

# **British Jihadism: The Detail and the Denial**

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## **Abstract**

Since the early 1990s British Islamists have been fighting, killing and dying in a succession of conflicts across the world, beginning with the Bosnian civil war of 1992-95. A decade later this violence reached the United Kingdom, with a series of deadly attacks on the London transport system in July 2005, the first suicide bombings in Western Europe.

This thesis provides a historiography of the involvement of Britons in global and domestic jihadist struggles at home and abroad across three decades. It catalogues and records their actions, and bring into a central document the names and affiliations of both British Islamist combatants, and those from jihadist organisations who have settled in this country. The ever increasing number of Britons travelling to the Islamic State does not come as a surprise when the scale of past involvement in such causes is considered. This thesis deconstructs the religious objectives intrinsic to these trends, and emphasises that in British Jihadism it is the goal, as much as the message, which is religious.

The reluctance of British Muslim representative organisations to address early examples of these developments, the 'denial' – is analysed herein. The development of a religious terrorism which often targets women and minority groups may have been expected to face critical examination from academics, in particular from within the critical terrorism studies school. Regrettably such rigour is found to be lacking. Indeed it is within the academy that some the most sustained attempts to deny any religious influences behind contemporary terrorism have been found. Detailed

feminist critiques of Islamist practice are deployed to advocate a new approach – one that leads to a critical terrorist studies which critiques not just government responses to terrorism, but terrorist actors also.

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I dedicate this thesis to James May (1969-2012).

## **Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations Used**

Allah Akbar	God is great.
Al-Qaeda	Jihadist organisation responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Also abbreviated to AQ
AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARC	Advice and Reformation Committee. An organisation of Saudi dissidents based in London, who distributed many of Osama Bin Laden's early statements.
BMI	British Muslim Initiative. Representative group established by former figures in the Muslim Association of Britain.
Caliphate	A system of governance established following the death of Muhammad. The established leader, the Caliph, ensures the sharia is enacted.
Dawah or dawa	Mission, often involving missionary work to call people to Islam
Deen	Religion
DGSE	Direction Generale de la Securite Exterieur – France's external security service

EDL	English Defence League. An organisation opposing what it perceives to be Islamic extremism. Formed after members of Al-Muhajiroun booed a march by the Royal Anglian Regiment in Luton in 2009
Fatwa	Religious ruling issued by an Islamic scholar
FOSIS	Federation of Student Islamic Societies. Umbrella organisation for ISOCs in the UK and Republic of Ireland
GIA	Abbreviation of Groupe Islamique Armé, an Algerian jihadist group known as the Armed Islamic Group in English
Hadith	Term applied to the sayings and practice of Muhammad
Harkat ul-Mujahideen	Pakistani jihadist organisation, abbreviated as HuM.
Hizb-ut-Tahrir	Global Islamic party seeking to restore the caliphate. Also known as HuT.
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence – the primary Pakistani security agency
ISOCs	University Islamic Societies
Jahiliyyah	A concept developed by Sayyid Qutb, referring, roughly, to ignorance
Jel	Jamaat-e-Islami – the largest clerical party in Pakistan

LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. From 2011 it has used the name Libyan Islamic Movement for Change
Madrasa	A Muslim institution of learning. Also spelt madrassa and madrasah.
MAB	Representative body formed by Muslim Brotherhood associates in the United Kingdom. A constituent part of the MCB.
MCB	Muslim Council of Britain, the largest representative body of British Muslims
MCU	Muslim Contact Unit of the Metropolitan Police
MI5	The Security Service, which has a domestic focus
MI6	The Secret Intelligence Service, which has an international focus.
MPSB	Metropolitan Police Special Branch. Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist unit, which also held a wider brief against political subversion. It merged into Counter Terrorism Command in 2006.
Salafi	A strand within Sunni Islam which seeks to return to the original way of Muhammad and the first three generations of the Prophets companions
Sawha	A movement of religious awakening, associated with Saudi Arabia

Sharia	The law of God, as set out in the Qur'an
Sunnah	Prophetic tradition and those of the first generation of Muslims
Umma	Or ummah. The concept of a global Muslim community
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
Wahhabism	The predominant strand of Islam in Saudi Arabia, developed in the eighteenth century by Muhammad abd al-Wahhab

## **Introduction**

Few subjects have dominated political discourse in the United Kingdom this century as frequently as terrorism. Whether the actions of terrorists themselves, or debates considering the wisdom of our responses to violence, there has rarely been a substantive period when this subject has been absent from domestic or international debate. The 30 June 2014 declaration of a caliphate in territory held by jihadists in Iraq and Syria, and the participation of British Muslims in that struggle, further crystallised attention.

The analysis below considers the historical background to these developments. It sketches the involvement of a small but not insignificant number of British Muslims, and co-religionists who moved to the UK, in a series of conflicts of which we are now in the third decade. The civil war in Syria and renewed conflict in Iraq may be the latest, and in the case of Syria the largest of these conflagrations, but is far from unique. Instead, when examined across a timescale of over twenty years, beginning with British participation in the Bosnian Mujahideen of the early 1990s, the movement of Islamists from across the UK to armed jihadist organisations in the Middle East is characteristic, predictable and consistent with long term political and theological expressions.

## **Definitions**

In any research in this field, the problem of definitions looms large. This thesis uses the British government's definition of terrorism from the Terrorism Act 2000, which states:



1. – (1) In this Act “terrorism” means the use or threat of action where –
  - a. the action falls within subsection (2),
  - b. the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public and
  - c. the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.
- (2) Action falls within this subsection if it –
  - a. involves serious violence against a person,
  - b. involves serious damage to property,
  - c. endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action,
  - d. creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public or
  - e. is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously disrupt an electronic system.
3. The use or threat of action falling within subsection (2) which involves the use of firearms or explosives is terrorism whether or not subsection (1) (b) is satisfied. (HM Government, Terrorism Act 2000, 1).

This is not without limitations, but no single definition of terrorism is likely to be satisfactory to all, at least in part because the phenomenon has proven so diverse (English, 2009, 55). In a substantial examination Richard English states; “terrorism might best be considered as a method deployed by people who collectively see themselves as engaged in a war” (English, 2009, 23). Whilst he goes further in justifying association of terrorism with warfare, the word ‘method’ in his description is arguably as significant. By seeing terrorism as a method, we are recognising those thus defined are attempting to do or achieve something – this is not violence for the sake of violence. What we call terrorism has a purpose – it is a means to an end.

The primary focus of this research is on the United Kingdom and/or those British Muslims who have engaged in violence in pursuit of particular aims. This brings international factors into consideration - Islam is a global religion, with centres of influence or power in countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan. This research establishes that although British Jihadism may be characterised by its presence on United Kingdom soil, it displays aspirations and practices which may be local, national or international.

The terms Islamist and in particular British Jihadism are used throughout this thesis. Before looking at the latter conceptualisation in detail, it is necessary to define component political and religious terms hereby deployed as adjectives and nouns. Azim Nanji observes that an Islamist seeks to: “enforce an ideological view of Islam in the political and social life of Muslim societies” (Nanji, 2008, 83). Islamists also “seek to establish norms of Muslim conduct in the affairs of society without necessarily seeking to challenge those in authority or encouraging extremism, including the use of violent means” (Nanji, op cit).

In this thesis British Islamism is characterised as the desire to put forward an ideological view of Islam within the United Kingdom, establishing norms of Muslim conduct in the affairs of British society. In this globalised era, a legalistic definition of citizenship is avoided, with those taking part in British Muslim life considered worthy of analysis, even if some may not be British passport holders.

Within Islamic thought there are two different types of jihad. The first is the greater, or individual jihad. This is to live life as good a Muslim as possible, something that may require the individual to fight against themselves in an inner struggle. Second is

the lesser jihad, where emphasis is again on struggle – but with an objective to create a just and divinely ordered society. A Jihadist is simply someone who undertakes jihad. However Nanji adds:

The term has come to refer to those groups in the Muslim world who believe in remaking Muslim societies and fighting Western influence through acts of violence, including suicide missions. Their imagined ideal of the Muslim world includes a unified society under a single authority which would impose Islam on all, by force if necessary (Nanji, 2008, 90-91).

The ‘greater jihad’ and what may be considered the spiritual struggle suggested by it, is not considered herein. In this dissertation British Jihadism refers explicitly to the involvement of UK Muslims in the lesser jihad. It is the contention of this research that a discernible British Jihadism exists, it has been present on these shores for some time and indeed is likely to continue, if not necessarily prosper. Problematically for western liberal democracy, evidence is presented demonstrating some adherents are willing to go further than seeking to remake Muslim societies, and instead to influence societies in which Muslims are a numerical minority.

Any sensitivity over the term Jihadism is rejected. Analysis of many of the events below, particularly those in chapter five such as the Bosnian and Syrian civil war’s, is lost without reference to both the conceptualisation and the word itself. To quote Peter Neumann of The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence:

It is nearly impossible to describe the movement that has been responsible for the terrorist attacks in Washington and New York as well as those on Madrid and London with accuracy and without causing offence by joining together Islam and terrorism and/or militancy (Neumann, 2008, 8).

An understanding of why young Britons may travel thousands of miles, at physical and legal risk, often to countries with which they have no familial or linguistic connection, requires an understanding of the motivations of the men themselves. Where declared, these are frequently rooted in religious declarations. To quote Ibrahim al-Mazwaghi, a University of Hertfordshire graduate later killed fighting in Syria “Jihad is to spend all your time and effort fighting the enemies of Allah” (Channel 4 News, 2013).

This is not to rely purely on stated declarations. In his study of jihadist recruitment in Europe, Neumann observes key shared elements – a literalist approach to Sunni Islam, a political agenda (Islamism) and a belief in achieving these goals through jihad (Neumann, 2008, 8-9). In other words, there is a demonstrable unity between theory and practice, or if you prefer, praxis.

To illustrate this, an interpretation and analysis of the conduct of British jihadists across a series of armed conflicts is conducted, in order to develop the conceptualisation of those involved in these struggles as primarily religious actors, for whom the realisation of purely political goals is insufficient. The removal of President Assad from power and his replacement by a cross-party government, or the establishment of a Kashmiri state purged of Indian government and security forces (to take just two examples) would be unacceptable to jihadists. Only life under the Qur’an, on genuinely Islamic territory, is. It is the delivery of literal Sunni Islam which matters.

If the concept of jihad represents a potential hurdle for researchers, further problematic terms occur in this analysis. The word fundamentalism, regularly

associated in the west with Islam, is arguably even more problematic than the term jihad. There is potentially little value in a particular religion if its fundamentals are not recognised and it considered desirable to adhere to them. Malise Ruthven makes a significant contribution to reasserting the validity of such a concept in academic research when he defines fundamentalism as:

A religious way of being that manifests itself in a strategy by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identities as individuals or groups in the face of modernity and secularisation (Ruthven, 2007, 5-6).

Originally used to describe trends within early twentieth century Protestantism, in 1920 Curtis Lee Laws argued fundamentalists would do battle for the fundamentals of the Christian faith (Ruthven, 2007, 8). Although hardly beleaguered, early British Muslim organisations such as the Islamic Foundation felt the need to stress the fundamental principles of Islam and to organise together so Islam could be propagated in contemporary Britain.

Salafi Islam adopts a similar posture to those 1920s American Christians, but is characterised by strict adherence to the literal word of the Qur'an and the first three generations of Muslims. Burr and Collins observe Salafism as being rooted in a commitment to "keeping the faith with the early generations of Muslims renowned for their piety, and Salafists regard themselves as the direct descendants of the 'best of the people' at the founding of Islam" (Burr and Collins, 2006, 21). The Prophet and his companions – those with direct, personal association of Muhammad – are central to this world view:

These three generations were highly esteemed by later Muslims for their companionship with the Prophet and proximity to his time and for their pure understanding and practice of Islam and contribution to it (Shahin, 1995, 463).

Salafists seek to return to this original way, a perspective which to Ruthven is by necessity both mono-cultural and rooted in the theoretical ideal of a golden age.

The “fundamentalist” is the believer who reaches into the core of the tradition, who identifies and returns to the “fundamentals” in order to recover that faith in its pristine form. That faith at its origins is Manichean, involving as it does a radical separation of the world between the saved and the damned, believers and infidels (Ruthven, 2002, 26).

Sadakat Kadri has referred to Salafism as the “reinvention of tradition” (Kadri, 2011, 107), and credits Ibn Taymiyya (discussed later in this thesis) with propagating the viewpoint that the practice of the first three generations of Muslims can be legally binding (Kadri, 2011, 112). If so, this potentially puts Salafists on a collision course with other systems of legal governance.

Not all Salafists adopt jihad (Lambert, 2008, 39) indeed the division between those perceived to be peacefully loyal to Saudi Arabia, and those influenced by jihadist groups can be vociferous (Kepel, 2011, 220). But those who adopt jihad characteristically combine Jihadism and Salafism. Gilles Kepel was the first academic to develop a categorisation conjoining Salafism and Jihadism (Tax, 2012, 8n). His term Jihadist-Salafist serves as an appropriate descriptor for the phenomena under consideration in this thesis. Jihadist-Salafists have deployed a “supercilious respect for the sacred texts in their most literal form, but they combined it with an absolute commitment to jihad” (Kepel, 2011, 220). Had this thesis been devoted solely to international developments, the categorisation Jihadist-Salafist

would have been adopted. As the focus is primarily on the United Kingdom, the term British Jihadism, as defined above, is preferred. It is noteworthy that when Kepel seeks to illustrate his categorisation of Jihadist-Salafist, he does so by naming two dissident Saudi preachers, and three men who for long periods lived in London – Abu Hamza, Abu Musab al-Suri and Abu Qatada (Kepel, op cit).

## **Research Questions**

Four core questions guide this work, which seeks to establish the depth and scope of a discernible British Jihadism, and to explain the reticence in the academy in accepting the phenomenon:

- What is the history of British Islamist involvement in violence, both on these shores and beyond?
- Why did so many Jihadist actors coalesce in the United Kingdom?
- Who are the British Jihadists? Are they religious or political actors? Are they linked to particular districts, mosques, institutions or organisations?
- In challenging traditional approaches to terrorism and counter radicalisation strategy, why has critical terrorism studies struggled to come to terms with the concept of violence from British Jihadists and the religious nature of their struggle?

In addressing these questions, distinct objectives predominate. One is to call for, and to take steps to commence, the re-positioning of terrorism studies between its two major camps – the orthodox and critical schools. To explain why this is both necessary and indeed important if British Jihadism – and other stripes of terrorism –

is to be better understood and in time fully addressed, the following pages establish some of the characteristics of the primary academic approaches to the study of terrorism.

### **Theoretical Background: The Chimera of Terrorism Studies**

Terrorism studies is an emerging academic discipline. Whilst students of international relations may have up to a dozen theoretical approaches to construct their research from, terrorism studies has not, yet, diversified in such a manner. In the United Kingdom the discipline's roots begin with the school at St Andrews University, founded by the late Paul Wilkinson. St Andrews, and American institutions such as Georgetown University in Washington, developed strong working relationships with police, security services and defence officials. Indeed, if anyone preceded Wilkinson in the field it was possibly Richard Clutterbuck, a former army officer who became an academic specialising in conflict, as well as developing the work of Control Risks in the private security sector (Wilkinson, 1998).

Wilkinson was not merely an observer of counter-terrorism strategies or the work of institutions in countering challenges such as that posed by Irish Republicanism. In advising bodies such as the Department of Transport on aviation security and Lord Lloyd of Berwick's inquiry which resulted in the Terrorism Act 2000, Wilkinson at times moved from spectator to player (Reisz, 2011, Cohen, 2000). Press coverage of the time stated:

He acts as adviser to several western governments, international organisations and large corporations operating in politically volatile parts of the world. Wilkinson is evasive on that subject (Sunday Times Scotland, 1990).



Paul Wilkinson could also be a protagonist, for example becoming involved in the campaign against army whistle-blower Colin Wallace, allegedly trying to prevent Channel 4 News broadcasting a feature on Wallace's accusations concerning military misconduct in Northern Ireland (Ramsay, 1988).

Ironically recommendations put forward by Wilkinson in the 1980s and 1990s to assist the liberal democratic state in resisting terrorism appear mild when compared to decisions implemented by certain Western governments against a minority of British jihadists in recent years – targeted drone attacks, detention without trial, rendition and control orders being prominent examples (Boyle, 2013, Fenwick, 2002, Blakeley 2011, Zedner, 2005). To Wilkinson the rule of law was always paramount:

It must be a cardinal principle of a liberal democracy in dealing with the problems of terrorism, however serious these may be, never to be tempted into using methods which are incompatible with the liberal values of humanity, liberty and justice (Wilkinson 2005, 115).

A second trend has emerged within terrorism studies. Taken aback by the sheer volume of literature emerging, noting its sometimes variable quality and its provenance, a critical academic approach to the subject issued forth in the years following the allied war on terror. Here research from academics associated with the Rand Corporation, St Andrews University or the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) cannot necessarily be separated from the military and political circles academics may move in. A critical perspective emerges that raises centrally the reality of state terrorism, is wary of overplaying the

threat from Islamist organisations, and seeks to consider wider societal factors that may lead to such tendencies emerging. Perhaps most of all, it attempts to develop a new framework for research which considers both the content of terrorism discourse and omissions from it (Jackson et al, 2009).

Substantial methodological critiques may be made of academics basing themselves in and around state institutions, and the process by which information may be disseminated from actors in the policing and security sectors. For example, writing on domestic terrorist threats, Anthony Richards places a figure of 30 on the number of animal rights activists in the United Kingdom willing to take part in the most serious types of violence – e.g. firebombing – which may be investigated under counter-terrorism legislation (Richards, 2007, 101). A footnote informs the reader the source for this figure is a telephone conversation with an unnamed Special Branch officer, who is presumably employed to monitor and/or counter such threats. This is not to question the veracity of Richards' published estimate, but Terrorism Studies is perhaps one of the few academic fields where a researcher may credibly suggest data has come from a confidential source he or she cannot name, and expect it to go unchallenged. Such information cannot be ostensibly neutral or objective – even if it is correct - as it comes from a protagonist, releasing information on a selective, privileged basis.

Such potential methodological frailties have led to spirited deconstructions of orthodox academics in which the focus of attack is not merely the author's text but the framework in which they are perceived to operate. Writing of Rohan Gunaratna

and the ICPVTR's analysis of Islamic insurgents in southern Thailand, Frank Connors considers negative conclusions to be inevitable. "The research design and methodology of the book makes the authors partisan to intelligence agency perspectives and susceptible to superficial explanations" (Connors, 2007, 148).

The criticisms articulated by Connors give some indication of the political debates which have come to colour terrorism studies. Indeed, elements of the divide between orthodox and critical terrorism researchers mirror the west's traditional left/right political divisions (English, Interview, 2010). If examples may be found of orthodox terrorism studies working with and in alleged support of ruling elites, some equally familiar political positions can be discerned in the arguments of critical academics. Consider Richard Jackson, discussing how the 9/11 attacks could potentially have been viewed differently. He speculated:

Instead of completely unprecedented attacks they might have been seen as part of a message of rage that the developing world has been trying to communicate to the developed world for many decades (Jackson, 2005, 98).

This would suggest accepting the strikes as some form of representative attack of the poor against the rich, or the weak against the strong, class war by other means. Aside from the reality Al-Qaeda statements did not articulate 9/11 in such terms, those who took part in the hijackings were curious representatives of the world's dispossessed. The majority came from Saudi Arabia, the richest, rather than the poorest nation in the Arab world. At the time Al-Qaeda was led by Osama Bin Laden, a multi-millionaire from one of the desert Kingdom's most important families.

The Bin Laden group was personally selected by King Saud to redevelop both Mecca and Medina, whilst the success of the family business earned Osama's father a considerable fortune (Coll, 2008, 127). Hijackers such as Mohammed Atta, Marwan al Shehhi and Ziad Jarrah, were well educated, and had spent periods of their lives in the West (Kean and Hamilton, 2004, 231-9). It was precisely because they came from such backgrounds they were able to live and study in the United States, without drawing sustained suspicion from the security services. Whilst not rejecting that the hijackers may have been driven by a considerable sense of injustice, they, and Al-Qaeda, make curious representatives of the developing world in a confrontation with the global north.

A second, more post-modern dichotomy may be observed across the terrorism studies divide, when the focus is on assessing the practices, beliefs and actions of perceived terrorist actors. This has involved an assessment of organisations such as Al-Qaeda within a rubric of what is referred to as religious terrorism (Hoffman 2006, Wilkinson, 2007). This strand of violence is perceived as posing a serious threat to the liberal democratic state and its citizens, thus requiring a substantive response from it. It is here we reach one of the most contentious debates within the academy and beyond its walls. Prominent academics within critical terrorism studies, activists on parts of the political left, and leaders of Muslim representative organisations, are either uncomfortable with the concept of religious terrorism, or reject it outright. Opposing any association between Islam and terrorism is also a position increasingly shared by political elites. Most noticeably this occurs after major terrorist incidents. Consider the Scottish National Party's deputy leader Nicola Sturgeon following the Glasgow Airport bombing (Gallagher, 2007), Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg after the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby (Muslim Weekly, 2013, C) and Prime Minister

David Cameron during the hostage crises involving the Islamic State (Cameron, 2014). Each referred to Islam explicitly as a 'religion of peace'.

This tendency has not been accompanied by a robust analysis from critical theorists. Nor, more importantly for this research, have the religious demands – for sharia law, and a truly Islamic state – articulated by terrorist actors, been foremost in the thoughts of critical researchers. The consequences of these demands on others and the impact of their adoption is unexamined. Critical terrorism studies have instead tended to focus on what may be safely expected of the discipline – assessing the wisdom of counter terrorism legislation, and its effect on particular groups of citizens. In a foundational text, Jackson, Smyth and Gunning elaborate a need to focus upon

- the impact of counterterrorism policies on specific communities, individuals, institutions, the legal order, domestic society, and the international system
- the effects of counterterrorism policy on human rights, social trust, community cohesion, democratic culture, the academy and academic research (Jackson et al, 2009, 231).

Potentially, such a framework mitigates against detailed examination of the terrorist themselves, their belief systems or the impact of their actions on communities. In positional terms, the declared analytical focus of Jackson et al would appear to be rooted in a characteristically post-modern approach, where it is not jihadism, Islamism or even Islam that is primarily studied, but how others respond to it. Johannes J.G. Jansen, the Dutch academic writer on Islamism, has warned of an approach which ensures "We can always study our own reactions to, e.g., another person's religion, rather than studying the other person's religion" (Jansen, 1997, xv).

Chapter six of this thesis is devoted to de-constructing what has become a limiting and substantial flaw in the approach Jackson and others have established to

studying contemporary terrorism, or perhaps more accurately, not studying it. This is not to reject or denounce critical terrorism studies per se, but merely to illustrate the presence of limitations, which in time may become binding unless restorative action is taken.

### **The Theoretical Approach Herein**

For the above reasons, this thesis moves beyond the structures provided by both 'orthodox' and 'critical' terrorism studies, opening up the possibility of finding space outside of, or better still between these two traditions. Indeed it is to be hoped the publication of research which takes the beliefs of perceived terrorists seriously, whilst at the same time maintaining a critical approach towards institutions of the state, reinvigorates the field. It is an original contribution of this research to move beyond, rather than stay located within existing paradigms within terrorism studies.

In theoretical terms, four academics have informed this research and thinking – Meredith Tax, Richard Hofstadter, Joseph R Gusfield and Michel Foucault. Richard Hofstadter (1916-70) and Joseph R Gusfield provide a platform from which to consider religious movements, their thinking and their actions. Hofstadter's *"The Paranoid Style in American Politics"* is a political classic which benefits re-reading. Hofstadter researched a series of political movements, from anti-Masonic campaigns to the revived Ku Klux Klan. He deploys the descriptive term 'paranoid style' not in the clinical sense but in the modes of expression adopted by those under consideration. Hofstadter found paranoid movements appear in waves, but this is not a process with readily negotiable interests (Hofstadter, 2008, 39). Indeed the paranoid tendency may become aggravated when adherents cannot make their

presence felt in the political process – initial suspicions are confirmed by exclusion. It is not difficult here to consider particular Islamist actors, on the outside of democratic political discourse, expressing sentiments of exclusion and grievance. Indeed as later chapters educe, the declaration and articulation of grievance is a recurring theme in the history of British Islamism.

Status politics, as examined in Hofstadter's analysis of Goldwater's 1964 Presidential campaign, centres on the recognition of society's problems as being moral. Decline can be arrested by returning to old virtues, indeed Goldwater's candidacy pivoted on moral, not economic realities. When researching developments in Conservative politics in the United States, Hofstadter discovered concepts of status central. He traces what he coins 'pseudo-conservatism' to the manner in which American's status has been linked to their Americanism. Here status politics refers to "the clash of various projective rationalizations arising from status aspirations and other personal motives" (Hofstadter, 2008, 53), before adding "I chose the term "status politics" because I was looking for a way to designate an impulse held in common by a variety of discontented elements" (Hofstadter, 2008, 86).

Status politics covers the issue of American identity, the problem of social status and most relevantly for this research, the effort of Americans to win assurance their values are reflected in the community at large. This desire for status runs through British Islamism, both in declarations of the society it wishes to see constructed domestically, and the type of society Jihadists seek to build out of conflicts abroad. Most importantly, "Status politics seeks not to advance perceived material interests

but to express grievances and resentments about such matters, to press claims upon society to give deference to non-economic values” (Hofstadter, 2008, 87). This tendency is demonstrated by Ibrahim al-Mazwagi, a Londoner fighting in the forces of the Katiba al-Muhajireen (The Battalion of Migrants) in Syria:

I had a car, I had a job. My dad had a car and a job. We weren't struggling, but we were just normal..... A Muslim is a Muslim. Is he in need of protection? Is he being transgressed upon? Is his lands being taken? Is his honour being violated? Yes he is. Then I'm there (Channel 4 News, 2013).

Gusfield's *“Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement”* (1976) was first published in the period Hofstadter was writing – 1963. Gusfield saw his analysis as an attempt to “answer theoretical questions about moral reform movements” (Gusfield, 1976, xvi). Gusfield's definition offers a particular piquancy when Islamist movements and Jihadist actors are considered. Moral reform is a way “in which a cultural group acts to preserve, defend or enhance the dominance and prestige of its own style of living within the total society” (Gusfield, 1976, 3).

Religious motives and moral fervour occur in a setting, and in nineteenth century America temperance was a way in which a declining social elite attempted to maintain power and demonstrate respectability. This was against a backdrop of a United States becoming increasingly urban, secular and more Catholic. As we shall see this type of defensiveness was a cornerstone of early British Islamists such as Dr Kalim Siddiqui or the Islamic Foundation in the 1980s and into the 1990s, faced with the need to both ‘survive’ in a country they had migrated to, and in time to move beyond mere survival as a community, towards properly instigating Islam in the west.



Gusfield found embracing religion saw the adherent commit to a set of codes governing their behaviour, with revivalism serving as part of embourgeoisement. In response to a perturbing and increasingly decadent society, they express “the belief that a return to the dominant values of the past, based on religion, economic morality, and familial authority, will solve social problems” (Gusfield, 1976, 144). The parallels between this revivalism and Salafi Islam are striking, with both approaches seeing life as having degenerated:

Salafism denotes a school of thought which surfaced in the second half of the nineteenth century as a reaction to the spread of European ideas. It advocated a return to the traditions of the devout ancestors (salaf in Arabic) (Kepel, 2011, 219).

Such developments bring with them not just life affirming change for the individual, but potential problems for broader society. One of the challenges for liberal democracy is that the entry of status issues into political discourse carries with it the prospect of destabilisation;

The sources of conflict are not quantitative ones of the distribution of resources. Instead they are differences between right and wrong, the ugly and the beautiful, the sinful and the virtuous. Such issues are less readily compromised than are quantitative issues (Gusfield, 1976, 184).

We might consider here how Salman Rushdie’s “*Satanic Verses*” was described by Dr Mughram Al-Ghamdi of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs in 1988; “This is the most offensive, filthy and abusive book ever written by any hostile enemy of Islam and deserves to be condemned in the strongest possible way” (Appignanesi and Maitland, 1989, 59). The polarisation afforded by such statements mitigates against possible compromise. As Muslim musician Aki Nawaz, who attended the anti-Rushdie protests, states of the subsequent fatwa:

For me it was just a tragic step in a tragic long episode and I think this caused the biggest division - it was the beginning of the division of Muslims and everybody else, including inside our communities (BBC Radio 4, 2009).

Whilst Gusfield and Hofstadter provide a theoretical basis from which to consider the emergence and development of Islamism in this society, the work of the American feminist Meredith Tax is used in this research in a particularly distinct manner. In 2012 she published a vigorous denouement of the flawed response of academics, the left, human rights organisations and feminists to what she terms the 'Muslim Right' (Tax, 2012, 1). Her book emerges out of the 2010 controversy involving Gita Saghal, the Head of Amnesty International's Gender Unit at its International Secretariat, who publicly objected to Amnesty's work with a British former Guantanamo Bay detainee, Moazzam Begg. Tax opposes rendition and torture, but insists Islamists like Begg seek to establish a society which is ultimately discriminatory (Tax, 2012, 7).

Here a clear frustration is also elucidated. A dangerous vacuum exists where terrorism is not considered in terms of its effects upon the human rights of civilians. Despite what Tax sees as the overwhelmingly local focus of religious fundamentalists, instead human rights discussions in the circles she condemns have focused on the conduct of counter-terrorism strategies of Western governments and their allies. Chapter six of this thesis demonstrates the extent to which critical terrorism studies is immersed in this failing, with particular reference to the founding academic within that school, Richard Jackson, and prominent colleagues Jeroen

Gunning, David Miller and George Kassimeris. The emancipatory agenda of critical terrorism studies comes to a juddering halt when faced by virtually any Islamist actor.

The final academic influence on this work is Michel Foucault. In terms of a theoretical approach towards the language of both terrorism and terrorism studies, the work of Michel Foucault is invaluable. In "*The Archaeology of Knowledge*" Foucault sets out the parameters by which statements may be examined:

- Who is speaking? Who is accorded the right to use this language and who is qualified to do so? What is their status, and how is that status achieved?
- What are the institutional sites from which discourse emerges, derives legitimacy and is applied?
- What is the position of the subject? What is his situation? What position does the subject occupy in informational networks?

Significantly Foucault sees the property of discourse as sometimes being confined to a particular group of individuals. In such circumstances only that particular group may invest a discourse in decisions, institutions, practices or to even take part in that discourse. This is particularly relevant if we are considering issues such as terrorism allegedly associated with a particular religion - the rules of discursive formations are to be found in the rules of discourse itself.

Any analysis though should not be confined merely to the statements that appear, but on their modes of existence "what it means for them to have appeared when and

where they did” (Foucault, 1972, 109). The regularity, for example, with which senior British politicians insist immediately after a terrorist attack faith played no bearing in the incident may be considered significant not merely in terms of the accuracy of such sentiments, but the timing and the location of these expressions. Discursive formations are groups of statements – consider as an example the groups of statements which may appear over several days after a deadly terrorist attack, or debates concerning a proposed government initiative to counter terrorism. In chapter four the response of several Muslim representative organisations to Mohammed Sidique Khan’s suicide video is examined critically, and the presence of a discursive formation which serves to diminish religious elements in Khan’s statement.

Having given notice of the intellectual influences and theoretical approaches taken in this research, the following section addresses some of the methodological issues the author has tackled in preparing this thesis, and establishes a method for detailing both British Jihadist actors, and those from established jihadist groups who migrated to the United Kingdom.

### **The Data Set Used In This Research**

To analyse the history, scale and nature of British Jihadism this thesis uses quantitative methods to record planned and actual terrorist attacks involving British Muslims at home and abroad, and in particular to build up a detailed overview of British Jihadis – who they are, and what activities they participated in. Throughout this research I have sought to build up data on Jihadist actors, keeping an Access

database of Britons convicted of terrorist offences, those held in Guantanamo Bay and similar institutions overseas and those convicted of criminal offences where a politico-religious element may be present. Information from the Access Database was then placed into tables in word format, giving, for example, lists of Britons killed fighting in Pakistan, or members and former activists of University Islamic Societies (ISOCs) convicted of terrorist offences. Data is also presented on international jihadists who have settled in the United Kingdom, with reference to the organisations they have been publicly associated with, and their country of origin. Such an approach is crucial to illustrate the scale and depth of the issue under consideration, its longevity, the validity of concepts such as designating the United Kingdom as 'Londonistan' and serve to move debate away from generalities. Tables representing this data are to be found throughout chapters three, four and five. The material presented has been entirely developed from the public domain – what is described as Open Source Intelligence (OSINT). Former CIA officer Robert Steele is perhaps the best known proponent of this concept and defines it thus:

Open source intelligence, or OSINT, is unclassified information that has been deliberately discovered, discriminated, distilled and disseminated to a select audience in order to address a specific question (Steele, 2007, 129).

The OSINT used to discover the extent and depth of British jihadism has eleven main components.

- Books by recognised authors in the field, such as Peter Bergen, Jason Burke, and Camille Tawil
- Memoirs from those involved in countering terrorism in a professional capacity

- Memoirs, articles and statements by those currently or formerly involved in Jihadist and Islamist organisations.
- Material from those supporting terrorist suspects and those convicted, in particular the British organisation Cage (formerly Cageprisoners)
- Press releases at the culmination of trials, from police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service
- Official government documents and statistics, including those published by the Home Office on terrorism arrests
- US Government sources such as affidavits and indictments. Also American government sources which were not intended for publication, but have subsequently been released via Wikileaks
- Media coverage of terrorism cases and incidents across a range of national and international print and web media
- Coverage of terrorism cases in the local press in Birmingham, Coventry, Derby, London, Luton, Manchester and Stoke
- Articles in the ethnic press, predominantly *Muslim Weekly* and *Jewish Chronicle*
- Analysis from websites tracking jihadist organisations and individuals, such as Internet Haganah

The third of the above categories, the statements of the jihadists themselves, has expanded substantially during the course of this study, due to the prominence of a range of social media platforms. Facebook, Twitter, What's App, AskFM, Instagram and others have been used by British fighters in Syria and Iraq to disseminate their world view in a manner which was not conceivable to those taking part in similar

struggles a decade or so earlier. Here a note of caution concerning SOCINT (Social Media Intelligence) is necessary. If academics have declared Wikipedia a site to view with caution as anybody may write there what they will, so we may view with caution the social media output of an individual hiding behind a nom-de-plume, claiming to be on a battlefield in Homs. They may be. But they just as easily may not be. Whilst such information may be useful, and is used at times in this thesis, it is recognised it is not of the same quality as that determined in, for example, a court of law.

Bias is inherent in reporting, as no writer approaches an issue free of values. It should be noted however in the vast majority of instances where data is presented in this research it concerns matters of public record – that someone has been arrested, convicted, or killed. The high number of guilty pleas in contemporary terrorism cases must be noted (Croft, 2012, 192-3) some 73% of terrorism prosecutions in the period 2001-10 resulted in conviction (Foley, 2013, 147). The author has attempted to deploy as broad a range of sources as possible in order to mitigate against any inherent bias. It is hoped by synthesising so much material, covering three decades, into one place, that both additions and indeed corrections may be made by subsequent researchers, so a permanent archive of British Jihadism may be established.

## **Challenges with Terrorism Data**

In methodological terms, listing planned terrorist attacks is an inexact science. Not only is it extremely difficult to decide when discussed action may be considered substantive enough to be ascribed the designation 'planned', but such a field is contaminated by press exaggeration, and the not always dispassionate contributions of counter-terrorism agencies. This phenomenon can be considered inherently more speculative than that pertaining to convictions, enacted terrorist attacks, or the deaths of individual fighters. In some instances whether a terrorist attack was being planned is a scene of considerable contestation – the alleged Easter 2009 plot to attack landmarks in Manchester is a prominent example. Counter terrorism surveillance officer Harry Keeble states

Early in 2009 MI5 received information that a team of suspected AQ operatives were based in the north of England and surveillance officers were dispatched to track the suspects 24/7. They soon built up a strong intelligence picture as they followed the suspects (Keeble and Hollington, 2010, 108).

After Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Bob Quick inadvertently revealed possible details of the investigation, termed Operation Pathway, surveillance was abandoned and twelve suspects arrested. Whether the police had prevented a credible terrorist attack was clearly a matter of dispute, as “Within two weeks of their arrest, detectives had to throw in the towel and release all the arrested men without charge” (Keeble and Hollington, 2010, 111). Relatives of those arrested accused the authorities of Islamophobia (Walsh and Wainwright, 2009).



In this instance, the authorities proved tenacious in not totally abandoning Operation Pathway, with the raid on Osama Bin Laden's Abbottabad compound producing fresh evidence against Liverpool University student Abid Naseer. This led to his extradition to the United States, and eventual conviction (FBI, 2015, b). On balance, and due to the successful legal procedures against Naseer, this research includes the 'Easter plot' in its dataset. It is however entirely possible if this analysis was being conducted at a different time, before the new material had been made available, a different decision could be justified.

In terms of time scale, this thesis does not consider British Muslim involvement in the jihad in Afghanistan from 1979-89. Whilst Britons did fight in the Mujahideen, Olivier Roy's contemporaneous categorisation carries considerable weight;

The Afghan resistance has not sparked off militant movements of support in the West, because there are no shared overarching values to which appeal can be made (Roy, 1986, 207).

For similar reasons British participation in broadly secular, nationalist struggles in Muslim majority nations – for example the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)<sup>1</sup>, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) or even the Free Syrian Army - has also been discounted.

In recent years some prominent British Muslims of Bangladeshi heritage stand accused of having committed crimes, including genocide, whilst fighting against the independence movement in Bangladesh from 1970-1. On 3 November 2013 Chowdhury Mueen Uddin, the former Chairman of Muslim Aid, Deputy Director of the

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<sup>1</sup> In the 1980s the JKLF had some presence in English towns with high numbers of migrants from Kashmir. Street collections and graffiti, in towns like Burnley, was noticeable in a manner rarely seen today.

Islamic Foundation and Vice Chairman of East London Mosque<sup>2</sup> was sentenced to death for the targeted killing of academics and intellectuals (Daily Star Bangladesh, 2013) committed by Al-Badr, a paramilitary wing of the clerical party Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel). Whilst noting the influence activists from Mr Mueen-Uddin's background have enjoyed within British Islamism, such historical offences are not considered herein.

In the years after 1989, the 'overarching values' between Westerners and Mujahideen Olivier Roy considered to be lacking, were found. This began with a conflict involving Muslims in Europe - Bosnia from 1992-5. This research therefore considers as many cases as possible of Jihadist struggle involving Britons from 1992 until 31 March 2015 – a twenty two year period which encompasses three separate decades. Such research cannot, by its nature, be complete. The solitary nature of doctoral research precludes the large scale, collaborative project which British Jihadism deserves. It is to be hoped this work motivates future developments of this type.

As well as terrorism related to Northern Ireland and that conducted by far-right actors, two particular terrorist attacks in Britain within the designated research period have been excluded. On the 26 and 27 July 1994 explosions occurred at the Israeli embassy and at the Balfour House office complex in Finchley, north London. On 11 December 1996 two Palestinians were convicted of conspiracy to cause explosions and sentenced to twenty years in prison. Both came from secular campaigning

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<sup>2</sup> All biographical information is taken from his website <http://www.chowdhurymueenuddin.com/> this also contains a vigorous rejection of the Bangladeshi charges.

traditions, although neither had connections to any terrorist organisations (Guedella, 2001). This research takes no position on the widely articulated view their convictions amount to a miscarriage of justice (Fisk, 1998) although the extent to which the 1994 bombing stands distinct from subsequent violence is noteworthy.

The millions of documents published by the Wikileaks website since 2006 were not originally written for publication. As such, they develop a particular curiosity. It has made public, for example, statements on alleged terrorist involvement made by particular Britons whilst in American custody. They, or their supporters, are free to point to the circumstances in which the US material was written, and to point to errors and inaccuracies which may be present. There will be errors of fact, as scared, abused or demoralised individuals are unlikely to always make accurate or consistent statements. Such errors, the setting for these statements, plus the treatment of many prisoners in American custody, raises questions about the validity of documents leaked to Wikileaks as a source. Overall my approach to these documents has been to see them as an indication of how a section of the United States government assessed an issue or individual at a set point in time. They have been read critically, which is the approach I have taken to all information used in this thesis.

## **Chapter Outline**

The next chapter considers some of the literature already published which attempts to explain jihadist violence, those involved in such campaigns, and existing studies

on British contributions to this phenomenon. A position emerges of some distinct studies pertaining to particular issues and controversies, without an over-arching focus on the substantive subject of British Jihadism on its entirety. This research aims to address that shortcoming.

In Chapter two, this thesis begins to develop. The genealogy of jihadism is established, with reference to thinkers who have influenced contemporary jihadist currents. Importantly it is established that politico-religious actors have increasingly displaced nationalist organisations, and that the demands of these figures preclude secular outcomes. This allows the reader to begin to see that religious demands are not mere ornamentation but intrinsic to these movements practice.

Some of the earliest articulations for jihadism made on these shores are considered, before analysis moves to examples of 'denial' towards emerging jihadist groups. The inability of many within British Islam to address developments is seen as having damaging side effects – an aura of sensitivity and defensiveness. It is a fear later shown to be replicated within critical terrorism studies, where caution concerning 'neo-Orientalism' ensures the religious goals of jihadist organisations do not receive due consideration.

Chapter three, Settlement, considers those Islamists from 14 territories who arrived to this backdrop, and establishes the broad range of jihadist groups and individuals who coalesced in the United Kingdom in the period under consideration. The extent to which émigrés were able to facilitate their fight for sharia in their homelands from Britain is demonstrated, as are the sometimes generous conditions in which they were able to operate. The cross-national co-operation between jihadist organisations, who often contained members from a series of countries, is used to

demonstrate that these are not mere political exiles seeking the removal of individual dictators in their home nation. In chapter three we also meet some of the Imam's who were to influence and shape British Jihadism.

In Chapter four those clerics – Abdullah el-Faisal, Abu Hamza, Omar Bakri Muhammad and Abu Qatada are placed in the context of the burgeoning struggle for sharia in the United Kingdom. The violence which Islamist actors have been involved in, and the structures they have come from, form the central part of this section. Here religion is demonstrated to central not just to their rhetoric but practice, be it at times in terms of target selection by terrorists, but also in the core practice of some jihadists. Not violence, but dawah. The history of conflicts surrounding Islamism on campus across three decades is also examined. The reluctance to accept these problems is later to be found repeated within critical terrorism studies.

Chapter five considers British Jihadists as external actors, sketching their participation in three decades worth of conflict in more than a dozen different countries, and an even greater number of armed groups. Tentative totals, and where possible names and dates, are given for those who died attempting to achieve their objectives. Those travelling to Syria and Iraq since 2012 to fight for the Islamic State do not form a unique occurrence, but instead the peak of a series of interventions ongoing for over twenty years. Indeed an earlier recognition of the phenomena described herein could have enabled a better informed response to the Syrian crisis. If terrorism studies has a purpose, it is surely to inform such debates.

Finally, in perhaps the most important section, chapter six, the structural and intellectual limitations of critical terrorism studies response to the above events is established. Two prominent feminist authors, Bennoune and Tax, are deployed to

put forward the contention that the local goals of jihadist actors have been overlooked by critical researchers, leading to a stunted understanding of their approach. Critical terrorism studies failings, whilst not necessarily fatal, are demonstrated with reference to some of its leading figures, to be substantial.

This research develops, at least in part, an archive of a small contested part of British Islam - Jihadism. Foucault believed such work could never be exhaustive: “It is obvious that the archive of a society, a culture or a civilisation cannot be described exhaustively; or even no doubt, the archive of a whole period” (Foucault, 1972, 130). This snapshot is as exhaustive as possible, but cannot be complete. In presenting the argument for a truly critical terrorism studies however, it seeks to develop a more accurate archive of the period we have lived through.

In the text which follows there feature names, words and religious terms which have been translated into English. This can produce inconsistencies – for example in the print media references to both Usama and Osama Bin Laden are readily found, with the organisation he founded described as Al Qaeda, al-Qaeda or Al-Qaeda. For ease of reading and understanding this thesis has attempted to standardise all such references, with the Penguin Dictionary of Islam and what it refers to as its “generally accepted forms of transliteration of the terms” (Nanji, 2008, ix) providing adjudication where necessary. The one exception to this is where text has been quoted, where all wording is as per the original.

## **Chapter 1 - Literature Review**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This literature review seeks to examine existing material in the field of jihadist violence, and to demonstrate such literature has not covered the depth, breadth or history of British Jihadism in the detail it deserves. Initially, a fundamental challenge emerges when researching terrorism - the sheer volume of published material. Andrew Silke has attempted to monitor developments in this literature, estimating in the five years following 9/11, more books were published on terrorism than in the previous fifty. At one stage a new book on terrorism was being published in English every six hours (Silke, 2008, 28). Any researcher may also consider articles in three specialist terrorism journals, analysis in security and intelligence publications, plus at times those devoted to international relations, race, religion, and politics or to particular regions such as the Middle East. When writing in quality newspapers and magazines is also considered, a PhD student could conceivably read continuously for the duration of their doctorate. And that is before considering primary literature from perceived terrorist actors.

Given the need for selection, this literature review elects to focus on three core issues. Firstly some primary sources from key figures in Jihadist struggle in recent decades – an early Arab fighter in Afghanistan, Abdullah Azzam, Al-Qaeda's founder Osama Bin Laden, and its current leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. Each is instantly recognisable to any UK based jihadist, and Abdullah Azzam's name was taken as inspiration for one of the UK's most prominent distributors of information on jihadist struggles – London's Azzam Publications. Secondly it is necessary to examine the far more limited literature concerning British participation in these campaigns, the

coverage of domestic terrorist attacks and wider studies of British Islamism. This is followed by a discussion of academic literature within terrorism studies, and a summary of the two main schools – orthodox and critical terrorism studies. This overview of the literature serves to give some indication as to the intrinsic beliefs and practices of jihadist actors, and to the partial examination thus far of those who hold such beliefs and are from the United Kingdom.

## **1.2 Literature on Jihadist Terrorism**

Abdullah Azzam was one of Osama Bin Laden's closest comrades in the Afghan jihad, who spoke of him with reverence (Lawrence, 2005, 77). A graduate of Cairo's Al-Azhar university, where he obtained a Master's degree in sharia law and a PhD in Islamic jurisprudence (Ruthven, 2002, 2012), Azzam combined religious knowledge with a commitment to armed struggle. Assassinated with his two sons in a Peshawar car bombing in 1989, Azzam's influence on the broader Mujahideen movement is discussed by a succession of writers (Bergen 2001, Burke, 2007, Wright 2007, Tawil, 2010).

This inspiration reached the United Kingdom, with the formation in 1997 of the organisation Azzam Publications by Talha Ahsan and Babar Ahmad, and a series of accompanying websites, the most prominent of which was Azzam.com (US District Court Indictment, 2006). This project brought together British Islamists to raise funds for Jihadist struggles abroad, to publish the proclamations of revered fighters and to publicise and promote the work of jihadists in the field. One of their titles is believed to contain the last writings of Abdullah Azzam, *"The Lofty Mountain"* (2003). The book is divided into three sections. First comes Azzam's biography of Islamic



Scholar Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani (d.1989), second is Azzam's description of a 1987 battle between Mujahideen and Soviet forces at Jaji in eastern Afghanistan, an analysis introduced by the pen of Osama Bin Laden. The final section is not written by Azzam but is devoted to one of the book's translators, Azzam.com correspondent Suraqah al-Andalusi, who is described as *Shaheed* – a martyr. Al-Andalusi was killed during the battle at Tora Bora as Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters retreated from Northern Alliance and US forces on 14 December 2001.

The book's introduction is a brief summary of Azzam's life, without a named author, but presumably written by al-Andalusi or a staff member of Azzam Publications. It uses quotes from Abdullah Azzam to stress the primacy of jihad over political methods, and informs the reader Azzam turned down profitable academic posts in order to fight for his beliefs. He is quoted as stating "Jihad and the rifle alone. NO negotiations. NO conferences and NO dialogue" (Azzam, 2003, 13). This theme continues when the battle of the Lion's Den is assessed:

One of the most beneficial lessons learnt, is a lesson from the whole of Islamic history: that directly confronting the enemy on a military basis is the best way to put an end to any oppression (Azzam, 2003, 118).

*"The Lofty Mountain"* closes with what is described as "the latest Crusade against Islam and its people on 7 October 2001" (Azzam, 2003, 135) – the post 9/11 attack by American and Northern Alliance forces on the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the Afghan mountains. It is here al-Andalusi retreats with Taliban forces, and meets his death. The narrative ends, after a series of quotes from the Qur'an, with words of praise from Abdullah Azzam for Osama Bin Laden (Azzam, 2003, 151-3). This text,

and its distribution in the UK, serves to illustrate the desire of Azzam Publications to connect the Mujahideen struggle of the 1980s with subsequent jihadist campaigns, and explicitly with Al-Qaeda. The war on terror is located as merely the latest in a series of infractions against Muslims. The ready connection of verses from the Qur'an with Bin Laden's veneration of Azzam, profess to bestow legitimacy upon the then leader of Al-Qaeda. How such literature, and politico-religious declarations of this type, have impacted upon jihadist struggles, is demonstrated in chapters four and five.

Laura Mansfield's *"In His Own Words – A Translation of The Writings of Dr Ayman Al Zawahiri"* (2006) is an English language version of his *"Knights under the Prophet's Banner"*, with additional material comprising al Zawahiri's statements and communiqués from 2001-6. Al-Zawahiri aims the latter at two constituencies – intellectuals and Mujahideen. The religious warriors have understood the conspiracy against them "They developed an understanding based on shariah of the enemies of Islam, the renegades, and their collaborators" (Mansfield, 2006, 23). A medical doctor, al-Zawahiri was working for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt when he was asked to go to Pakistan to assist Afghan refugees fleeing the Soviets during the war against the Red Army. Al-Zawahiri writes:

I saw this as an opportunity to get to know one of the areas of jihad that might be a tributary and a base for jihad in Egypt and the Arab region, the heart of the Islamic world, where the basic battle of Islam was being fought (Mansfield, 2006, 28).

Al-Zawahiri considers the theological importance of Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb, as he stressed unification, and the dangers posed by internal enemies of Islam, tracing such factors as the origins of the Jihad movement in Egypt. This movement needs an incubator “where it can acquire practical experience in combat, politics and organisational matters” (Mansfield, 2006, 35). Significantly the religious nature of this movement is emphasised. To al-Zawahiri it is vital that struggle is conducted under the correct Islamic principles, as it is in Afghanistan, rather than leftist or nationalist slogans, or a hybrid of these approaches, as happens in Palestine. This struggle is mandatory: “resistance is a duty imposed by Shariah” (Mansfield, 2006, 128).

Violence is an integral part of the al-Zawahiri method. One statement is entitled “Killing Americans” with best practice outlined: “Suicide operations are the most successful in inflicting damage on the opponent and the least costly in terms of casualties among the fundamentalists” (Mansfield, 2006, 200). Whilst the aim should be to cause maximum damage to the enemy, this requires a base from which fighters may operate – the fundamentalist state. In a significant passage in strategic terms, and in particular with regards to the recent emergence of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, he declares:

The establishment of a Muslim state in the heart of the Islamic world is not an easy or close target. However it is the hope of the Muslim nation to restore its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory (Mansfield, 2006, 201-2).

To achieve this caliphate, a vanguard is required. The masses need “A leadership that they could trust, follow and understand” (Mansfield, 2006, 224). This is made even clearer in al-Zawahiri’s conclusions:

Liberating the Muslim nation, confronting the enemies of Islam, and launching Jihad against them require a Muslim authority, established on a Muslim land that raises the banner of Jihad and rallies the Muslims around it (Mansfield, 2006, 225).

Mansfield’s work concludes with al-Zawahiri’s communiqués post 9/11, when Al-Qaeda was placed under critical pressure by the loss of its established base in Afghanistan. These show the author re-establishing core principles, and responding to new developments. On 4 March 2006 al-Zawahiri reiterates the objectives he believes all Muslims who support the jihadists should follow. This call to action has four parts. Firstly to take action to inflict economic loss on the crusader – through bombing and boycott. Secondly – to force the crusader out of Islamic lands. Thirdly change corrupt regimes that have sold out to the crusader and finally *dawah* – convert non-Muslims to Islam. There is nothing in these documents to indicate al-Zawahiri - or Al-Qaeda under his leadership - are likely to depart significantly from these declared objectives. But do we observe British Jihadists following the tactics and strategic positions adopted by al-Zawahiri?

This key primary source serves as the most substantial statement of belief, to date, by the man who took over as leader of Al-Qaeda in 2011 following the killing of Bin Laden. It also reinforces the religious nature of al-Zawahiri’s world view. Struggles of particular significance for many Arabs – in particular the Palestinian question – are explicitly framed as religious, not national or regional problems. Similarly the focus on developing a caliphate, and its association with a return to lost Muslim glories, depicts the re-establishment of a by-gone Islamic age.

The American academic Bruce Lawrence brought together 24 of Osama Bin Laden's proclamations and interviews in *"Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden"* (2005). Whilst an important primary source, it should be noted these statements are not unexpurgated – some religious formulae has been omitted (Lawrence, 2005, ix) and it is tempting to speculate the extent to which such omissions influence the perceptions of readers and researchers studying this text. The statements commence in 1994, when Bin Laden was resident in Sudan, through his time in Taliban controlled Afghanistan, to the period immediately after 9/11 and finally 2003-5, when Al-Qaeda's focus switched primarily to Iraq. Lawrence's introduction situates Bin Laden as a polemicist, but with a very particular approach:

The word imperialism does not occur in any of the messages he has sent out. He defines the enemy differently. For him, jihad is aimed not at imperialism, but at "global unbelief." Again and again, his texts return to this fundamental dichotomy. The war is a religious war (Lawrence, 2005, xx).

Lawrence insists Al-Qaeda is not a successor to 1970s left terrorism, draped in religious garb. Instead Bin Laden operates within the structure of defensive jihad set out by the great Islamic scholar Ibn Taymiyyah in the fourteenth century. It is prophetic tradition Bin Laden invokes when discussing the Jews or Israel. Indeed it is this very religious base Lawrence considers limiting – Bin Laden has no substantial social programme, but instead a focus on martyrdom.

The story of Osama Bin Laden as a global actor begins in the United Kingdom. His first public statement, dated 29 December 1994, was published by comrades in the Advice and Reformation Committee (ARC), a group of Saudi dissidents in London, who had fled King Fahd's repression of the *sahwa* in the Kingdom. An open letter to

Saudi Arabia's most important religious authority, Chief Mufti Bin Baz, Bin Laden lays the blame for the country's problems at the Mufti's fatwas. These have allowed usury to spread, the Crusader-Jewish alliance to station troops in the Kingdom and worst of all, the Mufti accepted the 1993 Oslo accords between Israel and the PLO.

The continued presence of American troops in the land of the Prophet dominates Bin Laden's public pronouncements until 9/11. This includes his 1995 call for the abdication of King Fahd (again published by the ARC in London) and his 1996 "Declaration of Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries." This begins with the stark opening line "Expel the Polytheists from the Arabian peninsula" (Lawrence, 2005, 24). This occupation is referred to cataclysmically - as the greatest disaster to befall Muslims since the death of the Prophet. In response, Bin Laden seeks a religious awakening, followed by jihad. His November 1996 statement "The Saudi Regime", gives further insight into a method for prioritising issues. Faith appears to be placed above what may, in Western terms, be referred to as anti-imperialism:

It is crucial for us to be patient and to cooperate in righteousness and piety, and to raise awareness of the fact that the highest priority, after faith, is to repel the invading enemy, which corrupts religion and the world, as the scholars have declared (Lawrence, 2005, 42).

In 1998 Bin Laden joined with al-Zawahiri (then wearing the hat of the Egyptian Islamic group), Mir Hamzah from Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Ulema (JeU) and Fazlur Rahman, a member of Pakistan's legislative assembly, to sign a fatwa declaring jihad against the Jews and Crusaders. This was conducted in the name of the World

Islamic Front. The co-signatories proceeded systematically, using seven passages from the Qur'an to justify this jihad (Lawrence, 2005, 58).<sup>3</sup> Three stated issues provoked their ire – America has occupied Islam's holiest lands, it has pursued crippling sanctions against Iraq, and it serves the interests of the Jewish state.

By now Bin Laden was committing himself clearly to the Islamic state the Taliban were constructing. He describes Mullah Omar as the commander of the faithful and encourages Muslims to support his Emirate “in its capacity as the raiser of the banner of Islam in the Islamic world, the true Islam of jihad for the sake of God” (Lawrence, 2005, 85). In April 2001 Bin Laden lobbied the international conference of Deobandis in Peshawar, Pakistan in support of the Taliban, calling for spiritual, financial and verbal assistance – with jihad coming under the categorisation of the ‘spiritual’. To Bin Laden, the Islamic state was here.

Even if the emphasis of Bin Laden's pronouncements may switch from one country or cause to another, the religious framework in which he operates does not. Some six weeks after 9/11 Bin Laden was telling Al Jazeera “the issue is one of faith and doctrine, not of a ‘war on terror’ as Bush and Blair depict it” (Lawrence, 2005, 135). It is this immersion of Bin Laden in his belief which colours the statements collected by Lawrence, even though for ease of reading, much religious formulae was removed from the text. To properly consider the influence of Osama Bin Laden in Britain, and the response of academics and politicians to it, such primary source material is crucial. We cannot reasonably discuss categorisations such as the term ‘Al-Qaeda

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<sup>3</sup> These being Qur'an 2:193, 8:39, 4:75, 8:24, 9:38, 9:39 and 3:139 (Lawrence 2005, 61-2).

inspired terrorism' (HM Government, 2011, 1) without examining the inspirations of Al-Qaeda's founder.

