<th>Muslim Friends</th>
<th>Acquaint</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Extra-cult affective bonds-emotional support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Non-Muslim Friend</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Sibling</th>
<th>Relative</th>
<th>Muslim Friend</th>
<th>Acquaint</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To obtain a more granular view of why the participants had such weak social networks, they were asked to describe the quality of their relationships with friends and family five years prior to their most recent arrest. Kelly explained that there was no specific conflict within [his/her] family. However, by nature they were distant. [He/She] recalled: ‘My siblings were always distant and cool and almost never visited me, although I visited them. The distance and coolness was not specifically towards me but was general in my family’.723

Sam’s social situation was more complex than Kelly’s. Sam suffered from very low self-esteem and had difficulties making friends. [He/She] recounted: ‘I never had any friends and was always shunned and hated by everyone so I kept everything to myself… I was very much an introvert’.724 Sam also had a difficult relationship with [his/her] parents and other family members. Sam recalled:

*My [parent] was bipolar and diagnosed late in life. My parents divorced when I was Seven [sic]. I felt like the black sheep of the*

---

723 Participant questionnaire C106
724 Participant questionnaire C132
family on both [sides of my family]. Never grew any strong relations with relatives. I believe because during my younger years I had hearing problems and did not have surgery to repair hearing until I was a teenager. Therefore, no bonds were ever built as a young child with relatives.

With my [parent], [he/she] gave no support to the marriage at all and preferred that I live with [him/her] so [he/she] could have more control over me. Most of my time was spent (free time) with my [parent] and [child] if not with them my [spouse] and [child]. Outside work, I did not associate with anybody else except them because I have no friends. Every once in a while, for alone time, I would drive the streets and watch people have fun. Many times I would take my [child] to the mountains and we would walk around the woods.

The only time I really saw another family member was if someone died. The time I did spend around them was strange. My [sibling] and I were never close. The majority of our communications with each other was how I could help him. The relationship between my [parent] and [his/her] [spouse] effected [sic] me as well because my [parent] came to me with problems.

**Negative Reaction to Conversion**

For the Muslim convert participants, there is evidence that their religious conversion may have further weakened their social networks. To measure how religious conversion affected participants’ relationships with others, they were asked to score the reactions of friends and family to their conversion as positive, negative, or neutral. Two of the participants reported that their families reacted negatively to their conversion, while the other two answered that the reaction was neutral. The participants’ friends were somewhat more forgiving about their conversions. Only one respondent recalled a negative reaction from friends. The others reported neutral

---

725 Participant questionnaire C132
reactions. Nonetheless, it is notable that none of the four participants in this study received a positive reaction when they converted to Islam.

Sam was particularly vocal about the difficulties surrounding [his/her] religious conversion. [He/she] recalled:

> When my family found out I reverted to Islam they really laid it on. I thought my [parent] was going to have a heart attack. The constant and daily attacks were the main reason I left so many of my [spouses]. I just wanted to get away from it as fast as possible.

> My [parent] did the absolute best to prevent me from teaching my [child] anything about Islam. I was not allowed to practice religion around [him/her] and when I did [he/she] would call me all sorts of foul names and end up screaming matches

> I think that for converts their families’ reaction to it affects them greatly. But you only asked about relationships about 5 years before recent arrest but you did not ask about relationships after conversion or right before it. These relationships affected me greatly and was the main factor in my decision making process.726

**Relations with Local Islamic Community**

Another factor that could potentially weaken participants’ social networks is their relationships with their local Islamic community. There are a number of factors that can complicate this relationship. As Wiktorowicz argues, an age gap between the mosque leadership and the youth can cause younger Muslims to feel alienated. Ethnicity and language differences can also inhibit integration into an Islamic community.727 These factors can affect both Muslim converts and non-converts. If the community has a strong ethnic character or heritage language, American-born Muslims, especially converts, may feel unwelcome. On the contrary, if the

---

726 Participant questionnaire C132
community is well integrated into American society and holds sermons in English, it may be off-putting to recent immigrants. A community’s dominant sect or the bent of its beliefs can also affect how accepted new members feel. As the table shows, half of the participants reported problems integrating into their local Islamic communities. The most common complaint was a difference in language.

Table 10: Relations with Islamic community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnic</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Lang</th>
<th>Sect</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the participants reported that the difficulties they experienced in the local Islamic community affected how welcome they felt. Pat felt particularly unwelcome, recalling, ‘I felt like second class community member [sic]’. In part, Pat explained that this feeling was the result of [his/her] disagreement with the community’s interpretation of Islam. On the contrary, Shannon did not report any problems with [his/her] Islamic community. However, [his/her] induction into the Islamic world is quite unique. Shannon’s experience with Islam was almost entirely online. Moreover, [his/her] conversion and radicalisation was nearly simultaneous. Shannon was convinced to convert to Islam by an Al Qaeda recruiter.

Overall, the six participants were very socially isolated. One respondent, Cory, was almost totally isolated. Although some of them reported spending time with other people, the relationships were often low quality, offering little material or emotional support. A few participants maintained strong relationships with one or two people in their social networks. Often those were partners, mothers, or Muslim friends. However, in most cases it is difficult to know if those strong relationships were with

---

Participant questionnaire C123
Participant questionnaire C123
Participant questionnaire C123
Participant questionnaire C131
Participant questionnaire 134
other jihadists. For instance, Shannon reported strong relationships with other Muslims friends. Yet, it is clear from external sources that jihadists were the only Muslim friends with which Shannon had relationships. Similarly, Cory reported only having one friend. External sources show that friend was also a jihadist. Alex seemed to be the one exception. [He/she] had strong scores across spare time, material support, and emotional support.

**Intensive interaction**

Lofland and Stark contend that the previous six factors are sufficient to cause an individual to verbally commit to religious change. However, to become a *total convert*, the individual must experience the fourth situational factor by entering into a period of intensive interaction with other members of the group.

In the past, researchers have measured this factor by looking for evidence of face-to-face socialisation between joiners and members of the new religious group. For example, Kox, Meeus, and Hart measured the participants’ in-person ‘interaction-frequency with group members’. However, as technology has changed, people now socialise with others without ever meeting them in person. Therefore, this study looked for both face-to-face interactions between participants and jihadists and participants’ engagement with electronic jihadist media. Intensive interaction was measured by asking participants to score the amount of their free time they spent on eight different jihadist activities on a four-point Likert-type scale: *None of my free time*=0, *some of my free time*=1, *a lot of my free time*=2, *most of my free time*=4. The activities included interacting with jihadists on social media, watching jihadist fighting videos online, watching or listening to jihadist lectures online, reading jihadist literature online, attending jihadist talks and sermons in person, talking to friends and family in person about jihad, or socialising/spending leisure time generally with other jihadists.

Participant responses to this question were mixed. Unfortunately, the sensitive

---

732 Participant questionnaire C131
733 Participant questionnaire 134
734 Participant questionnaire 110
nature of asking the participants about their interaction with jihadism, means that a number of them were not truthful in their responses. Three of the participants answered that they had spent none of their free time engaging with jihadism. However, external validation shows that these individuals had indeed socialised with other jihadists.

Nonetheless, considering only the responses from the three participants who did answer truthfully, there is evidence to show that these individuals spent a fair bit of time socialising with other jihadists. As the table shows, by far, Shannon had the most frequent interaction. [He/she] spent most of [his/her] free time talking with other jihadists on social media, watching videos and electronic lectures about jihad, and spending face-to-face time with jihadists. Likewise, Pat reported spending most of [his/her] time socialising in person with other jihadists. Meanwhile, both Pat and Sam spent a lot of free time interacting with jihadists on social media.

In order to develop a deeper understanding of what this intensive interaction looked like amongst the participants, thematic codes for intensive interaction were applied to the questionnaire. Analysis shows that each of the participants described their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>e-Lecture</th>
<th>Lit.</th>
<th>Live Lecture</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Socialise</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>2 1 1 2 1 2 2 3</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>3 3 3 3 0 2 0 3</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

737 Participant questionnaire C131
738 Participant questionnaire C123
739 Participant questionnaire C123; C132
interactions differently. Pat seems to have spent much of [his/her] time in person with [his/her] jihadist friends and family. While Pat did not expound greatly on [his/her] experience, [he/she] spoke often about deliberating about dogma with jihadist family members. Pat further recalled ‘The majority of my “free” time before this arrest was spent attempting to further my understanding of jihad as it was explained by others’.740

On the contrary, most of Shannon’s socialising was done online. As [he/she] explained:

I was always talking to others online about jihad and that’s all I thought about. I would get up in the morning and get on line [sic] and stay online all day and most nights. I would always wait for my most beloved [brothers/sisters] to come online so I could talk to them…I only spoke to brothers online that lives and will die or jihad.741

Sam’s intensive interaction experience encompasses both online and in-person socialisation:

It was not until I arrived in [country] is when [he/she] started telling me that all non-Muslims were enemy combatants and because they wither [sic] served in the military or because they support or pay taxes to the Kafir government.

Most of my information came from my [spouse]. I has [sic] also a member of a few forums that encouraged jihad. I was invited to these by my…co-defendant. When I was on my own I pretty much only watched jihadi videos on my own as well as I had my own collection of them.

My [spouse] would pull up lecture and I would watch them. I was

740 Participant questionnaire C123
741 Participant questionnaire C131
only interested in jihad because for the great injustice done in GTMO, Afghanistan, and Iraq. I knew somehow instinctively that Jihad was part of Islam. Later I actually read about it. I could not be convinced that suicide bombings was [sic] legitimate even though it was taught to me and I watched videos of people who were going to perform suicide bombings (sent to me by my [spouse]) watching jihadi videos was an everyday thing for me. Talking about jihad was an everyday thing as well. Only my circle of people was very small.

My in depth teaching of jihad came from one person and even though [he/she] tried to convince me of the extreme ideology, I rejected it in my mind and heart. I prefer to verify information given to me. Yes. I do have a story and plan to reveal it.  

Examined closely, there is a distinct difference in the nature of each of the three participants’ interaction with jihadists. Pat’s interaction seemed to be one of mutual discussion with others and reflective deliberation about jihadism. By contrast, Shannon’s interaction was self-initiated and more or less an extension of [his/her] jihadist seeking. Shannon does not seem to have done much deliberating. Rather, [he/she] blindly followed what others told [him/her] about Islam and jihad. Pat and Shannon’s experiences are different than those identified in past tests of the ‘World Saver’ model. For instance, Austin, Lynch, and Snow and Phillips described mandatory courses and assigned spiritual guides that indoctrinated recruits preceding their religious change. Only Sam’s experience mirrors the intensive interaction that previous researchers described. Sam was isolated with [his/her] spouse and sat down to watch jihadist lectures.

Change in relationships and ideas
Loftland and Stark argued that people who experienced the seven previous

---

742 Participant questionnaire C132
743 Participant questionnaire C131, C123.
745 Participant questionnaire C132
conditions would become ‘total converts, who exhibit their commitment through deeds and words’ to become ‘deployable agents for the movement’. Kox Meeus and Hart hypothesised that total conversion would be observable by changes in participants’ relationships and ideas before and after their conversion. Namely, the strength and quality of their social networks would diminish and their ideas about key aspects of life would change.

However, some researchers have found that people who experience religious change actually become closer to friends and family outside of their new religious group. Snow and Phillips argue that whether extra-cult bonds become stronger or weaker depends on the nature of the religious group that a person joins. If an individual joins an evangelical group, his or her relationships outside of that group will become stronger as he or she seeks to recruit others. However, if the group is communal or deviant, the extra-group ties will weaken as the joiner seeks to break away to live communally or cover up deviant behavior.

To determine if the Al Qaeda-linked participants’ relationships had changed as the result of their socialisation with the jihadist movement, this study again used Kox, Meeus and Hart’s role relation method. Participants were asked to rate relationships with eight types of social connections (i.e. partner, non-Muslim friends, mother, father, siblings, relative, Muslim friends, and acquaintances) on a five-point Likert-type scale (i.e. 0= never, 1= little, 2= somewhat, 3= much, 4= a great deal). For each social connection, respondents were asked to consider their lives in the few months before their most recent arrest and indicate how much of their spare time was spent with each of those connections and how much materials and emotional support they received from them. For each participant, the mean was calculated for spare time, material support, and emotional support. The mean scores were then compared with the mean scores from the earlier role-relation questions about their relationships five years before their most recent arrest.

Results for a change in relationships were mixed. Overall, participants spent less time with their social networks and had weaker relationships in the few months preceding their arrest than they did five years before. However, a few participants saw no change in their relationships between the two points in time.

**Spare Time**
Table 12 shows that the results for a change in spare time were mixed. Three of the participants reported that on average, they spent less spare time with members of their social networks in the few months preceding their arrest than they had five years before. However, two reported spending more time with their social networks. One respondent reported no change.

**Material Support**
However, table 13 shows that the amount of material support that Al Qaeda-linked participants received from their social networks diminished. Four of the participants reported that, on average, the amount of material support they received from the standard set of participants was less in the few months before their arrest than it was five years before. Only one reported that [he/she] was receiving more material support than earlier. One reported no change.

**Emotional support**
The Al Qaeda-linked participants also saw diminished emotional support from their social networks. Table 14 shows that four of the participants reported that, on average, the amount of emotional support they received from the standard set of participants was less in the few months before their arrest than it was five years before. Only one reported that [he/she] was receiving more emotional support than earlier. One reported no change.
### Table 12: Change in relations spare time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mean score 5 years before arrest</th>
<th>Mean Score few months before arrest</th>
<th>Mean Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>1.125</td>
<td>1.375</td>
<td>+0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>1.875</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-0.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.875</td>
<td>-0.375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 13: Change in relations-material support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mean score 5 years before arrest</th>
<th>Mean Score few months before arrest</th>
<th>Mean Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.875</td>
<td>-0.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>2.625</td>
<td>2.625</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>+0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>0.375</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>-0.375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14: Change in relations-emotional support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mean score 5 years before arrest</th>
<th>Mean Score few months before arrest</th>
<th>Mean Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>2.375</td>
<td>-0.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change in Ideas
Changes in participants’ ideas were measured in three ways. First, the Al Qaeda-linked participants were asked to think back to the few months prior to their most recent arrest and rate the importance of their religious beliefs and the frequency of their prayer and religious service attendance on Likert-type scales. The score from a few months before their most recent arrest was compared with the earlier scores from five years before their most recent arrest. The change was calculated as a positive number for an increase in religious beliefs and practices and a negative number for a decrease. Overall, participants’ beliefs and practices grew stronger over the period from five years before their most recent arrest to a few months before. Next, the participants were asked three multiple choice questions about the meaning of jihad. Finally, participants were asked to explain their understanding of the term jihad in an open-ended question. Admittedly, the last two measures cannot determine if there was a change in the participants’ beliefs about jihad. However, they do provide some insight into the Al Qaeda-linked participants’ current thinking about jihad, which may reveal whether or not they ever fully embraced the jihadist ideology.

Importance of Religion
Participants rated the importance of religion on a five-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1= very unimportant, 2= unimportant, 3= neutral, 4= important, 5= very important). As table 15 shows, three of the participants reported an increase in the importance of religion. Three reported no change. However, those who reported no change were already at the maximum score and could not report a higher score. It is especially interesting to note that five years before the arrest participants’ feelings about religion varied significantly. However, in the measurement in the few months before the arrest, all participants reported uniformly that religion was very important.
Table 15: Change in ideas-importance of religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>How important was religion 5 years before your arrest?</th>
<th>How important was religion a few months before your arrest?</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of participants’ prayer was measured on an 8-point Likert-type scale (i.e. 0= never, 1= once per month or less, 2= less than once per day, 3= 1x day, 4= 2 x day, 5= 3 x day, 6= 4 x day, 7= 5 x day, 8= more than 5 x per day). Overall, participants prayed more frequently in the period a few months before their most recent arrest. As table 16 shows, four of the participants reported an increase in prayer frequency. Two reported no change. However, once again, those who reported no change were already at the maximum score and could not report a higher score. As with the importance of religion, frequency of prayer varied significantly five years before the participants’ arrests. However, when measured again in the few months before the arrest, all participants reported uniformly praying more than five times per day.

Table 16: Change in ideas-frequency of prayer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>How often did you pray 5 years before your arrest?</th>
<th>How often did you pray a few months before your arrest</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The frequency of participants’ religious service attendance was measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (i.e. 0= never, 1= almost never, 2= Once a year, 3= a few times per months, 4= once per week, 5= more than once per week, 6= more than once per day). As Table 17 shows, three of the participants reported an increase in prayer frequency. Two reported no change. As with the last two scales, those who reported no change were already at the maximum score and could not report a higher score. Surprisingly, participants did not report uniform religious service attendance in the period a few months before their most recent arrest. Moreover, unlike the importance of religion and frequency of prayer scales, where changes between the two time periods resulted in maximum scores across the board, only two participants reported attending mosque the maximum of more than once per day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>How often did you attend religious services 5 years before your arrest?</th>
<th>How often did you attend religious services a few months before your arrest?</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Views on Jihad-Multiple Choice**

The Al Qaeda-linked participants’ understanding of jihad was measured with three multiple choice questions about jihad. Each question offered the participants three possible answers that represent a spectrum of Islamic thought from mainstream to militant.\(^{752}\) Overall, the answers varied significantly. Regarding the question: *Some people say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is*

protecting the Muslim Ummah through war. What do you think? most of the participants responded that jihad was both an internal struggle and a justification to protect other Muslims with war. Only one participant believed that jihad was solely for self-reflection. For the second question: Some people say only a Muslim state/government can use military force to protect a Muslim country or Ummah in the name of jihad. Others say individuals and non-state organisations can use violence in the name of jihad. What do you think? Three of the participants responded that jihad should be a state-sponsored endeavor only, one answered that it was an individual responsibility, and one replied that it was both. Regarding the third question, Some people say that protecting the Ummah through war in the name of Islam in the name of jihad is part of Islam, but does not have a place in the modern world, much like slavery. Others say that this form of jihad is one of the most important duties that an individual Muslim can undertake, what do you think? Two participants refused to answer. Three agreed that violent jihad is one of a Muslim’s most important obligations, and one participant replied that neither answer reflected the role of jihad in Islam.

Table 18: Some people say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim Ummah through war. What do you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Solely a Personal struggle for righteousness</th>
<th>Both a personal struggle and for protecting the Muslim Ummah through war</th>
<th>Solely protecting the Muslim Ummah through war</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shann on</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19: Some people say only A Muslim State/government can use military force to protect a Muslim country or Ummah in the name of jihad. Other say individuals and non-state organisations can use violence in the name of jihad. What do you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Only A Muslim State/government can use military force…</th>
<th>Both Muslim states/governments can use military force …</th>
<th>Only individuals and non-state organisations can use violence…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20: Some people say that protecting the Ummah through war in the name of Islam in the name of jihad is part of Islam, but does not have a place in the modern world, much like slavery. Others say that this form of jihad is one of the most important duties that an individual Muslim can undertake, what do you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>…does not have a place in the modern world</th>
<th>None of the above</th>
<th>… is one of the most important duties that an individual Muslim can undertake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Views on Jihad-Open-ended**

Finally, participants were asked about their views of jihad in an open-ended question: *Please explain in detail your understanding of the meaning of Jihad and how it pertains to your life as a Muslim.* Overall, the respondents understanding of jihad was mixed. Their responses generally fell into three categories: Those who believe that jihad is primarily a personal struggle, but also a justification for self-defense or defense of the Muslim Ummah; those who believe that jihad is primarily a justification for self-defense or defense of the Muslim Ummah, but also a personal struggle; and those who believe that jihad is solely a violent act in defense of the Muslim Ummah.

Pat and Cory’s statements fit best in the first category. They argued that jihad was mostly a non-violent struggle to better oneself and society within the constraints of the rule of law and that violent self-defense was only a last resort.

Pat explained jihad as largely a struggle for social justice, with very little justification for violence, even in self-defense. Pat explained:

> Jihad is to struggle with your utmost. To do good over bad Anything [sic] from working hard to provide a good life to defending your rights or the rights of others is included. Offensively compelling others to see your viewpoint and accept your interpretations and understandings is not in any part of jihad. Any human rights activist is a “jihadi” for struggling to overcome social injustice. It crosses the line of righteousness to injustice if you violate the laws in order to overcome said social injustice. The concept that when the laws to do not permit one to peacefully and effectively over some injustice then that validates the use of violent actions is still banned by the laws of humanity, i.e. human rights. Killing isn’t the solution. Migrating away from the injustice is what jihad calls for. Only if the doers of the injustice follow you and continue to compel you through offensive warfare, are you permitted to defends[sic] yourself with the rules.
Even then, it is said in the Quran that patience and forgiveness are the superior way to be evaluated. 753

Cory described jihad as mostly a spiritual and intellectual pursuit. Of the five points of jihad [he/she] used to define jihad, only one made vague reference to physical defense. Cory reported:

Jihad is:
  a. A struggle for the cause of Allah.
  b. Gain knowledge
  c. Protecting your family, religion, property, yourself
  d. Protecting yourself against satan
  e. Never using violence as an excuse or in the name of our religion 754

Sam and Kelly’s responses comprise the second category. Their answers mostly focused on defensive violent jihad. Although, both referenced the non-violent aspects of jihad.

Sam, however, speaks of jihad more in the context of an individual obligation. [He/She] explains:

My understanding of jihad despite the education I received is: Jihad is to defend the Muslim Ummah. No women children or non-fighters are legitimate targets. Suicide bombing is haram. Overthrowing Muslim leaders is incorrect. It’s my understanding that the Bosnian war was the most recent legitimate jihad. This is all based on my up to date knowledge and I still need educating on the matter.

At the time of my arrest it was quite similar. However, I am strongly against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I understand the anger and frustration of the Muslims fighters but I don’t agree with their method.

753 Participant questionnaire C123
754 Participant questionnaire 134
I also believe that jihad is a personal struggle and jihad for a woman is hajj. I also believe that women helped and participated to an extent when the Prophet was fighting jihad.

I know that there are rules regarding jihad but I have not been formally educated to these rules.

I also view all war as violent no matter who is fighting it. And anytime you have to fight someone to defend yourself against violence.

I don't believe that the only solution to a problem is automatic violence. I believe that if a person attacks another person or country the other party has a right to respond in proportion.

Again, I do not agree with the killing of innocent bystanders on any side.755

Conversely, Kelly’s reference to jihad seems to take the position that jihad is a tool of statecraft, rather than an individual obligation. Kelly:

Jihad is part of Islam. It is discussed throughout our Quran but it is clearly not necessarily war. If there is no Islamic state, then there is no one who can authorise war. An Islamic state cannot exist simply on the pronouncement of any lunatic. It can only exist if established by righteous people seeking to establish the good and not through committing atrocities. Its purpose is the same as a Jewish state.

Clearly Europeans and American have no understanding of Islam. The general posture of Europeans and Americans seems to be that Islam itself represents and [sic] existential threat to European and American values. As well as their governments take aggressive
postures against Muslims worldwide [sic]. I believe that much of this is power politics and greed, but much of it is Christianity and defense of that. Currently there is a continuous propaganda war against Islam out of fear of Islam that is not justified. Under those circumstances any European or American would assert the right to self-defense, yet the Muslims assert the right the world condemns it. This does not necessarily mean Military conflict but any sincere person must admit that there comes a point where it may be necessary (e.g. WWI, WWII). 756

Shannon’s response was by far the most militant and belongs to the third category. Whereas others seemed to suggest that the violent aspect of jihad was one of self-defense and last resort, Shannon appears to argue that violence is a virtuous obligation that bestows saint-like favour with God.

Shannon:

Jihad is the best way for a Muslim to go to Jinnah. The Brothers that died in jihad are among the most loved in Jinnah. We sacrifice all for the love of Islam. For all of us that fall either to death or prison more will rise. I personally felt my brothers honored me by giving me a way to help the Ummah. Either by giving them financial support or killing [NAME] they honored me because I’m just a [DELETED] and [DELETED] are never given assignments like the ones I was given. 757

The exploratory nature of this study makes it impossible to say whether the Al Qaeda-linked participants became total convert as a result of the preceding conditions. An exploratory study cannot identify causal relationships. However, there is some evidence that the participants’ relationships and ideas changed in the direction that Kox, Meeus, and Hart hypothesised that they would. 758 The ‘World Saver’ model argues that as individuals become more involved in a new religious organisation, they will sever ties with external social networks and begin a period of

---

756 Participant questionnaire C106
757 Participant questionnaire C131
758 Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model” 234.
intensive socialisation with the group. Kox, Meeus, and Hart believed that this behavior would manifest in empirically smaller and weaker social networks. For the six Al Qaeda-linked participants in this study, there is evidence to suggest that their hypothesis is well grounded. Overall, the participants in this study spent less time with their social networks and received less support from those networks in the few months before their arrests than they had five years earlier.

Similarly, there was an observable change in the religious beliefs and practices of most participants. Prayer frequency increased significantly amongst the majority of the Al Qaeda-linked participants from the period of five years before their arrest to the period of just a few months before the arrest. About half of the participants also reported an increase in the importance of religion in their lives and their attendance at religious services during the same period. The other half did not see an increase because they had already reported the maximum level of importance and religious service attendance in the period of five years before their arrest. What may be more telling, is that none of the participants reported diminished religious beliefs and practices between the two periods in their lives.

The research design renders it impossible to determine if the Al Qaeda-linked participants’ beliefs about jihad changed as a result of the model’s conditions. Primarily because the questionnaire did not ask about their thoughts on jihad before and after their contact with other jihadists. However, their responses does provide interesting insights into the inculcation of jihadist ideology in the participants. Overall, the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported fairly mainstream views of jihad. Surprisingly, most believed that jihad was both an internal struggle to become a better Muslim and that jihad was a tool of statecraft, not a justification for vigilantism. Only one of the participants espoused an extreme interpretation of jihad.

There are a number of ways to reconcile the fact that all of the participants conspired to commit or support the very radical act of violent jihad, but most seem to hold a moderate interpretation of jihad. The most obvious explanation is that the

---

participants lied in their responses. This is a reasonable assumption considering several of the participants were verifiably not truthful in other parts of the questionnaire. However, it is impossible to know what any person truly believes inside. Therefore, it is also possible that the participants have had a change of heart since their arrest and their answers reflect their current state of mind. This is also a plausible explanation. If it is true that intensive socialisation with members of a religious group can affect religious change, as Lofland and Stark theorise, then it may be equally true that time in prison away from the influence of that religious group may allow an individual to reconsider his or her religious change. A third hypothesis is that the participants were never radical to begin with. As John Horgan contends, radical beliefs may not be a necessary precursor to radical behavior. Individuals may act out of group think, social pressure, or impulsiveness without any ideological justification.

Comparing converts and non-converts

Beyond exploring the feasibility of the ‘World Saver’ model for explaining jihadist radicalisation, this study also seeks to explore if homegrown Muslim convert and non-convert jihadists living in the United States experience the conditions of the model differently. This is an important question because Muslim converts are disproportionately involved in domestic jihadist terrorism compared to their proportions in the general population. Therefore, any differences in the way converts and non-converts experience the model’s seven mechanisms may offer insights into why converts are overrepresented in jihadist terrorism.

Four of the Al Qaeda-linked participants in this study were Muslim converts. Two were born into Muslim families (i.e. non-converts). A review of their questionnaire responses suggests that differences between these two groups were only secondary. In other words, the seven conditions of the model were equally evident in nearly all of the participants, Muslim converts and non-converts alike. However, there were sometimes qualitative differences on how Muslim converts and non-converts

experienced those conditions.

While nearly all of the participants experienced tension, the lives of Muslim convert participants tended to be filled with much more trauma and abuse than non-converts. For instance, reports of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse were limited to Muslim convert participants. Converts were also more inclined to report experiences with a higher degree of severity than non-converts. One explanation is simply that converts were more open about their experiences than non-converts for cultural reasons. This hypothesis is plausible considering that convert participants were more likely than non-converts to describe their problems in fine detail in open-ended questions. Non-converts more often gave short answers to the open-ended questions. However, the evidence that converts in this study have more traumatic lives than non-converts is consistent with other research, which finds that converts often have backgrounds filled with abuse, neglect, and broken relationships.\textsuperscript{764}

Likewise, a religious problem-solving perspective was evident in all but one of the participants. However, converts reported subtle differences in other problem-solving perspectives. For example, converts were more likely to think of problems and solutions as political than non-converts. Moreover, maladaptive coping was exclusive to the convert participants in this study.

