



ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN THE STATE OF MAINE

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ABSTRACT

Using both empirical and theoretical frameworks, the purpose of Islamic Radicalization in the State of Maine is to assess the threat of Islamic radicalization in the state of Maine. The first section of this report discusses Muslim demographics both in the United States in general and in Maine in particular. Within Maine, this work will focus on Maine's largest Muslim demographic: the Somali refugee community. The paper provides a literature review on radicalization to violent extremism, favoring individual-based models of radicalization over the oft-cited Phase Model. It then explores potential risk factors that could render Maine's Muslim community vulnerable to radicalization. The research concludes there is not a high risk of Islamic radicalization in the state of Maine. While this report determines that Maine is not under significant threat of terror, it is careful not to conflate "low risk" with "no risk." Maine residents are not immune to radicalization, and scholars of Western extremism should continue to monitor Maine's vulnerable areas and populations.

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

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PART I: MUSLIM DEMOGRAPHICS

Global Trends in the Muslim World

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. This is likely due to the fact that Muslims tend to have large families, there is a high conversion rate to Islam, and Islam has a higher demographic transition rate than any other religion.¹ Demographic transition occurs when a group's mortality rate lags behind its birth rate, causing a spike in population growth. This yields a phenomenon known as the "youth bulge," meaning that young adults significantly outnumber other age brackets. For example, almost one-third of Egypt's population is between the ages of 15 and 29.² Islam is likely to remain the fastest growing religion until mortality rates begin to balance birth rates.

Islam is typically divided into two sects: Sunni (approx. 90% of Muslims) and Shia (approx. 10% of Muslims).³ Sunni Muslims are dispersed across the globe, while Shia Muslims are far more concentrated: between 68% and 80% of Shia live in Iran, Pakistan, India, or Iraq. The primary difference between the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam stems from a dispute over the successor of Islam: Sunnis believe that the public can elect the true successor of Mohammad, while Shia believe that the prophet named his son-in-law (Ali) as successor. Instead of an elected successor, Shia follow a line of Imams believed to be appointed by the prophet or God himself.

Regardless of sect, 73% of all Muslims live in one of the 49 countries for which Islam is the dominant religion.⁴ The three most popular regions for Muslims

¹ Roudi-Fahimi, Farzaneh, and Allyson Lynch. *Demographic Trends in Muslim Countries*. N.p.: Population Reference Bureau, 2013. Accessed February 12, 2014.

<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2013/demographics-muslims.aspx>.

² *ibid.*

³ PEW Research. *Mapping the Global Muslim Population*. N.p.: PEW Research Center, 2009. Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>.

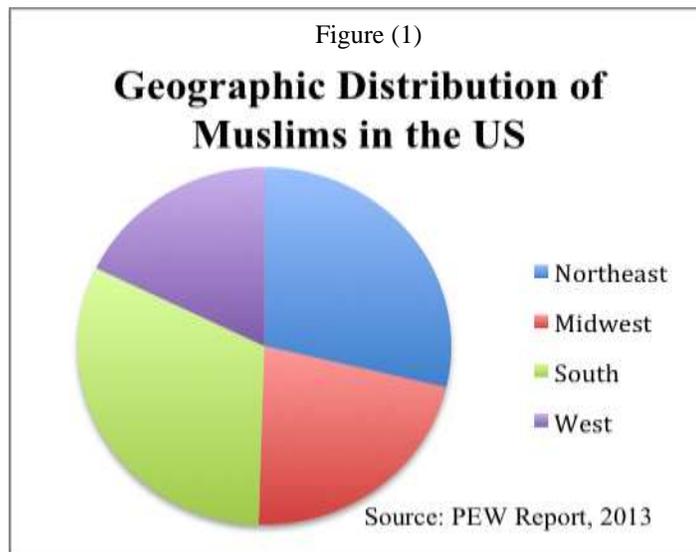
⁴ "The Global Religious Landscape." Pew Research. Last modified August 2011. Accessed February 10, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>.

are the Asia-Pacific region (62% of Muslims), the Middle East (20% of Muslims), and sub-Saharan Africa (16% of Muslims).⁵ Additionally, Muslims hold majority status in countries on three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe).

Overview of Muslims in the US

At 2.7 million people, Muslims in the United States make up between 0.6% and 0.8% of the American population (approximately 317 million people).⁶ Within this number, the Association of Religious Data Archives estimates that American Muslims have an 8% adherence rate at 2,106 Mosques.⁷ As depicted by Figure (1), American Muslims are distributed relatively evenly across the US: 29% live in the Northeast, 22% in the Midwest, 32% in the South, and 18% in the West.⁸

With regards to age demographics, a 2013 PEW report concluded that 29% of American Muslims fell within the age bracket of 18-29 years old, and 48% of American Muslims fell within the age bracket of 30-49 years old.⁹ This is significant, as leading scholars on Islamic extremism



in the West, namely Marc Sageman, believe that individuals in their twenties are most vulnerable to radicalization.¹⁰ That said, a 2011 PEW center report concluded

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Pew Research Center. "Portrait of Muslims." Portraits and Demographics. Last modified 2013. Accessed February 18, 2014. <http://religions.pewforum.org/portraits>.

⁷ Association of Religious Data Archives. *U.S. Membership Report*. N.p.: n.p. 2010. Accessed March 2, 2014. http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/u/rcms2010_99_US_name_2010.asp.

⁸ Pew Research Center. "Portrait of Muslims." Portraits and Demographics. Last modified 2013. Accessed February 18, 2014. <http://religions.pewforum.org/portraits>.

⁹ Pew Research. "Affiliations." Pew Research Religion and Public Life Project. Last modified 2013. Accessed February 25, 2014. <http://religions.pewforum.org/affiliations>.

¹⁰ Sageman, Marc. *Understanding terror networks*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

that Muslims in the United States oppose Islamic extremism at a higher margin than Muslims in other countries.¹¹ Furthermore, Muslim public opinion today is more in favor of American counterterrorism policies than it was in 2007, with a percentage increase from 26% to 43%.¹²

The 2013 PEW reports on Muslim-American perception of Islamic extremism indicates that although American Muslims are a viable target for extremist recruiters, the prospects of radicalization are lower today than they were half-a-decade ago. This may correlate with the transition from first-generation-immigrant Muslims to native-born Muslims. About two-thirds of American Muslims in 2011 were first-generation immigrants, hailing primarily from Pakistan or Middle East-North African (MENA) countries.¹³ That statistic has begun to shift: in the next two decades, the United States' Muslim population is projected to be roughly half native-born.¹⁴ The increase of native-born Muslims may bring with it more fluid integration into mainstream society and higher resistance to radicalization.

There seems to be a disconnect between Muslims' perception of themselves and American public opinion on Muslim-Americans. The Pew Center's research found that twice as many Americans believed that Muslim-Americans support extremism than did Muslim-Americans themselves.¹⁵ This statistic indicates that although Muslim-Americans increasingly support America's counterterrorism policies, they still suffer stigmatization as agents of terror. Such internalized prejudices are counterproductive to curbing homegrown extremism, as isolation can be a significant factor in an individual's decision to radicalize.

¹¹ PewForum. *Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism*. N.p.: Pew Research, 2011: pp 92

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ PewForum. *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*. N.p.: Pew Research, 2011. Accessed February 10, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/#worldwide>.

¹⁴ A 2011 PEW report projected that 44.9% of American Muslims would be native-born by 2030. For more on the PEW report, see: PewForum. *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*. N.p.: Pew Research, 2011.

¹⁵ PEW Forum, "The Future of the Global Muslim Population"

Demographics of Muslims in Maine

With a population that is 98% White, Maine is not known for religious or ethnic diversity. Muslims in Maine account for less than 0.5% of the state’s population, a percentage just shy of the national average.¹⁶ Within this 0.5%, an overwhelming majority of Muslims adhere to the Sunni tradition. This is unsurprising, as the majority of Muslims in Maine come from Somalia (a Sunni state). Table (1) compares the number of adherents to Muslim organizations (community centers, mosques, or masjids) in 2010 and 2000. The data suggests that Maine has witnessed a significant increase of Muslim adherents in two out of three counties (Cumberland and Androscoggin). Both Cumberland and Androscoggin are located in the south-central part of Maine, where most Somali and Iraqi refugees live. The increase in adherents could reflect the continual increase of Muslim immigrants in those counties.

Table 1: Change in Muslim Adherents From 2000-2010 (by county)¹⁷

| County ¹⁸ | Adherents in 2000 | Adherents ¹⁹ in 2010 | Change (%) |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| Androscoggin | No Data | 308 | +308% |
| Cumberland | 609 | 924 | +66% |
| Penobscot | 200 | 100 | -50% |

**Between 2000 and 2010, Maine underwent a 4.2% general population increase.²⁰

¹⁶ Pew Research. "US Religion Map." Religion and Public Life Project. Last modified 2013. Accessed January 13, 2014. <http://religions.pewforum.org/maps>.

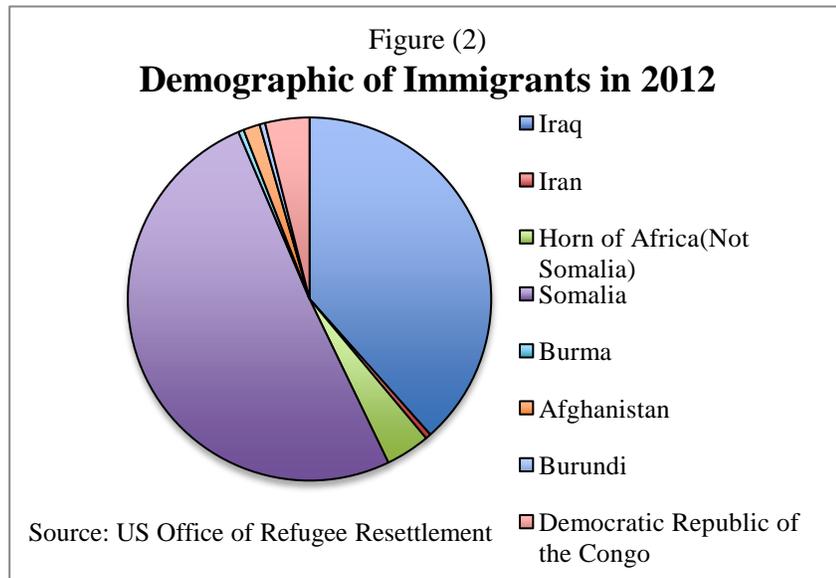
¹⁷ Association of Religious Data Archives. *Muslim Estimate Counties*. N.p.: n.p.,2010. Accessed March 1, 2014. http://www.thearda.com/ql2010/QL_C_2000_2_1119c.asp.

