



Islamic Radicalization in New Jersey

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ABSTRACT

This paper is designed to provide an overview of Islamic radicalization in the state of New Jersey. It is part of ICT's Islamic Radicalization Index (IRI) and follows a similar structure to other papers in the index. This report is part of a larger project on Islamic Radicalization in the United States. The paper is divided into four sections: Part one contains qualitative and quantitative information on Muslim demographics in New Jersey. Part two contains an explanation of the types of Muslim institutions in New Jersey as well as a summary of each of the 98 mosques. Part three examines the radicalization process, outlines terrorist activity in the state and provides descriptions of homegrown extremists. Part four presents the paper's main findings.

* 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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MAP OF NEW JERSEY



Source: NJ Department of Transportation

INTRODUCTION

This paper is designed to provide an overview of Islamic radicalization in the state of New Jersey. It is part of ICT's Islamic Radicalization Index (IRI) and follows a similar structure to other papers in the index. Since the project is specifically on Islamic radicalization, a considerable amount of this report covers Muslim demographics and religious institutions in the region. This is only to gain insight about the community—not to single out Muslims. All ethno-religious groups can have extremists. Any individual or organization mentioned in this report is by no means tied to terrorism unless explicitly stated otherwise. The paper is divided into four sections:

Part one contains qualitative and quantitative information on Muslim demographics in New Jersey. Part two contains an explanation of the types of Muslim institutions in New Jersey as well as a summary of each of the 117 mosques. Part three examines the radicalization process, outlines terrorist activity in the state and provides descriptions of homegrown extremists. Part four presents the paper's conclusions and main findings.

PART ONE: DEMOGRAPHICS

Muslims in the United States:

The United States has a vibrant and diverse Muslim community. More than 60% are immigrants from approximately 77 countries.¹ Of the native-born American Muslims, about 60% of them are African Americans.² African American Muslims have their own mosques and practices, which make them significantly different from the immigrant Muslim communities. The Muslim community is rapidly growing in the U.S. and it expected to double by 2030.³ Unfortunately, many Muslims in the U.S. have suffered discrimination. According to a Gallup poll from 2010, 48% of Muslim Americans say they have faced racial or religious discrimination in the past year.⁴ The FBI's Hate Crime Statistics from 2013 indicate that of the 1,223 reported anti-religious hate crimes, 13.7% were victims of anti-Muslim bias. This makes victims of anti-Muslim bias the second largest group after victims of anti-Jewish bias (60.3%).⁵ In a 2011 Gallup poll about 75% of Americans believe that Muslims do not speak out enough against terrorism.⁶ The estimated Muslim population in the United States in 2010 was 2,595,000 people.⁷

Muslim Immigration to New Jersey:

New Jersey holds one of the largest Muslim communities in the United States. Though there are Muslims in New Jersey from a wide array of ethnic

¹ Toni Johnson, "Muslims in the United States," *Council on Foreign Relations*, Sep. 19, 2011. (<http://www.cfr.org/united-states/muslims-united-states/p25927>)

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Islamophobia: Understanding Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the West," *Gallup*. (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/157082/islamophobia-understanding-anti-muslim-sentiment-west.aspx>)

⁵ "Hate Crime Statistics, 2013," FBI. (http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2013/topic-pages/victims/victims_final)

⁶ Toni Johnson, "Muslims in the United States," *Council on Foreign Relations*, Sep. 19, 2011. (<http://www.cfr.org/united-states/muslims-united-states/p25927>)

⁷ "The Future of the Global Muslim Population," *PewResearch*, Jan. 27, 2011.

(<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/future-of-the-global-muslim-population-regional-americas/>)

backgrounds, the most researched community is the Arab community. According to the Arab American Institute, the estimated Arab population is 240,000 and New Jersey has the 5th largest Arab American population in the United States. Most of the Arab immigrants in New Jersey are originally from Egypt, Jordan and Syria. New Jersey is the only state where Egyptians are the largest subgroup of Arabs—one in three Arab Americans in the state are of Egyptian ancestry.⁸ New Jersey also has a large Pakistani community of about 26,000 people.⁹

Muslim Population in New Jersey

The total population of the state of New Jersey in 2010 was 8,791,894.¹⁰ According to the Association of Religion Data Archives, the total number of Muslim adherents in New Jersey as of 2010 is 160,666 people.¹¹ Therefore approximately 1.8% of New Jersey's residents adhere to Islam, which is roughly double the percentage of the national average. Unfortunately, there is no data that shows the breakdown of the Muslim community in New Jersey by ethnicity or religious sect.

The Muslim community in New Jersey is relatively large and thriving. There are many Islamic private schools, Halal certified foods, Middle Eastern and South Asian grocery stores, community centers, youth groups and, of course, mosques. As with most states in the U.S., the Muslim community in New Jersey appears to be quite integrated into American society. However, a 2011 Pew polling indicates that “overall, a 52% majority [of Muslims] says that government anti-terrorism policies single out Muslims in the U.S. for increased surveillance and

⁸ “New Jersey,” *Arab American Institute*, 2003.

(http://www.aaiusa.org/page/file/0396de8685f3cdaaf3_geimvyqja.pdf/NJdemographics.pdf)

⁹ Sen-Yuan Wu, “New Jersey’s Asian Population by Asian Group: 2010,” *Labor Market and Demographic Research*, Feb. 17, 2012. (http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/pub/lmv/lmv_18.pdf)

¹⁰ “State & County QuickFacts,” *U.S. Census Bureau*, 2013.