### **1.3 British Islamism and Jihadism**

Until this year there had been no definitive study devoted solely to the history and involvement of British Islamists in jihad – hence in large part, the need for this thesis. Instead, with the exception of Raffaello Pantucci's *"We Love Death as you Love Life: Britain's Suburban Terrorists"* (2015), the past decade has produced a collection of jigsaw pieces, each devoted to a separate part of an ever-expanding puzzle. This has seen books centred on London's role in the global jihad, specific terrorist attacks such as 7/7 or the alleged ricin plot, plus the memoirs of those caught up in specific events in the war on terror – either as alleged participants, victims or as counter terrorism officers.

Lawrence Archer and Fiona Bawdon raise uncomfortable questions about how the media and politicians approach the judicial process in *"Ricin: The inside Story of the Terror Plot that Never was"* (2010). Archer was jury foreman in the trial of five Algerians in London allegedly trying to utilise the poison ricin to murder civilians. Although no poison was found, US Secretary of State Colin Powell used the case in his address to the UNSC on 5 February 2003, immediately prior to the invasion of Iraq. Powell's actions served to insert domestic counter terrorism into global politics in a manner which was stark and, with the benefit of hindsight, unfortunate. The danger of turning complex terrorist prosecutions into political sound bites is demonstrated by the reality that all the defendants were cleared – except for Kameel



Bourgass. Convicted of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance, Bourgass was already serving life in prison for murdering a Special Branch officer in Manchester.

Richard Watson's examination of Al-Muhajiroun "*The Rise of the British Jihad*" found three motivating elements to the group. A fierce opposition to British foreign policy, support for the creation of a global Islamic state under a Caliph and finally Islamic revolution in Great Britain (Watson, 2008, 35). Watson argues that in the 1990s such currents were not taken seriously by the domestic security service, which only became aware of a 'surge' in Islamist activity in 2003. This leads to his contention:

Omar Bakri Muhammad was preaching hate in Britain for more than twenty years, unencumbered by the state. A hard core of extremist radicals joined him, infecting generations of young British Muslims with their nihilistic interpretations of Islam (Watson, 2008, 38-39).

Watson presents an indication of the scale and depth of these issues by positioning them in some chronological context. What is perhaps frustrating is the strength of his monograph is also a weakness – by focusing on the historiography of Al-Muhajiroun he provides us with arguably the most detailed study to date of that organisation, but little on overlapping or competing elements within British Islamism. For example, how influential Al-Muhajiroun has been in university ISOCs is unclear from this analysis.

To formulate a more detailed conception of Jihadist and Islamist struggles in the United Kingdom, it is also necessary to consider the memoirs of those claiming to have been participants. In 2007 Ed Husain published "*The Islamist*". A teenage

activist in the Islamic Society at Tower Hamlets and Newham Colleges in London, Husain's autobiography charts his journey in, and then out of Islamism. It is a journey that has taken him a long way – from the east end of London to spells working in Syria and Saudi Arabia. Husain describes with some passion his rejection of what he now categorises as extremist values within key British mosques, and Muslim representative organisations.

Of particular interest are the descriptions of Islamic student activism, and how, with the benefit of hindsight, Husain sees this as increasing racial tensions in Newham, events which ultimately result in the murder of an African Christian student. 9/11 provoked mixed feelings in Husain, and he notes the contradictory and at times confused response to the attacks by British Muslims. This included conspiracy theories about Jews: "That type of double thinking, in denial and yet proud at the same time, was ubiquitous" (Husain, 2007, 206). Such attitudes lead Husain to take what is arguably a pessimistic view of domestic security "I fear the unleashing of a firestorm of violence by home-grown Wahhabi Jihadists, influenced by Islamist rhetoric, on the major cities of America and Britain" (Husain, 2007, 265).

Maajid Nawaz's *"Radical"* (2012), covers some similar ground to Husain. This is not coincidental - both were active in east London with Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT), although Nawaz progressed further in the organisation, both domestically and internationally. Growing up in a broadly white environment in Southend, Essex, Nawaz was alienated by the racism of both his peers and the authorities. Security and sanctity came first via immersion in Hip-Hop culture, then latterly from the development of a strong Islamic identity. Nawaz followed his brother Osman into HuT, but is keen to

stress this as a political process “Islamism is a political movement with religious consequences” (Nawaz, 2012, 86). HuT developed as a prominent force in the early 1990s, and Nawaz relates how Newham College’s Islamic Society, and the broader Students Union, came under their control: “The 1990s in London was the decade of Islamism” (Nawaz, 2012, 109). Similarly to Husain, Nawaz came to reject Islamism as an entity, but not Islam, his de-radicalisation beginning after being adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience whilst imprisoned in General Mubarak’s Egypt. Nawaz argues Jihadism is a merger between literalist religious tendencies and Islamism – a process which took some time to fully gestate.

Changes in identity played a role in facilitating this – Nawaz suggests that as racial issues became less prominent in the United Kingdom, and new waves of immigration occurred of North Africans, Somalis and Arabs into British ghettos, many increasingly had one thing in common – Islam. A previous British Asian identity was subsumed by a narrower Muslim identity. Although clearly alarmed at some of the changes he has seen in community life, referring even to self-segregation, interestingly Nawaz avoids making any mention of increased religiosity as a contributing factor “What had caused this shift was a mixture of discrimination and suspicion at home, and a growing awareness of events overseas” (Nawaz, 2012, 72).

Farhaan Wali has made a notable contribution to scholarship on Islamic Britain with his analysis of HuT *“Radicalism Unveiled”* (2013). Particular criticisms can be made of both Nawaaz and Husain – as former radicals, and in the case of Nawaaz a former leader in HuT, they bring very particular baggage with them in writing about

former comrades and campaigns. As they have chosen to reject their previous organisation and beliefs, the last thing they can be considered is neutral or impartial commentators. Additionally, both men have careers which at least in part centre on their 'former' status – Husain is the Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Nawaaz is a prominent writer and commentator, prospective parliamentary candidate for the Liberal Democrats and runs anti-extremist think tanks Khudi in Pakistan and the Quilliam Foundation in Britain. In 2011 he was consulted on the text of David Cameron's key speech on security policy to the Munich Security Conference.

Such criticisms cannot be made of Wali's research. He has taken a different methodological approach, interviewing existing members of HuT, leaders such as Farid Kassim and dissecting their literature and activism. Much of this occurs on University campuses, indeed HuT appears to have struggled to gain support in working class areas and in the north of England. Wali provides a valuable assessment of former HuT member Omar Bakri Muhammad, (best known for his subsequent activism in Al-Muhajiroun) which suggests a figure far more strategic than the comic image of tabloid renown. Subsequent chapters will focus on Bakri Muhammad and the group he founded, Al-Muhajiroun, in substantive detail.

Moazzam Begg is one of 14 Britons to have been detained by the US military at Guantanamo Bay. His *"Enemy Combatant"* (2006) charts his arrest in Pakistan in 2001 and process through American jurisdiction, but also his earlier time in Afghanistan. Prominent in British Islamist circles since the early 1990s, Begg visited jihadi training camps in Afghanistan in 1993, Mujahideen camps in Bosnia in 1993,

and later attempted to gain entry to Chechnya. He denies involvement in terrorism, but found many elements to admire in the Taliban:

When I went to Afghanistan, I believed the Taliban had made some modest progress – in social justice and in up-holding pure, old-style Islamic values forgotten in many Islamic countries. After September 11 that life was destroyed' (Begg, 2006, 381).

A Salafi, Begg began working for a support group for Islamist prisoners upon his release, but condemns the July 2005 bombings, seeing 7/7 as “a serious setback for any positive Islamic movement” (Begg, 2006, 381). Begg’s combination of support for those establishing sharia in Muslim majority countries, alongside a rejection of deadly terrorist violence against civilians in Britain, is one that has gained considerable influence within British Islamism. It has become characteristic of the prisoner support organisation Cage with which he is a Director.

Omar Nasiri’s *“Inside the Global Jihad”* (2006) tells of his work as an informant inside jihadist organisations for a series of European intelligence agencies. Some sixty pages are devoted to ‘Londonistan’, where Nasiri was sent by the French Direction Generale de la Securite Exterieur (DGSE). Finsbury Park mosque was initially divided, not by extremists versus moderates, but between supporters of Abu Hamza, and Pakistanis who wanted a fellow countryman to lead Friday prayers. In time it became controlled by followers of Hamza, the older Pakistanis forced out:

By now it was comprised almost exclusively of young people and angry people. The old guard was completely gone. And there were many new people coming in (Nasiri, 2006, 289).

A picture of Finsbury Park mosque at the centre of domestic and international jihadism is continued by Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory in *"The Suicide Factory: Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque"* (2006). A troubling portrait emerges of the UK authorities either being manipulated by a key international figure or simply not digesting Hamza meant what he said in his Friday *khutbah*'s. Here again whilst important information on British Jihadism emerges, McGrory and O'Neill's focus is not on the overall categorisation, but a distinct location and single religious institution within it.

One of those who attended Finsbury Park mosque during this period was to be arrested in the United States in August 2001. A Frenchman of Moroccan extraction, Zacarias Moussaoui was eventually convicted in 2006 of six charges of conspiracy related to the 9/11 attacks. Abd Samad Moussaoui traces his brother's life in *"Zacarias Moussaoui: The Making of a Terrorist"* (2003). Although the brothers shared a migrant background in a France divided along lines of race and class, Zacarias' move to London appears to have been crucial in his eventual development "I think the first mosque Zacarias went into was in Great Britain" (Moussaoui, 2003, 45). In time his association with followers of the Salafi strain of Islam in England began to trouble his family, although Abd Samad is keen to point out his brother knew comparatively little about religion.

Concern about Zacarias came to be expressed repeatedly – by relatives in France, Morocco and at Narbonne mosque. By 2000, French police approached Abd Samad suggesting that his brother may be in Chechnya. Few such concerns appear to have

arisen in Britain about Moussaoui's behaviour, leading to a core question raised by the book "Why have the British authorities been so lax?" (Moussaoui, 2003, 144).

This very personal account raises questions concerning the extent to which British authorities took seriously Islamist currents prior to 9/11, and places centre stage the role of London as a city allegedly shaping and facilitating the expansion of particular strands of Jihadism. These are questions which appear repeatedly in the discourse surrounding British Jihadism, and are addressed in subsequent chapters.

It is perhaps because of the fractured nature of the field that Kenan Malik's *"From Fatwa to Jihad: The Rushdie Affair and Its Legacy"* (2009) appears impressive both in its scope and discernment. Malik takes the robust position multi-culturalism as it has been developed in the UK fosters tribalism, cedes power to religious leaders in our communities and whilst it has not itself created militant Islam, has instead developed the space in which it operates. Malik looks in particular detail at the 7/7 bombers and their backgrounds. Mohammed Sidique Khan had been in a Leeds street gang known as the Mullah Crew, and the three Yorkshire born bombers (Khan, Tanweer and Hussain) identified themselves as Muslim, but were in conflict with older generations within their community. Having rejected their parent's lifestyles, there is not however a rejection of Islam per se or a recognition of secular values – for these young men a different form of Islam is required. Malik's work is important to this thesis because of its scope – he himself comes from an era of British Asian political activism which was frequently left leaning and where secular currents predominated. In charting the importance of the Rushdie affair and a top

down, state sponsored multi-culturalism, Malik is reflecting how his own political landscape has been altered. It is on that landscape Britain's jihadists came to stand.

Significant literature has emerged from serving and former Metropolitan Police officers involved in domestic counter terrorism. Andy Hayman was Assistant Commissioner – Special Operations, heading Counter Terrorism Command. *“The Terrorist Hunters: The Ultimate inside Story of Britain’s Fight against Terrorism”* (2009) brings Hayman together with the BBC’s former Home Correspondent Margaret Gilmore. Theirs is a book with a troubled setting. The opposition to the merger between Special Branch and the Anti-Terrorism Branch, Hayman’s disputes with Commissioner Sir Ian Blair and the wearying political challenges of his role are all recounted. Hayman was in post during the 7/7 and 21/7 attacks, as well as the 2007 Haymarket bombing. He unsuccessfully lobbied MPs for the right to detain terrorist suspects for 90 days without charge, and also had to explain critical police blunders such as the Jean Charles De Menezes shooting and that of an innocent Muslim man in a bungled counter-terrorism raid in Forest Gate in 2006.

There is however more to Hayman’s narrative than exculpation. The trapeze act required to work with Muslim community representatives in countering terrorism, whilst investigating, arresting and prosecuting elements within those communities is evident. By 10.45 on the day of 7/7, Hayman was beginning the organisation of work to reassure the Muslim community “We didn’t yet know for sure that this was an attack from terrorists hiding within the Muslim community – but it was a strong possibility” (Hayman and Gilmore, 2009, 32). Whilst convinced as to the procedural necessity of such an approach, Hayman is withering about the results gained from



Muslim-police outreach. He refers to the level of intelligence received from Muslim communities as 'dismal' and combatively states "If we are spending millions of pounds investing in Muslim communities we need to get more for our return than pleasant coffee mornings in local halls" (Hayman and Gilmore, 2009, 329).

A more intellectual analysis comes from career Special Branch officer Robert Lambert. Lambert founded and led the Metropolitan Police Muslim Contact Unit (MCU), before retiring to a career in academia. His article "*Salafi and Islamist Londoners: Stigmatised Minority Faith Communities Countering Al-Qaeda*" (2008) serves as a precursor to some of the arguments in "*Countering Al-Qaeda in London: Police and Muslims in Partnership*" (2011).

Lambert argues some Sufi Muslims in Britain have looked to direct islamophobia towards rival Muslims such as Wahhabis (Lambert, 2008, 211) and that Islamist and Salafi Londoners are far more likely to be equated with terrorism than those following other strands of Islam. Here, Lambert adopts the language, not of counter terrorism but of youth work. He sees young people in these communities as "at risk" from Al-Qaeda propaganda. Lambert concludes: "Salafism and Islamism, as causal or predictive factors, are no more significant to the profile of an Al-Qaeda terrorist than Catholicism was to the profile of a Provisional IRA member" (Lambert, 2008, 38).

Such an approach invites intellectual challenges. One of the IRA's most revered icons is Wolfe Tone – an Irish Protestant. In its rhetoric from 1798 to date, Irish republicanism seeks to include Protestant, Catholic and dissenter (Adams, 2011). Is such a cross community approach imaginable from Al-Qaeda, or the Islamic State? Perhaps anticipating potential criticism, Lambert states of British recruits:

It is axiomatic that by the time they become Al-Qaeda suicide bombers (or other active terrorists) UK Muslim recruits have bought into an ideology that distorts strands of Salafi and Islamist thinking” (Lambert, 2008, 39).

The frailty of Lambert’s approach, and the rapid manner in which categorising this problem as being one related to Al-Qaeda rather than much broader trends such as Salafi-Jihadism, are discussed in chapters four and five.

#### **1.4 Academic Studies of Terrorism**

Terrorism Studies is a comparatively new, although fast expanding academic discipline. Its articles, books and journals compete on the contested territory of a host of divergent actors. Domestic and international government departments, religious representative organisations, think tanks, police counter terrorism units, the security services, political parties plus of course jihadist actors themselves all have core messages they wish to disseminate, and indeed articulations they do not wish to see propagated.

Journalist Jason Burke, in his analysis *“Al-Qaeda”* (2007), establishes potential dangers for academics and journalists entering this arena, when he starkly comments “Intelligence services lie, cheat and deceive. Propaganda is one of their primary functions” (Burke, 2007, 16). He illustrates this with reference to claims made in a British government dossier on the 9/11 attacks, published on 4 October 2001. Burke believes this contains two fabrications and a deliberate omission. First are false claims Bin Laden was involved in drug production. Second that Al-Qaeda was responsible for the attack on American helicopters in Mogadishu in 1993,

immortalised in the film *Black Hawk Down*. The omission centres on the failure to mention Bin Laden's two year residency on the territory of a British ally – Saudi Arabia – whilst mentioning his visits to other countries in the same time period. Burke concludes:

Oddly a convention seems to have developed whereby something from a 'security source', even if released by politicians, suddenly acquires a degree of reliability. Actually such material should be treated with extreme circumspection, not exempted from normal journalistic practices (Burke, 2007, 18).

Governments are not neutral umpires, officiating in the field of terrorism and political violence. Firstly they are frequently the targets of such aggression. Those at risk of physical attack can hardly be expected to be objective or neutral about others potentially instigating violence against them. Secondly governments are the ultimate arbiters of whether those involved in terrorism should be negotiated with. There will be times when governments wish to articulate the desirability of taking such a step – and times when evidence is circulated to show either its impossibility or undesirability.

Thirdly, history has shown government, its departments or agents, acting with or without sanction from the legislature, have been participants in politically motivated violence and terrorism themselves – something they will be loathe to admit. Only with the publication in 2003 of the Stevens Enquiry did we get a clear admission from within the British government on collusion between elements of the state and Loyalist terrorists in Northern Ireland (Stevens, 2003). Many of the events Sir John Stevens examined had occurred in the 1980s, a ten year period when Paul Wilkinson arguably did most to develop the concept of terrorism studies as an

academic discipline, and was consulted by government on counter-terrorism (Sunday Times Scotland, 1990). A substantive academic critique of collusion failed to emerge in this environment.

Such scenarios continue in the fight by Western governments against Islamist terrorism. Consider Marc Sageman, recognised as an authority on Al-Qaeda, and author of substantial publications such as *“Leaderless Jihad”* (2008) and *“Understanding Terror Networks”* (2004). Sageman holds positions at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Maryland, and at think tanks the Centre for Strategic and International Studies and Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI). He also gave expert evidence to the third public hearing of the 9/11 Commission (Kean and Hamilton, 2004, 626).

The cynic may contend an additional element other than academic research factors Sageman’s knowledge – he served as a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer in Islamabad from 1987-89, directing American programmes in support of the Mujahideen. Given the importance of this period in the establishment of what was to become Al-Qaeda, Sageman can hardly be viewed as a neutral or dispassionate witness. Fellow academics can be remarkably reticent about Sageman’s background – for example Peter Neumann refers to him as “the American psychologist” (Neumann, 2008, 7) a point that is not inaccurate, but is distinctly limited in its approach. This is especially so when other researchers contend events such as 9/11 are evidence of ‘blowback’ from earlier, unwise American policies, such as arming and supporting the Afghan Mujahideen. Blowback has been defined as

An expression that refers to the unintended consequences of providing support to violent dissident groups in other states. These groups, once they are successful, may turn on their former benefactors and create problems for them (Lutz and Lutz, 2008, 293).

Examples such as those of Wilkinson and Sageman illustrate the difficulty in defining objectivity and neutrality with regards to prominent academics in terrorism studies. Despite these problems, Sageman's entry on the Foreign Policy Research Institute website describes him as "an independent researcher on terrorism" (FPRI website, n.d), a categorisation which in terms of historical analysis of Al-Qaeda, is contentious.

This does not mean orthodox terrorism studies has failed to provide significant insights into the theory, practice and mind-set of terrorist actors. Bruce Hoffman's *"Inside Terrorism"* (2005), attempts to categorise Al-Qaeda's structure into four elements. This typology begins with its pre-9/11 core, plus individuals who have risen through the ranks, replacing those lost in struggle. Second come Al-Qaeda associates and affiliates, trained or supported by the core group. Hoffman places the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and a succession of Kashmiri based organisations here. Thirdly he presents Al-Qaeda 'locals' – those perhaps with distant connections to the organisation, but previous involvement in terrorism. Fourthly, and most significant perhaps for those attempting to analyse domestic terrorist actors, are home grown radicals. These may have no direct connection to Al-Qaeda, but adopt its agenda. They are sometimes motivated by considerable enmity to the nations in which they live or have settled. Writing before the July 2005 explosions in London, Hoffman cites the 2004 Madrid bombers as support for his thesis. Amongst other issues, later chapters will discuss the extent to which Britons have been found in Al-

Qaeda's core leadership, have worked as affiliates, or could be considered as 'Al-Qaeda locals.' Attention is also given to the extent to which the focus on Al-Qaeda as a distinct entity has served to distract from a much broader entity – British Jihadism.

Gus Martin writes of the 'idiosyncratic quality' of religious terrorism, in *"Understanding Terrorism"* (2006). He argues religion may be a primary or a secondary motive in terrorist behaviour, and in the latter case may be less significant than cultural issues. Martin warns in particular about the dangers of a simplistic approach towards Islam and violence, and stresses the need to discern between the lesser and greater jihad. He also attempts to place contemporary jihads in a comparatively modern context:

The precipitating causes for the modern resurgence of the armed and radical jihadi movement are twofold: the revolutionary ideals and ideology of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the practical application of jihad against the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan (Martin, 2006, 188).

Whether domestic strands of Jihad are thusly inspired is further investigated below.

In *"Terrorism versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response"* (2006) Paul Wilkinson lists a total of 18 Al-Qaeda affiliates and support groups. These are all in Muslim majority nations, except for The Secret Organisation of Al-Qaeda in Europe, about which little has been heard in subsequent years. Wilkinson is at pains to stress the differences between Al-Qaeda and earlier strains of terrorism, such as the IRA, and the focus of his manuscript is primarily historical. Emerging threats, such as those

exemplified by Islamist attacks in Holland, Spain and England from 2004-6 receive only passing coverage. Wilkinson's focus is more on how the state should respond to terrorism, than an examination of just who the perceived terrorist actors are.

No consideration of terrorism, especially that considered to be religious in origin, is complete without considering David Rapoport. *"Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions"* (1984) was the first comparative study of religious terrorism. Rapoport argues the primary audience for such violence is the deity, although he also contends violence in Islam is aimed at social transformation in this world. Can we look at – for example – the actions of British Jihadists and see the deity addressed in particular acts?

A difficulty with trying to apply this particular text to contemporary Jihadist violence is that when considering Islam, Rapoport focused on the Assassins – a group from the Ismaili tradition within Shi'ism (Burman, 1987). Yet the organisations with which Britons have often been associated – Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Islamic State or Jaish-e-Mohammed, to take just four examples from those listed in figure 5.1 – are all Sunni.

This does not necessarily prevent Rapoport providing an insight into Jihadist methodology. He argues the Assassins based their strategic approach on the life of Muhammad, and this was demonstrated in their focus on withdrawing to remote locations – migration. One does not have to think too deeply to recall Bin Laden's retreats to Sudan or Afghanistan, or his call to Muslims to migrate from Saudi Arabia. Similarly the most controversial of the United Kingdom's Islamist groups has been Al-Muhajiroun, which translates as the emigrants.....

## 1.5 Critical Studies on Terrorism

A second trend within terrorism studies is that characterised by Critical Terrorism Studies, centred in the UK around the journal *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. Their approach may perhaps be summed up by the analysis of Richard Jackson, when considering the failure of terrorism studies as a discipline to engage sufficiently with state terrorism. In the spirit of Robert Cox he surmises “knowledge and its production is never a purely neutral exercise but always works for someone and something” (Jackson, 2008, 378). This process has consequences – terrorism studies as a subject is distorted, dominant power structures reified and elite and state projects enabled. In practice, terrorism studies serve the status quo.

Jackson cites prominent academics – such as Walter Laqueur or Paul Wilkinson – who have at times recognised the scale and significance of state terrorism – but declined to give it the full weight of their research capacity. He contends “a discourse analysis of the field reveals that the most notable aspect of the state terrorism discourse is its near complete absence” (Jackson, 2008, 382). This is all the more noteworthy when Jackson is able to list an exhaustive series of terrorist actions, campaigns, groups and repressive regimes supported by Western liberal democracies – from the 1985 French bombing of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior* to support for Pakistani governments who have sponsored a succession of terrorist organisations in Kashmir.

Ostensibly there is much to admire in the critical studies approach. As Jackson states when critiquing the failings of terrorism studies: “The exposure of this



dominant narrative also opens up critical space for the articulation of alternative and potentially emancipatory forms of knowledge and practice” (Jackson, 2008, 387).

There are also grounds for caution. Some in the field of terrorism studies question the perceived originality of the critical approach – in drawing on the wider body of critical thought in the discipline of international relations, it is not as new as it appears to be (Michel and Richards, 2009). They also question suggestions from within the critical paradigm that terrorism is linked to human insecurity and/or poverty – propositions which Michel and Richards contend lack empirical validation. A focus on state terrorism, and/or critiques of counter terrorist legislation may tell us much about how governments respond to violence, and strategic errors in their approach. The extent to which critical terrorism studies can develop an informed understanding of terrorist actors themselves is less clear. Indeed it may be argued the terrorist actor is no longer the centre of the researchers focus.

## **1.6 Conclusions**

Existing literature gives a comparatively thorough grounding in Al-Qaeda’s background, leaders, beliefs, objectives and practice. The writing of Abdullah Azzam, plus translations of al-Zawahiri and Bin Laden give significant insight into the theological and ambitions of three core figures within Islamism. Here faith serves as a guide to strategy. When Abdullah Azzam declares “Jihad and the rifle alone” it is a position rooted in his understanding of Islamic history (Azzam, 2003, 13, 18). Faith also serves however as the end goal for Ayman al-Zawahiri – a fundamentalist state leading to a caliphate (Mansfield, 2006, 201-2).

Al-Zawahiri is shown to be a more flexible theoretician than Azzam, establishing a four pronged strategy by which those who support the fundamentalists should act (Mansfield, 2006, 313-15) these combine action against the crusader with a notable religious imperative – dawah to convert non-Muslims. In chapter four we will see how a similar approach has been adopted by one high profile British organisation – Al-Muhajiroun.

Whilst some religious formulae has been removed from Osama Bin Laden's writings, what emerges is a thinker with a clear conceptualisation of his role within a religious paradigm. And whilst Bin Laden is most associated with Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia, it is from London that his communiques first emerge.

If primary sources present a somewhat unitary picture, literature on Jihadist violence in Britain is more fragmented, with a tendency to focus on particular incidents, groups or controversies. What emerges is inchoate – a study of Al-Muhajiroun, Finsbury Park mosque or HuT, the sometimes self-exculpatory memoirs of activists or those who have now adopted the mantle of former activists. This research takes a more rounded, detailed approach, adopting to focus on perceived terrorist actors, their actions and objectives in terms of the type of society they are seeking to build. The literature of terrorism studies – both orthodox and critical, has limitations, but both schools also bring particular theoretical strengths. Orthodox researchers such as Paul Wilkinson have taken terrorism, and terrorists seriously. Bruce Hoffman presents a possible framework by which religious terrorists in differing societies may be considered, and Rapoport's understanding of a religious terrorism which seeks to address the deity serves as a reminder religious actors operate to an environment

which is much broader than agitation around socio-economic issues of the day. When we turn to the motivations of 7/7 suicide bomber Mohammed Sidique Khan that rejection of material factors is explicit. Critical terrorism studies however has questioned the balance of debates about terrorism, and seeks to remind us of the disparities – particularly in military and economic terms between the West, and other regions of the world. Richard Jackson informs the reader that the history of counter-terrorism polity is one of contradiction and at times violence, even when accompanied by rhetorical commitments to peace and democracy.

This research seeks to steer a ‘middle way’ between prevailing orthodoxies. Taking jihadist actors seriously, both in terms of their ideas and intentions, as orthodox researchers have for some years. But it is not willing to reject the potential inherent within critical terrorism studies, not least because of the inherent dangers in accepting government strategy in counter terrorism strategies, as displayed so clearly by the era of Northern Ireland related terrorism. In adopting this ‘middle way’ the potential emerges for an innovative and detailed examination of British Jihadism, but also for a rejuvenation and renewal of critical terrorism studies.

The following chapter prepares the groundwork for a detailed study of British Jihadism. Before we may consider what this thesis considers to be British Jihadism, the broader genealogy of jihadism is addressed, with consideration given to primary sources four key thinkers with the Islamist canon – Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb, Maulana Mawdudi and Abdullah Azzam. The consequences of their ideals are discussed in terms of the increasing predominance of Islamist actors in particular

struggles, and the contestation fought over concepts of jihad. In the second half of the chapter focus moves more towards domestic issues, and the difficulties sections of British Islam have had in first acknowledging and secondly responding to emerging jihadist currents.

## Chapter 2 – Contested Territory: Roots, Articulations and Denial

### 2.1 Introduction

Writers positioning themselves within Islamic traditions have offered an array of explanations as to what Jihad is, how central it is to Muslim experience, when and where it may be justified (Haleem, 2002, Noorani, 2002). A multiplicity of approaches has characterised debate in the modern era (Peters, 1995, 372) and the range of views expressed serve to illustrate the scale to which the conceptualisation of Jihad is not merely a religious or political actuality, but an arena of struggle in its own right.

This chapter examines the shifting nature of definitions of Jihad, to seek answers for their varying nature and application, and locates contemporary adherence to jihadist struggle in the agitation of some of the key figures in the 20<sup>th</sup> century's Islamic revival. This revival is not limited to Muslim majority nations, indeed a core characteristic of Islamic organisations in the West has become that they seek to address politico-religious issues facing traditionally non-Muslim societies. The work of authoritative thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb and Maulana Mawdudi is critically examined, as is the extent to which nationalist or secular articulations of struggle have been increasingly displaced by the religious. Consequentially the objectives of particular struggles are also seen to shift.

By providing a genealogical analysis of jihad, this thesis moves to provide pertinent background to the emergence of politico-religious violence from a small number of British Sunni Muslims. Consideration is given to early domestic interpretations of jihad from within the radical milieu which emerged during the protests against *The Satanic Verses*, and to the articulations of American Muslim Yusuf al-Alwaki, an activist widely respected within British Islamism who went on to die as a member of

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Here theological justifications are presented which demonstrate not just the permissibility of jihad, but its necessity as a religious duty.

A core component of this thesis seeks to address the extent to which those British Muslims involved in violence and terrorist attacks may be referred to as religious or political actors. When this debate has flared in broader society, it has at times been intense. Over the past fifteen to twenty years Muslim representative organisations, including the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB, 1998, 1999 and 2000) and a series of protagonists have contested this space, and with it the right to declare expertise in contemporary terrorism. The defensive response to the emergence of jihadist actors from within British Islam has served to obscure the religious impulse of this phenomenon, a matter in need of redress.

## **2.1 The Genealogy of Jihadism**

Jihad is not one of the five pillars of Islam. Professing Islam, prayer, fasting, charitable giving (or spending for the sake of God) and pilgrimage are (Turner, 2006, 100-131). Yet to Bin Laden jihad was the peak of Islam (Lawrence, 2005, 49) and few of his pronouncements fail to mention the term, usually expressed as “jihad for the sake of God”, “jihad for God” or “jihad in the way of God” (Lawrence, 2005, 18, 73, 85, 97, 101, 166). In Bin Laden’s world view, jihad is all powerful. In 2004 he declared:

Under the pretext of fighting terrorism, the West today is doing its utmost to tarnish jihad and kill anyone seeking jihad. The West is supported in this endeavour by hypocrites. This is

because they all know that jihad is the effective power to foil all their conspiracies (Lawrence, 2005, 218).

To Bin Laden jihad has an end product. It is not merely fighting oppression, but has a specific intention. On Palestine for example, he states “Jihad must go on until an Islamic government is formed that rules according to the law of God” (Lawrence, 2005, 209), whilst Bin Laden’s 1998 declaration of war announced the World Islamic Front’s “jihad against Jews and Crusaders” (Lawrence, 2005, 58).

Osama Bin Laden did not develop these positions alone, or in comparative isolation. Instead he was standing on an intellectual and theological grounding which can be traced over decades of modern Islamic thought. In the succession of explanatory texts concerning Islam and violence associated with Islam, prominent references to works from the same authors – Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), Maulana Mawdudi (1903-1979) and Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989) occur repeatedly, with the first three being particularly associated with concepts of Islamic revival in the twentieth century.

Despite differing backgrounds of the above thinkers faced a core issue: if the Islamic path is the correct one, ordained by God, how to explain the lowly status of many Muslim majority countries in the twentieth century? And secondly how to move towards the type of society they envisioned? These methodological debates continue to permeate Islamist literature. Zafar Bangash, Director of the Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought, demonstrates an ongoing sense of frustration:

While constituting one fourth of the world’s population, occupying 20 percent of the earth’s landmass, producing 20 percent of its mineral and forty percent of its energy resources, the

Muslim world should be a leading if not the leading power in the world, yet at the global level it is quite insignificant, whether assessed on the material or moral scales (Bangash, 2009, 27)

Hasan al-Banna and six friends formed the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, seeking to promote an Islamic reformation and the re-establishment of Islamic order. There are seven key steps to al-Banna's revivalism – reform oneself, reform one's family, reform society, free society politically, work for the establishment of an Islamic state, re-establish the ummah and revive the caliphate, then lead and guide the world in the path of Allah (al-Banna, 2002, 46). A somewhat martial theme emerges when al-Banna talks of the Muslim Brotherhood as soldiers obeying orders and summarises the movement's principles: "Allah is our goal, the Messenger is our example, the Qur'an is our constitution, Jihad is our way and Martyrdom in the path of Allah is our aspiration" (al-Banna, 2002, 56).

Muslim Brotherhood members were required to take an oath on joining the organisation, the fourth of the pillars being jihad. An interesting dichotomy emerges in the 2002 biography of al-Banna's life, where he is quoted as stating "Always intend to go for jihad and desire martyrdom. Prepare for it as much as you can" (al-Banna, 2002, 54). Somewhat defensively a footnote states "The meaning of jihad is to strive and put things in order and establish justice" (al-Banna, 2002, 79). This may be the case, but does this definition fully explain al-Banna's reference to martyrdom?

If al-Banna was the Muslim Brotherhood's founder, it is Sayyid Qutb who was to serve as its most important ideologue, and a central figure in the twentieth century's Islamist movement (Fatah, 2011, 27). If by 2002 al-Banna's biographers were



positioning themselves cautiously about what jihad is and what its consequences may be, Qutb spoke in much more direct terms. The analysis in his most famous work, "*Milestones*" (1964), commences with a fixed division of the world into two distinct halves – Islam or *jahiliyyah* (roughly ignorance). Not only is the non-Muslim world steeped in jahiliyyah, but so is each country which claims to be Islamic. This reality necessitates a return to the Qur'an. Firstly to consider man's relationship with the universe, but secondly: "From it we must also derive our concepts of life, our principles of government, politics, economics and all other aspects of life" (Qutb, 2007, 21). There is no flexibility in the role of sharia in governing day to day human relations:

The basis of the message is that one should accept the shariah without any question and reject all other laws in any shape or form. This is Islam. There is no other meaning of Islam. (Qutb, 2007, 36).

Qutb conceived *Milestones* as written for the vanguard who would revive Islam and he devotes the entirety of chapter four to the subject of Jihad. His conceptualisation has five core characteristics: It is without geographical restriction, it is far from being a mere defensive concept, it is obligatory, it is centred on freedom and it is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The significance of this for western adherents to Qutb's analysis is self-evident – if the concept of jihad is without geographical restriction, it is as relevant to life in Coventry or Colchester, as Cairo. Qutb offers his own definition of jihad as striving – namely any form of activity where Muslims strive for the cause of God and Islam. There are no restrictions upon the realm of this faith "It addresses itself to the whole of mankind, and its sphere of work is the whole earth" (Qutb, 2007, 59-60).

Nationalism or loyalty to a particular sovereign state is presented as a troubling, modern development, alien to an Islamic consciousness. To Qutb, it is not the soil which matters, but the belief upon it. Nor is jihad a merely defensive concept. Here it is necessary to observe that Qutb was keen to declare jihad has no relationship to modern warfare, either in cause or conduct – the Western lexicon of wars of national defence, national liberation, insurgency or counter insurgency do not appear in this narrative. Instead it is 'jihad bis saif' - striving through fighting, which clears the way for striving through preaching.

That defensive meanings have been attached to jihad is something which appears to particularly frustrate Qutb. He blames this characterisation on the wiles of orientalist, a position he adopts repeatedly in the course of this chapter (for example on pages 62, 69 and 76) before concluding: "They are ignorant of the nature of Islam and its function, and that it has the right to take the initiative for human freedom" (Qutb, 2007, 76). This freedom seeks to wipe out tyranny and rejects every authority on earth except one – God. The need for jihad remains, whether defensive conditions exist or not.

Substantially, Qutb designates jihad as obligatory. Islam must employ it, irrespective of conditions of peace or conflict with neighbours, with the aim of an outcome where "the obedience of all people be for God alone" (Qutb, 2007, 63). Only then can man serve God, free from servitude. This concept of freedom differs radically from Western approaches to the term, which has come to characterise freedom as being centred on principles such as democracy, constitutional rights, the rule of law, free speech, property rights and some degree of economic independence. To Qutb it is in

serving God that man is free, and it is the duty of Islam to annihilate systems which oppose the freeing of man. Finally, Qutb does not believe in jihad for the sake of jihad. His jihad has purpose – it is a means to establishing divine authority. In words which were to be subsequently echoed by Yusuf al-Zawahiri (Mansfield, 2006, 225) this creates a headquarters for the movement of Islam, a beachhead “which is then to be carried throughout the earth to the whole of mankind, as the object of this religion is all humanity and its sphere of action is the whole earth” (Qutb, 2007, 72).

If these are the motivations or reasoning behind jihad through fighting, when may it be declared? Based on his reading of al-Taubah in the Qur’an (9: 29-32), Qutb considered jihad permissible to establish God’s authority on earth, to arrange human affairs to the guidance of God, to abolish satanic forces and systems of life and to end the lordship of one man over others.

Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture as believe not in Allah nor the Last day, and forbid not that which Allah has forbidden by His messenger, and follow not the Religion of Truth, until they pay the tribute readily, being brought low (Qur’an 9:29).

The broad nature of these principles suggest a Jihad that is almost endless – the lordship of one man over others which Qutb raises could presumably extend to any political system with a President or Prime Minister, or indeed to most economic systems. Similarly conflict waged against any who do not believe in Allah or the last day infers a similar longevity to conflict with secular political traditions.

Qutb’s jihad also begs a significant question. If it is striving to secure freedom to serve God, what happens to those who do not wish to serve God, or alternatively wish to serve a different God (or Gods) entirely? Qutb is specific communities cannot

be considered Islamic if they are based on other sources. Although he does not use the term, he appears to be talking about contemporary liberal democracies when he states; “In this society, people are permitted to go to mosques, churches and synagogues; yet it does not tolerate people’s demanding that the shariah of God be applied in their daily affairs” (Qutb, 2007, 93).

If this implies a degree of conflict is inevitable between Islam and jahiliyyah, Qutb goes further in dividing the world into two future camps. Dar-ul-Islam is the home of Islam, where the Islamic state is established, and sharia the authority. The rest of the world is Dar-ul-Harb – the home of hostility. Only two relationships can exist between these entities – war, or peace via contractual agreement (Qutb, 2007, 118). Furthermore a Muslim has no country except for where sharia is established, and no nationality save for his belief. This creates an ominous situation as far as Dar-ul-Harb is concerned:

A Muslim will remain prepared to fight against it, whether it be his birthplace or a place where his relatives reside or where his property or any other material interests are located (Qutb, 2007, 124).

This is consistent with the life of the Prophet; Muhammad fought against Mecca, although he had been born in the city, had relatives and property there: “The soil of Mecca did not become Dar-ul-Islam for him and his followers until it surrendered to Islam and the shariah became operative in it” (Qutb, 2007, 124).

The significance of these words, in terms of providing a potential theological basis and justification for British Jihadism is both striking and troubling. Qutb’s analysis of Islam presents a considerable challenge for any Western democracies housing a

significant number of adherents to Qutb's arguments. Does a state of hostility exist between Muslims living in non-Muslim societies and their neighbours, and does this endure until those in the Dar-ul-Harb have surrendered to Islam? This appears Qutb's position as he summarises: "Nationalism here is belief, homeland here is Dar-ul-Islam, the ruler here is God, and the constitution here is the Qur'an" (Qutb, 2007, 126).

One of those most repeatedly cited by Osama Bin Laden as an authority on jihad, Ibn Taymiyyah, was writing in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Modern Sunni fundamentalists have revived the teachings of Taymiyyah (Enayat, 2005, 35), undoubtedly noting; "Ibn Taymiyyah's rigorous works on comparative religion were not always pleasing to the Shia or the Christians" (Sardar and Malik, 2009, 112). His opposition to innovations in Islam has made him an important reference point for a new generation of Salafists, with his writings enjoying prevalence in Islamic bookshops in England (Ruthven, 2002, 135) and name being used by a prominent Jerusalem based organisation for the distribution of jihadist news – the Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center. Johannes J.G Jansen explains Taymiyyah's enduring influence:

Anger drops from the pages of his books, formulated so beautifully, in such general terms, that when a modern Muslim reads it, or even when I read it myself, it is impossible not to think of present day Muslim society. The effect of his work is electrifying (Religioscope, 2002).

A chapter of Taymiyyah's *"Governance According to Allah's Law in Reforming the Ruler and his Flock"* was published in book form by the Maktabah Al-Ansar

bookshop in Birmingham as *“The Religious and Moral Doctrine of Jihaad”* (2001). Their foreword declares Taymiyyah operates from a declared grounding in the Qur’an, the sayings of the Prophet and the practices of the first community of Muslims (Taymiyyah, 2001, 3). Here the primacy of jihad is declared, and any potential debates closed down:

The command to participate in Jihaad and the mention of its merits occur innumerable times in the Quraan and the Sunnah. Therefore it is the best voluntary (religious) act that man can perform. All scholars agree that it is better than the hajj (greater pilgrimage) and ‘umrah (lesser pilgrimage) (Taymiyyah, 2001, 24-5).

Paradise and freedom from hellfire are also invoked. Jihad is advocated against the enemy aggressor, apostates and those who oppose clear cut rulings of Islam, even if they are Muslims. The Medina chapters of the Qur’an, when Muhammad and his companions were in exile, are seen as particularly glorifying jihad. One of the most striking aspects of Taymiyyah’s analysis is that, when considered in 21<sup>st</sup> century terms, jihad is invoked as something to be considered on a win-win basis. It places the individual or community between blissful outcomes – victory, or if defeated, martyrdom and paradise (Taymiyyah, 2001, 27). From this perspective, conflict is positively engendered, a feeling enhanced by the broad scope of this jihad – it is obligatory against those who reject sharia, and against unbelievers (Taymiyyah, 2001, 33). Of further relevance is the belief that if Muslims take the initiative in such conflicts, jihad becomes a collective duty. If sufficient number answer the call, this obligation lapses – but the benefit accrues to those who have fought.

Taymiyyah’s brief analysis is reinforced by the production of theological evidence on virtually each page – of the 17 pages of actual text, 16 verses from the Qur’an are

used to demonstrate his argument, along with a further seven examples of Prophetic sayings or hadith. Whilst this may demonstrate theological legitimacy, criticisms of the character of this publication exist.

Maulana Mawdudi represents not just a significant figure in 20<sup>th</sup> century Islam, but as the founder of Pakistan's largest clerical party, Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel) a figure whose theoretical work continues to have relevance. There are important nuances to be considered when examining Mawdudi's approach to politics. Whilst he was born in British colonial India, and began writing in a sub-continent agitating for freedom from British rule, Mawdudi played no part in the anti-imperialist movement for independence. His biographers observe:

The idea of nationalism received concentrated attention from Mawdudi when he forcefully explained its dangerous potentialities as well as its incompatibility with the teachings of Islam (Ahmad and Ansari, 1979, 8).

Despite this Mawdudi left India for Pakistan upon partition, where "he has concentrated his efforts on establishing a truly Islamic state and society in that country" (op cit). This involved a very particular rejection of the multi-cultural state India was to become. "He sought an interpretation of Islam that would preclude the kind of cultural coexistence that the Indian National Congress party promised." (Nasr, 1996, 4). To Mawdudi, an independent India was pointless if it was to result in a Muslim minority dominated by or coexisting with, a Hindu majority.

Whilst Marx saw history centring on the struggle between classes, "History is seen by Mawdudi to consist essentially of a perpetual struggle between Islam and

Jahiliyah” (Ahmad and Ansari, 1979, 19). On this at least, Mawdudi and Qutb were in clear agreement. Mawdudi’s historical analysis leads to a gradualist approach where Islamic revolution is developed in stages. This is initiated with individual change, proceeding to a community of faith, through an ideological movement, to a new society and state, then finally a caliphate. The parallels with the manner in which al-Banna envisaged the Muslim Brotherhood initiating change in Egypt (above), are striking.

The decline which needs to be addressed began when the perfect society of the Prophet was lost, and religion and politics separated. However, Mawdudi’s programme of a truly Islamic society can come via the ballot box:

Mawdudi has been hopeful that if the Islamic movement keeps on striving patiently, it will ultimately succeed in installing righteous men in power. He is also convinced that the democratic structure is congenial to the Islamic state. He also thinks that the democratic order will provide the framework in which an Islamic movement can flourish, gather strength and bring about the total transformation that it aims at (Ahmad and Ansari, 1979, 26).

Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr places Mawdudi, and the Jel, firmly within the school of Islamic revivalism. The Jamaat:

Sought to preserve the place of Islam in society and politics, while it trained an Islamic vanguard who would oversee the revival of Islam at the national level and would cultivate support for its cause (Nasr, 1996, 41).

Nasr however sees Mawdudi as more conservative on the concept of jihad than other revivalists, and uses a quote which now appears prophetic:



He argued that it must not denote “a crazed faith....blood-shot eyes, shouting Allah’u Akbar (God is great), decapitating an unbeliever wherever they see one, cutting off heads whilst invoking La ilaha illa-llah (there is no god but God) (Nasr, 1996, 74).

Nasr adds forlornly these are “the very terms in which jihad and its revivalist advocates are seen today” (Nasr, op cit). When we consider the alleged participation of British jihadists in the beheading of hostages by the Islamic State, Mawdudi’s words maintain continued resonance.

## **2.2 The Displacement of Nationalist Struggles By Jihadism**

The following section sets out, with reference to the Palestinian and Kashmiri struggles, how concepts of jihad and a religiously based approach may displace what had previously been widely regarded as political struggles viewed in broadly nationalist terms. The approach articulated by Mawdudi, of rejecting nationalism as an ideology and instead seeking to develop a truly Islamic society, is seen to have broader resonance.

Having been unsuccessfully invoked in 1948 against the nascent state of Israel, the concept of jihad appears to have been conspicuous by its absence for subsequent decades of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and indeed the confrontations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Until comparatively recently the Palestinian struggle was characterised by the dominance of nationalist or even leftist currents in the shape of organisations such as the PLO, and constituent groups including Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for The Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Emerging Islamist organisations such as Hamas

were seen as rivals, especially for control of the Palestinian authority (Mannes, 2004, 237).

From 1968-80 the PLO focused on a process of internationalising terrorism, operating across borders (Hoffman, 2003, 64) characterised by an ideological commitment to anti-Zionism. This was not centred on concepts of the ummah – in the case of the PFLP training, support and assistance was given to and by secular left wing groups from Europe and Japan (Mannes, 2004, 315). Mark Barnsley, a Yorkshire anarchist who joined Fatah forces in Lebanon aged just 17 during the Lebanese civil war, recalls a society where religion appeared nominal, and observance rare amongst Palestinian combatants (Barnsley, Interview, 2012).

My recollection is religion played no part in it, the two years I was in Lebanon.... I never saw a burka, I didn't see anyone kneel to pray, the Palestinians were always keen to stress their struggle was not of a religious nature (Barnsley, Interview 2012).

This dominance of the struggle against Israel by secular actors engendered resentment. The theological distance for nationalism expressed by Mawdudi and Qutb is demonstrated in the actions of Abdullah Azzam, who abandoned the Palestinian struggle to teach in Saudi Arabia, so distant did he feel the cause had become from his faith (Azzam, 2003, 13). Whilst in a minority though, religious actors were never entirely absent. In 1969 King Faisal of Saudi Arabia called for a jihad to liberate Jerusalem (Abed, 1995, 109). Saudi Arabia was to be the host in 1981 when the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) adopted jihad to 'rescue' Jerusalem and the occupied territories. Significantly Faisal appears to have been the one Saudi leader to meet the exacting standards of Bin Laden, who observed in the

later stages of his rule “there was a clear engagement with Muslim issues, in particular Jerusalem and Palestine” (Lawrence, 2004, 36).

These interventions brought little immediate change. Whilst demonstrating Islamic leaders and nations were using religiously based language to formulate avowed goals, the extent to which serious attempts were made to put this rhetoric into practice is less clear. Rather than enacting any mandate to conduct concerted military action against Israel in support of the Palestinian cause, the 1980s instead saw several Sunni Muslim states work with Israel’s primary ally, the United States, to focus on jihad against the Soviet Union’s occupation of Afghanistan.

The two dates above – 1969 and 1981 – are interesting markers when we take into consideration the Islamic revival and its influence both on the language of political struggle, and the nature of that struggle itself. It is firstly important to be clear what this revival means.

Revival here is not understood to mean modernisation along Western lines. The revival of the ummah is seen as a means toward the establishment of a new society where shariah (Islamic law) is applied. Renewal then becomes a prerequisite for the islamization of all aspects of life (Abukhalil, 1995, 433).

We also see between these markers two of the most significant international events in the latter half of the twentieth century - Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 and the emergence of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan. Such international events reinforced the potential viability of jihad as a method of achieving goals, especially when the Mujahideen were seen as having played a role in a victorious struggle, and the defeat of a Superpower.

In this period significant change was occurring in the Palestinian territories. The formation of the Islamic Resistance Movement (usually referred to in English by its abbreviation Hamas) by Muslim Brotherhood members and the first Intifada of 1987 illustrated a component shift in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As the Hamas Covenant states; “There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad” (Laqueur, 2007, 436). Hamas sought to contest space previously occupied by secular actors:

The Islamists in the Occupied Territories have enhanced their position by capitalising on the weaknesses of the PLO. At the same time, they are working at the grassroots level to help people under the increasing economic difficulties resulting from prolonged occupation and lack of sufficient assistance from outside sources (Abed, 1995, 110).

Many were slow to understand the nature of the revolution Hamas was beginning. For example, although the movement issued its first communiqué in December 1987, the organisation was not banned by Israel until September 1989 (Mannes, 2004, 114). Efraim Karsh, an academic and former intelligence officer in the Israeli Defence Forces, admits Israel long ignored the rise of the Islamic Resistance Movement “in the hope that it would act as a counterweight to the far more powerful PLO, equally committed to the Jewish state’s demise. This proved a critical mistake” (Karsh, 2007, 218).

Palestinian writer Ramzy Baroud establishes the development of Hamas, over a period since the 1960s, has been incremental and structured, and rooted in its religious base:

The years between 1967 to 1975 were designated by the Islamic movement as the phase of “mosque building”. The mosque was the central institution that galvanised Islamic societies in

Gaza. It was not simply a place of worship but also a hub for education, social and cultural interaction, and later political organisation. In the period between 1967 to 1987, the number of mosques in Gaza tripled, rising from 200 to 600 mosques (Baroud, 2009).

In this same period a crucial figure in the organisation, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, began to develop the foundations for a campaign which would utilise violence (Mannes, 2004, 114) developing a security section which monitored both profane behaviour and those suspected of collaboration, and stockpiling weapons. When the first Intifada began in 1987, thanks

To Sheikh Yassin's years of preparation, Hamas quickly took a leading role in organizing demonstrations and strikes. Within a few months, Hamas began targeting Israeli soldiers and civilians (Mannes, 2014, 114).

As we shall see in chapter six when considering the work of Karima Bennouna, Melanie Cooper and Meredith Tax, Sheikh Yassin's concern to ensure both piety and combat is a common combination in communities dominated by jihadist actors. It is regrettably one that has received less considerably less consideration by academics within critical terrorism studies.

A second example of the displacement of nationalist actors comes from Kashmir. India and Pakistan have fought four wars - 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999 (James and Ozdamar, 2005, 456) with Kashmir at the centre of three of those conflicts. Historically activist involvement in the Kashmiri struggle – either in support of an independent Kashmir or a state that was solely located within the territory of Pakistan – had been a small but not insignificant political presence in several British towns and cities. In 1984 Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) members

kidnapped a diplomat at the Indian High Commission in Birmingham, and subsequently murdered him (Curtis, 2010, 156). By the time the JKLF carried out attacks in Indian controlled Kashmir, the forces of power were however changing in this region. Just as secular nationalist groups were being eclipsed by Islamist actors in the Palestinian struggle, so an identical process unfurled in Kashmir. By 1990 Pakistan's primary religious party, Mawdudi's Jel, had an armed wing, the Hizb-ul-Muhajideen (Burke, 2007, 98). Pakistani intelligence stopped aiding the left-leaning JKLF, and a process began of the sustained funding, training and development of Jihadist groups, beginning with the Hizb-ul-Muhajideen:

They tried to give an Islamic orientation to a secular separatist movement, with disastrous consequences. While the increasing involvement of Pakistani groups kept the armed struggle alive, it also widened the division within the movement. Many Kashmiri groups resented the ISI's attempts, first to 'Pakistanize' and then to 'Islamize' the movement (Hussain, 2007, 25).

By the time of the 1999 conflict in Kashmir, LeT, one of the largest of the Jihadist organisations in Azad Kashmir, was boasting of some 2000 training camps across the Islamic Republic, with *The Times* reporting "British Muslims join war in Kashmir" (Hussain, 1999).

The participation of Western Muslims was given clear theological support by representative organisations. Sheikh Faysal Mawlawi, the deputy chairman of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, issued a ruling that in the event of war between India and Pakistan, it was the religious duty of all Muslims to support Pakistan (Roy, 2002). In Britain opposition to the Terrorism Act 2000 from the largest Muslim representative organisation centred on the government's perceived criminalising of jihad in Kashmir (MCB, 2001). Subsequent chapters will consider

how the Kashmiri training camps in particular re-bounded on Britain, as well as considering the broader participation of Britons in jihad in the Indian sub-continent.

## **2.4 Indigenous Articulations of Jihad**

Having considered articulations of jihad, noted its rise and association with Islamic revival, what of Western and more particularly British conceptualisations? How have British Muslim writers and intellectuals addressed the subject? The following pages consider the approaches of early British Islamist Dr Kalim Siddiqui, perspectives from within the Muslim Council of Britain and finally the position of an American who worked to establish a significant following within domestic Islamism, Anwar al-Awlaki.

In the *“Muslim Manifesto: A Blueprint for Survival”*, the late Dr Kalim Siddiqui stated:

Jihad is a basic requirement of Islam and living in Britain or having British nationality by birth or naturalisation does not absolve the Muslim from his or her duty to participate in jihad: this participation can be active service in armed struggle abroad and/or the provision of material and moral support to those engaged in such struggle anywhere in the world (Siddiqui, 1990, 10).

Written well over twenty years ago, this appears to point in the direction of a physical jihad enacted overseas, although quite possibly promoted from a domestic base. And yet Siddiqui’s discussion of Jihad was a comparatively minor part, not just of his manifesto, but of his broader written output. The Muslim Manifesto is at heart a defensive document, a point best illustrated by its subtitle: a ‘strategy for survival.’ Significantly though, Siddiqui seeks to locate British Muslims firmly in the global ummah. This requires a rejection of what is seen as imposed options of integration and assimilation – in their place comes the categorising of British Muslims into a

much broader identity “Every Muslim must pursue his or her personal goals within the framework of the Muslim community in Britain, of the ummah, and of the global Islamic movement” (Siddiqui, op cit). More traditional markers of identity in Britain – those rooted in class, colour, regional or national identities, go unmentioned.

Siddiqui appears to have viewed British Muslims as greatly imperilled, and states of the authorities “Essentially their attitude towards Islam has not changed since the Crusades; their strategy remains the same, only their tactics have changed” (Siddiqui, 1990, 11). This does not equate to a purely physical threat, nor can British Muslims be protected by the law of the land:

The only survival kit that will work is the one that is entirely community based..... the shield of Islam is our only protection under all circumstances. Survival within Islam is the only form of survival that has any meaning (Siddiqui, 1990, 13).

In his main theoretical work “*Stages of Islamic Revolution*” (1999) Siddiqui offers a definition of jihad which is rooted in, and attached to, the threats faced by this imperilled community, jihad being “total or any part of the struggle to defend or promote Islam or the Muslim community” (Siddiqui, 1999, 132). Yet Siddiqui’s response to the existential threat faced by British Muslims was not to prioritise jihad, although he certainly did not rule it out. Instead he concentrated his political efforts, and that of the Muslim Institute he established, in forming a Muslim Parliament for Britain (ironically comparable to the Board of Deputies of British Jews) and into enthusiastically supporting the Islamic Republic of Iran and its model of a theocratic state (Kepel, 2011, 132-3).



Siddiqui was not shy of conflict. Some of the rhetoric in the Muslim Manifesto, with references to “no-go areas where the exercise of ‘freedom of speech’ against Islam will not be tolerated” (Siddiqui, 1990, 19) is incautious, perhaps deliberately so. As well as playing a significant role in the propagation of the Iranian fatwa against Salman Rushdie (Malik, 2009, 7-8) and the street protests which followed, Siddiqui is alleged to have been a fractious figure at a personal level with fellow activists. Ziauddin Sardar, who formed the Muslim Institute for Research and Planning with Siddiqui before arguing over the nature of the Iranian revolution, alleges that during the course of a conversation at the latter’s home in Slough, Siddiqui threatened to have his legs broken (Sardar, 2004, 169).

Re-examining Dr Siddiqui’s work some twenty years later, only parts proved prescient to the struggles that were to emerge. The Muslim Parliament was broadly irrelevant, superseded by a series of Muslim representative organisations to seek public influence after the Rushdie affair, and particularly after New Labour came to power in 1997. Nor has his work for the Iranian cause proved particularly significant – Britain’s mostly Sunni Muslim population has not looked to Shia Iran for leadership. It is the type of Islamic community structures envisaged, where assimilation and integration is avoided (except as members of a fixed community) which have proven more resilient (Bowen, 2014, 26).