¹⁸ Although Maine has sixteen counties, the ARDA report only identified Muslim populations in three of them. Thus, the table reflects only the three counties with Muslim populations. The numbers rest at ~0 for the other thirteen counties.

¹⁹ The ARDA defines “Adherents” as All members, including full members, their children and the estimated number of other participants who are not considered members; for example, the “baptized,” “those not confirmed,” “those not eligible for Communion,” “those regularly attending services,” and the like. This is in contrast to “Members,” who are defined as all individuals with full membership status. For many groups, especially Christian groups practicing adult baptism, full membership status is reserved for adults. For more information on the data methodology of the ARDA, see: www.thearda.com

Although Maine’s Muslims hail from a number of countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, the overwhelming majority of Maine Muslims are Somali refugees. Figure (2) depicts the proportions of immigrant demographics in Maine for the 2012 fiscal year. The pie chart reveals that Somalis

make up a vast majority of Muslim immigrants, with Iraqis following at a close second. Despite the fact that Iraqis comprise a significant demographic of Maine immigrants,



minimal information has been collected on them as a Muslim population, and there have been no alleged affiliations between Maine’s Iraqi community and radical Islam.²¹

As Figure (2) depicts, the number of Iraqis who immigrated to Maine in 2012 appear relatively comparable to the number of Somalis who did the same. However, this number is slightly misleading: Iraqi immigrants make up less than 10% of Maine’s total immigrant population. Tables 2-5 depict the demographic

²⁰ US Census Bureau, Population Distribution and Change: 2000 to 2010,,(Me. 2011). Accessed March 4, 2014. <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/ c2010br-01.pdf>.

²¹ On a national scale, there has been an epidemic of Iraqi *ihadists* who have been entering the United States as refugees since the beginning of the Second Gulf War. This was the case in May 2012, when two Iraqi refugees living in Kentucky were arrested on terror charges. Both suspects’ finger prints were matched to those found on a bomb taken out of Iraq in 2005. The Director of the FBI’s Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center said that he has identified dozens of Iraqi refugees living in the US whose fingerprints are suspiciously similar to those that have been lifted off IEDs. At this time, no Maine Iraqis have been identified as extremist refugees. See: Chumley, Cheryl. "FBI Scrambles to Find Iraqi Terrorists Living off US Welfare." *Washington Times* (Washington, DC), November 20, 2013.

breakdown of immigration to Maine during the four years leading up to 2012.²² The data reveals that immigrants to Maine come predominantly from Muslim countries and that Somalis consistently outnumber immigrants from any other country.

Table 2: Immigration to Maine for FY 2008

| Country | Number of Immigrants | Percentage of Total |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Somalia | 31 | 51.66666667 |
| Sudan | 19 | 31.66666667 |
| Iran | 7 | 11.66666667 |
| Iraq | 3 | 5 |
| Egypt | 0 | 0 |
| Eritrea | 0 | 0 |
| Non-Muslim Countries | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Table 3: Immigration to Maine for FY 2009

| Country | Number of Immigrants | Percentage of Total |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Somalia | 154 | 59.45945946 |
| Iraq | 49 | 18.91891892 |
| Non-Muslim Countries | 37 | 14.28571429 |
| Iran | 10 | 3.861003861 |
| Sudan | 7 | 2.702702703 |
| Egypt | 2 | 0.772200772 |
| Eritrea | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 259 | 100 |

²² All data for charts 2-5 comes from the US Office of Refugee Resettlement and can be accessed at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/refugee-arrival-data>

Table 4: Immigration to Maine for FY 2010

| Country | Number of Immigrants | Percentage of Total |
|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Somalia | 154 | 50.82508251 |
| Iraq | 93 | 30.69306931 |
| Non-Muslim | 35 | 11.55115512 |
| Eritrea | 8 | 2.640264026 |
| Iran | 7 | 2.310231023 |
| Sudan | 6 | 1.98019802 |
| Total | 303 | 100 |

Table 5: Immigration to Maine for FY 2011

| | | |
|-------------|-----|-------------|
| Somalia | 116 | 58.88324873 |
| Iraq | 44 | 22.33502538 |
| Non-Muslim | 25 | 12.69035533 |
| Eritrea | 5 | 2.538071066 |
| Sudan | 4 | 2.030456853 |
| Afghanistan | 3 | 1.52284264 |
| Total | 197 | 100 |

Focus: Somali Population in Maine

In addition to being the dominant Muslim community in Maine, Somalis are known targets for jihadist recruiters from al-Shabaab (al Qaeda's Somali affiliate). Consequently, the following analyses will focus primarily on Somali radicalization. While this work focuses less on other Muslim communities in Maine, they should not be considered invulnerable to radicalization in the future.

Somalis began settling in Maine in 2001, when re-settlement programs placed Somali refugees in Maine's largest city: Portland. The majority of Somalis in Maine today (95%) are secondary migrants who chose to relocate to Maine from their initial re-settlement locations.²³ These initial re-settlement locations included Minneapolis, Austin, and Atlanta. In 2013 alone, 161 secondary migrants

²³ Huisman, Kimberly. "Why Maine? Secondary Migration Decisions of Somali Refugees." Unpublished manuscript, University of Maine, Orono, ME, n.d. PDF

arrived in Maine while only 63 emigrated elsewhere.²⁴ Somalis' decisions to move to Maine puzzles scholars of refugee migration: economic opportunities tend to be a high priority for secondary migrants, and Portland, ME has less economic opportunities than other re-settlement cities.

A closer look at Maine's welfare system reveals why the state is a compelling choice for Somalis who struggled to maintain an adequate quality of life in more urban re-settlement locations. Kimberly Huisman, a sociologist at the University of Maine, conducted over twenty-seven interviews with Somalis in order to better understand their motivations for relocating to Maine. She found that although Maine is less economically advanced than many other US states, it offers better welfare benefits. In fact, in January 2014, Maine governor Paul LePage held a press conference to address the accusation that Maine's economic assistance programs were "too generous."²⁵

Huisman also found that Somalis chose Maine because it provides a sense of safety and quiet. Maine has a lower crime rate than Atlanta, Minneapolis, and Austin (cities from which the majority of secondary migrants immigrate). Safety is especially important for Somali migrants, many of who fled from lives defined by instability and violence in the horn of Africa. Other parents were drawn to Maine's well-equipped education systems: these individuals concluded that access to education was more important than access to the workforce in establishing a

²⁴ Office of Refugee Resettlement. "Refugee Arrivals for FY 2012 by State and Country of Origin." Table. 2013. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed March 10, 2014. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/fiscal-year-2012-refugee-arrivals>.

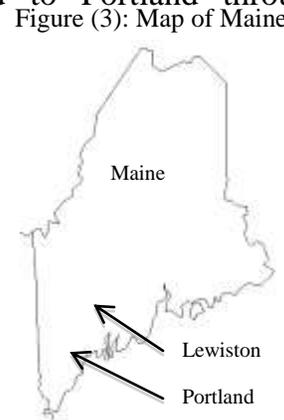
²⁵ LePage argued that Maine could face up to \$13 million in federal fines if it did not reform its policies in the 2014 FY.²⁵ His proposed solution would lead to cuts in Maine's welfare program. Limiting the welfare program would likely increase the socioeconomic gap between the refugee population and the rest of the Maine community. Such a move could hamper immigrants' integration into mainstream society and increase their vulnerability to radicalization. LePage has not taken action to cut the welfare program as of yet, leaving many to believe that his statement was an attempt to secure political support from hard-line Republicans. For now, despite Maine's lack of economic mobility, it continues to offer a strong safety net for immigrants with limited resources.

See: Cousins, Christopher. "Page: Maine faces \$13 million in federal fines for 'overly generous' welfare system." *Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, ME), January 3, 2014. Accessed February 25, 2014. <https://bangordailynews.com/2014/01/03/politics/state-house/lepage-maine-faces-13-million-in-federal-fines-for-overly-generous-welfare-system/>.

foundation for success in America.²⁶ Thus, although Maine initially appears an unlikely choice for secondary migration, it provides immediate benefits (welfare, safety, and education) highly valued by Somali refugees.

Geographic Distribution of Somali Population

Somalis are concentrated in Maine's two largest cities: Portland and Lewiston. Maine's first Somalis were those assigned to Portland through American refugee re-settlement programs. These programs place asylum seekers and refugees in various American cities upon arrival to the United States for their first thirty days. The US Department of Health and Human Services then provides recipient states with the necessary funds to assist refugees with housing, employment, and language learning for the subsequent eight months.²⁷ From that point forward, refugees can continue to receive economic assistance through established charities and state welfare systems.



Portland

The majority of Somali Muslims in Portland are primary migrants, meaning that Maine was their first placement location upon arriving to the United States. As a result, Somalis in Portland have been living in Maine (on average) longer than those in Lewiston (who are mostly secondary migrants). However, it also means that some of these immigrants did not *choose* Portland, but were rather placed there.

Settlement programs began placing Somalis in Portland in 2001 through the Lutheran Community Services program. The program provides job coaching, ESL

²⁶ Huisman, Kimberly. "Why Maine? Secondary Migration Decisions of Somali Refugees." Unpublished manuscript, University of Maine, Orono, ME, n.d. PDF. pp.18-19.

²⁷ Singer, Audrey, and Jill Wilson. *From 'There' to 'Here': Refugee Resettlement in Metropolitan America*. Brookings Institute, 2006. PDF.

training, cash assistance, and housing.²⁸ Because Portland has such low housing costs compared to other resettlement cities, it was a highly-requested placement site and quickly reached capacity for resettling refugees.

Lewiston

Many of Lewiston's first Somalis intended to settle in Portland but were diverted to Maine's second largest city due to a lack of available housing. Towards the end of 2001, Portland's housing vacancy was only three percent while that in Lewiston was upwards of twenty percent.²⁹ As a result, Somalis began moving into Lewiston homes, quickly establishing a small but cohesive community.