There were also differences in the religious seeking behavior of Muslim convert and non-convert participants in this study. Converts were more likely to report being dissatisfied with prior religious traditions. However, this dissatisfaction should not be surprising considering they converted to a new religion. When actively seeking information about Islam, non-converts were more likely to search for that information at a mosque, from family members, or from public events. Conversely, converts more frequently sought information about Islam on the internet. Again, these differences are fairly predictable. Converts are unlikely to have Muslim family members and prior research has found that converts often feel unwelcome at mosques due to cultural and language barriers.\textsuperscript{765}

\textsuperscript{764} Lewis R Rambo, \textit{Understanding religious conversion}. Yale University Press, 1993, 52-53.
There are no obvious differences in the experiences of Muslim convert and non-convert participants regarding turning points. The small sample combined with a diverse set of experiences means that there were no distinguishing patterns in major life changes between the two groups.

Likewise, there was not enough reliable questionnaire data to meaningfully explore the differences in the way Muslim converts and non-converts experienced the *cult affective bonds* and *intensive interaction* factors. Convert participants were very open about their relationships with other jihadists. On the contrary, the two non-convert participants lied about or omitted information regarding their contact with the jihadist movement. However, if we include external data about the participants, a difference in the way convert and non-converts develop social attachments to the movement becomes clear. The two non-convert participants had pre-existing relationships with friends who were jihadists. Three of the four converts, on the other hand, developed their relationships shortly after meeting jihadists.

**Discussion**

The experiences of the six Al Qaeda-linked participants who responded to the questionnaire for this study are largely congruent with the process Lofland and Stark described in their ‘World Saver’ model. While this study was purely exploratory and cannot point to any generalisations or causations, there was evidence that most of the six participants experienced all of the seven conditions of the model. Though it is impossible to posit a direct link between these experiences and religious change, it is notable that most of the participants also experienced a change in their social networks and religious beliefs and practices concurrently with the seven conditions of the model.

All of the participants experienced some form of tension. Although nearly all Americans experience personal and situational problems in their lives, the participants in this study experienced such problems to a much greater extent than is usually observable in the general population. The finding that the participants in this study experienced tension that is longer and more severe than found in the general

---

766 Lofland and Stark, “World Savers.”
population is significant. While Lofland and Stark hypothesised that joiners would experience tension more acutely than non-joiners, few tests of the model have measured this phenomenon.\textsuperscript{767} A number of radicalisation theories have posited that individuals who join radical movements would have experienced personal and social troubles too. However, very few studies have verified these problems with primary source empirical evidence.\textsuperscript{768}

A religious problem-solving perspective was also observable in nearly all of the six participants. Exploration of the problem-solving condition uncovered some of the most significant findings of the study. First, all of the Al Qaeda-linked participants were fairly religious five years before their arrests for terrorism-related offenses. Conversely, many radicalisation and new religious movement scholars believe that the people most likely to join terrorist groups or new religious movements will come from a non-religious background.\textsuperscript{769} Second, the participants in this study deployed a wide variety of coping mechanisms to identify and deal with their problems, including religious reflection. Therefore, while having a religious problem-solving perspective may be a necessary condition of religious change, we should not expect that only individuals who solely look to religion to explain and cope with problems would join religious movements.

While there was sufficient evidence that many of the participants were religious seekers, this factor was difficult to operationalise and prove. First, many of the participants see no difference between Islam and jihadism. Though mainstream Muslims, their allies, and anti-jihadist activists often argue that jihadists are not Muslims, jihadists argue they are, in fact, the most Islamic of Muslims. Therefore, while all of the participants actively sought information about Islam, there is no way of knowing if those participants were seeking information about jihadism or mainstream Islam. Nevertheless, three of the six participants specifically admitted to seeking information about jihadism.

\textsuperscript{767} Kox, Meeus, and Hart, “Testing the Lofland and Stark Model,” 864.
\textsuperscript{768} Snow and Phillips, “Lofland-Stark Conversion Model,” 434.
Five the six participants also experienced turning points shortly before their encounter with the jihadist movement. In fact, for the participants in this study, turning points appeared to be one of the most important factors in the ‘World Saver’ model. A change in life circumstances was often the catalyst that put the participants directly on the path to jihadism. Moreover, while Lofland and Stark’s model is static and linear, a turning point (the fourth factor) preceded the religious seeking (the third factor) for some of the participants in this study. It was the change of circumstances that led them to search for new meanings and experiences.\footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Savers.”}

The available data made it difficult to measure cult affective bonds. Some of the participants were not forthcoming about their attachment to other jihadists. Nevertheless, four of the six participants admitted to having a bond with a jihadist. Consistent with Lofland and Stark, some of the participants had a pre-existing bond to the jihadist movement, while others developed a bond after meeting a jihadist.\footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 871-872.}

One interesting finding that differs from Lofland and Stark’s model, is that the participants’ bonds with the jihadists who introduced them to the movement were not always emotionally close. While the participants often reported spending a great deal of time with the person who introduced them to jihadism, they also reported receiving very little or no emotional support from that person.

Most of the participants in this study were also very socially isolated. They spent very little time with other people and their relationships were often poor in quality. They received very little emotional or material support from others. These findings are consistent with Lofland and Stark’s assertion that people who join new religious movements will be social atoms who have few or distant relationships with family and close friends.\footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 872-873.}

About half of the participants also admitted to a period of intensive interaction with the jihadist movement. Although, there is evidence that three of the participants were not truthful about such activities. Therefore, the actual number may be higher. There were also some differences in the way that the participants in this study

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Savers.”}
\item \footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 871-872.}
\item \footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Savers,” 872-873.}
\end{itemize}}
experienced intensive interaction compared to Lofland and Stark’s description. In the original study, Unification Church mentors actively guided recruits’ indoctrinations with reminders, interventions, and social encapsulation. By contrast, the Al Qaeda participants in this study experienced a broad array of interaction with the movement, from mutual discussion and debate, to active seeking, and passive following.

While the seven conditions were identifiable in most of the participants, the available evidence and the research design restrict our ability to say that those mechanisms caused the participants to radicalise. As Knox, Meeus, and Hart hypothesised, the participants’ social networks became weaker, and their religious beliefs and practices became stronger. However, despite the fact that all of the participants had been convicted of jihadist terrorism-related offenses, only one of the participants reported radical beliefs about jihad.

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE TEST

This chapter presents the second phase of a mixed methods study which examines the applicability of Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model for studying jihadist radicalisation. While the exploratory analysis of the Al Qaeda-linked participants in the previous chapter provides rich qualitative data from a rare population, the sample is far too small to test for potential predictive qualities of the ‘World Saver’ model. Phase-two of this study compliments the exploratory phase, by testing emergent hypotheses from phase-one on a sample of 160 Muslim participants from the general population in the United States. The much larger sample that is reflective of the US Muslim population and allows for inferential statistical testing to determine the model’s ability to predict radicalisation.

Chapter 5 proceeds in four parts. Part one provides a detailed explanation of the methodology for statistical testing of the model. Part two presents descriptive statistics from the participant data for each of the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions. Part three presents the findings from hypothesis testing based on 11 research questions. Finally, part four offers a discussion of the findings and their implications.

Research questions

Findings from the exploratory phase-one of this study inform the development of more defined research questions and hypotheses test in phase-two—a quantitative confirmatory study. Specifically, the exploratory phase highlights several unresolved research questions about radicalisation.

First, the exploratory test shows that most of the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported changes in their religious beliefs and practices leading up to involvement in terrorism. For many of those participants, the importance of religion, frequency of prayer, and mosque attendance increased. These changes in religiosity may suggest that there is a relationship between religiosity and jihadist radicalisation. Such a relationship would be controversial as it may support the ‘conveyor belt’ theory of radicalisation, where ‘the more conservative a Muslim is in their beliefs, the more
fundamentalist they will become, and ultimately radicalised’. 775 A relationship between religiosity and jihadism would also certainly contradict Olivier Roy’s argument that jihadists are not religious zealots, but violent nihilists. 776 Therefore, this potential link requires further investigation.

Phase-one also identifies a range of beliefs amongst the participants concerning the role of jihad in Islam. Some of the participants reported very moderate views on jihad, while others described a radical understanding of the concept. The variety of participants’ understanding of jihad seems to contradict logic, considering the fact that each participant is a convicted jihadist terrorist. However, a number of scholars have noticed that many recent jihadist terrorists and foreign fighters have very little knowledge of jihadist ideology. This observation has sparked a vicious debate between Gilles Kepel and Olivier Roy regarding the role jihadist ideology plays in the radicalisation process. 777 Likewise, Peter Neumann and John Horgan vehemently disagree on this subject. 778 Therefore, it is necessary to explore the relationship between jihadist ideas (cognitive radicalism) and jihadist terrorism (behavioral radicalism).

Another emergent question centers on possible links between religious conversion and radicalisation. Research shows Muslim converts are significantly overrepresented in jihadist activity. In other words, the proportion of Muslim converts who have been convicted of jihadist-related terrorism in the West, or who have traveled to join the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq is significantly higher than the proportion of Muslim converts in the general population. This phenomenon may suggest that there is something different about Muslim converts that primes them for radicalisation. 779 However, the exploratory study does not find any major differences between the Muslim convert and non-convert Al Qaeda-linked

775 Rabah Kherbane, “The government believes the more conservative the Muslim, the more likely they will turn to terror,” The Independent, November 20, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/the-government-believes-the-more-conservative-the-muslim-the-more-likely-they-will-turn-to-terror-a6742431.html.
participants regarding their life experiences or relationships. Perhaps a larger sample will reveal differences that explain the disproportionate role of converts in jihadism.

Finally, the exploratory phase shows that the participants experienced changes in their beliefs and relationships in the five years before their arrest for terrorism-related offenses. However, those changes do not necessarily suggest radicalisation. They merely show that participants became more religious and more socially isolated. Therefore, it is still unclear if the model predicts behavioral or cognitive radicalisation. In fact, the ‘World Saver’ conditions may predict some other type of behavior, such as legal political activism. These unknown outcomes of Lofland and Stark’s model must be tested on scales which measure cognitive and behavioral radicalism and political activism.

The above gaps in knowledge lead us to the following research questions:

1) Do the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions together predict behavioral activism?
2) Do the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions together predict behavioral radicalism?
3) Do the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions together predict cognitive radicalism?
4) Do Muslim converts and non-converts experience the ‘World Saver’ conditions differently?
5) Does the status as a Muslim convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and behavioral activism?
6) Does the status as a Muslim convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and behavioral radicalism?
7) Does the status as a Muslim convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and cognitive radicalism?
8) Does religiosity predict behavioral activism?
9) Does religiosity predict behavioral radicalism?
10) Does religiosity predict behavioral cognitive radicalism?
11) Does cognitive radicalism predict behavioral radicalism?
Research design

This chapter presents the second phase of a mixed methods research design. Mixed methods research is a type of research design that employs two or more different types of data or data collection methods. Mixed methods research designs generally fall into two broad categories: confirmatory and complementarity. Confirmatory mixed methods design does exactly as its name suggests. It uses different data and methods to confirm or validate the findings from each source of data. The method of confirming is often called triangulation, where qualitative and quantitative data are compared and contrasted in order to come to a more valid conclusion or deepen a researcher’s understanding of a phenomenon.

By contrast, the complementarity approach allows researchers to compensate for weaknesses in the data or collection methods of one approach with the strengths of another approach. For example, a researcher can analyze a small, but rich sample of qualitative data to interpret the results from a large-N quantitative study that lacks depth. Conversely, researchers can use a quantitative study with a larger sample to test hypotheses derived from a small qualitative exploratory study in order to reach more generalisable findings. This study uses the complementarity mixed methods approach to add inferential value to the exploratory findings. While the exploratory analysis of the Al Qaeda-linked participants provides rich qualitative data from a rare population, the sample is far too small to test for potential predictive qualities of the ‘World Saver’ model. Phase-two of this study compliments the exploratory phase, by testing emergent hypotheses on a much larger sample, which allows for inferences regarding the model’s general predictive abilities.

A quantitative test of the ‘World Saver’ model requires access to a large sample of individuals who may have experienced the model’s conditions to determine if there is a relationship between those conditions and radicalisation. Indeed, most correlation tests require a sample size of more than 100 participants in order to have

---

the statistical power necessary to test for significant effects.\textsuperscript{783} Considering the goal of this thesis is to identify the mechanisms and processes involved in jihadist radicalisation, there are approximately four options for collecting a large sample of data on this population.

The first option is to interview a large sample of radical jihadists. This is the rarest type of radicalisation research.\textsuperscript{784} However, as phase-one shows, jihadists are a very difficult population to sample. Most of these individuals are only known to intelligence and law enforcement sources. Moreover, there are only a few hundred of these people in detention for researchers to safely interview. I went to great lengths to collect data from this population. However, my attempts were nearly futile. Of the 100 jihadists who fit my sampling parameters, only 71 are in US federal custody and 41 were allowed to participate. Of those, only six agreed to contribute data. This sample has no statistical value for a quantitative test of the ‘World Saver’ model.

The second option is to interview former jihadists. Indeed, a number of researchers have used this method.\textsuperscript{785} These individuals can offer deep and thick descriptions of their radicalisation and their experiences in the jihadist movement. However, interviewing reformed jihadists introduces sampling bias problems. The obvious questions one must ask: did these individuals de-radicalise? Why? And does their de-radicalisation affect the validity of the findings of a study which seeks to understand the mechanisms of radicalisation? As Snow and Phillips argue, religious conversion biases converts’ interpretation of the events that led to their conversion.\textsuperscript{786}

It is likely that radicalisation and subsequent de-radicalisation also biases the recollection of former jihadists. Furthermore, many have already told their stories over and over, which limits the novelty of the research design and its ability to produce original findings.\textsuperscript{787}

\textsuperscript{783} Samuel B. Green, “How many subjects does it take to do a regression analysis?” \textit{Multivariate behavioral research} 26, no. 3 (1991): 499-510.
\textsuperscript{784} Bart Schuurman and Quirine Eijkman, “Moving Terrorism Research Forward the Crucial Role of Primary Sources,” ICT Background Notes, 2013. \url{https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9a23/7694eb398b1433f7477f136cddf80c31b490.pdf}.
\textsuperscript{785} Ibid
\textsuperscript{787} For example see: Husain, Ed. \textit{The Islamist: Why I joined radical Islam in Britain, what I saw inside and why I left}. Penguin UK, 2015; Speckhard, Anne, and Mubin Shaikh. \textit{Undercover Jihadi: Inside the Toronto 18, Al
A third method proposes to reconstruct the biographies of jihadists from open source material available in the media and court documents. This is probably the most common method in radicalisation research and can yield rich data.\textsuperscript{788} As Olivier Roy argues, ‘We have all the biographical information that’s been gathered by journalists. There is no need to embark on painstaking fieldwork to figure out terrorist trajectories’.\textsuperscript{789} Indeed, there are a number of innovative radicalisation studies that rely on reconstructed secondary sources. These studies are particularly useful for compiling descriptive statistics on demographic and behavioral profiles for inductive theory building. For example, these data can tell us how many terrorists used the internet before committing a terror attack;\textsuperscript{790} if perpetrators acted alone or with accomplices;\textsuperscript{791} or be used for analyzing their social connections to other known terrorists.\textsuperscript{792} However, these data rarely tell us what someone is thinking or how they rationalised their behavior, unless that person wrote that information down autobiographically. Indeed, many terrorist memoirs exist. These accounts can offer deep insights into their thinking.\textsuperscript{793} However, autobiographical and secondary journalist accounts can be very incomplete in some areas, because autobiographers and journalists tend to cherry pick the elements of terrorist’s lives on which to report.\textsuperscript{794} The decision on what to include in an article about a terrorist also biases the data. Such inconsistencies in data collection further limit researchers’ ability to make comparisons between cases. In short, secondary source data is useful in some research (i.e. theory building). However, it has serious limitations for testing a complex radicalisation model.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\end{thebibliography}
The final option is to survey the general population about their life experiences to identify links between those variables and radical ideas and behavior. For instance, polling firms such as Pew and Gallop regularly conduct large attitudinal surveys about support for terrorism, terrorist groups, suicide bombings, etc. These surveys can provide valuable insights when compared with other demographic information such as age, education, income, etc. However, these polls rarely employ any theoretical models and therefore have limited explanatory value. Surveys can also be useful for political scientists and economists studying radicalisation. These studies tend to look for relationships between poverty, education, opinions on governance, and national rates of terrorism. More recently, sociologists, psychologists, and criminologists have begun to use surveys to look for radicalisation at the individual and group levels. A number of studies have surveyed general populations to isolate psychopathological and psychosocial factors, religiosity, religious conversion, cultural identity, and social relations. The advantage of this research design is that it allows investigators to collect large representative samples, reducing bias and improving generalisability. This method also avoids sampling on the dependent variable. The other three methods collect data from individuals who are already radical. Without a control sample, it’s difficult to isolate which factors are exclusive drivers of radicalisation and which are not related to the phenomenon. The downside of surveys is that the prevalence of radical individuals in the general population is likely very low. Therefore, researchers must take care to develop a research design which measures variation in the dependent variable. Likewise, researcher have no

---


way of knowing if these people will participate in violence. Therefore, they must use proxy measures such as ‘willingness’ to participate in or support for violence.

Phase-two of this study uses the survey method. An online, national survey was administered to collect data from a sample that is reflective of Muslims living in the general population of the United States. The survey employs three primary instruments to measure the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model as independent variables and cognitive radicalisation and behavioral activism and radicalism as dependent variables.

Instrumentation
The following is a description of the three survey instruments used to collect data for phase-two of this study.

World Saver questionnaire
The primary data collection instrument for phase-two of this study is a variation of the Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s ‘World Saver’ questionnaire. In April 2015, I contacted the study’s second author to request a copy of the original questionnaire. Professor Wim Meeus responded to my request and kindly provided me with the questionnaire. However, the original questionnaire introduced additional challenges. First, the questionnaire was in Dutch. I located a Dutch-English translator online and paid approximately £200 for translation services. The next issue is that the authors designed the original questionnaire for face-to-face interviews. It includes several open-ended questions, which inherently produce qualitative data. Therefore, I decided to remove or change many of the open-ended questions to closed-choice scaled items. Finally, the original study collected data on adolescents who joined two different Christian cults in the Netherlands in the early 1990s. Several of the questions were, thus, not valid for this study. Therefore, I removed, changed, and added several items to bring the questionnaire in line with my target population. Additionally, I tweaked some of the scales to add uniformity. In the end, the questionnaire retained the spirit and structure of the original version, but reflects a modern study of jihadist radicalisation in the United States.

The final ‘World Saver’ instrument is comprised of 206 items divided into nine sections (see below for detailed description of items). The first seven sections roughly correspond with the model’s seven conditions. Two additional segments measure change in the participants’ experiences over time. The tension portion of the instrument includes items which measure participants’ personal, situational, and social problems tension. The problem-solving perspective section measures aspects of participant’s religious upbringing, beliefs and practices, and identifies coping methods they use to deal with problems. There are two seeking sections. The first explores general seeking behaviors. The second asks specifically about the participants’ religious seeking. The turning point portion of the questionnaire aims to capture instability in participants’ lives by asking about recent changes they may have experienced. The cult affective bonds section identifies pre-existing social bonds with jihadists and jihadist sympathisers and measures the degree of participants’ social interaction with those individuals. The extra-cult affective bonds portion measures the strength of participants’ social support networks and their social isolation. Finally, the change in beliefs and change in relationships portions of the questionnaire ask participants to identify changes in their thoughts about social issues and the strength of their social networks over the past five years.

Activism-Radicalism Intention Scale (ARIS)
The second instrument is the Activism-Radicalism Intention Scale (ARIS). Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley developed the ARIS scale in 2009 to measure political mobilisation. The scale consists of ten items which measure intent to participate in activism and radicalism (see below for detailed description of items). The authors define activism as ‘participation in legal, non-violent political action.’ Conversely, radicalism is participation in ‘illegal or violent political action.’ Although, the scales to not measure actual legal/illegal behavior, Moskalenko and

---

McCauley explain that previous studies have shown that intent is a reliable predictor of future behavior. The authors tested the scale three times in the US and Ukraine. They conducted Exploratory Principle Component Analysis and identified two component factors with four items each. Two items did not load into factors. ‘The first component showed high loadings for the items pertaining to legal and non-violent political action (Activism), and the second component showed high loadings for the items pertaining to illegal and violent action (Radicalism)’. 802 The authors developed two equivalent scales with four items each: The Activism Intention Scale (AIS) and the Radicalism Intention Scale (RIS). Reliability tests of the two scales showed high Cronbach’s alpha scores. 803 I also ran Principle Component Analysis using Oblimin rotation. I similarly identified two component factors which corresponded to the AIS and RIS scales. Items 5-10 loaded onto the first component with loadings of 0.761 to .965. Items 1-4 loaded onto the second component with loadings of 0.633 to 1.0.

**Jihad Beliefs Scale**

The third instrument is the jihad beliefs scale, which is designed to show variation in participants’ understanding of jihad on a scale from moderate to radical. I originally designed the scale as a combination of three questions from two sources. C. Christine Fair, et al. developed the first item for a national survey of Pakistanis to study their attitudes toward political Islam, sharia, and jihadism. The authors operationalised jihadism with the following item: ‘Some say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim Ummah through war. What do you think?’ 804 This item evokes both extremes of the concept. The researchers determined that participants who responded that jihad is an act of war ‘embrace militant dimensions of jihad in principle’. 805 However, this question alone seemed too one-dimensional to capture the entirety jihadism’s understanding of jihad. Jihadists embrace the violent aspects of jihad and additionally believe that jihad is a personal responsibility. Moreover, jihadists advocate that, next to faith,
jihad it is the most important responsibility a Muslim can undertake. Therefore, I developed two additional scaled items which capture these concepts. I also ran Principle Component Analysis using Oblimin rotation, which identified a one-component scale with factor loadings from 0.405 to 0.768 for the three items. I also ran a Cronbach’s Alpha test, which showed that the three items together had low reliability (.327). Therefore, I ran an intercorrelation between the three items, which revealed that only items one and two were significantly related ($r(160)=.259$, $p=.001$). I removed the third item and ran the reliability test again. However, the alpha score was still too low ($\alpha=.402$). Therefore, I decided only to use the first item from C. Fair et al. as the measure of jihadist beliefs.

While other authors have developed measurements for radicalism, such as Coid et al. and Nivette, et al, I had already committed to the scales developed by Moskalenko and McCauley and Fair et al, before the aforementioned articles were published.

**Variables/measures**

From the above instruments, I created 14 variables to test the hypotheses of this thesis. While some of the variables are based on a single item from the survey, many of the variables represent multidimensional concepts, which required me to build composite variables. Composite variables aggregate two or more variables into a single variable. To aggregate data, scores from scaled items are summed and in some cases averaged and weighted to create a composite score for each participants’ data. Six of these composite variables represent the conditions from Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model. I refer to these composite variable as composite condition scores. Additionally, I developed composite variables to represent

---


religiosity and religious upbringing. Three other composite dependent variables come from the ARIS scale and the Jihad Beliefs Scale. I refer to the aggregate score from the Activism-Intentions Scale as the behavioral activism composite score. The aggregate score from the Radicalism-Intentions Scale is the behavioral radicalism composite score. Finally, I refer to the aggregate score from the jihadist beliefs scale, as the cognitive radicalism composite score. Below is a description of each variable and the method for calculating composite scores.

The tension composite condition score is an aggregate of three scales from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire. The first scale includes 41 items which measure personal and situational tension and ask about spiritual, relational, character, material, physical, psychological, emotional, and maltreatment difficulties. Participants rated the severity of each of those experiences on a five-point Likert-type scale from very mild to very severe. The second scale records the duration of each of those 41 experiences on a five-point Likert-type scale from less than a month to more than ten years. The third scale measures participants’ social problem tension and asks about their concern for 14 social issues (e.g. racism, US foreign policy, gender equality, etc.) on a five-point Likert-type scale from not at all concerned to extremely concerned. To calculate a composite score, I added the 82 personal and situational tension item scores together to get a personal tension score. Next, because I wanted social tension to have the same level of strength in contributing to the tension condition score, I multiplied its number of items by the number that would make its number of items equal to the number of items for personal tension (5.85714). Then I multiplied the combined total of personal and social tension by five (highest possible response score) to calculate a maximum possible score (820) for the tension composite condition score. To make that scale more easily interpretable, I divided that by 8.2 to make the overall tension composite condition score out of 100 (i.e. 100 is the highest tension score an individual could mark).

The problem solving composite condition score was created using the conditional transformations method to create a new variable from two questionnaire items from

the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire. As De Vaus explains, ‘This method involves specifying a new variable and its categories and then specifying the conditions a person must meet to be placed in a given category’. In this case, the questionnaire presented two multiple choice items. One asks participants to select from a list of coping mechanisms that they use to deal with personal problems in their lives. The other asks participants to select from a list of coping mechanisms that they use to deal with social issues they may have concerns about (participants could choose as many choices as apply for both questions). Each of the two questions includes a choice for prayer or religious reflection. Participants who selected this option as a choice in one or both of the questions meet the criterion for having a religious problem-solving perspective. In order to scale the variable, three conditions were created: condition 0) was applied to participants who did not select prayer or religious reflection for either of the questions; condition 1) was applied to participants who selected prayer or religious reflection for one of the questions; condition 2) was applied to participants who selected prayer or religious reflection for both of the questions. Therefore, the minimum problem solving composite condition score is zero and the maximum score is two.

The seeking condition score is comprised of a single five-point scale item from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire which asks participants to rate their agreement on the question: I am looking for a group that shares my ideas, opinion, or beliefs. The minimum seeking condition score is one. The maximum score is five.

The religious seeking composite condition score was created using the conditional transformations method to create a new variable from three items from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire. The questionnaire presented three similar multiple-choice items. Each question asks participants to select from an identical list of activities that they have undertaken to either: solve personal problems, seek solutions to social issues they are concerned about, or find a group that shares their ideas. Each of the three questions includes a choice for: participate in a religious group. Participants who selected this option as a choice for one of the items met the criterion for being a religious seeker. In order to scale the variable, four conditions were created:

---

condition 0) was applied to participants who did not select this choice for either of the questions; condition 1) was applied to participants who selected this choice for one of the questions; condition 2) was applied to participants who selected this choice for two of the questions; condition 3) was applied to participants who selected this choice for three of the questions. Therefore, the minimum religious seeking composite condition score is zero and the maximum score is three.

The turning point condition score is comprised of a single five-point scale item from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire which asks participants to rate their agreement on the question: I have experienced a critical junction in my life in the past five years that has led to significant changes in my lifestyle. The minimum turning point condition score is one. The maximum score is five.

The cult affective bonds composite condition score is a simple summed composite score from four ‘World Saver’ questionnaire items. The first item asks participants to indicate how often they spend time with people who advocate that it is compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group. The item is presented on a five-point Likert-type scale from never to daily. The second item asks participants how much emotional support they receive from those individuals on a five-point Likert-type scale. The last two items ask the participants how many of their immediate family members and close friends advocate that it is compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group on five-point Likert-type scales from none to all. The minimum score is four. The maximum score is 20.

The extra-cult affective bonds composite condition score is a summed aggregate score from three similar five-point Likert-type scales from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire. The first item asks participants to rate the amount of time they spend with a standard set of nine individuals (i.e. partner, best friend, father, mother, siblings, other relatives, Muslim friends, acquaintances, non-Muslim friends). The second two items ask participants to rate how much emotional and material support they receive from those nine individuals. The minimum score is 27. The maximum score is 135. Validity problems emerged from this variable regarding its ability to
measure extra-cult bonds (i.e. non-jihadists), since there is no way to determine if any of the individuals in the standard set of nine individuals is jihadist or not. Therefore, an additional sub-condition score was created for non-Muslim friends. Since one must be a Muslim to be a jihadist, it is assumed that none of the non-Muslim friends are jihadists.