Siddiqui does appear to have been prescient in stipulating the importance of the ummah and jihad. In the last three decades the attachment young British Muslims have formed for the ummah, and the desire to respond to declarations of suffering from within that ummah, has led to their participation in a series of armed conflicts. As chapter five demonstrates Britons have been found fighting, killing and dying in this cause in locations as diverse as Afghanistan, Bosnia, India, Iraq, Israel,

Pakistan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. The distinctive route Siddiqui signposted for British Islam, with its defensiveness, certainty and a vision where jihad is obligatory ensures that in any evaluation of British Islamism, and indeed British Jihadism, attention must be paid to his ideas.

If Siddiqui's Muslim Parliament failed to capture sufficient loyalty from British Muslims, other organisations emerged who have developed a long term profile. Since 1997 the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has been the country's largest Muslim representative body. As such, they have played a prominent role in public debates concerning jihadism. Mohammed Abdul Haleem's "*War and Peace*" an article written for the MCB book responding to 9/11, "*The Quest for Sanity*" (2002) examines the conditions within Islam where war may be waged. He stresses this is regulated by the Qur'an and hadith, and that all wars fought by the Prophet Muhammad were either in self-defence or to prevent an imminent attack. Haleem argues religious intention is also an essential prerequisite "When fighting takes place, it should be *fi sabil illah* – in the way of God – as is often repeated in the Qur'an" (Haleem, 2002, 209).

This hardly destroys the foundations being built by the likes of Al-Qaeda. If anything it reinforces them – anyone reading Haleem's analysis conversant with the writings of Osama Bin Laden will have been aware of the regularity with which Bin Laden combined the word jihad with either "jihad for the sake of God", "jihad for God" or "jihad in the way of God" (Lawrence 2005, 18, 73, 85, 97, 101, 166)

Having correctly stated jihad does not mean holy war (a point few Muslims needed to be told) Haleem reminds readers jihad may be conducted via argumentation,

financial support or by fighting, and that the Prophet considered the struggle with one's self to be the greater jihad, whilst the battlefield formed the lesser jihad. On the important subject of explaining when jihad is justified, Haleem is surprisingly brief – the reader is merely informed it must be just and for righteous intention (Haleem, 2002, 209). Jihad then becomes an obligation to guard religious freedom, for self-defence or to defend the oppressed. Haleem next moves on to correcting what he suggests are misconceptions about the so-called 'war' and 'sword verses' in the Qur'an. He defends both, arguing the defensive background to 2:191 has been obscured, whilst the attacks on polytheists referred to in 9:5 needs to be seen in context of the attacks upon the early Muslims. The latter is frequently quoted by those who argue justifications for offensive violence may be readily found within Islam. Haleem reiterates however, that for all the speculation about these verses, the word 'sword' does not actually appear in the Qur'an.

As skilfully constructed as this article is, its limitations must also be considered. The author makes little or no attempt to address his survey to contemporary events – his analysis remains firmly rooted in the seventh century. The question of whether jihad in a series of ongoing conflicts may be justified is not addressed directly, but left for the reader to interpret.

A much more contemporary approach is taken by an American of Yemeni descent, Anwar al-Awlaki (1971–2011). A frequent visitor to the UK, speaking at the annual dinner of FOSIS (Keeble and Hillingdon, 2010, 127) and major events organised by ISOCs and the Muslim Association of Britain where he was considered an 'icon of Salafism' (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2011, 28), al-Awlaki subsequently became a

prominent figure in AQAP before being assassinated in Yemen in an American drone strike. His *"44 Ways to Jihad"* (2009) combines accessible, colloquial English with a staunch belief in the obligatory nature of jihad against the global system of disbelief. Importantly for Muslims living in comparatively prosperous countries like the UK, al-Awlaki stresses the importance of using that wealth for the faith:

Probably the most important contributions the Muslims of the West could do for Jihad is making jihad with their wealth since in many cases the mujahideen are in need of money more than they are in need of men (al-Awlaki, 2009, 4).

To al-Awlaki Islam is a martial faith. He cites the impressive total of 19 battles Muhammad fought in ten years and states "Jihad is the greatest deed after believing in Allah and is the most needed" (al-Awlaki, 2009, 16). Once again, an elevation of jihad over and above all of the five pillars of Islam save for faith itself, previously detected in the writings of Taymiyyah and Bin Laden, is present. To maintain this, and clearly addressing himself to youth in the West, a jihadi culture needs to evolve, with nasheeds (religiously inspired songs) in English, focusing on concepts of justice and strength, not peace and weakness.

Before his killing, al-Awlaki appears to have believed significant progress was being made by the jihadist cause. Declaring "Western Jihad is here to Stay" and mocking the British and American governments:

The Jihad movement has not only survived but is expanding. Isn't it ironic that the two capitals of the war against Islam, Washington D.C. and London have also become among the centres of Western Jihad? Jihad is becoming as American as apple pie and as British as afternoon tea (al-Awlaki 2009, 1).

## 2.5 Jihad? Not In Our Backyard?

A very different battle has also waged over the term Jihadism. This involves those from the Islamic tradition, not only uncomfortable at the way the term is deployed at times in Western societies, but who have sought to limit its application or its utilisation by Al-Qaeda and its supporters. Foremost in this, has been Egyptian born Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the world's most prominent Sunni theologians. A Muslim Brotherhood member who has long lived in Qatar (Roy, 2004, 149-50) the very title of his work *"Islamic Awakening: Between Rejection and Extremism"* (2006) demonstrates the nature of some of the intra-Islamic debates being conducted, both in Muslim majority nations and in Muslim communities worldwide in an era of religious revival.

Al-Qaradawi defines jihad as "struggling against oppression and injustice in self-defence" (al-Qaradawi, 2006, 89) and also as "struggling against oppression and corruption" (al-Qaradawi, 2006, 91). He describes Islam as preferring jihad to personal worship and insists it is an individual obligation if a Muslim land suffers foreign aggression. This would appear to give a clear justification for jihad in circumstances such as the allied invasion of Iraq in 2003, or the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. It does not readily justify attacks by Muslims living outside Muslim lands – in for example, Europe, or the United States. Al-Qaradawi condemned 9/11 (Roy, 2004, 179).

The combination of al-Qaradawi's standing as a theologian, and his rejection of violence aimed at Western cities, was one which earned recognition from British politicians. Having visited the UK thirteen times from 1979-1997 (Livingstone, 2011, 503) in 2005 he was formally invited by Ken Livingstone as part of the Mayor of

London's programme to further engage with the capital's Muslim communities. Indeed Livingstone refers to al-Qaradawi in his memoirs as Sunni Islam's most important theologian (Livingstone, 2011, 502). In 2005 the cleric's visit to Britain saw considerable debate, with a Foreign Office memo recommending to the Home Office he be allowed to enter the UK, being leaked and placed online. In that note, Islamic Affairs advisor Mockbul Ali stated

I recommend that, on balance, the Foreign Secretary agree for the FCO to advise that Al Qaradawi should not be excluded from the United Kingdom given his influence in relation to our foreign policy objectives (Ali, 2005).

Part of al-Qaradawi's appeal to British elites appears to have been the contemporaneous contrast between his approach and those committed to jihad in the West, with the security services seeing him in functional terms "Special Branch believed his visit was important in preventing al-Qaeda from recruiting young British Muslims" (Livingstone, 2011, 504). So much so that when al-Qaradawi visited the Muslim Brotherhood influenced Finsbury Park mosque in 2004; "the Commander of MPSB was on hand to offer support to them and their guest" (Lambert, 2011, 265).

Al-Qaradawi's prognosis operates from the starting point any definition of what is considered 'extreme' must be based on the laws of Islam. The extent to which a society is religious will affect the extent to which negligence or deviation is permitted. Al-Qaradawi is a gradualist, a position he adopts due to his interpretation of the revelation of Islam. The Qur'anic texts revealed in Mecca differ to those revealed following the Prophet's flight to Medina – once monotheism was established,

prohibitions against particular acts followed. This leads al-Qaradawi to conclude gradation is important in achieving goals

those who call for a return to the Islamic way of life and the establishment of the Islamic state need to recognise the necessity of gradation for the realisation of their goals, taking into account the sublimity of their goals, their own means and potentials, and the multiplicity of impediments (Al-Qaradawi, 2006, 70).

This incrementalism must be particularly challenging for some young Muslims. Now in his 80s, al-Qaradawi notes a significant generational difference, with the youth more passionate in their faith than elders. Indeed when potentially revolutionary change was to emerge in some Arab countries during the Arab Spring, al-Qaradawi was to abandon gradualism. A fierce supporter of the uprising in Syria, he has articulated the struggle against President Assad in sectarian terms. At a 31 July 2013 rally in Doha, al-Qaradawi declared the Shia group Hezbollah to be the 'party of Satan' and insisted every able bodied Muslim trained to fight must join the Syrian rebels (Ahram Online, 2013). When leading Sunni clerics met in Cairo to formulate a position on the civil war, al-Qaradawi supported the following agreed statement:

Jihad is necessary for the victory of our brothers in Syria - jihad with mind, money, weapons; all forms of jihad. What is happening to our brothers on Syrian soil, in terms of violence stemming from the Iranian regime, Hezbollah and its sectarian allies, counts as a declaration of war on Islam and the Muslim community in general (Middle East Online, 2013)

For those in Britain who had embraced al-Qaradawi and sought to utilise his theological legitimacy against Al-Qaeda - at the Foreign Office, the Metropolitan Police Muslim Contact Unit or the office of former Mayor Ken Livingstone, these are

distinctly awkward words. Young Muslims in this country, already exposed to distressing images of suffering from Syria, could now read clear articulations to action. They were also presented with the stark image of Islam being under attack by its sectarian opponents – namely Shia Iran and its allies. Chapter five establishes the extent to which the call to arms in Syria has stimulated British jihadists, a process which has arguably made whatever temporary advantages gained by the British state's 'alliance' with Yusuf al-Qaradawi, redundant.

Following 9/11 al-Qaradawi tackled Al-Qaeda directly, and similar condemnation was issued by the Muslim Council of Britain. However, a closer examination of their stance shows a more tentative position. Whilst the MCB's Mohammed Abdul Haleem provided a historically rooted consideration of the legitimacy of jihad, how did the MCB respond to the considerable challenge posed by the development of support for jihadism as a concept amongst young British Muslims?

In 2002 the MCB published *"The Quest for Sanity: Reflections on September 11 and the Aftermath"*. The introduction, by Abdul Wahid Hamid states "The purpose of this book is to reflect on that day of horror and anguish" (Muslim Council of Britain, 2002, xv). In practice however, the monograph is primarily about the period following the attacks, racism experienced by British Muslims, the history of Islam in Britain and an assertion of the MCB's interpretation of Islamic values. Only one of eight chapters is devoted to September 11th itself, and that (pp. 3-25) is actually shorter than the chapter on Muslims and the media (pp. 43-73).

Al-Qaeda, its leaders or the concept of Jihad are unmentioned in the chapter on 9/11, and the foreword by MCB Secretary General Iqbal Sacranie suggests an



organisation stuttering in its approach “Terrorism has no religion. Its aim is to spread enmity and destruction throughout civilised societies” (MCB, 2002, xiii). Those are not the declared aims of Al-Qaeda, nor are they the aims of any terrorist group. Sacranie is at best conflating possible consequences with actual intentions. At worst, he is deliberately avoiding debate on the objectives established by Osama Bin Laden prior to 9/11 – to expel enemies from the holy places of Islam (Lawrence 2005, 30) and to fight jihad against the Jews and Crusaders (Lawrence, 2005, 69).

Nor is there a substantial discussion of extant conflicts. What is telling about the MCB’s post 9/11 analysis is the lack of any indication of an organisation debating the rights and wrongs of contemporaneous jihad in Kashmir, Yemen, Afghanistan or the Palestinian territories, or those seeking to establish sharia at home or abroad. Yet by 2002 British Muslim involvement in such struggles – and theological justifications of that involvement – was at least a decade old. The deaths of British jihadists in Bosnia or arrests of British Muslims abroad for terrorist offences (catalogued in chapter five) are absent from the MCB’s worldview. Nor is this the only flaw. Whilst Inayat Bunglawala (2002) correctly sketches some of the assaults and property damage British Muslims suffered following 9/11, the one death in this period, a racist attack on a white teenager in Cambridgeshire, is absent.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Qaeda as an organisation is barely considered. The journalist Melanie Phillips, a prominent and controversial critic of Islam, is mentioned more times in the book, four, than Osama Bin Laden – three.<sup>5</sup> It is as if a conscious decision has been taken

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<sup>4</sup> Ross Parker, a pub employee from Peterborough, was stabbed to death on September 21 2001 as he walked home from work. Three British Muslims were later jailed for life for his murder (Peterborough Telegraph, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> The references to Melanie Phillips are on p.47, 71, 72 and 117. Those to Bin Laden are on p.101, 102 and 102

not to present any trace of controversy, or any indication of problematic elements within contemporary Islamism. If so, continuing outrages committed by Al-Qaeda and like-minded groups, and the 2005 London suicide bombings, were in time to force the MCB's hand.

In both 1996 and 2000 young Muslims from Birmingham had died carrying out suicide attacks in Afghanistan and Kashmir respectively. In 2003 two Britons died attempting to blow up a bar in Tel Aviv, Israel (see chapter five). Organisations such as Al-Muhajiroun, calling for sharia law and/or the establishment of an Islamic republic in Britain, were a tiny but recognisable presence in Muslim communities in some towns and cities. Yet it does not appear to have been considered by the MCB that such trends could result in deadly violence on these shores. Following the deaths of 52 civilians in co-ordinated suicide bombings on the London transport system, Sir Iqbal Sacranie responded to revelations the 7/7 bombers were British:

We have received today's terrible news from the police with anguish, shock and horror. It appears our youth have been involved in last week's horrific bombings against innocent people (MCB, 2005).

How could the MCB, who were surely better placed than most to identify and address jihadist actors in local Muslim communities, see so little? An umbrella body representing more than 250 domestic Muslim organisations, the Muslim Council of Britain was formed in November 1997. The MCB's declared aims were to

1. Promote consensus and cooperation within the community.
2. Giving voice to issues of common concern

3. Obtaining removal of disadvantages and discrimination faced by Muslims
4. Fostering a better appreciation of Islam and Muslim culture
5. Working for the good of society as a whole (MCB, 2007).

From its early days the MCB was responding to, and lobbying politicians and state actors about, any association between terrorism and religion. In August 1998 new domestic counter terrorism laws were proposed following the American embassy bombings in Africa, and the resultant cruise missile attacks on Sudan and Al-Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan. Six months earlier Bin Laden had issued his call for 'Global Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders'. On 25 August 1998 the MCB responded to all these developments in a press release, noting with

alarm the latest outbreak of Islamophobia and the tendency by many respectable media to connect each and every incident of violence with 'Islamic terrorism' because someone made a telephone call or faxed a message on behalf of a never-heard-of-before-or-after 'International Jihad organisation'. Even a cub reporter knows that Jihad cannot be declared by fax or telephone (MCB, 1998).

When commenting on terrorism in this critical period, the organisation appears to vacillate, combining defensiveness with a purely reactive approach to events. Whether the British and American governments were taking Al-Qaeda and its call for global jihad seriously, the MCB, on this evidence, was not. The press release ended with an indication the organisation acknowledged threats, but was unsure as to their origin: "the MCB also expects the British Muslim community to act with wisdom and restraint and not to fall prey to any agent provocateur, within or without its ranks" (MCB, 1998).

The area in which the MCB appears to have acted most decisively is in rejecting any association between faith and violence, and in calling for recognition that those adopting violence in particular conflicts were correct to do so. On 24 January 2000 the MCB and Metropolitan Police issued a joint statement following a meeting between the MCB's Secretary General and Assistant Commissioner David Veness. The MCB expressed their opposition to the use of the word 'Islamic' when terrorist issues were being discussed. Such connections were certainly being made. The proscription of 21 organisations under the Terrorism Act 2000 made support, funding or membership of organisations fighting jihad in Kashmir and Palestine such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Palestinian Islamic Jihad illegal. Although Jihadist actors were not alone on the list (Sikh, Kurdish and a Greek Socialist organisation also featured) the MCB regarded it as ill-conceived. Yousaf Bhailok, MCB General Secretary insisted:

The Home Secretary has failed to distinguish between legitimate resistance movements who fight against the illegal occupation of their own land and organisations like the IRA which have targeted mainland Britain (MCB, 2001).

The MCB was thus drawing a clear distinction between those individuals and organisations involved in violence overseas, who it clearly characterised as carrying legitimacy, and any group targeting mainland Britain. As the latter parts of this thesis demonstrate, such a distinction was to become increasingly blurred, most noticeably in the cases of Dhiren Barot, who fought in Kashmir and was later convicted of domestic terrorist offences and secondly the 2005 London transport bombings. Two of the four bombers, Mohammed Sidique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer, having

trained in camps of the 'legitimate resistance movements' in Kashmir (see Chapter five).

## **2.6 Conclusions**

This chapter establishes the theoretical and perhaps more accurately theological background to the jihadist actors to be discussed throughout the next three sections. Firstly the primacy of Islam is recognised by all the thinkers considered herein – al-Awlaki, Azzam, al-Banna, Bin Laden, Mawdudi, al-Qaradawi, Qutb, Siddiqui and Taymiyyah. All seem to similarly share a world view which divides the globe into two rival camps, and this is notably characterised by Mawdudi and Qutb as positioning Islam on one side and disbelief on the other. For Qutb Dar-ul-Islam, the home of Islam, is where sharia has been established. The rest of the world is Dar-ul-Harb – the home of hostility. Thus a strict religious – as opposed to geographical or political - division is accentuated.

What differs in the positions of these men is the method to be adopted to achieve their end goal. Whilst Mawdudi from Jamaat-e-Islami and al-Qaradawi from the Muslim Brotherhood declare the importance of gradualist approaches, for others the time to act is here – most noticeably Azzam, Bin Laden and al-Awlaki. This may not permanently isolate such approaches. There is evidence that the gradualist position is far from fixed – Yusuf al-Qaradawi's support for the Syrian jihad, and the broader need to take up arms against the Shia being the most notable example.

For both Qutb, and the British Islamist intellectual Kalim Siddiqui, jihad is obligatory. Qutb articulates a world view where Islam and indeed jihad has no geographical restriction. Significantly for British readers he uses life of Muhammad to explain that

loyalty to place comes second – Muhammad fighting his birthplace of Mecca until sharia had been established there. Siddiqui makes clear that being British, whether by birth or naturalisation does not remove the obligation to fight jihad, although he seems to have envisaged this as an overseas, rather than domestic obligation.

In terms of those seeking to effect change in Muslim majority societies, a significant shift occurred in the final decades of the twentieth century. The Islamic revival, and the influence of many of the theoreticians of Islamism listed above, began to impact. The particular example of the Palestinian struggle, and the emergence of the Islamic Resistance Movement at the expense of more secular and more nationalist minded groups, has been give above. In the next chapter a similar process of displacement may be seen in both Libya and Kashmir.

On one level the debates concerning how sharia is to be achieved appear to have had minimal effect on the largest Muslim representative body in the United Kingdom, the MCB. Its response to the emergence of organisations seeking to bring about religious change through violence has been demonstrated in this chapter to be defensive and characterised by distinct limitations. At its infancy, the global jihadist campaign launched by Al-Qaeda, and consequent British support for it, was thus obscured. An important opportunity to gain understanding of jihadism as a concept was missed, and those best placed to address the issue of who British Jihadists are were instead to be found lobbying to ensure that religious terminology was not used to describe acts of violence.

Having established what jihadists seek, the theological basis from which they operate and that their intentions are without geographical limitation, it is time to turn towards British Jihadism. The next section, chapter three, demonstrates the

considerable appeal the United Kingdom has offered to jihadist actors from across the world, who found Britain a convivial base from which to pursue their goals. It considers why individuals and organisations committed to achieving sharia in their home nations came to this country, and establishes that British Jihadism has received broad input from across the Muslim majority world. Here, practice envisaged by many of the thinkers considered above could be enacted – such as al-Awlaki's desire for jihad through wealth – could be readily enacted, provided the law was not directly broken.

## **Chapter 3 – Settlement: The Migration of Foreign Jihadists to the United Kingdom**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Earlier chapters have established the re-emergence of Jihadism in the twentieth century, either via the articulations of activists such as al-Banna or Azzam, or the rediscovery of an important historical figure in Ibn Taymiyyah. Of the protagonists in this intellectual conflict, Qutb was at the forefront of those cited as offering theological articulation of the view Jihad as a concept is without geographical restriction. The boldness of this position coincides with an era of Islamic revivalism which saw struggles such as that in Palestine adopt an increasingly politico-religious hue.

The developments within both Islamism nationally and internationally, discussed in the introduction, literature review and chapter two of this thesis provides the distinct backdrop to some important shifts in the composition of the United Kingdom, and in particular its major English cities, from the 1990s onwards. This was to be a period of significant migration from Muslim majority nations to Britain, and one where the influence of Salafists from North Africa became discernible (Bowen, 2014, 5). Although still a small minority nationally in percentage terms, in parts of the country the Muslim population's numerical increase was significant – most notably the number in London increased by 405,440 between 2001 and 2011 and in Birmingham by 94,394 (MCB, 2015, 26).



In order to consider British Jihadism as a whole, the 'detail' of this thesis' title, this chapter seeks to examine what is sometimes characterised as a distinct component of this issue - the settlement of a series of Islamist and Jihadist émigrés in the United Kingdom, often after playing a significant role in armed struggles in their home nations (Black, 2005). The particular purpose of this section is to address two research questions. Why so many Jihadist actors coalesced in the United Kingdom, and also just who are the British Jihadists? It is firstly established a significant number of jihadists have indeed settled here in the UK – some 79 individuals are named herein. This allows us to go some way to characterise British Jihadism, and one of its foundational elements, namely the genuinely international nature of its composition, world view and practice. This chapter demonstrates British Jihadism has been distinguished by organisational diversity, and genuine breadth in terms of the national origins of those jihadis who have settled here. Furthermore, for all the focus on Al-Qaeda in the mainstream media, it is merely one of a number of jihadist groups to organise in this country.

This chapter uses the concept of open source intelligence to collate a series of twelve tables to establish the scale of migration into the United Kingdom by jihadist actors from overseas. It breaks down, on a nation state basis, the jihadists who have come here, and presents as much information as possible as to their background, activities, motivations and groups. Jihadists from a total of fourteen different territories are found to have lived in the United Kingdom at some stage, whilst this territory is also one used, on occasion, by Al-Qaeda. Consideration is also given to the term 'Londonistan' a categorisation found to flourish after particular terrorist attacks.

Figure 3.1 Overseas Jihadists in Britain by State

Country	Number of known jihadists in Britain
Algeria	27
Bangladesh	1
Egypt	10
India/Kashmir/Pakistan	4
Jordan	3
Libya	16
Maldives	Unknown
Morocco	2
Palestinian Territories	5
Saudi Arabia	4
Syria	6
Tunisia	1
Total	79

The greatest number comes from three North African states with a long history of conflict – Algeria, Egypt and Libya. They account for some 53 of the 79 named jihadists below.

### 3.2 Algeria

Algeria's Islamists first began to migrate in significant numbers following a failed attempt to overthrow the government in 1982 (Tawil, 2010, 33). However it was to be the events of the early 1990s that was to see the number of Algerians based in Britain increase significantly. Initial voting in the December 1991 general election saw the Front Islamique du Salut, (Islamic Salvation Front or FIS) victorious, albeit on a low turnout (Evans and Phillips, 2007, 169). A scheduled second round on 16 January 1992 did not occur, as a constitutional crisis was followed by military take-over – the likely democratic coming to power of an Islamist party had been prevented.

For much of 1992-2004, Algeria was consumed by catastrophic levels of violence, with a death toll reported as high as 200,000 (Amnesty International, 2007). Two significant jihadist groups fought in this period – Groupe Islamique Arme (Islamic Army Group or GIA) and its splinter the Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat or GSPC).<sup>6</sup> Fighters who left Algeria at this time, headed to areas where military training was available. It is estimated over a thousand attended Al-Qaeda's camps in Afghanistan (Foley, 2013, 26).

During the Algerian civil war the GIA's leadership based itself, not in North Africa, Afghanistan or a francophone country, but securely here in Britain (Kepel, 2010). Redha Malek, Algerian Prime Minister in 1993-4, names Abu Qatada as the GIA's London spokesman (Malek, 2004, 444). That a Jordanian of Palestinian heritage should seemingly play a key role in the leadership of an Algerian organisation exiled

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<sup>6</sup> It is an interesting peculiarity of Algeria's jihadist groups that such organisations adopt French, as opposed to Arab monikers.

here, demonstrates this conflict had developed wider characteristics than a struggle over who governed in Algiers. Indeed the Islamist campaign in Algeria had long been characterised by politico-religious tendencies well beyond the ballot box. The assassinations of intellectuals, socialists, secularists and women considered “too French in their manners and style of dress” (Evans and Phillips, 2007, 192) displayed a broader religious rage rooted in fundamentalism. When feminist Khalida Messaoudi was forced to give up teaching in 1993 after a fatwa sentenced her to death, exiled Algerian jihadists in London published material insisting her killing was merely a matter of time (Evans and Phillips, 2007, 193).

This research names a total of 27 different Algerian Islamists who either settled here in the UK, or spent time in Britain before propagating their struggle elsewhere. Some very significant players are included figure 3.1 below. These include Abdullah Anas, the son in law of Al-Qaeda’s founder, Abdullah Azzam. Anas, who was based in Afghanistan from 1983-92, has served on the council in exile of the FIS (Granta, 2008), and now has British citizenship (Foley, 2013, 267). Similarly Qamar Kherbane has played a leadership role in both Islamist politics (the FIS) and jihadism (the GSPC) and was given political asylum in Britain in 1994 (Al-Bawaba, 2001). In each case asylum was granted even though both men had been expelled from France in 1992, and deported to Pakistan (Sifaoui, 2002, 124).

Once Algerians were resident, they were extremely unlikely to be deported due to the poor standard of human rights in their country of birth. However, some who migrated to the United Kingdom appear not to have been fleeing the Algerian

dictatorship, but the attentions of the judicial system in democratic France. In 1995 and 1996, the GIA carried out a series of terrorist attacks there, killing 14 and wounding 230 (Foley, 2013, 4). Consequently, the French authorities, clamping down on extremists following the 25 July 1995 Paris Metro bombing, noted Algerian radicals moving from France to England (Watson, 2008, 51). Getting a precise number on those who moved to the UK in this period is difficult, although indicative case studies do emerge.

One of the men who found London more amenable was Salim Boukari, who in 2002 was jailed for 12 years in Germany, after a plot to carry out a bombing in Strasbourg. Interviewed in Kassel prison by Peter Taylor in 2004, the differences between France and Great Britain for a young man of his background are evident:

Life was uncomfortable for a young Algerian student, however uninvolved. Just going out for a drink meant the police would come and ask for his papers. London seemed a much better bet. "In England, they don't do stuff like this," he said (Taylor, 2004).

The less involved British approach at street level was replicated in the much more serious matter of extradition. This came to pose practical difficulties for French legislature. On 1 June 1999 the trial opened of 24 men accused of the 1995-6 bombings, including the Saint Michel Metro attack which had killed eight civilians. One significant defendant was tried in absentia – alleged fundraiser Rachid Ramda, who was fighting extradition from London. Ramda had been involved in publishing the GIA's organ *al-Ansar* in the city (Tawil, 2010, 115) and victims lawyer Francoise Rudetski stated "His absence is particularly regrettable. Without the money, there would not have been a network" (Henley, 1999). Not until 2005, and after the 7/7

bombings had increased the political temperature, was Ramda deported to France. He had spent ten years challenging extradition proceedings.

Of the 27 Algerian émigrés below, six went on to be convicted here in the UK, of offences including the murder of a police officer - Kamel Bourgass in 2004 - and in the case of Nasserline Menni, financing a suicide bombing in Sweden in 2010. A further five individuals have subsequently been found guilty of terrorism offences in other EU countries, including Djamel Beghal, convicted in France on separate charges in 2005 and 2013. Beghal, like Anas and Kherbane demonstrates the globalised nature of such actors, having moved between Algeria, France, England and Afghanistan. Indeed nine of the Algerian jihadists who lived in the UK appear to have used this country as a transit point before eventually heading to participate in training camps in Afghanistan or in other conflicts – Belbacha, Benalia, Bouralha, Hadjatzb, Larussi, Loiseau, Rahman, Sayab and Sufyian. Most strikingly, alleged GIA member Djamel Loiseau was found dead after the 2001 Battle of Tora Bora with a flight ticket from London still in his possession (McNeill, 2001). A willingness to both kill and die for their beliefs is evident amongst this generation of activists - in 2005, an Algerian living in Manchester died in a suicide bombing in Iraq.

Also listed below is Sylvie Beghal, sometimes known as Umm Hamza, the wife of Djamel Beghal, and the only female in figure 3.2. Despite her husband being in prison in France, in 2004 she returned to live in Leicester, citing to sympathisers the more Islamic environment here in the UK (Mafille, 2011). She has since been controversially convicted of failing to give information to counter-terrorism officials at East Midlands Airport (Casciani, 2013). The fate of two Algerians listed below is

unknown to the author – Ali Touchent and Abu Doha Haider. The latter appears to have been held in custody in the United Kingdom until 2008, and then, known only as U in court documents, to have fought extradition to his homeland (Worthington, 2009).

A characteristic of some Algerian émigrés, particularly single young men in Britain in this timeframe, was an involvement in low level criminality.

Having fake or doctored ID papers was pretty much routine among many in the Algerian community: it went with the territory of being an illegal immigrant and was a simple necessity of a life lived in the shadows (Archer and Bawdon, 2010, 53).

The question of to what extent such lifestyles funded individual criminality and when it funded Jihadist activity is complex. Braham Benmerzouga and Baghdad Meziane, for example, were convicted of running credit card frauds and passport scams in Leicester which aided Al-Qaeda (Guardian Online, 2003) and the Metropolitan Police's Operation Springbourne found similar crimes being committed in London (Archer and Bawdon, 2010, 107). Prior to Kamel Bourgass murdering a Special Branch officer in Manchester in 2003, he was on the run from a shoplifting charge and a deportation order. At one point Bourgass was given bail, under a different name, provided he lived at Finsbury Park mosque (Manchester Online, 2005).

There is some evidence that post 2002, when the United States added the GSPC to its list of Foreign Terrorist Organisations, countries previously reluctant to take action against Algerian networks, began to act (Tawil, 2010, 184). Public perception of these events as action against Algerian jihadists however, appears to have been

blurred by immediate post 9/11 concerns about Al-Qaeda as a distinct entity. In contradiction of the public's perception of events, Mitchell Silber goes as far as to state it was Algerian civil war veterans who 'dominated' Londonistan (Silber, 2012, 25). As Jason Burke explains:

Few militants arrested in Europe in recent years have proved to be simply 'al-Qaeda', as commonly designated. Instead the majority of them, at least until 2001-2, were linked to the GIA and GSPC (Burke, 2007, 218).

In June 2006 the concept of deportation to Algeria was accepted by English courts (Foley, 2013, 220), who had previously taken into predominant consideration Algeria's reputation for torture. Following Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC) hearings, nine Algerian terrorists have since been deported to their country of origin (Foley, 2013, 220). In assessing the importance of Algerian jihadists in the United Kingdom, it is noticeable that the majority of those listed below appear to have come to the UK prior to that 2006 legal change. However the collapse of the GIA, and the GSPC's 2007 merger into Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has not brought an end to the actions of Algerian jihadists in Europe. In 2012 Algerian physicist Adlene Hicheur, who had previously worked in this country, was jailed in France for sending emails to AQIM. In the same year, Nasseridine Menni, who had been living in Glasgow, was convicted of providing financial support to a suicide bombing in Stockholm.

Figure 3.2 Algerian Jihadists in Britain

Name	Incident	Source
Abdullah Anas	Son in law of Abdullah Azzam, granted political asylum in London, having been forced	Foley (2013, 267).



	<p>out of Algeria and France.</p> <p>Served as an assistant to Azzam.</p>	<p>Wright, (2006, 134).</p>
Djamal Beghal	<p>Lived in Leicester 1997-2000, distributing Abu Qatada's work, and also travelled to Afghanistan for training.</p> <p>Convicted in France of terrorist offences in 2005 and in 2013.</p>	<p>Burke (2007, 220-1).</p> <p>Foley (2013, 115-6).</p> <p>Cageprisoners, 23/12/13.</p>
Mrs Sylvie Beghal, aka Umm Hamza	<p>Left her home in Leicester to move to Taliban controlled Afghanistan with her husband.</p> <p>French citizenship ensured she could return to Britain in 2004.</p> <p>Controversially convicted of failing to comply with Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act, she lost an appeal against this conviction in 2013.</p>	<p>Mafille, 12/10/11.</p> <p>Casciani, 28/08/13.</p>
Ahmed Belbacha	<p>Once of Hampshire, Belbacha was arrested in Pakistan after 9/11. Held in Guantanamo for over a decade before being deported to Algeria.</p> <p>Travelled from Finsbury Park Mosque to fight in Afghanistan.</p>	<p>Reprieve 14/10/10</p> <p>US Dept. of Defence, 15/01/06.</p>
Yacine Benalia	<p>Left Finsbury Park mosque to fight in Chechnya in 2001.</p>	<p>Burke, 03/10/04.</p>
Brahim Benmerzouga	<p>Lived in Leicester until jailed for 11 years in 2003, having raised funds for Al-Qaeda.</p>	<p>Guardian Online, 01/04/03.</p>
Salim Boukari	<p>Lived in the UK before being jailed in Germany for planning terrorism attack in France.</p>	<p>Taylor, 09/02/04.</p>
Kamel Rabat Bouralha	<p>Prominent among Algerian émigrés at Finsbury Park mosque.</p> <p>Went to Chechnya to fight in 2001. Reportedly captured by</p>	<p>Burke, 03/10/04.</p>

	the Russians in 2004.	
Kamel Bourgass	Convicted in 2005 of the murder of DC Stephen Oake in Manchester on 14 January 2003.	Wylie, 15/04/05.
Abbas Boutrab	From Newtownabbey in Northern Ireland. Convicted of possessing articles of use to terrorism, jailed for six years.  This was the last use of a Diplock trial, without a jury.	Channel 4 News, 24/11/05.  Court of Appeal Northern Ireland, 2007.
Haider Abu Doha. Aka Amar Makhlulif	Arrested at Heathrow on a false passport in Feb 01, in connection with Los Angeles airport millennium plot. A senior member of the GSPC, living in London.	Burke (2007, 284), Evans and Phillips (2007, 285).
Nabil Hadjarab	Travelled via Finsbury Park mosque to Afghanistan. Captured 20/12/01, having been injured at Tora Bora.	US Department of Defence, 22/1/07.
Adlene Hicheur	Jailed in France in May 2012 for 5 years for sending emails to AQIM supporters. A physicist previously at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Oxfordshire.	Muslim Weekly 16/10/09.  Shaw, 04/05/12.
Rabah Kadre	Spent four years on remand in HMP Belmarsh, fighting extradition to France.  Convicted in absentia on 16/12/04 of plotting to bomb Strasbourg market. Upon extradition did not challenge the conviction, and was subsequently deported from France to Algeria.	Cageprisoners, 8/10/09.
Qamar Eddine Kherbane	A Mujahideen veteran and leading figure in the FIS and GSPC. Granted political asylum in the UK, 1994.	Al Bawaba, 20/09/01.
Osman Larussi	Left Finsbury Park mosque to fight in Chechnya in 2001.	Burke, 03/10/04.

Djamel Loiseau	A Franco-Algerian who came to London, before travelling on to fight in Afghanistan.	Sifaoui, (2003, 101).
Nasserdine Menni	Living in Scotland.  Convicted of providing material support to Stockholm suicide bomber Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly. Also convicted of immigration and benefit frauds.	Baker, 20/07/12.
Baghdad Mezianne	Was living in Leicester until convicted in 2003 of raising funds for Al-Qaeda.  Jailed for 11 years.	Guardian Online, 01/04/03.
Rachid Ramda	Came to London in 1992 from Peshawar, held in connection to 1995 Paris Metro bombings.  Extradition rejected 2002, granted 2005. Convicted in 2006, jailed for ten years.	Curtis (2010, 390, n84)  Tawil (2010, 112)  Scotland Against Criminalising Communities, 30/03/06.
Said Amr Abd al-Rahman	Travelled from Finsbury Park mosque to Yemen in 1998, jailed for terrorism offences in Sana'a in 1999.	Quin (2005, 239).
Kamil Sagheer	Travelled from Finsbury Park mosque to Yemen in 1998, jailed for terrorism offences there in 1999.	Quin (2005, 239).
Omar Saiki	A visitor to Abu Hamza at Finsbury park mosque, subsequently jailed in France for heading a terrorist network.	Sifaoui (2003, 103)  BBC Website, 13/12/00.
Mutij Sadiz Ahmad Sayab	Came to London to be put in contact with recruiters for the jihad in Afghanistan, leaving Britain in June 2001.	US Department of Defence 22/01/07b
Barghomi Sufyian	Came to London for work, but ended up travelling onto the Afghan camps. Arrested in Pakistan in 2002.	Swinford, 26/04/11.
Ali Touchent	GIA member who visited London whilst a suspect for the Paris Metro bombings. Managed to lose British	Nasiri (2006, 278).

	surveillance officers.	
Unnamed	A French national of Algerian birth, living in Manchester. Died aged 41 committing a suicide bombing in Iraq.	Bunyan et al, 22/06/05.

### 3.3 Bangladesh

On 28 February 2011 Rajib Karim, a Bangladeshi national living on Tyneside pleaded guilty to four charges of preparing to commit acts of terrorism or assisting others to - he was subsequently jailed for 30 years. Karim first moved to the United Kingdom in 1998 to study engineering at UMIST, and married a British Muslim before returning to Bangladesh. In 2006 the family came to Britain for medical treatment, Karim taking up employment with British Airways (Gardham, 2011, A).

Although Karim produced literature and electronic media for Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, his concerns were not merely related to events in that country – he was in email contact with Anwar al-Awlaki of AQAP (MPS, 2011) who sought to use his position within aviation to facilitate a terrorist attack. In emails between the two, published upon Karim's conviction (Gardham, 2011A) it is clear that to al-Awlaki an attack on the United States is the ideal, an attack on Britain is considered a definite second choice.

Although isolated as a case, the component parts of this plot illustrate the diversity of Jihadism. We have a member of a Bangladeshi Jihadist group, working in Britain with a British family, striving with an American in Al-Qaeda in Yemen to carry out a terrorist attack against the 'far enemy' – the United States.

### 3.4 Egypt

Jihadist organisations have a long history in Egypt, most notoriously being responsible for the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat and consequent, failed coup (Heikal, 1983). Returning Egyptian fighters from the 1979-89 Afghanistan conflict were able to rejuvenate the jihadist cause in the early 1990s, and attacks on security services and western tourists followed (Tawil, 2010, 48).

The brutality of the Egyptian state's response, plus significant divisions between the Islamists within the country with regards to both tactics and strategy (Mansfield 2006, 163) ensured the jihadists became increasingly dispersed. Some exiles seeking sanctuary travelled to western nations, including an important theological figure from the Egypt, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman. A teacher of theology at al-Azhar University and leader of al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya (Wright, 2007, 56) colloquially known as the 'Blind Sheikh', Rahman migrated to the United States, despite issuing fatwas declaring a state of war existed between Christians and Muslims (Wright, 2007, 177). The first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 was followed by Rahman's conviction for inciting terrorism (Bergen, 2001, 101) and initiated a joint FBI-Metropolitan Police investigation in the United Kingdom. Case officer Bob Lambert states that Rahman "had a small but significant following in London" (Lambert, 2011, 42) and refers to reports that one of these followers, Abu Hamza, managed to both praise the attack and accuse the authorities of perpetrating a miscarriage of justice against Rahman. Such double speak, praising violence yet simultaneously expressing grievance was to become a characteristic of Abu Hamza's output.

That investigation, and the declared support for a terrorist attack on a friendly state, could have led to a questioning approach being adopted by British authorities towards exiles from Mubarak's admittedly dictatorial rule. Instead, a succession of Egyptians were allowed to settle throughout the 1990s, who had serious criminal convictions in their homeland (see figure 3.3 below). In October 2001 the Egyptian online weekly *al-Ahram* took advantage of the post 9/11 atmosphere to list a total of 29 'Egyptian-Afghans' – Egyptian citizens who it claimed were Al-Qaeda members and/or associates of the Taliban (Al-Ahram, 2001). Seven were living in Britain, four having received political asylum. Issues raised by the conduct of the Blind Sheikh in the United States do not appear to have influenced the British government's decision making – each of the four men to be granted asylum in the United Kingdom - El-Sayed Abdel-Maksud, Sayed Agami Muhalhal Mu'awwad, Yasser al-Sirri and Ahmed Hassan Rabie received it *after* Rahman's arrest. Remarkably al-Sirri received asylum even though he had allegedly been involved in an attempt to assassinate the Egyptian Prime Minister (Al-Ahram, 2001).

Replicating the pattern of behaviour that characterised Algerian émigrés in this period, Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) supporters in the capital published a newspaper, *al-Mujahidun* (Tawil, 2010, 113) and sought to influence events in their homeland from afar. Yet Egyptian Islamist violence showed no desire to act in a restrained manner, or to restrict itself to acting solely within its own borders. The 1993 attempt on the life of the Egyptian Prime Minister by the EIJ killed only a passing teenager (Mannes, 2001, 94) and an attempt to assassinate General Mubarak in Ethiopia in 1995 similarly failed, despite the support of Sudanese intelligence (Wright, 2007, 214). That year the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan was attacked (Wright, 2007, 217) and such violence even spread to Europe – the EIJ bombing a police station in

Rikeka, Croatia, to demand the release of an imprisoned operative (Mannes, 2001, 95).

Perhaps the most serious of these attacks was in November 1997 - the massacre of 58 tourists and four Egyptians by al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya in Luxor. General Mubarak responded by making clear reference to what he saw as the role of Britain and Afghanistan in its facilitation:

Terrorists are protected in countries such as England and Afghanistan.....They live on English ground and elsewhere collecting money and planning with those in Afghanistan (Nasrawi, 1997).

Mubarak's intervention was not merely rhetorical. Although he sent his personal commiserations to the families of Britons killed in the shootings, as part of the judicial investigation he sought the extradition of London based EIJ members, including Adel Abdel Bary (Curtis, 2010, 183). However, European human rights legislation prevented their removal to a country where torture was routine. The next year Abdel Bary was involved in Al-Qaeda's African embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, which killed 224 (US Department of Justice, 2012, b). Having fought extradition to the US since 1998, Abdel Bary was extradited over thirteen years later, where he has pleaded guilty to terrorism charges (Weiser, 2015).

Given the EIJ and its domestic counterpart al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya were both signatories to Bin Laden's 1998 declaration of jihad by the World Islamic Front, it is perhaps no surprise that several British based Egyptians have appeared on the UN Al-Qaeda Sanctions List. The best known name is that of Abu Hamza, who was born in Alexandria in 1958, and came here as a student before fraudulently obtaining leave to remain in Britain, and subsequently British citizenship in 1986 (O'Neill and

McGrory, 2006, 10, 13). Others, despite being categorised as contributing to Al-Qaeda's activities by the United Nations, are broadly unknown to the wider British public and have avoided legal sanction. Consider Hani Al-Sayyid al-Sebai Yusif, an exiled member of EIJ who runs the Al Maqreze Centre for Historical Studies in London. The UNSC website states:

Al-Sebai Yusif has provided material support to Al-Qaida and has conspired to commit terrorist acts. He has travelled internationally using forged documents, he has received military training and has belonged to cells and groups carrying out terrorist operations using force and violence involving intimidation, threats and damage to public and private property, as well as obstructing the activities of the public authorities (UNSC, 2005).

Another Egyptian on that list, Al Sayyid Ahmed ironically received his British passport on 11 September 2001 (UNSC, 2011b) whilst Yasser al-Sirri, convicted in absentia of terrorism charges in his homeland, cannot be extradited as he likely faces torture upon his return. His request for asylum in the United Kingdom has however been rejected (Whitehead, 2012), possibly indicative of a shift in attitude from British authorities.

During the Syrian Civil War, a significant postscript emerged concerning Abdel Bary, which raises further questions as to the wisdom of allowing Egyptian jihadists to settle in the UK. His son, Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary, is a prominent British combatant in Syria, fighting in a very similar struggle to that which his father participated in for Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Bary junior has been an enthusiastic user of social media to declare support for the Islamic State. One twitter image showed Bary in their stronghold of Raqqa, posing with a severed head and the caption "chillin with my other homie, or what's left of him" (Buchanan, 2014). A further example in the



section on Libyan exiles, the Deghayes family of Brighton (below) demonstrates the potential for those involved in jihadist groups to be followed by a second generation of activists within their own families.

Figure 3.3 Egyptian Jihadists in the UK

Individual	Comment	Source
Al Sayyid Ahmed	Listed by the UN as affiliated to Al-Qaeda.	UNSC, 2011b
Adel Abdel Bary	EIJ member  Extradited from the UK in 2012 to face American charges related to the 1998 African embassy bombings. Pleaded guilty and awaits sentence.	Tawil (2010, 112).  FBI, 06/10/12.  Weiser, 22/01/2015
Ibrahim Eidaous	EIJ member granted political asylum in Britain.  Died of leukaemia whilst fighting extradition proceedings re the 1998 embassy attacks.	Curtis (2010, 181-2)  Haley, 15/10/09.
El-Sayed Abdel-Maksud	Ran EIJ operations in Albania until moving to London and obtaining asylum.	Al-Ahram, 18/10/01.
Sayed Agami Muhalhal Mu'awwad	A member of Egyptian Islamic Jihad's Special Missions Committee. Granted political asylum in Britain in 1995, having moved here from Yemen.	Al-Ahram, 18/10/01.
Muhammad Mustafa al-Muqri	A member of Gamaa al-Islamiyya.	Tawil (2010, 112).
Ahmed Hassan Rabie	Headed the important EIJ office in Albania before claiming political asylum in Britain in 1997,	Al-Ahram, 18/10/01
Usama Rushdi	Former media spokesman of	Tawil (2010, 142).

	Gamaa al-Islamiyya.  Lived in Birmingham having fled Egypt in 1989.	Hope, 14/07/11.
Hani al-Siba'l, aka as Hani Al-Sayyid al-Sebai Yusif	A member of EIJ living in Britain since 1994.  A 1998 asylum request was rejected due to his EIJ membership.	Tawil (2010, 31, 112)  UNSC (2005).
Yasser al-Sirri	Senior figure in al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya.  Sentenced to death in absentia in Egypt for attempting to assassinate the Prime Minister in 1993. Granted political asylum here in 1994.	Bodansky (2001, 293).  Al-Ahram, 18/10/01.

### 3.5 India, Kashmir and Pakistan

Placing an exact figure on the number of Pakistanis in Britain who come from Azad Kashmir ('Free' Kashmir, that part of the disputed territory under Pakistani as opposed to Indian control) is impossible, although there are suggestions as many as two thirds could be from the Mirpur district of Azad Kashmir (Abbas, 2011, 47). Jihadist groups have sought to develop influence, funding and members via the diaspora.

An early indication events in Kashmir carried resonance in Britain came in the late 1990s, when MI5 and Greater Manchester Police's Special Branch approached Oldham Imam Shafiq Rehman to become an informant. An exile from Kashmir, Rehman was the leader of the UK chapter of Markaz Dawa Al Irshad (Wilson, 1999)

an organisation better known for its Pakistani military wing – Lashkar-e-Taiba (Gul, 2010). Noticeably it was the domestic security service, MI5, allegedly seeking to recruit Rehman, not its internationally focused partner, MI6.

LeT (the Army of the Righteous) is a group with whom British Muslims could receive paramilitary training from at least 1999 (see chapter five), enjoyed a profile in the United Kingdom for some years. Leader, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed conducted a speaking tour in London, Birmingham and Rochdale in 1995 (Fisk, 2010). Banned domestically in 2001 (Horne and Douse, 2013) and in Pakistan 2002, LeT went on to commit the 2008 Mumbai attacks, killing 166 people (Fisk, 2010). One LeT member suspected of involvement in that attack, Raheel Shaikh, has been sought by the authorities in the West Midlands, where he was believed to be hiding. A further LET member, David Headley, now imprisoned for terrorist offences in the United States, has informed authorities he travelled to Derby to meet LET members there in an attempt to arrange an attack on Jyllands-Posten, the Danish newspaper which had published cartoons of Muhammad (Hill, 2010).

The tendency for Pakistani jihadist groups to develop support networks in Britain is not merely confined to the LeT. Masood Azhar who led the Harkat ul-Ansar (Movement for the Victorious) was an enthusiastic visitor to British Muslim communities, especially those from Kashmir.

Raising funds and recruits, his oratorical reputation preceding him and packing out mosques up and down the country, Masood had targeted working-class Pakistani expatriates, who maintained strong links with their old homes and had transformed places like Mirpur in Pakistan controlled Kashmir, into boom towns (Levy and Scott-Clark, 2012, 296).

The potential for visiting speakers to both motivate exiles and seek to shift young British Muslims in a particular direction is evident when their literature is studied. Kalim Siddiqui (see chapter two) had been clear that jihad was obligatory for British Muslims, regardless of their location. So Masood Azhar was explicit in publications such as *“The Virtues of Jihad”* (Azhar, n.d). But he also informed Western Muslims of the power this concept gave them, of the fear he insisted their belief induced in Western elites. The back cover of the *“The Virtues of Jihad”* declaring:

They are afraid of those Muslim youths of Europe who openly stroll the streets of London and Paris wearing military clothing and are eager and anxious to participate in the defence of Bosnia (Azhar, n.d)

Azhar’s visits to Britain were to come to an abrupt end when he was arrested by the Indian authorities for terrorist offences, having unwisely crossed into Indian controlled territory. In 1997 his Harkat ul-Ansar was designated a terrorist group by the US (Mir, 2008, 131) but simply changed its name and carried on as before. Azhar was to spend 1994-99 in custody, despite a young British admirer, Omar Saeed Sheikh taking Western hostages in New Delhi in an attempt to force his leader’s freedom (Levy and Scott-Clark, 2012, 219). Sheikh and Azhar were eventually to escape from Indian custody in the most dramatic of circumstances – flown to Taliban controlled Afghanistan in 1999 in a swap for Indian civilians on a hijacked plane held in Kabul (Hussain, 2007, 62).

On his release Masood Azhar returned triumphantly to Pakistan and formed a new organisation devoted to Jihad - Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM, the Army of Muhammad), with significant theological support from Pakistani Deobandi scholars (Mir, 2008,

131-2). Here again, the interplay between Pakistani exiles settled in Britain, and those participating in jihad at home, came to fruition. In Birmingham Azhar had met Abdul Rauf, the former judge at one of Kashmir's sharia courts. His son, Rashid Rauf, was to join Azhar in the JeM (Levy and Scott-Clark, 2012, 296) one of an estimated 300 British Muslims of Pakistani heritage to receive training with the JeM (Mir, 2008, 86). Rashid Rauf was to go on to play a central role in a 2006 plot by jihadists from London and High Wycombe to attack airliners (Silber, 2012, 51) eventually being killed by an American missile strike (see figure 5.5)

Figure 3.4 Jihadists from India, Kashmir and Pakistan

Name	Details	Source
Hanif Mohammed Umerji Patel aka Tiger Hanif	Fled counter-terrorism officials in India in 1996, and has fought extradition against charges of killing Hindus.	Manchester Evening News, 18/04/13.
David Headley aka Daood Gilani	LeT member who visited Derby in 2009, seeking support for a terrorist attack in Denmark.  Subsequently jailed for 35 years in the US.	Hill, 11/11/10.  Henderson, 24/01/13.
Shafiq Rehman	LeT member who became an Imam in Oldham in 1993.	Rawstorne, 17/08/99.
Raheel Shaikh	LeT member sought after the Mumbai attacks. Indian authorities believed he was living in Birmingham.	Erwin, 21/09/09.

### 3.6 Jordan

The importance of Abu Qatada to émigré Islamists in Britain is a recurring theme in this chapter, but his influence also extended to those fighting to establish sharia in Muslim majority lands. Shortly prior to 9/11, Osama Bin Laden was criticised by the Takfirist Wal Hijra group, on the somewhat obscure grounds that he supported and was protected by the Taliban, who had sought recognition from the apostate United Nations (Burke, 2007, 184). Bin Laden turned to London, and Abu Qatada for a religious ruling in support of his actions: “His fatwa, running to sixty-eight pages of closely written Arabic, was widely circulated in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere” (Burke, 2007, 184).

This role of theological adviser was one Qatada had performed previously for groups participating in armed struggle. In February 1995 Algeria’s GIA caused outrage by issuing a fatwa stating it was permissible to kill the immediate female relatives of security personnel. In London, the GIA’s *al-Ansar* newspaper published Qatada’s support for this position (Tawil, 2010, 114) and he appears to have flourished in this period as a theological guide (Nasiri, 2006, 269). His tapes on jihad were found in the property of the 2004 Madrid bombers (Neumann, 2008, 47-8). The narrative listing on the UNSC website, which provides a detailed explanation for Qatada’s presence on their Al-Qaeda Sanctions List, lists his involvement with no fewer than seven jihadist organisations:

1. Al-Qaeda
2. GIA – Algeria
3. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
4. Egyptian Islamic Jihad

5. GSPC – Algeria
6. Al-Qaeda in Iraq
7. Ansar al-Islam – Iraq

In addition to the above, the UN credits Qatada with advising “extremist groups” from Libya, Morocco and Tunisia and “Al-Qaeda related groups” in the United Kingdom. Omar Nasiri was present when Qatada, during a Friday sermon at the Four Feathers, shifted his allegiances due to the volume of Muslims being killed in Algeria:

The GIA had overreached; they were not in a position to decide who the real Muslims were and were not. Abu Qatada made it very clear that he believed it was the responsibility of every Muslim to work for the overthrow of secular regimes everywhere. But he also said the GIA had no right at all to kill other Muslims (Nasiri, 2006, 272).

Qatada’s twenty years in London, and the inability of the authorities to either charge him with terrorism offences in Britain or deport him to face the courts in Jordan following his original arrest in 2002, mirror those concerning particular Jihadis from both Egypt and Algeria. Indeed a similar process was attempted with Jordan, to that eventually agreed with Algeria (Foley, 2013, 220) of deportation with assurances (DWA) – that a suspect could be deported to a country if specific commitments were made by that nation not to abuse the individual, or use evidence against them that had been extracted by torture.

The second Jordanian jihadist to gain prominence within British Islam – Mahmoud Abu Rideh – proved to be almost as controversial a figure as Qatada. Like Qatada a man of Palestinian heritage, Rideh was a veteran of the Afghan Mujahideen who

moved to Britain in 1995, where he became an important fund raiser for Al-Qaeda (Tax, 2012, 37). Here, Rideh encouraged Britons such as Moazzam Begg to move to Taliban controlled Afghanistan, and is alleged to have worked with Begg to set up a girl's school for the daughters of foreign fighters in the Taliban's Emirate (Tax, 2012, 39). An interesting example of cross-fertilisation between domestic and international Islamists, and the direction such interaction may take.

Detained in the wave of arrests here following 9/11, Rideh was not charged with any terrorist offence, but eventually placed on a control order, restricting both his movements and associations (HHugs, 2007). The lack of any charge and his ill-health ensured Rideh's case became a cause celebre, with sympathetic coverage in newspapers such as *The Guardian* (Saner, 2009). In an emotive interview with his old associate Moazzam Begg, support group Cage reported that so damaged was Rideh by the restrictive nature of his control order, that he was confined to a wheelchair (Begg, 2008, a). Subsequently Rideh's family was to return to Jordan, and he appears to have reached an agreement whereby his control order would end in 2009 if he left the UK (Gardham and Swami, 2010).

Curiously Rideh then travelled to Syria and Pakistan, and in 2010 was killed in an airstrike in Afghanistan, having re-joined former comrades in Al-Qaeda (Gardham and Swami, 2010). This development proved somewhat difficult for supporters in the UK, with Victoria Brittain writing euphemistically that he was a "prisoner until he died" and commenting on the nature of his death merely by noting Rideh's departure from England and locating it inaccurately. "He later died in Pakistan in December 2010, almost exactly nine years to the date he was first detained" (Brittain, 2011).



Fig 3.5 Jordanian Jihadists in Britain

Name	Details	Source
Hussain Saleh Hussain Alsamamara	Came to Britain in 2001. Wanted by Jordanian authorities for terrorist offences, including association with Al-Qaeda in Iraq.	Watson, 16/06/10.
Abu Qatada	Involved with the GIA and raised funds in Britain for the Chechen Mujahideen.	UNSC, 2009, a.
Mahmoud Abu Rideh	Moved to the UK in 1995, granted leave to remain in 1998.  Killed in an airstrike in Afghanistan whilst accompanying Al-Qaeda fighters.	HHugs, 01/01/07.  Gardham and Swami, 16/12/10.

### 3.7 Libya

Western commentators once had a tendency to portray the Gadaffi regime as the example *par excellence* of Islamic state terrorism. Consider for example references to the “Islamic revolutionary warfare waged by Libya against the USA and Europe” (Hollingsworth and Fielding, 1999, 143) or the views of early terrorism specialist Claire Sterling, who observed Gadaffi styling himself as “the Ayatollah Khomeini of Africa and the Mediterranean” (Sterling, 1981, 267).

Libya was a state sponsor of terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s (Lacquer, 1999, 66). However few were discerning enough to acknowledge Colonel Gadaffi faced considerable internal challenge from those who did not consider his regime sufficiently rooted in sharia. Gadaffi’s attempts to style himself as an Islamic leader

of significance first came awry in 1973, when he convened the International Islamic Youth Conference in Tripoli. His attempts to emphasise an idiosyncratic combination of religion, nationalism and socialism as an answer to the world's problems, the 'Third Universal Theory', was decisively rejected by the internationally assembled Muslim youth, who instead sought answers within their faith (Sardar, 2004, 157-8).<sup>7</sup>

Opposition from Islamists within Libya was at times fierce – armed conflict between the state and jihadist actors flaring in 1986, 1987 and 1989 (Tawil, 2010, 33-4), yet Lacquer's overview of Libyan terrorism is solely focused on that funded and encouraged by Gaddafi – an example perhaps of the limitations in approach of orthodox terrorism researchers. The threat posed by the Libyan state to western governments was observed, that possibly posed to Libya by Islamic actors overlooked.

