

## *Jihadship*: From Radical Behavior to Radical Beliefs

Marco Nilsson

To cite this article: Marco Nilsson (2018): *Jihadship*: From Radical Behavior to Radical Beliefs, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI: [10.1080/1057610X.2018.1538092](https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1538092)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1538092>



© 2018 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC



Published online: 20 Dec 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 3965



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## Jihadiship: From Radical Behavior to Radical Beliefs

Marco Nilsson 

Global Studies (HLK), Jönköping University, Jönköping, Sweden

### ABSTRACT



*Jihadism* is a complex social phenomenon that changes people, but not always uniformly. This article argues that cognitive and behavioral radicalization can be seen as a discursive journey or *jihadiship* involving (e)merging ideas, problems, and solutions that change with encounters with new circumstances—both material and immaterial. The differences observed between various generations of *jihadists* are one manifestation of this complexity. Especially in a *jihadi* group, the processes of radicalization are bound to continue and take new forms, compared with those experienced in the West. Another example of the complexity of *jihadiship* is that not only can radical ideas lead to radical behavior, but also radical behavior can increasingly give rise to radical ideas in *jihadi* groups.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 26 April 2018  
Accepted 7 October 2018

Why do some Muslims residing in the West become radicalized, harboring extremist beliefs and a desire for fast and fundamental sociopolitical change (i.e., cognitive radicalization) and even resorting to violence to achieve this change (i.e., behavioral radicalization)?<sup>1</sup> Can knowledge of this radicalization process help us understand the prospects and challenges of deradicalization when fighters return from foreign conflict zones? Personal and collective grievances, networks and interpersonal ties, political and religious ideologies, and enabling environments and support structures have been associated with radicalization.<sup>2</sup> Still, we know little about Islamic radicalization in the West and the results of various studies are sometimes conflicting, often as concerns the role of education, class, family situation, and prior criminality.<sup>3</sup> Even less is known about why people become deradicalized.<sup>4</sup>

The possible variables associated with radicalization are many. One group of scholars, with roots in French sociology, concentrates on sociological background factors such as globalization and the dissolution of traditional communities and identities. From this perspective, radicalization takes place when individuals try to reconstruct their identities in a hostile and perplexing world. In particular, second-generation Muslim immigrants can experience a double sense of non-belonging, if they do not feel part of their parents' communities in their home countries and experience socioeconomic exclusion and racism in the West.<sup>5</sup> This can lead them to opt for an identity involving membership in the abstract community of the *ummah*, the global Muslim nation, whom the *jihadist* group claims to represent.

**CONTACT** Marco Nilsson  [marco.nilsson@ju.se](mailto:marco.nilsson@ju.se)  Jönköping University, Box 1026, 55111 Jönköping, Sweden.

© 2018 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

A second group of scholars emphasizes group-level variables such as social interaction, often drawing on social network theory. The roots of radicalization lie in social ties via mechanisms such as bonding and peer pressure. Radicalization can take place in a bottom-up fashion in which peers “egg each other on”<sup>6</sup> or through active recruitment efforts by organizations.<sup>7</sup> Sloodman and Tillie<sup>8</sup> argued that radicalization involves contacts with a charismatic leader in small groups isolated from the society. Wiktorowicz claimed that potential recruits must have a cognitive opening that makes them question their previous beliefs,<sup>9</sup> while Leiken suggested that a personal crisis is a very potent cognitive opening.<sup>10</sup> In recruitment sessions, there may be a need to manipulate the values and beliefs of potential recruits, which gradually creates frame alignment, as events in the world are interpreted such that radicalization ensues. From a recruitment perspective, it is not the material facts or events, such as poverty, racism, and wars, but how they are framed that are the key to understanding radicalization. Not only the problems but also the solutions, such as the establishment of an Islamic state, are framed strategically. For example, Kepel argued that, in seeking to enlist support for the establishment of an Islamic state, early Islamists in the Middle East sought to appeal to both the urban poor and the devout bourgeoisie deprived of power, doing this by balancing between two frames of political Islam: a radical social agenda and conservative morality.<sup>11</sup>

A third approach concentrates on individual-level motivations, such as the needs and inclinations of individuals. While Horgan argued that research has failed to establish a typical profile or “personality” of a violent radical,<sup>12</sup> Nesser offered a typology based on several personality types and roles that can be seen as significant for understanding the reasons for radicalization.<sup>13</sup> “Entrepreneurs” are religious-political activists who have a strong sense of justice. They radicalize using an intellectual process and play the role of recruiters, socializers, and trainers. “Protégés” are the second in command. They are equally convinced ideologically but younger and easily manipulated by the entrepreneur, whom they look up to. “Misfits” have experienced personal problems, often have criminal records, and do not perform well socially. They also have political grievances, are loyal to friends, and intend to cleanse themselves of past sins. “Drifters” have less specific reasons for radicalization. Neither ideology nor political grievance is their focus, but they may search for adventure and be motivated by youthful rebellion and loyalty to friends.

Despite the merits of these various approaches, theoretical and empirical knowledge of radicalization is still limited. What is clear, however, is that no sufficient cause of radicalization (i.e., a condition that, if satisfied, guarantees that radicalization occurs) has been identified. Second, there is much variation in the circumstances surrounding radicalization and none of the identified variables can be seen as a necessary condition that must be satisfied for radicalization to occur. Some experience socioeconomic difficulty, racism, or alienation, but none of these variables must be present in a person’s life for radicalization. To avoid a static view of radicalization, some scholars have described it as a long process rather than a time-limited incident, calling it a “staircase,”<sup>14</sup> “pyramid,”<sup>15</sup> or even “conveyor belt.”<sup>16</sup> However, efforts to examine different pathways to radicalization have failed to produce a conclusive model of radicalization: As Hafez and Mullins wrote, “the absence of a clear pattern or pathway to radicalization is precisely what is frustrating scholars.”<sup>17</sup>

What previous studies have not considered is that the radicalization of *ihadists* does not always end with an individual acting on his or her convictions and resorting to violence. This study argues that especially if someone decides to join a *ihadi* group in the Middle East, the processes of radicalization are bound to continue and take new forms, which can then later be exported back to the West. Theoretical and empirical knowledge of the radicalization processes inside *ihadist* groups is limited. However, these processes are interesting because they take various forms and are especially affected by the new social context that recruits encounter. Moreover, knowledge of these processes can help us understand the prospects of deradicalization when *ihadists* return to their home countries. Indeed, *ihadism* can be analyzed as a discursive journey of “*ihadiship*” including ideas, problems, and solutions that change with new circumstances. This means that there are generational and strategic variations in the ideas of *ihad*.