The intensive socialisation composite condition score is a summed aggregate score from eight items from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire which ask participants to rate the frequency of their involvement in a number of activities which relate to socialising with people who advocate that it is compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group (e.g. engaging in social media, watching videos, talking with friends). Participants rated the frequency of their involvement on a five-point Likert-type scale from never to always. The lowest possible score is eight. The maximum score is 40.

The religiosity composite condition score is a summed aggregate score from three items from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire. The first item asks participants to rate their agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale regarding the statement: Currently, religion is important in my life. The next two items ask participants to identify how often they pray and attend religious services on seven-point Likert-type scales from never to more than once per day. The minimum score is three. The maximum score is 19.

The religious upbringing composite condition score is a summed aggregate score from two items from the ‘World Saver’ questionnaire. The first item asks participants to remember back to their childhood and indicate on a seven-point Likert-type scale how frequently their parents attended religious services from never to more than once per day. The second item asks participants to rate their agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale regarding the statement: My parents raised me religiously. The minimum score is two. The maximum score is 12.

The behavioral activism composite score is a summed aggregate score from the four items from the Activism Intention Scale. Each item asks participants about their
willingness to participate in non-violent political activism in support of their group. In this case, the participant’s ‘group’ is presumed to be Muslims. From the beginning of the questionnaire, the informed consent advised participants that project was about identifying religious perspectives. Moreover, throughout the questionnaire, participants were continuously asked about their religious beliefs and practices. The four items are on a seven-point scale from completely disagree to completely agree. The minimum score is four. The maximum score is 28.

The behavioral radicalism composite score is a summed aggregate score from four items from the Radicalism Intention Scale. Each item asks participants about their willingness to participate in violent political activism in support of their group. For the reasons explained above, the participant’s ‘group’ is presumed to be Muslims. The four items are on a seven-point scale from completely disagree to completely agree. The minimum score is four. The maximum score is 28.

The cognitive radicalism score is derived from the one item in the Jihad Beliefs Scale. The item asks participants if jihad is a struggle for personal righteousness or if jihad is protecting the Muslim Ummah through war or both. The item is presented on a three-point scale. The minimum score is one. The maximum score is three.

Recruitment/sample
I conducted recruitment for phase-two through Qualtrics’ survey panel service. Qualtrics is one of the world’s leading academic survey platforms and panel services. These services identify participants and administer surveys to general or targeted populations and collect the data for a fee. The participants receive a nominal non-monetary compensation (e.g. $10 Amazon gift card, airline miles, etc.) for completed responses. Panel surveys are common in psychology research.812

There are several advantages to this method. First, it is possible to get a large number of responses in a very short time period. Second, researchers can administer surveys to a wide geographic area without costly field work. Similarly, the panel company can disseminate online surveys much easier than a researcher can with a

---

word-of-mouth online survey. Moreover, a number of studies show that the validity and reliability of online surveys ‘are comparable to those obtained by classical methods’. The downside of panel surveys is that there are ‘professional survey takers’ who may try to bypass sample selection criteria in order to get paid for a survey for which they are not qualified to take. However, researchers who are aware of this trap in advance can easily protect against this behavior by designing screening questions which make it more difficult for participants who do not meet selection criteria to take the survey.

I built my survey using Qualtrics’ survey platform and requested Qualtrics provide me with a quota sample of 50 Muslim converts and 50 non-converts between the ages of 18-65, who are living in the United States. I paid approximately £1,000 for the survey panel. Before collection began, Qualtrics staff assisted me with setting up branching, display, and skip logic in the survey. I asked Qualtrics not to collect personal identifiers such as IP addresses or geolocation information, in order to maintain the anonymity, which the IRB requires. Qualtrics conducted a soft launch for the first 10 per cent of the sample to make sure there were no obvious problems with the survey. The soft launch lasted two days. I made minor adjustments and Quatrics relaunched the survey. The remaining sample took six days to collect. Fortunately for me, Qualtrics forgot to stop collecting data at 100 complete surveys and returned an extra 72 responses. The initial sample of 172 participants was comprised of 50 Muslim converts and 122 non-converts.

After final data cleaning (explained in detail below), there were 160 participants remaining in the sample. This sample size is more than adequate for conducting multiple linear regressions, the primary method of analysis in phase-two. Determining the minimum sample size is an issue of statistical power. Therefore, according to Green, there are two separate issue to consider regarding sample size when conducting a multiple regression: multiple $R^2$ and beta weights $\beta$. If one is only interested in calculating $R^2$ then the formula for calculating the minimum sample for medium effects (where $R^2=.07; \beta=.20$) is $N \geq 50 + 8(k)$, where $k$ is the number of independent variables. However, if one also wants to calculate the beta

---

813 Gunther Eysenbach and Jeremy Wyatt. “Using the Internet for surveys and health research.” *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 4, no. 2 (2002).
weight, then the formula is \( N \geq 104 + k \). Since \( R^2 \) is not very useful without knowing if the probability is significant, it is usually necessary to calculate \( \beta \). In practical terms, this means the absolute minimum sample size for a multiple regression is \( N \geq 104 \). The multiple regressions in phase-two analysis use a maximum of nine independent variables. Therefore, the minimum sample size necessary is: 113 participants (\( N \geq 104 + 9 = 113 \)).

The sample of participants was comprised of 50 Muslim converts (36.5 per cent) and 110 non-converts. From this group, 55.63 per cent are followers of the Sunni tradition. A further 16.25 per cent identify as Shia, while 14.37 per cent do not claim a sect. Among the sample, the age range was 18-63. The mean age was 37.46 years old. Sixty-one per cent of the participants in my sample are between the ages of 18-39 years old. For gender, 51.25 per cent identified as male and 47.5 per cent as female. The remaining 1.25 per cent identified themselves as transgender. Regarding race or ethnicity, 36.52 per cent were white-European descent; 3.37 per cent were Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish; 23.6 per cent were African American; 17.42 per cent were Asian; 1.69 per cent were Native American or Alaskan Native; 15.17 per cent were Middle Eastern or North African; 2.25 per cent identified their race as some other race or ethnicity. For education, 1.88 per cent hold less than a high school diploma. 10.63 per cent have a high school diploma or equivalent. 17.5 per cent have some college, but no degree. 8.75 per cent hold a two-year degree and 28.75 per cent have earned a bachelor’s degree. For participants with advanced degrees, 21.25 per cent hold a master’s; 7.5 per cent a doctorate, and 3.75 per cent a professional degree.

By comparison, according to Pew Research, of the 3.3 million Muslims living in the United States, 20 per cent are Muslim converts. From both coverts and non-converts, 65 per cent claim to be Sunni, versus 11 per cent who identify as Shia. Fifteen per cent did not claim a specific sect. ‘Overall, 30% describe themselves as white, 23% as black, 21% as Asian, 6% as Hispanic and 19% as other or mixed race.’ Approximately, 26 per cent are Arabs. Regarding age, 59 per cent of Muslims in the US are between the ages of 18 and 39 years old. Fifty-five percent of

---

American Muslims are male and 45 per cent are female. For education status, 40 per cent hold at least a high school diploma. Twenty-six per cent have a bachelor’s degree and 11 per cent have a graduate degree. In terms of Islamic sect, age, race and gender, my sample is fairly reflective of the Muslim American population. The major differences are in low-level and high-level education. A larger percentage of my sample holds at least a high school diploma and graduate degrees are substantially overrepresented.815

External Validity/Data cleaning

The survey method presents several vulnerabilities which may affect the validity of data collection. However, I took a number of precautions to assure external validity. For example, before launching the survey, I conducted a pilot test with four colleagues. Each tester identified several deficiencies or inconsistencies in the survey which I fixed for the final version. Next, I developed screener questions, which restricted the demographics of participants to make sure they fit my target sample (i.e. Muslims, living in the United States, between the ages of 18 and 65 years old). I made sure to design the screener questions so that potential participants could not guess which demographic I was targeting for participation. For example, rather than ask participants binary questions such as, do you live in the United States?’ or ‘Are you a Muslim?’ I made participants choose their location and religion from lists of counties and religions. Those who did not fit the criteria were screened out and not allowed to take the remainder of the survey. Four hundred participants were screened out for not meeting selection criterion.

Another threat to the validity of data comes from participants who engage in ‘satisfying strategies’ or negative response behaviors, such as ‘straightlining’ their answers or speeding through the questions without paying attention. Obviously, these participants do not offer good data. I used three countermeasures against these forms of cheating. First, I asked participants to commit to providing their best answers. Participants who did not commit were screened out. An internal Qualtrics study found that asking participants to make this commitment improves data

quality. Second, I added two attention check questions, which ask participants to mark a specified mock response. Third, I added speed checks, which automatically screen participants based on 1/3 of the median survey completion time. Finally, I conducted a manual cleaning for straightliners and gibberish answers for text entry items. This process identified 13 invalid responses. These participants’ data was removed from the sample. Qualtrics replaced one of the participants to maintain my quota of 50 Muslim converts.

**Internal Validity**

Before researchers administer a survey, they must be sure that their instrument is valid and reliable. ‘Reliability is concerned with the ability of an instrument to measure consistently’. In other words, the items in an instrument’s scales should all measure the same thing. The most widely used statistical tool for measuring reliability is a Cronbach’s alpha test. This test measures correlations between items in a scale creating an alpha score (α) between zero and 1. The higher the correlation between items in a scale, the closer α values will be to 1. Items in scales that are not closely related affect the scale’s reliability. Generally speaking, α values between 0.7 and 0.8 are considered sufficiently reliable. ‘Opinions differ as to the cut off point for acceptable scores but scores below 0.6 are problematic’.

I conducted a Cronbach’s alpha test on each of the each of the composite condition scales that contain more than one item. All of the scales had sufficient reliability. The tension, cult affective bonds and intensive interaction composite condition scales, along with the activism and radicalism intention scales produced very high reliability scores.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>α value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tension composite condition scale</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious problem-solving</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perspective composite condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Seeking composite</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condition scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cult affective bonds composite</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condition scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-cult composite condition</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive interaction composite</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condition scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Activism Scale</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Radicalism Scale</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data analysis**

Phase-two uses four primary inferential statistical tests to analyze the participant data and test hypotheses. I used SPSS-24 statistical software suite to run the tests.

*Independent samples t-test* compares the means of two independent groups to determine if the differences between the means are significantly different, that is, if one can confidently state that the mean differences are not due to chance. A t-test begins with the null hypothesis that the means of the two groups are equal and that any differences found are due to chance rather than an effect of an independent variable. If the significance level is <0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected, the mean difference is not likely due to chance, and the independent variable has an effect on the dependent variable.\(^{820}\)

*Pearson’s correlation coefficient* (r) measures the linear correlation coefficient between two variables. Correlation coefficients identify the strength of relationships between two variables (0= no linear relationship; 1= perfect positive relationship; -

A significance test further identifies if that relationship is due to chance or if it is likely generalisable to the general population from which the sample is derived. When testing a correlation coefficient with a significance test, it is the test of the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the two variables (i.e. the correlation is zero). If the correlation is greater than zero, the researcher must determine if it is the result of chance or whether to reject the null hypothesis. The significance test determines the probability that any observable relationship is due to chance. P-values (p=probability) range for 0 to 1. A high p-value (> 0.05) means the correlation is likely the result of chance. A low the p-value (> 0.05) means the relationship is likely a real correlation.821

Linear regressions analysis predicts how much the independent variable affects the dependent variable or ‘how much impact each additional unit of independent variable will have on the dependent variable’. For example, I may hypothesise that Lofland and Stark’s tension condition predicts behavioral radicalism. If this assumption is true, I should expect to see that participants with a higher tension composite condition score will also have a higher behavioral radicalism composite score. This relationship is plotted on a scatter plot and represented by a regression line (slope=b), where tension scores are presented on the Y axis and behavioral radicalism lines are presented on the X axis. If there was a perfect relationship between tension and behavioral radicalism (Y=X), all of the participants scores would sit perfectly on the regression line and there would be a 1:1 ratio in the relationship. For every increase in participants’ tension scores, there would be an equal increase in behavioral radicalisation scores. However, such a relationship is unlikely. In reality, one unit change of Y may cause two unit changes of X, for example. Regression analysis allows us to predict how much one unit of independent variable (Y) changes the dependent variable (X) on the slope of the line (b). A multiple linear regression predicts the relationship of multiple independent variables with the dependent variable.822

Testing Linear Regression Assumptions

---

Linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of Models 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and Models 8 through 12. The following assumptions that must be met in order to use linear regression (using ordinary least squares model) analyses:

- Relationship between variables is linear
- No autocorrelation (predictor variables are independent of outcome variables)
- Relatively normal distribution/variation
- Homoscedasticity
- No problematic multi-collinearity (in multiple linear regression)

In order to test these assumptions, we first analysed descriptive statistics and distributions of variables (described in Findings for each variable). Then, to test the assumptions of homoscedasticity, linearity, and lack of autocorrelation, we used produced scatter plots of the residuals for each of the linear regression analysis (one per model). These scatter plots also helped to test the normality of our data, since they are useful for showing outliers. These scatter plots indicated that the relationships of the variables in linear regression analyses were generally linear, homoscedastic, lacked autocorrelation and lacked significant outliers (see Figures 1-20 in Appendix D).

In order to assess whether data for each linear regression was of a normal distribution, we produced a series of histograms for each model’s regression analysis. These histograms indicated that the distribution of data was generally normal (see Figures xxxxx in Appendix xx), with the exception of a slight positive skew for Models 4, 6, and 8. However, given the relatively large sample size for this data and the general normality of the data, this is no reason for concern. Additionally, some variables, like cognitive and behavioral radicalism, we would expect to be skewed since the majority of individuals do not engage in either cognitive or behavioral radicalism.

Finally, in order to test the assumption of multi-collinearity in our multiple regression analyses, we observed the tolerance statistics and variance inflation factors (VIFs) for each of our multiple regression analyses (Models 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6) For all analyses, the tolerance statistics for each independent variable was greater
than 0.1 and the VIF for each independent variable was less than 10, indicating that there is no problematic multi-collinearity in any of the multiple regression analyses conducted.

**Findings**

This section reports the findings of the quantitative study Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model. The findings are presented in two parts. The first part reports the descriptive statistics for each of the seven conditions of the model (i.e. tension, religious problem-solving perspective, seeking, turning point, cult affective bonds, extra-cult affective bonds, and intensive interaction). Then it gives descriptive findings for the *behavioral activism* and *behavioral radicalism intension scales*. Finally a table is presented showing the differences between convert and non-converts samples scores on the composite scales. Part-two of the findings section presents the results from hypothesis testing of 11 statistical models. Tests include multiple regression of the ‘World Saver’ conditions as predictors of cognitive and behavioral radicalism and activism; multiple regressions with interaction variables for Muslim converts and non-converts; and independent samples t-tests comparing the means of the ‘World Saver’ conditions between Muslim convert and non-converts.

**Tension**

Analysis of the Qualtrics survey data show that all of the participants experienced personal or situational tension is some way. Each participant selected at least one of the 41 items which measure personal and situational tension and ask about spiritual, relational, character, material, physical, psychological, emotional, and maltreatment difficulties. Many of the participants reported multiple tension experiences. The data show that on average, participants reported 18.5 problems per person.

The 10 most frequent personal or situational tension experiences which participants reported in the survey were: boredom, 73 per cent; lack of direction, 71 per cent; poor self-image, 71 per cent; a sense of meaninglessness, 70 per cent; a sense of powerlessness, 70 per cent; child rearing difficulties, 69 per cent; other relationship difficulties, 68 per cent; lack of challenge, 68 per cent; experiencing the severe
injury of a loved one, 68 per cent; and school difficulties, 67 per cent. However, respondent’s reports of these experiences are not particularly severe. The mean severity score for the 10 most frequent personal and situational tension experiences is $M= 3.11$ on a five-point Likert-type scale, which equates to neither severe nor mild on the questionnaire scale. Overall, the mean severity score for all 41 personal and situational tension items is, just slightly higher at 3.16. The participants tended not to experience tension for long periods of time either. The average personal and situational tension experiences were of a medium duration. The mean duration score for the 41 tension experiences was $M= 3.23$ (1-5 years) with a range from 2.49 (a few months) to 3.85 (5-10 years).

Overall, the Qualtrics panel participants reported moderate-to-high levels of social problem tension, or tension stemming from their concern about problems in society. Participants responded regarding their level of concern about 14 social problems on a five-point Likert-type scale, including racism, religious discrimination, economic equality, crime, human rights issues, gender equality, immigration, unemployment, the environment, LGBT issues, war/conflict, refugees, US foreign policy, and education. LGBT issues had the lowest mean social tension score ($M= 2.85$), which equates to neither concerned nor not concerned. War had the highest mean score ($M=4.29$), or somewhat concerned. The overall mean for all 14 social issues was $M=3.97$ (somewhat concerned).

Relevant Problem-solving perspective

Qualtrics panel participants demonstrated fairly high levels of prior religious socialisation. The vast majority of the Qualtrics panel participants reported that they were raised by religious parents. Of the respondents, 88.76 per cent reported that their father subscribed to a religion. Regarding the participants’ fathers’ religious affiliation, 58.75 per cent are Muslim, 21.25 are Christian, 0.63 per cent are Hindu, 2.5 per cent are Buddhist, zero per cent are Jews; 3.75 per cent are atheists, 5.63 per cent are other (Jehovah’s Witness, Baptist, Protestant, and Lutheran) and 7.5 per cent were of an unknown faith. Another 92.5 per cent reported that their mothers were adherents of a faith. Of the participants mothers, 57.5 per cent are Muslim, 26.25 per cent are Christian, 2.5 per cent are Hindu, 1.25 per cent are Buddhist, zero
are Jewish, 1.25 per cent are atheists, 5 per cent are other (Non-denomination, Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Jehovah’s Witness) and 6.25 per cent are unknown.

Beyond having parents who merely subscribed to a religion, the participants’ parents also showed a moderate-to-high-level of religious practice. Participants responded to a scaled questionnaire item which asked them to identify how frequently their parents attended religious services when the participant was a child. Not only does this item measure the participants’ parents’ level of religious practice, but it should also provide a proxy measure of how frequently the participants attended religious services as children, presuming they attended with their parents. Regarding religious services attendance, 8.3 per cent of the participants reported their parents attended more than once per day; 18.75 per cent attended daily, 40.63 percent attended weekly, 5.63 per cent attended monthly; 6.88 per cent attended annually; 8.75 per cent attended less than annually, and 11.25 per cent reported that their parents never attended religious services. The mean parental religious service attendance score is M= 3.56, which equates to monthly attendance. Additionally, the majority of participants (74.83 per cent) somewhat agreed or completely agreed that their parents raised them religiously. Only 15.63 per cent somewhat disagreed or completely disagreed. The mean score was M= 3.91(somewhat agree).

The Qualtrics panel participants also reported very high levels of religious beliefs and practices. The majority of the participants acknowledged that they attend religious services on a regular basis (59.31 per cent attended religious services at least once per month). Just over nine per cent (9.3 per cent) attend mosque at least once per day; 11.25 per cent attend daily; 29.38 per cent go to mosque once per week; 9.38 per cent attend once per month; 15.63 per cent attend on an annual basis; 15 per cent go less than once per year; and only 10 per cent report that they never attend religious services.

Participants’ prayer frequencies are even higher than their religious service attendance. The large majority of participants pray regularly (88.76 per cent of participants reported praying at least once per month). Of those who pray most frequently, 43.13 per cent reported praying more than once per day; 30.63 per cent pray daily; 11.25 per cent pray weekly; 3.75 per cent pray monthly. Only a small
portion of the participants reported praying less than once per month. For example, 3.75 per cent of respondents pray at least once per year; 6.25 per cent pray less than once per year and 1.25 per cent never pray.

High levels of religious service attendance and prayer appears to correspond with how important religious beliefs are to the participants. More than 85 per cent (85.37 per cent) of the respondents completely agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement: currently, religion is important in my life. The mean score for importance of religion is M= 4.35 (somewhat agree)

As explained elsewhere, Lofland and Stark argue that there are three types of problem-solving perspectives: 1) religious 2) political 3) psychological. The exploratory research in phase-one additionally identified social coping and maladaptive behavior problem-solving strategies. The exploratory phase also found that individuals may hold multiple problem-solving perspectives. To identify which problem-solving perspectives respondents hold, the Qualtrics panel participants responded to two similar questionnaire items which asked them to choose as many coping mechanisms as apply from a list. The coping mechanisms on the list represent various strategies participants may use to deal with important personal problems and concerns about social issues.

Regarding personal problems, 28.57 per cent of the participants reported using prayer or religious reflection (i.e. religious problem-solving perspective). Another 10.48 per cent reported that they participate in activism or volunteering. These activities represent political problem-solving. Thirty-four per cent reported psychological coping mechanisms for solving personal problems (e.g. self-help, psychological counseling, and psychiatric prescriptions). A further 6.19 per cent reported maladaptive coping mechanisms such as self-medicating with drugs, alcohol or binge eating. Finally, 17.86 per cent said that they spend time with others socialising (i.e. social coping).

Regarding coping with concerns for social issues in society, 27.4 per cent of the participants reported solving problems with prayer or religious reflection. A further 23.67 per cent turned to political options, such as activism and volunteering. Just
over a quarter, (25.63 per cent) reported psychological coping mechanisms. Only a small portion (4.23 per cent) indicated that they self-medicate with maladaptive behavior. Of the respondents, 16.9 per cent reported a social coping style.

**Seeking**

Kox, Meeus, and Hart identified two types of seeking: *self-definition as a seeker* and *active seeking*. Additionally, they acknowledge that some people may just be seeking in general, for knowledge or belonging, for example. Meanwhile, others may be specifically religious seekers.

To isolate which participants self-identify as seekers, the questionnaire asked Qualtrics respondents to what extent they agree with the statement: I am looking for a group that shares my ideas, opinions, or beliefs. Approximately half (50.63 per cent) of the participants *agreed or somewhat agreed* the statement. Less than one fifth (18.75 per cent) *disagreed* that they are seeking a group that shares their ideas. The mean self-identification as a seeker score was $M = 2.56$ (*somewhat agree*).

In order to identify in what types of active seeking participants engage, a questionnaire item asked participants to select as many items as apply from a list of seeking behaviors. The behaviors represent activities participants may have undertaken to find a group that shares their ideas. Of the respondents, 14.79 per cent engaged with traditional media; 7.75 per cent turned to books and pamphlets; 17.96 per cent looked for information about groups online; 24.46 per cent engaged in conversations with others; 5.63 per cent attended an informal meeting; 4.93 per cent enrolled in a course; 3.17 per cent visited a support group; 4.23 per cent participated in an action group; 9.15 percent participated in a religious-oriented group.

A similar questionnaire item asks participants to select as many items as apply from a list of seeking behaviors regarding activities they may have undertaken to find solutions to personal problems. Of the participants, 15.63 per cent seek information from the media; 10.42 per cent turn to books or pamphlets for information on solving their problems; 22.9 per cents read information online; 24.4 per cent ha conversations with social attachments; only 3.65 attend informational meetings; the same percentage enrolled in a course. Nearly 5 per cent (4.95 per cent) attend a
support group. One percent participate in an action group; 2.86 per cent join an online group. Finally, 8.59 per cent participate in a religious group.

A third questionnaire item asks participants to identify activities in which they participate to seek solutions to social problems about which they may have concerns. Again, 19.76 per cent seek out traditional media; 10.35 per cent read books or pamphlets; 22.12 per cent turn to online reading sources; 24 per cent speak to others; 3.76 per cent attend informational meetings; 1.88 per cent enroll in coursework; 3.06 per cent attend a support group; 4.24 per cent engage in an action group; 3.76 per cent turn to online groups; and 5.88 per cent seek the support of a religious group.

Regarding specific religious seeking behavior, roughly one quarter of the participants (23.75 per cent) said that they had sought out religious groups (other than Islam) to enquire about joining. Conversely, 76.25 per cent said they have never engaged in such religious seeking behavior. Most of those who enquired about joining other religions sought mainstream groups (e.g. Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism). A few participants noted that they visited New Religious Movements or specific sub-movements within mainstream faiths to enquire about joining (e.g. Jehovah’s Witness, born-again Christianity, Jesus Loves You, and Muslim Love). Of the participants who said they had contacted a group about joining (n=38), 68.42 per cent confirmed that they joined (n=26). Logically, those participants who previously converted to other religions are also converts to Islam since all of the participants in this study are Muslims. This means that the 26 participants who previously converted to another religion represent more than half of the Muslim converts in this study (n=50).

**Turning Point**

Analysis of the Qualtrics panel data finds that participants experienced moderate levels of instability in their lives. Sixty per cent of the participants agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement: I have experienced a critical juncture in my life in the past five years that has led to significant changes in my lifestyle. The mean score for this statement was $M=2.47$ (somewhat agree).
In order to determine what types of turning point events participants experienced, a questionnaire item asked: Which of the changes in life circumstances have you experienced in the past five years? Respondents selected as many events as apply from a list of eight events. Additionally, they had the opportunity to write in experiences which did not appear on the list. Of the participants, 18.77 per cent reported moving house; 12.32 per cent started or finished school, college, or university; 17.93 per cent left an old job or started a new one; 5.88 per cent recovered from a serious illness; 9.52 per cent experienced a relationship break up; 13.73 per cent reported the death of a loved one; 7.84 per cent got married; and 6.44 reported the birth of a child. Those who wrote in responses included experiences such as, injury; severe bigotry; a miscarriage of an unborn child; religious conversion; an adult child moving out of the house; ‘a horrible election’; and homelessness.

_Cult-Affective bonds_

Lofland and Stark identify two types of cult-affective bonds that may draw individuals into a group: pre-existing personal and affective relationships that develop after meeting an individual in a group. In order to measure these relationships, the questionnaire presented the participants with five items that ask about their relationships with people who advocate that it is compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group. These items are meant to represent participants’ relationships with jihadists, without specifically using the word _jihadist_. This was done to avoid participant response bias reaction or desirability. The statement incorporates all of the elements of jihadism’s understanding of the concept (i.e. an individual obligation to use violence in defense of the faith). Moreover, since all of the participants in this study are Muslims, references to ‘your religion’ and ‘your faith group’ clearly represent Islam.

Analysis of the Qualtrics panel data finds that a quarter (24.93 per cent) of the participants (n=40) maintain contact with a jihadist. Of those participants (n=40), 20 (63 percent) are in contact with a jihadist at least monthly. The vast majority, however, (75 per cent) claim to have no contact with people who advocate jihadist beliefs. Of the participants who acknowledged contact with a jihadist, 12.5 per cent
have daily contact; 5.63 per cent have weekly contact; 2.5 per cent have monthly contact; and 4.3 per cent have contact with a jihadist at least once per year.

Of the participants who have had contact with a jihadist (N=93), when asked how they came into contact with people who advocate jihadists ideas, the majority of participants (62 per cent) reported that a pre-existing relationship introduced them to jihadists. More than 35 per cent (35.5 per cent) developed a jihadist contact outside of their social network. 18.25 per cent sought contact on their own, 20.43 per cent made contact through a partner, 24.73 per cent met the jihadist through a family member; 11.83 per cent made contact through a friend; 5.38 per cent developed the relationship through an acquaintance; 3.32 per cent were visited by door-to-door dawa missionaries, 4.3 per cent met jihadist missionaries in a public space; and 2.15 listed other unspecified modes of contact with jihadists.

In order to develop a deeper understating of participants of pre-existing relationships with jihadists, the questionnaire asked the entire sample of participants (N=160) what portion of the people in their immediate families advocate that it is compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group. Surprisingly, 25 per cent of the participants reported at least some members of their immediate family advocated jihadist ideas. Of these participants, (n=40) 10.63 per cent said all of the members of their family support jihadist ideas. 5.63 per cent said the majority hold those beliefs; 3.13 per cent reported jihadist ideas are common in about half of their family; while 5.63 per cent said only some of the members of their family advocate jihadism. The vast majority (75 per cent, n=120), however, reported that there were no jihadists in their immediate family.

