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Utilizing Islamic Ethical Framework to Prevent Radicalization: The New Way Forward

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Abstract:

The War on Terror started about twenty years ago. Since then, it has undergone alternation. The fight abroad had a domestic dimension reflected in the crafting of national terrorist legislation, especially in Western countries. The home edition of the war, later dubbed the 'prevention of radicalization', channeled the polity's efforts in eradicating religious abnormalities through different measures of didactic, psychological, and social nature. The proposition of Islamic concepts as an indigenous lexicon for alternative reference within the wider inherently secular prevention architecture could redress the assumption that religion is an egregious feature of the past. This academic exercise is much needed due to the inadequacy of previous literature to immerse in a non-hegemonic religiously inspired discourse and provide a new perspective on the continuous engagement with the other. In asserting the

utility of such an approach, the author seeks to acknowledge the instrumental role Islamic moral principles can play in prevention.

Keywords: Islam, moral principles, prevention, radicalization, terrorism

1 Introduction

Either you're with us or you're against us. Either you stand for freedom, or you stand with tyranny... As you probably figured out by now, I view this current conflict as either us versus them, and evil versus good. And there's no in between. There's no hedging. And if you want to join against evil, do some good.¹

Half a year after the attacks on the Twin Towers and amidst the invasion of Afghanistan, the former President of the United States, George W. Bush Jr., addressed the troops who rallied in Alaska. These words were not uttered to condole the people who lost loved ones, nor did they serve to honor the deceased. They were only articulate enough to mobilize whoever is “us” against “them”, thus engaging them in a cosmic war of “good” and “evil”. The idea behind Bush’s remarks might not have been to consciously evoke Biblical imagery of benign protagonist forces battling with malevolent antagonists and inject it into the secular public sphere. Nevertheless, the statement somehow reflected his Evangelical Christian background in overlooking a probable political struggle against certain violent individuals. Instead, the contention has adopted a more religiously nuanced nature, reiterating a well-known thesis of an ideological clash of civilizations. This enmeshment of the public with the private gave license to the subsequent emergence of the securitized state and what the author refers to as the politics of fear and surveillance. The two closely related phenomena will be discussed concerning the issue of preventing radicalization, which the War on Terror authorized. Before proceeding towards a more detailed discussion of the measures undertaken by the modern polity to assure public safety and intact state sovereignty, the conversation ought to be steered in the direction of visualizing the enemy in mind, declared by the obscure “them” in the speech of the mentioned Commander in Chief. The engagement with determining the actual enemy stretches far beyond the intellectual capacity of any scholar, as previous research shows, but the differentiation of the probable opponent provides insinuation of the terms on which this War should be fought and perhaps a better understanding of the issue.

¹ George W. Bush Jr., “President Rallies the Troops in Alaska,” White House Archives, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/02/20020216-1.html>.

The enigmatic them could signify the terrorists if the time of the speech is considered – six months after 9/11. They might bespeak the Ottoman “other”² if one is to look a couple of centuries back. Represented in them might be all Muslims.³ While the way us is manifested in reality quite statically,⁴ they tend to undergo nuanced alterations. Contrarily, the author would not dare to say that “terrorists”, “the Ottoman other,” and “all Muslims” convey the same idea. The usage of the terms points to the different imaginary wars naturalized in social reality. The War on Terror had to be fought against “terrorists”, which constituted an eligible opponent after the weakening of the Soviet Union, against whom the military-industrial complex could be mobilized. “The Ottoman other” somehow was discursively incorporated when in several speeches the War was introduced as a crusade.⁵ “All Muslims” is the epitome of all others, immigrants or just different from white Caucasians based on their religious beliefs and/or skin color.⁶

Au contraire, the current research does not aspire to build on arguments reminiscent of a theological or cultural diatribe. The aim is to allow for the religious ideology against which the War on Terror was designed to be incorporated as part of the solution. It is good to be noted that the War launched in 2001 has undergone alternation. The fight abroad had a domestic dimension which was reflected in the crafting of terrorist legislation.⁷ The home edition, prefigured in the “prevention of radicalization”, channeled the polity’s efforts in eradicating religious abnormalities through different measures of didactic, psychological, and social nature. The proposition of Islamic concepts as an indigenous lexicon for alternative reference within the wider inherently secular prevention architecture could redress the assumption that religion is an egregious feature of the past. This academic exercise is much needed due to the inadequacy of previous literature to immerse in a non-hegemonic religiously-inspired discourse and provide a substantially new perspective on the continuous engagement with the “other”. In asserting the utility of such an

² Hans-Georg Betz and Susi Meret, “Revisiting Lepanto: The Political Mobilization Against Islam in Contemporary Western Europe,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 43, no.3-4 (September 2009): 313-34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220903109235>.