The empirical material for this study is based on interviews and conversations with Swedish *ihadists* definable as foreign fighters and with people around *ihadists* who have had the opportunity to observe their radicalization. Most interviews were conducted in the Gothenburg region, which has been a hotbed of radicalization and of recruitment to *ihadism* in Syria. Interviews with informants were arranged in advance, while the rest of the data were collected through ethnographic methods between 2014 and 2016. Indeed, scholars conducting research into *ihadism* often find themselves in a “gray zone between more formal interviewing and ethnographic research.”<sup>18</sup> Because the sample may be unrepresentative of the larger population of interest, the aim of this study is theory development rather than theory testing.

### Generational and strategic variation in the use of *takfir*

*Ihadism* is a complex social phenomenon. For *ihadists*, it is best seen as a discursive journey of *ihadiship* involving (e)merging ideas, meanings, problems, and solutions that change when encountering new material and immaterial circumstances. This complexity is manifested in the differences between those who engaged in *ihad* before and during the war in Syria. Many of those who traveled to Afghanistan and Bosnia were predominantly motivated by a desire to help the local Sunni Muslims resist oppression.<sup>19</sup> These grievances have a long history in the *ihadi* movement. As Georges argued, the *ihadi* movement has not only been dependent on theological justifications for its actions and goals, but has also nurtured itself with the suffering of Muslims and a sense of victimhood.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, those fighting in Syria were more likely to experience *ihad* as a normalized way of life, pursuing global objectives and increasingly using *takfir* (i.e., the excommunication of other Muslims), to justify fighting them.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, as the war progressed, the religious and sectarian aspects of the conflict became dominant.<sup>22</sup>

It is possible to discern further variation among *ihadists* going to Syria and Iraq since the protests in Syria turned into armed conflict in 2011, possibly emanating from generational differences relating to previous social contacts. Two Swedish Islamic State (IS) members and the nature of their previous social contacts in *ihadi* groups exemplify how differences in material realities can affect the ideas of *ihad*, such as the use of *takfir* after the rise of the IS to power in large swaths of territory between 2014 and 2016.

Bilal, who first fought for Katibat Al Muhajireen in the early days of the conflict but then joined the IS as it rose to power, said that most enemy soldiers were not real Muslims, the criterion he referred to being whether they perform the mandatory five ritual prayers: “Only a small part of the Free Syrian Army makes *salat* [i.e., ritual prayers] and are real Muslims—less than ten percent.”<sup>23</sup> Although his definition of a Muslim is strict and exclusive, the methodology he uses to draw conclusions is still reminiscent of traditional Islam. This opinion, which equates neglecting the five obligatory daily prayers with disbelief, was most famously held by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the founder of the Hanbali School of Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>24</sup>

Bilal’s unwillingness to label all enemy soldiers infidels seemed to be based on his former social contacts with other rebel groups. Bilal explained that he changed groups because he was unhappy with the general composition of the first group he was fighting for, as there were many fighters lacking Islamic conviction as well as spies. However, he still knew “good”<sup>25</sup> people fighting for other *jihadi* groups and found it difficult to label them all infidels. Moreover, during his time in the other group, he had been exposed to more traditional interpretations of Islam than those upheld by the IS. The IS has also given some imprisoned fighters from other *jihadi* groups the option of joining the IS instead of being executed. Such recruits are even more likely to be influenced by their former social contacts, as they have not changed groups because of their own convictions.

Lukman also fought for the IS. However, he had no previous social contacts with other *jihadi* groups and was therefore more focused on fighting other *jihadi* groups and more adamant that “the others”<sup>26</sup> were all infidels: “We fight those who fight us, and they are not real Muslims.”<sup>27</sup> The IS definition of who is a real Muslim, which he seemed to embrace wholeheartedly, relies on the duty to follow the Islamic political authority claimed by the IS leadership, rather than on self-definition, belief in certain basic tenets of Islam shared by most Muslims, or performing common rituals such as daily prayers.

*Takfir* played an important role for the IS in seeking to consolidate and expand its power, giving apparent legitimacy to its fight against other *jihadi* groups. Indeed, many *jihadists* were willing to embrace it as a result of the IS’s increasing power and ability to deliver the promise of territorial control, which is a precondition for both increased mobilization and creating an alternative society for those disgruntled with their existence in the West. This territorial expansion was the litmus test of modern *jihadism*, which Al Qaeda did not pass in Iraq, where it only temporarily succeeded in controlling small areas before being ousted and marginalized by the local tribesmen and the U.S. military. Lukman explained that the reason why most *jihadists* joined the IS was that “the IS has the greatest forward drive.”<sup>28</sup> It would not have had that drive without the ability to legitimize its fight and acquisition of territory from other *jihadi* groups. *Takfir* was therefore not accepted solely on religious grounds, as this idea and the material condition of “forward drive” were intrinsically connected, the latter strengthening the former.