Lewiston contains two of the poorest census tracts in the state of Maine, and its fifteen percent poverty rate surpasses the statewide average.³⁰ Lewiston residents also tend to have lower education rates and socioeconomic statuses compared to the rest of Maine.³¹ However, the pre-established Somali community in Lewiston led immigrating Somalis to settle there despite its economic inferiority. In 2008, Lewiston was home to 3,500 of Maine's 6,000 Somali refugees. This rendered Somalis 10% of Lewiston's population.³²

PART II: ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS IN MAINE

Maine's six Islamic institutions are located in Portland and Lewiston. Interestingly, while Lewiston is home to over half of Maine's Islamic Somali population, it holds only one Islamic center while Portland holds the remaining five. This may suggest that the Muslim community in Lewiston is more cohesive

²⁸ For more on the Lutheran Community Services program, see:

<http://www.lcsnw.org/portland/resettlement.html>

²⁹ Huisman, Kimberly. "Why Maine? Secondary Migration Decisions of Somali Refugees." Unpublished manuscript, University of Maine, Orono, ME, n.d. PDF, pp 11.

³⁰ *ibid.*, 10

³¹ *ibid.*,

³² *ibid.*, 1-4

than it is in Portland, where Muslims form sub-communities based on nationality. Table (6) lists Maine’s active Islamic centers (mosques or masjids). As the table depicts, there are two Islamic centers in Portland specifically for the Somali community.

Table 6: Islamic Centers in Maine

| Name | Denomination | Location | Ethnic Group | Language of Services |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Lewiston-Auburn Islamic Center | Traditional Sunni | Lewiston | Multicultural | English |
| Masjid at Tawba | Traditional Sunni | Portland | Somali | Arabic |
| Afghan Mosque | Traditional Sunni | Portland | Afghani | English |
| Islamic Society of Greater Augusta | Traditional Sunni | Portland | Multicultural | English |
| Maine Muslim Community Center ³³ | Salafi-Sunni | Portland | Somali | Somali |
| Islamic Society of Portland Maine ³⁴ | Traditional Sunni | Portland | Multicultural | English |

*Maine Muslim Community Center*³⁵

Established in 2005, the Maine Muslim Community Center averages 500 attendees for Friday prayers. Additionally, it enrolls 190 children and 60 adults in classes on Salafist Quranic readings.³⁶ The number of adults enrolled in Quranic

³³ Griffin, Dale. "Maine Muslim Community Center." Salatomatic. Last modified 2014. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www.salatomatic.com/d/Portland+18494+Maine-Muslim-Community-Center/?msg=20>.

³⁴ Islamic Society of Portland Maine. Last modified 2013. Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.al-hudacenter.com/>.

³⁵ Griffin

³⁶Maine Muslim Community Center. Last modified 2013. Accessed March 9, 2014. http://www.mainemuslim.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=3.

classes has doubled in the last three years. This could suggest an increase in Salafism in Maine; however, it could instead reflect increased accessibility of the masjid.

Of all Maine's Islamic centers, the Maine Muslim Community Center is the most likely target for extremist recruiters. This is because the center is the only Salafist-Somali masjid in the state of Maine. As a Salafist center, it upholds a more conservative Muslim tradition. The reason that Salafist centers are more vulnerable to radical recruiters than traditional Sunni centers is that extremist Islamic ideology (such as that of al Qaeda and its affiliates) has its roots in Salafist-Wahhabist Islam. On top of its Salafi ideology, the Maine Muslim Community Center's Somali identity renders it especially vulnerable to extremist recruiters because the primary terrorist group that recruits in Maine is al Qaeda's Somali affiliate (al-Shabaab). Al-Shabaab sees a strategic advantage in targeting a mosque that is dominantly Somali because it eliminates the need for identifying vulnerable Somalis at one of Maine's multicultural Islamic centers.

The Maine Muslim Community Center may also be at greater risk for radicalization because it has been a target of Islamophobia and hate crimes. In 2009, a Muslim man was shot in the back as he left the Mosque. Witnesses saw one black male and one white male running from the scene; however, there was minimal follow-up on the account.³⁷ Two years later, in 2011, the center was vandalized with anti-Islamic graffiti following the murder of Osama bin Laden.

Both the 2009 and 2011 incidents could have become trigger events for individuals already experiencing cultural isolation, personal trauma, or political grievances. Trigger events are "breaking points" that push individuals towards violent extremism. While the path to violent extremism is both gradual and complex, trigger events can begin or expedite the process of radicalization.

³⁷ "CAIR: Somali Man Shot after Leaving Mosque in Maine." YouTube. Video file. Posted by CAIRtv, September 3, 2009. Accessed March 8, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=citW94wpGPw>.

Muslim Student Association

The Muslim Student Association (MSA) is a national organization established by Muslim Brotherhood members at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1963. It sought to advance Islamic ideology on university campuses in the United States and Canada. In its first few years, the organization distributed the writings of Islamist ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb and Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Bana. Arab students who accepted the writings were then recruited to join the American wing of the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁸ The presence of radical Islamic organizations on university campuses is of great concern because students tend to be the most vulnerable demographic to radicalization. In fact, it was on university campuses in Saudi Arabia that radical Salafist-Wahabist ideology began to take traction in the 1980s. Even today, the average Islamic extremist is in his/her twenties with either a high school or college diploma.

The MSA has multiple known terrorists within its membership. Al Qaeda's Anwar al-Awlaki was president of Colorado State University's MSA in the 1990s.³⁹ In more recent years, Ramy Zamam (who was convicted of trying to join the Taliban in 2010) was president of Washington D.C.'s MSA council.⁴⁰ Ali Asad Chandia (who was convicted on three counts of providing material support to terror organizations) was president of Montgomery College's MSA. Lastly, al-Shabaab's Omar Hammami was president of the MSA at the University of Southern Alabama.⁴¹

³⁸ Baran, Zeyno. "The Muslim Brotherhood's US Network." *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 6 (2008): 99.

³⁹ Stakelbeck, Erik. "Muslim Student Group a Gateway to Jihad?" *CBN News*, August 29, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2014. <https://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2011/March/Muslim-Student-Group-a-Gateway-to-Jihad/>.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *ibid.*

Two of the 600 MSA chapters across American college campuses are located in Maine: at the University of Maine at Orono and at the University of Southern Maine.⁴² The UMaine-Orono MSA is one of only 150 official MSA affiliate groups. The MSA at the University of Southern Maine (USM), on the other hand, represents a much larger community of MSA groups that do not have official ties to the national institution.

Although the MSA is often surveyed for its connection to radical Islam, many MSA groups are benign grassroots initiatives to provide Muslims with a safe space to practice their religion. The USM Muslim Student Association, for example, is part of the campus multicultural center and has never been accused of involvement with extremism. The UMaine branch of MSA, however, did receive criticism in April of 2010, when it invited Jamal Badawi to speak about *jihad*. Badawi—who was a professor of religion at St. Mary’s University in Canada—has strong ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. He was listed on the first page of a 1992 Muslim Brotherhood Directory, was a founding member of the Muslim American Society (an American arm of the Muslim Brotherhood), and is a board member of ISNA (an outgrowth of the MSA).⁴³ The FBI also named Badawi as an unindicted co-conspirator in funneling money from a Texas-based non-profit (the Holy Land Foundation) to Hamas.⁴⁴ The decision to bring him to campus for Islam Awareness Week proved controversial in Maine: Badawi was scheduled to discuss how Quranic *jihad* is not synonymous to “holy war,” yet the speaker himself has a history of involvement with organizations that use the two words interchangeably.

UMaine’s MSA was in the spotlight again in March of 2013 for inviting Yassir Fazaga to campus for a lecture on terrorism and misconceptions of Islam.

⁴² *ibid.*, 105

⁴³ Investigative Project on Terrorism. “Jamal Badawi: Enduring Link to ISNA’s Radical Past.” <http://www.investigativeproject.org/3569/jamal-badawi-enduring-link-to-isna-radical-past> (accessed May 4, 2014).

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

The MSA's choice of speaker sparked some criticism from Islamo-suspicious groups because Fazaga has previously spoken alongside radicals such as Zakir Naik and Jamal Badawi. However, Fazaga himself has no known connections to extremist groups and has never publicized support for radical Islam. According to MSA president Nabeel Hashmi, the Muslim Student Association chose Fazaga because they felt his specialization would appeal to a broad student body and facilitate a cross-cultural dialogue.⁴⁵

PART III: RADICALIZATION

Literature Review/Theory

Conventional understanding consistently and mistakenly labels radicals as irrational, ideological aberrations. This is often because people are reluctant to confront the reality that radicals can be—and sometimes are—our accountants, our mailmen, or the middle-aged couple who moved in across the street. One of the more well-known models for explaining radicalization is the Phase Model, a model that understands radicalization as a linear evolution from “mainstream” to “violent jihadist” that passes through a given set of stages. This is the preferred model for security institutions such as the Danish Intelligence Services and the New York Police Department (NYPD). The NYPD established four stages for radicalization: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and *jihadization*.⁴⁶ The NYPD report cites terror attacks such as the 2004 Madrid Bombings, the Hofstad group in the Netherlands, and the 2005 London Bombings as examples that fit its linear phase model.

⁴⁵ Harrison, Judy. "Islamic Center Open House to Feature Speakers on Islam and Terrorism." *Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, ME), March 21, 2013. Accessed April 20, 2014. <https://bangordailynews.com/2013/03/21/religion/islamic-center-open-house-to-feature-speakers-on-islam-terrorists/>.

⁴⁶ Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, NYPD Intelligence Division (2007). "Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat". Read 10-20-2012

Unfortunately, Phase Models are minimally effective in identifying/minimizing extremist threats. This is because these models attempt to create a “one size fits all” formula for identifying terrorists rather than accounting for the variation in motivating factors between different individuals. The NYPD Phase Model puts forth broad sets of “risk identifiers,” such as “growing a beard” or “increased involvement in the Islamic community.” While both of these factors *might* signal an individual radicalizing, they are general categories that encompass more non-radicals in today’s society than they do radicals. As such, implementing a model that raises suspicion on Muslims based on general identifiers could further isolate Muslims from mainstream society. Stereotyping and isolating non-radical Muslims may ultimately increase the prospects for radicalization rather than protect the community against existing threats.

The NYPD’s Phase Model has thus far prevailed in the public eye because it appears to explain *ex-post-facto* why an individual became a terrorist. Each of the cited examples (Madrid, 2004; London, 2005; etc.) seemingly fit the mold of the Phase Model. However, the Phase Model is unable to explain why some individuals turn to violent extremism while others, under the same conditions, do not. Because of this, the model essentially works backwards to impose theory on facts rather than use facts to develop a theory. This is dangerous in the field of radicalization, as it provides only the guise of understanding the growing threat of extremism.