(<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/34000.html>)

¹¹ “State Membership Report,” *The Association of Religion Data Archives*, 2010.

(http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/s/34/rcms2010_34_state_name_2010.asp)

monitoring.”¹² That being said, the report did not find any signs of growth in alienation or support for extremism post 9/11.

Geographical Concentration

The Muslim community in New Jersey is relatively small compared to other religious communities, but large compared to the Muslim communities in other states. Below is a breakdown of the number of congregations, adherents and adherence rate in New Jersey and its counties. The counties listed are those that have Muslim communities based on the data from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA). If there is no data on the Muslim community of a county, the county will not be listed below. The three counties that we do not have data for are Cape May County, Salem County and Sussex County.

Table 1: Breakdown of Number of Congregations, Adherents & Adherence Rate in New Jersey (2000-2010)

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	68	120,724	14.3
2010**	109	160,666	18.3
2000 to 2010 Change	+41	+39,942	+33.1%

*Total population of New Jersey is 8,414,350

**Total population of New Jersey is 8,791, 894 (+4.5% since 2000)

†Number of adherents per 1,000 populations

Source: Association of Religion Data Archives

¹² “Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism,” *Pew Research Center*, Aug. 30, 2011. (<http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/muslim-americans-no-signs-of-growth-in-alienation-or-support-for-extremism/>)

Table 2: County Reports

Atlantic County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	2	3,782	15.0
2010**	4	9,422	34.3
2000 to 2010 Change	+2	+5,640	+149.1%

Bergen County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	4	6,473	7.3
2010**	7	4,799	5.3
2000 to 2010 Change	+3	-1,674	-25.9%

Burlington County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	5	8,464	20.0
2010**	6	7,770	17.3
2000 to 2010 Change	+1	-694	-8.2%

Camden County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	3	5,673	11.1
2010**	7	9,970	19.4
2000 to 2010 Change	+4	+4,297	+75.7%

Cumberland County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	--	--	--
2010**	1	1,474	9.4
2000 to 2010 Change	--	--	--

Essex County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	14	21,751	27.4
2010**	17	23,743	30.3
2000 to 2010 Change	+3	+1,992	+9.2%

Gloucester County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	1	1,891	7.4
2010**	1	1,474	5.1
2000 to 2010 Change	+0	-417	-22.1%

Hudson County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	9	15,697	25.8
2010**	13	21,042	33.2
2000 to 2010 Change	+4	+5,345	+34.1%

Hunterdon County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	--	--	--
2010**	1	150	1.2
2000 to 2010 Change	--	--	--

Mercer County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	4	11,673	33.3
2010**	5	5,122	14.0
2000 to 2010 Change	+1	-6,551	-56.1%

Middlesex County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	3	6,982	9.3
2010**	9	17,723	21.9
2000 to 2010 Change	+6	+10,741	+153.8%

Monmouth County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	5	9,455	15.4
2010**	5	7,397	11.7
2000 to 2010 Change	+0	-2,058	-21.8%

Morris County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	2	2,141	4.6
2010**	3	4,474	9.1
2000 to 2010 Change	+1	+2,333	+109.0%

Ocean County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	1	400	0.8
2010**	2	2,949	5.1
2000 to 2010 Change	+1	+2,549	+637.3%

Passaic County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	12	22,410	45.8
2010**	14	27,915	55.7
2000 to 2010 Change	+2	+5,505	+24.6%

Somerset County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate[†]
2000*	1	1,891	6.4
2010**	5	3,274	10.1
2000 to 2010 Change	+4	+1,383	+73.1%

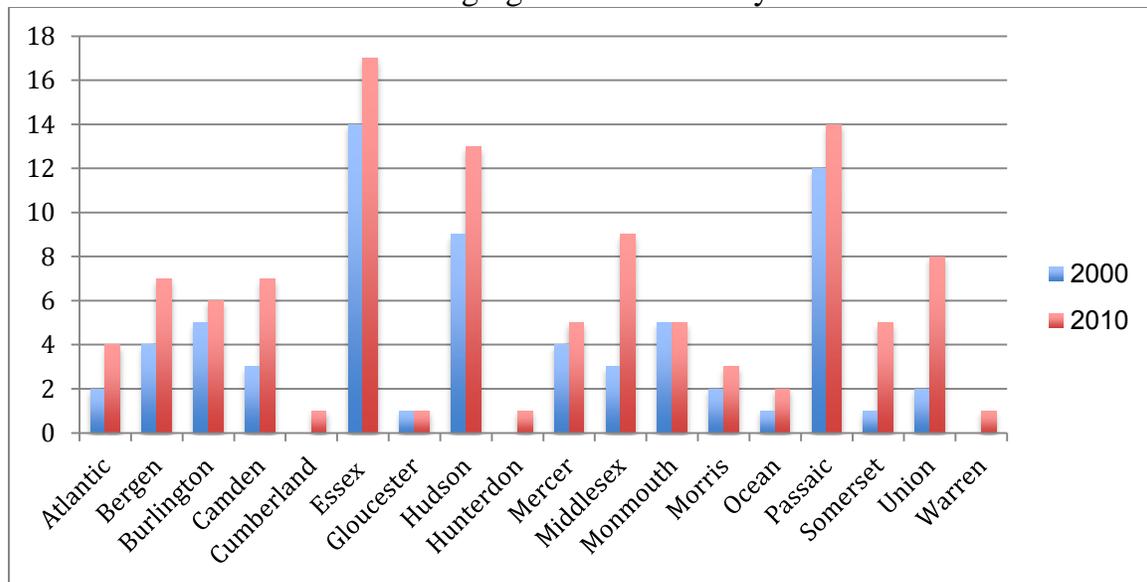
Union County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate [†]
2000*	2	2,041	3.9
2010**	8	10,494	19.6
2000 to 2010 Change	+6	+8,453	+414.2%