The questionnaire presented the same question to the participants regarding the prevalence of jihadists in their friend networks. The results were nearly the same. Twenty-five per cent of the participants report having at least some friends who advocate that it is compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group. Seventy-five per cent reported that none of their friends support jihadist ideology. Of those who reported jihadist friends (n=40), 8.75 per cent admitted that all of their friends were
jihadists; 6.25 per cent reported the majority of their friends are jihadists. About 4.38 per cent acknowledged that half of their friend networks are jihadist and 5.63 per cent have some jihadist friends.

**Extra-cult affective bonds**

In their study of recruitment to the Unification Church, Lofland and Stark argue that individuals who had few or weak social ties outside of the group were more likely to join. Overall, the sample in this study is well connected socially. The majority live with a family member. Moreover, most have contact with a friend or family member at least once per month. Additionally, they report moderate-to-high levels of emotional support from their families. However, many of the participants have problems with their local Muslim communities.

To determine if the participants are socially isolated, a questionnaire item asked participants to indicate with whom they live. Of the total sample (N=160) 25.62 per cent live alone. The majority (69.38 per cent) live with family members of some type (i.e. parents, spouse, and other family). From the participants who do not live with their parents (N=119), 21.01 per cent report that their nearest parent does not live in North America. However, the majority (57.13) live less than a day’s drive from their nearest parent (0-10 hour drive). Of the same group, the vast majority 71.11 live within a day’s drive from their nearest sibling.

To measure the quality of participants’ relationships, they were presented with Kox, Meeus, and Hart’s role relation scales. The scale asks participants to rate their relationship with nine standard individuals on a five-point Likert-type scales on three variables: frequency of contact, and the amount of emotional and material support they receive from those individuals. Regarding frequency of contact, Father saw the lowest mean score (M=2.71) for all nine standard relationships, which equates to monthly contact. Partner had the highest mean score (M=3.90), or weekly contact. The overall mean score was M=3.18, meaning on average the participants have contact with someone in their social network at least once per month. Using the same role relation scale, participants were asked to rate their agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale on the statement: I receive emotional support from the following people. Analysis of the results shows acquaintances had the lowest mean
score (M=3.39). Best friend had the highest mean score (M=4.14). The overall mean score is M=3.71, meaning participants on average somewhat agree that they receive emotional support from their social network. Finally, the questionnaire presented the role relation scale to participants regarding their agreement that they receive material support (e.g. help with project, money, child care etc.). The data shows acquaintances had the lowest mean score (M=2.49). Partner had the highest mean score (M=3.66). The overall mean score is M= 2.96, meaning participants on average say that they neither agree nor disagree that they receive material support from their social network.

Finally, to determine if participants are alienated from the Muslim community, the questionnaire presents four survey items which ask about difficulties participants with their Muslim community due to differences (i.e. cultural or ethnic difference, language differences, sect differences, belief differences). Participants rated their agreement regarding the existence of the differences on a five-point Likert-type scale. The data shows a mean range for the four issues from M=3.39 (language difficulty) to M=3.63 (sect differences). The overall mean score is M= 3.5, meaning participants on average say that they somewhat agree that they have difficulties with their local Muslim community.

**Intensive interaction**

Lofland and Stark argue that the final stage in the ‘World Saver’ model, intensive interaction with the group is necessary to move participants from verbal converts to total converts. To measure the intensity of Qualtrics panel participants’ interactions with the jihadist movement, the questionnaire presented respondents with a matrix of eight socialisation actives which represent interaction with ideas or people who advocate that is it compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group. These activities include interaction with jihadist ideas or people on social media, watching jihadist video or audio lectures, viewing videos showing jihadist violence, attending jihadist lectures or in-person sermons, discussions about jihadism with friends and family, and general socialisation with other people who advocate jihadist ideas.
Participants were asked to rate the frequency of their interaction in each eight socialisation activities on a five-point Likert-type scale from always to never. The data show talking to friends had the lowest mean score for the eight issues (M=1.66). Social media had the highest mean score (M=1.88). The overall mean score is M= 1.75, meaning participants on average say that they rarely interact with ideas or people who advocate that is it compulsory in their religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of their faith group.

**Behavioral activism scale**
Participants were asked to rate their willingness to participate in non-violent political activities in support of their group on a seven-point Likert-type scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data show that traveling for one hour to join in a public rally, protest, or demonstration in support of one’s group had the lowest mean score of the four issues (M=4). Meanwhile joining/belonging to an organization that fights for one’s group’s political and legal rights had the highest means score (M=4.66). The overall mean score is M= 4.49, meaning participants on average say that they neither agree nor disagree that they would participate in non-violent political action.

**Behavioral radicalism intension scales.**
Participants were asked to rate their willingness to participate in violent political activities in support of their group on a seven-point Likert-type scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data show that attacking police or security who were beating members of one’s group had the lowest mean score of the four issues (M=2.83). Meanwhile continuing to support an organisation that supports one’s group’s political and legal rights even though it sometimes breaks the law had the highest means score (M=3.23). The overall mean score is M=3.06, meaning participants on average say that they somewhat agree that they are willing to participate in violent political action.

**Comparing Muslim convert and non-convert scores**
The table below shows a comparison of the composite condition scores and the composite radicalism scores for Muslim converts and non-converts.
Table 21 Comparison of the composite condition scores and the composite radicalism scores for Muslim converts and non-converts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>N=</th>
<th>M=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioral Activism</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>17.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioral Radicalism</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>12.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tension</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>52.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Problem-solving Perspective</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seeking Score</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Seeking</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turning Point</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cult Affective Bonds</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra-cult Affective Bonds</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>91.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>81.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Muslim Friends Extra-cult Affective Bonds</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>9.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive Interaction</strong></td>
<td>Non-Convert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>15.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis testing**

This section presents hypothesis tests of the 11 research questions. The first part of this segment lays out the theoretical foundations for the hypotheses. The second includes the formal hypothesis testing and reports the results.

**Theoretical foundations of hypotheses**

The primary research question of this thesis asks if Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions in combination predict radicalisation. Since the radicalisation studies field theorises that there are two types of radicalism, which may or may not be related—*cognitive* and *behavioral*—it is pertinent to explore the
model’s relationship to both concepts. Three observations allow us to assume that the model will predict radicalisation. First, in their theory, Lofland and Stark posit that the model’s seven conditions in combination affect total conversion, meaning the converts ‘exhibit their commitment through deeds as well as words’. This definition of total conversion seems to incorporate concepts which represent both cognitive and behavioral radicalisation. This similarity may indicate the conversion and radicalisation phenomenon are conceptually related. Indeed, the conceptual similarities may explain why theoretical radicalisation and conversion models are nearly identical. Second, as chapter one argues, the jihadist movement shares many features with New Religious Movements. Therefore, the movement under examination in this study is also conceptually similar to the New Religious Movement, on which Lofland and Stark designed their model. Finally, the exploratory test in phase-one of the study found that most of the jihadist participants experienced all of the model’s seven conditions. These factors logically lead us to the conclusion that the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions in combination will predict behavioral and cognitive radicalism.

Mosklenko and McCauley find that their Activism-Radicalism Intension Scale (ARIS) measures two types of behavior: activism and radicalism. We have already hypothesised the ‘World Saver’s’ ability to predict violent radicalism. However, we still have not considered what role the Lofland and Stark’s model might play in predicting legal political activism. Mosklenko and McCauley find that activism is conceptually different to radicalism and the two do not sit on a single continuum. Rather they are ‘competing responses to a perceived need for political change’. The two authors find that non-violent activists identify with the political system in which they exist and seek to improve it. By contrast, violent radicals ‘may express a loss of identification with…the government currently leading the country’. Therefore, they turn to violence to affect political change instead because they do not see the system as legitimate. As Kepel explains, jihadism does not accept

827 Ibid, 239-260, 255.
temporal government as legitimate. Jihadism seeks to destroy man-made states and replace them with an Islamic state. Morally and rationally, it is justified to destroy man-made states and replace them with an Islamic state. Mosklenko and McCauley’s findings would therefore seem to explain why jihadists use violence to affect political change. Considering these findings, it also stands to reason that if the ‘World Saver’ model predicts jihadist radicalism, it will not equally predict activism.

As chapter one explains, there appears to be a disproportionate number of Muslim converts involved in jihadist activity. Indeed, research shows that converts are overrepresented in jihadist terrorism-related convictions in the US and UK. Likewise, the same phenomenon exists amongst jihadist foreign fighters originating in many Western European countries. If the ‘World Saver’ model predicts jihadist radicalism, the observation that Muslim converts are more likely to engage in jihadist activities suggests two assumptions. First, Muslim converts experience the ‘World Saver’s conditions at a higher rate. Second, one’s status as a Muslim convert affects the relationship between the model’s conditions and radicalism in a positive direction.

Phase-one of this study found that the Al Qaeda-linked participants experienced changes in their religious beliefs and practices in the few months prior to their terrorism arrests. For many of the participants, the importance of religion grew stronger and their frequency of prayer and religious service attendance increased. This observation may suggest that there is a positive relationship between religiosity and cognitive and behavioral radicalism.

Finally, the Al Qaeda-linked participants in phase-one of this study presented a range of interpretations of the concept of jihad. Some of the participants offered a moderate definition of the concept and some gave a radical interpretation. This variety of beliefs is interesting, considering all of the participants are convicted for participation in jihadist-related terrorism. One explanation for this range of beliefs is that the participants’ radical behavior may not necessarily be connected to radical beliefs. Indeed, John Horgan argues that some terrorists may engage in violence without being ideologically radical. Likewise, many ideologically radical

---

individuals may never engage in violent behavior. Therefore, there is empirical and theoretical evidence to suggest that cognitive radicalism and behavioral radicalism may not be related.

**Formal hypothesis testing**

**Model 1: Does the ‘World Saver’ model predict behavioral activism?**

**H₀:** R=0: There is no relationship between the variables in the ‘World Saver’ model and the Activism Intention Scale.

**H₁:** R ≠ 0, p<.05: There is a significant relationship between the variables in the ‘World Saver’ model and the Activism Intention Scale.

To test this hypothesis, I ran a multiple Ordinary Linear Squares regression using the nine conditions scores (i.e. *tension composite condition score, religious problem-solving composite condition score, seeking condition score, religious seeking composite condition score, turning point condition score, cult affective bonds composite condition score, extra-cult affective bonds composite condition score, non-Muslim friends extra-cult affective bonds condition score, intensive socialisation composite condition score.*) as predictors of behavioral activism. The conditions together significantly predict activism, (R= .625; F(9, 149)= 10.586, p< .001) These combined variables predict 39% (R² = .390) of the variance in activism. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Two variables within this model were significant individual predictors of behavioral activism: *tension composite condition score* (β = .345, p<.001) and *seeking condition score* (β = .190, p = .010). This means that for every one point increase on the tension scale score, there is a predicted .187 point increase in the activism scale score (unstandardised beta = .187) and that for every one point increase on the seeking condition scale score, there is a predicted 1.155 point increase in the activism scale score (unstandardised beta = 1.155).

---

Model 2: Does the ‘World Saver’ model predict behavioral radicalism?

H₀: R=0: There is no relationship between the variables in the ‘World Saver’ model and the Radicalism Intention Scale.

H₁: R ≠ 0, p<.05: There is a significant relationship between the variables in the ‘World Saver’ model and the Radicalism Intention Scale.

To test this hypothesis, I ran a multiple OLS regression using the nine conditions scores (i.e. tension composite condition score, religious problem-solving composite condition score, seeking condition score, religious seeking composite condition score, turning point condition score, cult affective bonds composite condition, extracult affective bonds composite condition score, non-Muslim friends extra-cult affective bonds condition score, intensive socialisation composite condition score) as predictors of behavioral radicalism.

The conditions together significantly predict radicalism, (R= .685; F(9, 149)= 14.653, p< .001) These combined variables predict 47% (R²= .470) of the variance in radicalism. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Three variables within this model were significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism: tension composite condition score (β= .254, p<.001), cult affective bonds composite condition score (β= .252, p= .046) and intensive socialisation composite condition score (β= .280, p= .031). This means that for every one point increase on the tension scale score, there is a predicted .145 point increase in the radicalism scale score (unstandardised beta= .145) and that for every one point increase on the cult affective bonds composite condition score, there is a predicted .393 point increase in the radicalism scale score (unstandardised beta= .393), and that for every one point increase on the intensive socialisation composite condition score, there is a predicted .230 point increase in the radicalism scale score (unstandardised beta= .230).

Model 3: Does the ‘World Saver’ model predict cognitive radicalism?
**H₀: R=0**: There is no relationship between the variables in the ‘World Saver’ model and the Jihad Beliefs Scale.

**H₁: R ≠ 0, p<.05**: There is a significant relationship between the variables in the ‘World Saver’ model and the Jihad Beliefs Scale.

To test this hypothesis, I ran a multiple OLS regression using the nine conditions scores (i.e. tension composite condition score, religious problem-solving composite condition score, seeking condition score, religious seeking composite condition score, turning point condition score, cult affective bonds composite condition, extra-cult affective bonds composite condition score, non-Muslim friends extra-cult affective bonds condition score, intensive socialisation composite condition score) as predictors of cognitive radicalism.

The conditions together did not significantly predict cognitive radicalisation (R= .266; F(9, 149)= 1.256, p =.266). There were no conditions that were significant individual predictors of cognitive radicalisation. I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Model 4: Do converts and non-converts experience the ‘World Saver’ conditions differently?**

**H₀: t= 0**: There are no significant differences between the mean scores for the ‘World Saver’ conditions between converts and non-converts.

**H₁: t ≠ 0, p<.05**: There are significant differences between the mean scores for the ‘World Saver’ conditions between converts and non-converts.

To test this hypothesis, I ran a series of independent samples t-tests, each comparing the mean scores of converts and non-converts for the nine conditions scores: tension composite condition score, religious problem-solving composite condition score, seeking condition score, religious seeking composite condition score, turning point condition score, cult affective bonds composite condition, extra-cult affective bonds composite condition score, non-Muslim friends extra-cult affective bonds condition score, intensive socialisation composite condition score.
There were significantly different mean scores between converts and non-converts for tension composite condition score, $t(158) = -2.926, p = .004$, and for religious seeking condition score, $t(158) = -2.115, p = .036$. The differences between the means were such that, for tension composite condition score, converts ($M= 59.48, SD= 11.83$) had a significantly higher mean score than non-converts ($M= 52.65, SD= 14.43$) and for religious seeking condition score, converts ($M= .42, SD= .91$) had a significantly higher mean score than non-converts ($M= .76, SD= 1.02$).

For the remainder of the conditions, there were no significant differences between the mean scores of converts and non-converts.

**Model 5:** *Does status as a convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and behavioral activism?*

**H₀:** $β = 0$: There are *no* significant interactions between the ‘World Saver’ conditions that are significant individual predictors of behavioral activism and conversion status.

**H₁:** $β ≠ 0, p < .05$: There are significant interactions between the ‘World Saver’ conditions that are significant individual predictors of behavioral activism and conversion status.

To test this hypothesis, I ran a multiple OLS regression using the significant individual predictors of behavioral activism (*tension composite condition score* and *seeking condition score*), conversion status, and two interaction variables, one representing the interaction of tension score and conversion status, and the other representing the interaction of seeking score and conversion status, as predictors of behavioral activism.

I only measured two interactions in this model analysis: 1) conversion status and tension and 2) conversion status and seeking, because tension and seeking were the only statistically significant individual predictors of behavioral activism when all conditions were included in the overall analysis. Therefore, only these variables are viable for analysis in assessing the relationship between conversion status, ‘World Saver’ conditions, and behavioral activism.
The interaction variables were not significant individual predictors of behavioral activism. The interaction between tension score and conversion status was not a significant individual predictor of behavioral activism ($\beta = .083; t(158)= 1.122, p =.264$), meaning that the effect that tension has on behavioral activism does not change significantly based on whether an individual is a convert or non-convert. The interaction between seeking score and conversion status was not a significant individual predictor of behavioral activism ($\beta= -.045; t(158)= -.637, p=.525$), meaning that the effect that seeking has on behavioral activism does not change significantly based on whether an individual is a convert or non-convert. I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Model 6: Does status as a convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and behavioral radicalism?**

**H₀:** $\beta = 0$: There are no significant interactions between the ‘World Saver’ conditions that are significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism and conversion status.

**H₁:** $\beta \neq 0$, $p<.05$: There are significant interactions between the ‘World Saver’ conditions that are significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism and conversion status.

To test this hypothesis, I ran a multiple OLS regression using the significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism (*tension composite condition score* and *seeking condition score*), conversion status, and two interaction variables, one representing the interaction of tension score and conversion status, and the other representing the interaction of seeking score and conversion status, as predictors of behavioral radicalism.

I only measured three interactions in this model analysis: 1) conversion status and tension, 2) conversion status and group bonds, and 3) conversion status and intensive socialisation, because tension group bonds, and intensive socialisation were the only statistically significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism.
when all conditions were included in the overall analysis. Therefore, only these variables are viable for analysis in assessing the relationship between conversion status, ‘World Saver’ conditions, and behavioral radicalism.

The interaction variables were not significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism. The interaction between tension score and conversion status was not a significant individual predictor of behavioral radicalism ($\beta = .058$; $t(158)= .874$, $p = .383$), meaning that the effect that tension has on behavioral radicalism does not change significantly based on whether an individual is a convert or non-convert. The interaction between group bonds score and conversion status was not a significant individual predictor of behavioral radicalism ($\beta = -.055$; $t(158)= -.464$, $p = .643$), meaning that the effect that group bonds has on behavioral radicalism does not change significantly based on whether an individual is a convert or non-convert. The interaction between intensive socialisation score and conversion status was not a significant individual predictor of behavioral radicalism ($\beta = -.029$; $t(158)= -.233$, $p = .816$), meaning that the effect that intensive socialisation has on behavioral radicalism does not change significantly based on whether an individual is a convert or non-convert. I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Model 7: Does status as a convert or non-convert affect the relationship between the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions and cognitive radicalism?**

**H$_0$: $\beta = 0$:** There are no significant interactions between the ‘World Saver’ conditions that are significant individual predictors of cognitive radicalism and conversion status.

**H$_1$: $\beta \neq 0$, $p<.05$:** There are significant interactions between the ‘World Saver’ conditions that are significant individual predictors of cognitive radicalism and conversion status.

Because none of the ‘World Saver’ conditions were statistically significant individual predictors of cognitive radicalism in the overall analysis, there were no variables viable for analysis in assessing the relationship between conversion status,
‘World Saver’ conditions, and cognitive radicalism. I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Model 8:** Does cognitive radicalism predict behavioral radicalism?

**H₀:** $r = 0$: There is no significant relationship between cognitive radicalism and behavioral radicalism.

**H₁:** $r \neq 0$, $p < .05$: There is a significant relationship between cognitive radicalism and behavioral radicalism.

To test this hypothesis, I ran an Ordinary Linear Squares regression using cognitive radicalism as a predictor of behavioral radicalism.

Cognitive radicalism does not significantly predict behavioral radicalism, ($r = .107$; $F(1, 158) = 3.561$, $p = .180$), therefore I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Model 9:** Does religious upbringing predict cognitive radicalism?

**H₀:** $R = 0$: There is no significant relationship between religious upbringing and cognitive radicalism.

**H₁:** $R \neq 0$, $p < .05$: There is a significant relationship between religious upbringing and cognitive radicalism.

To test this hypothesis, I ran an Ordinary Linear Squares regression using religious upbringing as a predictor of cognitive radicalism.

Religious upbringing significantly predicts cognitive radicalism, ($R = .220$; $F(1, 158) = 10.843$, $p = .005$), accounting for 4.8% ($R^2 = .048$) of the variance in cognitive radicalism. The null hypothesis is rejected.

**Model 10:** Does religiosity predict behavioral activism?
H₀: r = 0: There is no significant relationship between religiosity and behavioral activism.

H₁: r ≠ 0, p < .05: There is a significant relationship between religiosity and behavioral activism.

To test this hypothesis, I ran an Ordinary Linear Squares regression using religiosity as a predictor of behavioral activism.

Religiosity does not significantly predict behavioral activism, (r = -.080; F(1, 158) = 1.012, p = .316), therefore I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Model 11: Does religiosity predict behavioral radicalism?

H₀: r = 0: There is no significant relationship between religiosity and behavioral radicalism.

H₁: r ≠ 0, p < .05: There is a significant relationship between religiosity and behavioral radicalism.

To test this hypothesis, I ran an Ordinary Linear Squares regression using religiosity as a predictor of behavioral radicalism.

Religiosity does not significantly predict behavioral radicalism, (r = -.129; F(1, 158) = 2.672, p = .104), therefore I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Model 12: Does religiosity predict cognitive radicalism?

H₀: r = 0: There is no significant relationship between religiosity and cognitive radicalism.

H₁: r ≠ 0, p < .05: There is a significant relationship between religiosity and cognitive radicalism.
To test this hypothesis, I ran an Ordinary Linear Squares regression using religiosity as a predictor of cognitive radicalism.

Religiosity does not significantly predict cognitive radicalism, ($r = .057; F(1, 158) = .856, p = .477$), therefore I fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Discussion**

This thesis set out to test the hypothesis that the ‘World Saver’ model can predict jihadist radicalism. As explained, Lofland and Stark argued that seven conditions in combination (i.e. experiencing psychological tension, having a religious problem-solving perspective, being a religious seeker, experiencing a turning point in life, having cult affective bonds with members of the movement, having few or weak extra-cult affective bonds, and having intensive interaction with the movement) were necessary and sufficient to make individuals ‘deployable agents’ for the new religious movement in their study.

Testing this hypothesis commenced in two phases. The first phase of this study explored this question with a small qualitative sample of Al Qaeda-linked participants, which showed that their life experiences and relationships were fairly congruent with the seven conditions that Lofland and Stark describe in their model. However, the qualitative design in phase-one focuses more on describing process rather than the outcome. Moreover, the small sample in the exploratory study does not allow for inferences regarding the model’s predictive capabilities. Phase-two builds on the exploratory study with a quantitative test of the ‘World Saver’ model. It introduces a sample of 160 Muslim participants from the general population and three dependent variable scales: The behavioral activism and behavioral radicalism scales—which measure participants’ willingness to participate in non-violent activism and violent radicalism—and the cognitive radicalism scale which measures participants’ perceptions of the concept of jihad on a scale from moderate to militant. With this method, phase-two also attempted to answer several more specific research questions, which emerged from the exploratory study.
The answers to these questions produced several interesting findings. First, the ‘World Saver’ model can predict participants’ behavioral radicalism. Analysis shows that the combination of conditions in Lofland and Stark’s model significantly predict participants’ openness to participation in political violence (R=.685, p<.001). As the participants’ condition scores increased, their behavioral radicalism score also increased. However, not all of the seven conditions within the model were equally important individually. Only tension, cult affective bonds, and intensive interaction were significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism.

These results suggest that behavioral radicalisation is largely a social phenomenon, where individuals who access the jihadist movement through jihadist social attachments (cult affective bonds) then are indoctrinated through socialisation with other jihadists (intensive interaction). In the Qualtrics sample, often relationships with jihadists were the result of friends or family members who have a connection to the jihadist movement. Nearly a quarter (24.73) of the participants who said they have contact with a jihadist, said they met that person through a family member. Twenty per cent said they met a jihadist through their spouse. Approximately 11.83 per cent made contact through a friend. This finding is similar to the findings from several empirical studies of radicalisation, which have also found that kinship and friendship networks are important conduits for recruitment into jihadism.831

The participants in phase-two also spend a lot of time with jihadists. A fifth of the Qualtrics participants said they have contact with a jihadist at least weekly. Approximately a quarter (23.83 per cent) said they always or very often spend time talking with family members about jihad. And 20.68 per cent said they did so with friends. They also engaged with the movement in other ways. For instance, online socialisation also appears very important to the radicalisation process. Nearly a third (28.53 per cent) said they always or very often spend time discussing jihad on social media. Roughly the same amount always or very often watch violent jihadist videos online. These findings comport with other studies which find that radicalisation

seems to occur during periods of intensive socialisation with other jihadists, both online and offline.\(^\text{832}\)

The cognitive factor, psychological tension also played an important role moving people towards openness to political violence in this study. However, it is not clear from the data what role psychological stress plays in this radicalisation pathway. In Lofland and Stark’s study, tension led people with a religious problem-solving perspective to become religious seekers. On their quest to find religious solutions to their problems, they subsequently came into contact with a New Religious Movement. However, religious problem-solving perspective and religious seeking are not statistically significant individual predictors of behavioral radicalism in this study. Therefore, it does not appear that tension plays a catalytic role as it did in Lofland and Stark’s study, jumpstarting a chain reaction of searching for religious answers to problems which leads to contact with a deviant religious group. Rather, it is possible that tension may affect radicalsation in the way Quintan Wiktorowicz explains, by creating a cognitive opening, which renders people more amenable to new ideas.\(^\text{833}\) Further research is necessary to determine the exact role that tension plays in radicalisation. Temporal data or statistical path analysis may show where in the process tension affects a person’s radicalisation trajectory.

The finding that tension, cult affective bonds, and intensive interaction were individually the most important conditions in the model from this study is largely congruent with the findings of previous tests of the ‘World Saver’ model. In particular, researchers have historically found the most empirical support for cult affective bonds and intensive interaction in tests of the model. As Snow and Phillips argued in their test of the ‘World Saver’ model, ‘None of the hypothetical precipitants of conversion are regarded as more important than the development of a positive, interpersonal tie between the prospect and one or more of the movement members.’\(^\text{834}\) Such relationships are influential in recruitment because they are


\(^{833}\) Wiktorowicz, “Radical Islam Rising,”

bonds of trust that ‘bridge the gap’ between recruits’ first contact with a movement’s ideology ‘and accept it as truth,’ as Lofland and Stark argue.\footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Saver,” 871.}

Many of the ‘World Saver’ studies have also found tension to be an extremely important condition in recruitment to New Religious Movements. Some previous tests of the model have reported that tension was a factor in the recruitment of more than 80 percent of their participants.\footnote{For example: Bear, “A field perspective of religious conversion,” 285-286; Heirich, “Change of heart,” 664.} However, these studies only surveyed participants who joined a group. Therefore, Snow and Phillips were skeptical that tension is a sufficient condition for recruitment to a new religious movement. They argued that without a control group it is not possible to know if there is a qualitative difference in the tension that people who join New Religious Movements experience and the problems which everyone faces in their lives.\footnote{Snow and Phillips, “Lofland and Stark Conversion Model,” 440.}

The methods in phase-two of this thesis attempt to overcome that problem. First, the quantitative analysis in this study surveys a sample from the general population. This allows for variation in the dependent variable. Next, rather than use a binary measure that simply identifies the existence or absence of tension, the tension composite condition scale in this study is weighted to measure variation in the severity and duration of tension experiences. The more severe and longer participants’ tension experiences, the higher their scores. This improved methodology finds that there is a significant positive relationship between tension scores and openness to political violence.