³ Raymond Ibrahim, ed., *The Al Qaeda Reader: The Essential Texts of Osama bin Laden's Terrorist Organization* (Crown, 2007), 226 -29.

⁴ “Americans and their allies”, “the West” and “Judeo-Christian civilization” overlap almost completely.

⁵ George W. Bush Jr., “President: Today We Mourned, Tomorrow We Work,” White House Archives, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html>.

⁶ Namira Islam, “Soft Islamophobia,” *Religions* 9, no. 9 (September 2018): 280, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9090280>.

⁷ Lisa Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented 'Terrorism'* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 21-48.

approach, the author seeks to acknowledge the instrumental role Islamic moral principles can play in prevention.

2 Radicalization and Some of Its Models

Admittedly, the term “radicalization” is quite vague. As a derivative of “radical”, which comes as an antonym of “moderate” and a synonym of “extreme”, the concept seems to be characterized by deviation from the mainstream norms and upright objection to the state mandate.⁸ This definition might have held ground throughout history, but the ipseity of the agents of change has influenced the attitude towards such conduct. For example, the 18th-century American and French revolutionaries, who were pretty much inspired by the Enlightenment ideas of liberty, equality and separation of the church and state, are often received with praise, although their methods were not as peaceful as one might suppose.⁹ On the contrary, when the “others” are willing to advocate for social and political reforms, employing quite similar modus operandi, their actions are sanctioned as an imminent threat to national security.¹⁰ These illustrations were presented not to endorse decadent behavior but to reveal the double standards that have gained ground even in academia because of the relativity of the term.

Due to its suffix, radicalization should logically be treated as a process that leads to radicalism. Some pundits chose to define radicalism as “readiness to engage in illegal and violent political action.”¹¹ Others were more diligent in acknowledging the means through which system transformation can be sought. The means may be partitioned into non-violent, thus democratic, and violent, thus non-democratic.¹² However, a popular trend in academia became the treatment

⁸ Andrej Sotlar, “Some Problems with a Definition and Perception of Extremism within a Society,” in *Policing in Central and Eastern Europe: Dilemmas of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, ed. Gorazd Mesko, Milan Pagon, and Bojan Dobovsek (Maribor, Slovenia: University of Maribor Press, 2004), 703-7.

⁹ see Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, “Manifestations of Terror through the Ages,” in *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*, ed. Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, trans. Edward Schneider, Kathryn Pulver, and Jesse Browner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 79-93.

¹⁰ see Paulo Casaca, “The War on Terror,” in *Terrorism Revisited: Islamism, Political Violence and State-Sponsorship*, ed. Paulo Casaca and Siegfried O. Wolf (Brussels: Springer, 2017), 199-218.

¹¹ Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley, “Measuring Political Mobilization: The Distinction between Activism and Radicalism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 2 (March 2010): 240, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550902765508>.

¹² Alex P. Schmid, “Glossary and Abbreviations of Terms and Concepts Relating to Terrorism and Counter-terrorism,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, ed. Alex P. Schmid (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 598-706.

of radicalization as leading to violent extremism or terrorism.¹³ This type of discrepancy, coupled with the difficulty of conceptualization which can appropriately inform the practice, induced scholars to search for an all-encompassing definition that would capture the complexities of the phenomenon on the ground.

Such bold venture was undertaken by Schmid, who eloquently described it as an “individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favor of a growing commitment to engage in aggressive tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism, or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by ideological socialization away from mainstream or status quo-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate.”¹⁴

The strive to comprehend radicalization mobilized the intellectual community's efforts to create theoretical models that attempted to decontextualize the process of its political reality and, subsequently, link it to psycho-social factors within the individuals. Impacted by the global political rhetoric, the academic articles produced on the matter could be classified as pro-Western political activism rather than rigorous scholarship.