Warren County

Year	Congregations	Adherents	Adherence Rate [†]
2000*	--	--	--
2010**	1	1,474	13.6
2000 to 2010 Change	--	--	--

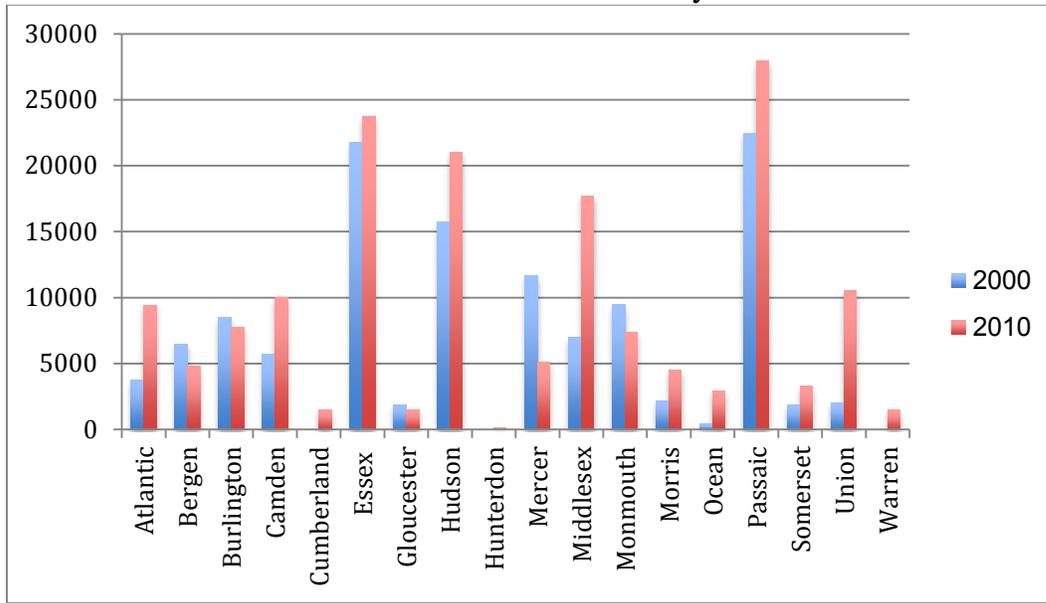
Chart 1: Number of Muslim Congregations Per County in 2000 and 2010*



*Please note that no data was available if the number is 0.

Source: Association of Religion Data Archives

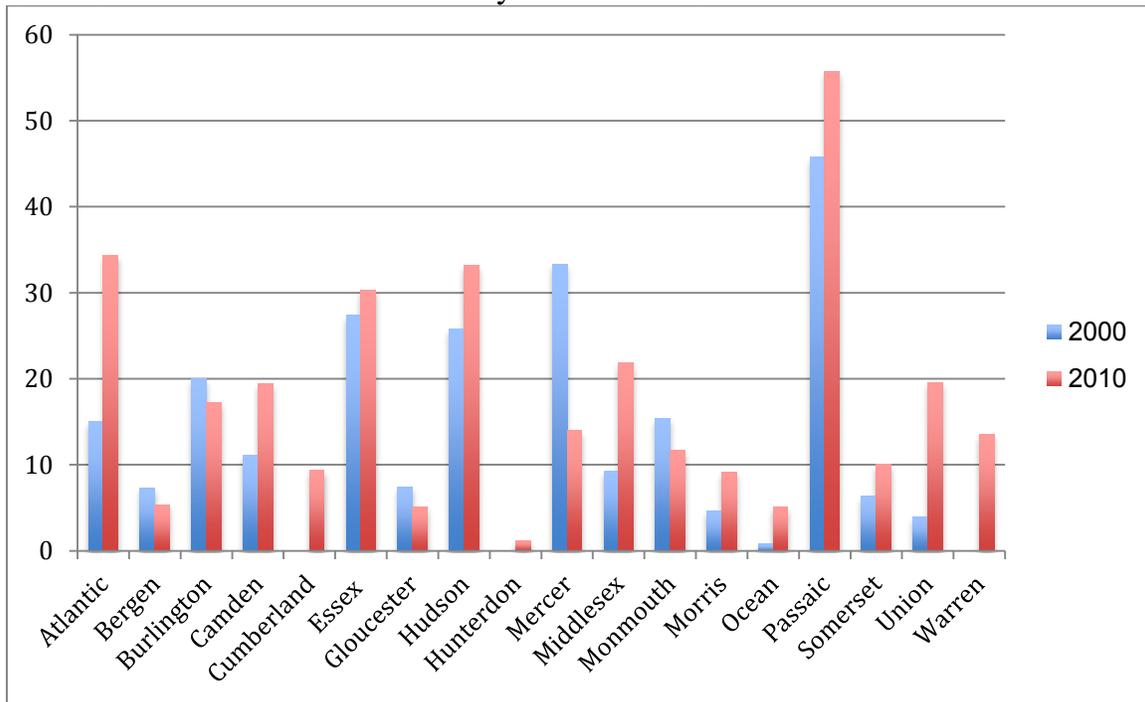
Chart 2: Number of Muslim Adherents Per County in 2000 and 2010*



*Please note that no data was available if the number is 0.