In order to understand how average people become extremists, we must contextualize the process of radicalization from the vantage point of the radical, who is in constant interaction with his social environment.⁴⁷ This requires an individual-centered model that examines the degree to which psychological, social, economic, and political factors affect an individual’s perception of the world. Such an approach has allowed authors such as Marc Sageman, Tore

⁴⁷ Tinka Veldhuis & Jørgen Staun, *Islamist Radicalization: A Root Cause Model* (The Hague, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, October 2009), pp. 62.

Bjørgo, Tinka Veldhuis, and Jorgen Staun to understand the process of radicalization as interplay between multiple drivers at the micro- and macro-levels.

The interpersonal (social) approach put forth by Marc Sageman in his book Leaderless Jihad concludes that individuals join radical groups with, or because of, their social networks. Interpersonal drivers of radicalization typically fall into one of two sub-categories: radicalization *in* a friend group or radicalization *because of* a friend group.⁴⁸ The second type of social network radicalization refers to individuals who join extremist groups because of personal connections with pre-existing members. Within diaspora communities, immigrants tend to drift towards acquaintances, friends, or family members from the old world. If these acquaintances are involved in a radical network, they can socialize the newcomers into said groups.⁴⁹

Authors such as John Horgan and Tore Bjørgo believe radicalization is more influenced by intrapersonal, psychological factors than by social ones. This view represents Bjørgo's Rational Choice Model, which argues that individuals join extremist groups after conducting a psychological cost-benefit analysis. This model focuses on an individual's personal experiences as the motivator for radicalization. Some potential personal factors could involve connection to a victim of American drone strikes, secondary political grievances, feelings of socio-economic isolation or discrimination, search for the intimate community that radical groups provide, or the search for honor or glory. If the process of radicalization emerges from a cost-benefit analysis, then individuals also consider

⁴⁸ The Hamburg group exemplifies the "bunch of guys theory," in which groups of friends radicalize together by reinforcing each other's extremist views and isolating themselves from mainstream society. For more information on the Hamburg cell, see: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. "5.3 The Hamburg Contingent." *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. United States Government, 21 Aug. 2004.

⁴⁹ The Madrid bombings exemplifies this type of radicalization: five of the seven Madrid bombers had been childhood friends in Morocco. For more information on the Madrid Bombers, see: Sageman, Marc. *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008. pp. 67, Print.

a variety of “pull factors” that deter them from joining radical groups. These factors might include fear of isolation from the mainstream, concerns that joining a radical group may affect future job prospects, or a desire to marry someone in the moderate world.

Although authors supporting individual-based models tend to emphasize *either* the interpersonal or the psychological dimensions of radicalization, it is important to consider radicalization as a fusion of both dimensions. Attributing radicalization to a single factor risks reifying an otherwise complex process. Thus, rather than seek to pigeon-hole radicalization into “this” or “that,” it will be most effective to identify all of the potential risk factors that could lead an individual to radicalize and then assess the degree to which they are present/influential within a specific group.

Global *Jihadi* Ideology

The most common form of radicalization in the West is Islamic radicalization to join al Qaeda or one of its many affiliate groups. This is especially true for the state of Maine, which is targeted by al Qaeda’s Somali affiliate, al-Shabaab. While many of al Qaeda’s affiliate groups have regional-specific goals, they all maintain the ideology of global *jihad*. The ideology has a long history, beginning with Muslim revivalism in the 1930s and ending with Osama bin Laden’s Fatwa against the Jews and Crusaders in 1998.

Muslim revivalism has its roots in the 1930s, with the emergence of Egyptian writers like Hasan al Bana and Said Qutb. The movement generally had three main objectives: to return Islam to its place as a civilization, to establish the *umma* (the widespread community of Muslims) as a viable political entity, and to rid the Muslim world of Western influence. Following Nasser’s 1955 crack down on Islamists in Egypt, the movement largely went underground. Followers of Hasan al Bana continued to preach non-violent resistance; however, Said Qutb

advocated violent *jihad* (struggle) by a pioneering vanguard to end *jahaliyah* (the state of ignorance).⁵⁰

Many Qutbist followers were excommunicated from Egypt and other Arab countries, eventually finding refuge in Saudi Arabia (today's hub of Salafist-Wahhabi ideology).⁵¹ The Saudi regime arguably facilitated the spread of radical Islam in the 1970s by allowing radical ideology to infiltrate university campuses as long as the leaders of Islamism agreed not to threaten the house of Saud.⁵² These radical teachings centered on the theory of "culture attack:" the belief that the West used modernization to weaken the Muslim world by infiltrating it with Western books, television shows, banks, sports, etc. These teachings—which reflected a mixture of Egyptian Salafism and Saudi Wahhabism—ultimately led to a new form of radical Islamism that became the building blocks for al Qaeda's ideology in the 1980s and 1990s.

Radicals enjoyed the support of the Saudi Regime again in 1979, when it encouraged Muslims to help expel the West from Afghanistan. The Saudi King supported extremist involvement in the Afghan *mujahedeen* fiscally and logistically. While King Saud's decision was arguably more of a strategic move than an ideological one,⁵³ it allowed extreme Islamism to play a more active role in society and facilitated mass radicalization of university students.

⁵⁰ One of the reasons Qutb was revolutionary to Islamism was that he argued that *jahaliyah*, which traditionally referred to the time before Muhammad, was a situation rather than a time period. According to Qutb, *jahaliyah* existed in the contemporary world wherever Islam was threatened. Because Muslims are obligated to resist *jahaliyah* wherever it occurs, Qutb was able to legitimize violence through religious teachings.

⁵¹ Salafi and Wahhabi are often used interchangeably; however, the two sects have subtle differences. Salafism, which emerged in Egypt during the enlightenment, sought to account for the advances of science and technology in returning to traditional Islam. Wahhabism, which emerged in Saudi Arabia, is a more puritan strain of Islamism that seeks to return to traditional Islam without the developments of modern technology. The radical Islamism that formed in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s embodied a fusion of both Salafism and Wahhabism. It accepted limited modernization as long as it was used to promote the cause of Islam. See: Shavit, Uriya. "Al-Qaeda's Saudi Origins." *Middle East Quarterly* (2006).

⁵² Shavit, Uriya. "Al-Qaeda's Saudi Origins." *Middle East Quarterly* (2006).

⁵³ Supporting the struggle against the West pitted Saudi Arabia as a leader in the Arab world while also ensuring that the most radical Saudis were pre-occupied beyond Saudi Arabia's borders

Osama bin Laden, the founder of al Qaeda, was a product of the Qutbist-Wahhabist fusion. Under the tutelage of radical Islamist Abdullah Azzam, he joined the *mujahedeen* in Afghanistan. Bin Laden maintained his Qutbism until August 6, 1991, when Saudi Arabia invited the United States to intervene in the First Gulf War. Under bin Laden's thought paradigm, inviting the West into the Muslim world allowed the United States to manipulate Islamic societies for their own political gains (a manifestation of the cultural attack). Bin Laden, who had previously focused on resisting the West, re-focused his struggle against the Saudi King. To bin Laden, engaging the West in a Muslim-Muslim conflict rendered the house of Saud an apostate regime that fell victim to the cultural attack and could no longer represent the Muslim people.

In 1996, bin Laden was still consumed with resisting the Saudi regime while future second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri targeted his Islamic resistance against Egypt.⁵⁴ Two years later, in 1998, bin Laden and Zawahiri joined forces to shift from attacking the "near enemy" (apostate Muslim leaders) to the "far enemy" (the United States and its allies). The partnership issued the fatwa for global *jihad*, which called on all Muslims to take up arms against the far enemy and its allies. The globalization of *jihad* extrapolated from the idea of "culture attack" by arguing that Muslims need to take a more active role in resisting the West. Ridding the Muslim world of Western influence was no longer enough; destroying the West was the only way to succeed in a global war against Islam. Until May of 2011, bin Laden served as the propagator of this worldview and the figurehead of al Qaeda ("the base").

Although the United States allegedly beheaded al Qaeda by killing bin Laden in May 2011, affiliate groups and individuals continue resistance in the name of bin Laden's ideology. This has occurred through what Marc Sageman calls the "leaderless jihad". Leaderless *jihad* refers individuals, small groups, or

⁵⁴ Ciovacco, Carl J. "The Contours of Al Qaeda's Media Strategy." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 32 (2009): 853-975. Print.

regional affiliates carrying out terror attacks in the name of al Qaeda without necessarily having any personal connection to existing al Qaeda members. The groups rarely coordinate or communicate with each other, acting more as semi-autonomous terror cells than as branches of a unified organization. Still, these groups/individuals identify with global *jihadism* and often draw their inspiration from al Qaeda Central. As a result, al Qaeda has become an umbrella identity for decentralized violent extremism.

The “leaderless *jihad*” has brought with it an increase in radicalization among Western Muslims. This can arguably be attributed to the rise of the Internet in the last decade. Potential recruits no longer have to travel to training bases in the Middle East; they can train alone or in small groups without leaving their local communities. In 2000, there were a mere twenty *jihadist* websites across the web; however, by 2008, the number had risen to 4,500.⁵⁵ Prior to the rise of the Internet, martyrs used to have to gain approval directly from bin Laden; however, today, such approval can be deduced implicitly from al Qaeda’s media communications.⁵⁶ With the Internet, al Qaeda can export its ideology to the Muslim diaspora by posting in virtual chat rooms, by disseminating *jihadist* magazines on the Internet, and by releasing video clips propagating Islamic extremism.

Focus Group: al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab, which means “the youth,” was established in 2006 during the insurgency against Somalia’s Ethiopian-backed transitional government.⁵⁷ The US

⁵⁵ Saltman, Samuel S. "The Global Jihad Network: Why and How Al Qaeda Uses Computer Technology to Wage Jihad." *Journal of Global Change and Governance* 1.3 (2008): 2-10. PDF file.

⁵⁶ Ciovacco, Carl J. "The Contours of Al Qaeda's Media Strategy." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 32 (2009): pp. 862. Print.