*Takfir* was also an apologetic reaction to those voices critical of the new society in the self-declared Caliphate, as the IS sought to establish itself in the minds and hearts of the Muslim world. However, now that the IS has lost its territorial basis and forward drive, the strategic need for excommunication has diminished. With decreasing military success in Syria and Iraq, efforts to prove that the forward drive still exists increasingly lead to terrorist plots against Westerners, who can be declared infidels even without the

concept of *takfir*. In this project, which does not emphasize territorial control but rather intimidation and revenge for the West's interference in the war in Syria, *takfir* is likely to play a lesser strategic role for the IS—yet another alteration of the ideological basis of *jihad* when material circumstances change.

### From justice to apocalyptic thinking

Samir was a rather typical young man with immigrant roots who grew up in Gothenburg in western Sweden. His story of *jihadiship* can shed some light on how *jihad* as a radicalization process can change people. Samir belonged to the first generation of *jihadists* who were radicalized during the early phases of the Syrian conflict. Evin Ismail had the opportunity to interview him as part of her sociological study of life in the Swedish suburbs before he was radicalized and left for Syria.<sup>29</sup> We have a fairly good picture of the circumstances that led to his radicalization. However, going to Syria for *jihad* was not the end of the process. A friend of Samir's, whom he met while visiting Sweden one last time before he was killed in battle, provided vital information about how his stay in Syria had made him increasingly radical by embracing apocalyptic thinking. In an interview before his radicalization, Samir said that he had been frustrated about his situation at school:

I do not really know, but I think they misunderstood me as a person and my skills, my potential. They completely misunderstood my potential. I had the potential to evolve in a positive way. Throughout my time in elementary school, their attitude towards me was totally humiliating. It was extremely racial. There was resistance all the way. It happened also to others, the pattern was that the Muslims in the class had to put up with the humiliation, they were seen as poorly developed.<sup>30</sup>

He felt that he had potential to succeed in life, but the teachers actively inhibited his chances of fulfilling this potential. This led to a feeling of injustice and ultimately hopelessness that created a hostile attitude toward the teachers, whom he saw as representing Swedish society at large: "They treated me like crap. The teachers said I cheated when I got good results in exams. They treated me like shit in school, why should I bother when no one is listening? I lost hope and thought that I should leave Sweden."<sup>31</sup>

Such feelings of injustice, hopelessness, and absence of a future have also been detected among Belgian and Dutch *jihadists*.<sup>32</sup> Samir's friend confirmed this situation, explaining that Samir felt that he had considerable potential but also had the misfortune of being born in a socioeconomically problematic immigrant area with parents who, given their background, could not help him escape his difficulties: "He had the ability to speak in front of dozens of people, but he felt that he could not use his talent and to dream of studying at the university did not belong to his reality."<sup>33</sup> In short, he possessed the qualities of an entrepreneur or a protégé, as he had a keen sense of justice and had failed to achieve his personal ambitions. However, he was not ideologically or religiously motivated to the extent that the ideal types of entrepreneur and protégés are. Like a misfit, he had personal problems, and may have seen radicalization as a way to cleanse himself of past sins. However, he did not display violent tendencies, worked at a community youth center, and was more intellectual than the typical misfit. Like a drifter, social connections and a search for an identity may have also played a role for

him, but he was too focused on justice to be a typical drifter who has no specific reason for *jihad* other than adventure-seeking or the social rewards of radicalization. As Nesser has acknowledged, it is sometimes difficult to fit an individual into a category to encapsulate why he has become a *jihadist*.<sup>34</sup>

Some people with criminal backgrounds see, for example, the IS as a “super gang,”<sup>35</sup> which can be indicative of the Islamization of radicalism, as disgruntled nihilists pursue death rather than utopian projects.<sup>36</sup> While others who do not always have criminal backgrounds are drawn toward radical groups because of social contacts, a lack of meaning in life,<sup>37</sup> and maybe even because of a youthful search for adventure, very few of those who need a sense of purpose and belonging are like Samir and actually went to Syria to fight. However, people in similar circumstances may instead experience other forms of radicalization, as they turn their backs on society by opting for criminality and gang-related activities. In doing so, they can be equally violent and adamant about giving up on the society in which they grew up.

Notwithstanding the nihilists, the major difference between many *jihadists* and gang members is that the former espouse the notion of the larger abstract community of Muslims—the *ummah*—and believe in an alternative identity, creating a political project for that community rather than entirely giving up and accepting an outlaw identity. This political project can be alluring for several reasons. For Samir, his prior focus on justice provided a needed cognitive opening that could be exploited by radical recruiters and friends. Without a sense of justice, coupled with the right social contacts, he could instead have given up on society by becoming radicalized as a gang member. Even those who become gang members can experience cognitive radicalization, even though their behavioral radicalization does not involve the creation of an alternative political society but merely the violent rejection of the rules of the old society. In contrast, Samir felt that he had much to gain by leaving Sweden for Syria for an alternative project that he saw as more constructive.

Radicalization seldom reaches its endpoint when recruits leave their home country, which can be exemplified by changing conceptions of evil. Samir had traveled to Syria to try to help the local Sunni Muslims strive for justice, and his view of evil had primarily manifested itself in the form of the Assad regime’s oppression of local Muslims. If he could not realize his potential and attain justice in Sweden, he could at least seek to do all this in Syria. However, when Samir returned to Sweden for a visit before he was killed in Syria, his friend described him as a changed man. Even though warfare involves suffering and cruelty, Samir laughed and his face shone. He exclaimed that this was “the end of the war against evil.”<sup>38</sup> Something had happened during the war that changed the radicalization process and made him talk in terms of metaphysical evil rather than oppression and social injustice.