Source: Association of Religion Data Archives

Chart 3: Adherence Rate Per County in 200 and 2010*



*Please note that no data was available if the number is 0.

Source: Association of Religion Data Archives

PART TWO: ORGANIZATION

Muslim Representation: A Rich Mosaic

This section will attempt to list the various Islamic institutions in New Jersey and provide a brief description of each one. All of the information was obtained using open source documents. The source used for locating the mosques was Salanomatic.com, a site designed for Muslim Americans. It claims that there are 117 mosques in New Jersey, but only 98 were found to be active. Mosques noted with an asterisk (*) are worthy of attention.

The Sunni Institutions

The Sunni sect of Islam is by far the largest and it has been estimated that they make 85% to 90% of the Muslim population.¹³ After the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632, there was a schism in Islam that divided the religion into two sects—Sunni and Shia. The Sunnis accepted Abu Bakr as the first caliph, but the Shia wanted Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, to be the caliph. Sunni Muslims typically pray in a mosque, also called masjid in Arabic. It is important to note though that a mosque is not a necessity for prayer. The places of worship for Sunni institutions will be sorted into the central, north and south regions and placed in alphabetical order.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

Dawatul Islamia of Somerset

Located in Franklin Township, the Dawatul Islamia of Somerset was established in 1992 to serve the communities of Somerset and Middlesex counties to promote Islamic education by setting up madrassas, adult education programs, organizing shows, seminars, fund raisers and exchange programs within and outside of the

¹³ “Sunnis and Shia in the Middle East,” *BBC*, Dec. 19, 2013. (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25434060>)

United States of America. The center is affiliated with Sunni Islam and the congregation is predominantly African-American. The current imam is Imam Ibrahim Conteh.

Institute of Islamic Studies

Located in Cranbury, the institute functions as a local mosque with daily prayer services for the multi-cultural Sunni community in West Windsor, East Windsor, Cranbury, as well as the surrounding areas.

Islamic Center of East Brunswick

Located in East Brunswick, the center was established in 2004 so that community members can locally fulfill their social, cultural and religious needs. There are daily prayer services, weekend school as well as Qur'an courses available. The center is affiliated with Sunni Islam and the congregation is predominately South Asian. The current imam is Imam Mohammed Shahid.

Islamic Center of Hunterdon County

Located in Flemington, the center offers daily prayer services and educational services for both children and adults. It is a multi-cultural, Sunni congregation and the imam is Imam Yaser El-Menshawy. The website of this organization was not examined because it attempted to download malware.

Islamic Center of Old Bridge

Located in South Amboy, the center is affiliated with Sunni Islam and the congregation is predominantly South Asian. The website of this organization was not examined because it attempted to download malware.

Islamic Center of Plainfield

Located in Plainfield, the center offers daily prayer services for the Sunni denomination.

Islamic Circle of Mercer County

Located in Lawrenceville, the organization was established in 1999 and is dedicated to Muslims in Lawrenceville and neighboring areas. The congregation is multicultural and follows the Sunni tradition. There are daily prayer services, youth groups, Arabic classes and additional services. The director is Selim Shaikh.

Islamic Information Institute

Located in Parlin, the institute offers daily prayer services for a multicultural, Sunni congregation. The institute has a library of Islamic books, a weekly Qur'an circle after Mughrib on Fridays and a brief daily lesson after Isha.

*Islamic Society of Monmouth County**

Located in Middletown, the organization offers daily prayer services, marital services, youth groups and lecture series for a predominantly Sunni, Egyptian congregation. It is also known as Masjid al-Aman. The Imam is Sheikh Reda Shata and he is known for being a Hamas supporter. He has been under NYPD surveillance as well.¹⁴

Majidullah, Inc. of Plainfield

Located in Plainfield, the organization was established over 30 years ago and offers daily prayers, a soup kitchen, a youth karate class, weekend school for

¹⁴ Ryan Mauro, "Islamic Society of Monmouth County," *The Clarion Project*, Apr. 2, 2013. (<http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/islamic-society-monmouth-county>)

Arabic and Islamic studies as well as a social service agency. The imam is Imam Abdul Wali Muhammad and the congregation is predominately African American.

Musallah

Located in Iselin, this organization offers all prayers for a multicultural, Sunni congregation.

Muslim Center of Middlesex County

Located in Piscataway, the center serves the Muslim community of Middlesex County with prayer services, a variety of school programs and volunteer opportunities. The imam is Imam Nizam Ahmad Raouf Zaman and the president is Dr. Safiullah Faizullah.

Muslim Center of Somerset County

Located in Somerset, the center was established over 20 years ago to serve the Muslim community in the Somerville-Bridgewater-Hillsborough area with prayer services, Qur'an classes and Sunday school. It is a multicultural, Sunni congregation. The imam is Imam Hafiz Mohammed Shahid and the president is Brother Arshad Jalil.

Muslim Community of New Jersey

Located in Fords, the organization offers prayer services, youth groups, Arabic classes, weekend classes and a Thursday sisters program in Urdu. The congregation appears to be predominately South Asian. The imam is Imam Abu Fatima Asif Hirani and the president is Dr. Mohammad Javed.