The deviant nature of jihadism may help explain the role of tension in the radicalisation process. Stark and Bainbridge argue that tension becomes more important when the group that one is seeking to join is exceptionally deviant. They contend that the more deviant the group, the higher the costs of joining. Therefore, the joiner must be facing extraordinary circumstances which outweigh the costs of deviant behavior. Their hypothesis may explain why tension plays a significant role in openness to illegal, violent activism.\footnote{Stark and Bainbridge, “Networks of Faith,” 1382.}
Although none of the other conditions in the ‘World Saver’ model were significant predictors of behavioral radicalism, it is possible that different operationalisations of the conditions would yield different results. For example, the extra-cult bond composite condition score turned out to be an invalid measure of countervailing attachments in participants’ social networks. Lofland and Stark argue that people who have stronger extra-cult affective bonds than they do cult affective bonds, will be recruited to a cult. Likewise, when studying jihadist involvement, we might expect to see that people with more non-jihadist social connections are less likely to be open to jihadist violence. However, in this study, extra-cult affective bonds were not negatively correlated with behavioral radicalism. This is likely because the measure did not ask the respondents to identify which of their social attachments are jihadists. Without knowing which people in participants’ social networks are jihadists and which are not, it is impossible to weigh the relative strength of their jihadist and non-jihadist social networks to determine which has more influence. I attempted to solve this problem by using one item from the composite extra-cult bonds condition scale that only measures relations with non-Muslim friends, since non-Muslims are unlikely to be jihadists. However, this modification did not have the desired effect. Future research should design an extra-cult bond scale in a way that can validly parse jihadist from non-jihadist social attachments.

Although the ‘World Saver’ model predicts behavioral radicalism, it does not predict cognitive radicalism. In other words, this study did not find a significant relationship between the conditions in Lofland and Stark’s model and holding the militant interpretation of jihad as solely an act of war. This outcome was unexpected. Lofland and Stark argue that people who experience all seven conditions will become total converts, which they describe as members ‘who exhibited their commitment through words as well as deeds.’ They add that total converts are ‘deployable agents’ for the movement. The authors’ definition seems to imply that total converts have internalised the movement’s ideology cognitively and behaviorally.\footnote{Lofland and Stark, “World Saver,” 864.} The null finding that the model does not predict cognitive radicalism becomes more interesting when paired with the finding that there is a significant positive relationship between the model’s conditions and openness to...
engage in political violence. This suggests that one may not have to be ideologically radical to be willing to participate in ideological violence (i.e. be a deployable agent for jihadism).

Phase-two further explored the relationship between cognitive radicalism and behavioral radicalism. Regression analysis found that there no significant correlation between those two variables (r=.107, p=.180). In other words, believing that jihad is solely an act of war meant to protect Muslims is not likely a sufficient condition for willingness to participate in political violence in defense of Muslims. This finding supports the work of John Horgan and Randy Borum, who argue the fact that many people hold radical beliefs but only a few commit violence. Therefore, they suggest that beliefs are not necessarily a precursor to violence.840 This finding also supports much of the religious conversion literature which finds that people usually make a conscious commit to a movement and begin acting out its rituals and practice before they cognitively embrace the ideology as part of their identity.841 In jihadism, violence is sacramental religious ritual and practice. Therefore, it is not surprising that aspiring jihadists may commit to violence in the name of the movement before they fully accept its ideology.842

Another important finding is that the ‘World Saver’ model also significantly predicts behavioral activism. In other words, there is a significant positive relationship between the conditions in the ‘World Saver’ model and willingness to participate in legal, non-violent activism (R=.625, p<.001). On its face, this finding seems to invalidate Lofland and Stark’s model as theory of jihadist radicalisation. A model which predicts openness to both violent and non-violent behavior is not specific enough to discriminate between the two outcomes. However, the individual correlation coefficients in the regression model show that within the model, the significant individual predictors for the dependent variable behavioral activism are different than the predictors for behavioral radicalism. Only tension and seeking are significant predictors of behavioral activism. This finding suggests that the

significant independent variables within the ‘World Saver’ model actually comprise two discriminant models. One model (tension and seeking) predicts legal, non-violent activism. The other, (tension, cult affective bonds, and intensive interaction) predicts illegal, violent radicalism.

Findings regarding the radicalisation of Muslim converts in jihadism were mixed. Research suggests that Muslim converts are significantly overrepresented in jihadism. Therefore, it was hypothesised that, if the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model predicted radicalism, it may also suggest that converts are more likely to radicalise because they have higher mean scores on model’s conditions than non-converts. Independent samples t-tests confirmed that, indeed, converts had significantly higher mean scores for tension and religious seeking. It should not be surprising that converts score higher than non-converts on religious seeking. More interesting is the relationship between converts and tension. Considering that tension is a significant predictor for behavioral activism and behavioral radicalism, it might suggest that converts are somewhat primed for involvement in political action.

Despite this finding, regression analysis with interaction variables for convert and non-convert find that the interaction variables are not significant individual predictors of behavioral activism, behavioral radicalism, or cognitive radicalism. This finding suggests that one’s status as a Muslim convert alone is not a sufficient predictor that someone will become radical or even become involved in non-violent activism. This finding supports research by Kleinmann et al, which shows that despite the fact that Muslim converts are disproportionately involved in jihadism, attempting to predict that an individual will become involved in jihadist terrorism in the UK based solely on his or her status as a Muslim convert produces a false discovery rate of 99.99 per cent.843

Finally, phase-two considered the role of religiosity in radicalisation. There is a significant debate regarding the role of religion in radicalisation. A number of radicalisation studies suggest that the religiously naïve are most likely to be recruited to jihadism. Others argue that Islamic piety is a precursor to jihadist

This thesis tested these hypotheses by conducting regression analysis between variables which measured participants’ religiosity (i.e. importance of religion and frequency of prayer and mosque attendance) and religious upbringing (i.e. a proxy for frequency of childhood religious service attendance and participants’ agreement on scale which asked how religiously they were raised) as independent variables and behavioral activism, behavioral radicalism, or cognitive radicalism as dependent variables. This study could find no significant relationships between religiosity and behavioral activism, behavioral radicalism, or cognitive radicalism. Only a weak positive relationship exists between religious upbringing and cognitive radicalism (R=.220, p=.005). It is no surprise that these concepts are not strongly related. Religious piety and religious upbringing are far too common characteristics to be of predictive value. There are nearly 3 million Muslim in the US. According to Pew, 87 per cent say religion is very important or somewhat important in their lives. And 59 per cent say they pray at least once per day. Results from the Qualtrics participants were similarly high. (85.37 per cent of the respondents completely agreed or somewhat agreed that religion was important in their lives). Nearly three quarters (73.76 per cent) say they pray at least once per day.

---

844 Olivier Roy, “Who are the new jihadis?” The Guardian, April, 13 2017; Rabah Kherbane, “The government believes the more conservative the Muslim, the more likely they will turn to terror,” The Independent, November 20, 2015,

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Scholars have proposed a number of models to explain radicalism. As explained, most of those models suffer from conceptual and methodological deficiencies. The inadequacy of radicalisation models has prompted a few scholars to suggest that conversion theories might be better able to account for radicalism due to their methodological strengths and empirical backing. One conversion theory to which scholars point is Lofland and Stark’s cult-conversion model. Lofland and Stark claim that seven conditions (i.e. experiencing acute psychological tension, having a religious problem-solving perspective, religious seeking, experiencing a recent turning point, possessing cult affective bonds, combined with weak or few extra-cult affective bonds, and undergoing intensive cult interaction) are necessary and sufficient to affect total conversion to a deviant New Religious Movement. These scholars suggest that Lofland and Stark’s conditions might also be necessary and sufficient to affect jihadist radicalism.

With this hypothesis in mind, I set out to test whether the seven factors from Lofland and Stark’s model, in combination, could account for jihadist radicalisation. Since this is a very complex question which has never been tested, finding the answer first required exploratory research before formal hypothesis testing could begin. Therefore, this thesis employs a two-phase complementarity mixed methods research design. Phase-one uses a small qualitative study of six Al Qaeda-linked participants to explore how convicted jihadists experienced the conditions of the World Saver model. This process identified additional, more specific research questions, which phase-two tested as hypotheses in a larger quantitative analysis of 160 Muslims from the general population.

Phase-one found that the experiences of the six Al Qaeda-linked participants were largely congruent with the process Lofland and Stark described in their ‘World Saver’ model. In most cases, there was evidence that the six participants experienced all of the seven conditions of the model. Moreover, these experiences often appeared qualitatively different from what is usually observable in the general population. While the research method in phase-one could not determine if those experiences led to radicalisation, the exploratory test shows that most of the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported changes in their religious beliefs, practices, and social networks leading up to involvement in terrorism. In many cases, the importance of religion, frequency of prayer, and mosque attendance increased and participants became more socially isolated. Phase-one also found that, although all of the participants experienced tension, the Muslim convert respondents tended have experiences that were much more severe than the non-converts in the sample.

While the qualitative analysis in phase-one offers a rich description of how the Al Qaeda-linked participants experienced the seven conditions in Lofland and Stark’s model, the exploratory study was not able to explain if there is a relationship between those experiences and radicalisation or if the findings are inferential to the general population. Therefore, phase-two filled these gaps by quantitatively testing the unresolved questions that emerged from the exploratory findings. The results show that experiencing the conditions of the world saver model has a substantial-to-very strong relationship with willingness to participate in political violence, or behavioral radicalism. A similarly strong relationship exists between the World Saver model and willingness to participate in legal, non-violent political action, or behavioral activism. Unexpectedly, however, experiencing the conditions of Lofland and Stark’s model is not significantly related to developing a militant interpretation of jihad. Moreover, despite the fact that the Al Qaeda-linked participants in phase one became more religious prior to their radicalisation, phase two could not find a significant relationship between religiosity and

848 Lofland and Stark, “World Savers.”
radicalism. However, quantitative analysis seems to confirm the exploratory finding that Muslim converts experience tension longer and more severely than non-converts. This finding also applies to Muslim converts’ experiences with religious seeking.

**Limitations**

Like all research there are a number of limitations to the findings of this thesis. Most importantly, this study is, to my knowledge, the first empirical study to apply a cult conversion theory to the problem of radicalisation. While a few scholars have suggested the benefits of building on new religious movement literature in radicalisation studies, few scholars have accepted the challenge. The lack of work in this area means that it is a wide-open field with many questions to explore and hypotheses to test. In this regard, this thesis presents a novel and fresh look at radicalisation through the lens of new religious movement literature. However, the downside to the lacuna of research that bridges new religious movement and radicalisation studies is that there is very little empirical data on which to build new research. Future research on radicalisation therefore needs to continue to build from the findings of new religious movement studies to identify new research questions and test new hypotheses.

Relatedly, there is very little research on the topic of Muslim convert radicalisation. There appears to be a significant overrepresentation of Muslim converts in jihadism. However, there is not yet a satisfying answer as to why this phenomenon exists. The research in this thesis was not able to answer the question either. Although Muslim converts seem to experience psychological stress (tension) to a greater degree than non-converts, the findings from this study suggest that the condition is not enough to affect radicalisation. Future research should further explore the role of tension in the overrepresentation of Muslim converts. Researchers should also test other theories of radicalisation on much larger samples of Muslim converts.

---

849 Lorne Dawson has contributed a number of works that bridge the gap between new religious movement studies and radicalisation. Scott Flower and John Horgan et al are also pursuing research using Lewis Rambo’s religious conversion theory. However, Rambo’s theory does not specifically address new religious movements, per se.

However, researchers should also look for alternative explanations. Perhaps Muslim converts are easy targets for police compared to people born into the faith. It may be possible that Muslim converts are overrepresented in terrorism-related criminal convictions for the same reason African Americans are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Future research should explore if converts are more likely to be the targets of FBI agent provocateur stings. It is possible that Muslim converts stand out in Muslim social circles due to their race or lack of ethnic fluency.

Researchers should explore how Muslim converts are accepted by the Muslim community and if other Muslims are more willing to report convert extremists to authorities than those that are born Muslims who may have deeper social connections to the ethnic or Muslim communities. There may also be differences in the reporting rates of the families of converts versus the families of born Muslims. Perhaps the families of ethnic minorities or immigrants are less likely to report their extremist child to the police because they are afraid that there will be increased police and media scrutiny on their community. Alternatively, perhaps Muslim parents are better equipped to deal with an extremist child than the non-Muslim families of converts, therefore extremism is handled internally. These questions need to be further explored.

The sample size in the exploratory phase of this study is extremely limiting. Actual violent jihadists are a very rare and extremely difficult population to sample. And while this study is one of the few to interview Al Qaeda-linked jihadists, it is difficult to come to reliable conclusions from a sample of six. There are obvious issues of sampling bias with these six participants. Why did they choose to participate and the other 35 convicted jihadists who were invited to participate did not cooperate? The problem also extends to the data these individuals supplied. In many cases they were not truthful or forthcoming about their relations with other jihadists. Although it was in many cases possible to check the validity of their responses from open sources such as the media or legal documents, there is no certainty that those sources are reliable either. Future research should focus on collecting a larger sample of standardised interview data from jihadists.

Collectively, researchers have interviewed dozens, if not hundreds of jihadists. However, that data is often informal or not standardised. Therefore, its usefulness for meta-studies is limited. If researchers could agree on a set of valid scales they could build a standardised set of terrorist interview data. From that data researchers could synthesise the research of others with metadata.

One reason that there is a lack of data from jihadists is the reluctance of the governments to give researchers access to terrorists in prison.\textsuperscript{852} Efforts are further hampered by research ethics boards. The Federal Bureau of Prisons ethics board has only approved three of eight applications to interview jihadist in federal custody. Moreover, the other two studies which the BOP did approve are hung up in ongoing university or funding body IRB disputes regarding the ethics of their research. One such study has been waiting two years for IRB approval.\textsuperscript{853} However, the low number of applications is also an issue. It is problematic that scholars publish hundreds of articles every year but there have only been eight applications to the BOP to interview terrorists. More effort is required to push through ethics applications to the BOP.

Relatedly, the findings of this thesis are limited by the lack of face-to-face interviews. Research comparing face-to-face interviews with telephone surveys and self-administered online surveys shows that face-to-face interviews produced the most reliable results and had less bias than the other two methods.\textsuperscript{854} It was evident from the data in this thesis, that some of the respondents did not understand the questions as they were presented in the questionnaire. In a face-to-face interview, a trained interviewer can repeat questions or explain misunderstandings to respondents.

The scale used to measure cognitive radicalism also limits findings in this thesis as they relate to \textit{cognitive radicalism}. As explained, the first attempt at a three-item

\begin{flushright}
\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{852} Sageman, Marc. "The stagnation in terrorism research." \textit{Terrorism and Political Violence} 26, no. 4 (2014): 565-580
\textsuperscript{853} Conversations with BOP Human subjects officer.
\end{footnotesize}
\end{flushright}
cognitive radicalism scale only delivered Combach’s alpha score of $\alpha=0.327$. The cut-off for reliability is generally $\alpha > 0.06$. Therefore, I had to drop two of the items related to jihadist beliefs. A one-dimensional scale of jihadist beliefs could be the reason for null findings regarding the role of ideology in radicalisation and the weak relationship between radical ideas and radical behavior. Future research should seek a reliable and valid indicator of cognitive radicalism. Considering that many researchers have found that few jihadists have a deep understanding of the movement’s ideology, it may be more constructive to design measures of cognitive radicalism based on feelings of moral justice or fairness, instead of measuring their understandings of the intricacies of jihadist doctrine.

Likewise, the extra-cult affective bonds composite condition scale in phase-two proved to be an invalid measure of countervailing attachments in participants’ social networks. This is because the item did not measure which social attachments are jihadists. Without knowing which people in participants’ social networks are jihadists and which are not, it is impossible to weigh the relative strength of their jihadist and non-jihadist social networks to determine which has more influence. Future research should design an extra-cult bond scale in a way that can validly parse jihadist from non-jihadist social attachments.

The Moskalenko and McCauley’s Activism-Radicalism Intension Scale (ARIS) also limits the findings as they relate to an actual measurement of violence. The behavioral activism and behavioral radicalism scales derived from the ARIS only measure willingness to act, not action. While, Moskalenko and McCauley’s argue that research suggests intension is a good indicator of future behavior, a scale that measured historical behavior or observations of such behavior would provide more meaningful findings regarding the ‘World Saver’ model’s ability to predict political violence.

Finally, as always, a larger sample size of Muslims in the general population would have provided more robust and generalisable findings. While the sample size of N=160 was sufficient for the tests used in this thesis, a larger sample would have provided more statistical power to detect statistical significance, and therefore higher confidence levels regarding generalisability.

Despite these limitations, the results of phase-one and phase-two offer several new findings regarding the process of radicalisation and confirm many existing theories about the process. The remainder of this chapter discusses how the findings from the qualitative and quantitative analyses from this thesis relate to bigger questions in the terrorism studies field.

A dynamic process of radicalisation

Lofland and Stark described their model as a ‘value-added’ linear process in which religious seekers sequentially experience conditions which funnel them towards conversion. They contend that this funneling process ‘systematically reduces the number of persons who can be considered available for recruitment and also increasingly specifies who is available’.\(^858\)

For many, this process helps to explain why the combination of rather mundane experiences can induce someone to take the extraordinary action of joining a cult. For this reason, many of the radicalisation process models follow Lofland and Stark’s template. For example, Wiktorowicz envisioned his model similarly as a funnel.\(^859\) Borum,\(^860\) the NYPD\(^861\) and Moghaddam\(^862\) all presented sequential process models. However, the static nature of these process models has led to much criticism, as many terrorism scholars argue that there is not a single path to radicalism.\(^863\) They contend

---


\(^863\) Randy Borum, “Radicalisation into violent extremism I: A review of social science theories,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4 (2011); John Horgan, "From profiles to pathways and roots to routes: Perspectives
that humans are heterogeneous beings. Therefore, the process of becoming a terrorist is likely to be complex and dynamic, with different contexts and experiences leading people to the same outcome. To account for this complex process, a radicalisation model cannot be limited to a linear process; it must be flexible and dynamic.

A quantitative test for linearity in Lofland and Starks model is not possible with the data from phase-two, because it is not temporal. However, data from the Al Qaeda-linked participants in the exploratory phase of this study is able to qualitatively show that they did not experience the model’s conditions in the same order that Lofland and Stark described. For some of the Al Qaeda-linked participants, there was a blurring between personal tension, seeking, and turning points. For example, when Sam’s sibling and only friend died, it was both tension and a turning point. Moreover, Sam and Shannon both experienced the end of abusive relationships shortly before meeting a jihadist recruiter. For Sam and Shannon these experiences are almost indistinguishable as separate conditions. The loss and abuse caused extreme psychological stress (tension). However, these experiences were also pivotal events (turning points) which set them on a path to seeking where they found jihadism. Therefore, in Shannon and Sam’s cases, the tension and turning points came before the seeking. Although the fact that the Al Qaeda-linked participants in this study did not experience the conditions in the ‘World Saver’ model in a linear fashion, in part, invalidates the ‘World Saver’ model, it is still a promising finding because it adds credence to the argument that radicalisation can take many pathways.

**A model of radicalisation**

The results from the Qualtrics survey find that the conditions in the ‘World Saver’ model, in combination, significantly predict openness to illegal, violent political action (behavioral radicalism). As participants’ scores for the model’s conditions increased, so too did their behavioral radicalism.

---

scores. From the nine independent variables, only tension, cult affective bonds, and intensive interaction are significant predictors of behavioral radicalism. Further multiple regression analysis confirms that the combination of these three variables alone is a significant predictor of behavioral radicalism ($R = .680, p < .001$). This finding suggests the remaining ‘World Saver’ conditions are not necessary mechanisms in the radicalisation process.

What emerges, then, is a new radicalisation model from the three significant conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model that predict behavioral radicalism. In this model a cognitive factor (tension) interacts with two social factors (cult affective bonds and intensive interaction) moving people towards willingness to participate in political violence. Analysis finds these three conditions are significantly correlated with each other. However, it is unclear if there is any linear sequence to these conditions. Whichever the case, the factors in the emergent model appear most similar to the factors suggested in Sageman’s ‘bunch of guys’ theory, where cognitive factors and social interaction leads to group-think and mobilisation to violence, and Wiktorowicz’s theory, in which psychological trauma and personal relationships open individuals to socialisation with a radical group. Each of these conditions—tension, cult affective bonds, and intensive interaction—largely mirror the factors described in the theoretical radicalisation literature. Moreover, they generally comport with other empirical findings in the terrorism studies field.

The first significant predictor in the emergent model is tension. Lofland and Stark describe this condition as a psychological stress stemming from frustration regarding deprivation. As they explain, tension is ‘best characterised as a felt discrepancy between some imaginary, ideal state of

---

865 Tension is significantly correlated with cult affective bonds $r(158)=.224, p=.004$; Tension is significantly correlated with intensive interaction $r(158)=.242, p=.002$; Cult affective bonds is significantly correlated with intensive interaction $r(158)=.878, p<.001$


affairs and the circumstances in which these people saw themselves caught up'. In their test of the ‘World Saver’ model, Kox, Meeus and Hart identified two types of tension: personal problems and social problems. They found that personal problems generally arise from problems relative to one’s person, such as loneliness, lack of self-confidence, or inadequate self-acceptance, and problems with one’s situation, such as meaninglessness, boredom, or a lack of challenge. Conversely, social problem tension stems from an individual’s concern about problems in society.

Most radicalisation process models theorise some type of psychological stress that resembles tension. Among these models, the most common way of accounting for psychological stress is relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is not about how much someone is deprived in absolute terms. Rather, it is how people perceive their deprivation or that of their group compared to what they believe is just. Moghaddam specifically identifies fraternal deprivation as the cause of psychological stress in the radicalisation process. He explains that this type of deprivation ‘arise[s] because of the position of an individual’s group relative to that of other groups.’ This feeling may lead to a sense of injustice if one feels his or her group is receiving unfair treatment. As Sageman suggests, people who radicalise perceive an out-group is waging war on their in-group. Wiktorowicz further contends extremist groups can induce this feeling by framing problems as injustices. In this regard, fraternal deprivation is similar to the social problems tension that Kox, Meeus, and Hart identify.

---

Other scholars hypothesise radicalisation factors that more closely resemble what Kox, Meeus, and Hart identify as personal problem tension.874

Wiktorowicz specifically points to personal crisis and trauma as catalysts that can cause a cognitive opening, where an individual becomes open to new ideas or direction in life. He argues that job loss, death of a loved one, victimisation by a crime, torture, or other idiosyncratic personal experiences may cause a cognitive opening.875 Sageman is very critical of this concept, contending there is no empirical evidence for such a phenomenon.876 However, Ellis et al, suggest that what Wiktorowicz observed may be a phenomenon known as posttraumatic growth (PTG), in which the experience of psychological trauma ‘can change beliefs, goals, behaviors, and identity’ following traumatic experiences.877

The experiences of the six Al Qaeda-linked participants from the exploratory phase of this thesis appear very similar to both types of psychological stress hypothesised in the radicalisation literature. For example, the majority of the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported feeling a sense of injustice regarding the treatment of Muslims around the world. They often spoke of love and affection for fellow Muslims in other countries and feelings of severe pain and sadness for Muslims suffering at the hands of non-Muslims. Their feelings of frustration stemming from fraternal deprivation were often obvious, as in Kelly’s case, where [he/she] believes that there is a global Christian conspiracy to subjugate Muslims. These individuals sometimes spoke of experiencing severe emotional distress when thinking about these injustices. Shannon even admitted that the plight of Muslims brought [him/her] to tears. Shannon and Sam further reveal that anger at the treatment of Muslims was so great that it moved them to act. While the different types of data prevent direct comparisons, it is important to note that, on average, the general population appears much less distressed by problems in society. For example, the mean response from Qualtrics panel participants in this study to questions regarding concern for war, the

874 Ibid. 227-240, 233.
refugee crisis, and US foreign policy—all issues associated with Muslim suffering—was only somewhat concerned. Conversely, the qualitative descriptions from Al Qaeda-linked participants suggest these issues were of grave concern.

Crisis and trauma are also key factors contributing to tension amongst the Al Qaeda-linked participants in this study. In particular, participants commonly reported severe psychological stress stemming from the death of a loved one, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, and self-esteem issues. While many people experience similar problems, Wiktorowicz suggests that those who move towards extremism will differ in the severity and duration of their experiences from those who do not become involved.\(^{878}\) The findings in this thesis seem to support this hypothesis. Compared to the five personal problems which the Al Qaeda-linked participants reported, the Qualtrics participants’ experiences are much less severe and shorter in duration. The Al Qaeda-linked participants reported that their experiences of the death of a loved one, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, and insecurity were all severe or very severe. By contrast, the mean severity score which panel participants reported for each of these experiences was neither severe nor mild. Likewise, Al Qaeda-linked participants tended to report that their tension experiences lasted more than five years, while Qualtrics participants on average reported those experiences lasting 1-5 years.

Empirical support for these findings in the terrorism literature is mixed. There is some empirical evidence which supports the role of fraternal deprivation as a factor in radicalisation. For example, King and Taylor suggest that ‘the findings of social psychological research place relative deprivation as a likely contributor to radicalisation.’\(^{879}\) However, they are careful to caveat that ‘it is group-based relative deprivation, as opposed to personal deprivation, that predicts collective action.’\(^{880}\)

Supporting this finding, in his analysis of 240 Saudi militants, Hegghammer finds that the primary reason the militants traveled to fight in Chechnya was ‘outrage at


the Chechen war.’ He found similar motivations for Saudi militants who fought in Kashmir and Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{881} Likewise, Sageman’s review of terrorist biographies highlights the importance of moral outrage at a perceived war on Islam.\textsuperscript{882}

The role of abuse as a factor in radicalisation has less empirical support. In their START study of Islamist, far right, far left, and single-issue terrorists, Jensen et al. find that out of 222 Islamist terrorists, only 4.1 per cent experienced abuse as a minor and 1.3 per cent experienced abuse as an adult. However, their study uses publicly available data.\textsuperscript{883} Considering abuse is significantly underreported, it is likely the actual accounts of abuse are much higher.\textsuperscript{884} Nevertheless, this study does not suggest that abuse is a mono-causal factor in radicalisation of jihadists. Rather, it is one factor relating to tension that emerged in the small sample of Al Qaeda-linked participants. Instead, the inconsistency in findings regarding the role of abuse in radicalisation may point to a very broad range of traumas and crises which may lead to tension as a factor in radicalisation.

The theoretical radicalisation literature also points to the role social attachments play in the radicalisation process. Lofland and Stark refer to these relationships as \textit{cult affective bonds}. The two authors argue that in order to begin the process of socialisation with a cult, an individual requires a pre-existing social connection to the group, or to develop a close affective relationship with a member shortly after meeting. Such relationships act as bridges of trust in such a way that joining the group just means ‘coming to accept the opinion of one’s friends’.\textsuperscript{885} Social relationships are also important conduits for joining jihadist groups. As Wiktorowicz argues, ‘if social contacts are in a movement, the seeker is likely to be drawn to the movement’s activities since social ties are trusted pathways of information.’ At the same time, movement members also reach out first to family and friends for

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
recruitment because those individuals are part of trusted networks. Sageman argues similarly that joining the jihadist movement is a result of having jihadist friendship and kinship networks. The role of social connections brings into focus the importance of radical milieux in neighborhoods or in virtual spaces. If an individual exists in a radical environment or one that is sympathetic to radical cause, he or she not only has more pathways to join a radical movement, but also the risks of being caught and the stigma of radicalism are much lower.

The findings of this thesis corroborate the importance of social networks in the radicalisation process. Among the six Al Qaeda-linked participants in the exploratory phase of this study, all had relationships with another member of the jihadist movement. Four of those participants had pre-existing relationships, of which one of those was with a family member. Two others developed romantic relationships with jihadists online. At least three of the participants explained how their jihadist attachment used the trust established in their relationship to recruit them into the movement. Likewise, approximately 25 per cent of the Qualtrics participants maintain a relationship with a jihadist. More than half of those relationships were facilitated through a pre-existing bond. In one third of those cases, the pre-existing bond was a family member or a friend. Moreover, cult-affective bonds were significantly correlated with behavioral radicalism.