That the political project had become apocalyptic and the evil metaphysical was obvious, as Samir now eagerly talked about the *Dajjal* (i.e., the “deceiver”), a mysterious figure often presented as a false prophet or “antichrist” who tries to mislead people during the end times. According to some Islamic sources, he is expected to appear on earth as *Yawm al-Qiyamah*, the Day of Resurrection, is approaching. As Samir had begun to see the fight in metaphysical terms, the issue was no longer countering Assad’s local actions but preparing for a global battle between the righteous and evil ones. This required a

redefinition of the aims of *jihad*. Since metaphysical evil knows no boundaries it cannot be overcome with a limited struggle, and he was convinced that the *jihadists* would “soon liberate Palestine and Egypt,”<sup>39</sup> extending the scope of his initial understanding of *jihad*.

The *hadith* literature assigns Syria a key role in apocalyptic Islam, of which many *jihadists* in Syria are well aware. Muhammad said of the *Dajjal* that “he would appear on the way between Syria and Iraq and would spread mischief right and left”<sup>40</sup> and that “angels will turn his face towards Syria, and there he will perish.”<sup>41</sup> To apocalyptic Islam also belongs the belief in Jesus returning to Damascus to participate in the final war against evil on the Muslims’ side: “Allah would send Christ, son of Mary, and he will descend at the white minaret in the eastern side of Damascus wearing two garments lightly dyed with saffron and placing his hands on the wings of two Angels. ... He would then search for him [i.e., the *Dajjal*] until he would catch hold of him at the gate of Ludd and would kill him.”<sup>42</sup> The *hadith* then continues to relate what happens after evil has been defeated: “Then a people whom Allah had protected would come to Jesus, son of Mary, and he would wipe their faces and would inform them of their ranks in Paradise and it would be under such conditions that Allah would reveal to Jesus these words: ‘I have brought forth from amongst My servants such people against whom none would be able to fight.’”<sup>43</sup>

While relying on the aforementioned *hadiths* has made it common for *jihadists* to assume that the Day of Resurrection is close and requires violent action, a Swedish *imam* who has had contact with IS supporters argued that, in the history of Islam, “these hadiths have often been exploited for political purposes,”<sup>44</sup> by linking the rise of some new movement to the end of days. According to him, the Quranic approach to the possibility of knowledge of the end of days is more cautious, illustrating this by quoting scripture: “They ask thee about the (final) Hour—when will be its appointed time? Say: ‘The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): None but He can reveal as to when it will occur. ... Only, all of a sudden will it come to you.’ They ask thee as if thou wert eager in search thereof: Say: ‘The knowledge thereof is with Allah (alone), but most men know not.’”<sup>45</sup>

Despite this skepticism as to the prospects of knowing about these developments, there has been a tendency among an increasing number of second-generation *jihadists* to see their struggle in terms of an upcoming upheaval in the world order. An apocalyptic framing of history is a strong source of motivation. If the world is changing, why not keep up with the changes, especially if one has not invested or become fully successful in the old world of *jahiliyah* (i.e., ignorance).<sup>46</sup> The inclination to embrace the apocalyptic worldview increases even more if it is coupled with a belief that failures in one’s old life can be attributed to an unjust power structure that controls and limits one’s life, which was the case with Samir. The apocalyptic worldview functions as a liberating mechanism and a way to take control of one’s hopeless situation. Samir’s embracing it is an example of *jihadism* as a discursive journey of *jihadiship*, including ideas, problems, and solutions that change with new circumstances.

## Cognitive radicalization through radical behavior

Part of *jihadiship* is that radicalization does not reach its end point when the recruit leaves for the battlefield. How do the processes of radicalization inside *jihadi* groups



function once one has traveled to, for example, Syria or Iraq? There has been a conceptual fault line between radicalization emphasizing radical beliefs (i.e., cognitive radicalization) and emphasizing violent behavior to realize these beliefs (i.e., behavioral radicalization). Moreover, Neuman argued that there has been an undue emphasis on behavioral radicalization, whereas cognitive radicalization as an ideological basis of violent behavior should receive more scholarly attention. Some scholars also stress that cognitive radicalization is only one of many pathways to violence.<sup>47</sup> However, the causal path can also run the other way, with radical behavior leading to increasingly radical beliefs. This exemplifies the complexity of *jihadiship* as a process whereby ideas merge and problems seeking solutions arise in encounters with new circumstances.

These processes of cognitive radicalization through radical behavior, or reverse radicalization, can be analytically divided into general psychosocial processes inside the group and more specific processes relating to battle. Among the general psychosocial processes is the desire of all groups to ensure that newcomers will contribute to attaining the group's goals. Such socialization is common to all armed forces that teach, both explicitly and covertly, certain norms and orientations. During socialization, "the group attempts to change the individual so that he or she can contribute more to the attainment of group goals."<sup>48</sup>

Not only does the group want to socialize the newcomers to embrace its goals, for example, making the scope of *jihad* global,<sup>49</sup> but also the newcomers want to become full members of the group. As full inclusion cannot be taken for granted, the group can use inclusion as a positive reward to newcomers for adapting to the group's norms and hierarchies and for helping the group reach its goals (i.e., behavioral radicalization). As Bilal said, among the first things that happens in their new social surroundings is that newcomers develop "respect for the more experienced fighters."<sup>50</sup> In *jihadi* groups, fighting skills and sacrifices are highly valued. Established fighters' experience is an asset that they can use to inculcate more radical ideas in the newcomers. What are these ideas and how do they spread?