New Brunswick Islamic Center

Located in North Brunswick, the center offers religious, educational and charitable services to Muslims and non-Muslims in the central New Jersey region. The

congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Qari Abdul Basit and the executive director is Sami Catovic.

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

Albanian American Islamic Center

Located in Garfield, the center caters to a predominately Albanian congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition and offers prayer services.

AlFalah Islamic Center

Located in Bedminster, the center attempts to serve the needs of the Muslim community with prayer services, a weekend Islamic school for families and guest speakers every week. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Al Mi'raj Center

Located in Bayonne, the center has an orthodox-revivalist approach to Islam and it is expressed through their services and programs. There are prayer services, youth activities, Quran classes and weekend school. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Al-Tawheed Islamic Center

Located in Jersey City, the center offers prayer services, weekend school and other activities to a multicultural congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Bayonne Muslims

Located in Bayonne, the organization offers prayer services, youth activities and community events. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Bedminster Musala

Located in Bedminster, the organization offers daily prayers, but no Friday prayers. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Bergen County Islamic Center

Located in Hackensack, the center was established in 1995 and offers prayer services, Sunday school and youth programs. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Bergen Turkish Cultural Center & Mosque

Located in Cliffside Park, the center is affiliated with the Turkish government and offers prayer services as well as classes on Islam and Turkish language. The president of the board of directors is Ismail Uslu.

Dar-ul-Islah: The Muslim Society of Bergen County, New Jersey

Located in Teaneck, the organization was established over 35 years ago and is often known as “The Teaneck Mosque” though there are other mosques in Teaneck. It offers prayer services, youth groups, classes as well as a variety of social services. The congregation is primarily South Asian and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Hafiz Saeed Qureshi and the president is Dr. Shujaat Husain.

Irvington Islamic Center

Located in Newark, the center was established to serve the Muslims of Union County, promote Islamic values and foster better relationships between Muslims and the greater community at large. The congregation adheres to the Sunni tradition. Today, the center is now called the Masjid Bani Adam.

Islamic Center of Harrison

Located in Harrison, the center provides prayer services, Islamic/Qur'an school for children and community services. The congregation is primarily South Asian and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Sharfuddin Nadwi and the president is Nadeem Haider.

*Islamic Center of Jersey City**

Located in Jersey City, the center carries out religious, cultural, education, economic, social, athletic and other activities pertaining to the realization of Islam as a complete way of life. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Dr. Farghal Ali and the president is Ahmed Shedded. According to the Investigative Project on Terrorism, this mosque has a history of ties to radical Islam.¹⁵ Mohammed A. Salameh, who frequented the mosque in the early 1990s, was convicted for his involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center Bombings.¹⁶ The director of the Islamic Center of Jersey City from 1978-1990, Mohammad al-Hanooti was named on a "List of Possible Unindicted Co-conspirators for the [1993] World Trade Center Bombing" and mentioned in the footnote of a civil action that he is "one of several ' Hamas leaders and activists' who were present at a 1993 meeting in Philadelphia."¹⁷ An imam of the mosque, Sayyid Askar, said in 2000 that "jihad is an absolute obligation upon those whose land has been occupied, and all Muslims have to stand together to repulse the enemy."¹⁸

¹⁵ "Islamic Center of Jersey City," *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*, 2010. (<http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/404>)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Islamic Center of Lake Hiawatha

Located in Lake Hiawatha, the center was established in 2008 to serve the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The president is Mr. Abdurehaman. According to their website, they are now closed due to some unexpected situation.

Islamic Center of Morris County

Located in Rockaway, the center offers prayer services, Islamic school and Islamic events. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The Imam is Imam Adel Barhoma.

*Islamic Center of Passaic County**

Located in Paterson, the center offers prayer services, weekend school, Arabic programs and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly Arab and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The Imam is Imam Dr. Muhammad Qatanani. In 1993, he was arrested by the Israeli government and reportedly confessed to being a member of Hamas. He was nearly deported in 2008 for failing to disclose this on his green card application.¹⁹

Islamic Center of Union County

Located in Union, the center offers prayer services, SAT classes, youth groups, weekend school and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly Arab and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

¹⁹Brian Donohue, "Paterson imam fights deportation," *NJ.com*, May 7, 2008. (http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/topstories/index.ssf/2008/05/paterson_muslim_leader_fights.html)

Islamic Cultural & Development Center

Located in Roselle, the center is also known as Masjid Ibn Taymiyah. It offers prayer services for a multicultural congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Islamic Society of Basking Ridge

Located in Basking Ridge, the organization was established in 2007 and offers prayer services, Qur'an classes, a study circle and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The president is M. Ali Chaudry.

Islamic Society of Northern Jersey

Located in Hackettstown, the organization, also known as the Masjid An-noor and the ISNJ Budd Lake Masjid, offers prayer services and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Jam-e-Masjid Islamic Center

Located in Boonton, the center offers a variety of prayer, educational and social services to the Muslim community. The center has multiple imams, including Imam Qari Mohammad Attaullah, and the president is Dr. Abbas Abdul Rahman.

Jamiah Masjid Livingston

Located in Livingston, the organization offers prayer services, sporting events and community service for the South Asian Muslim community. They have language classes in Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, and Arabic and engage in noble causes such as helping the flood victims of Bangladesh, earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan and poverty in India.