The importance of social bonds to radicalisation is widely corroborated by other empirical studies. In his 2004 study of jihadist networks, Sageman found that 82 per cent of those who joined Al Qaeda, did so through a friend or a family member. Olivier Roy confirmed that ‘half of the European Al Qaeda recruits he studied followed their friends, frequently through channels of petty crime.’ Hegghammer reports that many of the Saudi militants in his study traveled to the Afghan jihad following a brother or friend. Likewise, Rik Coolsaet found that a large portion of

Belgian ISIS fighters followed family members and friends from gangs to Syria.\textsuperscript{891} Scott Atran similarly found that 95 per cent of ISIS foreign fighters joined with friends and family members.\textsuperscript{892} Most recently, a 2017 UN study found that one third of the returned foreign fighters the authors interviewed traveled to Syria at the behest of a family member or friend.\textsuperscript{893}

Once a person begins engaging with other radicals, much of the literature on radicalisation argues that he or she will begin a process of socialisation which commits him or her to the movement’s ideas and behaviors. Lofland and Stark posit this process of commitment happens during a phase of \textit{intensive interaction} with other members of the group.\textsuperscript{894} During this stage, the group attempts to isolate the prospective joiner from outside influences and begins acculturating him or her to the movement’s beliefs and behaviors. Radicalisation models differ on the manifestation of this process. Some argue, similar to Lofland and Stark, that it is a top-down phenomenon where recruiters seek to socially encapsulate the recruits and indoctrinate them with the movement’s ideology. For example, Moghaddam argues that recruiters isolate new recruits, showering them with attention and engaging them in activities that change their perceptions about the legitimacy of violence and promote in-group, out-group divisions. As part of this process, recruiters also dehumanise enemies to morally disengage recruits in preparation for violence.\textsuperscript{895} Likewise, Wiktoroticz showed how Al Muhajiroun leaders attempt to separate interested joiners from others by engaging them in a constant flurry of group activities meant to convince them of the movement’s credibility and sacred authority. Wiktorowicz contends that these activities also socialise recruits to the movement’s culture and behaviors.\textsuperscript{896} Conversely, Sageman argues that the intensive interaction takes place in small cliques in a bottom-up process. Rather than direct

\textsuperscript{891} Neven Bondokji, Kim Wilkinson and Leen Aghabi, \textit{Understanding Radicalisation}, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2016, 19.
\textsuperscript{892} Jennifer Newton, “95% of foreign fighters who join ISIS are recruited by friends and family and radicalisation ‘rarely occurs in mosques’ claims Oxford University terrorism expert,” \textit{The Daily Mail}, November 25, 2015.
\textsuperscript{893} Hamed el-Said and Richard Barrett, Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria, United Nations Office of Counterterrorism, 2017.
\textsuperscript{895} Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration." \textit{American Psychologist} 60, no. 2 (2005).
indoctrination from movement leaders, groups of individuals self-isolate and indoctrinate themselves by watching jihadist videos and online lectures while participating in intense group discussions. According to Sageman, this process ratchets up the group’s radicalism through group-think and may eventually lead to violence.897

The data from both the exploratory research and the quantitative research phases of this thesis support a mix of intensive interaction modes involving both bottom-up and top-down socialisation. Of the three Al Qaeda-linked participants in the exploratory phase who shared their experiences interacting with other jihadists, all of them socialised in small, close-knit, in-person groups and via the internet. In all three cases, the individuals cut themselves off from non-jihadists and participated in intensive discussions about jihad. In all three cases, the Al Qaeda-linked participants lived with other members of their radical group. Moreover, in two of those cases, jihadist recruiters were part of the small, close-knit groups. Therefore, while the socialisation took place in small cliques, it also involved top-down instruction from movement recruiters.

The Qualtrics participants reported a wide array of intensive interactions with the movement. The most frequent of the eight suggested interaction activities from the survey was watching videos of jihadist acts of violence. From the total sample (N=160), 18 per cent reported watching violent videos either always or very often on a five-point, Likert-type scale from never to always. The next most popular was discussions about jihad with others on social media (17.5 per cent). For the least frequent interaction activity, 13.75 per cent admitted to socialising in person with other jihadists always or very often. As the data show, there is a very small range in the frequencies from the least popular interaction activity to the most popular. This may suggest that persons interacting with jihadists do so through a variety of means.

Empirical evidence abounds for the role of intensive interaction in the radicalisation process. For example, in their study of ISIS supporters in the US, Vidino and

---

Hughes find that many were part of clusters of ‘small informal groups of like-minded individuals whose internal dynamics reinforce the beliefs of its members.’ They explained that these clusters regularly consumed jihadist propaganda together ‘accelerating the cluster’s members’ radicalisation.’ In their study, Jensen et al. found that 75.1 per cent of their sample of Islamist terrorists (n=221) were a member of a formal or informal group. They also find that 35.6 per cent of their sample of Islamists (n=177) radicalised in a clique, ‘lending further support to the notion that radicalisation is a highly social phenomenon.’ Research from Hegghammer paints a picture of one intensive interaction scenario. He explains that jihadists have created a culture which romanticises the plight of jihad with songs, poems, and storytelling. He argues that radicalising persons often consume this propaganda before understanding the movement’s ideology and become acculturated to jihadism. Reading poetry, singing songs, and even weeping over stories of sacrifice and martyrdom together with other jihadists strengthens interpersonal bonds and commitment to the movement. However, such socialising does not always occur in person. Gill et al and Vidino and Hughes find that sometimes individuals socialise online, accessing videos, lectures, and other ideological information and sharing it with others via the internet. However, Gill et al and Vidino and Hughes contend that the internet rarely plays the sole role in radicalisation. Rather, they find socialisation with other radicals takes place both online and offline.

A model of non-violent political activism

It is also important to note that phase-two finds that the conditions in the ‘World Saver’ model, in combination, significantly predict willingness to participate in to legal, non-violent political action. As participants’ scores for the model’s conditions increased, so too did their behavioral activism scores. However, from the nine independent variables, different conditions predict activism, then do predict

---

899 Ibid
radicalism. Only tension, and seeking are significant predictors of behavioral activism. Further multiple regression analysis confirms that the combination of these two variables alone is a significant predictor of behavioral activism (R=.550, p<.001).

This result suggests that, within Lofland and Stark’s model, separate conditions predict violent and non-violent outcomes. This is a salient finding because it is not only helpful to know what factors lead people to political violence, it is also important to understand what mechanisms lead people to express democratic means for political change. In this case, it appears that psychological stress (tension) and searching for a like-minded social group (seeking) lead people towards a willingness to participate in legal political activism, but not political violence. The exploratory phase found some evidence of this phenomenon amongst the Al Qaeda-linked participants. Both Shannon and Sam experienced severe psychological trauma in their lives (personal tension). Moreover, they were both appalled by the Israeli’s treatment of Palestinian Muslims (social tension). As a result, they began seeking out likeminded activists to discuss these issues online (seeking), and reposting YouTube videos of Muslim suffering with comments condemning their treatment (non-violent activism). While Sam and Shannon eventually mobilised to commit terrorism that transitioned to violence, this did not occur until they met and began socialising with jihadists.

No ‘conveyor belt’ from activism to radicalism
A frequent criticism of radicalisation research is that scholars tend to look at outlier cases of terrorists and try to work backward to identify the mechanisms that led a person to violence. This kind of research misses cases where the same mechanisms lead to different outcomes. For example, some analysts have listened to terrorist grievances and concluded that social, economic, and political grievances are drivers of terrorism. However, this argument is easily falsifiable. Some people with grievances do nothing about them, while others take to the streets in legal democratic protest. And in rare cases, some people will turn to political violence. Understanding why some people turn to democratic means and others turn to violence may offer insights into preventing terrorism.
One hypothesis that a few scholars have posited in recent years is that violence is the extreme end on a continuum of political activism. On one end of the continuum are innocuous forms of political action, such as voting. On the other end of the spectrum is politically-motivated killing. Contentious, but legal forms of expression, such as protests sit somewhere in the middle. On this continuum, moving from one extreme to the other is a ‘psychological progression.’ Impatience and frustration with the lack of success of non-violent modes of political action causes individuals and groups to move further down the continuum towards violence.\(^{903}\) For example, after decades of political repression under the Assad family, Syrians took to the streets as part of the Arab Spring, demanding the departure of President Bashir Al Asaad. When their peaceful protests were met with more repression, some Syrians took to insurgency. This process is often referred to as the ‘conveyor belt’ theory of radicalisation. The metaphor suggests that grievances slowly and automatically move individuals and groups towards increasingly radical behavior.\(^{904}\)

This theory has received a lot of popular support from the media and governments.\(^{905}\) In particular, a number of governments accuse ostensibly non-violent Islamist activist groups such as the Hizb-ut Tahrir, and Al Muhajiroun as being jihadist incubators.\(^{906}\) Zeno Baran is one of the main advocates of this theory. She argues ‘International experts and law-enforcement agencies agree that HT [Hizb-ut Tahrir] is a “conveyor belt” for producing terrorists. Not all groups have to be directly involved in the terrorist act itself; HT produces thousands of manipulated brains, which then “graduate” from HT and become members of groups like Al Qaeda.’\(^{907}\)

McCaulery and Moskaleno hypothesise that this ‘slippery slope’ might also occur in self-radicalisation. They explain that dissonance theory shows that once someone

---


\(^{904}\) Ibid. 239-260.

\(^{905}\) Ibid. 239-260.


has acted in a morally questionable manner, they often justify or rationalise the behavior, clearing the way for increasingly immoral behavior. McCauley and Moskalenko give the examples of Milgram’s famous electro-shock study and Zimbardo’s prisoner study, in which each electric shock or mistreatment of a prisoner justified the next. As they explain, ‘There is then a pattern of slowly increasing radical behavior—behavior that harms others—in both the Milgram experiments and Zimbardo’s prison experiment. In dissonance experiments and in Zimbardo’s post-experimental inquiry, we see the power of self-persuasion in justifying one’s own behavior. Self-radicalisation is a slippery slope of increasingly extreme behaviors, with increasingly extreme reasons and justifications icing the slope.’

In a subsequent study, Moskalenko and McCauley tested the ‘conveyor belt’ hypothesis and rejected the notion that there is a slippery slope progression from non-violent to violent political action. To test the hypothesis, the pair developed the Activism-Radicalism Intension Scale—a ten-item instrument in which each item progressively moved from legal, non-violent political actions to illegal, violent ones. In three consecutive tests in the US and Ukraine, Principle Components Analysis identified an eight-item, two component scale that measured two separate, unrelated behaviors: legal, non-violent activism, and illegal, violent radicalism. For example, they found that the independent variable, ‘identification with country’ was a significant positive predictor of activism, but not radicalism. As they explain, ‘If radicalism differs from activism only in being a more extreme form of political commitment, then our eight items should have formed a single dimension. Instead, results of principle component analysis in the three studies show activism and radicalism to be distinguishable dimensions.’

The findings of this thesis also reject the ‘conveyor belt’ hypothesis. Phase-two of this study employed Moskalenko and McCauley’s Activism-Radicalism Intention Scale. Like the original study, a Principal Components Analysis identified two valid, discriminant components. One measured openness to legal, non-violent behavior.

The other measured openness to illegal, violent behavior with alphas of 0.943 for activism and 0.933 for radicalism, suggesting high reliability. As Moskalenko and McCauley explain, if these two concepts were on a continuum, there would only have been one contiguous scale. In other words, activism and radicalism are distinguishable dimensions. Findings from this thesis also show evidence of discriminant validity. The independent variables, *cult affective bonds* and *intensive interaction* were significant, positive predictors of *behavioral radicalism*, but not *behavioral activism*. Only *tension* and *seeking* predicted behavioral activism. This result further suggests that behavioral radicalism and behavioral activism are separate concepts. Violent, radical intentions are the result of socialisation with other violent radicals. Those who do not socialise with radicals are not likely to move from openness to non-violent activism to willingness to engage in violence.

On its face, it may seem that the mere existence of so-called ‘lone wolf’ terrorists would invalidate the finding that involvement in violent, radical behavior requires socialising with other radicals. However, research shows that there are few true ‘lone wolves,’ in the vein of Ted Kaczynski. Many lone actors have some, at least tenuous, relationship with other radicals either virtually, in real life, or in both realms. For example, in their study of 119 right-wing, single issue, and Al Qaeda-inspired lone actor terrorists, Gill et al. find, 1/3 of their sample belonged to a contentious political movement and 83 per cent interacted with other political activists either face-to-face or virtually. In other words, the vast majority of lone-actor terrorists in their study had a social connection to a movement.

So, why do so many individuals seem to have moved from ostensibly non-violent activist groups to involvement in terrorism? For example, in their comparative study of terrorists, activists, and young Muslims from the general population in Canada and four European countries, Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller found that violent terrorists were more likely than those in the other groups to have prior experience in political protests. Similarly, Raffaello Pantucci claims that nearly half of the 51

---

910 Ibid, 239-260.
terrorism plots either in the UK or abroad as of 2015 are linked to the ostensibly non-violent group Al Muhajiroun.\textsuperscript{913} Social movement theory may have the answer. As McCarthy and Zald explain, social movement organizations recruit from pools of constituents. These may be individuals who share the organization’s goals and benefit from its activism, but who are not themselves adherent members of the organization.\textsuperscript{914} In this regard, an individual may share the same grievances as the jihadist movement, and even sympathise with its goals, but only be a ‘constituent’ who is \textit{not} a deployable agent for the movement’s activities. For example, Bartlett and Miller find that most of the non-violent activists and young Muslims in their comparison groups held the same grievances and beliefs as terrorists, regarding foreign policy, takfirism, and establishing a caliphate. However, the non-violent participants did not believe that violent jihad was obligatory in Islam.\textsuperscript{915} The findings from this thesis suggest that these sympathisers are not likely to progress to violence on their own. Yet, they represent a potential pool of support from which jihadists can recruit. Once the jihadist movement establishes a personal connection with these sympathisers, further \textit{intensive socialisation} may lead them to accept violent behavior. As explained above, this is the trajectory that the Al Qaeda-linked participants, Sam and Shannon described in the exploratory phase. Their grievances about the treatment of Muslims took them as far as non-violent online activism. It was not until jihadists recruited them from among others with the same grievances as jihadists that they moved towards violence.

\textbf{The role of ideology and religion}

There is a healthy debate in the terrorism studies field regarding the role of ideology in the radicalisation process. On one side of the argument, scholars contend that ideology plays a central role in explaining why individuals adopt political violence. From this perspective, indoctrination to extremist ideology cognitively radicalises people. The ideology, then, becomes the instruction manual for the cognitively radicalised, guiding their beliefs and actions. As Peter Neumann explains, ‘Simply

\textsuperscript{913} Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith, “ Radical Islamist group al-Muhajiroun linked to half of British terror attacks in past 20 years,” March 23 2015, \url{http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/radical-islamist-group-al-muhajiroun-linked-to-half-of-british-terror-attacks-in-past-20-years-10128492.html}.


put, what makes some individuals resort to political violence while others do not is, in many cases, impossible to understand without looking at the ideological assumption which they have come to accept and believe in. Neumann uses the examples of Irish Republicans in Northern Ireland juxtaposed to Tibetans under Chinese control to support his argument. While both groups believe they are under occupation, he contends, Irish Republicans resorted to violence while Tibetans protested peacefully. He argues the difference is in their ideology. Indeed, many of the radicalisation process models include a stage or phase which describes ideological indoctrination as part of the radicalisation process.

On the other side of the debate, psychologists John Horgan and Randy Borum are skeptical that ideological radicalism is a necessary and sufficient predictor of terrorism. As Borum argues, ‘A focus on [cognitive] radicalisation, however, risks implying that radical beliefs are a proxy—or at least a necessary precursor—for terrorism. We know this not to be true.’ Similarly, Horgan contends we ‘need to recognise that the vast majority of those who hold radical beliefs are not necessarily going to express that commitment via violent action…and we need to also recognise the fact that many of those who engage in violent action do so without any clear ideological basis. Suddenly, preventing [cognitive] radicalisation in the hope of preventing terrorism would not seem to be a conceptually sound pursuit.’ Instead Horgan and Borum argue scholars should focus on the many ‘pathways’ into involvement in terrorism, of which one may be ideology.

There is a similar debate in the field regarding the role of religion in terrorism. More specifically, scholars, journalists, politicians, and activists disagree vehemently on Islam’s influence on jihadism. Depending on the analyst, jihadism is either framed as Islam in its natural violent state, or an ideology that has hijacked, twisted, or

---

corrupted the peaceful religion of Islam. Graeme Wood’s 2016 article ‘What ISIS Wants’ explored this debate, by investigating the roots and ideology of the Islamic State. He found that many of the movement’s followers held sophisticated understandings of Islam and that the movement based much of its strategy on Islamic text. Wood concluded, ‘The reality is that the Islamic State is Islamic. Very Islamic.’

However, Wood’s conclusion was met with ire by Muslim rights groups, clerics, and allied scholars who claimed that jihadism does not represent Islam. Others took the argument a step further suggesting ‘religion plays little if any role in radicalisation.’ Indeed French sociologist Olivier Roy has observed that few of Europe’s jihadists hold sophisticated religious or ideological knowledge. Similarly, Wiktorowicz, following the new religious movement literature, argues that the ‘unchurched’ were more likely to join Al Muhajiroun in his study. Further, Wiktorowicz goes as far saying that that possessing Islamic knowledge may in fact inoculate individuals from radicalism.

Empirical support in the literature regarding the role of ideology in radicalisation is mixed. Bartlett and Miller found that non-violent activists and young Muslims in the Canadian and European general populations were just as willing as terrorists to support the rights of Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq to use violence against Western troops. However, non-violent activists and young Muslims framed their support for self-defense as concepts of justice, fairness, or just war theory, not a religious obligation to wage jihad. Conversely, the terrorists in their study justified violence with the belief that jihad was a religious duty. In another study, Hamed el-Said and Richard Barrett found very low levels of ideological motivation in their interviews of 43 foreign fighters who returned from Syria. For example, only 37 per cent of their respondents said that jihad was an important or extremely important factor in their decision to go to Syria. Likewise, only 25 per cent said that ideology was an important or extremely important factor in their decision. However, when asked, 40 per cent of their participants said an obligation to defend Muslims

---

924 Olivier Roy, “Who are the new jihadis?” *The Guardian*, April 13 2017
from the Syrian government motivated them to travel. Conversely, in their survey of 1,320 Indonesians, Muluk et al. explored the relationship between religiosity, ‘intra-textual religious fundamentalism’ (i.e. a fundamentalist interpretation of the Quran), perceptions of unfair treatment, support for Sharia law and belief, violent jihad and ‘sacred violence.’ The researchers found that belief in violent jihad was the only significant predictor of willingness to participate in ‘sacred violence’.

The findings are also mixed regarding the role of religion in radicalisation. El-Said and Barrett found that more than half of the foreign fighters in their study were religious novices. Moreover, Bartlett and Miller found that there was no significant difference in levels of religiosity or religious upbringing between terrorists and non-violent activists. Likewise, Muluk et al. did not find a significant relationship between religiosity or ‘intra-textual’ religious fundamentalism and willingness to participate in ‘sacred violence’. Conversely, Rink and Sharma found that religiosity is a significant positive predictor of willingness to join the Islamic State.

Testing Wiktrowicz’s hypothesis that religious knowledge inoculates against extremism, Fair et al. found that even a ‘very rudimentary knowledge of Islam’ made their participants less likely to support Pakistani jihadist groups.

This thesis explored the role of ideology and religion in radicalisation and did not find any strong relationships between these concepts. First, there was very little difference regarding the understanding of jihad between the Al Qaeda-linked participants in the exploratory phase of this study and the Qualtrics participants from the general population in phase-two. From both groups, the majority believed that

jihad can be a personal struggle or violent defense of other Muslims. The majority of participants in both samples also believed that jihad was a state/government responsibility as opposed to an individual one. However, they differed on the importance of defensive jihad. 80.8 per cent of the Qualtrics participants responded that defensive jihad was an outdated concept. Conversely, all three of the Al Qaeda-linked participants who responded said that defending other Muslims in the name of jihad is one of the most important obligations a Muslim can undertake.

Phase-two also tested several hypotheses regarding the role of ideology in radicalisation. Regression analysis showed that the ‘World Saver’ model’s conditions in combination were not a significant predictor of cognitive radicalism (i.e. a militant interpretation of jihad). Perhaps more controversial is that regressions found there is no significant relationship ($r=.107, p=.180$) between cognitive radicalism and behavioral radicalism. This finding may suggest that possessing a violent ideology is not sufficient to lead someone to violent behavior.

There was also very little difference regarding religious beliefs between the Al Qaeda-linked participants in the exploratory phase of this study and the Qualtrics participants from the general population in phase-two. More than 85 per cent (85.37 per cent) of the respondents completely agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement: currently, religion is important in my life. The mean score for importance of religion is $M= 4.35$ (somewhat agree) on a five-point Likert-type scale. Comparatively, five out of six (83 per cent) of the Al Qaeda-linked participants said that religion was either important or very important in their lives five years before their arrests ($M=4.1$) on a five-point Likert-type scale. Moreover, regression analysis found no significant relationships between religiosity and cognitive radicalism or behavioral radicalism. This finding is highly suggestive that in this study there was an insufficient link between levels of religiosity and holding radical beliefs about jihad or willingness to engage in political violence. Furthermore, regression analysis also found that having a religious upbringing is only a weak positive predictor of cognitive radicalism. While this finding does not exactly support Wiktorowicz’s argument that growing up religious may inoculate people from extremist
interpretations of jihad, it does speak to his broader point that religion is not a key factor in jihadist radicalism.\(^9\)

The empirical evidence regarding the role of ideology in radicalisation may suggest a middle way between the arguments of Neumann on one side and Horgan and Borum on the other. Findings from Bartlett and Miller and el-Said and Barrett showed that having a deep understanding of jihad was not a requirement for supporting violence. Rather, participants in those studies framed support for violence in terms of morality and justice. It is interesting that in both studies, participants described their motivations in very similar ideological terms to the jihadist narrative (i.e. obligation to defend Muslims). However, they did not rhetorically connect that sense of duty to a religious obligation vis-à-vis jihad. \(^9\)

Likewise, many of the Al Qaeda-linked participants in the exploratory phase of this thesis expressed very emotional responses to the suffering of Muslims along with a desire to help. Yet, few showed very militant interpretations of jihad. It is possible that their responses result from their unwillingness to truthfully answer the questions. However, it is also possible that they did not have a deep ideological understanding of jihad and were motivated by something else. Perhaps the ‘ideology’ that scholars often discuss as a driver of terrorism is nothing more than a sense of justice or moral duty for many rank-and-file jihadists. In other words, radicalisation may not always instill in people a deep philosophical understanding of jihadist ideology. Instead, jihadist propaganda may just awaken in people a moral code of righteousness and duty to act, which serves as a proxy for ideology. In this sense, it is not correct to say that ideology drives political violence. Nor is it correct to say that beliefs are not important in leading people to terrorism.

**Religious conversion and radicalism**

Research by Kleinmann and Flower and Schurrman, Grol, and Flower has found that Muslim converts are significantly overrepresented amongst jihadists. In the US and many western European countries, Muslim converts have been convicted of


terrorism-related offenses or have traveled as foreign fighters at a rate much higher than their representation in the general population. This phenomenon seems to suggest that there is something different about Muslim converts that makes them more prone to jihadism than people who were born into the faith.

Indeed, there is some data to substantiate the claim that converts are different from non-converts. In phase-two, independent samples t-tests between Muslim converts and non-converts show that converts have higher mean scores than non-converts regarding their experiences of tension and religious seeking. This finding supports the findings from phase-one which showed that the Muslim converts amongst the Al Qaeda-linked participants experienced trauma and hardships that were qualitatively more severe than the non-converts.

Despite these differences, increased experiences of tension and religious seeking were not enough to affect radicalisation. Further multiple regression analysis using the significantly correlated conditions as predictors and a dummy variable for convert/non-convert, show that one’s conversion status has no significant effect on scores for behavioral activism, behavioral radicalism, or cognitive radicalism. While there is very little empirical research which seeks to understand the overrepresentation of Muslim converts in jihadism, one study by Rink and Sharma concluded, similarly, that there is no significant relationship between being a Muslim or Christian religious convert and radicalism. The lack of significant effects of conversion status on radicalisation may be due to the fact that conversion is such a common occurrence compared to radicalisation. As Kleinmann et al. argue, the fact that converts are statistically overrepresented can lead to the logical fallacy called ‘False Discovery Rate or FDR. If an individual is a convert, then the probability [that he or she becomes involved in jihadism] does increase, but identifying an individual as likely to commit domestic terrorism would still be wrong around 99.99% of the time.'

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis started with two principal research questions. First, can Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model account for why people radicalise to jihadism? Second, if Lofland and Stark’s model is a viable model of radicalisation, what can it tell us about the overrepresentation of Muslim converts involved in jihadism? While these are very specific theoretical questions, at their root is a much broader question about the causes of radicalisation in general. Although the field of radicalisation studies is slowly progressing towards an answer to this question, there is still no consensus about what leads people to participate in terrorism.

While this thesis is scholarly work, questions about what leads people to become involved in terrorism are not just academic; real lives are at stake. In 2016, terrorism killed more than 25,000 people globally. Of the groups responsible for those attacks, jihadists are unquestionably the deadliest. In 2016, ISIS claimed the lives of nearly 10,000 people around the world. The jihadist movement also attracts tens of thousands of followers. Since 2011, as many as 31,000 people have traveled to Iraq and Syria to join ISIS and other jihadist groups, where the vast majority of terrorism deaths occur. A disproportionate number of the foreign fighters from certain countries are Muslim converts. Outside of the main theaters of jihad, the movement has also claimed spectacular attacks in places like France, the United

---

942 Ibid.
In fact, since Al Qaeda’s attack on America in 2001, jihadists have killed nearly 100 more people in the US. Depending on how one defines radicalism, this thesis shows that Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model can explain why people become willing to engage in political violence such as jihadist terrorism. While the model does not seem capable of predicting why people cognitively radicalise and ascribe to jihadist ideology, the ‘World Saver’ was particularly good at predicting participants’ openness to involvement in violent political action. Specifically, the quantitative analysis in this thesis shows that the combination of psychological stress (tension), having jihadists in one’s social network (cult affective bonds), and regular socialisation with other jihadists and movement propaganda (intensive interaction) were the primary indicators of behavioral radicalism.

The qualitative interviews with the Al Qaeda-linked participants allow us to see what these conditions look like in the lives of actual jihadist terrorists. In many cases, the psychological stress that these individuals described was very severe and long lasting compared to what most Americans experience in their lives. Many of the Al Qaeda participants also had deep emotional attachments to the plight of other Muslims around the world, which seemed to add to their psychological stress. Likewise, as Lofland and Stark found in their study of the Unification Church, pre-existing social attachments to other members of the movement were important conduits for the Al Qaeda-linked participants’ path to jihadism. The majority became involved in jihadism through a family or friend. Two others were recruited though romantic relationships with jihadists whom they met online. Moreover, their socialisation with the movement occurred both online and offline. The Al Qaeda participants who shared their socialisation experiences often described obsessive

online engagement followed by small, close-nit, and in-person interactions in communal living situations.

Unfortunately, Lofland and Stark’s model does not equally provide us with a satisfying answer about the overrepresentation of Muslim converts in jihadist radicalism. This thesis originally hypothesised that, if the conditions of the ‘World Saver’ model were accurate predictors of jihadist radicalism, then perhaps converts would experience those conditions at a higher frequency or severity than non-converts. The initial exploratory study showed that, while both Muslim converts and non-converts participants experienced all of the model’s conditions, converts tended to have more severe tension experiences than non-converts. The quantitative analysis supported this finding. However, despite the discrepancies between converts and non-converts with regard to psychological stress, the differences were not enough to affect the predictors of behavioral or cognitive radicalism.

Surprisingly, this thesis also did not find strong evidence for the role of jihadist ideology in radicalisation. Some terrorism scholars argue that ideology is the force that motivates people to engage in terrorism and guides their behavior to align with a movement’s strategy and tactics. However, very few of the Al Qaeda-linked participants interviewed in this thesis held a militant interpretation of jihad. Similarly, the quantitative analysis showed that there is no relationship between holding a jihadist ideology and the willingness to participate in political violence.

These findings have very specific policy implications for law enforcement, intelligence, and countering violent extremism (CVE) programs. Specifically, the results suggest that policy makers should focus less on countering ideology and more on radical social networks.