A starting point of the radicalization process is that, faced with the realities of the battlefield, recruits increasingly start concentrating on life after death and on embracing the risks of fighting. Like many *jihadists*, Bilal said, "I expect to die,"<sup>51</sup> as his focus was no longer on this life. This acceptance of death or even loss of will to live makes warfare with all its calamities a natural, normalized part of everyday life, ultimately leading to numbness to violence. The numbness exhibited by numerous *jihadists* leads to loss of empathy for the victims of violence. As Bilal said, "there is nothing special about killing *kufar* [i.e., unbelievers]."<sup>52</sup> This attitude is strengthened by the fundamental attribution error (i.e., placing an undue emphasis on internal characteristics of the enemy rather than on external factors), especially when Sunni *jihadists* describe Shi'a Muslims as *rawafid* (i.e., rejecters). Their beliefs are described as resulting from their evil nature rather than as affected by situational circumstances, such as society and historical developments. As Amin, another young Swedish man fighting in Syria, said, "the *rawafid* are bad people who reject the true teachings of Islam and the Muslims. They are evil and deserve to be killed."<sup>53</sup>

A preliminary step toward explaining such justifications can be derived from dissonance theory, which suggests that people have a tendency for self-justification after they do something they at first know is wrong. The willingness to justify our actions and

decisions, especially the ones that seem to be inconsistent with our beliefs and previous norms, comes from the feeling called cognitive dissonance, which is a form of psychological discomfort. Such inconsistencies are an everyday condition especially related to goal-driven behavior<sup>54</sup> as, with few exceptions, an “individual strives toward consistency within himself.”<sup>55</sup>

Thus, dissonance is a motivational factor that refers to “nonfitting relations among cognitions,” cognition meaning “any knowledge, opinion, or belief about the environment, about one self, or about one’s behavior.”<sup>56</sup> Dissonance can arise from a perception of logical inconsistency, often in combination with past experiences of cause and effect associated with some behaviors, and cultural mores that define what is to be seen as dissonant.<sup>57</sup> Whatever the cause, faced with dissonance, an individual has two options to reduce it: change cognitions about behavior and change actions, or change cognitions about the effects or meaning of actions.<sup>58</sup> Under socializing pressures to conformity and self-sacrifice in the *jihadist* group, the latter will be chosen such that new radical beliefs and ideas will be adopted. Thus, while Durkheim famously suggested that anomie (i.e., normlessness or nihilism that Roy argued characterizes those who opt for *jihad*) increases the risk of suicide,<sup>59</sup> combined with other social factors, it can also lead to the creation and acceptance of new radical norms and ideas.

Numbness to violence and lack of empathy toward the enemy engender increased levels of violence, which often leads not only to killing other Muslim fighters but also to the death of innocent Muslim civilians. Faced with a new reality of war, a need to legitimize these actions arises and suitable interpretations of *takfir* start spreading. However, they cannot be used to legitimize the deaths of those civilians perceived as Muslims. A Swedish *imam* who has discussed the matter with several *jihadists* explained that a typical answer to the question of whether such violence is lawful is that “they will go to paradise if they are innocent, so it is actually better for them to die.”<sup>60</sup> This is not something that the *jihadists* have come up with on their own after deep theological reflection, but an idea proffered by the leadership and senior fighters. Like the concept of *takfir*, the idea of innocent Muslims going to paradise seeks to legitimize unusual actions when the political project calls for extreme violence leading to the death of other Muslims. The circle becomes complete and the new radical ideas proliferate further when the experienced fighter, once himself a newcomer, meets a new recruit seeking inclusion in the group and showing respect for those with more experience.

Ahmed, who fought in Afghanistan in the ranks of Hizbi-Islami Gulbuddin, said that the longer he spent with the other *jihadists*, the more radical the interpretations of Islam he started to espouse. He also related how he looked up to the more experienced fighters. The group became a tight brotherhood with a hierarchy in which the rankings were determined by the length of battle experience and the type of activity engaged in. “Those who could teach newcomers to use weapons and explosives were admired.”<sup>61</sup> In particular, those preparing for suicide attacks were said to have “shining faces,”<sup>62</sup> illustrating the extreme respect they enjoyed. This led not only to the spread of radical interpretations of Islam but also to the normalization of extreme forms of violence in the eyes of the recruits.

The aforementioned cycle of radicalization in which behavioral radicalization leads to cognitive radicalization is, of course, not automatic or inevitable. Some *jihadists* become

disillusioned rather than being convinced of the ideological soundness of the organization for which they are fighting. The following cases of two Swedish  *jihadists* who left for the IS in Syria clearly exemplify the different trajectories of  *jihadiship* that can materialize when newcomers face the realities of war. They also caution against believing that all individuals who become radicalized fit certain ideal types.

Safet and Ahmad were two young men living in Sweden, neither of whom had expressed sympathies for  *jihadist* groups. In fact, they frequented a Sufi  *tekke*—a gathering place for Muslims predominantly interested in the spiritual teachings of Islam. Both of them were, according to their friends, calm and polite in their manners. However, Ahmad seemed to have no meaningful activities in his life, other than going to the mosque for daily prayers. According to a friend, “he suffered from a lot of anxiety, apparently because he was not doing much with his life.”<sup>63</sup> However, through the Internet he became exposed to lectures and writings promoting  *Salafi-jihadism*. Eventually, he started to share such material via social media, for example, on Facebook. It seemed that he was looking for something to soothe his anxieties, and the  *jihadist* message resonated better than did the Sufi one. The same friend related that Ahmad’s ideological convictions were not strong and mainly emanated from his anxiety: “He lacked knowledge of Islamic doctrines, so I imagine that it was easy to convince him of almost anything, especially considering how restless he was.”<sup>64</sup>

While Ahmad was unemployed and single, Safet was employed, married, and had children. He was also more anchored in Sufism, as he even had a Sufi sheikh for spiritual guidance. However, that did not prevent him from joining the IS. According to the mutual friend, Ahmad convinced Safet to join him in traveling to Syria. Safet himself said in an interview that it was partly the “adventure”<sup>65</sup> that was alluring. However, he would not likely have become behaviorally radicalized had it not been for his friendship with Ahmad. In short, like Ahmad, he was a drifter, which is the prevalent ideal type according to Nesser.<sup>66</sup>

However, while most  *jihadists* are drifters without ideological convictions, but in search of identity, adventure, and social rewards, they are also more easily disillusioned than are the other ideal types. As they initially lack strong ideological convictions and have not reached strong levels of cognitive radicalization, they sometimes drop out of the circle of radicalization in the  *jihadist* group unless they are well socialized by experienced fighters. Even during his first days with the IS, Safet became so disillusioned that he realized that it had been a mistake to come to Syria. For a month, he nagged the commanders to allow him to return to Sweden until they agreed to let him go. However, if drifters find new social contacts in the  *jihadist* group and develop stronger ideological convictions, which was the case with Ahmad, they are more likely to stay of their own free will and enter the cycle of further radicalization. Thus, ideal types, such as the drifter, seldom exist in reality as stable categories.