The failure of the armed opposition to cause critical damage to the Libyan regime led many surviving Islamists to leave for the more welcoming environment of Afghanistan, where they were able to re-group. Some exiles also moved to the United Kingdom, where it is alleged the approach to Libyan dissidents was permissive:

In time Great Britain found friends in Qaddhafi's enemies – especially in the radical religious movements, which saw Qaddhafi as too moderate and adhering to an Islam that was too lax. One of those movements has gotten recent attention: the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (Brisard and Dasquie, 2002, 100).

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<sup>7</sup> The British delegate at this conference was Kalim Siddiqui, whose contribution to domestic Islamism is discussed in chapter two.

The LIFG combined into a single organisation Islamists suppressed by Gadaffi's dictatorship, and those with battlefield experience from Afghanistan (Tawil, 2010, 49). This appears to have been sufficient to overtake the rival oppositionists of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL) and by the mid-1990s "the nationalists had been replaced by the jihadists" (Tawil, 2010, 57). The displacement of nationalist actors by those stressing overtly religious rhetoric – a characteristic we have already seen in Kashmir and amongst armed Palestinian groups – ensured the Gadaffi regime became fully cognisant of the threat it faced from armed Islamists. Given Gadaffi's reputation as a proponent of 'Islamic terrorism' it is a considerable irony that the first warrant issued for the arrest of Osama Bin Laden, came not from the United States or Saudi Arabia, but was issued by the Libyan authorities in March 1998 (Brisard and Dasquie, 2002, 155), leading to an Interpol warrant the next month.

This research names a total of 17 Libyan jihadists to base themselves at some stage in the United Kingdom. The best known of the LIFG exiles in Britain is Anas al-Liby, who applied for asylum in the United Kingdom in 1995, and lived in Manchester until fleeing ahead of a counter-terrorism raid in 2000 (Curtis, 2010, 230). It was in al-Liby's Manchester home that the authorities discovered a core Al-Qaeda instruction manual (Lewis, 2008), "*Military Studies in the Jihad against the Tyrants*" whilst in this period the LIFG bulletin, *Al-Fajr*, was published from London (Tawil, 2010, 113).

The presence of al-Liby had long been controversial. In 1996 Egypt requested his extradition, as part of their investigation into a 1995 plot to assassinate Hosni Mubarak on a Presidential visit to Ethiopia (Curtis 2010, 230). In a preliminary

example of debates which were to reoccur with alleged jihadis who had settled here, the British authorities declined to act on the grounds of Egypt's sorry human rights record. Not until 2014 when he was arrested by American Special Forces in Tripoli did it appear as if al-Liby may answer in court for alleged participation in the 1998 African embassy bombings, but early in 2015 he was to die, in US custody, of cancer (Cage, 2015).

Although less well known in the public narrative of counter-terrorism than al-Liby, other leaders of the LIFG were also present in Britain during the 1990s. Consider for example Abu al-Mundhir al-Sa'idi, who served as the LIFG's primary interpreter of Islamic law, and attended key meetings in Kandahar in 2000, where Al-Qaeda and other exiled Arab fighters sought to formalise their relationship with the Taliban (Tawil, 2010, 167-9). LIFG exiles in Britain were not focused solely on matters of protocol however. When an attempt was made to assassinate Colonel Gaddafi in 1997, the LIFG issued its claim of responsibility to Arabic newspapers in London, leading to a formal complaint from the Libyan government about what it considered to be a threat to its sovereignty from British soil (Canada, 1999).

There was also clear interaction between LIFG exiles here and international jihadist groups with much broader remits than the fight against Gaddafi. As well as al-Liby, Abdul Baset Azzouz, an LIFG member and associate of Al-Qaeda's Aymaan al-Zawahiri, made his home in Manchester in the 1990s. After being restricted on a control order in Britain, he later returned to Al-Qaeda circles in both Pakistan and Libya (Mendick et al, 2014).

Any substantial analysis of Libyan jihadist exiles in the United Kingdom is made more complicated by the peculiar and shifting political backdrop to their presence.

The nature of the UK government's relationship with Libya over the past thirty years reads as a series of diverse fluctuations - from foe in the Thatcher era, to eventual friend at one stage under Tony Blair, and then back to foe again during the Arab Spring and the uprising against Colonel Gadaffi. These shifts had a pronounced effect on the Islamist opposition to Gadaffi, and their security in Great Britain. The LIFG for example was not designated a terrorist group by the United Kingdom until October 2005 – *after* the Blair government's rapprochement with Colonel Gadaffi (Curtis, 2010, 229). This delay occurred despite the group having been recorded by the UNSC Al-Qaeda Sanctions List on 6 October 2001, and that of the US Justice Department following 9/11.

The practical consequences of the listing of declared terrorist organisations impacted on the 2007 trial of three LIFG members from Birmingham, arrested shortly before their organisation's proscription (see figure 3.6). They mounted a defence centring on the LIFG's previous legality. This failed, in particular because the prosecution was able to link both the LIFG and the defendants to support for broader jihadist causes – for example in Algeria (Birmingham Mail, 2007). This case serves as an indication the LIFG's ambitions were not limited to the mere removal from power of Colonel Gadaffi, but that they exercised support for causes beyond Libya's national borders. This appears a common trait amongst exiled jihadists in the United Kingdom, already seen with those from Algeria, Egypt and Jordan, where solidarity is expressed across a series of Jihadist organisations from differing nations.

Paradoxically, Blair's rapprochement with Libya appears to have seen counter-terrorism policy swing from the extreme of not appearing to consider Libyan Islamist

exiles an issue, to the other extreme of assistance in their illegal removal to Colonel Gaddafi's jails. A compensation payment of \$3.5 million was made by the British government to Sami al Saadi in December 2012 after exposure of a joint rendition operation between the United Kingdom, USA and Libya (Al Jazeera, 2012). In its period of cooperation with the Libyan regime, MI6 reportedly opened a mosque in an undisclosed European city, in partnership with Libyan intelligence, to lure potential terrorists (Lewis, 2012), and used a Libyan security agent to monitor exiles across the north west of England (Buaras, 2011).

Such co-operation ceased following the Libyan uprising in 2011, when British policy shifted again – to support the overthrow of the regime. Interestingly from this point declarations concerning the problematic nature of Islamist radicals on British soil re-entered the rhetoric of the Libyan authorities. During the consequent civil war, Gaddafi attempted to characterise the campaign against him as a terrorist plot, led by jihadists. One example of this was the parading of Salah Mohammed Ali Abu Obah (named as Salah Mohammed Ali Aboaoba in some press reports), reportedly captured in fighting on Libya's north coast.

Mr Abu Obah said he had arrived in Libya from Manchester, England where he had lived for more than a decade as a member of the LIFG's economic department, raising money from local mosques and Islamic charities to fund the group's operations (Clover, 2011).

Abu Obah went on to inform western journalists he had helped four LIFG members from Manchester enter Libya via Tunisia, and in an interview with Channel 4 News to state he raised funds for the LIFG at Didsbury Mosque in south Manchester (Miller, 2011).

Domestically Libyan Islamists have seemingly had impact on indigenous strains of Islam. For example, it is alleged that by 2001 the Deghayes brothers, Abubaker and Omar, had worked with Abu Qatada and Afghan jihad veterans to oust more moderate figures at Brighton mosque (Whine, 2009, 21). Much greater focus was to be placed on the Deghayes family when Omar was arrested in Pakistan in 2002, having fled US occupied Afghanistan. That the stories of Islamists who have settled in Britain are at times far from binary is evidenced by the Deghayes family. Omar spent five years in Guantanamo Bay, where he was beaten so badly he lost an eye (Cobain, 2010). Three of Omar Deghayes nephews, all sons of Abubaker, have fought for the Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat Al-Nusra during the Syrian Civil War, where two have been killed (see fig 5.20). Recruitment of foreign fighters to Jabhat Al-Nusra is strictly on the basis of recommendation:

Jabhat al-Nusra imposes high barriers to entry for foreigners. They must first be vetted and vouched for by someone already in the organisation in a process known as receiving *tazkiyah*. The system has worked well for Arabs with links to the group but it has made it more difficult for Europeans wanting to join (Maher, 2014)

That three young men from Brighton were able to pass this vetting may indicate a recommendation rooted in familial connections.

Fig 3.6 Libyan Jihadists in Britain

Name	Detail	Source
Abdulbasit Abduirahim	A senior LIFG member in Libya who maintained his influence whilst in the UK.	US Embassy, 26/02/08.
Khaled Abusalama	From Birmingham, jailed for 22 months in trial with Kamoka (below)	Birmingham Mail 12/06/07

Abdel Baset Azouz	<p>Moved to Manchester in 1994. Arrested in 2006 and subsequently placed on a control order.</p> <p>Designated a global terrorist by the United States in 2014. An associate of the Al-Qaeda leadership, left Britain for Pakistan, then to head the group's activities in Libya.</p>	<p>Qureshi 23/04/08.</p> <p>US Gov, Federal Register, 07/10/14.</p> <p>Mendick et al, 27/09/14.</p>
Noman Benotman	<p>A former member of the Shura Council of the LIFG.</p> <p>Now a prominent critic of jihadist groups.</p>	Tawil (2010, 19, n2).
Abdul Bourouag	From Birmingham, jailed for 22 months in trial with Kamoka (below)	Birmingham Mail 12/06/07
Omar Deghayes	Informed the Americans he worked for the LIFG's Sanibel charity in Taliban controlled Afghanistan.	US Department of Defence memo: Secret 20290410 (10 April 2004).
Abdelrazag Elsharif Elost	Involved in fund raising for the LIFG in Britain.	US Embassy, 26/02/08
Ismail Kamoka	From Lewisham, jailed for three years nine months for supplying LIFG with cash and fake passports.	Birmingham Mail 12/06/07
Anas al-Liby	<p>Fled Manchester ahead of a counter terrorism raid in 2000. Arrested in Libya in 2014 in connection with the 1998 Al-Qaeda bombings of US embassies in Africa.</p> <p>Died 2015.</p>	<p>Curtis (2010, 230)</p> <p>Cage, 13/02/15.</p>
Maftah Mohamed El Mabruk	Fundraiser for the LIFG in Britain.	US Embassy, 26/02/08
Taher Nasuf	Listed by the UN Al Qaida Sanctions Committee in 2006 as a member of the LIFG, and as running the associated Sanabel Relief Agency.	UNSC, 13/08/09.
Salah Mohammed Ali Abu	Alleged LIFG fighter from	Miller, 15/03/11.



Obah	Manchester captured during the Libyan Civil War.	
Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq aka Abdel Hakim Belhadj	Reported to be the leader of the LIFG, and resident in London in the mid-90s.	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1999.
Abu al-Mundhir al-Saidi. Aka Abu Munthir.	The LIFG's Head of Islamic Law	Tawil (2010, 138, n4).
Faraj Hassan al-Saadi	A Libyan who had lived in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Italy before coming to the UK in 2002.  Designated as a terrorist by the UN.	Secretary of State for the Home Department v Saadi, 21/12/09.

### 3.8 Maldives

The Republic of Maldives may not be the first location which springs to mind when considering jihadist actors. Yet some intriguing snippets of information suggest an Islamist organisation from the islands, Jamaat Tul Muslimeen (JTM), is based in the United Kingdom. In November 2008 a cable sent by the US Secretary of State to US embassies, subsequently published by Wilileaks, stated Islamists in the Maldives had developed links with Al-Qaeda and Pakistan's LeT, and that JTM:

...is an extremist group based in the UK that follows an extremist ideology known as Takfir that actively encourages violent jihad and supports criminality against apostate states (US Secretary of State, 2008).

Whilst Maldivian jihadists appear to have their closest links to Pakistan (Roberts, 2011) interaction with suspected terrorists from the UK has been reported in both the local and Indian media in 2005 and 2007 respectively (Roberts, 2011).

### 3.9 Morocco

This research finds two Moroccan jihadists who have spent time in the United Kingdom. Jamal Ajouaou serves as a further example of the international nature of the jihadist scene in Britain. When designated a suspected international terrorist by the Home Secretary in December 2001, his associations were not with a Moroccan or British organisation, but with the Algerian GIA and GSPC, the Egyptian al-Gamaa al-Islamiya and the Chechen jihadists around Ibn Khattab (SIAC, 2003).

Houria Chahed Chentouf offers a comparatively rare example of a female Islamist convicted of terrorist offences in the UK, for the possession of material of use to a terrorist. She dropped a memory stick out of her burka at John Lennon airport on in 2008, containing weapons making guides.

Figure 3.7 Moroccan Jihadists in Britain

Name	Details	Source
Jamal Ajouaou	A Moroccan citizen who came to the UK. Prevented from returning to the UK on the basis of his support for a series of jihadist groups.	SIAC, 29/10/03.
Houria Chahed Chentouf	A dual Moroccan /Dutch citizen, who has lived in Manchester. Jailed for 2 years in 2009.	BBC Website, 02/11/09.

### 3.10 Palestinian Territories

This research names five Palestinian Jihadists who have settled in the United Kingdom, the majority having some association with the Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas. In London, Muhammad Sawalha has been a high profile figure

since fleeing Israeli security services in 1990, where he led Hamas leader in the West Bank. Sawalha has held the position of UK official on the Political Committee of the International Muslim Brotherhood Organisation in the UK (Vidino, 2010, 140) and was a founder of the Muslim Association of Britain, leading it for eight years (ITIC, 2010) - a rare example of someone from a jihadist background taking a position in an outward facing Muslim representative body.

Hamas has also published its monthly, *Filastin al-Muslima* in the UK since 1981, and a children's publication, *al-Fateh*, from London (ITIC, 2010A). Some imagery in the later, for example featuring a child in the uniform of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, may be pushing the boundaries of British laws with regards to incitement.

In international terms, perhaps the most important Palestinian jihadist to move to London has been Abu Walid, whose name appears in several of the histories of the era characterised as 'Londonistan'. Abu Walid was reportedly 'second in command' to Abu Qatada at the Four Feathers Islamic Centre in north London, and was a veteran of the Afghan camps (Nasiri, 2006, 246, 268). In this period, the French security services reportedly discussed assassinating Walid in London (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 126), although he appears to have faded from prominence after moving to Afghanistan (Nasiri, 2006, 282).

Figure 3.8 Palestinian Jihadists in Britain

Name	Detail	Source
Maged Akil	A member of Hamas exiled in London	IDF, 27/12/10.
Zahar Birawi	Hamas exile based in London,	IDF, 27/12/10

	who had a prominent role in the Muslim Association of Britain	
Muhammad Sawalha.	Hamas leader who fled to London and has been a leading figure in exile circles	Finkelstone, 20/04/94.
Abu Walid	A Palestinian associated with the Algerian GIA, who lived in Wembley.	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 126)
Majad El Zir	Hamas exile based in London	IDF, 27/12/10

### 3.11 Saudi Arabia

The importance of Saudi Arabian exiles in Britain to Al-Qaeda has been established in chapter one – it was the London based Advice and Reformation Committee who first distributed the series of pronouncements Bin Laden issued from 1994 onwards. Peter Bergen, who was to interview Bin Laden in Afghanistan for CNN in 1997, began his journey to the Islamic Emirate in the London suburb of Dollis Hill, meeting Saudi exiles Khaled al-Fawwaz, and later Dr Saad al-Fagih who facilitated his eventual question and answer session with the leader of Al-Qaeda (Bergen, 2001, 4). Whilst this thesis names only four Saudi jihadists to take up residence in Britain, all moved to London in the 1990s, and have been prominent figures in causes they espouse.

Bergen suggests the direct nature of Bin Laden's early statements caused some dissent amongst his followers in London – the ARC's Khaled al-Fawwaz observing it un-Islamic to kill civilians (Bergen, 2001, 96). Despite these tactical differences, in terms of strategy Bin Laden and al-Fawwaz appeared to be comfortable together "Arab journalists in the know referred to al-Fawwaz as 'bin Laden's ambassador to

Britain” (Atwan, 2006, 16). How this worked in practice is described by Abdel Bari Atwan:

In November 1996 he came to the offices of the newspaper al-Quds al-Arabi, where I am Editor-in-Chief, and after some courteous preliminaries and beating around the bush asked if I would be interested in travelling to Afghanistan to interview bin Laden, who had recently gone into hiding (Atwan, 2006, 16).

Thus was the need of all terrorist organisations – for the nourishment of publicity – satiated. Journalist Mark Hollingsworth indicates that al-Fawwaz’s involvement with Al-Qaeda extended from publicity into military matters. An interview at a north London Pizza Hut on 4 December 1996 allegedly contained the statement:

I have been discussing with Bin Laden and his supporters a radical change of strategy.....Instead of focusing on overthrowing the Saudi royal regime, the focus will be on targeting the US as the principle enemy (Hollingsworth, 2001).

Arrested in 1998 in connection with the African embassy bombings conducted by Al-Qaeda, al-Fawwaz fought extradition indefatigably until he was deported to America in 2012. At the time of writing his trial has just commenced.

Since his deportation, perhaps the best known Saudi exile connected to the United Kingdom is a man not actually in the country. Shaker Aamer is the longest serving Guantanamo Bay detainee with a British connection – he had been resident in Britain for some of the period prior to his arrest in Afghanistan in 2001, and his immediate family live here. Aamer was transferred to Guantanamo in 2002, and after being tortured, has remained there ever since (Amnesty International, n.d). In terms

of the reasons for his initial arrest, Aamer had fought in Bosnia, and later in Afghanistan in 2000, and was an associate of a series of convicted jihadist actors such as Richard Reid and Zaccarias Moussaoui (Simcox, 2012). Captured at Tora Bora, where Al-Qaeda and the Taliban fought a desperate last stand following the US invasion, he had earlier worked in Afghanistan for Al-Qaeda affiliated charity the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (CRT Briefing, 2015).

Figure 3.9 Saudi Arabian Jihadists in Britain

Name	Details	Source
Shaker Aamer	A Saudi citizen who is the last British resident in Guantanamo Bay. Fought in Afghanistan in 2000, and worked for an Al-Qaeda related charity.	Simcox, 18/01/12.  CRT Briefing, 2015.
Dr Saad al-Fagih	A Saudi dissident in London and long term associate of Bin Laden	Bergen (2001, 5).
Khaled al-Fawwaz	Propagandist for bin Laden in London until his arrest in 1998.  Extradited to the US in 2012 in connection to Al-Qaeda's African embassy bombings. Currently on trial in the US.	Jacquard (2002, 94).  Weiser, 22/01/2015.
Muhammad al-Massari	Helped Bin Laden develop a London office in 1994.	BBC Press Office, 07/03/04.

### 3.12 Syria

In 1982 an armed rebellion by the Muslim Brotherhood, and the associated Fighting Vanguard, in Hama, was crushed by Hafiz al-Assad (Tawil, 2010, 33). In the period

since then at least six important jihadists from Syria have spent considerable time living in Britain (see fig 3.10). Here important theoretical work was begun which impacted significantly on support for the Taliban's Islamic Emirate.

Abu Mus'ab al-Suri ranks as one of the most significant theoreticians and practitioners of contemporary jihadism. He is the subject of a major critical work in English – Brynjar Lia's *“Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri”* (2014) and al-Suri's *“The Call to Global Islamic Resistance”* has been partially translated into English as *“A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto”* (2008) by Jim Lacey for United States Joint Forces Command.

Having been part of the failed 1982 uprising, a disillusioned al-Suri later moved to Afghanistan, and worked as a trainer in Al-Qaeda camps from 1988-91. A founder member of the organisation, he appears to have taken his own route post 1991 (Tawil, 2010, 29) moving to Spain, then living in London from 1994-7 (Lia, 2014, 110). Here he edited the Algerian *Al-Ansar* newsletter for the GIA with Abu Hamza (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 114) although his biographer suggests al-Suri was also commuting repeatedly between Afghanistan, Britain, Spain and Sudan (Lia, 2014, 111). Indeed whilst the opportunity existed for al-Suri to fight with the GIA in Algeria, life in the United Kingdom appears to have been a more appropriate environment:

He had already begun to make a name for himself as a jihadi intellectual and writer and clearly felt a much stronger attraction to London and its vibrant environment of Islamists and exiled jihadis, than to the GIA's self-declared 'Caliphate' and its vulnerable 'liberated zones' south of Algiers (Lia, 2014, 120).

This serves as a further illustration of the attraction of life in Britain, in this period, to jihadists from many differing Arab nations. A second characteristic al-Suri

demonstrates is the ability of jihadist fighters to operate cross-nationally – in London he appears to have contributed his thoughts to the literature of the GIA, LIFG and Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Lia, 2014, 152) before setting up his own media organisation in 1996, the Islamic Conflict Studies Bureau (Lia, 2014, 160).

What seems to have broken al-Suri's comfortable existence in London was not any concern from the authorities, but the Taliban's establishment of sharia in Afghanistan. So impressed by the Taliban was al-Suri that he appears to have convinced other Islamists of the need to rally behind them (Tawil, 2010, 146). This persuasion "justified both fighting alongside the Taliban and immigrating to areas under their control" (Tawil, 2010, 147). Accordingly al-Suri left the United Kingdom for life in the Taliban's Islamic utopia.

Other Syrians in Britain preferred to support the Taliban from a distance. Omar Bakri Muhammad left his native Syria as a teenager in 1982, having also been part of the Muslim Brotherhood's failed uprising against President Hafez al-Assad (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 105). He claims to have studied at Egypt's prestigious Al-Azhar University and in Saudi Arabia, before entering Britain as a political refugee in 1986, and becoming active in HuT. A significant doctrinal difference was to emerge in that organisation, whose focus since its inception had been on developing the caliphate in the homeland of Islam – the Middle East. Omar Bakri Muhammad's belief in extending the caliphate to Britain was contra to HuT's core focuses and in 1996 he was expelled (Watson, 2008, 44-5). The group he subsequently founded, Al-Muhajiroun has been pivotal to British jihadism, and is discussed in detail in the next



chapter. Bakri Muhammad was to leave Britain for Lebanon shortly after the 7/7 bombings, and has not been allowed to return to the country.

Following the 2011 uprising against President Assad of Syria, one of the first jihadist fighters in the country to gain international recognition was a Salafi cleric previously based at the Al-Ansar Institute in Poplar in east London, Abu Bashir al-Tartusi (Loeb, 2012) the assumed name of Shaykh Abdul Mun'em Mustafa Halimah Abu Basir. In some ways al-Tartusi was the type of Islamic voice the British authorities were keen to engage with – he robustly condemned 7/7, and argued it was illegitimate for any Muslims with British citizenship to attack their host (Brandon, 2008, 22).

However, signs of the potentially problematic nature of al-Tartusi's thought were present well before the Syrian conflict began. He is a takfiri – a believer in declaring other Muslims apostate if they do not meet his exact jurisprudence, with the accompanying disputes and conflicts such actions may bring. Most noticeably al-Tartusi declared the head of the International Union for Muslim Scholars, and senior Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Yusuf al-Qaradawi apostate. The grounds for this included al-Qaradawi's perceived criticisms of the Taliban, acceptance of Muslims joining the US army and his support for multi-party democracy (Turkish Weekly, 2008).

Since returning to his homeland to join the jihad, al-Tartusi has stressed the importance of Islamic opposition to the existing regime and appears completely focused on the 'near enemy' (Bunzel, 2013). On that at least, he and al-Qaradawi are in agreement.

Figure 3.10 Syrian Jihadists in Britain

Individual	Details	Source
Omar Bakri Muhammad	Involved in HuT before founding Al-Muhajiroun, a group now proscribed under the Terrorism Act.	Watson (2008, 45).
Abi Dahdah	Syrian who eventually obtained Spanish citizenship. Spent time at Finsbury Park mosque, before being convicted of terrorist offences in Spain.	Leiken (2012, 182.)
Mohammed Al Ghabra	Damascus born but resident in east London, was added to the United Nations Al-Qaeda sanctions list in 2009.	UNSC (2011b).
Abu Messaab	Wrote for the Algerian GIA journal, Al-Ansar, which was based in London. Had fought in the Afghan Mujahideen.	Roy (2004, 299).
Mustafa Setmariam Nasar. Alias Abu Musab al-Suri	Lived in Neasden from 1995. Edited the GIA publication Al-Ansar.  Captured in Pakistan in 2005.	Curtis, 2010, 390-1, n84).  UNSC (2011).
Abu Bashir al-Tartusi	Syrian born cleric from Tower Hamlets, prominent in the jihad against President Assad.	Loeb, 22/10/12.

### 3.13 Tunisia

This research names one Tunisian jihadist to have spent significant time in the United Kingdom. A former professional footballer, Nizar Trabelsi developed important contacts in Islamist circles and offers an interesting example of a Jihadist actor from North Africa moving across several different environments but working with British born Islamists in an attempt to bomb Western targets.

British shoe bombers Richard Reid and Saajid Badat (who eventually changed his mind about blowing up a transatlantic flight) were both associates (O'Neill and

McGrory, 2006, 227) although claims also exist that Trabelsi had a much more senior role as Badat's handler (Lambert, 2011, 203). All three men attended Finsbury Park mosque and spent time together at an Islamic seminary in Pakistan (Silber, 2012, 31-2).

After living in Britain, Trabelsi travelled to Afghanistan, and was one of a group of jihadists in Belgium encouraged by Al-Qaeda to conduct terrorist attacks in Europe. He was subsequently jailed for ten years for plotting to attack a military base in Belgium (Silber, 2012, 310).

### **3.14 Al-Qaeda in the United Kingdom**

This country has been a repeated place of entry for Al-Qaeda members (see fig 3.11) with at least twelve significant individuals known to have passed through the country. Ramzi Binalshibh, seen with Khalid Sheikh Muhammad as the key strategist behind the co-ordinated attacks on the United States in 2001 (Fouda and Fielding, 2003) spent a week in London nine months prior to 9/11. Members of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and AQAP have travelled to the United Kingdom, whilst figures such as Anas al-Liby, Ramzi Yousef and Nizar Trabelsi all lived in Britain before being facing charges for serious offences in other countries, Yousef and Trabelsi being convicted, al-Liby dying before he came to trial.

Despite the proscription of Al-Qaeda, only a handful of prosecutions for membership of the organisation have occurred. Rather than reticence, Frank Foley explains the low number of legal cases in terms of the characteristics of such organisations; "the

informal nature of their networks in Britain means that ‘membership’ of such a group is difficult to prove” (Foley, 2013, 200).

Figure 3.11 Key Al-Qaeda members entering Britain

Individual	Comment	Source
Dr Bilal Abdullah	Had been involved with Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Carried out two failed bomb attacks in London and one at Glasgow Airport in 2007. Jailed for life.	Hayman and Gilmore (2009, 274).
Anwar al-Awlaki	Spent much of 2002-3 living in Britain where he was a high profile speaker.	Meleagrou-Hitchens, (2011, 28)
Ramzi Binalshibh.	Spent 2-9 December 2000 in London. Currently in US custody awaiting trial for planning 9/11.	Fouda and Fielding (2003, 170-1).
Haider Abu Doha	Was living in London during 1999, whilst planning was advancing for the Los Angeles Airport Millennium plot.	Burke (2007, 211).
Khaled el-Fawwaz	ARC leader in London. Extradited to the United States in 2012, and now on trial in connection to Al-Qaeda's 1998 embassy bombings.	Bergen (2001, 2-4).
Naeem Noor Mohammed Khan. Aka Abu Talha.	Arrested in Pakistan 12/07/04. Al-Qaeda computer expert, made five visits to GB in six years. Studied briefly at City University.	Hussain (2007, 133-4).
Anas al-Liby	Living in Manchester in 1999. Indicted for 1998 African embassy bombings.  Arrested in Libya in October 2013, died of cancer before trial.	Bergen (2001, 206).

Abu Ubaida al-Masri	Egyptian chemist and bomb maker. A Mujahideen veteran who moved to the UK, then Germany. Trained shoe bomber Richard Reid.	Hunter (2011, 345-6)
Nizar Trabelsi	A Tunisian who had attended Finsbury Park mosque. Jailed for 10 years in 2003 for a planned attack on the NATO base at Kleine Brogel.	Archer and Bawdon (2010, 77), Vervaeke (2010).
Unnamed Yemeni	Visited UK to seek funding for AQAP	Keeble and Hollington (2010, 226-7).
Unnamed Yemeni	An 'associate' of Al-Qaeda, arrested in 2010	May 03/11/10.
Ramzi Yousef (known in Swansea as Abdul Basit Mahmoud Karim)	A Kuwaiti of Pakistani heritage. Planned the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Studied in Swansea in 1986-9	Fouda and Fielding (2003, 92).  Roy (2004, 301).

### 3.15 Londonistan

The weight of data in the preceding pages demonstrates the frequency with which jihadist actors have settled in the United Kingdom over the past three decades. Counting the Palestinian territories as a nation, this has involved jihadists from some 14 different countries, joined of course by members of a pan-nationalist group in Al-Qaeda. Whatever the enmity these jihadists displayed to their countries of origin, it would be a mistake to see these exiles as disparate, united only by their displacement. Frank Foley reminds us of the importance of the ummah:

Islamist terrorists fight for the ummah – an abstract concept of a global community of Muslims. Their ideal is the creation of Islamic states, with a long-term aim in many cases of restoring the Caliphate (Foley, 2013, 24).

Events in London demonstrate that Islamists came here to advance the cause of the ummah. The tendency in the 1990s with which Algerian jihadist organisations were able to accept figures such as Abu Hamza (Egyptian born but with British citizenship) Abu Qatada (a Jordanian of Palestinian heritage who had settled in the UK with his family) or Abu Musab al-Suri (a Syrian with Spanish citizenship living in London) serves as a reminder that jihadist struggles are not national struggles, no matter how much anger may be displayed towards a particular head of state or government. Bigger, regional or global aims are paramount. Even in the case of Syrian Abu Bashir al-Tartusi, who has returned home to take part in the fight against President Assad, it is Islamic resistance, as opposed to the mere resistance, which matters. As soon as the protests against Assad began in 2011, al-Tartusi launched a Facebook page entitled “The Islamic Opposition to the Syrian Regime” (Bunzel, 2013). The mistakes which Aymaan al-Zawahiri saw as once characterising the Palestinian resistance have not been repeated in Syria.

It is worth considering how Britain got itself into a situation where it was hosting a succession of jihadist actors, committed to the eventual establishment of theological states or a cross national caliphate. In the Thatcher era, the United Kingdom had frequently viewed itself as taking counter-terrorism matters more seriously than its European neighbours, some of whom lacked Britain’s direct experience of the subject. This self-perception manifested itself in policy terms at the diplomatic level. For example, at the Luxembourg meeting of the European Council in 1985, the UK prevented majority voting being extended onto the issue of freedom of movement on the grounds the government did not trust European partners to control the

movements of terrorists. Such opposition also characterised Mrs Thatcher's opposition to the Single European Act (George, 1991, 195).

At some stage in the following two decades, a role reversal appears to have occurred. In time, the question emerged not whether Britain's allies were taking security matters seriously, but if the UK was doing so, and even whether British polices were beginning to endanger others. Former Labour Home Secretary Charles Clarke first encountered these concerns when serving as Police Minister from 1999 to 2001:

There were a number of foreigners, including Ministers of the Interior, who said to me we were being over sympathetic in allowing people in. We should be keeping people out more. They went on to attach this argument, that by allowing people in we were colluding with 'terrorists'. I have never accepted that (Clarke, Interview, 2010).

Some complaints were very specific in their nature. The issue of Abu Hamza and Finsbury Park mosque was raised with the British government by at least seven countries – Algeria, Belgium, Egypt, France, Germany, Netherlands and Spain (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 288) whilst evidence of Abu Hamza's material assistance to terrorists in Yemen in 1998 was gathered by the British security services (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 288-9) and Yemeni authorities. The pan-national nature of jihadist operations is further demonstrated by the reality that Abu Hamza, an Egyptian living in Britain, was willingly accepted as an advisor by the Islamic Army of Aden during its kidnapping of western tourists in 1998 (FBI, 2015).

Writing of the 1990s, Mark Curtis lists four major terrorist groups as operating from London – the GIA (Algeria), the LIFG (Libya), the EIJ (Egypt) and Al-Qaeda (Curtis,

2010, 256). For this situation to formulate a very particular police approach was necessary - one which considered terrorism purely in terms of the instrumental act, not its ancillary elements. To prosper terrorism requires a safe haven – a place where the actor may develop their tactics, strategy and resources. In the modern era, this does not need to be in the same country or even continent as the eventual attack – indeed if the safety of the actor is increased by their usual distance from the operation, all the better. Prior to 9/11, the British police appear to have neglected these ancillary elements to terrorism, and concentrated solely on ensuring the act itself did not occur on their territory. Evidence of this approach is scarce, but where found, illuminating. Andrew Staniforth of the West Yorkshire Police Counter Terrorism Unit is one of the authors of *“Blackstone’s Guide to Terrorism”*, and wrote a long running series “Tackling Terrorism” in *Police Review*. He writes “From the early 1990s, groups with links to Egypt and Algeria began to conduct terrorist operations in Western countries, including the US and France” (Staniforth, 2009).

That is an understatement. Terrorist attacks linked to Egyptian and Algerian organisations occurred at the World Trade Center in the United States in 1993 and in France in 1995-6. But Staniforth does not address the broader issue. At this time the organisations associated with those bombings - Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the GIA – were present and active in the United Kingdom, even if they did not conduct an attack here. As Curtis argues, their leaderships were resident in Britain, and as this chapter demonstrates, so were many of their propagandists and fundraisers. And for as long as they avoided breaking British laws, they could operate fully in support of their organisations.



As with other variables concerning British Jihadism, the concept of 'Londonistan' begins well before 7/7 or even 9/11. Camille Tawil dates the settlement of senior Islamic fighters to 1991:

London began to attract a large influx of jihadists after the end of the Gulf War in 1991 and the escalation of violence in Algeria the following year. Some had fled their countries of origin; others had been unable to return home after the end of the Afghan jihad (Tawil, 2010, 112).

These fighters were entering an environment where politico-religious ideas could be freely disseminated. In 1987 Riad El-Rayyes Books became the first company to publish Arabic language works from London (El Rayes, 2013), with titles on sale that would not have been available in more restrictive societies. These included, for example, the work of Egyptian Jihadist Shukri Mustafa, executed for assassinating the former Egyptian Minister for Religious Affairs, Sheikh al-Dhahabi, in 1977 (Jansen, 1997, 90). During the 1990s London was to emerge as a key location for the Arab speaking media. Here press freedoms could be enjoyed that were impossible in Cairo or Riyadh, and the United Kingdom's tradition of political asylum ensured that as well as journalists, many radicals who were in conflict with their own governments found London a more convivial base. Tawil lists four major Arabic newspapers, two magazines and the television channel MBC as establishing themselves in the British capital during the decade.

As we have seen, supporters of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Algerian GIA and Libyan Islamic Fighting Group each began to publish newspapers from London (Tawil, 2010, 113), as already did Hamas. Only in 1997 did it become illegal to conspire in Britain to commit terrorism abroad (Foley, 2013, 248), and even after that date some material certainly pushed the boundaries of British laws of freedom of expression. In 2001 Rifa'i Taha, of al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya, saw his book *"Unveiling the Pinnacle of*

*Islam*” published in London by the Islamic Observation Centre. This included the author’s discussion of whether it was permissible to murder Coptic Christians (Tawil, 2010, 142, 3).

The term ‘Londonistan’ was first used in the European media by the respected French writer on Islamism, Gilles Kepel on 18 September 2001, in an *El Pais* (Spain) article entitled ‘*La Trampa De La Yihad Afgana*’. Kepel had observed its use in the Arab media in the previous decade, and found Abu Hamza using it himself when they met at Finsbury Park mosque.<sup>8</sup> The word, according to Kepel, greatly amused Hamza. Analysis of the LexisNexis newspaper database demonstrates the development of the term in the period following 9/11:

Figure 3.12 Newspaper references to Londonistan

Year	All Languages	English
2000	0	0
2001	39	22
2002	72	43
2003	82	44
2004	59	33
2005	517	282
2006	443	320
2007	267	219
2008	118	86
2009	135	92

<sup>8</sup> Answer to a question I put to Kepel at his London School of Economics guest lecture “Muslims in Modern Europe” 12 January 2010.

2010	118	98
2011	119	101
2012	61	38
2013 (up until 21 May)	31	26
2013 22 May <sup>9</sup> – 30 June	37	10
2013 (1 Jan- 30 June)	68	36

Media references to Londonistan flourish after particular terrorist attacks. The Woolwich murder on 22 May 2013 saw more references in all languages to 'Londonistan' in the following five weeks than in the previous five months. The London bombings of 2005 coincided with the highest usage of 'Londonistan' in all languages, whilst for the English speaking media 2006 was to prove the peak. This may indicate the number of retrospective articles that were to flourish in the domestic press as the enormity of 7/7 sunk in, and established new investigative areas.

In an important comparative analysis of French and British approaches to countering terrorism, Frank Foley (2013) compares a robust French approach to Islamist actors in the 1990s, to that of the UK. The British did not appear threatened by such migrants: "The British police and intelligence services monitored these activists but essentially gave them free rein to promote and fund terrorist campaigns in other countries" (Foley, 2013, 3). Whilst such quotes provide stark reading, Foley locates these disparate approaches in differing institutional norms in each nations approach to security. What is sobering however, is that in a decade which saw terrorist attacks in Paris and civil war in Algeria: "Perhaps France's biggest overseas intelligence

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<sup>9</sup> 22 May 2013 was the date of the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby outside Woolwich barracks, by two Islamists.

operation against Islamist terrorists at this time was in London – or ‘Londonistan’ as they called it” (Foley, 2013, 287).

### **3.16 Conclusions**

In 1997 the United Kingdom banned the promotion of terrorism overseas. It was an action that may be considered overdue – members of jihadist groups from at least 14 territories are shown to have settled in this country, with four major terrorist organisations operating here – the Algerian GIA, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and Al-Qaeda. This was not a situation which emerged overnight, and its roots may be traced back to failed Islamic uprisings in the 1980s in Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Syria. Those events, and the end of the Afghan jihad provided propulsion. Whilst Afghanistan still acted as an outlet for some jihadis to re-align, the United Kingdom offered significant ‘pull’ factors – a tradition of providing space for those seeking political and religious asylum, an emerging base for Arab media and a legal system which did not seek initially to criminalise jihadist actors. The high number of Algerians, Egyptians and Libyans listed in this chapter – none countries traditionally associated with high levels of migration to Britain – is evidence for this propulsion and indeed ‘pull’. Finally, those who settled in other European Union countries, taking citizenship, in time found themselves able to move freely to the United Kingdom, under European law. Some Spanish-Syrians and Franco-Algerians took this route. Some, without British or EU citizenship, simply entered the country illegally and stayed, making use of an immigration system which was not always robust. Kamel Bourgass, the killer of DC Oake in 2003, is perhaps the best example of this.

Deportation of individuals such as Bourgass was problematic, as individuals were likely to be from a country where torture or execution was commonplace. It is here a second explanation for the presence of so many jihadis in London and other British cities emerges. Once here, Islamists proved hard to dislodge. Only with extreme difficulty did the British courts begin to accept the idea of extradition or deportation to countries such as Algeria or Jordan. Although sound humanitarian principles may explain the courts reluctance, extradition cases involving Abu Hamza and Rachid Ramda, to the United States and France respectively, also proceeded at a tortuously slow pace.

The preceding paragraphs address why so many jihadist actors from overseas were able to coalesce in the United Kingdom, but it is in the detail of the groups and individuals who settled in this country that we discover more as to their impulse. A theme of this thesis is to stress the centrality of religiosity. The displacement of nationalist organisations recognised in earlier chapters in Palestine and Kashmir is again observed – for example in Libya. The concept of the ummah was intrinsic to the practice of the new groupings, with activists of different nationalities supporting and working for organisations which often were not from their country of origin. This pan-Islamism is demonstrated by the senior roles taken in Algeria's GIA by a Jordanian, Abu Qatada and also by Abu Hamza, an Egyptian who took British citizenship. If demonstrated at leadership levels it was also found in lower ranks – consider the 2007 trial of LIFG members in Birmingham, whose work extended beyond the overthrow of Gadaffi to wider support for the jihad in Algeria.

Whilst recorded in this chapter by their countries of origin, exile in Britain did not separate any jihadist from participating in either global struggles or that in their country of birth. Of the largest group to come to the UK, at least 27 Algerians, five went on to commit terrorist offences elsewhere in the European Union, nine to move to jihadist conflicts in other parts of the world – most noticeably Afghanistan or Chechnya. For these actors at least, Britain appears to have been a stopping off point from which to pursue their understanding of the wider aims of the ummah.

The Islamist cause was also articulated from Britain by important ideologues. The distribution from north London of Bin Laden's declaration of a global Islamic front, by Saudi Arabian exiles, is only the first example. Abu Musab al-Suri and Abu Bashir al-Tartusi both found Britain a convivial base from which to theorise before departing for jihad elsewhere – Taliban controlled Afghanistan in al-Suri's case, for al-Tartusi the Syrian Civil War. The reasons for the departure of al-Suri provide further insight into the religious impulse intrinsic to jihadist actors. Having written for the London based publications of jihadist groups from Algeria, Egypt and Libya, he established a media facility dedicated to reporting on conflicts across Muslim majority nations - it tells us much that he was able to do all this from the United Kingdom. Only one imperative could eventually move al-Suri and his family – the realisation that the Taliban were creating what was considered to be a genuinely Islamic state. Only then did he leave Britain. As we shall see in later chapters, this allure of actually existing sharia was experienced by British born, as well as British based Islamists.

The settlement of so many Islamists in the United Kingdom was to bring significant, and sometimes unwelcome attention. The sobriquet 'Londonistan' which never

seems to quite go away is one example, complaints from at least seven nations of terrorists operating from British soil being another. No history of jihadism in the era of Al-Qaeda can overlook the Advice and Reformation Committee, Abu Hamza, Abu Qatada or Abu Musab al-Suri. All chose to make London their home.

It would be a mistake however to see the settlement of jihadists in the United Kingdom as a matter to be considered purely in historical terms. The question as to what extent values have been transmitted across the generations by migrant Islamist actors is now emerging. The Abdel-Bary's represent an interesting case of an apparent unity of ideals and practice within one family, with migrant father and British son involved in jihadist organisations across distinct generations – Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Al-Qaeda's African embassy bombings in 1998, and, contemporaneously, the British presence in the Syrian jihad. The Deghayes family of Brighton potentially offer a similar example of transmission. An uncle involved in the circles of the LIFG, captured in Pakistan following 9/11, a father predominant in Islamist circles in Sussex, and three teenage sons joining Al-Qaeda in Syria.

Three Islamists covered in this chapter, Omar Bakri Muhammad (Syria), Abu Hamza (Egypt) and Abu Qatada (Jordan) offer prominent examples of overseas Islamists who sought to settle in Britain, and from here to influence politico-religious events. Unlike al-Suri, they did not seek to leave Britain for the Taliban's Emirate, nor, with the brief exception of Hamza's sojourn to Bosnia, did they participate in jihad overseas. Instead they stayed in London, developing a distinct prominence and contesting space within British Islamism. The next section of this thesis considers the influence of these men on more domestic matters, and the emergence of a distinct British Jihadism, declaring politico-religious goals here in the United Kingdom. Bakri Muhammad, Hamza and Qatada, along with the Jamaican Abdullah el-Faisal are

portrayed as the clerical leaders of this impulse. In order to properly assess the range of British Jihadism, and that this is an operatively British as opposed to international endeavour, the actions of British jihadists, in terms of actual and planned terrorist attacks, are considered.



## **Chapter 4: British Jihadism**

### **4.1 Introduction**

On 13 May 2009 the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism published statistics on terrorism arrests and outcomes for the 11 September 2001 to 31 March 2008 (Home Office, 2009). Of 125 terrorist prisoners at 31 March 2008, a total of 62% were UK nationals (Travis, 2009). Whilst significant, the foreign jihadists outlined in the previous chapter, where prosecuted and imprisoned by the British authorities, were seemingly a minority of those involved in terrorism. The report also stated that 91% of those prisoners affirmed themselves to be Muslim, a remarkable figure given the 2001 census found only 2.97% of the population in England and Wales described themselves thus, rising to a mere 4.8% in the subsequent 2011 census (MCB, 2015).

Given the decline of terrorism related to Northern Ireland, the spotlight moves to the emergence of a new actor – which this research categorises as British Jihadism. This chapter serves to address the first research question set out in the introduction – what is the history of British Islamist involvement in violence on these shores? It does so by cataloguing and chronicling each terrorist attack, and each planned attack leading to convictions by jihadist actors in this country in the period 1992 – 31 March 2015. A series of tables are produced below listing the details of these incidents, along with critical analysis of the actor's perceived intentions and indeed justifications. By bringing this information together into one single document it is intended this thesis will provide an original contribution to research in this field, serving as a valuable tool for future researchers.

A further objective of this chapter is to address the second research question - who are the British Jihadists? Are they religious or political actors? Are they associated with particular districts, mosques, institutions or organisations? By examining the motivations of several core attacks, and giving due consideration to their organisational background, a significant picture emerges of actors expressing both political and religious objections to the society of their birth, and the policies of its governments. Particular attention is devoted to the terrorist attacks committed by Mohammed Sidique Khan, Nicky Reilly and Michael Adebolajo. In the case of Khan, Foucault's concept of a discursive formation is used to explain the inability of some British Muslim representatives to come to terms with religious, as opposed to political imperatives in Khan's actions.

This chapter connects with and builds upon work already undertaken in the previous chapter on jihadists settling in Britain, and looks at the specific influence in the United Kingdom of four jihadists who gained prominence during the years which frame this research. Three of these 'four lions' of British Jihadism – Omar Bakri Muhammad, Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada came from Muslim majority nations, the fourth, Jamaican Abdullah el-Faisal, claimed theological legitimacy via his years living and studying in Saudi Arabia. Perhaps characteristically in terms of religious actors, all appear to have viewed their interpretation of their faith as offering a design for living, not just in Muslim majority nations, but in a nation state of Judeo-Christian heritage, albeit with strong secular characteristics.

In order to explain the breadth of British Jihadism – the ‘detail’ of the thesis title, this chapter goes further than considering terrorist attacks and prominent jihadists. The highly charged nature of Islamist and jihadist currents on campus is outlined, and found to have considerable longevity. The deep involvement of one particular organisation – Al-Muhajiroun in violence is characterised, but it is observed that this is not the only side to the group formed by Bakri Muhammad and now led by Anjem Choudary. Al-Muhajiroun spends significant amounts of time calling others to the faith, and agitating for the introduction of sharia law, not in Muslim majority nations, but here in the United Kingdom. These are the practices of an organisation devoted to what it considers religious duty. Related to this approach, consideration is also given to the broader issue of religion and political violence. At its fringes, British Islamism displays a willingness to engage in both threats and violence targeting minorities. This tendency, a characteristic of Jihadist actors in Muslim majority nations, is thus far under researched, and one that is also considered in the final chapter on the response of critical terrorism studies to Jihadism.

## **4.2 Terrorist Attacks by British Jihadists**

Jihadist actors have been responsible for a total of 54 deaths in the United Kingdom since 2003. These killings include that of DC Oake in Manchester in 2003, the 52 civilians killed in the July 2005 London Transport bombings and Fusilier Lee Rigby murdered outside Woolwich barracks in 2013. Additionally five jihadists have killed themselves in domestic suicide bombings since 2005 – four on 7/7 and Kafeel Ahmed at Glasgow Airport in 2007. The 7/7 attacks in London gave the United Kingdom the unenviable record of suffering the first suicide bombings in Western

Europe. In total, jihadists have detonated bombs in the United Kingdom on ten separate occasions, with varying degrees of success. This figure comprises the eight separate public transport attacks in London in 2005, and the 2007 Glasgow and 2008 Exeter bombings, in which the only casualties were the perpetrators.

In terms of the scale of threat posed by British Jihadism, comparison with earlier strains of terrorism is illuminating. This research locates 54 deaths in Britain from 2003 to 31 March 2015 as a consequence of British Jihadism – an average of just under five deaths per year, and a higher figure than that in Northern Ireland. Terrorism caused 395 deaths on the British mainland from 1969 to 2001 (Foley, 2013, 19) 125 related to the Northern Ireland conflict, 270 occurring as a result of the Lockerbie bombing.<sup>10</sup> Accepting Foley's figures, in a calendar period of 33 full years the Northern Ireland conflict caused an average of just under four deaths annually on the mainland, whilst all types of terrorism led to nearly twelve fatalities each year.

The eight bomb attacks on London's public transport system in 2005, on 7 and 21 July, represent the most significant jihadist attacks yet in the United Kingdom. As well as the loss to life, there was considerable economic damage. Estimates of lost tourist income alone were as high as £300 million (London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2005). Police believe the 7/7 bombings cost some £8000 to organise (Hayman and Gilmore, 2009, 103), a demonstration that in cost benefit analysis terms, terrorism works. The motivations of the leader of the leader of the 7/7 cell –

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<sup>10</sup> For reasons that are unclear, Foley does not appear to have counted the three deaths in the 1999 London nail bombings. The perpetrator, David Copeland, was a member of a tiny fascist group, the National Socialist Movement (NSM) who targeted minority groups.

Mohammed Sidique Khan, are discussed in detail below, as they shed significant insight into the character and nature of British Jihadism.

In Michel Foucault's work on language, a particular role is observed for the author. The name of the author is at the centre of texts, it separates them, defines form and provides characterisation. "It points to the existence of certain groups of discourse and refers to the status of this discourse within a society and culture" (Foucault, 1977, 123). This becomes problematic in considering terrorism, where the authors name is traditionally absent from texts such as communiqués claiming responsibility for a particular action. The Provisional IRA, for example, took to issuing written statements in the name of the androgynous and pseudonymous 'P O'Neill'. Suicide videos, by contrast, are made with the participant at the centre of events. Foucault continues "the function of an author is to characterise the existence, circulation and operation of certain discourses within a society" (Foucault, 1977, 127).

To Foucault, it is in the text where the author explains events – a process that is central to the suicide video, where the process that has motivated the bombing is explained. It is perhaps the most individual of texts. The BBC transcript of Mohammed Sidique Khan's suicide video is headed "London bomber: text in full" (BBC Website, 2005, b, see Appendix 1). Unfortunately this is not actually the case – Khan's religious salutations as the video commences are not translated from the original Arabic – an unsatisfactory omission. The words the BBC leaves out of its translation are "Praise be to Allah, blessings and prayers upon his Prophet". This is not the only example of an important jihadist statement being translated in this manner – Bruce Lawrence's translation of Bin Laden's statements adopts a similar

approach “For clarity and flow of language, religious formulae that normally follow the invocation of God or the Prophet Muhammad (in particular the customary “Peace be Upon Him” have been omitted” (Lawrence, 2005, ix). Whilst perhaps understandable, the danger with this approach is it risks swapping the intended framework given to a particular snippet of speech by its author, merely for the ease of reading of others.

The transcript itself may be divided into four distinct categories. The first is religious - those salutations omitted by the BBC. The second is a mixture of the religious and political. Khan expresses a cynicism towards the media and government and ends with his clear statement “Our religion is Islam..... this is how our ethical stances are dictated” – two of eight separate religious references in the text. It is the third section of Khan’s video – from lines 20-34, that is perhaps the best known. Here Khan is at his most political: “Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world”. Although they are not mentioned by name, it is clear this is a reference to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Khan adds his condemnation of the treatment Muslims have received in such conflicts when he talks of “the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture” (lines 30-31) and states that until we (his fellow Muslims) feel security “my people will not stop this fight”. That this section of the video is the best known is perhaps indicative of debate on religious terrorism in recent years. Some appear ideologically more comfortable with the idea of a bomb attack because of flawed foreign policy, than with the concept of such an action being consistent with actual or perceived religious belief. As Lambert states “Mohammed Sidique Khan and fellow bomber Shehzad Tanweer were adamant that the war in Iraq, the war on terror and the UK’s uncritical support

for Israel's oppression of Palestinians motivated them" (Lambert, 2011, 25). Whilst that may be the inference of Khan's comments, it is worth noting he does not mention Iraq, Israel or even the Palestinians by name in his declaration.

The fourth section, lines 35-43, sees Khan return to religious concerns, discussing his prayer, love of the Prophets and support for contemporaries such as Bin Laden. He finishes with what can be seen as a closing message to Muslims, asking those listening to pray that his work leads to acceptance into paradise. Khan's final wishes seek a heavenly, rather than secular reward.

I myself, I myself, I make dua (pray) to Allah... to raise me amongst those whom I love like the prophets, the messengers, the martyrs and today's heroes like our beloved Sheikh Osama Bin Laden, Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and all the other brothers and sisters that are fighting in the... of this cause. With this I leave you to make up your own minds and I ask you to make dua to Allah almighty to accept the work from me and my brothers and enter us into gardens of paradise (BBC Website, 2005, b).

Foucault would recognise this desire for heavenly reward. It was also his position that the author-function is tied to legal and institutional systems which determine discourses (Foucault, 1977, 130). The systems in which Khan positions himself are his interpretation of what Islam is, and what his duties as a Muslim are.

Foucault argues that beyond the individual author emerge a series of positions that a range of individuals may occupy (Foucault, op cit). Representative voices from very differing approaches within British Islam illustrate an acceptance of Khan as a solely political actor, and the exclusion of other potentialities. The following section considers sources as diverse as *Muslim Weekly*, a national newspaper with a claimed circulation of 50,000 (Muslim Weekly, 2011) Cage, which styles itself as a

human rights NGO representing detainees (Kassimeris 2008, Cageprisoners, 2010) Muslim student bodies and several Muslim representative organisations.

*Muslim Weekly*, in an editorial of 7 August 2009, stresses the need for the public enquiry into the government's decision to invade Iraq (the Chilcot Inquiry) to also consider its effect on radicalisation. They quote a particular line directly from Mohammed Siddique Khan's suicide video: "Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world". Cage's Asim Qureshi also reproduces Khan's 'political' paragraph in his organisation's critique of Home Secretary Theresa May's counter-terrorism Prevent strategy (Qureshi, 2011). This section of Khan's speech is serving as what Foucault observed to be a 'discursive practice' – a primary point of reference that practitioners of a discourse return to. Neither *Muslim Weekly* nor Cage reproduce or consider Khan's preceding lines:

I and thousands like me are forsaking everything for what we believe. Our driving motivation doesn't come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer. Our religion is Islam - obedience to the one true God, Allah, and following the footsteps of the final prophet and messenger Muhammad... This is how our ethical stances are dictated (BBC Website, 2005, b).

A religious motivation, or even Khan's possible status as an actor with religious *and* political motivation for his actions, is not countenanced by either Qureshi or *Muslim Weekly*. Near identical approaches are to be found from another Cage activist Moazzam Begg in his *Critical Studies on Terrorism* interview and former Respect



party leader Salma Yaqoob. Discussing the extent to which British foreign policy has radicalised young people, Moazzam Begg states:

If you look at the video statements of some of the July 7<sup>th</sup> bombers, they say clearly why they did it. It's not to justify it, but if you want to know why somebody does something you have to hear it from his mouth, and he says clearly that he did it because of Iraq and Afghanistan (Kassimeris, 2008, 410-11).

Yaqoob takes a virtually identical path:

Mohammed Siddique Khan, the ringleader of the 7/7 bombers in a recording shown on Al-Jazeera, unequivocally identifies British foreign policy and his opposition to it as the justification behind the attacks. (Yaqoob, 2007, 287)

As with *Muslim Weekly*, Yaqoob goes on to directly quote Khan's reference to 'democratically elected governments' perpetuating atrocities.

Writing of discourses, Foucault suggests an important rule for approaching discursive facts "The description of the events of discourse poses a quite different question: how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than the other? (Foucault, 1972, 27). We might ask how is it that in Yaqoob's analysis of Khan, his references to foreign policy appear, but not his distinct declarations of faith.

A related example comes from a 2008 round robin letter signed by leading figures in four prominent organisations in British Muslim life: the Cordoba Foundation, Respect Party, British Muslim Initiative and Friends of Al Aqsa. In a spirited critique of the Quilliam Foundation and its influence on government '*What Turns Some Islamists to Terror*' presents what was by now orthodoxy:

We believe this is just another establishment-backed attempt to divert attention from the main cause of radicalisation and extremism in Britain: the UK's disastrous foreign policy in the

Muslim world, including its occupation of Muslim lands and its support for pro-Western dictators (al-Tikriti et al, 2008).

The writers continue: “those misguided few who are willing to cross the line into terrorism are not driven by disfranchisement or Sayyid Qutb’s writings, they do it because they are furious about Western foreign policy”. Three of the organisations party to this statement – the Cordoba Foundation, British Muslim Initiative and Friends of Al-Aqsa have subsequently sought to develop influence with academics in the field of critical terrorism studies, a matter discussed in detail in chapter six.

A slightly bolder approach to 7/7 is taken in literature produced for University Islamic Societies. “The War on Terror” (London ISOC, n.d.) is a two sided A4 leaflet that has been widely distributed at universities<sup>11</sup>. As well as providing a critique of the war on terror, it provides a summary of what it sees as the aims of Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Mohammed Sidique Khan, who are respectively described as ‘a leader’, ‘a scholar’, ‘a soldier’ then rather curiously in Khan’s case ‘an independent’. Of 7/7 the leaflet states:

“Was 7/7 a political act? Yes – clearly according to the videos of those who carried out the operations, they said it was for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Was 7/7 a terrorist attack? Yes the killing of 50 innocent civilians was undoubtedly a terrorist attack done to make a political statement.” (London ISOC, n.d.)