The New York Police Department (NYPD)'s four-stage model, which was manufactured at the backdrop of terrorism-related al-Qa'ida cases and investigatory work, served to inspire later models. Although the analytical axes did not stretch outside the Northern Hemisphere, their report contains valuable information about the ideological background of those who had already carried out an attack or were likely to do so in the future based on their age, socio-economic standing, and ethnoreligious association.¹⁵ A specific section is allotted for the quite simplistic assertion that the

¹³ “Understanding Referral Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism,” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/4/418274.pdf>.

¹⁴ Schmid, “Glossary,” 678-9.

¹⁵ “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” New York City Police Department, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/Justice/20070816.NYPD.Radicalization.in.the.West.pdf>.

main driver of radicalization is the inclination to the Jihadi-Salafi branch of Islamic thought. This theological stream is linked to “Sunni revivalist interpretation of Islam,” which inspires its affiliates to “attack institutions and societies in order to overthrow non-Islamic governments and to bring about a ‘pure’ Islamic society.”¹⁶ Even an uneducated glance into the reality of terrorist organizations might recognize the fallacy of such shallow presupposition. Their actions are steered by political ambitions,¹⁷ which certain religious interpretations and symbols might justify. The NYPD report elucidates four stages: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination and jihadization. Individuals, who have not committed violence but might appropriate radical messages, are included in the first stage. Self-identification is described as migration from a previously held identity to an “re-defined” one by “Salafi philosophy, ideology and values.”¹⁸ The difference between the last two stages is hidden in the willingness to participate in heinous acts of violence.

Another model of interest to the author strives to emphasize the psychological process of radicalization while allowing withdrawal at each floor of “the staircase to terrorism”. Moghaddam¹⁹ looks into future terrorists’ perception of the material world, which is likely negative. The issues of deprivation and unfair treatment are then verbalized aggressively. If the individual in question has found an extremist milieu that can echo the displaced resentment, the likeliness of engagement increases. The fondness developed in the attachment can lead to employment in the peripheral operations of the terrorist group when there is an intensification of the us-versus-them dichotomous thinking. The final floor is when the target identified as “the enemy” is dehumanized, and mental readiness for committing a terrorist act is reached. Apart from the internal trajectory of radicalization, the model accounts for extraneous factors such as social and geographical circumstances.

The last model to be evaluated is that of McCauley and Moskalenko.²⁰ The unique element is the division of radicalization into three autonomous levels: individual, group, and mass. Their

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Lorenzo Bosi, Chares Demetriou, and Stefan Malthaner, “A Contentious Politics Approach to the Explanation of Radicalization,” in *Dynamics of Political Violence*, ed. Chares Demetriou and Lorenzo Bosi (London: Routledge, 2014), 1-24.

¹⁸ “Radicalization in the West.”

¹⁹ Fathali M. Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration,” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 161–9, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.2.161>.

²⁰ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no.3 (July 2008): 415-33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550802073367>.

argument about the existence of parallel loosely connected structures in a way negates the situatedness of the individual in the societal niche. Moreover, the unclarity of the relationship between the levels could raise suspicion about the data used in developing the theory. Nevertheless, their design introduced the concept of multiple pathways to radicalization, which was often regarded as a continuous linear progression from “precrime” to “terrorism”.

3 Prevention and de-radicalization

In light of the reviewed models, prevention programming is designed to inhibit the drivers of radicalization, whatever they might be. Although broad in definition, prevention is not a foreign concept in the policing landscape. It was introduced as a revolutionary approach to reducing the opportunities for crime to take place through situational, developmental and community-involvement measures.²¹ These measures widely relied on operations outside the conventional justice system so they had the potential to tap into the already established practices of rendition, extrajudicial processes and unduly extradition permitted under terrorist legislation across Western countries. According to the most generic partitioning of prevention, it could be divided into three categories: primary, secondary and tertiary.²² Primary prevention encompasses all members of society. Its objective is the provision of equal access to social services and education.²³ Later on, the term developed flexibility and was bent to mean integrating aberrant elements through the facilitation of social cohesion.²⁴ Secondary prevention targeted individuals with certain vulnerabilities, such as the formation of grievances, loss of significance and withdrawal from familiar groupings.²⁵ Tertiary prevention dealt directly with criminals. It aimed at reducing the chances of re-offending.²⁶

Owing to the elasticity of prevention, the concept partially converges with de-radicalization. Koehler posits that de-radicalization decreases “individual or collective physical and ideological commitment to a group, milieu, or movement designated as ‘extremist’ or violently radical.”²⁷ At

²¹ Brandon C. Welsh, “Crime Prevention,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Crime and Criminal Justice*, ed. Michael Tonry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 126-155.