⁵⁷ Garenstein-Ross, Daveed. "The Strategic Challenges of Somali's al-Shabaab." *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2009, 25-36. PDF.

designated al-Shabaab as a terrorist organization in 2008.⁵⁸ The organization evolved from the Islamic Courts Union (Ittihad al-Mahakim al-Islamia). The difference between al-Shabaab and its predecessor is that the latter focused on Somalia as a nation—specifically Ethiopia’s Ogaden region, where Somalis hold ethnic dominance. Al-Shabaab, on the other hand, focuses on global *jihad* and regards the conflict in East Africa as part of a larger struggle between Islam and the West.

Although al-Shabaab emerged in 2006, radical Islam in Somalia has roots dating farther back than the mid-2000s. In 1969, Gen. Mohammad Siad Barre’s political crack down gave the Islamist movement momentum. Barre targeted Islamism because he believed that it was an opposition movement; this increased Islamism’s appeal to other resistance fighters regardless of ideology.⁵⁹ Throughout the next forty years, the notion of radical Islam materialized into a series of different Islamist groups. The first of these groups focused exclusively on ousting Barre. The ideology of the movement then sought to transform Somalia into a state ruled by *shariah* law, and, finally, to join the global *jihad* as an al Qaeda affiliate.

Today, al-Shabaab is projected to have between 6,000 and 8,000 active members.⁶⁰ It continues to recruit from the Muslim diaspora, namely from the United States. For example, Alabama-native Omar Hammami was one of the more prominent members of al-Shabaab before the group assassinated him due to organizational tensions. In September 2013, the Homeland Security Project’s threat assessment of *jihadist* terrorism concluded that al-Shabaab boasts the highest number of American fighters than any other al Qaeda affiliate.⁶¹ That number has decreased in the last two years, dropping from 50 to 20; however,

⁵⁸ The Associated Press. "Ten Things to Know about al-Shabaab." *Portland Herald* (Portland, ME), September 23, 2013. Accessed March 10, 2014. http://www.pressherald.com/news/nationworld/ten-things-to-know-about-al-shabab_2013-09-23.html?pagenum=full.

⁵⁹ Garenstein-Ross, Daveed. "The Strategic Challenges of Somali's al-Shabaab." *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2009, 25-36. PDF.

⁶⁰ Szoldra, Paul. "Who are al-Shabaab?" *Business Insider*, September 22, 2013.

⁶¹ Bergen, Peter, Bruce Hoffman, Michael Hurley, and Erroll Southers. *Jihad Terrorism: A Threat Assessment*. Bipartisan Policy Center, 2013. pp 38. PDF.

individuals linked to al-Shabaab are still at the top of the United States's domestic terrorism threat list.⁶²

PART IV: AL QAEDA AND AL-SHABAAB

Al-Shabaab has adhered to al Qaeda ideology since the early 2000s. For example, following Ethiopia's withdrawal from Mogadishu, al-Shabaab leaders said that continuing jihad beyond the confines of Somalia was a religious imperative.⁶³ Such a statement is consistent with al Qaeda's creed for global *jihad*, which argues that Muslims have an individual responsibility to fight infidels and resist apostate Muslim regimes. In 2008, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow (al-Shabaab and ICU leader) commented, "we will take our orders from Sheikh Osama bin Laden because we are his students" and that al-Shabaab and al Qaeda were "negotiating how [they could] unite to one."⁶⁴

Indeed, the al Qaeda-Shabaab relationship seemed reciprocal. Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri released a video in 2007 stating that Somalia was one of al Qaeda's three main theaters for *mujahedeen* (the other two being Iraq and Afghanistan).⁶⁵ Al Qaeda and al-Shabaab continued implied support for each other's organizations until the winter of 2012, when the groups announced an official partnership.

A few months later, in June 2012, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Boko Haram announced that they would also be synchronizing efforts with al-Shabaab.⁶⁶ This means that the three groups would be sharing

⁶² Koeing, Seth. "Pingree and Somali Leaders in Maine Dismiss Terrorist Link to Portland as 'Rumors'." *Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, ME), September 24, 2013. Accessed March 10, 2014. <https://bangordailynews.com/2013/09/24/news/portland/pingree-and-somali-leaders-in-maine-dismiss-terrorist-link-to-portland-as-rumors/>

⁶³ Garenstein-Ross, Daveed. "The Strategic Challenges of Somali's al-Shabaab." *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2009, 25-36. PDF.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Lerman, David. "African Terrorist Groups Starting to Cooperate, U.S. Says." *Business Insider* (Washington), June 25, 2012. Accessed March 10,

funds, planning joint attacks, and exchanging training tactics. The partnership between al-Shabaab and al Qaeda Central is far more threatening than the latter triangle alliance of al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram. Although al-Shabaab has focused the majority of its attacks on Africa's Eastern Horn, the partnership with al Qaeda may mean a more active and more threatening rhetoric in the coming years. The merger between al Qaeda and al-Shabaab also means that the Somali-based terror group is now accountable to Ayman al-Zawahiri and his edicts. This is a threat to the United States because it expands al Qaeda's footholds in Africa and increases the number of regional cells under al Qaeda's central command.

The partnership with Boko Haram and AQIM, on the other hand, is unlikely to yield a significant threat increase for the United States. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is the weakest of al Qaeda's affiliates and has taken minimal action to attack the West.⁶⁷ It has also refrained from opportunities to attack Western interests in AQIM's theaters of operation. As a result, AQIM is unlikely to encourage al-Shabaab to take more global aspirations, as it is preoccupied with its own regional concerns. The primary benefit of partnering with AQIM is money. AQIM's kidnapping for ransom renders it one of the more affluent *jihadist* groups, and significant money transfers could increase al-Shabaab's operational capabilities⁶⁸ However, given AQIM's focus on operations in Algeria and Mali, it is unlikely that the group will make significant fiscal contributions to efforts in Kenya or Somalia.

A closer look at the relationship between Boko Haram and AQIM further assuages the threat of a triangle alliance between the two Islamist groups and al-Shabaab. Boko Haram receives significant funding from AQIM, yet the group has

2014. <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-06-25/african-terrorist-groups-starting-to-cooperate-u-dot-s-dot-says>.

⁶⁷ Bergen, Peter, Bruce Hoffman, Michael Hurley, and Erroll Southern. *Jihad Terrorism: A Threat Assessment*. Bipartisan Policy Center, 2013. pp 35. PDF.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

hit only one international target since its inception in 2002.⁶⁹ Like AQIM, Boko Haram is far more concerned with regional aspirations than global *jihad*: its primary goal is to place Nigeria under *shariah* law. As a result, most of its attacks take place in Northern Nigeria. In fact, Boko Haram has treated global *jihad* as such a low priority that al Qaeda Central consistently refuses an official alliance. Should AQIM begin funding al-Shabaab as well as Boko Haram, it would be splitting resources between the two groups. Thus, an alliance between all three may sound detrimental, but in practice, it may not render al-Shabaab any more dangerous than it already is.

PART V: RISK FACTORS IN THE STATE OF MAINE

On the surface, Maine appears to be the last place that would foster radicalization. However, a closer look at socio-economic, political, racial, and social factors reveals that Maine might be more than “Vacationland”. The three most prominent risk factors in Maine are high education coupled with high unemployment; Islamophobia and discrimination; and social pressures for conservatism among the Somali community. Despite these risk factors, Mainers targeted by al-Shabaab have largely resisted indoctrination.

High Education with High Unemployment

While the safety, quiet, and welfare infrastructure in Maine renders it a hotspot for secondary Somali migrants, high rates of unemployment drive many of those immigrants to either leave or become disenchanting. Somalis who stay in Maine despite the stagnant economic opportunities tend to live below the poverty line. Huisman found that, when asked about a future in Maine, a Somali college student responded, “there is not much in Maine for me. As soon as I graduate I’m

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 37.

leaving. *Inshallah* (God willing).”⁷⁰ Such a statement reflects a sense of hopelessness seeded in a lack of economic mobility.

Terrorism scholars Alan Kreuger and Jitka Maleckova argue that poverty alone does *not* have a causal relationship with radicalization.⁷¹ They found, however, that poverty paired with high education levels can create an environment fertile for extremism. This was the case in Egypt, where the United States invested heavily in educational programs as part of its counter-radicalization policy in the 1970s. However, at the time, Egypt’s economic infrastructure was defined by crony capitalism, unemployment, and patronage networks. This created a large demographic of educated Egyptians with no economic mobility. Radical Salafist groups offered employment opportunities, and this factor—often independent of ideology—led many to perceive group membership as their best option.⁷²

Maine is a prime example of a population having high education levels paired with high unemployment rates. Maine boasts an 85% high school graduation rate (the 10th best in the US).⁷³ The graduation rate for Somalis in Maine is generally consistent with this statistic, with 72% of Somali high school students in Lewiston having graduated in 2012.⁷⁴ Employment rates, however, do not exhibit the same consistency: although Maine’s unemployment rate rests roughly at the national average (6.2%),⁷⁵ unemployment among Somalis was as

⁷⁰ Huisman, Kimberly. "Why Maine? Secondary Migration Decisions of Somali Refugees." Unpublished manuscript, University of Maine, Orono, ME, n.d. pp. 23. PDF.

⁷¹ Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Autumn 2003).

⁷² For more information, see: Sageman, Marc. *Leaderless jihad: Terror networks in the twenty-first century*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. pp. 57. Print.

⁷³ Government of Maine. "Maine High School Graduation Rates." Maine Department of Education. Last modified 2013. Accessed February 25, 2014. <http://www.maine.gov/education/gradrates/>.

⁷⁴ Washuk, Bonnie. "Somali Students Finding Success in Maine." *Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, ME), June 12, 2011. Accessed February 25, 2014. <https://bangordailynews.com/2011/06/12/news/somali-students-finding-success-in-maine/>

⁷⁵ Government of Maine. "Unemployment and Labor Force." Center for Workforce Research and Information. Last modified December 2013. Accessed February 25, 2014. <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/laus.html>

high as 51% in 2006.⁷⁶ Applying this data to Kreuger and Maleckova's theory, Maine's Somali population should be at high risk of radicalization. Of course, the political, social, and economic environment in Maine is significantly different than that in Egypt. However, Egypt can help elucidate how certain economic risk factors can foster an environment prone to radicalization.