The categorisation of the founder of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as a ‘soldier’ and Al-Qaeda ideologue Ayman al-Zawahiri as a ‘scholar’ is hardly indicative

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<sup>11</sup> The author received a copy from a literature stand of the University of East Anglia ISOC in 2010, indicating distribution was not restricted to London ISOCs.

of a rejection of Al-Qaeda's aims. The involvement of UK university students in Jihadist organisations is considered in greater detail later in this chapter.

One of Foucault's aims was to show why a statement could not be other than it was (Foucault, 1972, 27). He also viewed discursive formations as being groups of statements. Khan's political beliefs have dominated debate on 7/7 within a significant section of British Muslim opinion, because a discursive formation has emerged excluding his religious views, choosing instead to focus on political justifications for the bombings. In time, a process of reinforcement has occurred, with disparate Muslim commentators selecting the same reference points from his suicide video. This process can be found in *Muslim Weekly*, from Moazzam Begg and Asim Qureshi of Cage, in the 2008 round robin letter, and finally from London ISOC, all establishing a discursive formation. Given the commitment of critical terrorism studies to examine "the discourses and representational practices of terrorism" (Jackson et al, 2009, 228) it is regrettable that the interview between George Kassimeris and Moazzam Begg, conducted in the *Critical Studies on Terrorism* journal, should readily allow this formation to be reproduced.

Perhaps the least known and least understood British Jihadist attack is that conducted by Mohammed Rashid Saeed-Alim, the taken name of Nicky Reilly, a white male from Plymouth, Devon, who converted to Islam following 9/11. A man with learning difficulties, on 22 May 2008 Reilly entered the Giraffe restaurant in Exeter, intending to carry out a suicide bombing. His device detonated prematurely in the toilets, and he was the only person injured (Western Morning News, 2008).

In choosing a public venue to attack random civilians, Reilly's methodology was little different from each British jihadist attack to that date. Indeed thus far all domestic jihadist bombings have been aimed either at public transport sites or licensed premises (see figure 4.1). Amongst bombings planned but not conducted due to intervention by the authorities we see also see the presence of a licensed venue – the Ministry of Sound nightclub in London in 2004, which those convicted following Operation Crevise talked of targeting, as well as public utilities, the Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent, synagogues or even a football ground (Silber, 2012, 83). Kenan Malik raises a pertinent point concerning the failed Haymarket bombing of the Tiger bar in 2007. Just two minutes' drive away are the Houses of Parliament and Foreign office "Yet the bombers chose to park their deadly load outside a building full of partygoers – hardly the actions of political soldiers driven to fury by Britain's foreign policy" (Malik, 2009, 85).

A new development in Exeter was that Reilly acted individually, leaving a valedictory letter explaining his intentions. This statement, reproduced in full by local media following his trial, indicates someone clearly capable of linear thought. If anything Reilly's comments have not been given the analysis they deserved, most likely because of public references to his learning disability. Reilly commences his statement with the words "In the name of God most gracious, most merciful" (Exeter Express and Echo, 2008). These words are taken from the opening line of the Qur'an, and are referred to as the basmala or bismillah. This formula is invoked at the beginning of important Muslim events (Nanji, 2008, 28). In his translation of the Qur'an Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall describes this statement "as an essential part of the Muslims' worship, public and private, and no solemn contract or

transaction is complete unless it is recited” (Pickthall, 2008, 5). However lacking in education Reilly was, and he was remarkably new to Islam, he had picked up some basics of the creed.

Nicky Reilly’s initial complaint is that Muslims are suffering at the hands of Britain, Israel and America. This is a pain he has suffered collectively with his fellow Muslims “We are sick of taking all the brutality from you” (Exeter Express and Echo, 2008). The imprisonment of Muslims and the torture of Muslim women are also cited. Reilly then turns from geo-political matters to the prurient, and raises a series of concerns about the nation’s moral compass.

In Britain it's OK for a girl to have sex without marriage and if she gets pregnant she can get an abortion so easily. When you are getting drunk on Friday and Saturday night your behaviour is worse than animals. You have sex in nightclub toilets. You urinate in shop doorways. You shout your foul and disgusting mouth off in the street. It is unacceptable to Allah and the true religion Islam. Britain and USA and Israel have no real rules. (Exeter Express and Echo, 2008)

This is how Nicky Reilly had come to see the country of his birth, and his fellow citizens. His world view encompassed a particular duality, combining a critique of the war on terror, the related issue of Western policy in Muslim majority countries, and, almost simultaneously, a disgust at the morality which he observed on working class Plymouth streets he had lived all his life. This religious conservatism, in particular a concern about the sexual conduct of society, appears characteristic of jihadist actors, and intrinsic to their practice. In the previous chapter the attacks on ‘westernised’ women in Algeria by jihadist groups, and the cheerleading of such actions by

Algerian émigrés in London was cited. In addition to this Juergensmeyer considers examples from both Algeria and Afghanistan where Islamists sought to remove women from public life (Juergensmeyer, 2003, 200) and to achieve control over public displays of sexuality. To the fundamentalist, the type of decadence Reilly expresses his disgust for:

.....are illustrations of the encroaching power of evil, demonstrations of the pervasiveness of the lack of moral values, and examples of how social definitions have become skewed (Juergensmeyer, 2003, 202).

In developing his statement, Reilly also appears to have been influenced by the suicide video of Mohammed Sidique Khan. Towards the end of his narrative, Reilly uses an identical phrase to that used by Khan “Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood” (Exeter Express and Echo, 2008, BBC Website 2005, b). Similarly, there is also a reference to Bin Laden, and an indication that Reilly was familiar with Bin Laden’s statements “Sheikh Usama has told you the solution on how to end this war between us and many others have as well but you ignore us” (Exeter Express and Echo, 2008).

The extent, to which Reilly worked with or was directed by others, is unclear. Diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, his mother believes he was easy prey for radicalisation (BBC Website, 2008). Devon and Cornwall police regard two men in Pakistan, who Reilly was in contact with via the Internet, as having played a critical role in assisting him to construct his device (BBC Website, 2010), although the actual bomb attack, and the description of his motivation, appear to be his own work.

It would be incorrect to assert British Jihadists have been solely preoccupied with random attacks upon civilians. Figure 4.1 (below) indicates a growing tendency towards targeted violence. Here the intended victims are not random citizens, travelling by tube or wining and dining, but have instead been selected on the basis of who they are, what they believe or actions they have conducted or been associated with. By looking at who is targeted in these incidents, and the articulations put forward by participants, the potential emerges to develop further insight into who British Jihadists are, and the nature of their motivations.

Jihadists have been responsible for the death of a police officer and a soldier in this type of attack (see figure 4.1) There have also been credible attempts to kill in targeted attacks, where the convicted perpetrators have been unsuccessful. The attempted murder of Stephen Timms MP in May 2010 by Roshonara Choudhry and the deadly weapons assembled to attack the English Defence League (EDL) in 2012 (see figure 4. 2) are examples where the political views of the victim appear to have impacted on their selection for attack. On a further occasion police intervention and prosecution has prevented an attempt to kidnap and murder a British Muslim soldier by jihadists (CPS, 2008), and secondly an attempt to follow the murder of Lee Rigby with a further attack upon military personnel (Crime and Justice, 2015).

On 22 May 2013, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale murdered Fusilier Lee Rigby, ambushing the off duty soldier walking back to his barracks at Woolwich, south London. A noticeable aspect of this killing was the desire for martyrdom of both attackers. Rather than seeking to escape, each waited in the immediate vicinity of the body, with Adebolajo delivering monologues to anyone willing to listen, before

charging at armed police officers (Sengupta, 2013, a). In a speech recorded at the scene by a witness, a bloodied Adebolajo combined an evisceration of British foreign policy with a series of religious declarations:

The only reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers. And this British soldier is one. It is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. By Allah, we swear by the Almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you until you leave us alone. So what if we want to live by the Sharia in Muslim lands? (LiveLeak, 2013)

Adebolajo appears to have considered his actions a religious imperative, due to commandments in the Qur'an. Although a British citizen of African Christian descent, he locates his worldview elsewhere:

By Allah if I saw your mother today with a buggy I would help her up the stairs. This is my nature. But we are forced by the Qur'an, in Sura At Tawba, through many ayah in the Qur'an, we must fight them as they fight us. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. I apologise that women had to witness this today but in our lands women have to see the same (LiveLeak, 2013).

The particular chapter referred to by Adebolajo is Sura 9: At-Taubah, considered to be one of "stern commandments against idolaters" (Pickthall, 2004, 114). At 9:5 it contains the following words:

Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor due, then leave their way free. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (Pickthall, 2004, 114).

A second element emerges, certainly on the part of Abdebolajo. That is the overt attachment to religious symbols, and a desire to position himself within the tradition



of earlier British Jihadists. At remand hearings he appeared carrying a copy of the Qur'an, asking to be known as Mujahid Abu Hamza (Shaw, 2013). Adebolajo's declared intention appeared to be to locate himself in the lineage of perhaps Britain's best known Islamic cleric – Abu Hamza. Yet to students of jihadist struggles, the image of a book waving defendant haranguing a court drew parallels with older and arguably more substantial figures in the jihadist canon. Some of the earliest televised footage of criminal proceedings against contemporary jihadists comes from Egypt, and the trials of those arrested in the sweeping detentions which followed the 1981 assassination of Sadat. In what is perhaps the standard assessment of that period, Gilles Kepel's *"The Prophet and the Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt"* (1985) one of the assassins, Lieutenant Khalid al-Islambuli is pictured on the first day of his trial, raising his Qur'an above his head and waving it at the court.

In his eventual trial at the Old Bailey, the duality of juxtapositions continued, as Adebolajo rooted his actions in his understanding of sharia, and opposition to British foreign policy. On 21 May he had prayed to Allah that the person they selected would indeed be a soldier (Shaw, 2013b). Lee Rigby was killed after the defendants drove a car at him, then he was stabbed repeatedly by both assailants. In his evidence, Adebolajo portrayed the initial part of the attack as God's will "That was not something that was premeditated. It just so happened Allah caused him to cross in front of my car" (Shaw, 2013b). Adebolajo characterised his defence in strictly Islamic terms, insisting an English criminal court was not the place he should be judged.

In terms of the law, I am a soldier of Allah. I understand some people might not recognise this because we don't wear fatigues or go to the Brecon Beacons to train but we are soldiers in the eyes of Allah. Basically, it's a war between Islam and those military who invade Muslim lands (Shaw, 2013b).

The table below gives a full listing of fifteen jihadist attacks in the United Kingdom.

Fig 4.1 Jihadist terrorist attacks in Britain

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place/Incident</b>	<b>Names</b>	<b>Court Case</b>	<b>Comments and Sources</b>
14/01/03	Manchester. Murder of DC Stephen Oake.	Kamel Bourgass.	Convicted of murder on 30/6/04.	Manchester Online, 15/04/05.
07/07/05	Bombing on train near Edgware Road tube station, London. Kills 6.	Mohammed Sidique Khan	None – Suicide Bombing	Intelligence and Security Committee, 2009.
07/07/05	Bombing on train near Aldgate tube Station. Kills 7.	Shehzad Tanweer	None – Suicide Bombing	Intelligence and Security Committee, 2009
07/07/05	Bombing on train near Russell Square tube station. Kills 26	Jermaine Lindsay	None – Suicide Bombing	Intelligence and Security Committee, 2009
07/07/05	Bombing on a bus at Tavistock Square. Kills 13	Hasib Hussain	None – Suicide Bombing	Intelligence and Security Committee, 2009
21/7/05	Detonated bomb on tube between Stockwell and Oval stations.	Ramzi Mohammed	Convicted of conspiracy to murder. Jailed for 40 years.	No injuries, device did not explode. Siddique, 23/04/08
21/7/05	Detonated bomb between Latimer	Hussain Osman	Convicted of conspiracy to	No injuries, device did not

	Road and Shepherd's Bush stations		murder. Jailed for 40 years.	explode. Siddique, 23/04/08.
21/7/05	Detonated bomb accidentally on the No.26 bus in Hackney	Muktar Said Ibrahim	Convicted of conspiracy to murder. Jailed for 40 years.	No injuries, device did not explode. Hackney Gazette, 22/03/07.  Siddique, 23/04/08
21/7/05	Detonated bomb at Warren Street station.	Yassin Omar	Convicted of conspiracy to murder. Jailed for 40 years.	No injuries, device did not explode.  Silber (2012, 142).
21/07/05	Bomb intended for Shepherds Bush station.	Manfo Asiedu	Jailed for 33 years.	Bomb dumped in a park after Asiedu changed his mind.  Siddique, 23/04/08.
29/6/07	Tiger Nightclub, Haymarket, London. A secondary device was placed on Cockspur Street.	Dr Bilal Abdulla and Kafeel Ahmed.	See below	Bombs failed to go off.  Smith, Hansard, 02/07/07.
30/6/07	Glasgow Airport	Dr Bilal Abdulla and Kafeel Ahmed.	Abdullah convicted, Ahmed died of the injuries he received in the attempted bombing.	Bomb failed to go off fully, but fire ignited.  Crown Prosecution Service, 16/12/08.
22/5/08	Exeter, Giraffe restaurant.	Mohammad Rashid Saeed-Alim (Nicky Reilly).	Jailed for 18 years.  Bowcott, Guardian,	Bomb went off in the toilet, only injuring Reilly.

			31/01/09.	
14/5/10	Stephen Timms MP.	Roshonara Choudhry	Convicted at the Old Bailey of attempted murder, 3/11/10.  Jailed for life with a minimum 15 year tariff.	Timms was stabbed at his constituency office, but survived.  Dodd and Topping, 3/11/10.
22/05/13	Woolwich – murder of Drummer Lee Rigby	Michael Adebolajo and  Michael Adebowale	Both men arrested at the scene, subsequently convicted of murder and jailed for life.	Off duty soldier Lee Rigby was murdered close to Woolwich army barracks.  Crown Prosecution Service, 26/02/14.

### 4.3 Failed Jihadist Attacks in Britain

This research names a total of thirteen credible jihadist plots in Britain, where police intervention appears to have prevented loss of life or serious injury, and where a successful criminal prosecution followed. For reasons of space less attention is devoted to these incidents than to the attacks above. However that thirteen substantive plots occurred from 2000 - March 2015 indicates virtually each year a jihadist attack has been attempted in Britain but disrupted by police and/or security service intervention.

If the thirteen plots below are added to instances of failed attempts to conduct bombings on aircraft to the United States, where in 2001 Richard Reid failed to ignite

a bomb in his shoes and in 2009 Omar Farouk Abdulmutallab was unable to set off a device in his underpants, an issue emerges. Croft and Moore (2010) and Kenney (2010) point to the apparent incompetence of jihadist actors. For all the fear engendered by their attacks, British Jihadists do not yet possess the tradecraft frequently demonstrated by actors at the peak of the Northern Ireland conflict. Indeed there is a somewhat comic element to grown men in Luton conceiving of sending an exploding toy car into an army barracks to kill soldiers, or the Birmingham rucksack plot members losing money trading shares online they had hoped to use to buy explosives (O'Neill, 2013).

The story of domestic British Jihadism begins in 2000, a full ten months before 9/11, with an MI5 operation monitoring Moinul Abedin of Birmingham and Faisal Mostafa of Stockport. In a house and a garage Abedin had rented in fake names, chemicals, detonators and protective clothing were discovered (Morris 2002). Abedin was subsequently sentenced to twenty years imprisonment for committing an act with intent to cause an explosion. His target remains unknown. Mostafa, who had been cleared of similar charges in 1996 in Greater Manchester, was again found not guilty<sup>12</sup> (Morris, 2002). Whilst hardly indicative of an impending wave of terrorist violence, the activities of Moinul Abedin serve as an important marker in terms of timescale – they pre-date 9/11, they pre-date the allied invasion of Afghanistan and they predate by at least two and a half years the invasion of Iraq.

The 2004 fertiliser plot, which saw jihadists from across the south of England jailed for life following a police operation code-named Crevise, provides an important indication that foreign policy has served to stimulate, more than create British Jihadism. Core members of the group had made multiple trips to Pakistan and

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<sup>12</sup> In 1996 Mostafa was cleared of explosives charges, but jailed for four years for possessing a gun.

Afghanistan from 2000 onwards, and the decision to carry out an attack at home appears to have been taken in February 2003 (Silber, 2012, 96) – a full month before the allied invasion of Iraq. Given this, and the 2000 Birmingham case, it is necessary to conclude; “the threat to Britain pre-dated the invasion of Iraq, but the war and subsequent occupation likely contributed to the intensification of the threat” (Foley, 2013, 28-9).

When considering targeted attacks by British jihadists, as well as more random actions, the presence of religious articulations may be readily discerned. On 30 June 2012 six Muslims from Birmingham travelled to Dewsbury in West Yorkshire. Armed with homemade bombs, guns, knives and machetes, they intended to attack an English Defence League rally in the town. A statement they had written addressed to the “English Drunkards League” explains their motivations:

Today is a day of retaliation (especially) for your blasphemy of Allah and his messenger Muhammad. We love death more than you love life. The penalty for blasphemy of Allah and his messenger Muhammad is death (Muslim Weekly, 10/05/2013)

The men’s attempt to implement their interpretation of sharia law on the streets of Yorkshire was unsuccessful, not least because they arrived after the EDL had dispersed. The subsequent discovery of the weaponry they had amassed, including two shotguns and two incendiary devices, led to prison sentences of between 18 and 19 and a half years (Radnedge, 2013).

What is distinctive about the Birmingham Jihadists message is its separation from the purely political objections long raised to the EDL by anti-fascist protestors. Organisations such as Searchlight, Hope Not Hate, Unite against Fascism and Antifa have all condemned the EDL’s perceived racism and violence towards Muslims, and

attempted to disrupt their activities accordingly. With the jihadists however, it is not the EDL's racism that is provocative, but blasphemy that demands the ultimate response.

Figure 4.2 Failed jihadist attacks in Britain

Date	Target	Names	Trial	Comment
November 2000	Unknown	Moinul Abedin and Faisal Mostafa, arrested in Birmingham on 17/11/00.	Abedin convicted and jailed for 20 years for committing an act with intent to cause an explosion.  Mostafa acquitted.	First known domestic Jihadist plot, pre-dating 9/11 and the war on terror.  Morris, 28/2/02.
2004	The Operation Crevice plot.  Amongst others, the Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent, and Ministry of Sound nightclub in London.	Salahuddin Amin, Omar Khyam, Waheed Mahmood, Jawad Akbar and Anthony Garcia. All were from Crawley or Luton.	Each man was convicted and jailed for life.	BBC Website 30/04/07.  Silber (2012, 87).
Arrested in August 2004.	Car combs were to be placed in limousines in basement car parks.	Dhiren Barot	Convicted conspiracy to murder 7/11/06, Woolwich Crown Court. Jailed for 40 years.	Tax (2012, 34).
10/08/2006	Liquid Bomb Plot.	25 suspects arrested in Britain following investigation involving police in Britain, USA and Pakistan.  Those arrested	Umar Ali, Tanvir Hussain and Assad Sarwar convicted of conspiracy to murder people unknown and following a re-trial, of plotting	Crown Prosecution Service, 08/07/10.

		came mostly from High Wycombe and Walthamstow.  (Silber, 2012, 40).	to destroy transatlantic aircraft.  Ibrahim Savant, Arafat Khan and Waheed Zaman convicted of conspiracy to murder, after three trials.	
2006-7	Birmingham – plot to kidnap and murder a British Muslim soldier	Parviz Khan, Mohammed Irfan, Bassiru Gassama, Hamid Elasmara, Zahor Iqbal.	Khan jailed for life, for engaging in conduct with the intention to commit acts of terrorism.  Four others convicted for their roles.	CPS, 18/02/08.
2008	Bristol Shopping Centre	Andrew Ibrahim	Convicted, and given an indeterminate sentence.	Gardham 18/07/09.
2010	Newcastle	Rajib Karim	Jailed for 30 years on 28/2/11	A British Airways employee, sought to attack an aircraft.  Gardham, 02/02/11.
2010	Stock Exchange	Nine men from Cardiff, London and Stoke. Arrested 20/12/10.	All nine pleaded guilty to a series of terrorist offences.  Abdul Miah was jailed for 16 years 10 months.  Gurukanth Desai, 12 years  Mohammed Chowdhury, 13 years, 8 months  Shah Rahman, 12 years.  Omar Latif, 10	Crown Prosecution Service, 09/02/12,



			<p>years 4 months.</p> <p>Mohammed Shahjahan, 8 years 10 months.</p> <p>Usman Khan, 8 years.</p> <p>Nazam Hussain, 8 years.</p> <p>Mohibur Rahman, 5 years.</p>	
2011	Jewish community targets in Manchester	Mohammed and Shasta Khan, from Oldham.	Convicted 19/07/12. Mr Khan was jailed for 15 years, his wife for 8.	Frazer, 20/07/12.
2011 – arrested September	Birmingham Rucksack Plot (Operation Pitsford)	<p>Irfan Naseer, Irfhan Khalid, Ashik Ali convicted of leading the plot.</p> <p>Rahin Ahmed, Bahader Ali, Mohammed Rizwan and Mujahid Hussain also convicted, as were four men for travelling to Pakistan for terrorist training.</p>	<p>Convicted of 12 counts of preparing for acts of terrorism. Khalid and Naseer jailed for 18 years, Ali for 15.</p> <p>See McCarthy, Birmingham Mail 26/04/13 and Peachey, Independent, 26/04/13.</p>	No specific target had been selected.
30/06/12	Attempt to bomb EDL rally in Dewsbury.	Omar Mohammed Khan, Mohammed Hasseen, Anzal Hussain, Mohammed Saud, Zohaib Ahmed and Jewel Uddin arrested on 4 July after weapons discovered in their impounded	All pleaded guilty to preparing an act of terrorism between 1 May and 4 July 2012. (Muslim Weekly, 10/05/13).	Knives and guns were also taken to be used, but the men arrived after the EDL had dispersed.

		car.		
2012	Luton Territorial Army Toy Car Plot	Zahid Iqbal, Mohammed Sharfaraz Ahmed, Umar Arshad and Syed Hussain.	All four pleaded guilty. Iqbal and Ahmed jailed for 16 years 3 months, Arshad for 6 years 09 months and Hussain for 5 years 3 months.	Luton Today, 18/04/14.
19 August 2014	Attempt to behead a British soldier in London	Al-Muhajiroun supporter Brusthom Ziamani convicted of preparing an act of terrorism.	Jailed for 22 years.	Crime and Justice (20/03/15).

#### 4.4 Four Lions? The Clerical Leaders of British Jihadism

The most controversial figures within British Islamism have, perhaps appropriately, been clerics – Abu Hamza late of Finsbury Park mosque, Abu Qatada formerly of the Four Feathers centre in London, Abdullah el-Faisal who taught at a series of London Islamic institutions including Brixton Mosque and Omar Bakri Muhammad, founder of Al-Muhajiroun. Whilst differences exist between the men in terms of ethnic background, temperament and personal ambitions, there is also much common ground. All four are Sunni Muslims who espouse Salafism, moved to the United Kingdom in the 1980s or 1990s, each justify violence at specific junctures, and all looked to develop influence with British Muslims whilst simultaneously contributing to global Islamic affairs. In turn each was to come into conflict with the British state, and the legal systems of other countries.

## **Abdullah el-Faisal**

A Jamaican born convert to Islam, Abdullah el-Faisal makes a living as an Islamic preacher, with a particular interest in using social media to advance his arguments. El-Faisal's background gave him particular advantages when propagating his interpretation of Islam to black Britons. Just two weeks after she converted to Islam, Marion Lindsay took her son Germaine to hear a fellow Jamaican talk about Islam – Abdullah el-Faisal (BBC2, 2010). A former drug user, el-Faisal was well placed to proselytise to those with an experience of street life, and could offer a distinct, if austere alternative to it. He understood that life because he had lived it, but could also offer an understanding of a new vision – el-Faisal had studied Islam in Saudi Arabia for eight years (Schoenfeld, 2004, 51).

Thus educated, he took up life as a peripatetic preacher of Islam, building up a steady following through sales of his lectures and sermons (Abbott, 2010). 7/7 bomber Germaine Lindsay appears only one of many to be influenced by el-Faisal. Three British men from Tipton who fought in Afghanistan in 2000-1 – Rhuheh Ahmed, Asif Iqbal and Shafiq Rasul were reportedly encouraged on that path, in material which emerged via Wikileaks:

Various Imams and a well-connected cleric named Sheikh Faisal visited the Tipton mosque and encouraged the detainee and his friends to commit themselves to the armed struggle against the west (US DoD, 29/10/03).

It appears to be only after 9/11 that the authorities digested the detail of what el-Faisal had been saying for years – that his preaching included not just a call for jihad but the arming of Muslim children, and to kill Jews and Hindus. In 2003 he was

convicted of soliciting murder, and at the completion of sentence in May 2007 deported (BBC Website, 2007, b). El-Faisal holds the unwelcome title of the first Muslim cleric in Britain to be convicted of inciting hatred (Foley, 2013, 269-70).

Abdullah el-Faisal settled in Kenya before being deported again - to his homeland of Jamaica. There, el-Faisal remains as active as ever, and an indication of his output is that a You Tube search of his name on 27 September 2013 listed 122,000 videos. In cyberspace the restrictions some governments have placed on el-Faisal in person may be readily circumvented. For example an el-Faisal lecture utilising the Paltalk system and his own Authentic Tauheed website entitled "Why we hate the Shia" was being advertised by British supporters in July 2014 (Non Stop Dawa, 2014). On social media el-Faisal has taken a declared position in support of the Islamic State, accusing Al-Qaeda of being jealous of IS, and taking a wrong turn under Ayman al-Zawahiri (Faisal, 2014).

## **Abu Hamza**

The most recognisable British Jihadist has been Abu Hamza. His jocular rent-a-quote personality, prosthetic limb, and London accent helped form a public image that was a tabloid editor's dream. A lapsed Muslim who rediscovered the faith, Hamza worked at Regents Park Mosque as a cleaner (Lambert, 2011, 81) but had greater ambitions. In 1994 he established the Supporters of Sharia organisation, and took up a position at Luton Central Mosque (Smith, 2000) He was then appointed to take Friday prayers at Finsbury Park mosque, gaining operational control of the centre in 1997 (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 36). In theological terms, Abu Hamza appears to have made up with gusto what he lacked in knowledge. Having noted

Abu Hamza's physical deformities and their provenance in Afghanistan, witness Omar Nasiri declared:

I was even more amazed when I heard Abu Hamza speak. He knew nothing at all about theology, which seemed odd for someone who had gone through the camps. He was very loud and passionate, but to me he also seemed very ill-informed (Nasiri, 2006, 275).

When Giles Kepel interviewed Abu Hamza at Finsbury Park mosque, they spoke Cairene together, the dialect of Arabic associated with Egypt's capital. Yet Kepel found Hamza more comfortable in English (Kepel, 2010), so immersed had the Egyptian become in London life. This appears to have been to Hamza's advantage in working with young British Muslims, indeed the difference between Hamza and some of the older, Urdu speaking Imam's in London is significant.

Radical imam's were experts at articulating their followers' cultural anxieties and exploiting their conflicted sense of identity, and they did so in the (European) languages in which their second- and third-generation European Muslim audiences felt most comfortable (Neumann, 2008, 36).

Yet this can only serve as a partial explanation for the Hamza phenomenon. Under his control Finsbury Park mosque developed a reputation for extremism and intemperate behaviour involving young British Muslim men. But it also provided a home for the capital's Algerian exiles, some of whom were prominent supporters of jihadist organisations in their homeland. As we have seen in the previous chapter, at least nine Algerians appear to have travelled on in this period from Finsbury Park to overseas conflicts. O'Neill and McGrory remind us of the importance of Salafism:

The core of the Salafi ideology is that Islam has strayed from its origins, and secular Muslim society has grown decadent and heretical. Modern standard bearers, like Osama Bin Laden, embraced the idea of holy struggle- jihad – to achieve their religious and political objectives (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 276)

It was this Salafi-Jihadist analysis of the world – and what to do about it - which Hamza presented, but with a significant development. “Abu Hamza copied this, and finessed the doctrine to appeal to inner city British youths” (O'Neill and McGrory, op cit).

Hamza briefly became editor of the GIA's publication *al-Ansar* in 1997, and was its spokesman during the controversy over a series of massacres (UNSC, 2011). In this period, French counter-terrorist officials, fearful of an attack by Algerians on the 1998 World Cup football tournament in the country appear to have developed a particular fear of Hamza and Abu Qatada who;

Issued a regular flow of fatwas to GIA groups operating in France and Algeria, drawing upon a deluge of references from the Qur'an and Salafist theologians to justify all manner of violence, including the killing of women and children (Evans and Phillips, 2007, 253).

The French even seem to have believed that in issues of *al-Ansar* produced in Finsbury Park, operational instructions were being given in code to militants in France (Foley, 2013, 287). Abu Hamza was not however so committed to the cause that he would allow his support for the GIA to erode his position at the mosque. When the GIA issued a communiqué justifying massacres of civilians on the bizarre grounds that the population of Algeria was now apostate, Hamza was attacked by some Algerians who ripped down a copy of the GIA's notice inside the mosque (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 44). After clashes saw riot police deployed, Hamza

backed down and resigned from his work for the GIA (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 44-5).

Media coverage of Finsbury Park mosque increased, especially after Hamza was connected in the press to a kidnapping in Yemen by the Islamic Army of Aden-Abayan (see chapter five) indeed Abu Hamza appeared to rather enjoy the spotlight (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 159) where he became widely caricatured. Supporters of Hamza presented him rather differently. When remanded in custody awaiting trial in 2005, demonstrations were held by members of Supporters of Sharia outside HMP Belmarsh. Hani al Sebai Yusif, Director of the Al-Maqreze Center for Historical Studies opined:

The jailed cleric is reciting the "prayer of the sufferer". His family said he was reciting another prayer, that of the story of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) who was swallowed by a whale but saved by God, in the darkness of Belmarsh (Asharq al-Awsat, 2005).

In 2006 Abu Hamza was jailed for seven years for inciting murder and racial hatred during his time as Imam at Finsbury Park mosque. In 2012 was extradited to the United States where he was convicted of 11 charges pertaining to the establishment of jihadi training camps in Oregon, and terrorist offences in Yemen, being jailed for life on 9 January 2015 (FBI, 2015).

### **Omar Bakri Muhammad**

As the founder of Al-Muhajiroun, Bakri was a high profile, if peripheral figure within British Islam. He established the organisation in 1996 after splitting with HuT: "The

intention was to use Al-Muhajiroun to recruit young ideologues committed to forming a caliphate in Britain” (Watson, 2008, 45). Bakri possibly benefitted initially, like Abu Hamza, from being regarded as a bizarre, humorous figure. Watson insists Bakri was considered a crank by the British security services, a position assisted in the public mind by the television documentary *‘Tottenham Ayatollah’* (Ronson, 1997). In one of the first national television considerations of domestic Islamism, Bakri Muhammad produced a series of inflammatory and at times eccentric quotes. For example whilst discussing elements which would need to change to establish a truly Islamic society in Britain under sharia law, Bakri insisted music act The Spice Girls should be arrested ‘immediately’ for lewd conduct, whilst positioning himself disapprovingly outside the Wood Green branch of record store HMV.

The author spoke briefly to Ronson about this programme when he was conducting a book signing at the Camden Centre in London on 12 November 2011. Nearly fifteen years on Jon Ronson made light of his documentary, making the self-deprecating comment that people like Omar Bakri Muhammad had proven to be the exact opposite of how he had portrayed them – he had turned out to be more dangerous than funny. Bakri’s organisation, Al-Muhajiroun, is considered in greater detail later in this chapter.

Following the 7/7 bombings, pressure on the British authorities to act against those who advocated jihadism was intense. Within two weeks of the attacks Bakri gave a curious interview to a Saudi exile newspaper. This included an offer to leave Britain voluntarily, but also stressed the positive theological work he was engaged in, stating he;



Had looked after and educated two generations of Muslims youths through religious sermons and lectures, and by participating in religious conferences. Bakri said he founded the Sharia court in Britain which officiated over 1,400 marriages and 600 divorces. He also established a college where hundreds of Muslims youths learned the fundamental tenants of Islam (Asharq al Awsat, 2005, b)

Following Tony Blair's declaration of 5 August 2005 that in terms of counter-terrorism 'the rules of the game are changing' Bakri notably left Britain the following day (Foley, 2013, 270). Now based in Lebanon, he has continued to promote his and Al-Muhajiroun's ideals, using the Internet to remain in contact with supporters in Britain. Three major developments have occurred since Bakri's sudden departure. Home Secretary Charles Clarke revoked his indefinite leave to remain in Britain, and an attempt by Bakri to return to in 2006, during a Royal Navy evacuation of British subjects from Lebanon during the Israel-Hezbollah war, was rejected (Guardian, 2006). Never prosecuted in the UK under terrorism legislation, the Lebanese authorities have taken a more robust approach to Bakri. In 2010 he was convicted for his role in clashes with the Lebanese army, and by 2014 was in prison having been arrested as part of an army security drive to counter religious sectarianism (Lebanon Daily Star, 2014). Finally, like el-Faisal, Bakri has supported the emergence of the Islamic State, arguing that Al-Qaeda had in practice stepped aside for the group, and that Syria is now the focus of real hope (MSNBC, 2015).

## **Abu Qatada**

A Jordanian of Palestinian extraction expelled from Kuwait, Abu Qatada moved to Britain in 1993 (Wagemakers, 2012, 202). Also known as Omar Mahmoud Uthman, and Abu Qatada al-Filastini, Qatada voluntarily left Britain for Jordan on 6 July 2013, where he was subsequently acquitted of any role in terrorist attacks in Amman in the period 1999-2000. Described as a “dignified departure” and a “hero” by supporters (Brittain, 2013, Muslims against Detention, 2013) Qatada had spent the second half of his twenty years in Britain locked in legal battles against deportation. Although never charged with a terrorist offence here, Qatada was readily referred to in the press as Al-Qaeda’s leader in Europe or Bin Laden’s spiritual adviser (Littlejohn, 2012) and in similar terms by British politicians:

One individual indisputably a member of the Osama bin Laden team was Abu Qatada, a radical cleric who operated as Al-Qaeda’s ‘European Ambassador’ (Gove, 2006, 88).

Despite an element of hyperbole, Qatada’s work as a propagandist with Algerian GIA exiles in London, and providing religious rulings for Osama Bin Laden is evidenced in the previous chapter. His role as a spiritual leader at the Four Feathers Club in west London to both Arab émigrés and young British Muslims appears to have been significant:

Abu Qatada always gave very learned expositions. He talked about theology, and it was clear he knew a great deal about Islam. The lectures weren’t easy – he demanded a great deal from his audience (Nasiri, 2006, 269).

Accompanying this knowledge was a clear commitment to combat. When discussing jihad “He made it clear that the armed jihad was the most noble form of all” (Nasiri, 2006, 268), the type of elevation of jihad we have already seen from both Bin Laden

and Qutb. To Johannes Jansen the divide between those with an attachment to waging jihad and those who fail to do so, is a key separation between what he terms mainstream and fundamentalist Muslims:

To true fundamentalists, the other, more spiritual meanings of jihad are unimportant, or at least much less important than the specific martial meanings of the term (Jansen, 1997, p10).

The greater, spiritual jihad to be a better Muslim is hereby replaced by the lesser jihad of the battlefield. Although not personally a fighter, Qatada appears to have raised considerable funds in Britain for the Chechen cause (UNSC, 2009, a) and to have distributed the work of his fellow Jordanian Salafist Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (Wagemakers, 2012, 202) one of the most important Islamist thinkers alive within that tradition (Wagemakers, 2012). During the periods Qatada was remanded in custody fighting extradition to Jordan, he devoted his time to contemplation of the Qur'an "In the first three years, I completed the memorization of the Book of Allah, the Most High, along with lengthy contemplations about it" (Qatada, 2009) developing friendships with accused Islamist prisoners and seeking to rally his co-religionists behind particular causes. One such statement, released via the Islamic Observation Center during the tensions over the Muhammad cartoons, "urged Muslim youth to defend Islam" (SITE Intel, 2006).

Since his return to Jordan and successful defence in two terrorism trials, Qatada has continued to maintain a high profile in Salafist circles. This has included giving a series of interviews to the American Salafi Muslim Bilal Abdul Kareem. Here it can be noted that in contradistinction to el-Faisal and Omar Bakri, criticism is articulated of the Islamic State. Whilst praising them for fighting Shia Iran, Alawites and apostates,

Qatada accuses IS of dividing and fighting against the Mujahideen in Iraq and Syria (Kareem, 2015). Reference to the 'Mujahideen' here is likely to be a reference to the Al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat Al-Nusra, who Qatada supports against the Islamic State (al-Amin, 2014).

By 2013, none of the 'four lions' of British Jihadism remained in the UK. El-Faisal and Hamza having been deported, Bakri Muhammad and Qatada almost certainly leaving before they were pushed. The routes they took in terms of their activism differed, with Hamza taking a high media profile, Bakri Muhammad that of group based activism. Differences also emerge when their stances on the emergence of the Islamic State and its declared Caliphate are considered. Despite such dichotomies, radical Imam's may be seen as conducting specific, similar roles. Peter Neumann argues four core elements discerned their work – they serve as chief propagandists of the Islamist militant movement, act as religious authorities, serve as recruitment magnets and create 'networks of networks'. This may be nationally, internationally, or both (Neumann, 2008, 35). Not all of the four lions performed each of these duties all the time, but elements of Neumann's framework fit their activities. Hamza, Bakri and el-Faisal may be considered prolific propagandists. Qatada enjoyed international status as a religious authority, whilst Hamza and el-Faisal both worked to tailor their appeal to particular demographics within British Islam. Here were recruitment 'magnets' willing to both travel the country and to utilise new technology as a tool for propagating their message. Perhaps the most high profile network to emerge as a consequence of this activism was to be Bakri Muhammad's organisation, Al-Muhajiroun, which is considered in the following section.

#### 4.5 Al-Muhajiroun: The Emigrants

Given the repetition with which they appear in the narrative of British Jihadism, under a variety of names, it is necessary to examine Al-Muhajiroun in some detail. The first step to developing an understanding of the group is to consider their chosen nomenclature. The concept of migration is important within Islam. “The Hijrah refers to the migration/exodus of Muhammad and the muhajirun (his companions) from Mecca to the city of Yathrib” (Yusuf, 1995, 111). The Islamic calendar dates from this migration (Sardar and Malik, 2009, 18). Imtiyaz Yusuf observes that historically the Hijrah represents a journey of religious intent, and that it has been used by thinkers such as Mawdudi and Qutb to justify a withdrawal from states of non-belief (Yusuf, 1995, 111). In the name they have taken, Al-Muhajiroun position themselves within a key Islamic concept. Although some distance from the heart of Islam in Arabia, their situation, as exiles, should not necessarily be considered new or unusual – “One third of the ummah exists as minorities in non-Muslim countries” (Sardar and Malik, 2009, 150). With an estimated 1.6 billion Muslims in the world (Desilver, 2013) at least 500 million live, as Al-Muhajiroun do, in non-Muslim societies, and consequently do not live under a legal system which pertains to operate sharia<sup>13</sup>.

Richard Watson, a BBC journalist who has investigated Al-Muhajiroun for many years, published *“The One True God, Allah: The Rise of the British Jihad”* (2008). He places the organisation at the centre of a British jihadism that traverses both the UK and Pakistan. Academic Catherine Zara Raymond (2010) narrows Al-Muhajiroun’s focus to the overthrow of the British government, and its replacement with an Islamic

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<sup>13</sup> In addition to this, not all Muslim majority states proclaim sharia, and many who do may not satisfy the demands of particular activists.

state, based on sharia. From Britain, other states would be overthrown until a caliphate was formed. Both writers discern domestic and international goals within the organisation's strategy – an example of the duality which is important to recognise if we are to discern a distinct British Jihadism.

Al-Muhajiroun has become a familiar sight in many British towns and cities. Their activities centre on dawah, usually conducted at street stalls where shoppers congregate, pitches outside mosques and at Islamic rallies and conferences. Their message is also spread online, via posters and stickers, and through provocative use of the media – in particular holding demonstrations and interventions with messages that may alarm or upset those who do not share their approach. Whilst using the name Muslims against Crusades, Al-Muhajiroun launched a series of protests against British troops parading after returning from service in Afghanistan. It is important to stress that these are not characteristic of the type of anti-war actions held by the Stop the War Coalition or pacifist groups since 2001. The focus of MAC has not been to oppose military intervention or violence per se, but to stress hostility to British servicemen and solidarity with the ummah. Activist and former British and Commonwealth middleweight boxing champion Anthony Small, who now calls himself Abdul Haqq, stated after demonstrating against the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment in Barking "I am a Muslim first and a boxer second. These people are killing my brothers and sisters. They come back to this country and parade medals they've won by killing" (Sabey, 2010).

Whilst it is provocative demonstrations and stunts such as burning the poppy on Remembrance Day that attract publicity, much more routine work centres on

propagation of Islam (Choudary, 2011). Typically this work is publicised on social media. In an April 2011 example in Peckham, the intervention begins with prayer, before Choudary can be seen patiently explaining his ideas to shoppers, many of whom prefer to pass by without taking any leaflets. The video however closes triumphantly when a man accepts Islam, and makes the shahada (declaration of faith) to cries of 'Allah Akhbar' and an embrace from Anjem Choudary. It is from the shahada that a whole series of consequences follow, and the relationship between God and man is established (Sardar and Malik, 2009, 50). Speaking ahead of a similar street stall scheduled for east London in 2009, Choudary commented;

We are going from area to area talking about Islam as an alternative to the current British lifestyle....Islam will liberate you from the man-made law and the worship of your own desires (Sherlock, 2009).

Such mundane, routine activity would be familiar to anyone who has been part of an evangelical religious organisation or indeed a minor political party.

In October 2004 Bakri closed down Al-Muhajiroun, perhaps mindful of possible proscription by the Home Secretary (Schroeder, 2007, 148). Subsequently a series of initiatives have been launched by those who were prominent in the original grouping, using different names for each organisation. Quintan Wiktorowicz lists as many as fifty different Al-Muhajiroun fronts and platforms, a list Catherine Raymond increases by fourteen (Raymond, 2010, 13), although the main incarnations have been Al-Muhajiroun, Al-Ghurabaa, Islam4UK and Muslims against Crusades. Each appears to have a very familiar, almost identical membership, and to conduct itself in a similar manner to its predecessor. The tactic of proscribing Al-Muhajiroun and

successor groups does not appear to affect their ability to organise - no one from within this current has been convicted of membership of an illegal organisation. Indeed, after Islam4UK was banned on 21 January 2010, Anjem Choudary appeared on Newsnight that evening with Jeremy Paxman (Raymond, 2010, 24).

How might we begin to categorise Al-Muhajiroun? Melinda Cooper (2008) sees radical Islam as conditional on absolute prohibition in familial, moral and sexual relations. Religious revivals in the neo-liberal era converge on this point – where national, political and economic foundations have been lost the politics of desire can still be controlled. Whilst Cooper stresses this element was present in the Muslim Brotherhood from its inception, it is interesting to note its preponderance in Al-Muhajiroun circles. In 2012 activists in the London borough of Waltham Forest launched a campaign entitled The Shariah Project. This was a street level campaign for sharia law to be introduced in London, featuring activism against the sex industry, with website footage of Muslim security patrols to enforce norms of Islamic behaviour and debates with (pixilated) female journalists about the probity required of women.

Such activities occurring in the middle of London provoke media outrage (Robinson, 2013) but are not a surprise. Imtiyaz Yusuf argues hijrah (migration) has taken on particular significance in the post-colonial era “leading to the emergence of different interpretations and the establishment of hujar (settlements) relevant to diverse Muslim geopolitical areas” (Yusuf, 1995, 112) – this includes dividing territory into areas of Islam, and areas of war. The Shariah Project, however small, seeks to similarly establish and control territory.



This localism is consistent with Cooper's analysis of what she refers to as an 'Islamic neo-fundamentalism', which "relocates absolute value in the realm of sexual politics and the divine – that is below and above the arena of the nation state" (Cooper, 2008, 33). Thus calls for sharia law as a right of multi-cultural difference – this is a method of maintaining a non-negotiable sense of value. It is the demand for sharia that is central to the existence of the fundamentalist and is at the core of the definition of the faith expounded by key activists. As Sayyid Qutb states:

The basis of the message is that one should accept the Shariah without any question and reject all other laws in any shape or form. This is Islam. There is no other meaning of Islam (Qutb, 2007, 36).

Al-Muhajiroun's view of Islam is not of a passive or purely spiritual faith, nor despite the Shariah Project, is it entirely local. Activists played a particularly prominent role in the violence during the international controversy over the Muhammad cartoons. One of Al-Muhajiroun's incantations, Al-Ghurabaa looked to pre-empt any legal action against it, stating that its members;

Do not glorify acts of terrorism, whether committed by individuals, organizations or nation states such as the USA or UK; we do not wish to emulate them or praise them and make it expressly clear that it is not the intention of any of our articles or comments of our representatives (Quoted in Schroeder, 2007, 149).

This position is in contradiction to both Al-Muhajiroun's conduct as an organisation and Al-Ghurabaa's actions during the anti-Danish protests. It called a march from Regents Park Mosque to the Danish Embassy to protest about the cartoons of

Muhammad published in the newspaper Jyllands-Posten on 30 September 2005. This demonstration featured placards with slogans such as “Slay Those Who Insult Islam” and was attended by one man dressed as a suicide bomber. Similar material appeared on the Al-Ghurabaa website (Schroeder, 2007, 150), and was no idle threat - this research has found five members of Al-Muhajiroun who have died in jihadist violence (see figure 4.3). These include an activist who was one of Britain’s first suicide bombers – Bilal Mohammed from Birmingham, who died in an attack on an Indian army post in Kashmir in 2000. Away from the dawah stalls and calls to the faith, Al-Muhajiroun has long been a group with a particular affiliation to serious violence. A 2013 report by anti-racist group Hope Not Hate suggests as many as 70 people connected to Al-Muhajiroun have either been convicted of terrorist related offences in this country or killed fighting overseas (Lowles and Mulhall, 2013, 19).

By 2008, Peter Neumann was questioning whether Al-Muhajiroun could be considered a ‘gateway’ organisation, joined by some who went on to become terrorists, or if it was instead a terrorist group (Neumann, 2008, 34). In terms of the total terrorist convictions of Al-Muhajiroun members, assembling a definitive figure is made problematic by a lack of clarity as to the number and details of members, and what appears to be a loose structure of affiliation, especially outside of London. Issues are further clouded by the reluctance of authorities to clearly state the politico-religious background of those convicted of terrorist offences. Arrests in a 2010 plot to bomb the Stock Exchange, involving Jihadists from Cardiff, London and Stoke followed an Islam4UK meeting in Cardiff (Gardham et al, 2010). Significantly group affiliations of the nine men convicted of terrorist offences in this instance is lacking in the Crown Prosecution Service press release upon conviction (CPS, 2012), even

though it is present in national and local media coverage; “Six of the nine men had been personally taught by former Islam4UK spokesman Choudary, while four were also in contact with convicted terrorists” (Docklands and East London Advertiser, 2012a). Similarly Camber et al (2012) refer to the prominent dawah stalls run by the Stoke gang members and that “At least two of the defendants were members of the MAC’s predecessor, Islam4UK”.

The 7/7 bombings present further example of this ambiguity. Inquest evidence was heard that Mohammed Sidique Khan “developed a deepening interest in al-Muhajiroun” (Addley, 2011) yet the group is unmentioned in the Coroner’s inquest report (Hallett, 2011). One of the few occasions in which Al-Muhajiroun members appear to have been collectively investigated and subsequently prosecuted for terrorist offences was at the height of the tensions following the invasion of Iraq, when Abu Izzadeen and others delivered fiery orations outside Regents Park mosque on 9 November 2004. Six members were consequently jailed for inciting terrorism (MPS, 2008).

Significant focus returned to Al-Muhajiroun following the Woolwich killing, with footage emerging of murderer Michael Adebolajo at the group’s demonstrations. This includes a photograph of a 2006 picket at the Central Criminal Court, in support of those charged following the Al-Ghurabaa demonstration at the Danish embassy (Whitehead et al, 2013). Images appeared to show Adebolajo scuffling with police officers shortly before he was arrested. Such articulation of grievance, and Adebolajo’s declaration that Muslims collectively are under attack, should not

surprise us. For Joseph R Gusfield, “Status politics is political conflict over the allocation of prestige” (Gusfield, 1976, 18). An obsession with declaring and jockeying for status percolates the thinking of these currents. Al-Muhajiroun in Waltham Forest is not acting outside of Islamist traditions by demanding sharia, nor is its activist Adebolajo acting illogically in waving his copy of the Qur’an at court, or placing himself within a canon of individuals headed by Abu Hamza. To such actors it is the denial of sharia, by a society which simultaneously proclaims multiculturalism and an equality of religious values, which engenders resentment.

In his study of American Christian fundamentalists, Hofstadter found “The operative content of their demands is more likely to be negative, they call on us mainly to prohibit, to prevent, to censor and censure, to discredit and to punish” (Hofstadter, 2008, 88).

In any discussion of the extent to which these tendencies characterise British Islamism, the role of Al-Muhajiroun in expressing such demands cannot be overstated.

Figure 4.3 Al-Muhajiroun’s Jihad: Members killed

Name	Details	Source
Bilal Mohammed	Died in a suicide bombing in Srinagar on 25/12/00. Involved with Al-Muhajiroun and Jaish-e-Mohammed.	Watson (2008, 63).
Yasir Khan	From Crawley, killed in US bombing raids on Taliban controlled Kabul post 9/11.	Harris, Wazir and Burke, 4/11/01.
Aftab Manzoor	Aged 25, from Luton. Killed in US bombing raids on Taliban controlled Kabul post 9/11.	Harris, Wazir and Burke, 4/11/01.

Afzal Munir	Aged 25, from Luton, killed in US bombing raids on Taliban controlled Kabul post 9/11.	Harris, Wazir and Burke, 4/11/01.
Omar Sharif	Died in 2003 Hamas suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. Was involved with HuT at Kings College, before following Bakri Muhammad into Al-Muhajiroun.	Husain (2007, 263).

#### 4.6 The Academic Battlefield

On 11 December 2009, Anjem Choudary chaired a meeting at University College London (UCL) entitled “Prisoners of the War against Islam” (BBC Radio 4, 2010). An online address was received from Bakri Muhammad in Lebanon. Few of those attending could have anticipated the storm about to envelop UCL’s ISOC and indeed the umbrella organisation for ISOCs – FOSIS. Two weeks later, on Christmas Day an attempt was made to explode an airliner over Detroit, with a bomb positioned in the underpants of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. A wealthy Nigerian who had spent time in Yemen, he studied Mechanical Engineering at UCL from 2005-8, becoming President of the ISOC in 2006-7.

The sensitivity of politics and religion on campus, and the approach of academic institutions to terrorism was subsequently emphasised. A *Daily Telegraph* editorial thundered “Academic liberalism is a danger to life” calling for a greater focus on the activities of ISOCs:

Liberal British academics, along with their friends in the media and public sector, have a habit of diverting any discussion of terrorism away from Islamism towards the evils of Anglo-

American foreign policy. By doing so they are less likely to offend students from developing countries whose delicate sensibilities seem to matter more than security (Telegraph, 2009)

Perhaps not surprisingly FOSIS felt the need to respond to such media coverage, issuing a press release the following day. The organisation, which claims to represent 90,000 Muslim students in Britain (BBC Radio 4, 2010) commented:

There remains no evidence to suggest that Muslim students are at particular risk of radicalisation or that university campuses are vulnerable to people seeking to recruit to this extreme ideology (FOSIS, 2009).

It is a wonder that following the attempted plane bombing, FOSIS could claim there is no evidence Muslim students are at risk of radicalisation. Abdulmutallab is far from being the first recent student leader to be involved with terrorist offences. This incident followed those of 2007 Glasgow airport suicide bomber Kafeel Ahmed (former President of the ISOC at Queens University) and Yassin Nassari (former ISOC President at University of Westminster) who was convicted of bringing guides on constructing weapons into the UK. Airline bomb plotter Waheed Zaman, convicted of conspiracy to murder in 2010, was ISOC President at London Metropolitan University *at the time of his arrest*.

Nor was Ahmed even the first ISOC alumni to die in a suicide attack. Tel Aviv bar bomber Omar Sharif was a former member of Kings College London ISOC. In 2007 London Metropolitan University student and Al-Muhajiroun member Syed Hashmi became the first man to be extradited from the United Kingdom to the USA on terrorism charges – later pleading guilty to providing material support to Al-Qaeda (Weiser, 2010) whilst he was studying in Britain.

What makes these occurrences particularly disturbing is that those appointed to senior positions in student bodies have traditionally been selected because of their administrative skills, popularity with others, knowledge of the issues at hand or ability at particular tasks. This appears to have been the case with Abdulmutallab, whose predecessor as UCL ISOC President, Kassim Rafiq noticed the qualities within him (BBC Radio 4, 2010). An independent inquiry convened by UCL to consider whether Abdulmutallab was radicalised at the institution rejected the proposition (UCL, 2010) and stressed publicly the importance of the institutions commitment to freedom of speech. Malcolm Grant UCL Provost at the time of the attempted bombing, insisted universities could not be bulwarks against terrorism (BBC Radio 4, 2010).

The first wave of Islamist student violence in Britain did not come via individuals such as Zaman or Abdulmutallab, but occurred more than a decade earlier. Ed Husain charts his personal involvement in the provocative behaviour of Islamists at Tower Hamlets College in 1992-3. This included putting pressure on female students to wear the hijab, and declining to use a mosque minutes away from campus. The Islamic Society instead demanded territory on site that they – and only they – could control (Husain, 2007, 61-2). At Husain's next place of study, Newham College, the stridency of the Islamic Society was a significant factor in divisions between Muslim and African Christian students, events which led to Ayotunde Obanubi being stabbed to death (Husain 2007, 151, Nawaz 2012, 130). Sa'eed Nur and Umrans Qadir were both subsequently convicted for their roles in Obanubi's murder.

Little noticed outside of east London at the time, the killing has since developed particular resonance, not least because it appears to have played an important role in eventually shifting both Husain and Nawaz away from what they now portray as a confrontational Islamism. Others involved in the case have taken a different route.

Kazi Nurur Rahman was initially amongst those charged with murder, only for his prosecution to be dropped. He was later to attend jihadist training camps in Pakistan, and to be jailed for buying firearms in a Metropolitan Police sting operation (Wheeler, 2012). Wary of arrest following the murder of Obanubi, Majid Nawaz sought legal advice from a HuT student who was also a lawyer – Anjem Choudary (Nawaz, 2012, 132).

The Newham College murder serves as a reminder that contemporary debates concerning Islamism on campus are not new, but instead have a twenty year plus history. It was in the same period that Abdulmutallab's alma mater, UCL, first experienced problems with some Islamist students. Ed Lyon was the Student Union's External Affairs and Welfare Officer at UCL from 1993-4, one of five sabbatical officers running the Students Union. Mr Lyon discovered the ISOC distributing anti-Semitic posters on campus, and after a meeting of UCL's Societies Board the then ISOC was disaffiliated from the wider students union due to its dominance by HuT, producing and circulating anti-Semitic literature and attempted intimidation of student union officials (Lyon, Interview, 2010). HuT promotional material at this time was certainly stark. A talk by its deputy leader, Farid Kassim at the University of Central England was entitled "Battlefield – The Only Place for Muslims and Jews." This was accompanied by a picture of a bomb being placed on the Israeli flag, and a caption stating "The (Last Hour) will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them" (Fisher, 1994).

When Abdulmutallab was arrested for the Detroit bombing, Mr Lyon was surprised to see reporters turning to the 'phenomena' of Islamists on campus:



It is nice to say this has never happened before – but it is very far from the truth. There's been Islamic extremism on campuses across London in my experience, for quite some time (Lyon Interview, 2010).

Accordingly, since 2005 the National Union of Students 'no platform' policy has banned three Islamist organisations – Al-Muhajiroun, HuT and MPAC - the Muslim Public Affairs Committee (National Union of Students, 2012). Figure 4.4 documents some of the university ISOC members and alumni involved in terrorist incidents, or convicted of terrorist offences. Eleven separate individuals are named. In an attempt to update these records, and to consider the broader issue of British students fighting in Syria and Iraq, further information has been sought from both FOSIS and UK Universities. An email by the author to FOSIS on 26 August 2014 did not receive a reply. Nor did a similar email to UK Universities on 15 October 2014.

Of all British academic institutions, Queens University Belfast arguably has the greatest direct experience of terrorism. During the Northern Ireland conflict it had staff and students who were perpetrators of terrorism, and its victims (English, 2010, Interview). This includes academics Miriam Daly, murdered by the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), Edgar Graham, murdered on campus by the IRA (McKittrick et al, 1999, 830, 967) and Adrian Guelke, who survived a shooting by the UDA. This author's hypothesis such experience may ensure Queen's took a proactive and open approach to enquiries about terrorist alumni proved incorrect – on every occasion I attempted to conduct research at Queen's University into Kafeel Ahmed, the institution did not reply to emails. Richard English, then Professor of Politics at Queen's, explained "When the story broke there was a denial to say the story was anything to do with us" (English, Interview, 2010). This position was shaped by

distinct factors – the attack was on the mainland, Ahmed was the only fatality, and knowledge of Islamic politics in Northern Ireland is generally low (English, op cit).

The desire to absolve Islamist students from any negative publicity concerning terrorist offences can be dogged. Examples of this approach from critical terrorism studies academics are discussed in chapter six, but it is one which may also encompass University administrators. The destruction of the twin towers in 2001 brought renewed attention upon the 1993 World Trade Center attack, and with it the rediscovery of bomber Ramzi Yousef's academic background. Professor Ken Reid, Deputy Principal of Swansea Institute (now Swansea Metropolitan University) responded cryptically;

I am personally convinced that the person who is held in New York is not our former student. I am personally convinced that our former student is no longer alive and I am personally convinced that he was part of a plot carried out against him and former Kuwaiti students (BBC Website: Wales, 2001).