MAS Center

Located in Bayonne, the MAS Center is now known as the Bayonne Mosque. They offer regular prayers, Qur'an and Arabic classes, as well as a karate class. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Masjeed Jalalabad

Located in Paterson, the organization is also known as the Islamic Foundation of New Jersey. It was established in the late 1970s and offers prayer services, lectures and weekend classes. The community is predominantly Bengali and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Mufti Fatehul Islam and the president is Shamsul Islam.

Masjid al Huda

Located in Jersey City, the organization offers prayer services, classes and a variety of social programs. The congregation is multicultural, though there is a sizeable Hispanic population, and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Abu Sumayyah AbdurRazzaq Lebron.

Masjid al-Ferdous

Located in Paterson, the organization is also known as the Paterson Islamic Mission of New Jersey and was established in 1997. It offers prayer services, weekend Qur'an classes and a summer program for children. The masjid is open to anyone, but the congregation is predominantly Bengali and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

*Masjid al-Haqq**

Located in Newark, the organization offers prayer services, Islamic weekend school and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly African American and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is

Imam Abdul Kareem Muhammad, who was involved in a lawsuit against the NYPD's surveillance program.²⁰

Masjid al-Nasr

Located in Wayne, the organization offers prayer services for a multicultural, Sunni congregation.

Masjid al-Wadud

Located in Montclair, the organization offers prayer services for a predominantly African-American, Sunni congregation. The imam is Imam Kevin Dawud Amin.

Masjid al-Wali

Located in Edison, the building is currently under construction and will offer prayer services. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Masjid Baitul Nasr

Located in Pleasantville, the organization offers prayer services for a multicultural congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Bilal.

Masjid Dar ul-Khair

Located in Jersey City, the organization offers prayer services for a largely South Asian congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition. The jum'a prayers are held at the Masjid Jalalabad.

²⁰ Abdul Kareem Muhammad, "Why I'm fighting the NYPD's surveillance of Muslims: Opinion," *NJ.com*, Feb. 28, 2014.

(http://www.nj.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/02/why_im_fighting_the_nypds_surveillance_program_opinion.html)

*Masjid Imam Ali K. Muslim**

Located in Newark, the organization offers a safe environment for prayer, worship, education and community events for the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly African-American and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Abdul Akbar Muhammad and is known to be against the NYPD's surveillance measures.²¹

Masjidun-Nur

Located in Camden, the organization offers prayer services, weekend school, summer camp and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Ismam Radee Abdullah.

Minhaj ul Quran

Located in Hackensack, the organization offers prayer services and educational services to a predominantly South Asian, Sunni congregation. The imam is Imam Hafiz Saleem Qadri and the president is Dr. Meer Safdar Ali.

Muslim Community Center of Union County

Located in Elizabeth, the center was established in 1997 and offers prayer services, Sunday school, youth programs and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Syed Fakharudin Alvi and the president is Nawaz Sheikh.

²¹ "Records detail mosque spying; NYPD defends tactics," *USA Today*, Feb. 24, 2012.

(<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2012-02-22/newark-nypd-muslim-spying/53212918/1>)

Muslim Federation of New Jersey

Located in Jersey City, the organization offers prayer services, classes and other services for a multicultural, Sunni congregation.

National Islamic Association (NIA)

Located in Newark, the organization was established in 1985 and offers prayer services, weekly classes and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Daud Haqq.

Nida-ul-Islam Center

Located in Teaneck, the center offers prayer services, classes and other services for a multicultural, Sunni congregation. The imam is Mufti Abdul Muqtadir Sikander.

North Hudson Islamic Center

Located in Union City, the center was established in 1992 and offers prayer services and other services through a variety of committees. The congregation is predominantly Arab and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Muhammad Moussa.

Omar Mosque

Located in Paterson, this mosque offers prayer services and other services for a predominantly Arab, Sunni congregation.

Ulu Camii

Located in Paterson, this mosque offers prayer services, classes, a library and other services. The congregation is predominantly Turkish and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Özcan Güngör.

Waris Cultural Center

Located in Irvington, the center is also known as Masjid Waarith ud Deen, offers prayer services for a predominantly African-American congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Wahy Deen Shareef .

Yeni Dunya Mosque

Located in Clifton, the mosque offers daily prayer services for a predominantly Turkish congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition.

SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY*Delaware Valley Muslim Association*

Located in Burlington, the organization offers prayer service for a predominantly Turkish congregation that adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Ismail Ozturk.

Gracious Center of Learning & Enrichment Activities

Located in Cherry Hill, the organization offers prayer services, Arabic classes, study groups, after school classes, youth groups and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The director and imam is Imam John Starling.

Islamic Center of Ewing

Located in Ewing, the center offers prayer services, Sunday school, Islamic events and other services. The congregation is predominantly African-American and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Qareeb Bashir.

Islamic Center of Ocean County

Located in Toms River, the center offers prayer services, weekend and full time school, youth groups and other services. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Maqsood Qadri.

*Islamic Center of South Jersey**

Located in Palmyra, the center was established in the early 1980's and offers prayer services, Islamic school, youth groups and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The Duka brothers from the 2007 Fort Dix attack plot prayed at this mosque on Fridays.²²

Masjid As-Saffat

Located in Trenton, the organization offers prayer services, Qur'an classes, a 10-day Arabic course and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Shaykh Abdur-Rahman Ahmed.