While theories of radicalization help us understand what risk factors *can* lead to radicalization, the presence of such factors does not necessitate extremism. Thus, while the theory put forth by Kreuger and Maleckova helps explain the case of Egypt, those same "risk factors" present in Maine have not led to a spike in Islamic extremism. In cases where educated individuals join extremist groups for economic reasons, the conflict between high education and low employment often occurs at the macro- level. In Maine, Somalis have the option of relocating to urban centers in the US with more economic opportunities. Often, they do: the Somali community in Maine is regularly in flux, with families relocating elsewhere after taking advantage of the housing and educational benefits that the state has to offer. As a result, they are not forced into the type of "economic last resort" that motivated many Egyptians to join the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s.

Islamophobia and Discrimination

Like any city, Lewiston and Portland are not immune to Islamophobia and discrimination. On May 2, 2011, following the death of Osama bin Laden, the Maine Muslim Community Center in Portland was vandalized. "Osama today, Islam tomorrow" and "Long Live the West" were both spray-painted onto the outer wall of the masjid.⁷⁷ Two years earlier, in 2009, a Muslim was shot in the

⁷⁶ Rector, Amanda K. *Employment Patterns of Somali Immigrants: An Analysis of the to Lewiston from 2001 through 2006*. Augusta, ME: Center for Workforce Research and Information Maine Department of Labor, 2008. PDF.

⁷⁷ McMorris-Santono, Evan. "Portland, Maine Mosque Vandalized in Suspected Hate Crime following Bin Laden Death." *Talking Points Memo* (ME), May 2, 2011. Accessed February 12, 2014. <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/dc/portland-maine-mosque-vandalized-in-suspected-hate-crime-following-bin-laden-death>.

back after coming out of the Maine Muslim Community Center in Portland. Three years before that, in 2006, Brent Matthews (a white male) rolled a pig's head into the Lewiston-Auburn Islamic Center during evening prayers.⁷⁸ The act is especially offensive because pigs are *haram* (forbidden) in the Islamic tradition. Soon after, Matthews was charged with desecrating a place of worship.⁷⁹

The Somali population also suffers from verbal discrimination—both passive and overt. Many Somali high school students report that they hear white students yelling for them to “go back where they came from.” Being black, their skin color attracts unwanted staring and comments about Somalis needing to accept “American culture.” For example, former Mayor Robert MacDonald was quoted making racist comments about Lewiston's Somali population during a BBC interview in the fall of 2012. MacDonald attempted to explain his statement, commenting that if “you [Somali immigrants] believe in Somali culture so much, why aren't you over there fighting for it?”⁸⁰ Such a statement showed grave disregard for the violent realities of Somalia, undermined the refugee population, and left many Somalis feeling unwanted.

While discrimination and hate crimes have occurred in Maine, the general consensus is that public integration and cross-cultural understanding outweigh attempts to isolate the Somali community. Hussein Ahmed, Lewiston's Islamic community leader, stated that although MacDonald's words were hurtful, he does not believe that they represent the general Lewiston sentiment towards the Somali community. Ahmed noted that the Somali population shares many economic struggles with the greater Lewiston community, and he wishes that MacDonald

⁷⁸ Zezima, Kate. "A Lone Man's Stunt Raises Broader Issues." *New York Times* (New York, NY), September 5, 2006. Accessed March 26, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/05/us/05maine.html?ref=us&_r=1&

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Thistle, Scott. "Lewiston Mayor Tells Somalis to 'Leave Your Culture at the Door'." *Bangor Daily News*, September 27, 2012. Accessed March 19, 2014. <http://bangordailynews.com/2012/09/27/uncategorized/lewiston-mayor-tells-somalis-to-leave-your-culture-at-the-door/>.

had chosen to highlight cross-cultural cooperation rather than isolation.⁸¹ Lewiston City Council President Mark Cayer responded that he valued the diversity of Lewiston and did not support the idea that any religious or ethnic group should have to “check their culture at the door.”

With regards to hate crimes, Portland Police Chief James Craig stated that hate crimes number roughly one every other year, and hate crimes targeting religion are even rarer.⁸² When they do happen, Maine’s public tends to rally around the Muslim community rather than isolate it. Such was the case following the 2011 hate graffiti on the Maine Muslim Community Center. Residents of Portland came out to the Maine Muslim Community Center in solidarity. Following Matthews’s throwing a pig head into the Lewiston-Auburn mosque, 150 people (including then-governor John Baldacci) joined in a local park to condemn the act and demonstrate support for the Somali community. In 2003, when the anti-immigration World Church of the Creator held a rally to “save” Lewiston from Somali refugees, the 40-person demonstration was met by a 4,000-person counter-demonstration.⁸³

While Muslims make up a microscopic minority, Maine universities sponsor Islamic student organizations and events. These organizations are active in bringing various speakers to campus and appear to work together with other inter-faith groups to combat Islamophobia and spread knowledge about Islam. For example, in 2004, students and professors at the University of Maine began the Somali Narrative Project (SNP). The SNP documents the stories and perspectives of Somalis in Maine with a view towards increased integration and understanding between Somali and American communities.⁸⁴ Such demonstrations of support

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² McMorris-Santono, Evan. "Portland, Maine Mosque Vandalized in Suspected Hate Crime following Bin Laden Death." *Talking Points Memo* (ME), May 2, 2011. Accessed February 12, 2014.

⁸³ Langellier, Kristin. "Negotiating Somali Identity in Maine." *Applied Communication in Organizational and International Contexts*, no. 27: 979-106.

⁸⁴ Engaging Maine's Somali Communities. Accessed March 9, 2014. <https://umaine.edu/las/community-links/engaging-communities/engaging-maines-somali-communities/>.

decrease the likelihood of radicalization because they combat the feelings of isolation that Islamophobia generates.

Efforts towards integration do not only come from mainstream Maine society; Islamic community leaders actively promote inclusion and understanding as well. Maine Muslim Community Center President Mohamud Mohamed commented that the solution to Islamophobia is in an Islamic proverb: “the animals understand each other when they sniff each other; the people understand each other when they talk together.”⁸⁵ Established Islamic centers that are well integrated into mainstream Maine society provide Muslims in the area with social networks that discourage radicalization and motivate youth to become more involved in their communities.

Religious Conservatism Among Somali Populations

While the tight-knit nature of Maine’s Somali community, in part, combats social isolation, it also increases social pressures for religious conformity. Maine’s Somali population tends to be strictly conservative: one Somali commented, “some Somalis have been referred to by other Muslims as ‘the Muslim Police,’ and have behaved in ways like the moral police of Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.”⁸⁶ Many of Huisman’s interviewees commented that Somali women who do not wear a *hijab* in public are targets of condemnation.⁸⁷ Pressure to adhere to old world traditions can become a driver of radicalization among Muslims living in the West. Through developing intimate connections, members of minority groups can reinforce each other’s beliefs—inherently radicalizing each other through a process Marc Sageman calls the “Bunch of Guys Theory.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Inglis, Jeff. "Mosque Welcomes Visitors." *Portland Phoenix*, August 15, 2012. Accessed March 17, 2014. <http://portland.thephoenix.com/news/142805-mosque-welcomes-visitors/>.

⁸⁶ Huisman, Kimberly. "Why Maine? Secondary Migration Decisions of Somali Refugees." Unpublished manuscript, University of Maine, Orono, ME, n.d. pp. 27. PDF.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ For more on Sageman’s “Bunch of Guys Theory,” see: Sageman, Marc. *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008. pp. 67, Print.

Although Somali conservatism seems to fit the conditions of Sageman’s “Bunch of Guys Theory,” high social pressures to uphold strict tradition has not led to the radicalization of Muslims in Maine. One potential reason for this could be a general demographic resistance to radicalization. While the pressures to conform create the potential for group members to radicalize away from the mainstream, such pressures can also serve as a bulwark to radicalization. Thus, mass objection to extremism can be just as contagious and re-enforcing as support of it.

PART VI: CASE STUDIES

9/11

Two of the 9/11 bombers—al Qaeda mastermind Mohammed Atta and partner Abdul-Aziz Al-Omari—spent the night of September 10, 2001 at the Comfort Inn Hotel in Portland, Maine.⁸⁹ Atta was the hijacker who took control of American Airlines Flight 11, the first of the two planes to crash into the World Trade Center. Multiple Mainers reported having sighted Atta in the months leading up to 9/11. Portland Public Library Security Director Spruce Whited recalled seeing Atta using the library’s computers multiple times during the summer of 2000.⁹⁰ Although police were unable to verify Whited’s lead, Atta’s using public computers to communicate with other radicals would be consistent with national trends in *jihadist* communication. Al Qaeda members often use public libraries to communicate because officials cannot trace the IP addresses back to the individual, allowing the identity of the radical to remain anonymous.

⁸⁹ Matthews, Chris. "9/11 Mystery: What was Atta Doing on 9/10." *NBC News*, September 7, 2006. Accessed March 17, 2014.

http://www.nbcnews.com/id/14686192/ns/msnbc_tvhardball_with_chris_matthews/#.UydUKa2SyJl

⁹⁰ Connerty-Marin, David, and Josie Huang. "The Night before Terror." *Portland Press Herald* (Portland, ME), October 5, 2001. Accessed March 19, 2014. <http://www.pressherald.com/archive/september-11-portland-maine-chronology-fbi-mohamed-atta-abdulaziz-alomari.html>.

Profile: Mohammad Atta

The son of an Egyptian lawyer, Mohammad Atta was raised in an upper-middle class family in Cairo. After receiving his first degree in architecture, Atta joined Cairo's Engineering Syndicate, an organization informally used as a base for the Muslim Brotherhood.⁹¹ However, it was not until four years after Atta moved to Germany that his process of radicalization truly began. In 1996, Atta began frequenting al Quds, a Mosque close to his university in Hamburg. The mosque's Imam, Mohammad Fazazi was a radical who glorified martyrdom and advocated the killing of non-believers.⁹² Within a year, Atta began showing more religious conservatism and teaching extremist classes at the mosque. By mid-1997, *jihadi* Mohammad Haydar Zammar officially recruited Atta to join the Hamburg cell of al Qaeda. Two years later, Atta left Germany for Florida, where he joined the Huffman Aviation Light Aircraft training school.⁹³

Atta's process of radicalization exemplifies both trigger-event radicalization and Marc Sageman's "Bunch of Guys" theory. On the one hand, Atta radicalized through his social network: he lived in a two-bedroom apartment with other radicalizing Muslims. Through eating meals together, socializing together, and living together, the Hamburg cell isolated themselves from mainstream student culture. The less contact the Hamburg group had with the moderate world, the more its members reinforced each other's radical ideology. This created a self-legitimizing snowball effect in which Atta's entire social environment revolved around anti-Western sentiment and radical Islam. As Sageman notes, when Atta eventually traveled to Afghanistan to join al Qaeda, it

⁹¹ Center for Grassroots Oversight. "Mohammad Atta." History Commons. http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=mohamed_atta.