“Organizational caging” also explains why people who have joined  *jihadi* organizations have difficulty leaving them, even when ideological convictions start to wane. Writing of World War II, Mann argued that military organizations could become “a true cage” in which the soldiers “felt securer inside than outside, and from which they could not see outside.”<sup>67</sup> As Käihkö wrote in a study of Liberian rebels, “once with the rebels, it was often safer to choose a known evil rather than an unknown one.”<sup>68</sup> This

concept also aptly describes the difficulty of leaving *jihadi* groups. Even when the social and material rewards of group membership wane and unit cohesion is upheld through coercion that should lead to widespread desertion, most Western *jihadists* will fight to the end. As a Kurdish Peshmerga officer fighting the IS on the frontlines outside of Kirkuk said in an interview, “foreign fighters seldom surrender,” as they are unsure about how they will be treated if they do.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, even if they become disillusioned by the IS’s political project, they are often unsure whether they can ever pursue another path in life if they return to their homelands. The risk is high that they will either be imprisoned or otherwise limited in their life options. Bilal said that “those who return and give up jihad are weak in faith.”<sup>70</sup> However, he also saw life in Sweden as “meaningless.”<sup>71</sup> These obstacles to deradicalization, including limited life options and a lack of meaning, further increase the risk that some returning fighters will opt for terrorism, which can become yet another trajectory in their *jihadiship*.

## Deradicalization

What do these radicalization processes mean for the prospects of deradicalization? Deradicalization has been associated with doubt related to ideology, group issues, or personal and practical issues.<sup>72</sup> In general, push factors relating to disillusionment with life in the radical group arguably play the strongest role for those exiting radical groups.<sup>73</sup> While data limitations have made it difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the various deradicalization programs that actively seek to change beliefs and behavior,<sup>74</sup> logically, deradicalization attempts can make use of the same processes and factors that were present during the various stages of radicalization. If socialization was an important factor, new social contacts, for example, in the form of nonviolent *Salafism*, could contribute to cognitive deradicalization as new ideas are adopted, indirectly contributing to behavioral deradicalization.<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, changing material circumstances in the form of work and educational opportunities can more directly lead to behavioral deradicalization, as new patterns of activity override old ones. However, these reverse processes are not self-evident for returning foreign fighters if they are prone to staying in closed social circles, do not work or study, and are therefore not exposed to new people and ideas. Moreover, entrenched wartime socialization will be hard to defuse. For example, replacing their respect for their brothers in arms with respect for nonviolent religious authority will be difficult.

Amir had fought in Bosnia and explained in an interview why he had felt compelled to return to battle after having come home, as the friendship ties that had grown stronger in the battlefield drew him back to *jihad*. He had already left *jihad* and was considering settling down, feeling that he had done enough, when he heard that one of his close friends had died in the battlefield: “The war crated a sense of community. You thought more about the others and you became less selfish. It strengthened friendships. You became more interested in other people’s problems, more generous, and more willing to sacrifice yourself for the others.”<sup>76</sup> Replacing IS members’ understanding of metaphysical evil with a more practical conception of social problems that one can address without violence will also be a challenge.

A Swedish *imam*'s encounter with a young man who was just about to leave for Syria to fight for the IS exemplifies how successful deradicalization can make use of the same processes as does radicalization if skillfully applied to the specific case. A taxi was already waiting outside to take the young man to the airport, but the despairing Muslim father had taken his son's passport and called the *imam* to help. The *imam* related that the young man was difficult to reach and reluctant to talk to him at first:

The son was 20 years old. My starting point was not to question jihad. ... The chances of convincing him about that would have been zero. It would not have worked. But I adapted to his way of thinking. ... So I tried to reach down to his level of understanding. I said, "OK, let's assume that it is jihad, but you have to convince me." The young man suddenly opened up and a discussion ensued, which led to a mutual agreement that the Prophet's instructions about jihad are to be followed.<sup>77</sup>

Just like the IS recruiters, the *imam* sought to use all his assets, religious, ethnic, and rhetorical, to establish a social connection with the young man so that discussion could ensue and deradicalization in the form of reverse socialization could become possible. Like the IS recruiters, he also at first established some common ground concerning theology and religious authority. This opening gave the *imam* an opportunity to lead the discussion to another aspect of *jihad*, the rights of parents to approve or forbid participation in *jihad*. He related the argument that he used:

"What should we do according to the Prophet Muhammad? Muhammad said definitely that the rights of parents are to be prioritized over jihad. That was jihad led by Muhammad himself. ... Forget about Baghdadi [i.e., the IS leader], forget about Osama bin Laden, we have Prophet Muhammad here. The first priority is the parents' rights. What do you say about this?" He said, "My parents are not Muslims." I said "Whatever, even if they are not Muslims, they have rights." He saw all of society as infidels.<sup>78</sup>

After several hours of discussion of religion and *jihad*, during which a social connection and common ground on the basis of religion was established, the final stage of the strategy was to make use of cognitive openings to deradicalize the young man. However, at this stage, cognitive openings are not as easy to use as they are when radicalization takes place. Two such openings worked in this particular case. First, like the IS recruiters, the *imam* appealed to freedom of action, which the young man desired. Second, while the IS recruiters use a sentimental appeal to direct this freedom of action toward creating an obligation to act on behalf of an abstract community (i.e., the *ummah*) the *imam* replaced it with an appeal to reestablish his identity connection to his family. This final stage was very short and intense, but worked in this case because it built on several hours of seeking to establish a social connection, religious authority, and common theological ground. In this case, the appeal was strong enough to override the lures of the *jihadist* community in the mind of the young man, so that he would not use his freedom of action for destructive purposes:

It was when I told him, "OK, if you want to go, then go." He said, "If I live, I will live with honor and dignity, if I die, I will end up in Paradise." I said, "You will not end up in paradise. You will end up in Hell. But your actual punishment will be nothing less than your parents' tears in the form of deep oceans. You will have your hands tied behind your back and drown in your parents' tears." Then tears started to roll down his cheeks. It was a very powerful strike at his heart.<sup>79</sup>

Deradicalization is bound to be more difficult when the *jihadi* has already been exposed to the use of violence in conflict zones. However, knowledge of various radicalization processes, especially inside the *jihadi* group, can help us understand the prospects of deradicalization when *jihadists* return to their home countries. There will be variation in the level of belief in the radical ideology: some remain ardent believers, while others are more open to new ideas as a result of the IS's military defeats and loss of territory. When communicating with those with more stable radical beliefs—often misfits but not drifters—there is a greater need to convince the person that he has undergone a personal crisis, which was also the radical recruiter's most efficient cognitive opening to induce frame alignment such that new beliefs and behaviors can emerge. To reverse these processes, it is imperative to understand how radicalization occurs not only before leaving for the conflict zone but also in the traumatic and bloody battlefields of Syria and Iraq, where new ideas must be developed and adapted to deal with, for example, innocents dying.

## Conclusion

Modern *jihadism* is a movement that offers simple solutions to complex problems. In its current version, it is theologically linked to *Salafism*, which, like many fundamentalist creeds, stresses the outward expressions of religion in the name of a return to the example of the devout early generations of Muslims. Most *Salafists* are not *jihadists*. However, when the *Salafist* metaphysics and Sayed Qutb's *takfirism*,<sup>80</sup> which justifies an increased use of violence, converge to create “*jihadist Salafism*,” a term coined by Kepel,<sup>81</sup> a potent recipe for violent radicalization emerges.

However, *jihadism* is a complex social phenomenon that has changed throughout the history of Islam in response to new contexts and ideas. *Jihad* also changes people, but not always uniformly. Cognitive and behavioral radicalization can be seen as a discursive journey or *jihadiship* involving (e)merging ideas, problems, and solutions that change with encounters with new circumstances—both material and immaterial. The differences observed between various generations of *jihadists* are one manifestation of this complexity. Radicalization does not always end with individuals acting on their convictions and resorting to violence. Especially in a *jihadi* group, the processes of radicalization are bound to continue and take new forms, compared with those experienced in the West.

This can be exemplified by changing conceptions of evil, including the adoption of apocalyptic beliefs, and varying tendencies to use *takfir*. Another example of the complexity of *jihadiship* is that not only can radical ideas lead to radical behavior, but also radical behavior can increasingly give rise to radical ideas in *jihadi* groups. These processes of “reverse radicalization” can be analytically divided into general psychosocial processes inside the group and more specific processes relating to battle. Analyzing the various radicalization processes as part of *jihadiship* can improve our understanding of the challenges and prospects of deradicalization both in general and in specific cases.

Although an analytical focus on *jihadiship* can create valuable knowledge of the complexity of radicalization and deradicalization processes, future research faces several challenges. First, access to empirical material (i.e., those who have been radicalized), is

difficult, making it difficult to produce generalizable results and to test theory.<sup>82</sup> Second, the variables often associated with radicalization are part of many Muslims' lives in the West without their giving rise to radicalization. If they can give rise to radicalization in some cases, this invites the question of why they do not do so in other cases. Ultimately, a good theory of radicalization must also be a good theory of why people do *not* become radicalized, which makes the analytical task difficult. While research has so far focused largely on the characteristics of those who are successfully recruited rather than recruitment failures, the empirical and theoretical task for future studies is to account for both recruitment successes and failures.

## Notes

1. Peter R. Neumann, "The Trouble with Radicalization," *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2013): 873–894.
2. Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins, "The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 11 (2015): 958–975.
3. Alan B. Krueger, "What Makes a Homegrown Terrorist? Human Capital and Participation in Domestic Islamic Terrorist Groups in the U.S.A.," *Economic Letters* 101, no. 3 (2008): 293–296; Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 2004); Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe—Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study* (The Hague, The Netherlands: Clingendael Institute, 2006); Wesley C. Heinkel and Alexandra L. Mace, "Homegrown Islamic Terrorism: Assessing the Threat," *Journal of Public and International Affairs* 22 (2011): 109–136; Max Abrahms, "What Terrorists Really Want? Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 78–105.
4. Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, "Promoting Exit from Violent Extremism: Themes and Approaches," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 2 (2013): 99–115; Steven Windisch, Pete Simi, Gina Sott Ligon, and Hillary McNeel, "Disengagement from Ideologically-Based and Violent Organizations: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Journal for Deradicalization* 9 (2017): 1–38.
5. Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2005), 185; Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 193.
6. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.
7. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).
8. Marieke Sloomman and Jean Tillie, *Processes of Radicalisation: Why Some Amsterdam Muslims become Radicals* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Institute for Migrations and Ethnic Studies, University of Amsterdam, 2006), 90.
9. Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*.
10. Robert S. Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 157.
11. Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2002), 67.
12. John Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618 (2008): 80–94.
13. Petter Nesser, *Islamist Terrorism in Europe: A History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015).