²² Gerald Caplan, *Principles of Preventive Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1964).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ “Anti-Radicalisation Report 2019,” Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network (CTPN), accessed November 15, 2021, https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ar_report_web_ne_6.11.19.pdf.

²⁵ Caplan, *Principles*.

²⁶ Welsh, “Crime Prevention,” 130.

²⁷ Daniel Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 29.

the same time, other scholars like Clubb insist on referring to the term as the total rejection of violent values, attitudes and beliefs.²⁸ As a cumulative piece of knowledge from both definitions, one can argue that de-radicalization signifies a reverse radicalization process. Based on this conjecture, it is safe to claim that the main difference between de-radicalization and prevention is that the former engages with confirmed offenders, whereas the latter, because of its theoretical breadth, entraps both individuals prone to become extremists and those who have been linked to such terrorist activity.

4 Preventive Strategies

Prevention cleavage is not only done by targeted individuals but by type of approach. Mutsaers and Demir pinpointed three main trends in the field: security-orientated, mental health-centered and pedagogical.²⁹ The security-orientated approach falls into the category of hard prevention, such as “military [intervention], policing, intelligence and [terrorist] legislation.”³⁰ Nevertheless, the involvement of the local community members in some of the operations received blistering critique. The community engagement by the law enforcement agencies was often presented as a partnership that could not have been more remote from the truth. Security personnel recruited informants without the approval and knowledge of the wider community.³¹ These foot soldiers were skillfully used in the prosecution and participated in court hearings as witnesses if enough evidence was not found against the convicts.

²⁸ Gordon Clubb, “Re-evaluating the Disengagement Process: The Case of Fatah,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 3, no.3 (September 2009): 25-34, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26298414>.

²⁹ Paul Mutsaers and Sibel Demir, “Preventing Radicalization and Polarization: A Literature Review of Policies, Priorities, Programs, and Partnerships for Youth at Risk,” Platform JEP, 2019, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.platformjep.nl/binaries/platformjep/documenten/publicaties/2020/04/09/preventing-radicalization-and-polarization/Mutsaers+and+Demir+%282019%29.pdf>.

³⁰ Anne Aly, Anne-Marie Balbi, and Carmen Jacques, “Rethinking Countering Violent Extremism: Implementing the Role of Civil Society,” *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 10, no.1 (July 2015): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2015.1028772>.

³¹ Basia Spalek and Laura Zahra McDonald, “Counter-terrorism: Police and Community Engagement in Britain and the US,” *Arches Quarterly* 5, no.9 (Spring 2012): 20-27.

Moreover, if a selected individual refused to cooperate, they would likely be viewed as a sympathizer of violent extremism.³² In addition, the informants were not included in witness protection programs after their service, which posed risks to their existential well-being.³³

The mental health-centered approach was designed so Western democracies could “evade the charge of racism in their management of Muslim political agency.”³⁴ Although mental health issues were dismissed as a factor contributing to radicalization,³⁵ it serves the powerful narrative that counter-extremist approaches are put in place to safeguard people “at risk”. Recent academic pieces focused on swapping mental illness with “perceived grievances”. This trend, worthy of ridicule, translated the lived experiences of structural discrimination into psychological imagery. Moreover, the current medico-political rhetoric reminds of a previous discourse that contained the boundaries of Black people’s socio-political animation in the United States. Metzl posited that “[black] men required psychiatric treatment because their symptoms threatened not only their sanity, but the social order of white America.”³⁶

The pedagogical approach sees parents, teachers, and youth workers as agents responsible for forming a resilient and cohesive society. Apart from having the role of human radicalization detectors, these pedagogues were in charge of cementing a durable identity in the youth,³⁷ drawing them into controversial discussions surrounding extremism (Steadman, Grace & Roberts, 2020) and offering mentorship.³⁸ Even though such promulgations empower people on paper, the reality

³² Randa Abdel-Fattah, “Countering Violent Extremism, Governmentality and Australian Muslim Youth as ‘Becoming Terrorist’,” *Journal of Sociology* 56, no.3 (April 2020): 372-87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783319842666>.