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ The Observer. "Mohammad Atta: Profile of a Terrorist." *The Guardian*, September 16, 2001. Accessed April 6, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/16/september11.usa7>.

was not “the path of a lone individual, as often portrayed in the press; it [was] a group adventure.”⁹⁴

On the other hand, since Atta had been exposed to radical Islam for over a decade before joining the Hamburg cell, social networks were unlikely the only factor driving him towards violent extremism. A significant landmark in Atta’s process of radicalization was arguably the April War (1996), an Israeli bombing campaign in Lebanon that followed a series cross-border fire. Known to Israelis as Operation Grapes of Wrath, the offensive was Israel’s attempt to pressure the Lebanese government into better controlling Hezbollah. The Israeli offensive outraged Atta, who wrote and signed his personal will that same day. The will embodied elements of both Salafism (no woman would go to his grave or funeral) and Wahabism (no one would weep or cry).⁹⁵ Following Operation Grapes of Wrath, Atta became a more active extremist, eventually becoming an official member of al Qaeda and the Hamburg cell.

Profile: Abdul Aziz Al-Omari

Less is known about Abdul Aziz Al-Omari, the 9/11 hijacker who joined Atta in Portland, Maine. Al-Omari was born in Asir Province in Southwest Saudi Arabia, where he was raised in an upper-middle class family. He left home to attend Imam Mohammad bin Saud University in the Qassim Province, where he received a graduate degree in Islamic law.⁹⁶ The Qassim Province upholds a strict Wahhabist culture and tends to attract more radically-minded individuals. It was there that Al-Omari began his path towards violent extremism. He allegedly

⁹⁴ Sageman, Marc. *Leaderless jihad: Terror networks in the twenty-first century*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. pp 70. Print.

⁹⁵ Atta, Mohammad. Letter, April 11, 1996.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/network/personal/attawill.html>.

⁹⁶ Center for Grassroots Oversight. “Abdulaziz Alomari.” History Commons.
http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=abdulaziz_alomari

studied under Sulayman al-Alwan, a radical Imam currently serving a 15-year prison term for being the “al Qaeda mufti.”⁹⁷

Assessment

The decision to spend the night of September 10, 2001 in Portland initially puzzled intelligence officers and terrorism scholars. However, Portland is arguably a strategic choice for the 9/11 attackers. First and foremost, it is an under-the-radar metropolis in close proximity to a major city (Boston). With the Portland Jetport offering commuter flights to Boston, the bombers could bypass some of Logan International Airport’s stricter security regulations. Terrorism expert Steve Emerson also suggested that Portland was the bombers’ “fallback plan” in case weather, traffic, or security impeded their ability to launch the attacks from planes in Boston.⁹⁸ Furthermore, should the hijackers make a last-minute decision to abort the plan, Maine shares an international border with Canada and has extensive water access to the Atlantic Ocean. Maine is therefore strategically located near both a major city and probable escape routes.

A more skeptical assessment of Atta and Al-Omari’s trip to Portland is that the bombers traveled to Maine to make final contact with an al-Qaeda sympathizer. Proponents of such a theory argue that an unknown source located in the Portland area provided final preparation and/or authorization for the 9/11 attacks. FBI and White House officials investigated ferry logs, air traffic reports, and Portland residents in search of a connection to Atta. The search came up empty, meaning that the most likely connection between Maine and 9/11 was that Atta used Portland to bypass Logan security, or in the case of extreme complications, as a back-up plan for the hijacking. This theory is further supported by the testimony of Michael Tuohey, the ticket agent who checked Atta and Al-

⁹⁷ Sulami, MD. "Appeals Court Upholds 15-year Jail Sentence of ‘Al-Qaeda Mufti.’" *ArabNews* (Jeddah), November 29, 2013. Accessed April 7, 2014. <http://www.arabnews.com/news/484261>.

⁹⁸ Matthews, Chris. "9/11 Mystery: What was Atta Doing on 9/10." *NBC News*, September 7, 2006. Accessed March 17, 2014.

http://www.nbcnews.com/id/14686192/ns/msnbc_tvhardball_with_chris_matthews/#.UydUKa2SyJl.

Omari into their commuter flight to Boston. He commented that Atta became angry when told that he would have to go through security again in Logan, screaming “I thought there was a one-step check-in... They told me one-step check-in.”⁹⁹

Barakaat Bank

On 7 November 2001, the United States froze all assets of Barakaat North America, Inc. because it was suspected to be financing al Qaeda.¹⁰⁰ The company, owned by Somali brothers Liban and Mohammad Hussein, transferred money from the United States to Somalia and the UAE. Suspicion of Barakaat first emerged in 1999, when one of FleetBoston’s bankers was completing a routine account review to ensure that none of its clients were involved in money laundering. The Barakaat account drew a red flag because reports showed consistent transfers just under \$10,000—the threshold for which account holders have to file reports to the federal authorities—to the United Arab Emirates.¹⁰¹ FleetBoston contacted Liban Hussein to notify him that the bank would be closing his Barakaat account.

Not long after the Boston sector of Barakaat closed, Liban Hussein traveled two-and-a-half hours north to open yet another account for Barakaat at Key Bank in Portland, Maine. On March 6, 2000, Liban Hussein deposited \$180 into an account that would cumulatively transfer more than \$920,000 from the United States to the UAE.¹⁰²

The significance of al Barakaat in Maine is two-fold. On the one hand, Key Bank is the same bank that Mohammad Atta used to withdraw money one day

⁹⁹ Associated Press. "Airline Ticket Agent Recalls Atta on 9/11." *Fox News* (Scarborough, ME), March 7, 2005. Accessed April 6, 2014. http://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,149635,00.html.

¹⁰⁰ See: Exec. Order No. 13224, 3 C.F.R. 24 (2001).

¹⁰¹ Chauhan, Sharad. *The al Qaeda Threat*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation, 2003: 286.

¹⁰² Lavoie, Denise. "Boston Man Arrested in Terror Money Network." *Boston.com* (Boston, MA), November 7, 2001. Accessed April 6, 2014. http://www.boston.com/news/daily/07/attacks_boston_money.htm.

before he crashed American Airlines Flight 11 into the World Trade Center. Liban Hussein, who opened the account, was listed as a suspected al Qaeda associate by the United States, United Nations, and Canada in 2001.¹⁰³ That same year, President George Bush named Hussein a terrorist financier.

Al Barakaat North America is a branch of a much larger al Barakaat network that the CIA has been investigating since the 1990s. In 1999, one of the American embassies in Africa received word that bin Laden had made a \$1 million investment in venture capital in al Barakaat and used the company to send money to *mujahedeen* operatives in the Middle East.¹⁰⁴ The United States Treasury claimed that Barakaat was not only transferring money to al Qaeda, but also sharing the company's profits with it.¹⁰⁵ Money transfers of nearly \$100,000 to the UAE—where al Qaeda is known to have multiple bank accounts—seemingly supported this suspicion.

At the same time, the Hussein brothers denied any connection to Islamic extremism and claimed to have opened their branch of al Barakaat as a necessary means of allowing Somalis to support their families back home. Somalia lacks central banking infrastructure, making traditional money wiring difficult for refugees. Opening a Barakaat account in Portland served a niche demand, as Maine is one of the most popular locations for Somali refugees in the US. Hussein's story seems plausible: al Barakaat North America has numerous branches in Somalia, and it has successfully transferred money for hundreds of Somali families. While large money transfers to the UAE raise suspicions about connections to extremist groups, the larger al Barakaat enterprise has its headquarters in the United Arab Emirates. Thus, the \$920,000+ from al Barakaat

¹⁰³ Mickolus, Edward. *The Terrorist List: The Middle East*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2009. pp. 286

¹⁰⁴ 9/11 Commission, comp. *Chapter 5: Al Barakaat Case Study*. Terrorist Financing Staff Monograph. United States Government. PDF.

¹⁰⁵ Chauhan, Sharad. *The al Qaeda Threat*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation, 2003: 286.

North America could have been a mechanism of repositioning company assets from one branch to organization headquarters.

Although al Barakaat violated US laws by operating a money remitter without the appropriate license, there was not sufficient evidence to indict either of the Hussein brothers on terror charges. Still convinced of the connection between al Barakaat North America. and al Qaeda, the United States arrested Mohammad Hussein for illegal business operations.¹⁰⁶ The lack of evidence connecting the Hussein brothers with al Qaeda led Canada to discontinue extrication proceedings against Liban Hussein in June of 2002.¹⁰⁷ Nine years later, in 2011, the United Nations Security Council approved a request to delist al Barakaat North America, Inc. from the Al Qaeda Sanctions List.¹⁰⁸ The decision was based on a lack of evidence connecting the Barakaat affiliate with al Qaeda.

Assessment

Both Canada's decision to cease extrication and the UN de-listing of al Barakaat North America, Inc. suggests that the al Barakaat case could be an example of American over-zealousness to draw connections between *hawalas* and al Qaeda following 9/11. Professor of Social and Political Theory Jeremy Waldron critiqued American "rebalancing" of the security-liberty scale after 9/11 for unequal distribution.¹⁰⁹ Officials claimed that reducing American liberties for all would increase collective security of the state. However, Waldron argues that the majority of white, upper-middle class Americans never felt the consequences of these policy changes, while thousands of American Muslims faced terror accusations, unlawful detention, and CIA "sneak and peaks."

¹⁰⁶ Beare, Margaret E., and Stephen Schneider. *Money Laundering in Canada: Chasing Dirty and Dangerous Dollars*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ United Nations Security Council. "Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Deletes Six Entities from Its List." News release. December 28, 2011. PDF.