14. Fathali M. Moghadam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 161–169.
15. Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 3 (2008): 415–433.
16. Zeyno Baran, "Fighting the War of Ideas," *Foreign Affairs* 84 (2005): 6.
17. Hafez and Mullins, "The Radicalization Puzzle," 959.
18. Marco Nilsson, "Interviewing Jihadists: On the Importance of Drinking Tea and Other Methodological Considerations," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no. 6 (2017): 5.
19. Marco Nilsson, "Foreign Fighters and the Radicalization of Local Jihad: Interview Evidence from Swedish Jihadists," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 5 (2015): 343–358.
20. Fawal A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8.
21. Nilsson, "Foreign Fighters and the Radicalization of Local Jihad."
22. Edwin Bakker and Roel de Bont, "Belgian and Dutch Jihadists Foreign Fighters (2012–2015): Characteristics, Motivations, and Roles in the War in Syria and Iraq," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (2016): 837–857.
23. Gothenburg, Sweden, 2 May 2014.
24. The origins of Hanbali School of Islamic jurisprudence (*madhhab*) can be traced to Ahmad ibn Hanbal in ninth-century Baghdad. It is the official school in Saudi Arabia and the most conservative of the four Sunni schools of legal thought.
25. Gothenburg, Sweden, 2 May 2014.
26. Gothenburg, Sweden, 16 May 2014.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Evin Ismail, "Varför ville du dö Samir? [Why Would You Die, Samir?]," *Dagens Arena*, 17 February 2015, <http://www.dagensarena.se/magasinetarena/varfor-ville-du-do-samir>.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Rik Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave: What Drives Europeans to Syria, an to Islamic State? Insights from the Belgian Case" (Egmont Paper 81, Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, Belgium, 2015); Bakker and de Bont, "Belgian and Dutch Jihadists Foreign Fighters (2012–2015)."
33. Gothenburg, Sweden, 3 April 2015.
34. Nesser, *Islamist Terrorism in Europe*, 13.
35. Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave," 21–22.
36. Olivier Roy, *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of Islamic State* (London, UK: Hurst, 2017).
37. Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave"; Daan Weggeman, Edwin Bakker, and Peter Grol, "Who Are They and Why Do They Go? The Radicalisation and Preparatory Process of Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighters," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 4 (2014): 100–110.
38. Gothenburg, Sweden, 3 April 2015.
39. Ibid.
40. Sahih Muslim 7015.
41. Sahih Muslim 3187.
42. Sahih Muslim 7015.
43. Ibid.
44. Gothenburg, Sweden, 2 May 2015.
45. *The Holy Qur'an: Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali* (Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth), 7:187.
46. *Jahiliyah*, often translated as the "Age of Ignorance," is an Islamic concept referring to the period of time in Arabia before the advent of Islam. It indicates a negative evaluation of pre-Islamic life as compared to the teachings and practices of Islam. In modern times, it has been used in the writings of, for example, Sayed Qutb to argue that Muslim countries have fallen back into *jahiliyah* in the absence of religious *Sharia* law.



47. Peter R. Neuman, "The Trouble with Radicalization," *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2013): 873–893; Randy Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4 (2011), 8.
48. John M. Levine and Richard Moreland, "Group Socialization: Theory and Research," *European Review of Social Psychology* 5, no. 1 (1994): 309.
49. Nilsson, "Foreign Fighters and the Radicalization of Local Jihad."
50. Gothenburg, Sweden, 2 May 2014.
51. Gothenburg, Sweden, 9 May 2014.
52. Ibid.
53. Gothenburg, Sweden, 16 May 2014.
54. Eddie Harmon-Jones, Cindy Harmon-Jones, and Nicholas Levy, "An Action-Based Model of Cognitive-Dissonance Processes," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 24, no. 3 (2015): 184–189.
55. Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 1.
56. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, 3.
57. John Sabini, *Social Psychology* (New York: Norton, 1995).
58. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, 3–14.
59. Emil Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (New York: The Free Press, 1897/1951); Olivier Roy, *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of Islamic State* (London: Hurst, 2017).
60. Gothenburg, Sweden, 17 January 2015.
61. Gothenburg, Sweden, 12 September 2015.
62. Ibid.
63. Gothenburg, Sweden, 9 April 2016.
64. Ibid.
65. Gothenburg, Sweden, 10 January 2015.
66. Nesser, *Islamist Terrorism in Europe*, 17.
67. Michael Mann, "The Role of Nationalism in Two World Wars," in *Nationalism and War*, ed. John J. Hall and Sinisa Malesevic (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 181.
68. Ilmari Käihkö, "Bush Generals and Small Boy Battalions: Military Cohesion in Liberia and Beyond" (Ph.D. diss., University of Uppsala, 2016), 39.
69. Mala Abdullah, Iraq, 20 February 2015.
70. Gothenburg, Sweden, 2 May 2014.
71. Ibid.
72. Dalgaard-Nielsen, "Promoting Exit from Violent Extremism."
73. Mary Beth Altier, Emma Leonard Boyle, Neil D. Shortland, and John G. Horgan, "Why They Leave: An Analysis of Terrorist Disengagement Events from Eighty-Seven Autobiographical Accounts," *Security Studies* 26, no. 2 (2017): 305–332.
74. Dalgaard-Nielsen, "Promoting Exit from Violent Extremism."
75. Robert Lambert, "Competing Counter-radicalisation Models in the UK," in *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences*, ed. Rik Coolsaet (Farnham, UK: Ashgate).
76. Gothenburg, Sweden, 14 November 2015.
77. Gothenburg, Sweden, 20 May 2016.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. The *takfir* doctrine (i.e., the excommunication of other Muslims), was first enunciated by Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328) in response to the Mongolian takeover of the Khalifat, as he argued that the new rulers were not real Muslims despite their official conversion. It was then further developed by Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) during the Islamists' conflict with the Egyptian government to legitimize the use of violence against rulers who were claimed to

have apostatized. The *fakfir* doctrine gained more prominence in modern times when President Anwar Sadat was assassinated by members of Islamic Jihad in 1981.

81. Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2002), 219.
82. Nilsson, "Interviewing *Jihadists*."

## ORCID

Marco Nilsson  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1240-4323>