There appear no doubts within Scotland Yard that the Ramzi Yousef who blew up the World Trade Center is the same man who studied in Swansea. Bob Lambert presents the investigation into Yousef as a model of probity;

There were no concurrent briefings to the news media about Yousef's activities in the UK. Instead, UK police officers were able to piece together useful information about the four years Yousef had spent studying electrical engineering at what was then the Swansea Institute of Higher Education without undue media attention (Lambert, 2011, 44).

Figure 4.4 Universities, ISOCs and Terrorism

Name	University, ISOC and Subject	Terrorist Activity	Source
Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab	President, UCL ISOC 2006-7.	Arrested for trying to detonate a bomb on flight to Detroit, 25/12/2009.	BBC Radio 4. 04/02/10.
Jawad Akbar	Brunel University ISOC,	Convicted of terrorist offences following Operation Crevise	Keeble and Hollington (2010, 130).
Abdulla Ahmed Ali	City University ISOC, Engineering.	Convicted in the liquid bomb plot and jailed for life.	Keeble and Hollington (2010, 125).
Mohammed Gul	Queen Mary University of London ISOC	Added 30 terrorist videos to video sharing websites, 2008 –2009.	Creighton, 28/2/11.
Syed Hashmi	London Metropolitan University	A US citizen born in Pakistan. Extradited to the US in 2007.  In 2010, pleaded guilty to providing material support to Al-Qaeda and was jailed for 15 years.	Weiser, 27/04/10.
Khobaib Hussain	Law, Wolverhampton University	Convicted following the Birmingham rucksack bomb plot, of travelling abroad for terrorist training.	McCarthy, 26/02/13.
Waseem Mughal	Leicester University ISOC, Biochemistry student.	Running website for Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Had also run the Leicester University ISOC website.	Oliver, 5/7/07.  Keeble and Hollington (2010, 130).  Leppard and Dowling, 17/10/10.
Yassin Nasari	President, Westminster University	Convicted of possession of material	Green, 16/7/07.

	ISOC,	of use to a terrorist.	
Abid Naseer	Studying Computer Studies at Liverpool John Moore's University when arrested.	Convicted in 2015 of planning terrorist attacks in Manchester and New York.	US Department of Justice, 07/07/10. FBI, 04/03/15.
Omar Saeed Sheikh	LSE ISOC, Applied Mathematics.	Subsequent terrorism convictions in India and Pakistan.	Burke (2007, 87-9).
Waheed Zaman	Serving President of London Metropolitan ISOC.	Convicted of conspiracy to murder.	CPS, 08/07/10.

#### 4.7 British Islamism and Political Violence

Whilst incidences of terrorism may dominate political and media discourse, less deadly violence involving Islamists is at times an undercurrent within society. This section considers examples of anti-Semitic and homophobic incidents, and the use of violence to uphold blasphemy codes and Islamic standards within education. The *Jewish Chronicle* columnist Geoffrey Alderman has written:

The greatest threat to the safety and security of Jews living in the UK comes from Muslims living in the UK. Not all British Muslims of course, or even a majority of them. But a section of British Muslim society harbours malevolent and occasionally murderous intentions towards British Jews (Alderman, 2010).

Such intentions appear to multiply during periods of particular tension. Incidents in the UK increased significantly during the Israel-Gaza war, when in July 2014 95% of faith related crime recorded in London was against Jews (Mayor of London, 2014, 11). Of those perpetrating hate crimes in London a minority - 45% - were described as white British (Mayor of London, 2014,13) implying that anti-Semitic violence is no

longer the preserve of neo-Nazis. In Europe the 2012 Toulouse attacks saw a French gunman, Mohammed Merah, shoot dead three schoolchildren and an adult at the Ozar Hatorah Jewish Secondary School. Concern about Islamist attacks on Jewish citizens has also been expressed across Scandinavia (Eiglad, 2010) and in public discourse in Holland and Germany during 2010 (Stauber, 2011). In 2012 Mohammed and Shasta Khan from Oldham received long prison sentences for plotting to attack Jewish community buildings in Manchester (see fig 4.2). Negative perceptions about the future of European Jewry have thus aired (Jewish Peoples Policy Agency, 2013), with declining populations potentially under threat from both nativist far right and Islamic actors. These issues peaked with the 2015 shootings in Paris at a kosher supermarket and at a Copenhagen synagogue.

Hatred is not merely directed at Jews. The existence of what may be termed low level threats and intimidation from Islamist actors towards opponents, or those who simply attract their opprobrium, is comparatively under researched. Whilst not meeting the explicit definition of terrorism, instances of politico-religious violence of the type sketched below warrant further future study to see if those involved in such actions progress into more significant, potentially deadly jihadist violence.

In July 2010 activists distributed leaflets outside Jamia Mosque in Derby calling on homosexuals to be executed, and also distributed such literature door to door (Hough, 2011). In London, Mohammed Hasnath from Tower Hamlets was fined for posting stickers with the slogan 'Gay Free Zone' across the East End, accompanied by a sura of the Qur'an (Brocklebank, 2011). Later that year Hasnath was convicted again – for spraying burkas on advertising posters featuring women (Lowles and Mulhall, 2013, 47).

Whilst such incidents appear minor compared to the deadly violence outlined earlier in this chapter, they potentially serve as a method of progression towards support for jihadist groups. In May 2012 Mohammed Hasnath received a third conviction – for possessing documents of use to a person committing an act of terrorism, namely the AQAP magazine *Inspire* (Docklands and East London Advertiser, 2012b). By 2013 he was reportedly in Somalia, featuring in an Al-Shabaab video entitled “*Woolwich Attack: It’s an Eye for an Eye*” (Lowles and Mulhall, 2013, 47). Kabir Ali, convicted in the Derby case of stirring up hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation, later spoke of his wish to become a suicide bomber, and has since died in such an attack committed on behalf of Islamic State, in Iraq (Muslim Weekly, 14/11/14).

Nor has Britain avoided violence in retaliation for the breaching of blasphemy codes, so murderously enacted against the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. In 2008 the home of Melanie Phillips’ “*Londonistan*” publisher, Martin Rynja of Gibson Square, was firebombed. He had courted further controversy by intending to publish the novel “*The Jewel of Medina*”, about the Prophet Muhammad’s child bride. Police officers covertly filmed three prominent London Islamists buying petrol, followed them from Regents Park mosque to Gibson Square in Islington, arresting them after they had carried out their attack (Davey, 2008, Islington Gazette, 2009).

Other types of violence has sought to uphold Islamist approaches to education. In 2011 four men from Whitechapel were convicted of causing grievous bodily harm with intent after religious studies teacher Gary Smith received a fractured skull outside the Central Foundation Girls School in Bow. A police recording device hidden in one of the gang’s car revealed their motivation to be opposition to a non-Muslim teaching about Islam (Taylor, 2011). Whilst such a degree of violence

appears without justification, an explanation for the opposition to Muslims being taught religious studies by a non-Muslim appears in Qutb's *"Milestones"*.

A Muslim cannot go to any source other than God for guidance in matters of faith, in the concept of life, acts of worship, morals and human affairs, values and standards, principles of economics and political affairs and interpretation of historical processes. It is, therefore, his duty that he should learn all these from a Muslim whose piety and character, belief and action, are beyond reproach (Qutb, 2007, 108-9).

#### **4.10 Conclusions**

This chapter primarily addresses the first research question established by this thesis— to catalogue the history of British Islamist violence on these shores. Since 2000 the UK has seen a series of actual and attempted terrorist attacks by jihadist actors articulating a dual justification rooted in religious adherence and opposition to British foreign policy. This violence has resulted in some 54 deaths, plus those of five suicide bombers. The casualty toll would have been considerably higher had any of thirteen catalogued attempted attacks come to fruition.

From its slightly stuttering start in 2000, Jihadist violence is now an established part of British life. Fifteen years of detail however, are yet to entirely extinguish denial. Sensitivities ensure that the number of jihadists emerging from backgrounds within the higher education system is still a scene of contestation, rather than one gaining universal acceptance as an uncomfortable reality.

Perhaps curiously, given the self-identification of the participants in this violence, its religious characteristics have frequently been played down, most noticeably in the response discussed above by a succession of Islamic activists to the suicide video of

7/7 bomber Mohammed Sidique Khan. Here, in part, is the ‘denial’ of the thesis title. A discursive formation has developed which focuses primarily on political explanations for the 2005 bombings, and seeks to ignore religious pronouncements within the same source text. This analysis therefore details an important inconsistency, and seeks to make a substantial contribution towards the understanding of what remains the largest domestic terrorist attack in Britain’s history.

The second intention of this chapter has been to address the question of who are the British Jihadists. In terms of affiliations, British Jihadism is shown to be a disparate and diverse entity, although one where certain core elements may be found. Certain University Islamic Societies, the Finsbury Park and Regents Park mosques, and the Al-Muhajiroun group and its offshoots feature substantially in this historiography. In the statements offered by three terrorists – Mohammed Sidique Khan, Nicky Reilly and Michael Adebolajo each roots himself in the Islamic faith and predicates their actions as a response to the treatment of Muslims by western governments. This duality – of faith and suffering under actual or perceived repression – appears a core element of just who the British jihadists are.

For these actors, loyalty is overtly displayed, not to their place of birth or residence, but to fellow Muslims. Such a commitment is intrinsic to Islamist practice, a component part of the rejection of nationalism we have seen articulated by the likes of Mawdudi, Qutb, and Azzam in earlier chapters. Qutb states categorically that Muhammad fought against Mecca, despite it being his birthplace and a city where he



still had property (Qutb, 2007, 124) – Mecca was outside of the faith, and thus to be opposed.

This rejection of their fellow Britons, is accompanied by a strong religious imperative to act against injustice. Sura 9 of the Qur'an commands Adebolajo's actions at Woolwich. It is the will of God that Lee Rigby walks in front of his car, moments before he is murdered. Khan's "obedience to the one true God, Allah, and following the footsteps of the final prophet and messenger Muhammad" (BBC, 2005, b) forms what he characterises as his 'ethical stance' - committing the London transport bombings. This cannot be seen as merely political. As a consequence of his actions he asks his fellow Muslims to pray for him, and he seeks entry into "gardens of paradise" (op cit). In Devon, as disgusted by the decadence of the streets around him as he is by British foreign policy, Nicky Reilly resolved to blow up a local restaurant. In 2007 the would-be bombers of the Tiger Tiger nightclub ignored the administrative centre of Britain's political elite in Whitehall, to place a car bomb a short distance away outside a Westminster nightclub. British Jihadism seeks to punish, not just the impact of government policies upon the ummah, but our own behaviour.

The rejection of Britain displayed by Khan, Reilly and Adebolajo potentially indicates that the term British jihadism is a misnomer. Yet British Jihadism still has categorical value. Each of the men listed above seeks to express and fulfil their faith, not in the Muslim majority world, but here in the United Kingdom. For the Birmingham Jihadists who attempted to kill English Defence League protestors in Dewsbury, the EDL's blasphemy on the streets of Yorkshire leads to the religious imperative that they

must be killed for blasphemy. For the British Jihadist, sharia law is not some distant entity in a Muslim majority land – it is right here, right now. A Muslim will fight against his birthplace unless sharia is established there (Qutb, 2007, 124).

In the period before the ‘four lions’ of British Jihadism settled here – Abdullah el-Faisal, Abu Hamza, Omar Bakri Muhammad and Abu Qatada – such views would have seemed extraordinary. In his study of American monetary campaigners, Richard Hofstadter asserts that when cranks achieve a popular following, it is best to take their agitation seriously (Hofstadter, 2008, 286). The natural British propensity to mock developments that are different or unsettling arguably guided initial reactions to those clerical ‘lions’ of British Jihadism who gained a degree of public recognition – most noticeably Abu Hamza and Omar Bakri Mohammed. Such a response may have worked in 1980s Britain, where Islamist ideas were of less interest to young Britons, and Muslim communities smaller in number and in consciousness. Instead, this failure to take domestic Islamism seriously as a contender for influence, was combined with the ongoing settlement of Islamist and Jihadist actors from overseas outlined in the previous chapter. It was subsequently combined with what was perceived to be a foreign policy inimical to the ummah.

The initial reticence of the British state towards to tackle the four lions legally, ensured they were able to gain a significant degree of recognition, and some localised support, amongst British Muslims. In the midst of the eventual legal travails of the four lions, Peter Neumann was speculating that the era of the radical Imam may be over – the authorities had now caught up (Neumann, 2008, 36-7) and were prepared to take legal action against excesses. That British Jihadism continues, and

indeed thrives, despite the absence of the four lions from these shores indicates that their influence, although important, is no longer pivotal. Bakri Muhammad's group, Al-Muhajiroun is evidence of this – it has endured through a near twenty year history, surviving proscription under counter-terrorism legislation, the deaths of members in jihad and prosecution of its activists. In its commitment to dawah, to establishing an Islamic Britain under sharia, its sense of grievance and lapses into violence, Al-Muhajiroun encapsulates British Jihadism.

Having examined British Jihadism in its home environment, and found it to be characteristically rooted in a sense of grievance and practical expressions of religious faith, the next chapter discusses the extent to which Britons have travelled overseas to contribute to the cause of the ummah. In particular chapter six focuses on locations where Britons have sought to join indigenous Islamists and Jihadists who were already fighting to establish sharia. This is located in the overall theme of the research in that it contributes to the 'detail' of the thesis title, but in particular addresses the second part of this research's initial question – what is the history of British Islamist involvement in violence beyond these shores. The desire to move to Muslim majority lands and to experience sharia, which appears frequently throughout the next chapter, also contributes to our understanding of the third research question – which asks who the British Jihadists are, and whether they constitute religious or political actors.

## **Chapter 5: The Geographical Distribution of British Jihadis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Speaking of the British Jihadis who fought in Bosnia from 1992-5, Mark Curtis observes Parliament said next to nothing on the subject (Curtis, 2010, 214-5) a response arguably repeated until the post 9/11 era. This chapter seeks to rectify such omissions, and to demonstrate the range of conflicts in which British Jihadists have participated across three decades. The following pages break down, on a country by country basis, the presence of British actors in Jihadist conflicts on that particular nation's soil, and place an estimate on the number of Britons killed in jihadist operations globally since the early 1990s. It is intended that this chapter serve as a contribution towards future research by other academics. Whilst the Syrian jihad is now receiving the detailed study of academics from across the Western world, it is noted that the earlier conflicts listed in this chapter often received only perfunctory study.

This chapter addresses a core question in this thesis – what is the history of British Islamist involvement in politico-religious violence beyond these shores? It does so by detailing some fourteen countries in which British Jihadists have been involved in conflict. This builds on the theoretical underpinning developed in earlier sections of this thesis, not least the understanding of jihad as a concept without geographical restriction, the need to protect the ummah and the position of Qutb that Islam has no meaning without sharia. The previous two chapters have illustrated the diverse nature of British Jihadism. Firstly, that the United Kingdom has played host to a

succession of jihadist actors from conflicts across Muslim majority nations. From their safe haven, many sought to influence events in accordance with their politico-religious aims. Secondly that some of those exiles went on to develop significant influence with a minority of British Islamists, as part of a wider movement expressing demands for sharia in the United Kingdom and participating in violence domestically. This chapter presents detailed information on what may be considered a third element of British Jihadism – its contribution to conflict overseas.

In doing so, this section of the thesis further develops an evidence base for assessing a second research question – who are the British Jihadis? Are they religious or political actors? Are they linked to particular districts, mosques, institutions or organisations? In looking at exactly what Britons have sought to do in overseas conflicts, and the groups they have joined, we gain further indications as to the nature of this phenomenon.

Where possible names, dates and figures are given for those known to have fought or died, or who have participated in training for armed conflict. Where individuals have been processed through the criminal justice system that information is also recorded, although it is to be recognised that the judicial system in, for example, Yemen, may differ substantially in its approach and standards to that aspired to in the United Kingdom.

Such research is an inexact science. Consider Bradfordian Salman Abdullah, who provided information to Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory on Finsbury Park mosque "Abdullah estimates that there may have been as many as fifty men from Finsbury Park who died in terror operations and insurgent attacks in a dozen or more conflicts abroad" (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 93). Evidence for such a high figure is scant,

although conversely accurate lists of those who have died in violence in countries such as Afghanistan, Algeria, Chechnya or Somalia is not publicly available either. But it is not just former jihadists who have provided questionable figures. The numbers given for those considered to have trained in Al-Qaeda's camps in the Afghanistan and Pakistan region have been characterised by their volatility.

The former Scotland Yard commissioner, Sir John Stevens estimated that more than two thousand had undergone terror training. His successor, Sir Ian Blair, who saw the same intelligence reports as Sir John, put the number closer to two hundred. MI5 has never revealed its tally (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 101).

It is that type of discrepancy – from two thousand to two hundred - which this chapter seeks to address, by going some way to collating names and details from the overseas jihads in which British Muslims have participated. Some evidence exists of attempts by the British state to develop centralised information on those who have travelled to jihadist training camps, but there appears no opportunity for independent researchers to inspect such records, nor is it a straight forward matter if anyone wishes to challenge their presence on such a list. For example, Abdul Rahman was a Metropolitan Police constable who resigned from the force after failing counter terrorism checks. Media coverage of his legal action against Scotland Yard stated:

Shortly before Mr Rahman's clearance was suspended MI5 rechecked details of officers and civilian staff at the Met, and other forces, against their records of suspects who had been to Pakistan or Afghanistan and who it suspected might have attended terrorist training camps or madrassas (Leach and Barrett, 2012).

In the absence of access to state records (which may or may not possess a high degree of accuracy) this chapter makes use of open source intelligence from academic and journalistic research, court cases, support organisations for British Muslims arrested for terrorist offences and articles in the ethnic press.

Firstly it is necessary to list the range of jihadist organisations Britons have been members of and/or participated in, over the past three decades. Figure 5.1 lists 16 Jihadist organisations known to have contained British members, a figure which is almost certainly an under estimate, given the mutating nature of the Syrian conflict.

Figure 5.1 Britons and Jihadist organisations

Organisation	Individuals	Source
Afghan Taliban	Unnamed taxi driver from east London, fighting in Dhani-Ghorri, Afghanistan.	Abdul-Ahad and Boone, 25/11/10.
Al-Qaeda	Mohamed Rashed Daoud al-'Owhali	Bergen (2001, 107).
Egyptian Islamic Jihad	Akram	Nawaz (2012, 265).
Harakat al-Islami Bangladeshi	Rhuhel Ahmed	Pantucci, 2011.
Harkat ul Mujahideen (HUM) Pakistan	Omar Saeed Sheikh	Burke (2007, 87).
Islamic Resistance Movement - HAMAS, (Palestine)	Asif Hanif	Watson (2008, 66-7)
Islamic Army of Aden-Abayan (Yemen)	Abu Hamza	Quin (2005, 238).
Islamic State (Iraq and Syria)	Mohammed Emwazi	Mekhennet and Goldman, 26/02/15.
Jemaah Islamiyah (Indonesia)	Jack Roche	Conboy (2006, 192n)
Jaish-e-Mohammed (Pakistan)	Rashid Rauf	Married a relative of JeM founder Masood Azhar (Keeble and Hollington, 2010, 53).
Al-Shabaab (Somalia)	Samantha Lewthwaite	Hamilton, 24/09/13.
Jabhat Al-Nusra (Syria)	Abdul Waheed Majid	Sky News, 07/02/14.

Katiba Al-Muhajireen (Syria)	Ibrahim al Mazwagi	Gilmore, 13/06/13.
Jund al-Sham (Syria)	Kabir Ahmed, who later left the group and joined IS	Muslim Weekly, 14/11/14
Lashkar-e-Taiba (Pakistan)	Shehzad Tanweer	Malik (2009, 110).
Tehreek-e-Takiban Pakistan Jamaatul Ahrar (TTPJA)	Dr Mirza Tariq Ali	Verkaik et al, 16/11/14

This research names ten terrorist bombings involving Britons, or British based Islamists, conducted overseas from 1996 to date, in which nine suicide bombers have killed themselves. These attacks have occurred in Afghanistan, India, Israel, Iraq, Sweden, Syria, and the United States and over the Atlantic Ocean on a flight to America. The exact death toll in these incidents is unknown, although the two attempts to bring down airliners in 2001 and 2009 could potentially have killed hundreds.

Fig 5.2 Jihadist attacks involving Britons overseas

Date	Place	Names	Court Case	Comments
1996	Afghanistan	Khalid Shaheed	None – suicide bombing	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 87).
25/12/00	Indian army base in Srinagar.	Bilal Mohammed	None – suicide bombing	Watson (2008, 63).
22/12/01	Atlantic Ocean, attempted shoe bombing on flight between Paris and Miami.	Richard Reid	Jailed for life in the US.	CNN, 31/01/03.
30/04/03	Mike's Place, Bar, Tel Aviv, Israel.	Asif Hanif	None – suicide bombing	Three civilians killed.  Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30/06/03.
30/04/03	Mike's Place, Bar, Tel Aviv,	Omar Khan	None – found dead in sea	Israel, Ministry of Foreign



	Israel.	Sharif	having fled the scene.	Affairs, 30/06/03
October 2003	Iraq – suicide bombing	Wail al-Dhaleai	Shot dead by US troops whilst trying to carry out a suicide bombing.	Taylor 01/09/06.
February 2005	Iraq – suicide bombing	Unnamed French national, aged 41.	None – suicide bombing.	Man had lived in Moss Side, Manchester, for two years. Bunyan et al 22/06/05.
25/12/09	US airspace over Detroit.	Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab	Sentenced to life imprisonment.	US Department of Justice, 16/02/12.
11/12/10	Stockholm, Sweden.	Taimour Abdulwahab Al-Abdaly	Suicide bombing.	Higginson 13/12/10.
07/02/14	Aleppo prison, Syria	Abdul Waheed Majid	Suicide bombing.	Sky News, 07/02/14.
07/11/14	Beiji, Iraq.	Kabir Ahmed	Suicide bombing.	Muslim Weekly, 14/11/14

## 5.1 Afghanistan

British Islamists have a long history of seeking religious goals in Afghanistan. In 1993 Moazzam Begg travelled from Birmingham to a Jel training facility in Pakistan, before moving to the al-Fajr camp in Afghanistan (Begg, 2006, 53). These camps were operational some four years after the Soviets' departure (indeed after the Soviet Union ceased to exist) yet were still producing combatants. Next Begg visited an adjoining Arab camp, which he found less spartan, but with only a dozen men in training, compared to some 150 at the Pakistani run base. Begg describes listening to war stories from veterans of the Kashmir conflict, and it was seeing such a location that completed a religious awakening:

By the time of my return I considered myself a practising Muslim. The Afghan visit was a life-changing experience for me. No few days had affected me like that. I had met men who seemed to me exemplary, in their faith and self-sacrifice, and seen a world that awed and inspired me (Begg, 2006, 57).

As part of this religious journey, Begg moved permanently to Taliban controlled Kabul in June 2001, taking his family. His support for the Taliban is articulated in his memoir:

When I went to Afghanistan, I believed the Taliban had made some modest progress - in social justice and in upholding pure, old style Islamic values forgotten in many Islamic countries. After September 11 that life was destroyed (Begg, 2006, 381).

In the fight to establish these Islamic values, little quarter was given. In 1996 'Khalid Shahid' from Birmingham died committing a suicide attack against Northern Alliance forces (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006, 87) – the earliest likely case of a Briton utilising this technique. Shortly after 9/11 two jihadists from Burnley, Afrasiab Ilyas and Arshad Miaz, were reported killed by a Northern Alliance attack on Taliban forces near Kabul. Fellow Lancastrian Anwar Khan had been held in an Afghan prison for four years having been arrested fighting for the Taliban in 1998 (Harper, 2011). Those arrested in Afghanistan, and its border areas in this period, suffered differing fates. Some, such as Munir Farooqi from Manchester, appear to have been able to buy their release via family members (Scheerout, 2011) those less fortunate, such as Richard Belmar (US Department of Defence, 2003) ended in Guantanamo Bay.

Even after the Taliban lost control of Afghanistan, Britons continued to travel to the country to fight. In February 2009 *The Independent* claimed, based on British Army

sources, Briton was now fighting Briton in parts of southern Afghanistan. A military spokesman explained:

This second group, the Urdu, Punjabi speakers etc, who fall back into English, in for example Brummie accents. You get the impression that they have been told not to talk in English but sometimes simply can't help it' (Sengupta, 2009).

In considering the characteristics of British Jihadism, this inability to lose one's native tongue, even when operating in Taliban controlled territory and attempting for security reasons to avoid the English language, is indicative.

In cases contemporary fighting against the post-Taliban government and coalition troops appears to take a rather structured approach. In November 2010 Guardian journalists spoke to an east London taxi driver who spends most of his year working in London, but returns to his homeland with his brother for three months to fight. "There are many people like me in London....We collect money for the jihad all year and come and fight if we can" (Abdul-Ahad and Boone, 2010).

The 14 British Taliban fighters listed in table 5.4 below is lower than estimates put forward by the authorities. Following the 2011 convictions of Munir Farooqi, Israr Malik and Matthew Newton for preparing for acts of terrorism (attempting to recruit two undercover police officers to travel from Manchester to Afghanistan to fight coalition troops) Greater Manchester Police informed local media they believed Farooqi had sent up to twenty men to the conflict (Scheerhout, 2011). This figure is impossible to verify – firstly because any such individuals are unlikely to come forward and admit their involvement in criminal offences. Secondly because the

police do not appear to have levied further charges, or publicly named any suspects, despite having, on their own declared estimate, up to twenty such possible cases.

This research names sixteen Britons who have trained in Afghan camps, at least nine at facilities controlled by Al-Qaeda. Fourteen Britons are listed who participated in combat in Afghanistan, a further ten being killed in the country (see figures 5.4-5.5). This is higher than the number of British jihadis killed in Pakistan (figure 5.11) and is indeed the highest for any country with the exception of the ongoing conflict in Syria, an indication of the priority given to establishing, protecting and then later re-establishing the Taliban's Islamic Emirate. A core component of any discussion of these Britons has to be their ideological and theological commitment. Fahad Ansari of Cage writes of the Taliban:

“Despite their flaws, they were the best thing that Afghanistan had experienced in decades. It was for this reason that thousands of Muslims from all over the world also migrated to Afghanistan over the next few years” (Ansari, 2010, 31).

Of those who sought participation in this Islamic utopia, he observes;

“While many did comment on the Taliban excesses in their imposition of shariah, the general overall sentiment in Afghanistan was that they were living in the closest semblance of an Islamic state that existed in the Sunni world” (Ansari, 2010, 31)

After 2005, Ansari notes the Taliban not only displaying resilience, but building a parallel government to achieve two basic needs – security and justice. This has ensured that Muslims continue travelling to Afghanistan to join with them, indeed to Ansari the support of Muslims internationally is essentially for the Taliban's cause “It

is only if the Muslim world offers them some support and recognition that they will have a fair chance to govern and be judged accordingly” (Ansari, 2010, 33).

Figure 5.3 Britons who attended Afghan training camps

Individual	Details	Source
Feroz Abbasi	From Croydon, trained at Al-Qaeda's al-Farouq camp, via Finsbury Park mosque.	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 202, 209)
Ruhel Ahmed	From Tipton. In autumn 2000 spent 40 days at a camp in Kandahar run by Harakat al-Islami Bangladeshi.	Pantucci, ICSR, 2011.
Talha Ahsan	In 2013, pleaded guilty in the US to providing support to terrorists. As part of his plea, admitted travelling to a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan.	US Department of Justice, 10/12/13.
Saajid Badat	Attended Al-Qaeda's Khalden and Darunta facilities.	Silber (2012, 31).
Moazzam Begg	Attended the al-Fajr training camp, plus an adjoining Arab site in 1993	Begg (2006, 50-57).
Richard Belmar	Trained at Al-Qaeda's al-Farouq camp in 2001.	US DoD 15/11/03.
David Courtailler	A Frenchman who converted to Islam in Britain. Travelled to the Khalden camp at the arrangement of Finsbury Park mosque.	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 92, 97).
Abdul Haq	A Moroccan living in London, attended Khalden.	Nasiri (2006, 145).
Asif Iqbal	From Tipton, attended training in Kandahar run by Harakat al-Islami Bangladeshi.	Pantucci (2011).
Oussama Abdullah Kassir aka Abu Khadijah	A Swedish citizen of Lebanese descent. Boasted of his experience in Afghanistan whilst trying to establish a training camp for Finsbury Park mosque worshippers in the	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 192).

	United States.  Subsequently detained on 11 terrorism charges in the US in 2009.	FBI, 12/05/09.
Binyam Mohammed	Trained at the al-Farouq facility in the months prior to 9/11.	US DoD, 26/12/08.
Zaccarias Moussaoui	Attended Al-Qaeda's Darunta site near Jalalabad.	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 100).
Mohammed Rashid Daoud al-Owhali	Attended the Khalden camp in 1996	Burke (2007, 169).
Richard Reid	Attended Al-Qaeda's Darunta base near Jalalabad.	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 100).
Jack Roche	Admitted his training in Afghanistan to Australian police.	Conboy (2006, 192n).
Omar Saeed Sheikh	Attended the Khalid bin Waleed camp in 1993.  Attended a refresher course, and also trained recruits at a HUM facility near Jalalabad in 1994.	Burke (2007, 95).  Fouda and Fielding (2003, 58).

Figure 5.4 British Jihadis fighting in Afghanistan

Individual	Details	Source
Ruhel Ahmed	Was with Taliban forces in 2000. Also flew out to Afghanistan post 9/11 to fight for the Taliban.  Captured by Northern Alliance forces.	US DoD, 28/10/03.
Aslam Awan	Living in Manchester before travelling to Afghanistan to fight coalition forces.	Manchester Evening News, 22/11/07.
Tarek Dergoul	Informed the Americans he lost an arm fighting at Tora Bora, before escaping to Pakistan, where he was arrested.	US DoD, 28/10/03
Munir Farooqi	A Taliban veteran from Manchester, convicted in 2011 of attempting to recruit further fighters to travel there.	Scheerhout, 10/9/11.

Abu Hamza	Lost an eye and two limbs whilst experimenting with explosives at a training camp.	Nasiri (2006, 221).
Asif Iqbal	Flew out to Afghanistan post 9/11 to fight for the Taliban. Captured by Northern Alliance forces.	US DOD, 28/10/03
Murad Iqbal	Was living with Awan in Manchester, before leaving for Afghanistan to fight coalition forces.	Manchester Evening News, 22/11/07.
Anwar Khan	Captured fighting for the Taliban by the Northern Alliance in 1998.	Harper, 09/02/11.
Mohammed Rashid Daoud al-Owhali	Fought for the Taliban in 1997	Burke (2007, 174).
Abu Munthir	Left Luton to fight against coalition forces following the allied invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.	Silber (2012, 88).
Kazi Rahman	Entered Afghanistan via Pakistan post 9/11 to join the Taliban. Later convicted of trying to buy guns in the UK.	Watson (2008, 64).
Adam Rashid	Captured by the Northern Alliance whilst fighting for the Taliban in 2000.	Bergen (2001, 269, footnote 67).
Shafiq Rasul	Flew out to Afghanistan post 9/11 to fight for the Taliban.  Captured by Northern Alliance forces. Along with Ahmed and Iqbal became known as the Tipton 3, when transferred to Guantanamo Bay.	US DoD, 29/10/03 (via Wikileaks).  Pantucci (2011).
Unnamed east London taxi driver	Fighting for the Taliban in 2010 in Dhani-Ghorri.	Abdul-Ahad and Boone, 25/11/10.

Figure 5.5 Britons killed in Afghanistan

Individual	Details	Source
Munir Ali	From Tipton, killed in fighting following 9/11.	Pantucci (2011).

Afrasiab Ilyas	From Burnley. Killed by Northern Alliance forces near Kabul in 2001.	O'Neill (2001).
Yasir Khan	From Crawley. Killed in US bombing raids on Taliban territory post 9/11.	Watson (2008, 65).
Aftab Manzoor	From Luton. Killed in US bombing raids on Taliban controlled Kabul post 9/11.	Watson (2008, 65).
Arshad Miaz.	From Burnley. Killed by Northern Alliance forces near Kabul in 2001.	O'Neill (2001).
Afzal Munir	From Luton. Killed in US bombing raids of Taliban controlled Kabul post 9/11.	Watson (2008, 65).
Mahmoud Abu Rideh	Reported killed in US air strike on 16/12/10.	Gardham, 16/12/10.
Khalid Shahid	From Birmingham, he blew himself up along with rival Northern Alliance forces in 1996.	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 87).
Unknown	Taliban fighter with an Aston Villa football club tattoo, whose body was discovered by British soldiers.	Radnedge, 15/06/09.
Unknown	Taliban suicide bomber who conducted an attack at Afghanistan's defence headquarters in April 2011, and was believed to have travelled from London.	Elliott, 23/04/11.

### 5.3 Bosnia-Herzegovina

By the time of Baroness Thatcher's April 1993 call for the West to arm Bosnia's Muslims, many of her fellow Britons were already fighting in the country - the first field of operations for British Jihadism. As Bosnian Muslims fought in the Civil War, Jihadists travelled to fight alongside their co-religionists, although the brand of Islam traditionally practiced in the Balkans was very different to that of the arriving fighters.



Theologically the justness of this cause has been clearly articulated “the Bosnian struggle against Serbian fascism is undoubtedly a jihad” (Sardar and Malik, 2009, 61).

Estimates vary of between 1-5000 foreigners fighting in Bosnia. In contrast to prominent Islamic thinkers such as Ziauddin Sardar, Evan Kohlmann paints a more problematic picture of Muslim ‘relief workers’ and ‘staff’ of Islamic charities who were in practice combatants. Moazzam Begg, one of the Britons who travelled in this period, for what he states were charitable activities, suggests five British Muslims were killed in combat (Begg, 2006, 68), whilst Kohlmann identifies the only slightly higher figure of six (see figure 5.6)

Several names in that table are clearly pseudonyms, reflecting the tendency within Jihadist organisations for individuals to be referred to by their place of origin – al-Libi, al-Turki and al-Brittani, for example would be used to refer to individuals from Libya, Turkey and Britain. The similarity to the names used on social media by Britons currently fighting in Iraq and Syria is striking. The first Briton to be killed in Bosnia was Gulam Jilani Soobiah from Leicester in September 1992. Some were exceptionally young – Sayyad al-Falastini, from south west London, was just 18 when he was one of four fighters to die at the Jihadists headquarters at Podbrezje in December 1995. Kohlmann suggests they were killed when a bomb they were preparing detonated prematurely (Kohlmann, 2002, 163-5).

There is limited information on British combatant’s daily activities in Bosnia, and how as fighters they contributed to the wider struggle. Moazzam Begg and two colleagues visited Zenica, where the Bosnian Mujahideen were based. He found their training camp to be professional, very international, and run by Arabs with a

strong influence from Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Begg, 2006, 68). In a contemporaneous video widely distributed amongst Islamists, a Briton calling himself Abu Ibrahim, with his face disguised and carrying a rifle stated:

When I come here you feel a sense of satisfaction, you are fulfilling your duty. You feel that you are doing what the Prophet Muhammad and his companions did fourteen hundred years ago. You feel that you achieved something (AbuHamza8477, 2008).<sup>14</sup>

An unidentified English comrade in arms further posits the conflict in religious terms:

These people Mujahideen come from all over the world, not just from one Arab country but many brothers from France, England, Uganda, Philippines everywhere, not for the money but for the sake of Allah for the religion, for Islam (AbuHamza8477, 2008).

Given these religious declarations, how significant was Bosnia subsequently? On 28 June 2002 Evan Kohlmann made what appears to have been a rather intimidating visit to Finsbury Park mosque, where he found Abu Hamza happy to reminisce about this period. Kohlmann declares this struggle vital to subsequent actions. "It provided an environment where trained foreign Muslim fighters arriving from Afghanistan could mingle with unsophisticated but eager terrorist recruits from Western Europe" (Kohlmann, 2002, xii-xiii).

Bosnia also provides the first instance of British Jihadists in conflict against the military of their own country. At Guca Gora on 13 June 1993 four British UN vehicles were detained by Mujahideen fighters under the command of an unidentified Briton, who eventually allowed their release (Kohlmann, 2002, 87). Jonathan Bronitsky

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<sup>14</sup> The provenance of this video is unclear, although it is clearly recorded in Bosnia at some stage during the Civil War, and has been a mainstay of jihadist propaganda since. It is available on a succession of video sharing websites.

argues the Bosnian conflict allowed British Islamists to frame government policies as damaging to Islam, and to thus crystallise a contemporary issue overseas with broader domestic fears about racism and personal security (Bronitsky, 2010, 23).

Today, the Bosnian civil war appears distant, but is recalled with some reverence by British Islamists, concerned that the war on terror has diminished the willingness of Muslims to rally to a cause (Ansari, n.d). More broadly we see in embryo in Bosnia many issues and debates that occur repeatedly in the following two decades. Firstly, a small number of British Muslim youth taking up arms, in the company of international fighters under a broad Islamic banner. Secondly controversy over British foreign policy deemed inimical to the ummah. Thirdly concerns some Muslim charities had a brief that extended beyond the humanitarian. Fourthly the pitting on different sides in conflict, of British soldiers and British Jihadists.

Perhaps the most important legacy from British Jihadism's opening salvo comes in terms of the precedents established. Of the eleven Britons listed in the Bosnian Mujahideen below, four were to be arrested and convicted in subsequent separate terrorist trials – Babar Ahmad, Shahid Butt, Abu Hamza and Andrew Rowe. Ahmad went on to develop one of the most important jihadist websites and pleaded guilty to terrorist offences in the United States, Butt was convicted of planning to attack Christian targets in Yemen, Hamza of offences in both Britain and America, and Rowe in the United Kingdom. This would appear to give weight to the position of Kohlmann, that the importance of Bosnia was the synthesis it provided in bringing together fighters from Afghanistan with idealistic recruits to the jihadist cause from Europe.

Bosnia also carries ramifications for contemporary debates. At several stages of the jihad in Syria, those sympathetic to British fighters travelling to the country have attempted to argue the west has nothing to fear from such men – that they would never come back to attack their home countries (Begg, 2013, Cage, 2014). Within critical terrorism studies a broader position has been declared that we should not judge those travelling to overseas conflicts (Jackson, Interview, 2011). Some media articles on the conflict even compared British fighters in Syria to the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War (Monbiot, 2014).

The behaviour of some Bosnian Mujahideen fighters after that conflict suggests articles presenting the view such men would not be involved in broader terrorism lack empirical basis. Further details of each of the men's convictions are listed below.

Figure 5.6 Britons in the Bosnian Mujahideen

Name	Details	Source
Babar Ahmed	Suffered a shrapnel wound to the head whilst fighting in Bosnia.  In 2013, pleaded guilty in the USA to providing and conspiring to provide material support to terrorists.	BBC Website 09/05/11.  US Dept of Justice, 10/12/13.
Shahid Butt	Prominent Birmingham Islamist, first arrested in the Rushdie protests, went on to fight in Bosnia.  Convicted in 1999 in Yemen of conspiring to form an armed gang, jailed for five years.	Channel 4 News Dispatches, 06/08/07.  BBC Radio 4, 07/02/09.  Quin (2005, 117).
Omar Deghayes	Informed US authorities whilst being held in Guantanamo that	US Department of Defence,

	he had fought in Bosnia.	10/04/04
Abu Hamza	Made three trips to the country in 1995.  Convicted in the UK in 2006 for soliciting murder.  Convicted in 2015 on terrorist charges in the United States.	Curtis (2010, 214).  Crown Prosecution Service, 07/02/06.  FBI, 21/02/15.
Abu Zubair al-Haili	A Saudi citizen who lived in Tooting	Kohlmann (2004, 29).
Abu Ibrahim	3 <sup>rd</sup> year medical student at Birmingham University, from Golders Green. Involved with Azzam Publications.	Kohlmann (2004, 94, 232).
Michael Jean-Pierre	Returned to the Lisson Green Estate in London with leg injuries from the conflict.	Watson (2008, 58).
James McLintock	A Scottish convert who claims to have joined the Bosnian Mujahideen in 1994.	Walsh, 13/04/09.
Andrew Rowe	Jailed for terrorist offences in Britain in 2005. Had been injured in a mortar attack whilst fighting in Bosnia.	Muir, 24/09/05.
Unidentified Briton	Headed a Mujahideen unit which arrested British UN forces in Guca Gora.	Kohlmann (2004, 87).
Unidentified South Londoner	Condemns British Muslims who talk rather than fight in the Mujahideen.	Appears on the "British Mujahideen" in Bosnia video (AbuHamza8477, 2008).

Figure 5.7 Britons Killed in Bosnia

Name	Details	Sources
Gulam Jilani Soobiah, aged 44.	d. 17/09/1992 in Mostar, when his Land Rover was struck by a missile.	Kohlmann (2004, 36).
Abu Ibrahim al-Turki	d. October 1992. Killed by French UN troops who were travelling to Battle of Butmir.	Kohlmann (2004, 60-61).
Abu Muslim al-Turki	In his 40s or 50s, killed in battle	Kohlmann (2004, 94-5).

	against Croats.	
David Sinclair	A convert, also known as Dawood al-Brittani	Kohlmann (2004, 95).
Abu Mujahid al-Brittani	d. 10/9/95 in Operation Badr, an attack on the Serbs at Mount Poceljevo and Mount Paljenik. Had graduated from University in 1993, and combined charity work with Jihad.	Kohlmann (2004, 138-9)
Sayyad al-Falastini	d. 12/12/95 aged 18, in an explosion at the Mujahideen training camp at Podbrezje.	Kohlmann (2004, 163-5).

#### 5.4 Chechnya

No war is purely physical. Britons have also contributed to the jihadi struggle's ideological and cultural elements. The website Azzam.com (named after Abdullah Azzam whose importance to the jihadist movement has been a recurring theme in this thesis) was at one stage receiving an astonishing five million daily hits for its mixture of jihadi statements, interviews, martyrs obituaries and propaganda videos (North, 2002). Sister organisation Azzam Publications was run via the British Monomarks postal address service in London. The importance of these tools was recognised by combatants in the field. The late Saudi Jihadist Ibn Al-Khattab, best known for his activities in Chechnya commented:

The brothers in Britain, may Allah reward them, have put in much efforts to publicise the Jihad. There is an organisation by the name of Azzam Publications, which is run by brothers who are known to us and maintain regular contact with us. So anyone who wishes to support us or requires any further information about the situation here, they should contact this organisation (Kohlmann, Dossier, n.d.).

Paul Murphy's analysis of the Chechen Jihad, *"The Wolves of Islam: Russia and the Faces of Chechen Terror"* further outlines how this relationship worked:

Until November 2001, you could buy your own personal copy of a Khattab video on CD-ROM from Azzam Publications for \$20.00. The videos, called *Chechnya from the Ashes* and *Russian Hell in the Year 2000*, show live footage of Chechen suicide truck bombings of Russian military barracks in the Chechen towns of Argun and Gudermes in July 2000 (Murphy, 2006, 33).

Contemporaneous information was also sent from the front line to Azzam Publications, for example by email as Khattab re-grouped his forces having retreated from Dagestan under heavy Russian bombardment in August 1998 (Murphy, 2006, 103). The United States government eventually took action against such activities, issuing a 49 page affidavit, requesting the extradition of Azzam webmaster Babar Ahmad (United States of America v Babar Ahmad, 2004) and a similar document against associate Talha Ahsan. Part of the legal case against Ahmad was the use of internet servers in the United States for a website which declared its purpose thus:

Azzam Publications has been set up to propagate the call for Jihad, among the Muslims who are sitting down, ignorant of this vital duty....Thus the purpose of Azzam Publications is to 'Incite the believers' and also secondly to raise some money for the brothers (United States of America v Babar Ahmad, 2004, 4).

This quote demonstrates that Anwar al-Awlaki was not the first Western Islamist to raise the concept of jihad through wealth. Equally the priority of Jihad for Muslims is, in this approach, again stressed as pivotal.

How many Britons have fought directly in Chechnya? In 2003 Al-Muhajiroun was proscribed, a development which in terms of timeframe appears to have followed

complaints from Russia that the organisation was sending combatants to Chechnya (Curtis, 2010, 274). Xavier Djaffo, a French citizen who had been attending Finsbury Park mosque, was killed fighting in ‘The Martyrs Battalion’ in 2000 after an encounter with Russian troops. Briton Amir Assadula, an African convert to Islam who had fought alongside Khattab for some years, was killed in July 2002 (Murphy, 2006, 99-100).

Unlike the civil war in Syria, actually getting to Chechnya appears to have been a challenge for British Islamists who wished to physically contribute to the struggle. In 1999 the Bosnian Mujahideen veteran from London, Andrew Rowe attempted, unsuccessfully, to reach the conflict (Watson, 2008, 45). In a brief section of his autobiography Moazzam Begg states “I had heard about people from Britain who had gone to join the Chechen struggle” (Begg, 2006, 82) and discusses his plans to travel to the region at the height of the jihadist campaign. However, Begg qualifies what he personally was attempting to do “I was ready to help in whatever way I could, fight if I had to, despite my lack of training” (Begg, 2006, 83). He did not reach Chechnya – Georgian border guards refused entry. As such, this research names a mere five British Jihadis to have fought in Chechnya, two of whom were killed – almost certainly a significant underestimate.

Fig 5.8 British Jihadis in Chechnya

Name	Details	Sources
Amir Assadula	Killed in the Vedensky district in July 2002.	Murphy (2006, 99).
Yacine Benalia	Left Finsbury Park mosque to fight in Chechnya in 2001.	Burke, 03/10/04.



Kamel Rabat Bouralha	Prominent amongst the Algerian émigrés at Finsbury Park mosque.  Fought in Chechnya in 2001.	Burke, 03/10/04.
Xavier Djaffo, aka Massoud al-Benin.	A friend of Zacarias Moussaoui, was attending Finsbury Park mosque.  Killed by Russian forces in April 2000, whilst working for UK website Azzam.com	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 93).  Murphy (2006, 100).
Osman Larussi	Left Finsbury Park mosque to head to Chechnya to fight in 2001.	Burke, 03/10/04.

## 5.5 India, Kashmir and Pakistan

In December 2008 Prime Minister Gordon Brown described the greatest threat to Britain's security as paradoxically coming from an ally – Pakistan, with 75 percent of terrorist plots against the UK originating in the Islamic Republic (Hinsliff, 2009). Whatever the reliability of this figure, there has been a significant relationship between British Jihadism and Pakistan, a subject already touched upon in chapter three. Jihadist training has long been associated with the major organisations fighting from bases in Azad Kashmir. In October 1999 a London based rail industry professional, Mohammed Sohail, was forwarding emails to those interested:

Currently jihad training is being done in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan. It is on for 21 days and is of beginner's level. It is organised by Lashkar Toiba. The advanced training is for three months and for students it is 15 days. Then there are special courses. If anyone wants to go to Afghanistan... I can also do this by arrangement (Berry and Hastings, 1999).

When confronted by the *Sunday Telegraph* about why he was involved in such activity, and using his Railtrack email account in the process, Mr Sohail replied with a standard explanation:

I want to make it clear that our organisation has never targeted people in Britain. We are involved only with struggles abroad. We see it as a form of self-defence. We have a duty to help brothers who are fighting oppression overseas (Berry and Hastings, 1999).

In 2000 Mohammed Bilal from Birmingham, killed himself in a suicide attack on an Indian army base in Srinagar. This death could have been a spur to the British government to take the Kashmir question and British jihadist participation in it seriously. However it was only after 9/11, and a renewed possibility of war between India and Pakistan following the December 2001 terrorist attack at the Indian Parliament, did the UK find its voice. In June 2002 Foreign Secretary Jack Straw informed the Commons;

There was a clear link between Pakistan's main intelligence agency and the militant groups sending fighters into Kashmir. The government in London had believed this to be true for some years but had hitherto not said so in public (Bennett Jones, 2003, xviii-xix)

Straw denounced those fighting in Kashmir as terrorists. A categorisation which presumably applied to those British Islamists, many listed below, fighting alongside them?

This research names 27 Britons as having trained in the Pakistani camps, including two 7/7 bombers and Mukthar Ibrahim, who organised the unsuccessful 21/7 attacks.

This fact alone should ensure that Mr Sohail's declaration is, with the benefit of hindsight, worthless. Indeed it appears characteristic of those who attend such camps that they go on to commit or attempt to commit terrorist offences in their home country – this applies to 14 of the 27 men listed in figure 5.10. The longevity of British access to jihadist camps is also demonstrated in that table - with named Britons in Pakistan from at least 1999-2014. However, not all attempts by Britons to train in Pakistan have proved a success. In the summer of 2011 Al-Muhajiroun's Richard Dart and Jahingar Alom were unable to find a suitable facility despite spending time in the country. Later that year they booked flights to Quetta, having sought information from Imran Mahmood on meeting Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) contacts in the country. Both were turned back at Heathrow (Metropolitan Police, 2013).

The proximity of the Syrian jihad has not brought an end to such adventures. Hamayun Tariq from Dudley spent 2012-4 with militants in Waziristan before heading to Syria (Malik, 2014). When Al-Muhajiroun member Dr Mirza Ali fled violent disorder charges in London in 2014, he absconded not to Syria but Pakistan, where he joined the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Jamaatul Ahrar (TTPJA). Struck off in his absence by the General Medical Council for hitting a Shia Muslim with a stick during fighting at an Al-Muhajiroun rally on Edgware Road, Ali has reportedly been killed by Pakistani military action (Glanvill, 2015).

Figure 5.11 lists a total of nine deaths of Britons in Pakistan. This makes the country the third most deadly for British Jihadis, behind only Afghanistan and Syria. Of these, eight have been killed by either the American or Pakistani military, seven in drone strikes, a demonstration of the extent to which this action against alleged terrorists is being utilised, regardless of their nationality.

Figure 5.9 Britons who have fought in India, Kashmir or Pakistan

Name	Details	Source
Salman Abdullah	A Yorkshireman of Kashmiri heritage, he fought in Kashmir in the late 1990s travelling via Finsbury Park Mosque	O'Neill and McGrory (2006, 82).
Dhiren Barot	Fought for a series of non-state groups in Kashmir in the years before 2000.  Now serving life for terrorist offences in the UK.	Cage (2014).

Figure 5.10 Britons trained in India, Kashmir or Pakistan

Name	Details	Source
Mohammed Sharfaz Ahmed	From Luton. Trained in Pakistan for a week in 2011, before leaving as his Arabic was too poor.  Convicted in the plot to attack Luton TA Centre.	Luton Today, 18/04/13.
Jawad Akbar	Attended a training course at Kohat in North West Frontier Province in 2003, and then travelled to another in Kashmir.  Convicted of terrorism in the Operation Crevice case	Watson (2008, 69).  Keeble and Hollington (2010, 130).
Abdullah Ahmed Ali	Travelled with jihadists to the Afghan-Pakistan border area with the Islamic Medical Association in 2003.  Jailed for life for his part in the 2003 airline bomb plot.	Keeble and Hollington (2010, 44)  Keeble and Hollington (2010, 125).
Ashik Ali	Trained in Pakistan in the run-up to the Birmingham rucksack plot.  Jailed for 15 years for terrorist	Muslim Weekly, 03/05/2013.

	offences in 2013.	
Dr Mirza Tariq Ali	Pakistani born, he became involved with Al-Muhajiroun after coming to the UK in 2004. Jailed in absentia for violent disorder in June 2014, but had already fled for Pakistan.  In November 2014 appeared in a video for the TTPJA.	Verkaik et al, 16/11/14
Naweed Ali	Travelled to Pakistan to train with the Birmingham rucksack plotters, but had second thoughts. Jailed for 40 months.	Muslim Weekly, 03/05/2013
Waheed Ali	Jailed for 7 years in 2009 for planning to attend a terrorist training camp. Had already attended camps in 2001 and 2003.	Williams, 30/04/09.
Salahuddin Amin	From Luton. Attended the Balakot facility in 2001. Latter jailed following Operation Crevice.	Silber (2012, 94).
Umar Arshad	An associate of Al-Qaeda members in Manchester. Fled a control order in 2007, and is believed to be with fighters in Pakistan.	Cruickshank, 20/01/12.
Mohammed Babar	Trained with Barot in Pakistan in 2004	Hayman and Gilmore (2009, 285).
Dhiren Barot	Trained with Operation Crevice plotters in Pakistan. Now serving life (see above)	Hayman and Gilmore (2009, 285).
Anthony Garcia (Previously Abdulrahman Adam)	Trained in the country with Operation Crevice plotters and two of the 7/7 bombers.	Gardham, 21/08/10.
Khobaib Hussain	Travelled to Pakistan to train with the Birmingham rucksack plotters, but had second thoughts. Jailed for 40 months.	Muslim Weekly (03/05/2013)
Ishaaq Hussain	Travelled to Pakistan to train with the Birmingham rucksack plotters, but had second thoughts. Jailed for 40 months.	Muslim Weekly (03/05/2013)

Mukhtar Ibrahim	Received training in the period 2004-5. Went on to lead the failed 21/7 bombers in London.	Curtis (2010, 286)
Abu Izzadeen (Trevor Brooks)	Spent seven months weapons training in Kashmir	Watson (2008, 61).
Irfan Khalid	Trained in Pakistan in the run-up to the Birmingham rucksack plot	Muslim Weekly (03/05/2013)
Aabid Hussain Khan	Ran a jihadist website, moving between Bradford and Pakistan whilst claiming to do charitable work.	BBC2 Generation Jihad, Episode 2 15/2/10.
Mohammed Sidique Khan	Malakand, Swat Valley 2003, plus a further camp in 2004.  Died committing the 7/7 bombings.	Malik (2009, 110-1)
Shahid Khan	Travelled to Pakistan to train with the Birmingham rucksack plotters, but had second thoughts. Jailed for 40 months.	Muslim Weekly 03/05/2013
Omar Khyam	Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir  Kalam, Swat Valley, 2003  Serving life for the Operation Crevice plot.	Curtis, (2010, 286).  Malik (2009, 111)  Silber (2012, 87)
Imran Mahmood	Trained in Pakistan from July 2010 prior to returning to the UK in August 2011.  Jailed for 14 years 9 months with two others in 2013 for preparing for an act of terrorism.	MI5 25/04/13, MPS 25/04/13.
Irfan Naseer	Trained in Pakistan in the run-up to the Birmingham rucksack plot	Muslim Weekly 03/05/2013.
Kazi Rahman	Trained with Operation Crevice plotters in Pakistan.  Later convicted of buying guns in a counter-terrorist sting operation.	Hayman and Gilmore (2009, 284).  Wheeler (2012).
Mohammed Shakil	Jailed for 7 years in 2009 for	Williams, 30/04/09.

	planning to attend a terrorist training camp. Had previously attended camps in 1999, 2001 and 2003.	
Shehzad Tanweer	Attended camp run by LeT (Mudrike, nr Lahore) and Manshera, run by HuM.  Died committing the 7/7 bombings.	(Malik, 2009, 110).
Hamayun Tariq	From Dudley, spent 2012-2014 with militants in Waziristan before leaving for Syria.	Malik, 20/11/14.

Figure 5.11 British Jihadis Killed in India, Kashmir or Pakistan

Name	Details	Source
Ibrahim Adam	From east London. Aged 24, absconded from a control order in May 2007. Killed by a drone in Waziristan in November 2011.	Daily Mail, 19/11/11.
Dr Mirza Ali	Al-Muhajiroun member on the run in Pakistan. Killed in armed forces action against the TTPJA,	Glanvill, 13/03/15.
Aslam Awan	Pakistani born, reportedly joined Al-Qaeda whilst a student in Manchester. Killed in a drone strike in North Waziristan in 2012.	Sadaqat, 21/01/12.
Mohammed Azmir	A 37 year old from Essex, killed alongside Adam in Waziristan.	Daily Mail, 19/11/11.
Abdul-Jabbar	A Briton who had been living in Punjab, killed by a drone on 08/09/10 in north Waziristan.	Cageprisoners, 08/09/10.
Bilal Mohammed	Died in a suicide bombing in Srinagar on 25/12/00. Active in Al-Muhajiroun and Jaish-e-Mohammed.  Involved with the Harkat ul Mujahideen since 1994.	Watson (2008, 63).  Curtis (2010, 192)

Rashid Rauf	Aged 27, reported killed by a drone on 22/11/08 in north Waziristan whilst on the run from Pakistani custody in December 2007.	Alderson et al 23/11/08.
Gerry Smith, aka Mansoor Ahmed or Abu Bakar.	Aged 25, killed 11/12/10 in a drone strike near Datta Khel, north Waziristan. A white convert.	Metro 17/12/10.
Stephen – surname unknown.	Aged 48, killed 11/12/10 in a drone strike near Datta Khel, north Waziristan. A white convert.	Metro 17/12/10.

With at least nine Britons killed in Pakistan, it might be expected a significant number would also be in jail in the country for terrorism offences. The only reported person however is Omar Saeed Sheikh, on death row since 2003 for the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl (Fouda and Fielding, 2003, 69).

## 5.6 Indonesia

The case of Jack Roche, a British born Muslim convert who has lived most of his life in Australia, appears to be the only instance of a Briton involved in an Indonesian Jihadist organisation – the Al-Qaeda affiliated Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (Conboy, 2006, 192n). Roche conducted preparatory work for a JI attack on the Israeli embassy in Canberra, a plot subsequently aborted.

## 5.7 Iraq

Assessing the numbers of British Jihadists to have fought in Iraq is a complicated process. No comprehensive survey has been published of Britons fighting coalition



forces in the period following the overthrow of Saddam Hussain in 2003. Secondly the success of Islamic State, and its desire to erase the border between Syria and Iraq, obscures the location of many contemporary jihadists in-situ. Indeed the very nature of Islamic State's caliphate rejects such demarcation. As it stands, this research names four men from the UK known to have fought in Iraq – two British citizens and two British residents. An additional five men have been killed in the country – three British citizens and two British residents.