¹⁰⁹ Jeremy Waldron, "Security and Liberty: The Image of Balance", *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol 11 (2), June 2003, pp. 191-210

The story of the Hussein brothers seems to support Waldron’s argument. The FBI was unable to find sufficient evidence to prove that Barakaat provided logistical and financial support to al Qaeda. Even without the necessary evidence, the US held Mohammed Hussein in solitary confinement in Boston, demanded the extradition of Liban Hussein from Canada, froze all Barakaat North America, Inc. assets, and publically listed the Hussein brothers as terrorist financiers. Following the settlement of Liban Hussein’s case, the Canadian Justice Department Spokesman commented, “we looked at the evidence, and then it became clear: there was no evidence.”¹¹⁰

Despite America’s inability to prove Barakaat’s connection to al Qaeda in a court of law, some terror analysts maintain the belief that the Barakaat system finances Islamic extremism. Cases involving informal money transfers (IMTs) such as Barakaat are often difficult to prove because *hawalas* tend to lack transparency.¹¹¹ Business often occurs between friends or acquaintances, meaning that some transactions go unrecorded. Lack of documentation inhibits government agencies from being able to effectively investigate alleged connections to terror groups. Thus, it is possible that money from al Barakaat North America, Inc. was redirected to al Qaeda through undocumented transfers without the Hussein brothers knowing. As a result, lack of evidence alone should not remove all suspicion of the organization.

Westgate Mall Massacre

On September 21, 2013, members of al-Shabaab opened fire in Nairobi’s Westgate Mall. Westgate Mall is an unsurprising target for an al-Shabaab attack. First and foremost, al-Shabaab has carried out nearly one quarter (22%) of its

¹¹⁰ Warde, Ibrahim. *The Price of Fear: the Truth Behind the Financial War on Terror*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp 99. 2007.

¹¹¹ The degree of transparency differs between each Barakaat affiliate. For example, the Swedish branch of Barakaat kept meticulous records of all transfers. Such records were critical in dropping terror charges against the Sweden’s Barakaat network. See: Warde, Ibrahim. *The Price of Fear: the Truth Behind the Financial War on Terror*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp 99. 2007.

attacks in Kenya since 2012.¹¹² This is likely in retaliation to Kenyan forces intervening in Somalia in October 2011. The Westgate Mall specifically is also a symbolic and strategic target for al-Shabaab: it is Israeli-owned and a favorite of many American ex-pats.¹¹³ As such, the mall symbolizes the “culture attack” al Qaeda ideology seeks to fight (the mall sells many Western products and symbolizes globalization of Western culture). In attacking the Westgate Mall, al-Shabaab was able to carry out violence against manifestations of the “far enemy.” This theory is supported by the fact that al-Shabaab gunmen let all Muslims leave the mall before proceeding to shoot at the remaining patrons. Victims of the shooting included family members of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, several American citizens, two French nationals, and two Canadian nationals.¹¹⁴ In total, the event killed 59 and injured 179.¹¹⁵

On the afternoon of September 21, al-Shabaab released a series of statements on its Twitter handle claiming responsibility for the attack. One of the group’s tweets suggested that a Maine Somali was one of the 15 gunmen who opened fire that day. Twitter suspended the al-Shabaab account and deleted the tweet regarding the Maine resident. Al-Shabaab did not release the identity of the alleged Maine gunmen, rendering the lone tweet as the only evidence connecting Maine to the shooting.

Assessment

State officials were unable to confirm the identity of the alleged Maine *jihadi*, and intelligence reports are still uncertain about whether or not a Maine resident was actually involved in the attack. Given the lack of identity of the

¹¹² Miller, Eric. *Al-Shabaab Attack on Westgate Mall in Kenya*. Background Report. Baltimore, MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2013. PDF.

¹¹³ Gettleman, Jeffrey. "Making Sense of Kenya's Westgate Mall Massacre." *New York Times* (New York, NY), September 27, 2013. Accessed March 9, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/29/sunday-review/making-sense-of-kenyas-westgate-mall-massacre.html?_r=0.

¹¹⁴ ABC News. "Kenya Mall Shooting: Timeline of Events." *ABC*, September 22, 2013. Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/kenya-mall-shooting-timeline-events/story?id=20334295>.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

Mainer and the fruitless investigations in Maine, the chances that one of the gunmen in Nairobi hailed from Maine is slim at best. Regardless, mentioning Maine as one of the states from which al-Shabaab drew its *jihadi* fighters shows the organization's desire to include Maine in its recruitment pool. It also suggests that there may be Mainers currently among the ranks of al-Shabaab who have not yet engaged directly in violence. The fact that one of the fifteen Westgate Mall terrorists was *allegedly* from Maine speaks to the reality that while Maine has protected itself from much of al-Shabaab's recruitment efforts, it is not invulnerable to radicalization.

PART VII: THREAT ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

Maine is one of fifteen states that the White House and Department of Homeland Security concluded has no specific domestic or foreign threat of terrorism.¹¹⁶ While the threat of terrorism is quite low in Maine, it would be incorrect to conclude that it does not exist. Terrorism expert Evan Kohlman stated that Portland, Maine is on a very short list of cities from which al-Shabaab recruits members.¹¹⁷ Kohlman was clear, however, that this is not because Portland has a high number of radicals. Rather, it is because Portland has one of the higher concentrations of Somali refugees in the United States.¹¹⁸ Because al-Shabaab is a Somali-based group, it primarily seeks to recruit individuals of Somali decent.

Most Somali refugees in Maine, though, are more interested in maintaining a quiet, safe lifestyle than returning to militancy. As Huisman concluded, most Somalis who *choose* Maine over more urban Somali communities tend to share a

¹¹⁶ Government of Maine. "Top Secret America: Maine." *Washington Post*. Accessed March 17, 2014. <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/states/maine/>.

¹¹⁷ Committee on Homeland Security, *Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland*, H.R. Doc. No. 112 (2011).

¹¹⁸ Other al Shabaab recruitment hot spots include San Diego, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and St. Paul, Minnesota. See: *WCSH Portland* (Portland, ME). "Portland Named as Recruiting Center for al-Shabaab Terrorists." September 22, 2013. Accessed March 4, 2014. <http://www.wcsh6.com/news/article/257532/2/Portland-named-as-recruiting-center-for-al-Shabaab-terrorists>.

general desire to distance themselves from violence. This may explain why al-Shabaab has been more successful recruiting Somali Muslims in other target cities, such as Minneapolis, than it has in Lewiston or Portland.

Even though the current threat level for Islamic radicalization and violent extremism is low in the state of Maine, this does not mean that Maine is unsusceptible to a terrorist threat. First and foremost, the majority of Islamic radicalization today occurs in the virtual world. After the US invasion of Afghanistan, Hamid Mir—Osama bin Laden’s biographer—noticed “every second al Qaeda member carrying a laptop and a Kalashnikov as they scattered into hiding.”¹¹⁹ In fact, the majority of terrorist arrests today are linked to the Internet.¹²⁰ Potential recruits are no longer meeting at local Islamic centers for training; they instead download jihadist material online, use it to self-radicalize, and then disseminate it to others in PDF formats that cannot be detected by online intelligence. As a result, it is possible that individuals in Maine are radicalizing under the radar and through unconventional social channels.

Secondly, there is a significant difference between first- and second-generation immigrants. While first-generation immigrants chose to live in Maine for the calm and safety, second-generation immigrants typically lack the first-hand experience with violence from the old world that deters radicalization. Consequently, these second-generation immigrants tend to be more susceptible to radicalization than their parents’ generations. Since Somali immigration to Maine began in the early 1990s, second-generation immigrants are just now reaching the age bracket most vulnerable to radicalization.

Finally, terror’s strongest asset is that it employs strategic surprise. The inability for specialists and government agencies to predict a terror attack maintains the constant threat—and fear—of terrorism. While studying terror

¹¹⁹ Saltman, Samuel S. "The Global Jihad Network: Why and How Al Qaeda Uses Computer Technology to Wage Jihad." *Journal of Global Change and Governance* 1.3 (2008): 2-10. PDF file.

¹²⁰ Sageman, Marc. *Leaderless jihad: Terror networks in the twenty-first century*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. pp. 73, Print.

networks and radicalization can better equip security professionals to identify vulnerable regions, potential targets for recruitment, and sensitive times/events, it cannot create immunity to terrorism.

In his book Surprise Attack: the Victim's Perspective, Ephraim Kam provides a critique of states' attempts to protect themselves from strategic surprise. The problem, writes Kam, is that surprise—by definition—is impossible to defend against: “it is possible to bring about improvements in intelligence work [that might] prevent or delay surprise in *some* cases, but [...] if the enemy is willing to wait patiently in order to achieve surprise, chances are good that he will succeed.”¹²¹ As such, improvements in intelligence (i.e. lowering the threat-sensitivity threshold or hiring specialists for specific threat areas) can only marginally improve a state's ability to thwart a strategic surprise from a group like al Qaeda or al-Shabaab.¹²²

Although Kam's book focuses on strategic surprise from conventional armies, his arguments also apply to the contemporary threat of global *jihad*. If states cannot definitively safeguard themselves from surprise attacks, and if terror relies on surprise as its primary strategy, then even “low risk” areas such as Maine are not invulnerable to terrorism. Consequently, it is important not to conflate “low risk” with “no risk.” While radicalization in Maine is highly unlikely, scholars of radicalization should continue to monitor the Somali community and assess the presence of various risk factors that might influence the prospects for radicalization in the future.

¹²¹ Kam, Ephraim. “Conclusion.” In *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004. pp. 229

¹²² Increasing a security system's sensitivity risks a case of “the boy who cried wolf.” a state will over-respond to a threat that does not materialize. This increases public unrest until the public becomes immune to the threats, ultimately driving the threat-response threshold back to its original (or lower) position. Institutionalizing “devil's advocate” departments may help avoid confirmation bias and selective intelligence gathering. However, such departments absorb significant time and resources that many intelligence agencies are unwilling to dedicate to a position created to advocate for unlikely scenarios. Lastly, employing terrorism specialists may be helpful in the beginning. Eventually, though, these employees will likely become integrated into the “group think” of the bureau, meaning that they will lose their resistance to majority opinion and confirmation bias. See: *ibid*.

While Maine’s most prominent risk factors (high education with low employment; discrimination; and cultural insulation) have not led to an increase in Islamic extremism thus far, Maine should address these risk factors where possible. Such efforts will serve as preemptive efforts to address potential drivers of radicalization as the demographic of second-generation immigrants enters their twenties. In keeping these recommendations in mind, Maine can best position itself to maintain the “low risk” status it currently enjoys.

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Posted by CAIRtv, September 3, 2009. Accessed March 8, 2014.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=citW94wpGPw>.

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