³³ Vivienne Chin, “Collateral Damage of Counter-terrorism Measures and the Inevitable Consequence of the Social Exclusion and Marginalization of Vulnerable Groups,” in *Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism Among Youth to Prevent Terrorism*, ed. Marco Lombardi, Eman Ragab, Vivienne Chin, Yvon Dandurand, Valerio de Diviitis, and Alessandro Burato (Amsterdam: IOU Press, 2015), 11-22.

³⁴ Tarek Younis, “The Psychologisation of Counter-extremism: Unpacking PREVENT,” *Race & Class* 62, no.3 (September 2020): 38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396820951055>.

³⁵ Asta Maskaliūnaitė, “Exploring the Theories of Radicalization,” *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal* 17, no.1 (2015): 9-26.

³⁶ Johnathan M. Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), xiv.

³⁷ Trees Pels and Doret de Ruyter, “De Relatie Tussen Opvoeding, Socialisatie, Ontwikkeling En Radicalisering: Overzicht Van En Hiaten In De Beschikbare Kennis [The Relationship Between Education, Socialization, Development and Radicalization: Overview and Gaps in the Available Knowledge],” *Pedagogiek* 31, no.2 (June 2011): 117-33, <https://doi.org/10.5117/PED2011.2.PELS>.

³⁸ Basia Spalek and Lynn Davies, “Mentoring in Relation to Violent Extremism: A Study of Role, Purpose, and Outcomes,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no.5 (April 2012): 354-68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2012.666820>.

about their implementation is pretty grim. Parents and teachers were not adequately trained or advised on how to respond to the maturation of radical ideas and on what stage to reach out to the criminal justice system.³⁹

5 Methodology

The current paper is qualitative desk research that relies on but is not limited to authentic religious sources, foundational to understanding the embedded preconceptions for the materialization of an Islamic lifestyle. The Holy Quran and the Prophetic Hadith corpus contain motifs potentially discouraging violent behavior in individuals strongly affiliated with the faith. While this is said, the research is wary of “the fallacy of the Muslim mind theory.”⁴⁰ The theory suggests that religion is the main driver for Muslims' actions, thoughts, and behavior patterns. This way presents factors such as character, inborn abilities, social interactions, and geographical settings in which adherents to Islam find themselves denied their contributory agency.

In this line of thought, the research strives to present the scriptures neither as an ahistorical instrument to steer the actions and thoughts of their followers nor as generalizable truth which can be applied to other non-Islamic radicalization. Its purpose can be found in generating an alternative model of prevention directed toward Muslims in the Western context. The word “alternative” is quite appropriate because the current praxis bespeaks of reductionism, which attributes certain negative actions or behavioral patterns to individuals of some ethnic backgrounds because they are deemed less advanced or inferior to others.⁴¹

Some specific moral principles will be contextualized in the reality of the 7th-century experience, so their discursive essence is extracted, but the majority will be employed through their empyrean relevance to the human experience, thus subjected to historical immunity. The rigorous interdisciplinary uptake would permit the concept of prevention to move beyond the dichotomy of “good Muslim”- “bad Muslim” and produce supplementary strategies of its own.

³⁹ Annemarie Van de Weert and Quirine A. Eijkman, “Subjectivity in Detection of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism: A Youth Worker's Perspective,” *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 11, no.3 (April 2018): 191-214, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2018.1457069>.

⁴⁰ Gabriele Marranci, *Faith, Ideology and Fear: Muslim Identities Within and Beyond Prisons* (London: Continuum, 2009), 39.

⁴¹ Laura Zahra McDonald, “Impact and Insecurity: The Securitisation of State Relations with British Muslim Communities,” in *The Securitisation of Migration in the EU: Debates Since 9/11*, ed. Gabriella Lazaridis and Khursheed Wadia (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 119-41.