Masjid Freehaven

Located in Lawnside, the organization offers prayer services, Sunday school and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly African-American and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The mosque is in

²² Alan Feuer, "Mosques Are Shaken by Ties to a Plot," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2007. (http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/14/nyregion/14mosque.html?_r=1&)

association with the leadership of Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, who passed away in 2008 and was one of Elijah Muhammad's sons. W.D. Mohammed also condemned the Nation of Islam.²³

Masjid Muhammad of al-Islam

Located in Chesterfield, the organization offers prayer services for a multicultural, Sunni congregation.

Masjid Muhammad of Atlantic City

Located in Atlantic City, the organization offers prayer services, Islamic studies classes, online classes and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Imam Amin Muhammad.

Masjid Shuhada

Located in Mount Holly, the organization offers prayer services, weekend Islamic school and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Sunni tradition. The imam is Sheikh Jamal Ahmed El-Chebli.

Masjid Ul-Jihad

Located in Trenton, the organization offers prayer services to a multicultural, Sunni congregation.

²³ "Warith Deen Mohammed Condemns the Nation of Islam," *Anti-Defamation League*, Aug. 14, 2007. (http://archive.adl.org/main_nation_of_islam/wd_mohammed_noi.html#Uxb9aOeSzm4)

Masjidul Taqwa

Located in Trenton, the organization offers prayer services to a multicultural, Sunni congregation.

Muslim American Community Association

Located in Voorhees, the organization offers prayer services, lectures and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation adheres to the Sunni tradition.

Quba School & Islamic Center

Located in Camden, the organization was established in 1985 and offers prayer services, lectures and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly African-American, most of whom are converts, and adheres to the Sunni tradition.

The Salafist Institutions

Salafism is a movement within Sunni Islam that attempts to follow the virtues, piety and leadership of Islam during the period from 610 until 661—from the prophetic mission of Muhammad until the death of Ali, the last of the rightly guided successors. The term “salaf” means predecessor, as their beliefs coincide with early Islam. Salafism is often used synonymously with Wahhabism, though there are disputes as to whether they should be used synonymously. Within Salafism, there is a particular strand known as Salafi-jihadism, which rejects democracy and Shia rule.²⁴ They believe in violent jihad to achieve their political goals. An example of a Salafi-jihadist group is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

²⁴ Hafez, Mohammed M. *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2007. 63-70.

(ISIS), which was disaffiliated from al-Qaeda last February and is annihilating minorities as well as devout Muslims in the parts of Iraq and Syria they control.

Al-Minhaal Center

Located in South Plainfield, the center offers prayer services, Arabic classes, Qur'an classes and other services to the Muslim community. The mosque can hold about 1,500 people. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Shaykh Alaa El-Sadaawi.

Islamic Center of America

Located in East Orange, the center offers prayer services, Islamic classes and other services. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Imam Abu Mulimah.

Islamic Cultural Center

Located in Newark, the center offers prayer services for a multicultural congregation that adheres to the Salafi tradition.

Islamic Dawah Center of Plainfield

Located in Plainfield, the center offers prayer services, weekly classes and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The president is Mudeer Khalifa Abdur Rahman.

Masjid al-Furqaan

Located in Atlantic City, the mosque offers prayer services for a multicultural, Salafi congregation.

Masjid Ansar As-Sunnah

Located in Paterson, the mosque was established in 2000 and offers prayer services, classes and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Imam Hamza Abdus-Salaam.

Masjid As-Habul Yameen

Located in East Orange, the mosque offers prayer services and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly African-American and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Imam Abdoul Aziz.

Masjid Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab

Located in Camden, the mosque offers prayer services and other services to a multicultural, Salafi congregation.

Masjid Rahmah

Located in Newark, the mosque offers prayer services, classes and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly African-American and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Imam Umar Quinn.

Masjidul Bayaan

Located in Asbury Park, the mosque offers prayer services, weekly educational classes and other services. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Imam Abu Hafsah Kashiff Khan Al Bakistani.

Muslim Community Organization of South Jersey

Located in Atlantic City, the organization and was established in the early 1990s. The mosque offers prayer services, Sunday school and has a community center.

The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Imam Jawad Rasul and the president is Dr. Abdul Qadir.

Muslim Society of Jersey Shore

Located in Toms River, the organization, also known as Masjid Bilal, offers prayer services, a variety of classes and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly Arab and adheres to the Salafi tradition. The imam is Imam Alaa Ahmed and the president is Walaa Eldin Elsayed.

The Shia Institutions

Approximately 10-15% of the world's Muslim community adheres to the Shia tradition. They are a majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan. After the schism between the Sunni and Shia, the Shia supported Ali's ascendancy. The term Shia originates from "shi'at Ali," which means "supporters" or "helpers of Ali."²⁵

Al Gadeer Benevolent Foundation

Located in North Bergen, the foundation was established in 2012 and offers prayer services, lectures and other services to the Shia community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Jafari tradition.

Astaana-e-Zehra

Located in Englishtown, the organization was established in 1990 and is the religious center of the Ahle Baith Foundation. The organization offers prayer services, religious school, youth groups and other services. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Jafari tradition.

²⁵ Christopher M. Blanchard, "Islam: Sunnis and Shiites," *Congressional Research Service*, Jan. 28, 2009. (<http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RS21745.pdf>)

Imam Ali Masjid

Located in Pennsauken Township, the mosque offers prayer services for a multicultural, Jafari congregation.