Beginning in the mid-2000s, governments began to develop programs to counter a rising tide of homegrown radicalisation in Muslim communities. These programs saw radicalisation as a war of ideas and many sought to foster moderate Muslim voices as a bulwark against radical Islam. In 2007, the UK government announced a

---

“new action plan to step-up work with Muslim communities to isolate, prevent and defeat violent extremism.” The program focused on promoting ‘shared values,’ as a way to undermine Islamist ideology. Soon after, similar programs began to appear in the US. For example, in 2008, the municipalities in the greater Los Angeles area began working toward a program that partners with the Muslim communities to ‘address a broad spectrum of extremist ideology that promotes violence and criminal activity.’

The US government is similarly focused on countering radical ideology at the national and international levels. For example, as Day and Kleinmann note, ‘The National Strategy for CVE under the Obama administration defined violent extremists as ‘individuals who support or commit ideologically motivated violence to further political goals.’ Likewise, President Donald Trump has largely promoted the idea that America faces a threat from ‘Radical Islam.’ As part of the national strategy, the FBI developed a program called ‘Don’t be a Puppet’ to warn citizens about falling victim to the narrative of extremists who ‘sometimes twist religious teachings and other beliefs to support their own goals.’ The US State department also runs a student-led program called ‘Peer-to-Peer’ to develop online platforms to counter extremist narratives globally.

It seems much of the policy focus on countering radicalisation in the US is directed at countering ideological narratives. However, the findings of this thesis suggest a counternarrative strategy may not be effective. Primarily because the data from this study shows that willingness to participate in political violence is largely a result of socialisation. As explained above, two of the most significant predictors of jihadist behavioral radicalism are having a connection to another jihadist and socializing

---

956 Day and Kleinman, ‘Combating the Cult of ISIS, 15.
with the movement. Moreover, in this sample, there is only a weak relationship between holding a militant jihadist ideology and being willing to become involved in illegal political violence. This may suggest that ideology is not the strong driver of terrorism that many believe it is.

The salience of socialisation over ideology in jihadist radicalisation points to other policy issues as well. For example, some countries have de-radicalisation programs which seek to de-program individuals who have already become involved in jihadism.\footnote{John Horgan, “De-radicalisation programs offer hope in countering terrorism,” \emph{Los Angeles Times}, February 13, 2015, http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0215-horgan-terrorist-deradicalisation-20150215-story.html.} In one such program, Singapore’s Religious Rehabilitation Group uses moderate religious scholars to convince convicted jihadists that they have embraced a corrupt interpretation of Islam.\footnote{Nur Asyiqin Mohamad Salleh, “Religious Rehabilitation Group adapts to combat evolving terror threat,” \emph{Straits Times}, January 19, 2017, http://www.straitstimes.com/politics/singap Politics/religious-rehabilitation-group-adapts-to-combat-evolving-terror-threat.} However, if the findings of this thesis hold true outside of its research sample, extracting ideology to prevent future terrorist recidivism may not be effective. Instead, separating individuals from their radical social environment may work better. Moreover, if ideology is not a strong predictor of political violence, attempts at disengagement may be preferable to de-radicalisation.

The social aspect of radicalisation also highlights the challenge of returning jihadist foreign fighters. Since 2014, thousands of jihadist supporters traveled to Iraq and Syria to fight for ISIS and live in their ‘Caliphate.’\footnote{Kirk, “Iraq and Syria: How many foreign fighters are fighting for Isis?”} When coalition forces began a drive to oust ISIS from its strongholds in Mosul and Raqqa in 2016, many of the foreign fighters began returning home to their respective countries.\footnote{Patrick Wintour, “Islamic State fighters returning to UK ‘pose huge challenge’,” The Guardian, March 9, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/09/islamic-state-fighters-returning-to-uk-pose-huge challenge.} As a result, Western governments are now struggling to find a solution to deal with hundreds of veterans of jihad. Each of these returnees has likely acquired a large social network of jihadists abroad and is now a potential conduit for new recruits at home. While some of the jihadist returnees are being sent to prison, in other countries, authorities try to reintegrate them back into their communities.\footnote{Georgia Holmer, “What to Do When Foreign Fighters Come Home,” Foreign Policy, June 1, 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/01/what-to-do-when-foreign-fighters-come-home-isis-islamic-state-syria-iraq/} Governments need to keep
these individuals from building jihadist networks and radicalizing a new generation of jihadists in their home counties. They are someone’s future *cult affective bond* to the jihadist movement.

Overall, then, this research has tremendous applicability for CVE policy and programs. The findings that social relationships are more important than ideology should guide policy makers and practitioners to develop and support counter radicalization, de-radicalisation, and corrections programs that emphasise fostering strong positive relations over counternarratives. Resources should also focus on removing individuals with connections to jihadist groups from society, and preventing the return of foreign fighters to communities where they can recruit others.

Finally, it is important to recognise that the findings of this thesis only represent the results from one study. While the findings largely support our theoretical understanding of radicalisation vis-à-vis the role of social networks and socialisation, much more empirical work lies ahead of researchers before we can be certain what mechanisms cause people to become involved in terrorism. The findings of this thesis suggest that Lofland and Stark’s ‘World Saver’ model will be a fruitful avenue for future research into jihadist radicalisation.962

---

APPENDIX A: BOP APPROVAL LETTER

U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Washington, D.C. 20531
June 2, 2014

Mr. Scott Kleinman
612 King's Road
London, SW 62DX
England

Dear Mr. Kleinman:

The Bureau of Prisons Research Review Board (BRRB) carefully reviewed and assessed the submission of the proposal; “A Comparative Study of the Religious and Political Perspectives of Muslim Converts and Non-Converts in America.” Based our review, the research has been approved and you will be allowed to mail the survey to 41 of the 71 inmates on your list.

You are authorized to proceed with the study. Please contact Jody Klein-Saffran, Ph.D. to arrange the logistics for the project to proceed. This approval expires one year from the date of this memorandum. When your project is complete, you should send a final report to the Bureau’s Research Review Board (BRRB). If the project is not complete within the year, you should submit a progress report and request a project extension from the BRRB.

For any questions that arise or any unanticipated problems with the research, please contact Dr. Jody Klein-Saffran at (202) 305-4110.

Sincerely,

Jodi Simon Garrett
Assistant Director for Information, Policy, and Public Affairs
APPENDIX B: PRISONER QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire: A Comparative Study of Religious and Political Perspectives of Muslim Converts and Non-Converts in America.

Participant ID#________

Background: The following document is a questionnaire that will ask you about your past experiences and beliefs and relationships with family, friends, and associates. Your answers to the questions will be used in a study that compares the ways and processes by which Muslim converts and “born Muslims” develop religious and political viewpoints.

Directions: Please complete the following questionnaire by checking the boxes that apply to your answers for multiple-choice questions, or by writing out your answers to the open-ended questions. If you require more room to write your complete answer, I have provided you with additional blank pages at the end of this questionnaire.

Please take your time completing this survey. You do not have to complete it all in one sitting. You may take a break at any time and complete it over a few days.

When you are finished with the questionnaire, please place it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope that I have provided you and send it in the mail to the return address.

Important Note: Before answering the following questions please note: Your answers to these questions are anonymous and confidential. You have been given a study ID number. This number will be used on your answers instead of your name. Your data and personal information will be kept in a locked container in a locked room. Personal information about you will not be associated with your name in any report or paper.
PART A: Background

Q1. What is your age?

Q2. Which statement best reflects your religious affiliation? *(Please check one box)*
   - I was born into a family that follows or practices the Islamic Faith
   - I was not born into a Muslim family; I converted to the Islamic Faith

Q3. If you converted to Islam, how old were you when you declared the *Kalimah Shahada* (word of witnessing/testimony) and embraced Islam.

PART B: Personal Experiences

Q4. Think about your life **BEFORE** your most recent arrest. Did you experience any of the following spiritual difficulties? How mildly or severely did you experience these difficulties? How long did you experience these difficulties? *(Please check all of the boxes that apply to your experiences)*

**Meaninglessness**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe

- Less than a month
- A few months
- 1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Lack of direction**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Sense of powerlessness**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Poor self-image**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe

Less than a month
- a few months
- 1-5 years
- 5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Boredom**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe
Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Lack of challenge
Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Unsure of cultural identity
Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Unsure of religious identity**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Other (Please describe)**
Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

None
Q5. Think about your life BEFORE your most recent arrest. Did you experience any of the following relationship difficulties? How mildly or severely did you experience these difficulties? How long did you experience these difficulties? (Please check all of the boxes that apply to your experiences)

Marital difficulties

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe

- Less than a month
- A few months
- 1-5 years
- 5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Child rearing difficulties

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe
How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Parental difficulties**

Very Mild  
Mild  
Neutral  
Severe  
Very severe  

Less than a month  
a few months  
1-5 years  
5+ years  

How old were you during this period of difficulties?
**Other relationship difficulties**

Very Mild

Mild

Neutral

Severe

Very severe

Less than a month

A few months

1-5 years

5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Severe injury/ illness or death of loved one**

Very Mild

Mild

Neutral

Severe

Very severe

Less than a month

A few months

1-5 years

5+ years
How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Other *(Please describe)*

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

None
Q6. Think about your life BEFORE your most recent arrest. Did you experience any of the following character difficulties? How mildly or severely did you experience these difficulties? How long did you experience these difficulties? *(Please check all of the boxes that apply to your experiences)*

**Drug abuse**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe

- Less than a month
- a few months
- 1-5 years
- 5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?
Alcohol abuse

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Criminal arrests/jail or prison time

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years
How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Self-centeredness**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Various personality difficulties such as uncontrollable temper**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years 5+ years
How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Other *(Please describe)*

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe

Less than a month
few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

None
Q7. Think about your life **BEFORE** your most recent arrest. Did you experience any of the following material difficulties? How mildly or severely did you experience these difficulties? How long did you experience these difficulties? *(Please check all of the boxes that apply to your experiences)*

**Unemployment**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Job dissatisfaction**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe
Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Finance difficulties

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

School difficulties

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe

Very severe

Less than a month

a few months

1-5 years

5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Homelessness

Very Mild

Mild

Neutral

Severe

Very severe

Less than a month

a few months

1-5 years

5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Other *(Please describe)*

Very Mild
**Mild**

**Neutral**

**Severe**

**Very severe**

**Less than a month**

**A few months**

**1-5 years**

**5+ years**

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**None**

**Q8.** Think about your life **BEFORE** your most recent arrest. Did you experience any of the following physical, psychological, or emotional difficulties? How mildly or severely did you experience these difficulties? How long did you experience these difficulties? (**Please check all of the boxes that apply to your experiences)**

**Diagnosed mental illness**

**Very Mild**

**Mild**

**Neutral**

**Severe**

**Very severe**

**Less than a month**
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Diagnosed personality disorder**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Depression**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe
How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Emotional distress**

Very Mild

Mild

Neutral

Severe

Very severe

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Chronic illness**

Very Mild

Mild

Neutral
Severe

Very severe

Less than a month

a few months

1-5 years

5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Sudden illness

Very Mild

Mild

Neutral

Severe

Very severe

Less than a month

a few months

1-5 years

5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?
**Anxiety**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe

Less than a month
- a few months
- 1-5 years
- 5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Suicidal thoughts/attempt**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe

Less than a month
- a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Other (Please describe)

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

None
Q9. Think about your life **BEFORE** your most recent arrest. Did you experience any of the maltreatment difficulties? How mild or severe did you experience these difficulties? How long did you experience these difficulties? *(Please check all of the boxes that apply to your experiences)*

**Racism**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe
- Less than a month
- A few months
- 1-5 years
- 5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Religious bigotry**

- Very Mild
- Mild
- Neutral
- Severe
- Very severe
Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Physical Abuse**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe
Very severe

Less than a month
a few months
1-5 years
5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

**Emotional Abuse**

Very Mild
Mild
Neutral
Severe

317
Very severe

Less than a month

a few months

1-5 years

5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Sexual Abuse

Very Mild

Mild

Neutral

Severe

Very severe

Less than a month

a few months

1-5 years

5+ years

How old were you during this period of difficulties?

Other (Please describe)

Very Mild

Mild
How old were you during this period of difficulties?

None

Q10. Think about your life **ABOUT 5 YEARS BEFORE** your most recent arrest. Which problem coping methods did you use to try to solve any of difficulties mentioned above in PART A? (Please check the boxes that apply to your experiences)

Social (e.g. talk with friends or family, go out and have fun, etc.)

Physiological (e.g. illegal drugs or alcohol, dieting, exercise, sex)

Religious (e.g. praying, speaking to religious official, attending religious services, trying out a new religious faith, visiting a psychic or other superstitious practices)

Psychological (e.g. counselling, therapy, legally-prescribed psychiatric drugs)

Political (e.g. joined a political movement, participated in political activism, attended a protest or rally, called or wrote your legislative representative)

Identity (e.g. attempt to remake your self image)

None
Q11. Which solutions were most effective? Which solutions were not effective? (Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)

Q12. If you experienced any of the personal, relationship, character, material, physical, or maltreatment difficulties listed in PART A, please describe in detail what those difficulties were, how they came about, how they made you feel, and how they affected your outlook or direction in life. (Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)

Q13. Do you remember a time when you first became politically active about issues in the ummah (global Muslim community)? Was there an event or experience that prompted your involvement? When did this happen? (Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)

PART C: Spiritual History

Q14. Think about your life during two periods before your most recent arrest. How important or unimportant was religion in your life during these different periods? (Please check one box for each time period)

About **5 YEARS BEFORE** your most recent arrest

Very unimportant
Q15. Think about your life during two periods before your most recent arrest. About how many times per day did you pray during these different periods? *(Please check one box for each time period)*

About **5 YEARS BEFORE** your most recent arrest

1
2
3
4
5
More than five times
Less than once per day
Once per month or less

Never

In the **FEW MONTHS BEFORE** your most recent arrest

1

2

3

4

5

More than five times

Less than once per day

Once per month or less

Never

Q16. Think about your life during two periods before your most recent arrest. About how about often did you attend religious services (mosque, church, etc.) during these different periods? *(Please check one box for each time period)*

About **5 YEARS BEFORE** your most recent arrest

Never

Just for religious holidays, weddings, funerals etc.

About once per year

A few times per month

About once per week

More than once per week

More than once per day
In the **FEW MONTHS BEFORE** your most recent arrest

- Never
- Just for religious holidays, weddings, funerals etc.
- About once per year
- A few times per month
- About once per week
- More than once per week
- More than once per day

**Q17.** When and how did you first learn about Islam? *(Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)*

**Q18.** In the past, where did you go to get information and learn about Islam? *(Please check all of the boxes that apply)*
Q19. Have you ever looked into or considered joining religions other than Islam? Which religions did you try? What attracted you to them? Why did you finally choose Islam? *(Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)*

Q20. Explain the role that religion played in your life and how it has or has not changed. Have your religious beliefs always adequately fulfilled your understanding of the world and your experiences in life? Why or why not? *(Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)*

**PART D: Relationships**

Q21. If you are a religious convert, how would you describe the attitude of your family to your conversion to Islam? *(Please check one box)*

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Other
I am not a convert

Q22. If you are a religious convert, how would you describe the attitude of your non-Muslim friends to your conversion to Islam? (Please check one box)

Positive
Neutral
Negative
Other

I am not a convert

Q23. Think about your life ABOUT 5 YEARS BEFORE your most recent arrest. How easy or difficult was it for you to make non-Muslim friends? (Please check one box)

Very easy
Easy
Neutral
Difficult
Very Difficult

Q24. Think about your life ABOUT 5 YEARS BEFORE your most recent arrest. How easy or difficult was it for you to make Muslim friends? (Please check one box)
Very easy
Easy
Neutral
Difficult
Very Difficult

Q25. Think about your life about 5 years before your most recent arrest. How accepted or unaccepted did you feel by your local Muslim community? (Please check one box)

Very accepted
Accepted
Neutral
Unaccepted
Very unaccepted

Q26. Think about your life about 5 years before your most recent arrest. Did you experience any of the following difficulties with the local Muslim community? (Please check all of the boxes that apply)

Ethnic or cultural differences between you and the local Muslim community
Age differences between you and the members of the local Muslim community
Language differences between you and the members of the local Muslim community
Sect difference between you and the members of the local Muslim community
You had a different understanding of Islam than the other members of the community
Other
I did not experience any difficulties

**Q27.** Think about your life **ABOUT 5 YEARS BEFORE** your most recent arrest. How satisfied or not satisfied were you with the way the local mosque met your needs? (*Please check one box*)

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied
**Q28.** Think about personal relationships with the people in your life **ABOUT 5 YEARS BEFORE** your most recent arrest. How much of your spare time did you spend with these people, and how much material help and emotional support did you receive from them? *(Please check one box in each row for each relationship)*

**Partner/significant other**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Muslim friends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Father

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sibling (s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spare Time</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material Help</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional support</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other relatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spare Time</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material Help</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional support</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Muslim Friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Acquaintances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q29. Think about personal relationships with people **IN THE FEW MONTHS BEFORE** your most recent arrest. How much of your spare time did you spend with these people, and how much material help and emotional support did you receive from them? *(Please check one box in each row for each relationship)*

**Partner/significant other**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Muslim friends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Father

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sibling(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Other relatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Muslim Friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acquaintances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Help</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q30. Think about your life **ABOUT 5 YEARS BEFORE** your most recent arrest. Tell me in more detail about the quality of your relationships with your family and friends at that time. Were your relationships strong and loving, or weak and/or tense? Why? Did you have many close friends whom you could trust? Did you spend most of your time alone or with others? Why or why not? *(Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)*
PART E: More on Relationships

Q31. Who first introduced you to the belief that all Muslims have an obligation to use or support violence to protect the ummah in the name of jihad? *(Please check one box)*

- I have never been introduced to this concept
- Family member
- Friend
- Acquaintance
- An online relationship
- Imam/cleric
- Someone from my mosque
- I learned about this concept myself on the Internet, from literature, etc.

Q32. If a person introduced you to the above concept, about how old were you when your first met this person?

Q33. How would you rate your relationship to this person? *(Please check one box)*

- Very close
- Close
- Neutral
- Somewhat close
- Not close at all
- Not applicable
Q34. What portion of your family believes that all Muslims have an obligation to use or support violence to protect the ummah in the name of jihad? *(Please check one box)*

None

Very few

About half

The majority

All

Q35. Think about your life ABOUT 5 YEARS BEFORE your most recent arrest. At that time, what portion of your close friends believed that all Muslims have an obligation to use or support violence to protect the ummah in the name of jihad? *(Please check one box)*

None

Very few

About half

The majority

All
Q36. Think about personal relationships with people in the few months before your most recent arrest. How much of your spare time did you spend with, and how much emotional support did you receive from, people who believe that all Muslims have an obligation to use or support violence to protect the ummah in the name of jihad? (Please check one box in each row)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spare Time</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q37. Without identifying any specific person, explain the details surrounding your first encounter with the belief that all Muslims have an obligation to use or support violence to protect the ummah in the name of jihad? How did you find out about this concept? Did you learn about it on your own? If another person introduced it to you, how did you meet them? How well did you know or trust this person and what was your relationship to them? (Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)
PART F: Beliefs

Q38. In which of the following ways have you been exposed to information about the belief that all Muslims have an obligation to use or support violence to protect the ummah in the name of jihad? (Check all of the boxes that apply to your experience)

- I have never been exposed to information about this obligation in Islam
- Social media about this obligation in Islam (forums, blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.)
- Attended lectures in person about this obligation in Islam
- Video/audio lectures about this obligation in Islam
- Attended Imam/cleric’s sermons about this obligation in Islam
- Read literature about this obligation in Islam (books, magazines, pamphlets etc.)
- Spoke to someone in public, on the street, or at dawa stall about this obligation in Islam
- Spoke to friends about this obligation in Islam

Q39. Some people say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim ummah through war. What do you think? (Please check one box)

- Jihad is solely a personal struggle for righteousness
- Jihad is both a personal struggle for righteousness and protecting the Muslim ummah through war
- Jihad is solely protecting the Muslim ummah through war

Q40. Some people say only a Muslim state/government can use military force to protect a Muslim country or ummah in the name of jihad. Others say individuals and non-state organizations can use violence in the name of jihad. What do you think? (Please check one box)

339
Only states/governments should use military force in the name of jihad

Both states/governments and individuals should use military force in the name of jihad

Only individuals should use violence in the name of jihad

Q41. Some people say that protecting the *ummah* through war in the name of jihad is part of Islam, but does not have a place in the modern world, much like slavery. Others say that this form of jihad is one of the most important duties that an individual Muslim can undertake. What do you think? (*Please check one box)*

- Protecting the *ummah* through war in the name of jihad is part of Islam, but does not have a place in the modern world
- Protecting the *ummah* through war in the name of jihad is one of the most important duties that an individual Muslim can undertake
- None of the above

Q42. Please explain in detail your understanding of the meaning of jihad and how it pertains to your life as a Muslim. (*Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.*)

Q43. **IN THE FEW MONTHS BEFORE** your most recent arrest, how much of your free time did you spend doing the following activities? (*Please check one box for each activity*)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent on the following activities</th>
<th>Most of my free time</th>
<th>A Lot of my free time</th>
<th>Some of my free time</th>
<th>None of my free time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in social media (twitter, facebook, forums, etc.) about the obligation use violence to defend the <em>ummah</em> in the name of jihad</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching videos of Muslims using violence to fight jihad</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching/listening to video/audio lectures about the obligation use violence to defend the <em>ummah</em> in the name of jihad</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read literature about the obligation use violence to defend the <em>ummah</em> in the name of jihad</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending lectures/sermons in person about the obligation use violence to defend</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response Options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to my friends about the obligation to use violence to defend the <em>ummah</em> in the name of jihad</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to my family about the obligation to use violence to defend the <em>ummah</em> in the name of jihad</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing with my other friends who believe that Islam requires individuals to use or support the use of violence only to protect the <em>ummah</em> in the name of jihad?</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q44.** Explain in detail your exposure to information or media that discussed belief that Islam requires individuals to use or support violence only to protect the *ummah* in the name of jihad. Where did you go to find out more about jihad or discuss the topic? Were you interested right away, or did you need to be convinced? How much time did you spend,
learning about jihad, discussing jihad with others, watching jihad videos, etc.? (Please write your answer below. If you require more space, please use the extra pages provided at the end of the questionnaire.)
APPENDIX C: QUALTRICS SURVEY

1. Do you commit to thoughtfully provide your best answers to each question in this survey?
   I commit to giving my best answers (1)
   I don't commit to giving my best answers (2)
   I can't commit either way (3)

2. What is your current age?

3. In which country do you currently reside?
   Afghanistan (1)
   Albania (2)
   Algeria (3)
   Andorra (4)
   Angola (5)
   Antigua and Barbuda (6)
   Argentina (7)
   Armenia (8)
   Australia (9)
   Austria (10)
   Azerbaijan (11)
   Bahamas (12)
   Bahrain (13)
   Bangladesh (14)
   Barbados (15)
   Belarus (16)
   Belgium (17)
   Belize (18)
   Benin (19)
   Bhutan (20)
   Bolivia (21)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (22)
Botswana (23)
Brazil (24)
Brunei Darussalam (25)
Bulgaria (26)
Burkina Faso (27)
Burundi (28)
Cambodia (29)
Cameroon (30)
Canada (31)
Cape Verde (32)
Central African Republic (33)
Chad (34)
Chile (35)
China (36)
Colombia (37)
Comoros (38)
Congo, Republic of the... (39)
Costa Rica (40)
Côte d'Ivoire (41)
Croatia (42)
Cuba (43)
Cyprus (44)
Czech Republic (45)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (46)
Democratic Republic of the Congo (47)
Denmark (48)
Djibouti (49)
Dominica (50)
Dominican Republic (51)
Ecuador (52)
Egypt (53)
El Salvador (54)
Equatorial Guinea (55)
Eritrea (56)
Estonia (57)
Ethiopia (58)
Fiji (59)
Finland (60)
France (61)
Gabon (62)
Gambia (63)
Georgia (64)
Germany (65)
Ghana (66)
Greece (67)
Grenada (68)
Guatemala (69)
Guinea (70)
Guinea-Bissau (71)
Guyana (72)
Haiti (73)
Honduras (74)
Hong Kong (S.A.R.) (75)
Hungary (76)
Iceland (77)
India (78)
Indonesia (79)
Iran, Islamic Republic of... (80)
Iraq (81)
Ireland (82)
Israel (83)
Italy (84)
Jamaica (85)
Japan (86)
Jordan (87)
Kazakhstan (88)
Kenya (89)
Kiribati (90)
Kuwait (91)
Kyrgyzstan (92)
Lao People's Democratic Republic (93)
Latvia (94)
Lebanon (95)
Lesotho (96)
Liberia (97)
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (98)
Liechtenstein (99)
Lithuania (100)
Luxembourg (101)
Madagascar (102)
Malawi (103)
Malaysia (104)
Maldives (105)
Mali (106)
Malta (107)
Marshall Islands (108)
Mauritania (109)
Mauritius (110)
Mexico (111)
Micronesia, Federated States of... (112)
Monaco (113)
Mongolia (114)
Montenegro (115)
Morocco (116)
Mozambique (117)
Myanmar (118)
Namibia (119)
Nauru (120)
Nepal (121)
Netherlands (122)
New Zealand (123)
Nicaragua (124)
Niger (125)
Nigeria (126)
North Korea (127)
Norway (128)
Oman (129)
Pakistan (130)
Palau (131)
Panama (132)
Papua New Guinea (133)
Paraguay (134)
Peru (135)
Philippines (136)
Poland (137)
Portugal (138)
Qatar (139)
Republic of Korea (140)
Republic of Moldova (141)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marino</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Arab Republic</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thailand (172)
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (173)
Timor-Leste (174)
Togo (175)
Tonga (176)
Trinidad and Tobago (177)
Tunisia (178)
Turkey (179)
Turkmenistan (180)
Tuvalu (181)
Uganda (182)
Ukraine (183)
United Arab Emirates (184)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (185)
United Republic of Tanzania (186)
United States of America (187)
Uruguay (188)
Uzbekistan (189)
Vanuatu (190)
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of... (191)
Viet Nam (192)
Yemen (193)
Zambia (580)
Zimbabwe (1357)

4. What is your religious affiliation?
5. Have you always been a member of your current religion, or did you a convert?
   Yes, I have always been a member of my current religion. (1)
   No, I have not always been a member of my current religion. I am a convert. (2)

6. What religion, if any, did you practice before you converted to your current religion?

7. What was your approximate age when you converted to your current religion?

Listed below are a series of statements about personal issues you may have experienced in your life. Please indicate the severity and the duration of each experience.