6 Proposing Islamic alternatives

6.1 “Soft” Monitoring And Mass Surveillance Vs. Individual Accountability

The basic tenant of preventing Islamic radicalization is countering violent Salafist interpretations of the religion. Scholars such as Bartlett, Birdwell and King contributed this notion of violent ideology to the lack of authentic religious knowledge.⁴² Even though their work did not receive much traction in academia, it was echoed at a governmental level with the introduction of Sufi state-sponsored leaders and organizations which tried to pacify the much more traditional mainstream Sunni Islam.⁴³ As a compliment, some “moderate” individuals in Muslim-majority areas in the West were empowered to participate in prevention schemes, as discussed earlier. Such strategies were the natural extension of surveillance cameras and frequent stops and searches in minority communities. Moreover, the tactics did not only have an impact on community-police and state-community relationships, but their permeability had a negative effect on the social exchanges between Muslims and non-policing professionals – teachers, health, social and youth workers.⁴⁴ In proportion to the accumulation of “expertise” drawn in, the broadened prevention targeted social justice and environmental activists who were adherents to Islam.⁴⁵

The alternative approach to the above-mentioned is the promotion of individual accountability, which recognizes the innate potential of every human being to act as a partner in the establishment of a peaceful society. This principle does not depict the Muslim community as a collective threat to the state or divide them into politically governable categories – “moderate” and “extreme.”⁴⁶ It addresses their moral disposition in a pretty much-desacralized world by directing the discourse towards an eternal state of perennial being in the Hereafter, which decides the individual’s conduct. The idea that Islam sanctions ill behavior is reflected in the following verse: “Whoever earns evil

⁴² Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell, and Michael King, *The Edge of Violence: A Radical Approach to Extremism* (London: Demos, 2010), 33.

⁴³ Arun Kundnani and Ben Hayes, *The Globalisation of Countering Violent Extremism Policies: Undermining Human Rights, Instrumentalising Civil Society* (Amsterdam: Transnational Institute, 2018), 13; Mark Sedgwick, “The Support of Sufism as a Counterweight to Radicalization: An Assessment,” in *Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism Among Youth to Prevent Terrorism*, ed. Marco Lombardi, Eman Ragab, Vivienne Chin, Yvon Dandurand, Valerio de Diviitis, and Alessandro Burato (Amsterdam: IOU Press, 2015), 113-9.

⁴⁴ The UK counter-extremism strategy PREVENT placed legal responsibility on teachers, health, social and youth workers to refer people who harbor radical ideas or might become terrorists in the future.

⁴⁵ Aziz Choudry, “Lessons Learnt, Lessons Lost: Pedagogies of Repression, Thoughtcrime, and the Sharp Edge of State Power,” in *Activists and the Surveillance State: Learning from Repression*, ed. Aziz Choudry (London: Pluto Press, 2019), 3-22.

⁴⁶ Abdel-Fattah, “Countering Violent Extremism,” 385.

and becomes engrossed in one's sins will be doomed to Hell and abide therein forever."⁴⁷ Furthermore, there is an incentivization for performing noble deeds by multiplying the reward. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

Allah ordered (the appointed angels over you) that the good and the bad deeds be written, and He then showed (the way) how (to write). If somebody intends to do a good deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write for him a full good deed (in his account with Him); and if he intends to do a good deed and actually did it, then Allah will write for him (in his account) with Him (its reward equal) from ten to seven hundred times to many more times: and if somebody intended to do a bad deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write a full good deed (in his account) with Him, and if he intended to do it (a bad deed) and actually did it, then Allah will write one bad deed (in his account) .⁴⁸

The mentioned Prophetic narration also accounts for the inner ethical compass for distinguishing good and bad, taught by God.

6.2 Mental Health And Perceived Grievances Vs. Tawakkul And Belief In The Qadr

The display of violence has often been treated in academia as a psycho-social problem susceptible to medical treatment.⁴⁹ During the early years of the War on Terror, the nexus between mental well-being and violent extremism was espoused to reinforce the secular narrative that religious ideology is perilous, especially if not contested.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the latest research shows that the White Caucasian population suffered from mental health issues more in comparison to other ethnicities.⁵¹

Later, precedence was given to the emerging theoretical framework of “perceived grievances.”⁵² The temptation to create a profile for the “extremist” positioned diasporic communities on the spot because of their limited opportunities for political participation and access to social services. This

⁴⁷ Al-Quran Surah 2, Ayat 81.

⁴⁸ Muhammad Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Ar-Riqaq 498/8*, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/81/80>.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Kandel Englander, *Understanding Violence* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 73-75.