A recurring theme re-emerges in this data. Whilst those with familial connections to Iraq may perhaps be expected to take part in such conflicts, others listed below have very distant backgrounds – in Scotland, England, Yemen and France. An indication of the international nature of jihadist networks. But it is not just foreign policy which stirs such individuals to action. Suicide bomber Kabir Ahmed previously came to public attention having been convicted of stirring up hatred on grounds of sexual orientation, in his home town of Derby (Muslim Weekly, 14/11/14). Equally it should be noted that two of the combatants listed in figure 5.13, Abdulla and Al-Abdaly, went on to commit terrorist attacks in Europe – Abdulla in England, Al-Abdaly in a country which had not directly participated in the invasion of Iraq – Sweden.

Fig 5.12 Britons Known to have fought in Iraq

Name	Details	Source
Taimour Abdulwahad Al-Abdaly	A Swedish-Iraqi who had settled with his family for over a decade in Luton.  Died in 2010 in a suicide bombing in Stockholm, having earlier fought in Iraq.	Pantucci, 21/08/14.
Bilal Abdulla	An Iraqi doctor. Fought	Pantucci, 21/08/14.

	coalition troops in his homeland before committing the failed July 2007 bombings in London and Glasgow.	
Hilal al Jedda	An Iraqi exile who received British citizenship in 2000. Arrested by US forces in Iraq on 10/10/04, on suspicion of attacking coalition soldiers.	Ross and Rudgard, 11/07/14.  Amnesty International, 21/07/05.
Hamzah Parvez	A 21 year old west Londoner fighting for ISIS.	Whitehead, 29/08/14.

Figure 5.13 Britons Killed in Iraq

Name	Details	Source
Kabir Ahmed	Died carrying out a suicide bombing against police in Beiji, Iraq on 7/11/14.	Gatten, 09/11/14
Abdul Raqib Amin. Alias Abul Baraa	IS member from Aberdeen, reportedly killed by a Iraqi forces in Ramadi in July 2014	@Abu_Dujana, Twitter (13/07/14).
Wail al-Dhaleai	A Yemeni granted asylum, living in Sheffield with a Yorkshire born wife.  Killed by US troops whilst attempting a suicide attack in November 2003.	Taylor, 01/09/06.
Mohammad Nasser	Reported killed by shrapnel, whilst fighting alongside fellow Londoner Hamzah Parvez.	Whitehead, 29/08/14.
Unnamed	French national of Algerian origin, who had been living in Moss Side, Manchester. A suicide bomber.	Evening Standard, 22/06/05.  Bunyan et al, 22/06/05.

## **5.8 Israel and the Palestinian Territories**

In April 2003 Asif Hanif from London and Omar Khan Sharif from Derby strapped themselves with explosives and attempted to blow up Mike's Place, a bar in Tel Aviv. Hanif, along with three Israelis, was killed at the spot, whilst Khan, somewhat mysteriously appears to have fled the scene after problems occurred with his explosives. His body was washed up a week later on Tel Aviv sea front (Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003).

It is worth noting that although Britain does have a small émigré population of Palestinians, neither Hanif or Sharif came from this community. They were British Muslims of Pakistani heritage, from stable family backgrounds (Roy, 2004, 308, 19n). Both subsequently appeared in suicide videos released by Hamas, giving the Israeli government an opportunity to attack international support for the Palestinian cause – Sharif and Hanif had associated with the pro-Palestinian International Solidarity Movement on arrival in the region (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003).

## **5.9 Kenya**

Kenya has proved to be an important transit point for British Jihadists travelling to Somalia, and possibly a terrorist target in its own right. A total of seven Britons have been recorded by the Kenyan legal system to this effect, with a major terrorist trial, of Jermaine Grant ongoing. In the majority of cases listed below the response of the Kenyan authorities has been to deport those detained back to Britain. This number has included Michael Adebolajo, who in 2011 is believed to have been prevented from joining Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. Having been unable to take part in jihad in East Africa, Adebolajo was later to pursue his aims in Britain, murdering

soldier Lee Rigby in Woolwich in 2013. The case of Adebolajo provides further evidence that those committed to jihadist causes overseas can possess similar ambitions with regards to their home nations.

Fig 5.14 British Jihadis in Kenya

Name	Incident	Source
Graham Andrew Adams aka Ahmed Khalid Ibrahim	A Muslim convert from Rochdale. Arrested with several armed Somalis in Mombasa. Subsequently deported.	News 24, 19/12/07.
Michael Adebolajo	Arrested in 2011, allegedly attempting to enter Somalia. Deported to Britain.  Now serving life for murdering Lee Rigby.	Muslim Weekly, 31/05/13.
Habib Ghani	From Hounslow, believed by Kenyan police to be on the run with Ms Lewthwaite. Reported killed in Somalia (see figure 5.18).	O'Neill, 29/02/12.
Jermaine Grant	On trial for possessing bomb making material and conspiring to commit an explosion.	BBC Website, 17/02/14.
Samantha Lewthwaite	Widow of 7/7 bomber Jermaine Lindsay. Wanted by Kenyan authorities in connection with the same alleged plot as Grant.	O'Neill, 29/02/12.
Mohamed Mohamed	An 18 year old from Cardiff, Arrested at Lamu, Kenya, in October 2011, attempting to travel onwards to Somalia.	McGuinness (2011)
Iqbal Shahzad	As above. Both men were deported from Kenya on 19/10/11.	McGuinness (2011)

### **5.10 Nigeria**

The highest profile jihadist group in Nigeria has been Jama`at Ahl al-Sunna li al-Da`wa wa al-Jihad, Arabic for “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad.” It is as Boko Haram, meaning “Western education is sinful” in the Hausa language (Zenn, 2014, 5) by which the organisation is best known locally and internationally.

The one Briton to gain a public profile within Boko Haram has been Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche, arrested in Sudan in March 2014 in connection with bomb attacks in Abuja. A student at the University of South Wales from 2007-10, Ogwuche had used social media both after and during his time in Wales to make a series of comments advocating violence (Selby, 2014).

### **5.11 Somalia and Somaliland**

Somalia’s government and institutions collapsed in 1994, and repeated attempts to replace them in the following two decades failed. The emergence of the Islamic Courts movement from 2006 demonstrated Islamists were attempting to restore order, asserting their interpretation of the Qur’an. The profile these events received and the development of the Al-Shabaab organisation attracted the attention of both sharia seeking Islamists from the rest of the world, and Somali exiles in Britain keen to return to fight in their homeland.

Media speculation has put the number of Britons trained by Al-Shabaab at 50 (McDougall, 2012), with others supporting their struggle financially from the UK. Shabaaz Hussain from Tower Hamlets, for example, was convicted of sending

£8,900 to associates in the country for their training (McDougall, 2012). Further support has been contributed to relief programmes run by Al-Shabaab, such as the Ala-Yasir camp in southern Somalia (Osman, 2011).

The use of drones against Britons fighting in Somalia is one of a range of counter terrorist responses – from attempting to disrupt financial supply routes through to depriving dual national fighters in Somalia of British citizenship. This highly unusual approach has been enacted at least twice – against Bilal al-Barjawi and Mohamed Sakr. Both seemingly left London for Somalia in 2009, were stripped of their British citizenship in 2010, and killed by drones in 2012. Whilst those drones were US controlled, British counter-terrorism input into the killing of al-Barjawi is likely (Webber, 2013) – he was killed shortly after telephoning his wife in the Royal London Hospital at Whitechapel, where she had given birth to their child.

This research records four Britons as having trained in Somalia – all from Tower Hamlets in east London. An additional five Britons are listed as part of Al-Shabaab's forces. What is noticeable here, as in Chapter four, is the representation of students and recent graduates. Students from Imperial College, Kings College (again) and the University of East London have all contributed to Al-Shabaab's struggle to install sharia in Somalia.

The deaths of a further five Britons are recorded below, although the names of only three are known.

Fig 5.15 Britons trained in Somalia

Individual	Details	Source
Tufual Ahmed	Travelled to Somalia with Ali	Docklands and East London

	and Jahangir.	Advertiser, 02/08/12.
Mohammed Shahim Ali	Travelled to Somalia with funds raised for him by his brothers.	Docklands and East London Advertiser, 05/04/12.
Mohamed Hasnath	Prominent Islamist in Tower Hamlets, appears in a 2013 Al-Shabaab video.	Lowles and Mulhall, (2013, 47).
Muhammad Jahangir	Travelled with Ali and Ahmed.	Docklands and East London Advertiser, 02/08/12.

Fig 5.16 British Jihadis in Somalia

Individual	Details	Source
Mohammed Ahmed Mohamed (Recorded as CC in legal proceedings)	Arrested in Somaliland, and placed on a control order after deportation to the UK. Had fought with Al-Shabaab in Somalia.  Absconded from control order on 1 November 2013 and remains missing.	Swann and Casciani (2012)  May, 04/11/13.
CF (name withheld from public due to a control order).	Arrested in Somaliland, and placed on a control order after deportation to the UK. Had fought with Al-Shabaab after fleeing a trial for attending training camps in Afghanistan.  Now at university in London.	London24, 12/04/13.
Un-named	23 year Kings College law graduate, travelled to fight for Al-Shabaab in 2010	Kerbaj, 24/01/10.
Un-named	25 year old medical student from Imperial College, travelled to fight for Al-Shabaab in 2010	Kerbaj, 24/01/10
Un-named	A 24 year old female bio-medical student at University of East London, who joined Al-Shabaab's medical unit in 2010.	Kerbaj, 24/01/10

Figure 5.17 Britons Killed fighting in Somalia

Individual	Details	Source
Bilal al-Barjawi	Aged 27. Killed by a US drone in January 2012 after telephoning his wife in London.	Webber (2013).
Habib Ghani	Aged 28, from Hounslow. Reported to have been shot dead in Shongolow following an internal dispute in Al-Shabaab.	Camber and Smyth, 12/09/12.
Mohamed Sakr	From Newham, killed by a US drone in February 2012.	Webber (2013).
Unnamed 21 year old from Ealing.	Killed whilst conducting a suicide bombing in Baidoa, Somalia in February 2009.	Sengupta, 25/02/09.
Unnamed teenager	Reported killed on an unnamed Al-Qaeda website.	Owens, 17/07/11.

## 5.12 Sweden

On 11 December 2010, Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly, an Iraqi who had lived in both Sweden and Britain, attempted to conduct a suicide bombing in Stockholm. He killed only himself, although two civilians were injured. The University of Bedfordshire graduate, resident in Luton with his wife and family, had been assisted in his preparation by Nasserddine Menni, an Algerian living in Glasgow (Judiciary of Scotland, 2012).

Aaron Weisburd conducted an analysis of Taimour al-Abdaly's Facebook account after this death: "we find a predominance of anti-Shiite and anti-apostate videos, lesser amounts of anti-Western/anti-USA/anti-Semitic/anti-Israel content (in that order)" (Internet Haganah, 2010). Weisburd speculates this may be influenced by self-censorship – any online account dominated by Al-Qaeda videos is likely to draw



the attention of the authorities. However he also intimates this could be an accurate picture of the politico-religious attitudes of such actors:

Jihadis may attempt to attack the West from time to time, but the real source of their rage will be found in their unhappiness with Muslim rulers and with their fellow Muslims more generally (Internet Haganah, 2010).

The sectarianism displayed by Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Abdullah el-Faisal towards Shia, discussed earlier in this thesis, is a further example of this tendency. Manifestations of this turning to violence are however rare within British Islamism – the anti-Shia demonstration in London by Al-Muhajiroun which led to violent clashes in May 2013 being a rare example (Norman, 2013).

### **5.13 Syria**

In 2010 Ali Marmouk, Director General of Syria's General Intelligence Service visited London. He provided MI6 with a list of British Islamists in Syria (some of whom had entered via the conflict zone of Iraq) as part of an attempt to enter into co-operation with Whitehall on anti-terrorism matters (Intelligence Online, 2010). The United Kingdom had been of specific interest to the Syrian authorities since the 1990s, when several Syrians were prominent in Jihadist circles in London (see figure 3.10).

Since Syria's uprising against President Assad began in March 2011, a series of armed opposition groups have jostled to lead the insurgency. Although the Free Syrian Army had initially been the largest of the rebel groups, jihadists gravitated towards Jabhat Al-Nusra, Al-Tawhid, Katiba Al-Muhajireen or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Cockburn and Hall, 2013) often referred to as ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) and since its declaration of a caliphate, as Islamic State. One of the

errors Osama Bin Laden considered himself to have made was in not giving Al-Qaeda a resonantly Islamic moniker, which could serve to closely associate in Muslim minds his organisation with their perceived struggle (Bergen, 2012). Islamic State makes no such mistake.

Figures 5.18 to 5.20 make a contribution to cataloguing and recording British contribution to the Syrian jihad. This research makes no claim to be as comprehensive as those, such as the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence at Kings College, who have had the resources to chart the Syrian jihad solely, with a team of researchers working on different aspects of the subject. It does however, especially when tied to data on earlier jihads such as those in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia, aim to produce an overview across a significantly greater timeframe. In terms of the numbers of fighters recorded below, and the number of deaths, the Syrian conflict, although not unique, is now the most important in three decades of British Jihadism. There are estimated to be at least 20,000 foreign fighters in Syria, with a quarter of these being from Western countries. Some 500-600 are believed to be from Britain (Neumann, 2015).

This research names sixteen British fighters who have been killed in Syria. Some of these deaths came in the violence which flared in May 2014 between Jabhat Al-Nusra and IS (White and Collins, 2014). Others have died conducting suicide bombings, in US airstrikes or on the battlefield against Syrian or Kurdish forces. Despite a significantly greater focus now on preventing would be fighters and supporters of Islamic State from travelling to Syria, there is nothing to indicate either a reduction in interest from a small number of British Sunni Muslims in this cause, or

a significant reversal in the fortunes of IS. As such, this distinct chapter in the history of British Jihadism is likely to continue for some time.

In addition to those killed in Syria, this research names a total of 31 male fighters who have left Britain to fight jihad there, and 13 females who have travelled to the Islamic State. The departure of women from the United Kingdom to a conflict of this type has not been a characteristic of earlier jihadist activity, although it is estimated several hundred have left Europe to join IS (Sherwood et al, 2014). At this stage it is unclear how many of the women have travelled to marry fighters, to live under sharia, or if any are directly involved in violence. This is likely to be an area of considerable future research.

Those in Syria are to be found speaking in broad terms of sharia and protecting Islam. Using his understanding of Salafi-Jihadi ideology, Shiraz Maher of Kings College has spoken to scores of fighters in Syria. In an examination of those who had travelled to Syria from Portsmouth, he found young men who had earlier come together in the Portsmouth Dawah Team, a group dedicated to proselytising to non-Muslims (Maher, 2014). Observing the Syrian Civil War, they were determined that the outcome should be sharia, rather than democracy.

More generally, he writes of the jihadis' motivations:

There are those who are principally motivated by the region's human suffering, whom we call missionary jihadis; there are martyrdom seekers, who regard the conflict as a shortcut to paradise; there are those simply seeking adventure, for whom the supposed masculinity of it all has great appeal; and, finally, there are long-standing radicals for whom the conflict represents a chance to have the fight they had been waiting for (Maher, 2014).

Any understanding that the attraction of jihadist causes was rooted in the appeal of Al-Qaeda had been critically overtaken by events. That some should make the journey from running dawah stalls in Portsmouth's shopping centre to Syria is perhaps not remarkable, given what we know about the characteristic practice of jihadist organisations.

Figure 5.18 British Jihadis in Syria

Individual	Details	Source
Mohammed Ahmad	From Birmingham. Fought in the Kateeba al-Kawthar group. Pleaded guilty to terrorism offences on his return to the UK.	Whitehead, 08/07/14.
Rashed Amani	Aged 19. A business studies student at Coventry University.	Arlott, 24/06/14.
Mohammad Azzam	From Manchester. Travelled in September 2013.	Muslim Weekly, 31/10/14b.
Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary	Aged 23, from London.  Was reporting from Syria as @itsLJinny on Twitter until suspended.  Father jailed for 25 years for terrorist offences in the United States, arising from Al-Qaeda's 1998 African embassy bombings.	Daily Mail, 09/03/14.  US Dept of Justice, 06/02/15.
Eamon Bradley	Aged 25, from Londonderry. A Muslim convert from the Republican Creggan Estate.	Deeney, 03/07/14.
Mashudur Choudhury	Aged 31, from Portsmouth. Spent the bulk of October 2013 in Syria.	Casciani, 20/05/14.
Aine Davis	From Hammersmith, has been fighting in Syria since 2013.	Collins, 22/08/14.

Amer Deghayes	From Brighton	Muslim Weekly, 31/10/14
Siddhartha Dhar also known as Abu Rumaysah	Aged 31, from London. A high profile member of Al-Muhajiroun	BBC News London, 12/11/14
Mohammed Emwazi	A Kuwaiti born Londoner. Accused of carrying out a series of executions of hostages in Syria.	Mekhennet and Goldman, 26/02/15.
Mohammed Hadi	Aged 19, from Coventry	Arlott, 24/06/14.
Ahmed Halane	From Manchester. Brother of the Halane sisters (see below).  His father teaches Qur'anic studies at the Manchester Somali Islamic Cultural Trust.	Scheerhout et al, 10/07/14
Abu Handhla	Alias of a British IS fighter based in Manbij, Syria. Now married to Salma Halane from Manchester.	Gadher, 14/12/14.
Nur Hassan	Originally from Kotka in Finland, but had been living in Whalley Range, Manchester.	Thompson, 21/11/14.
Junaid Hussain	From Birmingham, believed to be fighting for IS in Syria.	Hunter, 08/09/14.
Omar Hussain	Aged 27 from High Wycombe. Former security guard	Taher, 19/10/14.
Ismail Jabbar	Aged 22 from London	Marris, 02/06/14
Ali Kalantar	Aged 18, from Coventry.  Afghan born, he came to Britain aged 10.	Arlott, 24/06/14.  Jones, 28/06/14.
Reyaad Khan	Aged 20, from Cardiff. Had previously attended the Salafi Al-Manar Centre in Cardiff. Appeared in ISIS propaganda video of 20/06/14.	Kennedy, 21/6/14.
Imran Khawaja	Fought in the Rayat al-Tawheed group, before faking his death to return to UK. Jailed for 14 years for terrorist offences.	Crown Prosecution Service, 06/02/15.

Aseel Muthana	Aged 17, from Cardiff. Had attended the Salafi Al-Manar Centre in Cardiff.	Kennedy, 21/6/14.
Nasser Muthana	Aged 20, from Cardiff. Older brother of Aseel. Had previously attended Al-Manar in Cardiff.  Appeared in ISIS propaganda video of 20/06/14.	Kennedy, 21/6/14.
Muhammad Hamidur Rahman	One of five men from the Jami Mosque in Portsmouth who travelled to Syria in October 2013.	Casciani, 20/05/14.
Mamunur Mohammed Roshid	From Portsmouth	Casciani, 20/05/14.
Yusuf Sarwar	A Birmingham City University student. Fought in the Kateeba al-Kawthar group. Pleaded guilty to terrorism offences on his return to the UK.	Whitehead, 08/07/14.
David Souaan	A student at Birkbeck, University of London, of Syrian-Serbian heritage.  Arrested at Heathrow in May 2014, on his second trip to fight in the conflict.	Court News UK, 03/02/15.
Shabazz Suleman	Aged 18, from High Wycombe. Missed his A levels at Wycombe's Royal Grammar School and is believed to have been in Syria since May 2014.	Sawer et al, 08/11/14.
Hamayun Tariq	Mechanic from Dudley, joined IS having fought for the Taliban in Waziristan	Malik, 20/11/14.
Abu Basir al-Tartusi	Imam from London. Has a high profile as an online ideologue of the Syrian jihad.	Loeb, 22/10/12.
Assad Uzzaman	From Portsmouth, one of group who travelled together to Syria.	Casciani, 20/05/14
Abu Yacoub	From Walthamstow. Fighting for IS at Salaheddin, Aleppo.	Harper, 17/8/12.

Fig 5.19 British Women in Syria

Name	Details	Source
Amira Abase	15 year old from Bethnal Green believed to have joined IS in March 2015.	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 13/03/15.
Shamima Begum	15 year old from Bethnal Green believed to have joined IS in March 2015.	As above
Sharmeena Begum	15 year old who attended Bethnal Green Academy. Left London for Islamic State in December 2014.	Dodd, 13/03/15.
Khadijah Dare	A convert from Lewisham, with a high profile on social media.	Hermann, 25/07/14.
Samya Dirie	Aged 17 from Stockwell. Travelled with Yusra Hussien to Istanbul, and its believed onto Syria	Hermann, 07/11/14
Salma Halane	Aged 16, from Chorlton in Manchester. Twin sister of Zahra.	Scheerhout et al, 10/07/14
Zahra Halane	Aged 16, from Chorlton in Manchester.	As above
Yusra Hussien	Aged 15, reported missing from her Bristol home 01/10/14.	Muslim Weekly, 03/10/14a
Rehana Begum Islam	Left Britain with two children to head to Islamic State on 14 February 2015.	Watts, 23/03/13.
Sally Jones	A Muslim convert from Chatham, married to Birmingham IS fighter Junaid Hussain	Hunter, 08/09/14.
Aqsa Mahmood	From Glasgow, most high profile British woman on IS territory due to her social media platform.	Stewart, 12/09/14.
Tareena Shakil	Aged 25, from Burton-upon-Trent. Took her 14 month old son with her.	Muslim Weekly, 31/10/14C.
Kadiza Sultana	16 year old from London. Believed to have joined IS in	Syrian Observatory for Human

	March 2015.	Rights, 13/03/15.
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Figure 5.20 Britons killed in Syria

Individual	Details	Source
Mohammed el-Araj	Aged 23, from Ladbroke Grove. Died fighting Syrian troops, August 2013.	Gardham, 21/11/13.
Mohammed Azzam	Aged 19, from Manchester.	Muslim Weekly, 31/10/14b
Abu Hujama al-Britani	Pseudonym of a Hounslow man killed in August 2013 by Assad's forces.	Gardham, 21/11/13.
Abdullah Deghayes	Aged 18, killed fighting for Jabhat Al-Nusra in Latakia, April 2014. From Brighton.	Muslim Weekly, 31/10/14.
Jaffar Deghayes	Aged 17, from Brighton. Killed in October 2014.	Muslim Weekly, 31/10/14.
Muhammad Medhi Hassan	Aged 20, from Portsmouth. Killed during the IS offensive to take Kobane.	Townsend and Malik, 25/10/14.
Iftikhar Jaman	From Portsmouth. Killed fighting for IS.	Soni, 05/02/14.
Mohammed Azzam Javeed	Aged 19, from Manchester. Killed February 2014.	Scheerhout, 28/10/14.
Abu Layth	From the north of England.	Soni, 05/02/14.
Abdul Waheed Majid	Aged 41, from Crawley. Killed conducting a suicide bombing at Aleppo prison. Video of him released by Jabhat Al-Nusra.	Sky News, 07/02/14.
Ali al-Manasfi	Killed by Syrian troops in May 2013.	Parry, 03/06/13.
Ibrahim al Mazwagi	Aged 21 Killed in February 2013, fighting for the Katiba al Muhajireen	Gilmore, 13/06/13.
Anil Khalil Raoufi	Aged 20. From Didsbury in Manchester, killed fighting for IS. A mechanical engineering student at the University of Liverpool	Malnick, 13/02/14.
Manunur Roshid	Aged 24, from Portsmouth	Muslim Weekly, 31/10/14C
Akram Sebah	Reportedly fighting for Jabhat Al-Nusra and killed in	Lister, 26/01/14



	September 2013.	
Mohamed Sebah	Claims he was fighting for ISIS and killed in September 2013.	Lister, 26/01/14.

### 5.14 Yemen

Yemen serves as a small but distinct chapter in the story of British jihadism. At least three British Islamists have suffered violent deaths in the country. Peter Bergen visited the Islamic centre at Dammaj, where sixteen year old Hosea Walker was shot dead in 2000. He found thirty Britons at a site which his translator and driver were extremely nervous about entering (Bergen, 2001, 191) and describes a venue with a clear military, as well as religious, ethos. Whilst the exact circumstances of Walker's death are unclear, that of Adil Malik, and a British colleague in 2012 was announced to the media by his father. Both had been killed in Yemen's ongoing insurgency.

One explanation for the growth of British Jihadism into maturity is the reluctance of many to recognise and address it at infancy. Issues that were to 'emerge' in the past decade as 'new' look remarkably similar to events that were originally played out, with different actors and in different locations, in the 1990s. For example, the detentions in Guantanamo Bay were not the first time Britons had been incarcerated abroad, in questionable legal circumstances and protesting their innocence, whilst suspected of involvement in terrorism. Between December 1998 and January 1999, eight Muslims from London and the West Midlands were arrested in Yemen, along with two Algerian from Finsbury Park mosque, on suspicion of planning attacks on

Western and Christian targets in the country. For many, this case served as an introduction to the beliefs and practices of the Imam at Finsbury Park, Abu Hamza, focus of considerable media attention as his son and stepson were amongst those arrested (Quin, 2005, 238).

In custody the men protested both their innocence and conditions, making accusations of torture. As the Yemeni newspaper *Al-Bab* commented at the time:

The case damaged relations between Britain and Yemen, and both sides are now keen to bring it to a close. An early release would please sections of the British Muslim community who have accused the government of not doing enough on the men's behalf (Whittaker, 2000).

In retaliation for the arrests, the Islamic Army of Aden-Abyan kidnapped a party of Western holidaymakers. During a botched rescue attempt by the Yemeni authorities, four tourists – three from the UK – were killed. Examination of the phone of one hostage taker showed calls made to Abu Hamza in London, during the hostage crisis (Bergen, 2001, 180-183). This formed part of the case against Hamza in his eventual deportation to the United States (Judiciary of England and Wales, 2012) and conviction (FBI, 2015a).

A campaign group, Justice for the Britons in Yemen was formed with contacts in London, Manchester and Bradford, with Salma Yaqoob, later leader of the Respect Party, acting as Birmingham spokeswoman.

The goal of this campaign is to see that the fundamental human rights of the five British men unlawfully detained in the Yemen are recognised and enforced by the Yemeni authorities; and

that the British government fulfils its duty of care both towards the detainees through the consulate in Yemen, and towards their families in Britain through the Foreign Office. (Justice for the Britons in Yemen Press Pack, n.d)

Whilst the press pack Justice for the Britons in Yemen circulated contained pictures of four of the men in terms of their family lives, studies and work for charity, these observations were to face critical, and not always complimentary scrutiny. Criticism was not associated solely with the tabloid press. *The Guardian*, in an editorial headed “Justice in Yemen: British Muslims must act wisely” warned:

The Islamic Army, in spite of its grand name, is a very small group. Those who have similar views in Britain almost certainly number no more than a handful. But the British Muslim community for its part needs to guard against any romanticisation of Jihad especially among young Muslims. The dangers attached to such romanticisation, and of the actions which may follow from it, are very clear (Guardian, 1999).

Mary Quin was one of those held hostage by the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, giving evidence against Hamza at his US trial. Her memoir “*Kidnapped in Yemen*” is remarkable for its tenacity. Whilst four of her tour party were killed, Quin not only survived but returned to Yemen to visit the convicted Britons in jail, and travelled to London to confront Abu Hamza in Finsbury Park. When Rashad Yaqoob (brother of Salma) informed her the British men were in Yemen to study Arabic and learn about Islam, Quin states “I decided that if Yaqoob really believed what he was telling me, then he was very well meaning but naive” (Quin, 2005, 151).

In this instance, a duopoly of responses may be discerned. In sections of the British Muslim community, the men’s accusations of ill-treatment and anger at what was

perceived to be the British government's disinterested response moved to the forefront of the story. To some activists it became the story. Other interpretations – certainly not on the agenda of community representative organisations - focused on the crimes the men were accused of preparing, and their associations in the United Kingdom. Despite the warnings sounded by *The Guardian's* editorial, there is little evidence, post Yemen, the issue of young Muslims travelling abroad to take part in violence was addressed by Muslim representatives as problematic. The Muslim Council of Britain, whose failings are discussed in detail in chapter two, could have used cases such as these to recognise that some serious problems were emerging within British Islam. Instead, following the Yemen arrests, Britons continued to travel to fight jihad in a succession of theatres with little or no critical comment from representative organisations.

Figure 5.21 Britons killed in Yemen

Name	Details	Source
Hosea Walker	From London, aged 16 when shot dead at a mosque in Dammaj in 2000.	Bergen (2001, 192)
Hisham	Killed fighting for fundamentalist forces near Dammaj in June 2012.	Metro 27/6/12
Adil Malik	Aged 24. Killed fighting for fundamentalist forces near Dammaj in June 2012.	Metro 27/6/12

Figure 5.22 Britons jailed in Yemen for terrorism

Name	Details	Source
Samad Ahmed	From Birmingham	Justice for the Britons in Yemen Press Pack (n.d.)
Shahid Butt	Prominent figure at Birmingham Central Mosque and in the Convoy of Mercy to Bosnia.	Justice for the Britons in Yemen Press Pack (n.d.)
Mohsin Ghalain	Stepson of Abu Hamza	Quin (2005, 238)
Malik Nasser Harhara	From Birmingham. Holder of dual British and Yemeni citizenship. IT graduate from Westminster University.	Justice for the Britons in Yemen Press Pack (n.d.)  O'Neill and McGrory (2008, 161).
Ayaz Hussain	A computer studies graduate	Quin (2005, 238)
Gulam Hussain	From Luton	Justice for the Britons in Yemen Press Pack (n.d.)
Mohammed Mustapha Kamel	Abu Hamza's son	Quin (2005, 238)
Shahzad Nabi	A 20 year old bus driver and cousin of Ayaz Hussain	Quin (2005, 238)

### 5.15 The Scope of British Jihadism

A total of 59 British Islamists and British residents have been killed fighting in international jihadist struggles from the Bosnian conflict onwards, as recorded in figure 5.23 below. When added to the five deaths in Britain in the same period discussed in the previous chapter, it establishes a death toll of 64 British jihadis. These deaths have come in suicide bombings, in combat with rival Muslim organisations, in internecine disputes and at the hands of coalition forces. If 1992 is taken as the first year of the British jihad, that is a total of 64 deaths in 23 years – an

average of just under three per year. However it is highly likely the figures above are an underestimation of the likely total, especially with regards to the Syrian conflict and ongoing violence in parts of Iraq.

It should perhaps be noted that of the ten countries in which British Jihadis have been killed, a majority are still experiencing jihadist violence, a further indication that the total below is likely to increase in the years to come.

Figure 5.23 Britons killed in overseas jihad 1992 – 31 March 2015

Country	British Jihadist Death Toll
Afghanistan	10
Bosnia	6
Chechnya	2
India, Kashmir and Pakistan	9
Iraq	5
Israel	2
Somalia	5
Sweden	1
Syria	16
Yemen	3
Total	59

## 5.16 Conclusions

This chapter has established the range and depth of British Jihadism overseas across three different decades, and in doing so addresses the first of its research questions. It details the organisations Britons have joined, countries they have fought in, and that at least 59 Britons have died in this cause since 1992. Due to the ongoing nature of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and indeed that so few of the areas contested by jihadis have established a lasting peace, this figure is only going to rise.

For all the media coverage it has provoked, there was a marked inevitability about British participation in the Syrian jihad. As discussed in chapter three, important Syrian exiles, such as Abu Musab al-Suri and more significantly Tartusi had based themselves in London. With their understating of the failings of past armed struggles, they could take a strategic view of the potential afforded by future conflicts. This coalesced with a background of British based Jihadists who had long shown themselves long willing to join conflicts where Sunni Muslims were in arms. Some fourteen different countries are listed in this chapter where British Jihadism, however briefly has appeared. Given this tendency, it would have been staggering if the conflict in Syria had progressed without significant British input.

Malise Ruthven suggests it would be a mistake to see Sunni violence as merely reactive or defensive. Its formative period was one of unprecedented expansion (Ruthven, 2002, 246) and this is violence which seeks to achieve something – sharia – rather than merely seeking to defend or delay the success of a rival ideology.

It is not difficult to see such ambitions articulated, from young British Muslims in Bosnia in the 1990s, to those who fought for the Taliban before 9/11, through to the Portsmouth youths who left behind the Portsmouth Dawah Team to go to Syria.

The consequences of young Britons travelling to fight in the Syrian Civil War has not been merely to contribute to the fight against President Assad, but to help establish the Islamic State, to expand and defend its territory. It is in such actions that British best combines theory and practice, where the Islam of Qutb or Azzam is no longer discussed, but enacted/

Twenty years of British Muslim participation in a series of Mujahideen type groups and their jihads should have ensured that the numbers travelling to Syria, and joining the Jabhat al-Nusra or IS was not a surprise. In the words of Ruthven “In the majority Sunni tradition, violence in the form of warfare is linked historically to the Islamic imperium” (Ruthven, 2002, 246). Those who have established a caliphate in Syria and Iraq and seek to maintain it may not agree with the word imperium, but the consequences of it appear little different, especially for those from other faiths and traditions. The failure to recognise this reality about contemporary Jihadism is discussed at greater length in the next chapter, where the inability of critical terrorism studies to consider its effects form a central part of the critique of that academic approach.

This chapter seeks to address a second research question, asking who are the British jihadis. We might begin to address that question by stating who they are not. Although getting exact details on the religious backgrounds of those who have fought abroad or obtained terrorist convictions at home is an inexact science, it is noticeable Muslim minorities appear entirely absent from such data. The organisations Britons have gone overseas to join which are listed in this chapter – the Pakistani and



Afghan Taliban, Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State, are characteristically sectarian.

No exact figures exist for how many Shia Muslims there are in Britain. It is not a question posed by the census, and the Muslim Council of Britain's recent analysis of the 2011 Census "British Muslims in Numbers" (MCB, 2015) makes no attempt to speculate. Estimates suggest however that Sunni Muslims comprise between 80-90% of the global Muslim community, the Shia minority being 10-20% - and the number of Shia in Britain is likely to be of similar proportions to that globally – no more than 10-20% (Elgot, 2013).

Considering the question of terrorism and Islam in the *New Statesman*, Mehdi Hasan wrote:

Not one of the 111 Muslims imprisoned in Britain on terrorism offences is believed to be a Shia. Most Sunnis, like Shias, reject extremism and violence, but in the context of terrorism, it is important to understand the exact nature of the threat. To lump all Muslims together is self-defeating (Hasan, 2010).

This research has not uncovered instances of British Shia being convicted of terrorist offences in the years since Hasan spoke, nor in the two decades previously. Nor do they appear to travel abroad in numbers seeking jihad. Whilst British Muslims have travelled to Israel to commit suicide bombings for Hamas, as discussed above, they have not done so for Hezbollah.

Considering British Jihadism in this matter is not without challenges – such precise details of religious affiliation does not form part of the criminal justice system's record keeping. However, given that in the research period under consideration the United Kingdom has invaded and fought an unpopular war in majority Shia Iraq, and we

have seen a potentially radicalising conflict in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah, the absence of recognised Shia in both domestic terrorism statistics and jihadist campaigns overseas is marked.

An estimated 50-60% of Iraq's population is Shia (Ruthven, 2002, 183) and British Muslims who are Shia may have been expected, in some circles, to consequently respond to the 2003 invasion by taking up arms in defence of their kin. Hardly any appear to have done so. Similarly young men and women from the Ismaili minority trend within Shi'ism, and the Ahmadiyya community do not appear within our terrorism statistics or the extended narrative of British Jihadism. If, as widely accepted, the humiliation of Muslims brought about by our foreign policy is an instigator of both domestic terrorism and jihad abroad, it is a hurt and shame that appears to have fallen more onerously on Sunni Muslims than others.

Within some Islamist circles in Britain, attempts are made to present the view the country has nothing to fear if some of its Muslim citizens travel to fight in overseas conflicts. This chapter presents empirical evidence as to the folly of such views. For some Islamists a clear distinction may be drawn between jihadist causes abroad and at home. Fahad Ansari writes:

Our greatest error has been our silence while the world and these individuals have equated martyrdom operations in Palestine and other occupied lands with acts of terrorism in London, operations which are completely different in nature; one is legitimate resistance against a brutal military occupation, the latter is blatant terrorism (Ansari, n.d.)

In this analysis "Violent jihad in Palestine, Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir and elsewhere is not equivalent to the events of 7-7 which have been absolutely condemned by all".

This noble pursuit is “of no threat whatsoever to British society and something not only justified but encouraged by international law” (Ansari, n.d). Such words are passionately articulated. Yet they require us to ignore the veterans of international jihads imprisoned for subsequent terrorist offences. This chapter has established that the Bosnian conflict and the Pakistani training camps in particular have produced such individuals. Worse, to adopt such a position is to separate the July 2005 London bombers from LeT and HuM, at whose camps in Kashmir they developed and honed their deadly skills. It is precisely because Jihadism is rooted in broader ambitions of achieving sharia and carrying out the word of God that it cannot be readily separated into a set of behaviours in Syria, and an entirely different approach in the United Kingdom.

In his work on the ‘paranoid style’ Hofstadter argues that the paranoid does not seek mediation and compromise in the manner of a politician “what is at stake is always a conflict between absolute good and absolute evil” (Hofstadter, 2008, 31). Expecting to see that conflict between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ kept away from the streets of Britain appears unreasonable. As we have seen in the previous chapter, when Michael Adebolajo was prevented from joining the jihad in Somalia with Al-Shabaab, he returned to the United Kingdom and eventually murdered a British soldier.

But in this conflict, the Jihadist is not necessarily achieving success. Good does not appear to be triumphing. The Bosnian Mujahideen were not rewarded with an Islamic Bosnia, but a partitioned state in which the traditional Islam of the Balkans reasserted its authority over imported Salafi strains. Kashmir remains divided. In Afghanistan, the Taliban were removed from power, and Al-Qaeda dispersed. The Pakistani legal system remains a mixture of tribal, western and Islamic practices. Al-Shabaab has lost ground in Somalia. Such a score card functions as a reminder that

whilst victory may be the goal of the Jihadist, at this stage he appears to share much with the activists identified by Richard Hofstadter “since these goals are not even remotely attainable, failure constantly highlights the paranoid’s frustration” (Hofstadter, 2008, 31). If Syria does not prove to be different, the UK will face the challenge of how to deal with a significant number of returning, frustrated jihadis.

Having established the detail of British Jihadism, both in Britain and overseas, and the importance of the United Kingdom as a base for jihadist actors and organisations from overseas, this thesis now moves from the ‘detail’ to the ‘denial’. The type of defensive responses to Jihadist violence which has characterised British Muslim representative organisations is shown in the next chapter to also be present in the approach of critical academics, within the discipline of critical terrorism studies. The argument is presented that not only has a significant opportunity been missed to look at both sides in the war on terror critically, but that the religious nature of those involved in jihadist struggles has been down played. Worse, this occurs at the expense of ignoring the voices of those who frequently suffer most from the impositions of fundamentalists.

## **Chapter 6: A Missed Opportunity: Critical Terrorism Studies and British Jihadism**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This thesis has covered a lot of ground. It has established the genealogy of jihadist ideals, and the primacy of religious objectives therein. The displacement of nationalist actors by jihadist groups has characterised a series of struggles from Libya to Kashmir. Following failed Islamist uprisings in a series of Muslim majority nations, or sometimes merely to avoid domestic repression, Jihadists began to settle in the United Kingdom in the 1990s in significant numbers. Here they continued to fight not only for sharia in their homelands, but internationally. The most prominent figures in British Jihadism have, appropriately, been clerics, and from within these circles emerged articulation of the need to properly implement sharia, not just in Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia, but here in the United Kingdom. For over twenty years Jihadists have travelled from these shores to contribute to Sunni Islamist struggles, whilst a minority have even turned to violence in their home country. In 2005 the United Kingdom witnessed Europe's first suicide bombings, committed by four of its own citizens.

Despite this setting, reference to religious terrorism, or the presence of Islamic terminology when discussing attacks such as the killing of Lee Rigby or overseas campaigns involving jihadists, is far from ubiquitous. Instead, as discussed in the introduction, an orthodoxy has emerged where politicians such as David Cameron,

Nick Clegg, Nicola Sturgeon (Gallagher 2007, Muslim Weekly 2013C, Cameron 2014) and Muslim representative organisations (MCB, 2002) declare a remarkably similar position which seeks to debunk any association between Islam – and even at times Islamism – and terrorist violence.

David Cameron's speech to the 2011 Munich Security Conference, (written in consultation with the Quilliam Foundation's Maajid Nawaz) established this government's wider views on terrorism and extremism. Cameron spoke of the problem of a 'warped interpretation of Islam', and made a clear distinction between the peaceful religion of Islam (good) and the political ideology of Islamist extremism (bad). "It is vital that we make this distinction between religion on the one hand, and political ideology in the other." And further on: "the point is this: the ideology of extremism is the problem, Islam emphatically is not" (Cameron, 2011). In the Prime Minister's analysis religion is worthy of mention, but this is contingent on it first being praised and a defensive barrier placed squarely in front of it. The challenge the government faces is to Cameron political – 'the ideology of extremism' – which appears to exist in a vacuum separate from any genuine religious expression, practice or interpretation.

David Cameron's position is not without logic. Internationally, the potential for religious rhetoric to polarise has been observed. "The result is that conflicts are absolutized, rendering them more intractable, less susceptible to negotiation" (Ruthven, 2007, 102). If religion itself may not readily be removed from a conflict, an incentive to de-toxify debate by reducing or eliminating the prominence of religious terminology emerges. Politicians, police, security services and religious actors themselves may all have reason to at times amend, restrict, deny or reduce public

association of religion and violence, or to separate an act of violence from the declared belief of its perpetrator.

It is much harder to see why academics should be thus motivated. This chapter argues that a significant opportunity to properly examine British Jihadism, and wider Islamist currents has gone awry. Responsible for this failure are some of those expected to interrogate closely those holding or seeking power – critical academics. In examining this failing, this thesis addresses its final research question – in challenging traditional approaches to terrorism and counter radicalisation strategy, why has critical terrorism studies struggled to come to terms with the concept of violence from British Jihadists and the religious nature of their struggle? To find the answer to this failing, the core work of critical terrorism studies academics is examined in detail, in particular that of Richard Jackson, whose research has been pivotal in establishing and maintaining the discipline - the Editor in Chief of *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. Jeroen Gunning and Richard Jackson's "*What's So Religious about Religious Terrorism*" (2011) is also examined thoroughly. This article's influence is such that it is currently the most read and most cited on the *Critical Studies on Terrorism* website (CST, 2015). A core foundational text by Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning "*Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*" (2009) is also dissected.

The actions of two further critical academics who have adopted very particular positions on religious terrorism are considered – those of David Miller and George Kassimeris. The work of Miller is important because of his standing – organising the 2011 Critical Terrorism Studies conference with his then department at Strathclyde University "*A Decade of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Since 9/11: Taking Stock and New Directions in Research and Policy*". He is also organising its 2015

conference at Bath University, and is prominently associated with broader political currents via the monitoring group Spinwatch, known for high profile research into the lobbying and public relations industries. Kassimeris is considered because his interview with British Islamist Moazzam Begg – and Critical Terrorism Studies approach towards his group Cage - provides an indicative example of what is considered to be the stunted development of critical terrorism studies. Begg is not interviewed critically, but instead given a polished platform from which to present unchallenged a series of Islamist canards. Here is the ‘denial’ that at times characterises contemporary British Islamism, meeting the denial of critical terrorism studies.

Academic examination of critical terrorism studies has tended to focus on perceived or particular failings. These include the suggestion it is not anywhere near as innovative as it pertains to be, and the characterisation that its analysis frequently ignores good practice within orthodox research for what critics see as ‘straw-man’ attacks (Horgan and Boyle, 2008, Michel and Richards, 2009). This chapter adds three significant additional charges to those declared shortcomings. That the desire to ‘de-orientalise’ terrorism studies leaves it incapable of taking declared religious actors seriously. That it has not addressed the human rights abuses of terrorists, in particular those from jihadist organisations, and thirdly that in establishing a working and in particular a financial relationship with Islamist actors in the UK, critical terrorism studies develops the perception and indeed the reality of a conflict of interest.



This chapter draws on the thinking of two prominent feminist academics – Meredith Tax and Karima Bennoune. Both share a position that those concerned about abandonment of core human rights principles in the war on terror need to adopt a similarly robust critique towards fundamentalist and jihadist currents. That is also the position of this thesis. Tax’s *“Double Bind: The Muslim Right, The Anglo-American Left and Universal Human Rights”* (2012) describes itself as “a response to the way human rights organisations, the left and academic feminists think about terrorism and the Muslim right” (Tax, 2012, 1). By the Muslim right, Tax is not presenting a definition rooted in economics, but “a range of transnational political movements that mobilise identity politics towards the goal of a theocratic state” (Tax, 2012, 7). This combines Islamists seeking an electoral route, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots, Salafists who distil electoral and street politics and Jihadist-Salafists, including the likes of Al-Qaeda. Whatever the differences in method, these groups are united by a shared end goal:

The goal of all political Islamists, whatever means they prefer, is a state founded upon a version of Sharia law that systematically discriminates against women along with sexual and religious minorities (Tax, 2012, 7).

An Algerian resident in the US, Karima Bennoune’s *“Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here: Untold Stories from the Fight against Muslim Fundamentalism”* (2013) is based on 286 interviews with individuals of Muslim heritage from 26 countries, who have each opposed fundamentalism in their communities. She states “the struggle waged in Muslim majority societies against extremism is one of the most important – and overlooked – human rights struggles in the world” (Bennoune, 2013, 3). It is certainly one overlooked by leading figures within critical terrorism studies.

This chapter opens by giving an overview of the core beliefs and in particular the research agenda set out by Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning. It then looks at how this agenda has been applied in practice to Islamist actors and to the war on terror. It is here that significant problems emerge, not necessarily with the research framework, but certainly with its application. Having considered the issue of universities and terrorism earlier in this thesis, the third section of this chapter returns to campus, to consider how critical academics have responded to examples of jihadists operating within the university system. This section then expands to offer a critical analysis of the relationship between some critical researchers and Muslim representative organisations, in particular with those from Muslim Brotherhood backgrounds.

Well before its media notoriety in 2015, critical terrorism studies also engaged with the support group Cage, which has represented a series of individuals charged with terrorism. The analysis of feminist authors is used to offer a comprehensive critique of this relationship, and more broadly to posit that the failings of critical terrorism studies in this field matter, and are substantial. Concluding arguments are made which declare the need for a genuinely critical terrorism studies, which takes the aims and conduct of jihadist groups as seriously as human rights abuses committed in the war on terror.

## **6.2 Critical Terrorism Studies – An Overview**

This is now a discipline with over a decade's theoretical development behind it, and whose subject matter places it at the centre of prominent contemporary debates.

Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning characterise the research agenda of critical terrorism studies as having seven core components:

1. The discourses and representational practices of terrorism, which inform both counter-terrorism and terrorism studies
2. Applying historical materialist approaches to analyse counter terrorism in terms of class, capitalism, hegemony and imperialism
3. Conducting systematic research into state terrorism, in particular of western states and their allies.
4. Broadening the research agenda to other forms of violence and non-violent behaviour in social movements
5. To take gender seriously in terrorism research
6. Address the western centric approach of existing studies and to include the voices of those in the global south
7. To analyse the ethics, impacts and efficacy of counter-terrorism (Jackson et al, 2009, 228-231).

Paradigmatically this list, although by no means exhaustive, would appear to allow for the rigorous study of both perceived terrorist actors, and the governments who play a central role in determining how societies respond to violence. There is however, arguably a greater interest across the seven points in the response to terrorism from the nation state, than there is in the language and practice of terrorists.

Richard Jackson expounded on the origins of critical terrorism studies in an interview with the author in Aberystwyth in 2011. Placing researchers in a series of theoretical

backgrounds from approaches such as critical discourse, historical materialism, Marxism and social movement theory;

We are all united by a profound dissatisfaction with the orthodoxy and with the network of influential terrorism experts who appear in the media the most, who write the core text books that everyone quotes and who get invited to give expert advice to governments (Jackson, Interview, 2011).

Although the Al-Qaeda attacks on the United States in 2001 do not appear to have been a motivating force for Jackson and other academics to coalesce, the response to it was;

We were very dissatisfied with the response to 9/11, and the war on terror, that was seen to be legitimised by their orthodoxy. Critical terrorism studies is an intervention..... To try and challenge that orthodoxy (Jackson, Interview, 2011).

This background would indicate an approach, which at least initially was more predicated to critiquing one side in the war on terror – the US and its allies – than Al-Qaeda. The following pages examine what has happened when critical researchers have moved away from that initial focus towards considering the nature of jihadist groups.

### **6.3 ‘Critical’ Approaches to Jihadism and the War on Terror?**

Religious terrorism as a concept has been marginalised by critical researchers, and explicitly rejected by leading academics in the field (Jackson, 2007, Gunning and Jackson, 2011). On one level, this is surprising. A research framework seeking to “include the voices and perspectives of those in the global South” (Jackson et al, 2009, 230) could hardly ignore those agitating from religious perspectives, nor for that matter could it reasonably avoid engaging with those seeking to resist the

influence of religious actors. Secondly a declaration has been recorded that “there is a pressing need to take gender more seriously in terrorism research” (Jackson et al, 2009, 230). Again, this could be expected to lead to an engagement with the conduct of both state and non-state religious actors in their treatment of females and minority ethnic, social and sexual groups. What is the position of people from those groups in areas where religious groups are hegemonic?

The research framework of critical terrorism studies does however come with a caveat, which indicates a potential reluctance to seriously consider declared religious groups as unitary actors. Theoretically there is;

The need to deconstruct explanations which focus overly on religion and embed them in broader social and political theory – but vitally, without overlooking the role of religion and the spiritual (Jackson et al, 2009, 230).

However, of the five bullet points which follow this quote as topics in need of additional research, none reference religion, save perhaps for concern about “the Eurocentric and Orientalist underpinnings of the field” (Jackson et al, 2009, 231) indeed in the same volume Jeroen Gunning writes of the urgent need to use social movement theory to “De-orientalise terrorism research” (Gunning, 2009, 172).

How has this ‘de-orientalism’ and ‘de-construction’ of religion and counter-terrorism worked in practice? An early critical text to emerge following 9/11 and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq was “*Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-Terrorism*” (Jackson, 2005). Contemplating the language of the war on terror, Richard Jackson observes an American construct, where terrorists are portrayed by the White House as traitors, perverting their own religion. The reasons for this are:

The American government had no wish to start a global religious war, thus it had carefully to fix the nature of the enemy terrorists in such a way that any possibility they might be considered essentially 'Muslim' terrorists was forestalled (Jackson, 2005, 64).

Thus Jackson observes the religious element of their political demands was dismissed, and attempts begun to fracture Al-Qaeda from wider global Muslim support. George W Bush was to be observed doing this in a speech as early as 20 September 2001, whilst Colin Powell went even further a month later, arguing Bin Laden's actions demonstrated that he had no faith whatsoever. Powell stated:

They are evil people. They believe in no faith. They have adherence to no religion...The message I have for Osama bin Laden is that he cannot hide behind a faith in which he does not believe because, if he believed in it, he would not be doing what he does. (Quoted in Jackson, 2005, 65).

Al-Qaeda is now stripped of any vestige of religiosity. Jackson comments "This is an attempt to say that Osama bin Laden is a fake and a charlatan who is trying to deceive Muslim people" (Jackson, op cit). The Bush Presidency is widely perceived to have been characterised by significant blunders in its linguistic approach to the war on terror – the controversy over the use of the term 'crusade' (Bush, 2001) being the most prominent example from a leader whose Christian faith was at the core of his understanding of civilisation (Church, 2002, 121). Yet US strategy frequently attempted to proceed on the type of lines Jackson describes. The 2002 National Security Strategy, for example, avoids any reference to Islam, Muslims or jihad, pinpointing the enemy as a noun - terrorism:

The United States of America is fighting a war against terrorists of global reach. The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism -

premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents (United States, 2002, 5).

Only upon his death did the United States government formally opt to reconcile Osama Bin Laden with his faith. Having killed Al-Qaeda's leader at Abbottabad in Pakistan in 2011, "the Administration stressed the considerable care and attention that was extended to the treatment of bin Laden's body. Here, the requirements of Islamic tradition were repeatedly invoked" (Jarvis and Holland, 2014, 434). At a press conference, the State Department explained:

We are ensuring that it is handled in accordance with Islamic practice and tradition. This is something that we take very seriously. And so therefore this is being handled in an appropriate manner (White House Press Secretary, 2011).

In death, Bin Laden became Muslim again. The initial element to Jackson's work, which usefully argues that the United States at times found strategic value in secularising the war on terror, was regrettably not built upon. Instead, Richard Jackson's "*Constructing Enemies: 'Islamic Terrorism' in Political and Academic Discourse*" (2007) takes the investigative tools deployed in his 2005 study of the discourse of the war on terror, and applies that approach to analysis of Islamist terrorism. Unfortunately, the beliefs and objectives of the participants themselves appear of secondary interest.

There is simply too much variation within 'Islam' and Islamic movements for meaningful or illuminating generalisations, not least because 'Islam' consists of over a billion people from more than 50 countries, languages and cultures, five major doctrinal groupings and hundreds of smaller sects, theological traditions and cultural-religious variants (Jackson, 2007, 413).

Yet Jackson then finds illuminating generalisations can be made providing they are positive, stating that:

Islamic practice is not antithetical to democracy there is a large and sophisticated body of research that confirms that Islamic doctrine and practice, including varieties of 'Islamism' and 'Islamic fundamentalism', is not typically or necessarily violent, anti-democratic or incompatible with secularism or modernity' (Jackson, 2007, 414).

This analysis is further characterised by a reluctance to address core texts written by religious actors themselves. Despite the wide translation of such texts into English, Jackson uses only one primary source from an Islamist figure (Bin Laden's Messages to the World, edited by Bruce Lawrence) relying instead on secondary sources. There is nothing from the canon which has influenced contemporary Islamist actors - Taymiyyah, Qutb, Mawdudi, Azzam or even a perceived reformer such as al-Qaradawi. Neither the Qur'an nor hadith are referenced.

From the single source of Bin Laden, Jackson deduces:

These texts reveal a fairly nuanced political analysis and a clear set of political goals, including: support for the establishment of a Palestinian state; ending US military occupation of the Arabian peninsula and its ongoing support for Israel; overthrowing corrupt and oppressive Arab regimes; supporting local insurgencies in Kashmir, Chechnya, the Philippines and elsewhere; and expulsion of Western forces from Iraq and Afghanistan (Jackson, 2007, 418).

Whilst it may be understandable for Jackson to contend Bin Laden wished to see a Palestinian state, and that this is evidence of Al-Qaeda's political nature, it is far from a sophisticated or rounded reading. We have already seen in this thesis that portraying conflicts in Kashmir or Palestine as local insurgencies is to ignore the



broader demands of Islamists, and their desire to displace those pursuing purely political objectives (Hussain, 2007, 25), (Karsh, 2007, 218). The objectives of groups like Al-Qaeda go beyond what Jackson is willing to recognise. Bin Laden illustrates this in Messages to the World (the book Jackson cites in support of the above quote):

The legal duty regarding Palestine and our brothers there – these poor men, women and children who have nowhere to go – is to wage jihad for the sake of God, and to motivate our umma to jihad so that Palestine may be completely liberated and returned to Islamic sovereignty (Lawrence, 2005, 9).

Bin Laden could hardly have been more explicit. Is it a 'generalisation' to say this strand of thought defines itself as Islamic, having clear religious goals? His position – of a Palestine returned to Islamic sovereignty, involving the global Muslim community and achieved via the religious tool of jihad, would appear to explicitly rule out all other types of state. Further, this is referred to, not as a goal or aim, but a legal duty - Bin Laden's actions appear rooted in his understanding of sharia.

Perhaps influenced by the need to 'de-orientalise' debate, a sensitivity runs through Jackson's writing with regards to how Islamist actors are referred to by the west. Satisfaction is expressed at a European Union review of its usage of terms such as 'jihadi' and 'Islamic' (Jackson, 2007, 425-6). When pushed on official approaches to distance religious references from counter-terrorism, even developing potentially inaccurate categorisations such as 'Al-Qaeda inspired terrorism', Jackson is supportive:

In the way language works I think there is a much deeper implication there. And the implication is that it's causal, that somehow religion is causally connected to terrorism. Islamism is causally connected to terrorism, or concepts of jihad as defined by the Islamic

religion are part of the cause, the essence of this terrorism. And my own view is that there is no such thing as religious terrorism (Jackson, Interview, 2011).

By 2007, Western governments were increasingly seeking to develop counter terrorism policies articulated in terms avoiding religious terminology. Instead, more neutral terms which focused on the criminal nature of terrorist acts were emphasised. Speaking shortly after the 2007 attacks in London and Glasgow, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith told the New Statesman;

It is a conscious approach.....and it's a conscious approach that stems from the need to enlist the broadest possible coalition in order to tackle terrorism...So yes its tone, but the tone is fundamentally linked to the approach you need to take to counter terror (Bright and Kampfner, 2007).

Here at least, government and critical terrorism academics appeared to be speaking in remarkably similar terms.

In “*What’s So ‘Religious’ about ‘Religious Terrorism’*” Gunning and Jackson (2011) put forward the argument that the concept of religious terrorism is problematic in conceptual and empirical terms, and that the behaviour of those labelled religious terrorists is often indistinguishable from secular actors. They position such terminology within historical power structures, and observe a process which seeks to use discourse to legitimise contentious counter-terrorism practices. The article proceeds through three distinct sections – considering the origins and usage of religious terrorism as a term, critical examination of it as a concept, and finally alternative suggestions for how we may study what is tentatively described as “the religious dimensions of political violence” (Gunning and Jackson, 2011, 370).