I felt a sense of meaninglessness (1)

8. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

9. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)

I felt a lack of direction in life (2)

10. How severe was this experience?
11. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)

I felt a sense of powerlessness (3)

12. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4)   Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

13. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)

I had poor self-image (4)

14. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4)   Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

15. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)

I felt a sense of boredom (5)

16. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4)   Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

17. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)
I felt a lack of challenge (6)

18. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

19. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I was unsure of my cultural identity (7)

20. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

21. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I was unsure of my religious identity (8)

22. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

23. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I was unsure of my sexual orientation (9)

24. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

25. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)
I was unsure of my gender identity (10)

**26. How severe was this experience?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Severe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Severe</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Severe nor Mild</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Mild</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Mild</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**27. How long did this experience last?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than a Month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few Months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 10 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I experienced marital difficulties (1)

**28. How severe was this experience?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Severe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Severe</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Severe nor Mild</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Mild</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Mild</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**29. How long did this experience last?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than a Month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few Months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 10 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I experienced child rearing difficulties (2)

**30. How severe was this experience?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Severe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Severe</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Severe nor Mild</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Mild</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Mild</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**31. How long did this experience last?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than a Month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few Months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 10 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I experienced parental difficulties (3)

**32. How severe was this experience?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Severe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Severe</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Severe nor Mild</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Mild</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Mild</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**33. How long did this experience last?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than a Month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few Months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 10 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I experienced other relationship difficulties (4)

34. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4)   Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

35. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)

A loved one was severely injured (5)

36. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4)   Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

37. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)

I experienced death of loved one (6)

38. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4)   Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

39. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)

I was unable to enter into an intimate relationship with a steady partner (7)

40. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1)   Somewhat Severe (2)   Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4)   Very Mild (5)   Not Applicable (6)

41. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1)   A Few Months (2)   1-5 Years (3)   5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5)   Not Applicable (6)
I abused drugs (1)

42. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

43. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I abused alcohol (2)

44. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

45. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I experienced criminal arrests/jail or prison time (3)

46. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

47. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I was self-centered (4)

48. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

49. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

357
I had an uncontrollable temper (5)

50. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

51. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I experienced unemployment (1)

52. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

53. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I experienced job dissatisfaction (2)

54. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

55. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I experienced finance difficulties (3)

56. How severe was this experience?
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

57. How long did this experience last?
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)
I experienced school difficulties (4)

58. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3) Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

59. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4) More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I experienced homelessness (5)

60. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3) Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

61. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4) More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have a diagnosed mental illness (1)

62. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3) Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

63. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4) More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have a diagnosed personality disorder (2)

64. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3) Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

65. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4) More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)
I have experienced depression (3)

66. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

67. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have experienced emotional distress (4)

68. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

69. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have experienced a chronic physical illness (5)

70. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

71. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have experienced a severe sudden physical illness (6)

72. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

73. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)
I have experienced anxiety (7)

74. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

75. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have had suicidal thoughts/Attempts (8)

76. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

77. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have experienced racism (2)

78. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

79. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have experienced religious bigotry (3)

80. How severe was this experience?
Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

81. How long did this experience last?
Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)
I have experienced physical abuse (4)

82. *How severe was this experience?*
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

83. *How long did this experience last?*
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have experienced emotional abuse (5)

84. *How severe was this experience?*
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

85. *How long did this experience last?*
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have experienced sexual abuse (6)

86. *How severe was this experience?*
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

87. *How long did this experience last?*
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)

I have had a near death experience (7)

88. *How severe was this experience?*
   Very Severe (1) Somewhat Severe (2) Neither Severe nor Mild (3)
   Somewhat Mild (4) Very Mild (5) Not Applicable (6)

89. *How long did this experience last?*
   Less Than a Month (1) A Few Months (2) 1-5 Years (3) 5-10 years (4)
   More Than 10 Years (5) Not Applicable (6)
90. Which of the previously listed personal problems has affected you the most severely in the past five years? (Select all that apply)

- Meaninglessness (1)
- Lack of direction in life (2)
- Sense of powerlessness (3)
- Poor self-image (4)
- Boredom (5)
- Lack of challenge (6)
- Unsure of cultural identity (7)
- Unsure of religious identity (8)
- Unsure of sexual orientation (9)
- Unsure of gender identity (10)
- Marital difficulties (11)
- Child rearing difficulties (12)
- Parental difficulties (13)
- Other relationship difficulties (14)
- Severe injury of a loved one (15)
- Death of loved one (16)
- Unable to enter into an intimate relationship with a steady partner (17)
- Drug abuse (18)
- Alcohol Abuse (19)
- Criminal arrests/jail or prison time (20)
- Self-contentedness (21)
- Uncontrollable temper (22)
- Unemployment (23)
- Job dissatisfaction (24)
- Finance difficulties (25)
- Homelessness (26)
- Diagnosed Mental illness (27)
- Diagnosed Personality disorder (28)
Depression (29)
Emotional distress (30)
Chronic physical illness (31)
Sudden physical illness (32)
Anxiety (33)
Suicidal thoughts/attempts (34)
Racism (35)
Religious bigotry (36)
Physical abuse (37)
Emotional abuse (38)
Sexual abuse (39)
Near death experience (40)
None of the above (41)

91. How do you deal with important personal problems in your life? (Select all that apply)
Prayer or religious reflection (1)
Social or political activism (2)
Self-help or personal development techniques (3)
Self-medicate (e.g. smoking, drugs, alcohol, binge eating) (4)
Psychological counseling or legally prescribed psychiatric drugs (5)
Volunteering or public service (7)
Spending time with others (9)
Physical activity (e.g. exercise) (10)
Other (6)
None of the above (12)
92. What types of activities have you undertaken to solve personal problems? (Select all that apply)
Gather information through media (1)
Read leaflets/books (2)
Read information online (3)
Conversations with people (4)
Visit informational meetings (5)
Attend courses (6)
Participate in support group (7)
Participate in action group (8)
Participate in online group (9)
Participate in religious group (12)
Other (10)
None of the above (11)

Listed below are a series of social issues you may have concerns about. Please indicate the degree to which each concerns you.

93. Racism (1)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

94. Religious discrimination (2)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

95. Economic inequality (3)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

96. Crime (4)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

97. Human rights issues (5)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

98. Gender equality (6)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)
99. Immigration (7)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

100. Unemployment (8)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

101. The environment (9)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

102. LGBT rights (10)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

103. Please select Somewhat Concerned (15)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

104. War/Conflict (11)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

105. Refugees (12)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

106. US foreign policy (13)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

107. Education (14)
   Extremely Concerned (1) Somewhat Concerned (2) Neither Concerned or not Concerned (3) Slightly Concerned (4) Not at all Concerned (5)

108. How do you deal with social issues you may have concerns about?
    Prayer or religious reflection (1)
    Social or political activism (2)
    Self-help or personal development techniques (3)
    Self-medicate (e.g. smoking, drugs, alcohol, binge eating) (4)
    Psychological counseling or legally prescribed psychiatric drugs (5)
Volunteering or public service (7)
Physical activity (e.g. exercise) (9)
Spending time with others (10)
Other (6)
None of the above (12)

109. **What types of activities have you undertaken to seek solutions to social issues you may have concerns about? (select all that apply)**
Gather information through media (1)
Read leaflets/books (2)
Read information online (3)
Conversations with people (4)
Visit informational meetings (5)
Attend courses (6)
Participate in support group (7)
Participate in action group (8)
Participate in online group (9)
Participate in religious group (12)
Other (10) ______________________________________________________
None of the above (11)

110. **During your childhood, how frequently did your parents attend church, mosque, temple, or other religious services?**
More than once per day (1)
Daily (2)
Weekly (3)
Monthly (4)
Annually (5)
Less than annually (6)
Never (7)
111. What is your father's religious affiliation? (If deceased, choose last known affiliation)
Islam (1)
Christianity (2)
Hinduism (3)
Buddhism (4)
Judaism (5)
Atheism (7)
Other (6)
Unknown (9)

112. What is your mother's religious affiliation? (If deceased, choose last known affiliation)
Islam (1)
Christianity (2)
Hinduism (3)
Buddhism (4)
Judaism (5)
Atheism (7)
Other (6)
Unknown (9)

113. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
My parents raised me religiously.
Completely Agree (1)
Somewhat Agree (2)
Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
Somewhat Disagree (4)
Completely Disagree (5)
114. Which of the following experiences were part of your religious upbringing? (Select all that apply)
   Conversations about religion in the family (1)
   Jointly attend religious services (2)
   Sent to religious services by parents (3)
   Participation in religious activities for people (4)
   Participation in religious education (5)
   Educated in a religious school (6)
   None of the above (7)

115. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
   Currently, my religion is important my life.
   Completely Agree (1)
   Somewhat Agree (2)
   Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
   Somewhat Disagree (4)
   Completely Disagree (5)

116. How often do you attend religious services (e.g. church, temple, mosque)?
   More than once per day (1)
   Daily (2)
   Weekly (3)
   Monthly (4)
   Annually (5)
   Less than annually (6)
   Never (7)
117. How often do you pray?
   More than once per day (1)
   Daily (2)
   Weekly (3)
   Monthly (4)
   Annually (5)
   Less than annually (6)
   Never (7)

118. How has the frequency of your attendance at religious services changed in the past five years (e.g. church, temple, mosque)?
   Become much more frequent (1)
   Become a little more frequent (2)
   No change (3)
   Become a little less frequent (4)
   Become much less frequent (5)

119. How has the frequency of your prayers changed in the past five years?
   Become much more frequent (1)
   Become a little more frequent (2)
   No change (3)
   Become a little less frequent (4)
   Become much less frequent (5)

120. How has the importance of religion in your life changed in the past five years?
   Become much more important (1)
   Become a little more important (2)
   No change (3)
   Become a little less important (4)
   Become much less important (5)
121. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
I am looking for a group that shares my ideas, opinions, or beliefs.
Completely Agree (1)
Somewhat Agree (2)
Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
Somewhat Disagree (4)
Completely Disagree (5)

122. What types of activities have you undertaken to find a group that shares your ideas? (select all that apply.)
Gather information through media (1)
Read leaflets/books (2)
Read information online (3)
Conversations with people (4)
Visit informational meetings (5)
Attend courses (6)
Participate in support group (7)
Participate in action group (8)
Participate in online group (9)
Participated in a religious group (12)
Other (10)
None of the above (11)

123. Besides your current religion, have you ever contacted a religious group(s) about joining?
Yes (1)
No (2)

124. Besides your current religion, which religious group(s) have you contacted about joining?
125. Did you join this religious group?
   Yes (1)
   No (2)

126. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
   I have experienced a critical juncture in my life in the past five years that has led to significant changes in my lifestyle.
   Completely Agree (1)
   Somewhat Agree (2)
   Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
   Somewhat Disagree (4)
   Completely Disagree (5)

127. Which changes in life circumstances have you experienced in the past five years? (Select all that apply)
   Moving house (1)
   Began or finished school/college/university (2)
   Left old job or started a new job (3)
   Recovery from serious illness (4)
   Relationship break-up (5)
   Death of a loved one (7)
   Marriage (9)
   Birth of a child (10)
   None (12)
   Other (6)
128. Please indicate how often you spend time with people who advocate that it is compulsory in your religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of your faith group.

Daily (1)
Weekly (2)
Monthly (3)
Annually (4)
Never (5)

129. How did you come into contact with people who advocate that it is compulsory in your religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of your faith group? (Select all that apply)

Sought contact myself (1)
Through partner (2)
Through family (3)
Through friends (5)
Through acquaintances (6)
Door-to-door missionaries (7)
Missionaries in a public place (8)
The Internet (9)
Other (10) ________________________________________________
Not Applicable (11)

130. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience) I receive emotional support from people who advocate that it is compulsory in your religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of your faith group?
Completely Agree (1)
Somewhat Agree (2)
Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
Somewhat Disagree (4)
Completely Disagree (5)

131. What portion of your immediate family advocate that it is compulsory in your religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of your faith?
All (1)
The majority (2)
About half (3)
Some (4)
None (5)

132. What portion of your close friends advocate that it is compulsory in your religion for individuals to wage war or use violence to protect or defend other members of your faith?
All (1)
The majority (2)
About half (3)
Some (4)
None (5)

Listed below are a series of statements about activities in which you may have participated in the past. Please indicate how frequently you participate in each activity.

133. Engage in social media to discuss the obligation to wage war or use violence to protect or defend members of your faith. (1)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

134. Watch videos of members of your faith waging war or using violence to protect or defend other members of your faith. (2)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)
135. Watch/listen to online lectures about the obligation to wage war to protect or defend members of your faith. (3)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

136. Read literature about the obligation to wage war or use violence to protect or defend members of your faith. (4)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

137. Attend lectures/sermons in person about the obligation to wage war or use violence to protect or defend members of your faith. (5)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

138. Talk to my friends about the obligation to wage war or use violence to protect or defend members of your faith. (6)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

139. Talk to my family about the obligation to wage war or use violence to protect or defend members of your faith. (7)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

140. Socialize with others who believe it is compulsorily to wage war or use violence to protect or defend members of your faith. (8)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

141. Please select "Never" (9)
Always (1) Very Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

142. Who do you live with? (Select all that apply)

I live alone (3)
Parents (1)
Spouse/Partner (2)
Friend(s) (4)
Other family (6)
Non-relative roommates (5)

143. What was your reason for leaving your parents' home?
   Education (1)
   Job (2)
   Marriage or romantic relationship (3)
   Conflict (4)
   To experience adulthood (5)
   Other (6)

144. If driving, how many hours do you live from your nearest parent? (If no living parents, enter N/A)
   Less than one hour (1)
   1-2 hours (2)
   2-5 hours (3)
   5-10 hours (4)
   10-15 hours (5)
   15-20 hours (6)
   More than 20 hours (7)
   My nearest parent does not live in North America (8)
   N/A (9)
145.  **If driving, how many hours do you live from your nearest sibling? (If no siblings, enter N/A)**
   Less than one hour (1)
   1-2 hours (2)
   2-5 hours (3)
   5-10 hours (4)
   10-15 hours (5)
   15-20 hours (6)
   More than 20 hours (7)
   My nearest sibling does not live in North America (8)
   N/A (9)

Please indicate how often you spend time with the following people.

146.  **Partner (1)**
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

147.  **Best friend (2)**
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

148.  **Father (3)**
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

149.  **Mother (4)**
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

150.  **Siblings (5)**
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

151.  **Other relatives (6)**
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

152.  **Muslim friends (7)**
Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

153.  Acquaintances (8)
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)

154.  Non-Muslim friends (9)
   Daily (1)  Weekly (2)  Monthly (3)  Annually (4)  Never (5)
(Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
I receive emotional support from the following people.

155. Partner (1)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

156. Best friend (2)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

157. Father (3)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

158. Mother (4)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

159. Siblings (5)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

160. Other relatives (6)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

161. Muslim friends (7)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

162. Acquaintances (8)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)

163. Non-Muslim friends (9)
      Completely Agree (1) Somewhat Agree (2) Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
            Somewhat Disagree (4) Completely Disagree (5)
(Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
I receive material support from the following people (e.g. help with projects, money, child care, etc.)

164. Partner (1)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)

165. Best friend (2)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)

166. Father (3)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)

167. Mother (4)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)

168. Siblings (5)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)

169. Other relatives (6)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)

170. Muslim friends (7)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)

171. Acquaintances (8)
- Completely Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Completely Disagree (5)
172. Non-Muslim friends (9)
   Completely Agree (1)  Somewhat Agree (2)  Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
   Somewhat Disagree (4)  Completely Disagree (5)

173. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
   How accepted do you feel by your local religious community (e.g. members of your church, mosque, temple religious center.)

   Completely Accepted (1)
   Somewhat Accepted (2)
   Neither Accepted or Unaccepted (3)
   Somewhat Unaccepted (4)
   Completely Unaccepted (5)
Listed below are a series of statements about difficulties you may have had with members of your religious community. Please indicate the degree to which the following statements relate to your experience.

174. I experienced difficulties from ethnic or cultural differences with other members of my religious community (1)
   Completely Agree (1)  Somewhat Agree (2)  Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
   Somewhat Disagree (4)  Completely Disagree (5)

175. I experienced difficulties from language differences with other members of my religious community (2)
   Completely Agree (1)  Somewhat Agree (2)  Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
   Somewhat Disagree (4)  Completely Disagree (5)

176. I experienced difficulties from sect differences with other members of my religious community (3)
   Completely Agree (1)  Somewhat Agree (2)  Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
   Somewhat Disagree (4)  Completely Disagree (5)

177. I experienced difficulties with other members of my religious community because my beliefs about religion were different from theirs. (4)
   Completely Agree (1)  Somewhat Agree (2)  Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
   Somewhat Disagree (4)  Completely Disagree (5)

Listed below are a series of social, political, religious, cultural, and moral issues you may have concerns about. Please indicate how frequently you participate in activism related to these issues. (e.g. voting, volunteering, protesting, lobbying,
grass roots organizing, canvassing, etc.)

178. Social issues (e.g. racism, immigration, education, etc.) (1)
Always (1) Sometimes (2) Very often (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

179. Political issues (e.g. elections, civil rights) (2)
Always (1) Sometimes (2) Very often (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

180. Religious issues (e.g. the role of gender, war, science in your religion, etc.) (3)
Always (1) Sometimes (2) Very often (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

181. Cultural issues (e.g. the role of language, gender, or religion in society, etc.) (4)
Always (1) Sometimes (2) Very often (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

182. Moral issues (e.g. war, death penalty, abortion, etc.) (5)
Always (1) Sometimes (2) Very often (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)
183. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
I behave differently since I have become involved in social, religious, cultural, political, or moral, activism.
Completely Agree (1)
Somewhat Agree (3)
Neither Agree or Disagree (4)
Somewhat Disagree (5)
Completely Disagree (6)

184. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
In the past five years my ideas about solutions to social, religious, cultural, political, or moral problems have changed.
Completely Agree (1)
Somewhat Agree (3)
Neither Agree or Disagree (4)
Somewhat Disagree (5)
Completely Disagree (6)

185. (Please indicate the degree to which the following statement relates to your experience.)
In the past five years my involvement in social, religious, cultural, political, or moral, activism has changed.
Completely Agree (1)
Somewhat Agree (3)
Neither Agree or Disagree (4)
Somewhat Disagree (5)
Completely Disagree (6)
Please indicate how your relationships with the following people have changed in the past five years.

186. **Partner (1)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

187. **Best friend (2)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

188. **Father (3)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

189. **Mother (4)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

190. **Siblings (5)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

191. **Other relatives (6)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

192. **Muslim friends (7)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

193. **Acquaintances (8)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)

194. **Non-Muslim friends (9)**  
Become Much Closer (1)  
Become a Little Closer (2)  
Unchanged (3)  
Become a Little More Distant (6)  
Become Much More Distant (4)  
Lost Contact (5)
If contact was lost, please explain the main reason the contact was lost.

195. Partner (x1)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1) My religious group objects to the relationship (2) My friends object to the relationship (4) My family objects to the relationship (10) I moved to a new location (5) My work or school circumstances changed (6) I don't have time (7) Personal conflict (11) Other (8)

196. Best friend (x2)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1) My religious group objects to the relationship (2) My friends object to the relationship (4) My family objects to the relationship (10) I moved to a new location (5) My work or school circumstances changed (6) I don't have time (7) Personal conflict (11) Other (8)

197. Father (x3)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1) My religious group objects to the relationship (2) My friends object to the relationship (4) My family objects to the relationship (10) I moved to a new location (5) My work or school circumstances changed (6) I don't have time (7) Personal conflict (11) Other (8)

198. Mother (x4)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1) My religious group objects to the relationship (2) My friends object to the relationship (4) My family objects to the relationship (10) I moved to a new location (5) My work or school circumstances changed (6) I don't have time (7) Personal conflict (11) Other (8)

199. Siblings (x5)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1) My religious group objects to the relationship (2) My friends object to the relationship (4) My family objects to the relationship (10) I moved to a new location (5) My work or school circumstances changed (6) I don't have time (7) Personal conflict (11) Other (8)

200. Other relatives (x6)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1)  My religious group objects to the relationship (2)  My friends object to the relationship (4)  My family objects to the relationship (10)  I moved to a new location (5)  My work or school circumstances changed (6)  I don't have time (7)  Personal conflict (11)  Other (8)

201.  Muslim friends (x7)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1)  My religious group objects to the relationship (2)  My friends object to the relationship (4)  My family objects to the relationship (10)  I moved to a new location (5)  My work or school circumstances changed (6)  I don't have time (7)  Personal conflict (11)  Other (8)

202.  Acquaintances (x8)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1)  My religious group objects to the relationship (2)  My friends object to the relationship (4)  My family objects to the relationship (10)  I moved to a new location (5)  My work or school circumstances changed (6)  I don't have time (7)  Personal conflict (11)  Other (8)

203.  Non-Muslim friends (x9)
He/she objects to my religious beliefs (1)  My religious group objects to the relationship (2)  My friends object to the relationship (4)  My family objects to the relationship (10)  I moved to a new location (5)  My work or school circumstances changed (6)  I don't have time (7)  Personal conflict (11)  Other (8)

For each statement, select the answer that best indicates how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

204.  I would join/belong to an organization that fights for my group’s political and legal rights (1)
Strongly Agree (1)  Agree (2)  Somewhat Agree (3)  Neither Agree or Disagree (4)  Somewhat disagree (5)  Disagree (6)  Strongly Disagree (7)

205.  I would donate money to an organization that fights for my group’s political and legal rights (2)
206. I would volunteer my time working (i.e. write petitions, distribute flyers, recruit people, etc.) for an organization that fights for my group’s political and legal rights

Strongly Agree (1) Agree (2) Somewhat Agree (3) Neither Agree or Disagree (4) Somewhat disagree (5) Disagree (6) Strongly Disagree (7)

207. I would travel for one hour to join in a public rally, protest, or demonstration in support of my group

Strongly Agree (1) Agree (2) Somewhat Agree (3) Neither Agree or Disagree (4) Somewhat disagree (5) Disagree (6) Strongly Disagree (7)

208. I would continue to support an organization that fights for my group’s political and legal rights even if the organization sometimes breaks the law

Strongly Agree (1) Agree (2) Somewhat Agree (3) Neither Agree or Disagree (4) Somewhat disagree (5) Disagree (6) Strongly Disagree (7)

209. I would continue to support an organization that fights for my group’s political and legal rights even if the organization sometimes resorts to violence

Strongly Agree (1) Agree (2) Somewhat Agree (3) Neither Agree or Disagree (4) Somewhat disagree (5) Disagree (6) Strongly Disagree (7)

210. I would participate in a public protest against oppression of my group even if I thought the protest might turn violent

Strongly Agree (1) Agree (2) Somewhat Agree (3) Neither Agree or Disagree (4) Somewhat disagree (5) Disagree (6) Strongly Disagree (7)

211. I would attack police or security forces if I saw them beating members of my group

Strongly Agree (1) Agree (2) Somewhat Agree (3) Neither Agree or Disagree (4) Somewhat disagree (5) Disagree (6) Strongly Disagree (7)
212. I would go to war to protect the rights of my group (9)

Strongly Agree (1)  Agree (2)  Somewhat Agree (3)  Neither Agree or Disagree (4)  Somewhat disagree (5)  Disagree (6)  Strongly Disagree (7)

213. I would retaliate against members of a group that had attacked my group, even if I couldn’t be sure I was retaliating against the guilty party. (10)

Strongly Agree (1)  Agree (2)  Somewhat Agree (3)  Neither Agree or Disagree (4)  Somewhat disagree (5)  Disagree (6)  Strongly Disagree (7)

214. What is your gender?

Male (1)
Female (2)
Transgender (3)
Other (4)
215. Which categories describe you?

Select all of the boxes that apply. Note, you may select more than one group.

- **White** (For example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.) (1)
- **Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin** (For example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Columbian, etc.) (2)
- **Black or African American** (For example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.) (3)
- **Asian** (For example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.) (4)
- **American Indian or Alaska Native** (For example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inuit Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.) (5)
- **Middle Eastern or North African** (For example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.) (6)
- **Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander** (For example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.) (7)
- **Some other race, ethnicity, or origin** (9)

216. Which statement best describes your current employment status?

- Working, Full-Time (paid employee) (1)
- Working, Part-Time (paid employee) (9)
- Working (self-employed) (2)
- Not working (temporary layoff from a job) (3)
- Not working (looking for work) (4)
- Not working (retired) (5)
- Not working (disabled) (6)
- Not working (other) (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)

217. Which best describes your occupation?

*Use the drop down menu to select your answer*

- Legal occupations (1)
- Food preparations and service related occupations (2)
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations (3)
Management occupations (4)
Production occupations (5)
Personal care and service occupations (6)
Building a grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations (7)
Business and financial operations occupations (8)
Healthcare support occupations (9)
Education, training, and library occupations (10)
Protective services occupations (11)
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations (12)
Community and social services occupations (13)
Computer and mathematical occupations (14)
Construction and extraction occupations (15)
Sales and related occupations (16)
Office and administrative support occupations (17)
Life, physical, and social science occupations (18)
Farming fishing and forestry occupations (19)
Architecture and engineering occupations (20)
Transportation and materials moving occupations (21)
Other (22)

218. Information about income is very important to understand. Would you please give your best guess?
Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in (previous year) before taxes.

Less than $10,000 (1)
$10,000 to $19,999 (2)
$20,000 to $29,999 (3)
$30,000 to $39,999 (4)
$40,000 to $49,999 (5)
$50,000 to $59,999 (6)
$60,000 to $69,999 (7)
$70,000 to $79,999 (8)
$80,000 to $89,999 (9)
$90,000 to $99,999 (10)
$100,000 to $149,999 (11)
$150,000 or more (12)

219. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
Less than a high school degree (1)
High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (2)
Some college but no degree (3)
Associates degree in college (2-year) (4)
Bachelor's degree (4-year) (5)
Master's degree (6)
Doctoral Degree (7)
Professional degree (JD,MD) (8)

220. What branch/sect of Islam do you practice?
Sunni (1)
Shia (2)
Sufi (4)
Unknown (6)
Other (3)
221. Some people say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim ummah through war. What do you think?

Jihad is solely a personal struggle for righteousness (1)
Jihad is both a personal struggle for righteousness and protecting the Muslim ummah through war (2)
Jihad is solely protecting the Muslim ummah through war (3)

222. Some people say only a Muslim state/government can use military force to protect a Muslim country or ummah. Others say individuals and non-state organizations can use violence in the name of jihad. What do you think?

Only states/governments should use military force in the name of jihad (1)
Both states/ governments and individuals should use military force in the name of jihad (2)
Only individuals should use violence in the name of jihad (3)

223. Some people say that protecting the ummah through war in the name of jihad is part of Islam, but does not have a place in the modern world. Others say that this form of jihad is one of the most important duties that an individual Muslim can undertake. What do you think?

Protecting the ummah through war in the name of jihad is part of Islam, but does not have a place in the modern world (1)
Protecting the ummah through war in the name of jihad is one of the most important duties that an individual can undertake (2)
None of the above (3)
APPENDIX D: STATISTICAL CHARTS

Figure 1 Model 1 Scatterplot

Figure 2 Model 1 Histogram
Figure 5 Model 3 Scatterplot

Figure 6 Model 3 Histogram
Figure 7 Model 5 Scatterplot

Figure 8 Model 5 Histogram
Figure 9 Model 6 Scatterplot

R² Linear = 0.469

Figure 10 Model 6 Histogram

Mean = 12.25625
Std. Dev. = 5.49157
N = 160
Figure 11 Model 8 Scatterplot

Figure 12 Model 8 Histogram
Figure 13 Model 9 Scatterplot

Figure 14 Model 9 Histogram

R² Linear = 0.049

Mean = 4.54
Std. Dev. = 1.292
N = 160
Figure 15 Model 10 Scatterplot

![Scatterplot with regression line \( y = 21.05 - 0.25x \)]

Figure 16 Model 10 Histogram

![Histogram showing frequency distribution of Activism Score with mean = 17.96, median = 15.56, and N = 160]
Figure 17 Model 11 Scatterplot

Figure 18 Model 11 Histogram
BIBLIOGRAPHY


90. Faraj, Muhammad Abd al-Salam, "The neglected duty." Voices of Terror (1986): Section 64, 401-403.


98. General Intelligence and Security Service, Jihadism on the Web: A breeding ground for jihad in the modern age, 8.


100. Gill, Paul and Emily Corner, “There and back again: The study of mental disorder and terrorist involvement.” American Psychologist 72, no. 3 (2017): 239.


apologetics-carry-serious-risks/?postshare=5661447886714901&tid=ss_tw-bottom.

112. Hamm, Mark S. Terrorist recruitment in American correctional institutions: An exploratory study of non-traditional faith groups final report. Indiana State University, Department of Criminology, 2007.


150. Kherbane, Rabah, “The government believes the more conservative the Muslim, the more likely they will turn to terror,” The Independent, November 20, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/the-government-believes-the-more-conservative-the-muslim-the-more-likely-they-will-turn-to-terror-a6742431.html.


195. Newton, Jennifer, “95% of foreign fighters who join ISIS are recruited by friends and family and radicalisation 'rarely occurs in mosques' claims Oxford University terrorism expert,” The Daily Mail, November 25, 2015.


244. Schmid, Alex P. "Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation: A conceptual discussion and literature review." ICCT Research Paper 97 (2013), 22, 26, 27.


254. Sheikh, Jakob. ""I Just Said It. The State": Examining the Motivations for Danish Foreign Fighting in Syria." Perspectives on Terrorism 10, no. 6 (2016).


433