⁵⁰ Rem Korteweg, Sajjan Gohel, Francois Heisbourg, Magnus Ranstorp, and Rob De Wijk, “Background Contributing Factors to Terrorism: Radicalization and Recruitment,” in *Understanding Violent Radicalisation: Terrorist and Jihadist Movements in Europe*, ed. Magnus Ranstorp (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 21–49.

⁵¹ Kamaldeep Bhui, Michaela Otis, Maria Joao Silva, Kristoffer Halvorsrud, Mark Freestone, and Edgar Jones, “Extremism and Common Mental Illness: Cross-sectional Community Survey of White British and Pakistani Men and Women Living in England,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 217, no. 4 (March 2019): 547-54, <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2019.14>.

⁵² Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism,” 161–9.

argument, which locates the problem and solution for societal prosperity within the citizen, evades holding the state accountable for its deficiency in providing relevant services.

The proposed principles of firm belief in the preordainment and full trust in the Creator encourage people to develop political ideologies which favor reconstruction of the present system rather than basal disruption of the status quo. The response is not to be considered complacency with injustice but a realistic expectation materialized in actions that do not protrude outside the established legal system. The change should not happen at all costs and without due regard to the nature of the employed means. Conviction in the preordainment (Qadr) is one of the basic tenants of belief (īmān), while trust in the Creator (Tawakkul) usually follows the exhaustion of all practical methods.⁵³ Moreover, these principles put into perspective the individual's life trajectory and allow them to find peace with their current state of affairs, thus eliminating the feelings of resentment, which are seen as conducive to the displacement of aggression.

6.3 Social Cohesion Vs. Human Unity

The social cohesion incentive rests on the notion that two major societal segments (Muslims and non-Muslims) with different values exist.⁵⁴ This logic is not only a reiteration of the radical claim of the terrorist groups, but it also assumes the homogeneity of the separate entities, which facilitates the polarized “us” versus “them” thinking, which is seen as a contributor to violent extremism.⁵⁵ Moreover, cohesion is often understood as the cultural assimilation of the minority into the majority through adopting beliefs and language skills.⁵⁶ Such an exercise places the ultimate responsibility in the hands of the different, overlooking that belonging to a group depends on the membership approval of its associates.⁵⁷ Muslims will fail to belong to the wider Western society as long as White Caucasians do not recognize them as fellow citizens, even if they have a high degree of appropriation of Western democratic values.⁵⁸

⁵³ Muḥammad ibn 'Isā Tirmidhī, *Jami' al-Tirmidhi, Book of on the Description of the Day of Judgement, Ar-Riqaq, and Al-Wara' 2517/4*, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2517>.

⁵⁴ Alison Scott-Baumann and Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, *Islamic Education in Britain: New Pluralist Paradigms* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 9-30.

⁵⁵ McCauley and Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization,” 415-33.

⁵⁶ Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 84 – 114.

⁵⁷ “Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries,” Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Prisons-and-terrorism-15-countries.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Saffron Karlsen and James Y. Nazroo, “Ethnic and Religious Differences in the Attitudes of People Towards Being ‘British’,” *The Sociological Review* 63, no.4 (November 2015), 759-81, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12313>.

In contrast, the Islamic concept of human unity is more suitable as it binds individuals through their share of Divine spirit (rūh).⁵⁹ The minority does not have to adjust to the majority because the required property for forming an attachment is an innate attribute. The connection with the Creator, One and Only, presupposes the enjoyment of equal rights and freedoms. This principle does not negate human diversity in terms of possessing distinct physical and cultural traits.⁶⁰ It regulates the human-to-human interaction about the individual vertical relationship with the Transcendent. In this sense, closeness with the Divine assures that the dignity of every person is preserved. In addition, transgression against one unit of humanity is rendered a threat to all.⁶¹

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, an advantageous feature of the current research is considering an alternative prevention model of Islamic radicalization that employs religious concepts to achieve peaceful coexistence between members of different societal groupings. The approach is sensitive to the lived experiences of marginalized individuals who often become the main targets of state interference because of their economic standing, ethnoreligious background, and access to social services. The suggested paradigm centers on treating the causes rather than mending the symptomatic façade of violence by minimizing the need for external intervention and stimulating internal transformation within creed-bound subjects that would condition positive behavioral patterns.



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⁵⁹ Al-Quran Surah 38, Ayat 72.

⁶⁰ Al-Quran Surah 49, Ayat 13.

⁶¹ Al-Quran Surah 5, Ayat 32.