As with Jackson's 2007 article on Islamic Terrorism, Gunning and Jackson feel able to negotiate this issue without detailed reference to written sources from religious actors. In this article none are referenced. That means nothing from within the vast corpus of literature produced by politically oriented Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, either in Egypt or amongst its supporters in the west. Nothing from any of the Salafist-Jihadist currents, be it Al-Qaeda or the various Pakistani organisations, even though the actions of such groups have, along with the war on terror, been pivotal in re-igniting academic interest in religious terrorism as a concept. Nor do Gunning and Jackson turn to any Qur'anic sources or hadith, even though such references particularly occur in Bin Laden's pronouncements. Before religious terrorism is debated as a concept in *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, any combatant who may describe themselves as seeking religious goals or acting in accordance with their faith, risks being removed from Gunning and Jackson's conceptual framework.

The first stage of their argument is to adopt the position that it is not conceptually possible to clearly distinguish religious and secular phenomenon. To illustrate this, a series of examples is given:

Religious structures and practices lose their distinctiveness, as parallels can be readily found in the secular world: priests have their counterparts in charismatic community or national leaders; mosques perform functions overlapping with those offered by community halls, rituals, foundational texts and their gatekeepers (priests, prophets, party leaders) can be found in both religious and secular communities (Gunning and Jackson, 2011, 374).

There is the element of the fatuous in these arguments. Mosques may well take on the function of community halls, but one remains a sanctified building, whilst the

other is not. Behaviour considered unacceptable in one, may be permissible in the other. National leaders may adopt characteristics resembling those of Priests, but a politician such as Stalin's legal authority came from being President of the Soviet Union, not from any resemblances which may be discerned in his character. Few foundational texts for political parties are treated with the reverence reserved by some for the Bible or Qur'an. It would be one thing to burn the Plaid Cymru manifesto on Aberystwyth High Street, another to burn the Qur'an.

What this framework does allow however, is for Gunning and Jackson to adopt a protective intellectual barrier around religion as a concept. If it is accepted religion has no distinguishing features from any other belief system – however weak the examples cited – a categorisation such as religious terrorism becomes impossible to construct. And this is done without detailed reference to any belief systems or core religious texts! This stance carries with it the useful adjunct that if it is not possible to separate religion from any other belief system, similarly religious terrorism cannot be distinguished from other variants either.

This makes quantitative comparative studies impossible. "How are we to make an authoritative claim that actors are religious or secular, let alone that one set is more violent than the other?" (Gunning and Jackson, 2011, 379). Such a stance risks becoming facile. Firstly because it ignores readily available criteria, such as whether a particular group advocates or introduces sharia law on territory it controls. Secondly because of the limitations placed on the discipline by such a mind-set. If Gunning and Jackson's approach is accepted, a potential comparative study (for example) of the numbers killed by left wing terrorists in Europe in the 1970s, and those killed by Islamists in West Africa in the 2010s, would be ruled methodologically unsound as it could not be shown the Red Brigades were secular and Boko Haram

religious? Here, religious terrorism becomes not so much problematical in empirical terms (Gunning and Jackson, 2011, 369), but an impossibility.

A second element in the authors thinking is the proclamation that faith is viewed with inherent suspicion within English speaking academia, due to the relegation of religion to the private sphere as the modern nation state was developed (Gunning and Jackson, 2011, 375). This creates a situation in Middle Eastern and Terrorism Studies “leading to the portrayal of Islamists (advocates of an Islamic political order) as inherently intolerant, dogmatic and violent, as opposed to the supposedly tolerant and pragmatic secularists” (Gunning and Jackson, 2011, 375). This is certainly not the framework by which the feminists mentioned in this chapter judge Islamists. Karima Bennouna (2013) did not interview 286 secularists for their views on Islam, but 286 people of Muslim heritage who have opposed Islamist dogma and/or violence in Muslim majority countries.

Having declared the impossibility of religious terrorism, Gunning and Jackson face a somewhat difficult task in addressing Hamas - the Islamic Resistance Movement. The Hamas Covenant uses a famous hadith to close its article seven;

The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him! This will not apply to the Gharqad, which is a Jewish tree (cited by Bukhari and Muslim) (Hamas, 2004, 435).

Article thirteen declares the only solution for Palestinians is through jihad. Given this reliance on apocalyptic visions of the end day, and the superiority of jihad, some careful positioning is required to maintain the articles core argument. “Creating an

Islamic state is a more explicitly religiously inspired goal. But even here we would query whether this could be usefully categorised as simply religious” (Gunning and Jackson, 2011, 377). When Hamas say they want a religious state, and give blood fighting for it across a generation, they do not actually mean it!

Interestingly Gunning and Jackson go on to refer to the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, plus socio-economic changes, enabling women to take a greater role in politics. There is no mention of the extent to which in Hamas dominated Gaza, religious injunctions upon women have increasingly stifled individual freedom. These range from the imposition of Islamic clothing in schools to a ban on women cycling, all enforced by religious police (Bennoune, 2013, 116-7). Without engagement with the texts of those who declare religious goals and cite religious sources for their actions, or those on the ground who oppose them, Gunning and Jackson’s rejection of the importance of religion appears, if the term may be used, preordained. With no consideration of the broader social impact of Islamist actors upon their own societies, only a partial assessment of the issues is being presented.

A further characteristic of the critical approach is that central to our understanding of jihadists should be consideration not of what they are fighting for, but what, and more importantly who, they fight against. And that is easily defined as being Western imperialism. Jackson, relying on Pape, insists “For al-Qaeda, religion matters, but mainly in the context of national resistance to foreign occupation” (Jackson, 2007, 418). This is a peculiar statement. Not least because it ignores Al-Qaeda’s clear rejection of nationalism as a viable method (Mansfield, 2006, 35-6). Karima Bennoune expounds on how approaches such as Jackson’s misrepresent the nature of fundamentalists:

Some Western observers see Muslim fundamentalists as the stalwart representatives of the local standing up to the global, the Jihad versus McWorld scenario. That is not how they are often seen on the ground (Bennoune, 2013, 14-15).

If Bennoune's work has a core purpose, it is demonstrating this reality. For example, in post-Saddam Iraq, Al-Qaeda went much further than opposing occupying western forces. Having distributed burqa's for women to wear in a village near Baghdad, they murdered a local trade unionist who opposed the practice (Bennoune, 2013, 123). It is from such examples that she contends "Jihad is McWorld, just a different version of it" (Bennoune, 2013, 15). It is because groups such as Al-Qaeda or Islamic State offer an interpretation of Islam that is fashioned for both day to day living and explaining contemporary global events, that a rounded analytical approach to them is required. Whether there is foreign occupation or not, the fundamentalists' interpretation is extant, be it sharia patrols on the streets of east London or compulsory burkas in rural Iraq. In Bennoune's native Algeria, it is worth noting the Islamists, supposedly taking up arms due to the annulment of Algeria's elections by the military, responded by killing hundreds of women. Women participating in sport and entertainment were seen as particularly threatening:

Pop singers, too, were targeted on the grounds that their music, demonised as pornographic and anti-Islamic, represented the invasion of Western culture (Evans and Phillips, 2007, 193).

Algerian fundamentalist practice was predicated on their linkage of post colonialism and sexual mores (Cooper, 2008, 37) and whilst Algeria's military government was not minded to cede political power to them, it increasingly did so in social matters, most notably in the field of family law. At the local level, Islamist morality was reinforced by threats and the use of direct action "One of the most disturbing aspects

of this violence is the fact that it is perpetrated in the name of anti-imperialist revolution” (Cooper, 2008, 38).

In conceptual terms there are real dangers in failing to accord the status of combatant to jihadist actors, in declining to seriously examine the programme, methods and end goals of those taking up the gun in Chechnya, Algeria and similar conflicts. Paradoxically, this dismissal mirrors the infantilism of colonialism (Bruckner, 2010, 42) in the peremptory way non-whites are viewed. Karima Bennouna suffers no such inhibitions, and details the nature of the Chechen jihad, and its long term impact on civilians, via interviews with displaced Chechens. She sketches a trend whereby indigenous Sufi strains of Islam have been increasingly displaced by Salafism (Bennouna, 2013, 149). Space for more liberal Muslims has narrowed significantly, with attacks in Grozny designed to enforce the veil (Bennouna, 2013, 149-153). In the feminist as opposed to the critical approach, there is less concern about how jihadists are labelled, than there is about the effects of their conduct:

Most fundamentalist campaigns are local; events like 7/7 in the UK and 9/11 in the US are rare compared to pressure, threats and violence at the community level, designed to impose ideological conformity and obedience to fundamentalist rules (Tax, 2012, 27).

To Tax, a dangerous vacuum has emerged where few consider terrorism in terms of its effects on the human rights of civilians. Instead, a much greater focus is made on human rights issues arising out of counter-terrorism (Tax, 2012, 25-6). On this subject, critical terrorism studies may be considered part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.



## 6.4 Critical Terrorism Studies on Campus

Chapter four of this thesis establishes the longevity of controversial issues involving both student Islamists and recent alumni. Since the early 1990s these have ranged from anti-Semitic and threatening behaviour (Lyon interview, 2010) to support for Al-Muhajiroun, Al-Qaeda and participation in terrorism. Figure 4.6 of this thesis lists eleven examples of the later, including serving ISOC officials. When asked about the number of terrorist convictions of students in leadership positions from ISOCs, Richard Jackson demurred:

I am not sure that is relevant at all. If you were to do an analysis of how many convicted criminals there were amongst former members of the law society – how many of them were engaged in fraud? In later years, I bet you would find a hundred times more than terrorists (Jackson, Interview, 2011).

The flippant nature of this reply belies its absurdity. University law associations do not tend to advocate fraud as an ideal, whilst ISOCs are by definition predicated on the ideal of propagating Islam. If some students subsequently become involved in jihadist groups or support the Islamic State, the issue of their lineage and motivations requires a more substantive consideration than being dismissed as irrelevant.

Richard Jackson is not the only critical academic dismissive of Jihadist terrorism. David Miller has enjoyed a high profile in Critical Terrorism Studies, organising two of the discipline's annual conferences and serving as one of the editors of the special edition of *Critical Studies on Terrorism* which followed the 2011 conference. He has also taken a particular interest in debates surrounding Islamism on campus. In an article "*Spying on Academics will not help Fight Terrorism*" Miller established principled opposition to increased pressure being placed on academics to comply with a range of demands by UK Universities outside normal teaching practice. Here

a strong case is presented that it is not the job of universities as institutions to be monitoring students for immigration purposes, political activism or holding a supervisory brief over lecturer's research into subjects such as political violence (Miller, 2013). Independent research is presented as essential to developing an understanding of terrorism, and Miller warns against the introduction of a system whereby those handling 'security-sensitive' information are monitored within the academy.

Whilst a determined case is established that such controls would be illegitimate, less convincing is a series of assertions which, taken cumulatively, imply any concern about terrorism on campus, or even terrorism per se is in some way unfounded:

Few people who form their opinions on the threat posed by Islamist terrorism by listening to successive government ministers or the BBC will be aware that this type of terrorism makes up an extraordinarily small proportion of the terrorist threat across Europe. According to Europol – in data supplied to them by all 27 EU governments, the number of Islamist terrorist attacks never exceeded 0.7% of the total number of terrorist attacks in any year between 2006 and 2009 (Miller, 2013).

It is unclear why in an article discussing guidance issued by UK Universities in October 2012, terrorist figures for the 27 European Union member states is relevant, or why Europol data for the specific years 2006-9 has been chosen. It is not a surprise that across the EU as a whole, Islamist terrorism is comparatively low – one would expect few jihadists to be active in the Baltic States or the former Communist nations of central Europe. In those parts of Europe where borders are disputed, or revanchist claims continue, violence from dissident Irish Republicans, or groups such as ETA, may endure. The continental picture is irrelevant to UK Universities, who are focused upon higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. Here, issues

concerning Islamist actors on campus have, as seen earlier in this text, considerable history across three decades. Critical academics have every right to question whether increased monitoring of staff and students is an appropriate response to this problem. They are however on weak ground if seeking to downplay or dismiss the issue of terrorism and religious extremism on campus altogether.

At the 2011 Critical Terrorism Studies conference David Miller presented new research - *“The Cold War on British Muslims: An Examination of Policy Exchange and The Centre for Social Exclusion”* written with Tom Mills and Tom Griffin (Mills, et al, 2011). This work, along with a later publication *“The British Israel Research and Communications Centre: Giving Peace a Chance?”* (Mills et al, 2013) broke new ground for critical terrorism researchers in this country. The combination of a senior academic, Miller, writing and researching with his PhD students (Mills and Griffin on both publications, Mills, Griffin and Hilary Aked on the latter) was not new, but receiving direct sponsorship for such work from Islamic organisations based in the UK is a radical departure. *“The Cold War on British Muslims”* is described on the title page as “Sponsored by the Cordoba Foundation” whose logo appears alongside that of Spinwatch. In the acknowledgments, the author’s state:

We hope that this report might help to illuminate the somewhat opaque funding arrangements of the Centre for Social Cohesion and Policy Exchange. As part of a process of encouraging these and other think-tanks to own-up to their funding sources we gratefully acknowledge that this report has been produced with the aid of a grant of £5,000 from The Cordoba Foundation. Our thanks to its CEO Anas Altikriti for the support (Mills et al, 2011, 53).

In the case of the 2013 investigation into the British Israel Communications and Research Centre (better known as BICOM) page two of the report reproduces the logos of Spinwatch and MEMO – Middle East Monitor, implying joint production, although copyright is ascribed solely to Spinwatch. In terms of funding, a similar process is acknowledged to that of the 2011 report, only with MEMO replacing The Cordoba Foundation:

Funding for this study was given by the Middle East Monitor (£5,000). We are grateful for their faith in our research skills. We can record that they were model funders in that they provided the cash and let us get on with it (Mills et al, 2013, 79).

The Spinwatch website reveals a total of £15,000 in funding from the Cordoba Foundation, via payments of £5000 in 2010, 2012 and 2014. Indeed funding from Islamic organisations now appears to be a significant income stream – additional sums totalling £17,000 having been received since 2012 from MEMO, Friends of Al Aqsa and Interpal (Spinwatch, 2015)<sup>15</sup>. This approach has now travelled from Spinwatch into the discipline, with the 2015 Critical Terrorism Studies conference being funded with the support of “The ESRC, Islam Expo and the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath” (Critical Studies on Terrorism, E Mail, 2015).

The breadth and scale of this funding raises significant issues. Most notably, the preponderance of Muslim Brotherhood related organisations, and groups formed or led by Brotherhood activists, in the above list. When leader of the opposition, David Cameron observed that the Cordoba Foundation “is a front for the Muslim

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Spinwatch meticulously records its donations for public consideration on its website.

Brotherhood” (Cameron, 2008). In 2015 an interview with Chief Executive Anas al-Tikriti on Al-Jazeera was prefaced with the description of it as “Muslim Brotherhood linked” (Al-Jazeera, 2015). Although resident in London, Al-Tikriti maintains a position amongst Arab elites significant enough for him to meet President Obama at the White House in 2014 to discuss the situation in Iraq (Al-Jazeera, 2015) where his father heads the Islamic Party (Bowen, 2014, 110).

Islam Expo, one of the sponsors of the 2015 Critical Terrorism Studies conference, was established by Al-Tikriti’s British Muslim Initiative (BMI) (Bowen, 2014, 111), itself a splinter from the Brotherhood created Muslim Association of Britain. Innes Bowen suggests that BMI’s support for Hamas ensured Labour politicians boycotted Islam Expo’s 2008 exhibition in central London (Bowen, op cit). The Muslim Brotherhood’s subsequent support for jihad in Syria (Mohsen, 2013) further ensures its distance from British politicians, if not critical academics.

Interpal, who provided Spinwatch with £2000 in 2014, is a charity which works for the relief of Palestinians. It too has Muslim Brotherhood associations. In 2008-9 it was investigated by the Charity Commission concerning links to Hamas, support for suicide bombing and “the charities links to the Union for Good, an international confederation of charities close to the Muslim Brotherhood” (Smith, 2013). The subsequent report found insufficient evidence to sustain accusations Interpal supported terrorism, but did find a lack of diligence in how it worked with Palestinian partners, and issued a requirement to end to any relationship with the Union for Good (Charity Commission, 2009, 32).

Friends of Al-Aqsa, a campaigning group which also works on behalf of Palestinians donated £10,000 to Spinwatch in 2014. It was formed and is led by Ismail Patel.

Here again the Muslim Brotherhood connection comes via Islam Expo and BMI, for whom Patel has been a Director and Spokesman respectively (ITIC, 2011). Finally MEMO, sponsor of the 2013 analysis of Zionist lobbying, has an established Muslim Brotherhood connection through its Director, Daud Abdullah. Abdullah signed a round robin opposing possible proscription of the Muslim Brotherhood (Cordoba Foundation, 2014), in the capacity of his employment with the Brotherhood established BMI.

In summary, of the five Islamic organisations funding critical academics in the UK, either via Spinwatch or helping to finance the 2015 Critical Terrorism Studies conference, all have Muslim Brotherhood associations to some degree. The total donated to Spinwatch alone is £32,000. Taking funding of this nature ensures Spinwatch, and critical academics participating in its work, are open to question as to the influence Islamist actors have on their research. After all, why else would they be so willing to fund it? There is considerable irony in Miller, who has spent much of his career debunking the influence of elite lobbyists on our politics, readily working with powerful figures in domestic and Middle Eastern Islamism who seek to develop political influence via the dissemination of their message. This is also a relationship which appears set to continue

In turning our attention to the 'Israel lobby' we decided to focus, in what we hope will be the first of a number of reports, on BICOM, the most sophisticated and apparently more moderate end of the pro-Israel groups currently active in the UK (Mills et al, 2013, 79).

Is it likely that future reports, given their funding stream, will be considering the influence of Islamist actors in our politics or education system?

This co-operation between critical academics and Islamists may appear unprecedented. However it is in keeping with the long term strategy of exiled Muslim Brothers in the west:

The Brothers do not advocate isolation from mainstream society. To the contrary, they urge Muslims to actively participate in it, but only in so far as such engagement is necessary to change it in an Islamic fashion (Vidino, 2011, 11).

Vidino's examination of those he categorises the 'new Western brothers' refers to the Muslim Association of Britain as "a quintessential New Western Brotherhood organization in its origins, ideology, connections and methodology" (Vidino, 2010, 140). The methodology of the Western Brothers is traced to Yusuf al-Qaradawi's 1990 statement 'Priorities' which envisaged the group's representatives developing positive relationships with leading tiers in Western societies. From this position the Brothers would seek to play a central role in administering Muslim community life in public bodies, achieving hegemony in those communities, whilst at the same time professing the Islamist position on geopolitical issues. As a consequence the Western Brothers have been found

...defending the Islamist regime in Sudan to opposing the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, from attacking secular rulers throughout the Middle East to presenting various Islamist groups operating in the region as genuine advocates of democracy opposing corrupt dictatorships, they have advocated the many causes of the global Islamist movement (Vidino, 2010, 86).

Opinion is divided as to the direction the Western Brothers wish to take European societies on the long term – Vidino separates respondents on this question into 'pessimists' and 'optimists.' However it is to be as noted that as recently as 2002 al-Qaradawi was talking of an Islamic conquest of Europe via preaching and ideology (Vidino, 2010, 92). In such language the theoretical propositions established within

the Muslim Brotherhood, that there are no restrictions upon the realm of Islam (Qutb, 2007, 59-60) reappear. Whilst al-Qaradawi rejects the method of groups such as Al-Muhajiroun, their respective intentions for European societies appear identical.

It is at this point we might expect a genuinely critical approach towards Islamist groups operating in the UK to appear, not least as Islamising society may be far from compatible with a core approach of critical terrorism studies – taking gender seriously. Thus far, such research has been distinctly lacking, both at the domestic and international level. During the brief period of Muslim Brotherhood rule in Egypt from 2012-13, violence against political opponents and journalists flourished, as did the instigation of an Islamic constitution in what was seen as, at best, a flawed process (Bennoune, 2013, 298). President Morsi placed himself above the law, heralding a ‘new era of repression’ (Amnesty International, 2012). Does the Muslim Brotherhood’s brief record in office sit with the progressive goals declared by Jackson, Smyth and Gunning in 2009? Could the Morsi period in Egypt, and the resistance to it, be independently researched by academics funded by the Brotherhood’s British supporters?

For critical terrorism studies, further reputational issues emerge. The possibility of an open assessment of religious terrorism, or counter terrorism initiatives which may impact on British Muslims, is greatly reduced when conference funding is provided by an organisation which seeks power and influence in the Muslim community. Certainly the study of British Jihadism is affected by such a relationship. The extraordinary closure of Finsbury Park mosque by counter-terrorism police in 2003,



and its eventual transfer to Islamists associated with the Muslim Brotherhood over the heads of supporters of Abu Hamza (Bowen, 2014, 109) can hardly be properly assessed by those funded by key participants in the events. Similarly the 2003 Tel Aviv suicide bombing, involving British jihadists on behalf of Hamas (see chapter five) is unlikely to be considered in a truly critical manner by academics working with the Hamas supporting BMI.

It is the Muslim Brotherhood which gains from its association with academia, and is using it to try to protect its status in the United Kingdom. When indications emerged the British government may proscribe the Brotherhood under counter terrorism legislation, a full page advertisement was taken out in *The Guardian* of 28 May 2014, decrying such a possibility. Among the signatories and their respective organisations listed were Ismail Patel of Friends of Al-Aqsa, Anas Al-Tikriti of the Cordoba Foundation, Dr Daud Abdullah of the British Muslim Initiative and Mohammed Kozbar of Islam Expo. Of the eight academics on the list, the biggest grouping was from critical terrorism studies – Marie Breen Smyth, Richard Jackson, and David Miller (Cordoba Foundation, 2014).

## **6.5 Critical Terrorism Studies and Cage**

If a critical approach is to dominate the methodology of critical terrorism studies considering the war on terror, should that same approach be continued when considering recognised terrorist actors? Or those suspected or accused of participating in terrorism? In 2008 in *Critical Studies on Terrorism* George Kassimeris

interviewed Moazzam Begg, a Briton formerly held without charge in Guantanamo Bay. The relationship between critical terrorism academics and Cageprisoners (now Cage), the organisation of which Begg is a Director, is ongoing. Asim Qureshi of Cage has published articles in the disciplines journal (Qureshi, 2009, Qureshi, 2010) and presented a further paper at its 2014 conference. When Qureshi was under sustained criticism in 2015 for comments at a press conference concerning British Jihadist Mohammed Emwazi, Richard Jackson tweeted his support, insisting “I’ve always thought Cage did important work for human rights” (Jackson, 2015).

Like his organisation, Begg is a controversial figure. On 7 February 2010 Gita Saghal, Head of the Gender Unit at Amnesty International’s Secretariat, publicly denounced that Amnesty had been working with Begg and Cage in a campaign entitled ‘Counter Terror with Justice’. Saghal commented:

As a former Guantanamo detainee it was legitimate to hear his experiences, but as a supporter of the Taliban it was absolutely wrong to legitimise him as a partner (Kerbaj, 2010).

Saghal was equally scathing at any suggestion Begg or Cage believed in human rights as a concept. This is important, especially in the context of Amnesty International. As an organisation, it had long steered a delicate course which allowed it to condemn, for example, excesses from the British state in Northern Ireland, without sharing a platform with those in the Irish Republican movement who espoused violence. Even during the apartheid era in South Africa, Amnesty had maintained a distance from those who would use or advocate violence. Now, it gave a platform to a man who supported the Taliban. Going even further, Amnesty, who had refused to accept the African National Congress had a right to bear arms to end minority white rule, now accepted a concept of ‘jihad in self-defence,’ thus “endorsing

a myth that has been used to justify fundamentalist atrocities from Iraq to Afghanistan to Algeria” (Bennoune, 2013, 22).

No hint of impending controversy surrounding Begg is discernible from his interview in *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. Indeed proceedings open with a questionable premise in only the second sentence: “Moved by the plight of the Afghani people, in 2001 Begg travelled to Kabul with his family to start a school for basic education and provide water pumps” (Kassimeris, 2008, 405). Here Kassimeris ignores the background reality that Begg had long sought out Islamist controlled territory – the Mujahideen camps in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Chechnya (Begg, 2006, 66, 53, 87). Nor does the statement about a school appear to be borne out by Moazzam Begg’s autobiography. This offers two reasons for his move to Afghanistan. Begg was running the Maktabah Al-Ansar Islamic bookshop in Birmingham, one of the primary distributors of Salafi-Jihadist literature in this country (Bhatt, 2010, 40). These associations increasingly brought the attention of the police and security services. Begg explains;

My close friends were constantly being visited by MI5. They used to ask them to inform on me, but I was quite open with everyone about my plans. I didn’t have anything to hide. In the bookshop I used to hear a lot about Afghanistan from people who were going back and forth regularly, and one of them told me about a school project that he had initiated in Kabul (Begg, 2006, 90).

However the school had already been built by the time Begg left for the Taliban’s Emirate “The headmaster of the school even phoned me from Kabul to thank me”

(Begg, 2006, 91) [for assistance Begg had given]. Meredith Tax is perplexed as to claims by Fahad Ansari of Cage that in Afghanistan Begg was involved in developing education for boys and girls:

But how could this be, when the Taliban did not allow education for girls over the age of eight and had closed down all the girls' schools in Afghanistan? The answer is that the school was not for Afghan girls. It was a school set up by al-Qaeda's treasurer and Begg for the children of foreign jihadis, including his own (Tax, 2012, 39).

Instead of these educational commitments, analysis of Begg's autobiography indicate his reasons for emigrating appear to have been financial, and a weariness towards Britain brought about by the attention of the authorities:

The simple fact of the cost of living weighed with me too. Many people told us we could live in the best areas of Kabul for less than a £100 a month, and gradually the idea of uprooting the family and going there to live took hold of me, and as I talked about it, seemed quite possible (Begg, 2006, 91-2)

A further line in the interviews introduction is contentious: "Begg is a spokesman for the Human Rights organisation Cageprisoners" (Kassimeris, 2008, 405). This repeats what the then Cageprisoners stated on its website:

Cageprisoners Ltd is a human rights organisation (company registration no: 6397573) that exists solely to raise awareness of the plight of the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay and other detainees held as part of the War on Terror (Cageprisoners, 2010) .

Difficulties emerge however when a deeper examination of Cage's work is conducted. Amongst those supported by Cage have included Abu Hamza, convicted

in this country of soliciting murder, and would be shoe bomber Saajid Badat,<sup>16</sup> convicted of conspiracy to destroy, damage or endanger an aircraft. These were not detainees, but individuals granted due process and convicted after proper consideration of evidence in open court (Bennoune, 2013, 345-6n). Until his death at the hands of the US military in 2011, Cage repeatedly publicised the fugitive Yemeni-American preacher Anwar al-Awlaki, including an interview between Moazzam Begg and al-Awlaki on 31 December 2007, and a section of its website, 'Islamic Focus' which included al-Awlaki's calls for jihad (Tax, 2013, 60). This approach leads Meredith Tax to conclude;

Its principle of selection has less to do with universal, indivisible human rights than the desire to support activists in jihadi networks. In fact, rather than doing human rights work, the organisation is obeying the Salafist injunction to 'free the prisoners' i.e. free those Muslims who have been jailed for making war on unbelievers and invaders of 'Muslim lands'. It has no interest in any other Muslim prisoners (Tax, 2012, 46).

It is certainly possible to take the impression from Cage's website it is devoted to the support of imprisoned jihadists, and the propagation of like-minded ideals. Unfortunately we do not get the opportunity to hear such positions debated with Begg – *Critical Studies on Terrorism* fails to levy such questions. This is all the more curious when Begg's own autobiography, mentioned at the start of Kassimeris' interview, talks so openly about his visits to Jihadi training camps in the years prior to his detention (Begg, 2006, 50-57, 59, 66-7 and 87). None of these criticisms is to deny the human rights abuses Begg and others suffered at Guantanamo Bay and more broadly in American custody. Indeed Kassimeris' questions do allow Moazzam

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<sup>16</sup> Many references to Hamza and Badat were removed in changes to the then Cageprisoners website which followed the controversy provoked by Ms Saghal's charges.

Begg to paint a vivid picture of life as a detainee and its effects upon him as an individual. But a critical perspective should surely require a robust approach to actors other than the state, its organs and orthodox terrorism researchers? To quote Richard Jackson:

Discourses are significant not just for what they say but also for what they do not say; the silences in a discourse can be as important, or even more important at times, than what is stated (Jackson, 2008, 379).

On re-reading Kassimeris' interview, what is absent from the questioning is at times more striking than what is present. The interviewee's positions are all too often accepted, without critical response, by the interviewer. A failing that the critical school observes in orthodox terrorism studies, the weak acceptance by academics of what they are told, is in this instance, replicated when considering Moazzam Begg of Cage.

## **6.6 Why the Failings of Critical Terrorism Studies Matter**

To address this question, it is firstly necessary to acknowledge critical theories do develop significant influence, be it within the distinct parameters of academia, or across broader society. In Middle Eastern Studies, Edward Said's '*Orientalism*' is the core text (Allen, 2006, 296) even if this sometimes means stretching his arguments well beyond their original emphasis. Whilst Charles Allen notes the robust criticisms Said made of elements within the Arab world, these appear to be increasingly overlooked, and he observes that '*Orientalism*' has ended up "giving further credence to the widespread Muslim self-image of the umma as innocent victim of Western oppression" (Allen, 2006, 296).

Similarly Meredith Tax sees debate about the status of Muslim women as increasingly off limits for any western feminist “She will be beaten over the head with Edward Said, a self-declared secularist who must be turning in his grave to see the use his followers make of him” (Tax, 2012, 100). In the 1995 afterword to a new edition of *‘Orientalism’*, Said acknowledged his analysis had at times been taken in a different direction by certain consumers;

Yet Orientalism has in fact been read and written about in the Arab world as a systematic defense of Islam and the Arabs, even though I say explicitly that I have no interest in, much less capacity for, showing what the true Orient or Islam really are (Said, 2003, 331).

Edward Said’s friend Christopher Hitchens talks of the ‘galvanising’ effect of *‘Orientalism’* (Hitchens, 2012, 505). The book coincided with the years where existing Middle Eastern ‘experts’ were made to look increasingly deficient by their inability to predict the Iranian revolution, the assassination of Sadat or the coup attempt which followed it. Said’s critical analysis of academic and political attitudes towards the East is thus far from peripheral, indeed in time his analysis, or adapted interpretations of it, appear to have become predominant. Nor is Middle Eastern Studies unique in mainstreaming what may be seen as critical approaches. In Security Studies the Copenhagen School has arguably traversed a similar route, to the extent that in terms of academic publications and doctorates “the Copenhagen School has become as mainstream as it is possible to get” (Croft, 2012, 77). Critical approaches of earlier orthodoxies can therefore develop real influence, the question is perhaps whether should it occur, such influence for critical terrorism studies would enhance, or regress, our understanding of terrorism?

In terms of religious terrorism, and significant organisations within it such as Al-Qaeda, critical terrorism studies appears to have little to contribute. Evidence is scant of critical academics displaying the type of interrogative approach towards Islamists or Jihadists as taken towards western governments. Instead conformism rules. What appears inherent in supposedly critical analysis of religious actors is, perhaps surprisingly, a complete inability to take their ideas and practice seriously. Consider this exchange between Kassimeris and Begg:

GK: Do you see yourself as a political activist or a political spokesman?

MB: I don't see myself as a political activist; I see myself as a human rights activist.

GK: Do you think torture is an effective way of extracting information from detainees – because it's happened? (Kassimeris, 2008, 407).

To George Kassimeris, Moazzam Begg seemingly appears as a mere victim of American cruelty, not as an activist in his own right with an established view of how human relationships should be properly organised. Might we not expect a question of how a 'human rights activist' ending up supporting the Taliban? Richard Jackson defends the approach taken by Kassimeris in terms of the need to respond to extant political realities:

In the broader case of challenging the dominant discourse to give voice to people who are treated as 'evil' terrorists, I think this is an important part of re-balancing. That's kind of what we are trying to do (Jackson, Interview, 2011).

The importance of this re-balancing means that the impact of Begg's support for the Taliban – the human rights of women, religious minorities or those Afghans who simply did not share the Taliban's excesses – remains unexplored. This is perhaps the most substantive failing of critical terrorism studies thus far. In the cause of 're-



balancing' the discourse surrounding terrorism, the voice of those who suffer from the application of fundamentalists religious beliefs, risks being extinguished. A core aim of critical terrorism studies – taking gender seriously, is forgotten. The feminist voices of Meredith Tax or Karima Bennouna matter less than those of Cage or Muslim Brotherhood related groups. The voices of indigenous opponents of fundamentalism remain absent.

To Richard Jackson, Jihadist causes, such as that in Chechnya which Begg sought to join, and Britons such as Babar Ahmad supported via the Azzam.com website, should not be readily condemned:

It is part of our imposition of values to say anyone who goes to fight in Chechnya must be dodgy. There were people who fought against the fascists in Spain, now we valorise them. Somehow we have to not keep imposing a western liberal dominance, and using it as a frame for justifying everyone (Jackson, Interview, 2011).

A core failure of 'critical' academics is the inability to seriously engage with the long term goals of jihadist actors on their own terms. It is as if the re-shaping of Muslim majority communities under their control – as cited by Bennouna in particular – was not happening. Whilst the fear of 'orientalism' offers some explanation, this failing also appears to be rooted in the inability to see jihadist practice as anything other than political, and the flawed categorisation of its violence as solely reactive. Consider Richard Jackson on the 7/7 attackers:

What they are doing is political. It is aimed at ending a political policy and it is aimed at ending British foreign policy that they couldn't change in any other way, or they felt they couldn't. The election couldn't work, petitions, demonstrations, nothing worked. They felt that violence might work, and in that they are following any other tradition (Jackson, Interview, 2011).

This is a remarkably similar approach to the discursive formation on the London bombings established by *Muslim Weekly*, London ISOC, Salma Yaqoob, Asim Qureshi of Cage and Anas al-Tikriti of the Cordoba Foundation et al (see chapter four). Here Mohammed Sidique Khan's perceived criticism of Labour's foreign policy is emphasised, his declaration of Islamic ethics made in the preceding lines, excluded (see Appendix one).

Jackson's blind spot is even more frustrating when other academics, often with a long history of engaging critically with the defence and security policies of Western states, do manage to take the comparatively small step of recognising jihadist actors possess a normative vision. Consider Paul Rogers, who assesses Al-Qaeda as establishing both short term aims measured in the decades, and a single long term objective, which may take a century or more (Rogers, 2008). Rogers sees Al-Qaeda as possessing six short term goals – removing Western forces from all Islamic lands, replacing the House of Saud, removing all unacceptable 'Islamic' regimes, defeating Zionism, supporting Islamist separatists in struggle and ending the power of the 'far enemy' – the US. The long-term aim is the establishment of a caliphate, extending outwards from the Middle East.

....since this is a revolutionary movement based on a religious belief, there is an important eschatological aspect. The movement's leadership does not expect to see its goals achieved in its lifetime. The movement is in this perspective viewed as merely the contemporary aspect of a much greater historical process (Rogers, 2008).

This gradualism should be familiar to any reader of Mawdudi or al-Qaradawi, let alone Qutb. It serves the purpose of understanding Al-Qaeda's opposition to foreign interference in Muslim majority nations, but equally grasps that the organisation is far from reactive. It is a duality critical terrorism studies should reflect upon.

## 6.7 Conclusions

Critical terrorism studies may have much to tell us about the dangers of domestic counter terrorism initiatives, and the problematic nature of our foreign policy. This chapter has established however that it fails to make a substantial contribution to the understanding of Islamist currents, Islamic fundamentalism or jihadist groups. British Jihadism has passed it by, and the actions perpetrated by British Jihadists ignored, save for the desire to characterise such actions solely in terms of responding to western aggression. Indeed the failure to engage with primary sources in both Jackson (2007) and Gunning and Jackson (2011) indicates it is not just British Jihadism, but Jihadism per se which has failed to receive proper examination. For Miller (2013) concerns of terrorism or fundamentalism on campus are merely ones to be dismissed as lacking in legitimacy.

The research framework established by Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning (2009) did not necessarily lead to this impasse. Its seven core components do allow for the study of terrorist discourse and practice, and declare the need to take gender more seriously than it has been (Jackson et al, 2009, 228-31). The difficulty is that the most innovative work on the effects on women of fundamentalism and jihadism is being done outside of critical terrorism studies. Melinda Cooper and particularly Meredith Tax and Karima Bennoune would appear to be standing not merely outside critical terrorism studies, but in opposition to it. The failure of critical terrorism studies to recognise the domestic goals of jihadist actors, and their affects at the local level, is substantial.

In terms of assessing self-declared religious actors, some weaknesses were inherent in the discipline at the initial stage – the desire to ‘deconstruct’ explanations seen to

'overly focus on religion' (Jackson et al, 2009, 230) is with hindsight an indication that deconstruction ran the risk, in practice, of becoming elimination. Indeed the later methodological framework declared by Jackson and Gunning (2011) appears designed to make any concept of religious terrorism both impossible to measure and indeed impossible to acknowledge.

A fear of being 'Eurocentric', of 'orientalism' and the dogged inability to take the ideas and practices of fundamentalists seriously in their own right, has hamstrung critical academics. Ironically they now sound remarkably similar to western political elites on issues such as the need to remove religious terminology from counter-terrorism discourse.

One development in critical terrorism studies has been its engagement with, and increasing sponsorship by, Islamist organisations. Some £32,000 has gone to the critical academics at Spinwatch, whilst funding is now being provided at an organisational level for critical terrorism studies annual conference. The proper academic consideration of British Islamism, in all its shades and currents, from the local to the jihadist, is unlikely to be achieved if simultaneously accepting funding from some of the more influential groups within contemporary Islamism. A conflict of interest exists, which needs to be addressed by critical academics at Spinwatch, and more generally within the critical terrorism studies discipline. The approach taken to Cage, however, both as an organisation and in the form of Moazzam Begg, does suggest that even before critical terrorism studies began receiving funding from religious actors, it was not approaching them in anything like a questioning manner.

These failings are regrettable, as in terms of critiquing rendition, state terrorism or foreign interventions, critical terrorism studies as a discipline, makes an important

contribution to research. It is within critical circles that the author, for all its failings, still wishes to position himself. But the need for critical terrorism studies to embrace properly rounded research using the same standards in analysing religious terrorism as it has western actions in the war on terror is pressing. In this failing, it is worth noting critical terrorism studies is not alone. The feminist analysis of Meredith Tax and Karima Bennouna raises the deficiencies of the Anglo-American left in responding to the rise of Islamism, and its more violent manifestations. Critical terrorism studies can now be added to that list. Karima Bennouna concludes:

I think when we talk about Muslim fundamentalism we have to actually talk about *it*. It exists. It gravely menaces the human rights of people of Muslim heritage. It is just as deserving of critical discussion as US foreign policy or the Israeli government or anti-Muslim bias (Bennouna, 2013, 24).

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis set out to describe the depth and scope of a discernible British Jihadism, and explain the reticence in the academy to accepting this phenomenon. The open source data brought together in addressing the four research questions herein serves to give British Jihadism the attention this subject has long deserved, and to demonstrate the ‘detail’ of this work’s title. The response from British Muslim representatives to these events, and regrettably from some critical academics, serves as the ‘denial’. The term British Jihadism is, in many ways, contingent. A British Jihadist is a Briton, or British resident who undertakes jihad. British Islamist thinkers such as Kalim Siddiqui appear to have initially conceptualised jihad as a religious duty to be conducted overseas, in the cause of the ummah. The practice of groups such as Al-Muhajiroun, and individuals, particularly in the case of Michael Adebolajo, demonstrates that this jihad can be as applicable domestically as internationally. British Jihadism may therefore be discerned by its location, by its aim to take action to install sharia law in this country. When we look more closely at British Jihadis overseas national characteristics may still emerge – consider the British Jihadis in Helmand, unable to stop themselves from lapsing into English.

The first question considered in this thesis sought to establish the history of British Islamist involvement in violence, both on these shores and beyond. In answering this, it can first be stated that British Jihadism predates Al Qaeda, and shows every indication of potentially post-dating it. The narrative of politico-religious violence involving British Muslims is a small, but not insignificant part of our modern history. This research establishes at least 59 Britons have died since 1992 in jihadist

violence abroad, plus 5 have killed themselves conducting suicide bombings in the UK. British Jihadism has been responsible for 54 deaths in this country and an unknown number abroad.

It is fortunate that the death toll above is not higher. Others would no doubt have been killed in transatlantic plane bombings or the attempt to kill EDL demonstrators in Yorkshire, but for the success of the authorities in disrupting attackers and/or the incompetence of some participants. British Jihadism has repeatedly demonstrated itself willing to kill its fellow civilians in large numbers, but has not always had the capacity or capability to do so.

The allure to some of Islamic utopias is stark. Here, Jihadism is both religious and political. Whilst some of the articulations enacted may appear political – whether to intervene in Afghanistan one year, Iraq, Somalia or Syria the next – religion is not the means of the struggle, but the end. To the British Jihadist, an independent or nationalist Afghanistan is not the desired outcome - an Islamic Emirate living under the Qur'an is all. To understand British Jihadism requires both a recognition, and indeed comprehension of this dual nature. To illustrate the paradoxes inherent in this, consider the debate between British Guantanamo Bay prisoner Moazzam Begg, and two FBI officers who interviewed him in Cuba. Begg complains throughout his memoirs that he was denied due legal process, but comments:

I wanted to live in an Islamic state – one that was free from the corruption and despotism of the rest of the Muslim world.

*So you chose the Taliban?’*

I chose Afghanistan. I admit I have made mistakes – but had it not been for 9/11, I think I would still be living happily in Afghanistan

*Probably as a member of Al Qaeda or the Taliban*

I knew you wouldn't understand. The Taliban were better than anything Afghanistan has had in the past twenty-five years. You weren't in Afghanistan – not before nor during the Taliban. Child sex, rape, looting, robbery, murder and opium production only ended when they took control.

*And in came amputations, floggings and executions..... (Begg, 2006, 214).*

The most challenging adherents of British Jihadism are those activists unwilling to take the gradualist road towards sharia established by Mawdudi, al-Qaradawi and contemporary Muslim Brotherhood activists, or to be satisfied with seeking, as Begg and others have, Islamic utopia overseas. The activities of Al-Muhajiroun, and demands to implement sharia on the streets of Britain, as evidenced by campaigns in east London, are small and peripheral, but they serve both to antagonise and damage community relations. Whilst it is tempting to trivialise bearded young men chasing away sex workers on the streets of Walthamstow, that response to British Jihadism – the failure to take seriously actors such as Abu Hamza and Omar Bakri Muhammad – appears unwise given past precedent. British Islamism, and indeed British Jihadism present ideas which deserve to be taken seriously, not least because they have been demonstrated repeatedly to inspire action.

British Jihadism is unlikely to be pacified by influences from abroad. With the exception of Bosnia or possibly Chechnya, the combat zones listed in this thesis that



British jihadis have travelled to and fought in, remain combat zones. British Jihadists have taken what can be described as, if the term may be used, an ecumenical approach to their violence. They have appeared in organisations as diverse as Hamas in Palestine, Jemaah Islamiyah of Indonesia, the Taliban and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen in Pakistan, Al Qaeda, as well as forming their own groups, or acting independently. The 59 to die in violence abroad have done so across 11 countries, whilst 14 different nations have so far seen British Jihadists on their territory. Virtually anywhere the ummah appears in conflict, and Sunni Muslims are in arms, Britons are present.

The second question this research sought to address was why so many Jihadist actors have coalesced in the United Kingdom. The story of Osama Bin Laden as an international religious figure seeking influence with Muslims globally began here in 1994, when colleagues in the Advice and Reformation Committee issued his first public proclamation from north London offices. Chapter three has detailed 79 jihadists from overseas who settled in the United Kingdom in the era that has become colloquially known as 'Londonistan'. Although these actors came from 14 different territories, a majority, 53 came from either Algeria, Egypt or Libya.

The turbulence brought about by failed Islamist uprisings in four North African states in the 1980s, the ending of the Afghan jihad, and the brutality of many dictatorships in the Muslim majority world each provided a stimulus for jihadists to leave their home nation, or to stay away from it if they had already left. Britain, with a tradition of comparative hospitality towards migrants, and its emerging centre of Arab media, offered a tempting location. That however, can only be part of the story. Some of the

Islamists 'fleeing' to London at this time were making good their getaway, not from Algerian torture chambers, but the French judiciary. Others had a long involvement in violence in jihadist groups for whom any form of governance other than their own interpretation of the Qur'an would always be unacceptable.

Once here, such men proved difficult to dislodge. The question of extraditing alleged terrorists from Britain to countries where they face serious charges has been recurrent throughout the research period covered by this thesis. Whilst the potential for extradition to Algeria and Jordan was eventually introduced, it has not proved possible to remove alleged offenders to Egypt, due to the history of torture in that country. The removal of suspects to countries where higher standards may be expected, has also at times proved slow-paced, as the thirteen years to deport Abdel Bary to the United States, and the decade to remove Rachid Ramda to France, demonstrate. Abu Hamza was able to serve nearly all of a prison sentence for inciting murder, whilst fighting extradition to the United States.

Similar issues have bedevilled cases involving alleged jihadists from the Indian subcontinent to settle in Britain, and jihadists from Pakistan in particular have been eager to use the UK as an arena for fundraising and developing influence. The cross-fertilisation between British Jihadism and Pakistan has had deadly consequences. In allowing terrorist groups such as the LeT and HuM to organise and fund raise in the United Kingdom, and for Britons to go to Kashmir to train, the skills necessary to bring the 7/7 attacks to fruition could be developed. This research shows that at least half of those trained in such facilities in Pakistan have gone on to be convicted of terrorist offences in Britain. Four British veterans of the Bosnian

Mujahideen were subsequently convicted of terrorism. Any idea the UK has nothing to fear from such foreign adventures is demonstrably false.

After new terrorist attacks, such as that in Woolwich in 2013, the term 'Londonistan' re-enters our political discourse. The tolerance once displayed to prominent jihadist organisations allowed to organise, recruit and plan activities in the United Kingdom, provided they did not directly carry out violence here, was more than a lapse adoption of the traditional British approach to granting asylum. Such practices are consistent with a long standing preference for religious elites over secular, nationalist or socialist trends in Muslim majority countries (Curtis, 2010). Adopting that approach in the United Kingdom required a reluctance to take religious actors seriously, and the refusal to see such currents as a potential alternative or rival to western systems of governance. The engagement with Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Muslim Brotherhood influenced organisations as bulwarks against Al-Qaeda, or even against Abu Hamza, was demonstrated as conceptually flawed by the development of the Syrian jihad, and the support of Islamists for it. Now the challenge is less 'Al-Qaeda inspired terrorism than an entity opposed to Al-Qaeda – the Islamic State.

The third question considered in this thesis asked who are the British Jihadists. Are they religious or political actors? Are they linked to particular districts, mosques, institutions or organisations? The reality that individuals such as 7/7 bomber Mohammed Sidique Khan view themselves as acting in accordance with the requirements of faith is repeatedly underplayed, although not by the jihadists themselves. The response by politicians to each jihadist attack is now established –

to distance those responsible from the politico-religious currents in which they have moved, often for some years. The motivations for police officers and politicians in doing so is perhaps a necessity and arguably admirable – they wish to avoid a backlash against Muslim citizens who may be crassly associated with the actions of a small number in that community. They seek support and information from Muslims in disagreement with the behaviour of their co-religionists. Academic research however, cannot be encumbered by such concerns.

The call for sharia in British towns and cities, as controversially articulated in the demands of the Rushdie protestors in 1989, has come to be put into practice, for example by Al-Muhajiroun's Sharia patrols in east London, or the Birmingham jihadis who travelled to Dewsbury intending to murder EDL members for blasphemy. Nicky Reilly displayed as much a concern with countering the indecency he observed on Friday nights in Plymouth as he did with Anglo-American foreign policy. The 2007 Haymarket bombers sought to attack, not the Foreign Office, but a nightclub a few streets away. Such is the preoccupation of jihadist organisations, and their milieus. However amateurish, the above examples are deeply divisive, and present challenges to liberal democratic norms. As well as presenting danger via actual or intended terrorist attacks virtually each year since 2000, the threat of the British jihadist lies in the problems Richard Hofstadter identified arising from right wing radicals in the United States. As they do not seek attainable results, the danger comes in the changes they make to our political climate.

Yet positive narratives do exist. Pascal Bruckner reminds us: "Every time a Western country has tried to create a special legal code for minorities, it has been members

of those minorities, usually women, who have protested” (Bruckner, 2010, 150). The research of Meredith Tax and Karima Bennouna serves as a reminder that it is within Muslim communities, both here and in Muslim majority nations that Islamist and Jihadist actors primarily operate. Whilst jihadists may seek martyrdom, it is away from the battlefield where they exercise power in accordance with their interpretations of religious texts. It is in the community where they need to be robustly opposed. The failure of critical academics in particular to engage with this uncomfortable reality is deeply disappointing.

British Jihadism is the preserve of Sunni Muslims, many of whom are strongly associated with Salafi organisations and traditions. Whilst members and alumni of University ISOCs have an ignoble record when it comes to terrorist convictions, such issues appear to shift from campus to campus – no one University appears to have a permanent, as opposed to an episodic problem. No ISOC has the in-depth association with British Jihadism as that demonstrated by the Al-Muhajiroun organisation, or the various off-shoots it has grown throughout its history. Certain religious institutions appear repeatedly in this thesis - no narrative on the subject could be complete without reference to Finsbury Park or Regents Park Mosques. It is likely that the difficulties concerning Finsbury Park provoked this extraordinary line in the Prime Minister’s statement on anti-terror measures following the July 2005 bombings:

We will consult on a new power to order closure of a place of worship which is used as a centre for fomenting extremism and will consult with Muslim leaders in respect of those clerics who are not British citizens, to draw up a list of those not suitable to preach who will be excluded from Britain (Blair, 2005).

Although it took eight years, to an extent the latter half of Blair's proposal has been enacted – the 'four lions' of British Jihadism - Omar Bakri Muhammad, Abdullah el-Faisal, Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada have each been removed from or have left British soil. The importance given to ridding the country of some of its 'turbulent priests' should serve as a clear example that these are issues pivoting on theological as much as temporal matters.

The aims, beliefs and practice of British Jihadism is remarkably consistent. A duality may be discerned in organisations such as Al-Muhajiroun, and from individuals over the past a decade as demonstrated in this thesis by Mohammed Sidique Khan, Nicky Reilly and Michael Adebolajo. That is to critique British and western foreign policies, and to declare religious imperatives. The demand for a caliphate and sharia law, to live according to the Qur'an and the sayings and practice of the Prophet appears fixed. It is the tactics and issues focused upon, that are more variable. Tomorrow's Mohammed Sidique Khan is likely to be less concerned with the allied invasion of Iraq as by overthrowing Assad, but his ethical stances and the type of society he wishes to establish will still be fashioned by his understanding of Islam.

A British Jihadism has emerged, which sees itself as part of a global ummah, has comparatively deep roots across three decades, and finds enemies both at home and in a series of old and emerging conflicts abroad. Yet its staunchest adherents are often as concerned with dawah – bringing people to the faith – as they are with combat. The practice of Al-Muhajiroun and the Portsmouth Dawah Team serve as evidence that you can do both.

The final research question set out by this thesis focused on the academy. In challenging traditional approaches to terrorism and counter radicalisation strategy, why has critical terrorism studies struggled to come to terms with the concept of violence from British Jihadists and the religious nature of their struggle? Two significant ironies concerning critical terrorism studies emerge in this research. In worrying about how Jihadist violence is referred to, politicians and critical academics inhabit remarkably similar territory. Equally, each has sought out Islamic partners it may work with, whilst simultaneously rejecting any conceptualisation of religious violence. Events were to ensure the UK government was shown to be unwise in some of its partnerships, and this research develops new understanding of some of the relationships critical academics have developed with Muslim Brotherhood related groups and individuals in the United Kingdom. The conflicts of interest which emerge need to be addressed if critical terrorism studies is to develop genuinely challenging academic research into terrorism itself, as opposed to merely critiquing government policy.

Some of the weakest responses to British Jihadism and international jihadist groups have been demonstrated to come from within British Islam. The stuttering response of the MCB to the emergence of Al-Qaeda and the increasing number of British jihadis fighting overseas, and the highly selective response to 7/7 from a series of organisations, have all been detailed in this research. And yet it is towards British Islamist organisations that critical researchers have increasingly turned. On past precedent, the product of these relationships, whilst financially advantageous to a minority of researchers, and likely to articulate demands for status from Muslim

Brotherhood related groups involved in this process, is unlikely to bring forth an improved understanding of terrorist actors.

It is here that critical terrorism studies is at its most deficient. In a series of countries nationalist or left-leaning opposition movements have been displaced by Jihadists. Palestine, Kashmir and Libya serve as historical examples of this, the decline of the Free Syrian Army, as contemporary. Yet jihadist groups are not anti-imperialists in the traditional sense of the concept. Bin Laden did not recognise the term, targeting instead 'global unbelief' (Lawrence, 2005, xx). In power, Islamist groups often attack those from the weakest minorities on their territory (Tax, 2012, 7). In building a Caliphate, the Islamic State seeks to recapture the lost glory of Muslims alluded to by Al-Qaeda's Aymaan al-Zawahiri (Mansfield, 2006, 201-2).

The failure of critical terrorism academics to engage with primary source materials from jihadist groups and their leaders undermines the type of understanding necessary to properly assess such developments. Richard Jackson's flawed understanding of Al-Qaeda's goals as political and in some way nationalist or anti-imperialist (Jackson, 2007, 418) is exacerbated by the disciplines broader failure to engage with how Islamists legislate in the territories they control. Here, an appreciation of feminist critiques of Islamism is long overdue, and would still sit within the research paradigm Jackson, Gunning and Smyth established in 2009. The fear of 'orientalism' may be so debilitating though, that a serious assessment of religious terrorism or the Islamic State as an entity, is too problematic for these researchers. If terrorism studies has a purpose, it is surely to inform debates such as



those over Syria and the Islamic State. If critical terrorism studies is stymied here, it risks irrelevance.

Academics do not have the same role in society as police officers or politicians. A role of the academic is to demonstrate what is happening, and to suggest explanations as to why. Removing religious terminology and concepts from debate should not come automatically to research in this field – indeed as this thesis establishes, the use of primary sources indicates the centrality of religious objectives to many of our domestic terrorist actors. The contested territory of British Jihadism guarantees controversy and emotive debate. Whilst this is likely to continue, political and religious sensitivities, and confused input from both critical academics and politicians, should not be allowed to restrict debate. That has been going on for long enough.

London proved important to the development of Al-Qaeda. But the veterans of Saudi Arabia's Islamic awakening who distributed Bin Laden's pronouncements were not the instigators of British Jihadism. Nor were the veterans of Algeria's GIA or Egyptian Islamic Jihad who moved to Britain in the same period. It is the synthesis of these international factors with the domestic that give us British Jihadism. The decline of secular values within British Asian politics, ironically assisted by British political elites (Malik, 2009), a British Islam that was simultaneously defensive yet contesting for status, plus the influence of a global Islamic resurgence, all combine to prepare the backdrop to what has been a shifting of tectonic plates. Two years before Al-Qaeda began to disseminate Bin Laden's analysis of global events via the United Kingdom, British Muslims had already picked up the gun to serve in the

Bosnian Mujahideen, and it was five years since the protests in many English cities calling for the head (literally) of Salman Rushdie for blasphemy.

Richard Hofstadter observed that “the problems of yesterday are not solved but outgrown” (Hofstadter, 2008, 223). As the distance from 7/7 increased, it became tempting to consider British Jihadism had declined. From 2006 until the middle of 2013, British Jihadists did not mount a successful, deadly attack in this country. Such contentions were proven premature by the Woolwich murder, and the rise of the Syrian jihad. In the Islamic State young British Islamists are pursuing the same dream an earlier generation was chasing in Taliban controlled Afghanistan. Some will be killed there, or will fight as long as they can before departing for similar conflicts elsewhere. Others will return to Britain, some seeking to build sharia in London, Birmingham and other British cities. This should remind us that British Jihadism, like its counterparts overseas, is about far more than the counter-terrorism policies governments establish to respond to it:

Ultimately however, Muslim fundamentalism is not essentially a security question for Westerners. At its very core, it is a basic question of human rights for hundreds of millions of people who live in Muslim majority countries and populations around the world (Bennoune, 2013, 13).

This thesis has sought to throw new light on the former proposition and provide a foundation to explore the latter in future research.

## Appendix One

Last Updated: Thursday, 1 September 2005, 22:01 GMT 23:01 UK

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### London bomber: Text in full

**The full text of the videotape of Mohammad Sidique Khan, one of the four 7 July bombers, which was aired on Arabic television channel al-Jazeera and in which he explains his motives.**

“



I'm going to keep this short and to the point because it's all been said before by far more eloquent people than me.

Mohammad Sidique Khan carried out the Edgware Road bombing

And our words have no impact upon you, therefore I'm going to talk to you in a language that you understand.

Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood.

I'm sure by now the media's painted a suitable picture of me, this predictable propaganda machine will naturally try to put a spin on things to suit the government and to scare the masses into conforming to their power and wealth-obsessed agendas.

I and thousands like me are forsaking everything for what we believe.

Our driving motivation doesn't come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer.

Our religion is Islam - obedience to the one true God, Allah, and following the footsteps of the final prophet and messenger Muhammad... This is how our ethical stances are dictated.

Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world.

And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters.



It is not known when the videotape, aired on 1 September, was made

Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight.

We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation. ”

A second part of the tape was less clear, but he could be heard saying:

“ I myself, I myself, I make dua (pray) to Allah... to raise me amongst those whom I love like the prophets, the messengers, the martyrs and today's heroes like our beloved Sheikh Osama Bin Laden, Dr Ayman al-Zawahri and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and all the other brothers and sisters that are fighting in the... of this cause.

With this I leave you to make up your own minds and I ask you to make dua to Allah almighty to accept the work from me and my brothers and enter us into gardens of paradise.”

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