Imam-a-Zamana Foundation of North America

Located in Freehold, the foundation was founded in 1988 originally as Imam Sahib uz-Zaman Trust. The organization offers prayer services, Islamic school, family picnics and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation adheres to the Jafari tradition.

Masjid-e-Ali

Located in Somerset, the mosque was founded in 1980 and offers prayer services, religious classes and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and adheres to the Jafari tradition.

Mehifile Shahe-Khorasan Charitable Trust

Located in Englewood, the organization offers prayer services, an investment-banking program and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Jafari tradition.

Mohammadia Islamic Center

Located in Paterson, the organization offers prayer services to a predominantly Afghan congregation that adheres to the Jafari tradition.

Shia Association of North America

Located in Delran, the association, also known as Bait-ul-Qayem, was established over 25 years ago. It offers prayer services, classes, youth groups and other

services for the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Jafari tradition.

Zainabia

Located in Irvington, the organization offers prayer services, lectures and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Jafari tradition.

The Non-denominational Institutions

Non-denominational Muslims adhere to a type of Islam that is not restricted to any specific sect. They would refer to themselves as “just Muslim.”

Islamic Society of Central Jersey

Located in Monmouth Junction, the organization offers prayer services, weekend school and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and non-denominational. The imam is Imam Hamad Ahmad Chebli.

Jamia Musallah

Located in Edison, the organization was founded in 2008 and offers prayer services and other services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and non-denominational.

IABC Mosque

Located in Burlington, IABC stands for Islamic Academy of Burlington County and was established in 2008. The mosque offers prayer services, Islamic schooling and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and non-denominational.

Masjud Darul Islam

Located in Elizabeth, the mosque offers prayer services for the Muslim community. The congregation is multicultural and non-denominational.

The Sufi Institutions

Sufism is a sect of Islam that emphasizes the inner, mystical, or psycho-spiritual dimension of Islam. Some scholars, however, believe that it is a philosophy that falls outside the realm of Islam.²⁶

Sunni Rizvi Jamia Masjid

Located in Jersey City, the mosque, also known as the Jersey City Islamic Center, offers prayer services, Qur'an classes, youth groups and other services to the Muslim community. The congregation is predominantly South Asian and adheres to the Sufi tradition. The imam is Imam Maulana Hafiz Ghulam Yasin Rizvi.

Muslim Student Association (MSA)

MSA is a national, religious organization that was formed in 1963 to serve Muslim youths. It offers many valuable services to Muslim students throughout the nation. The organization has chapters on many college and university campuses in the U.S. and Canada. MSA is only included here because we are trying to survey the entire Muslim community of New Jersey, but some chapters of the organization have had ties to extremism. According to a report from the NYPD, "Extremists have used these university-based organizations as forums for the development and recruitment of likeminded individuals—providing a receptive platform for younger, American-born imams, to present a radical message in a way that

²⁶ Alan Godlas, "Sufism, Sufis, and Sufi Orders: Sufism's Many Paths," *Islam and Islamic Studies Resources*. Accessed Apr. 2, 2014. (<http://islam.uga.edu/Sufism.html>)

resonates with the students.”²⁷ Furthermore, a few MSA members have joined terrorist organizations in the past. One such example is Omar Hammami from Daphne, Alabama. Hammami served as president of The University of South Alabama’s MSA. A week after 9/11, he was quoted in the school newspaper as saying it was “difficult to believe a Muslim could have done this.”²⁸ Several years later, he moved to Somalia and joined al-Shabaab, which today is an official al-Qaeda affiliate.²⁹

The MSA chapters that the national organization claims to be affiliated with are below. There are MSAs at other universities that are not mentioned on the official MSA website as the list has not been updated since May 2012.³⁰

College of New Jersey

Drew University

Montclair State University

New Jersey Institute of Technology

Passaic County Community College

Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Seton Hall University

William Paterson University of New Jersey

²⁷ Mitchel D. Silber, Arvin Bhatt, et. al, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” *New York City Policy Department*, 2007.

(http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf)

²⁸ Mike Levine, “Al Qaeda Linked American Terrorist Unveiled, as Charges Await Him in U.S.,” *Fox News*, Sept. 4, 2009. (<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2009/09/04/al-qaeda-linked-american-terrorist-unveiled-charges-await/>)

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “2013-2014 Affiliated Chapters List,” *Muslim Students Association*, May 10, 2012. Accessed Apr. 2, 2014. (<http://msanational.org/2012-2013-affiliated-chapters-list/>)

PART THREE: RADICALIZATION

Islamic Radicalization: An Overview

The study of Islamic radicalization can help explain how regular people can transform from civilians to terrorists. It is important that we understand how radicalization works because this may provide us with insight on how to stop or prevent terrorism. An understanding of radicalization can also teach us about de-radicalization—the transformation of a terrorist into a civilian. Thus, radicalization is an extremely important issue in terrorism studies and must be thoroughly researched.

As with most theories in the social sciences, radicalization theories are not perfect, but they are the best explanations of radicalization that we have at the moment. Many researchers and organizations including Dr. Fathali M. Moghaddam, Dr. Ehud Sprinzak and the New York Police Department (NYPD) have developed their own theories of radicalization. For the purpose of this paper, we will only use the NYPD theory because it is designed specifically to deal with Islamic radicalization, which is the phenomenon we are examining, and New York City is in close proximity to New Jersey.

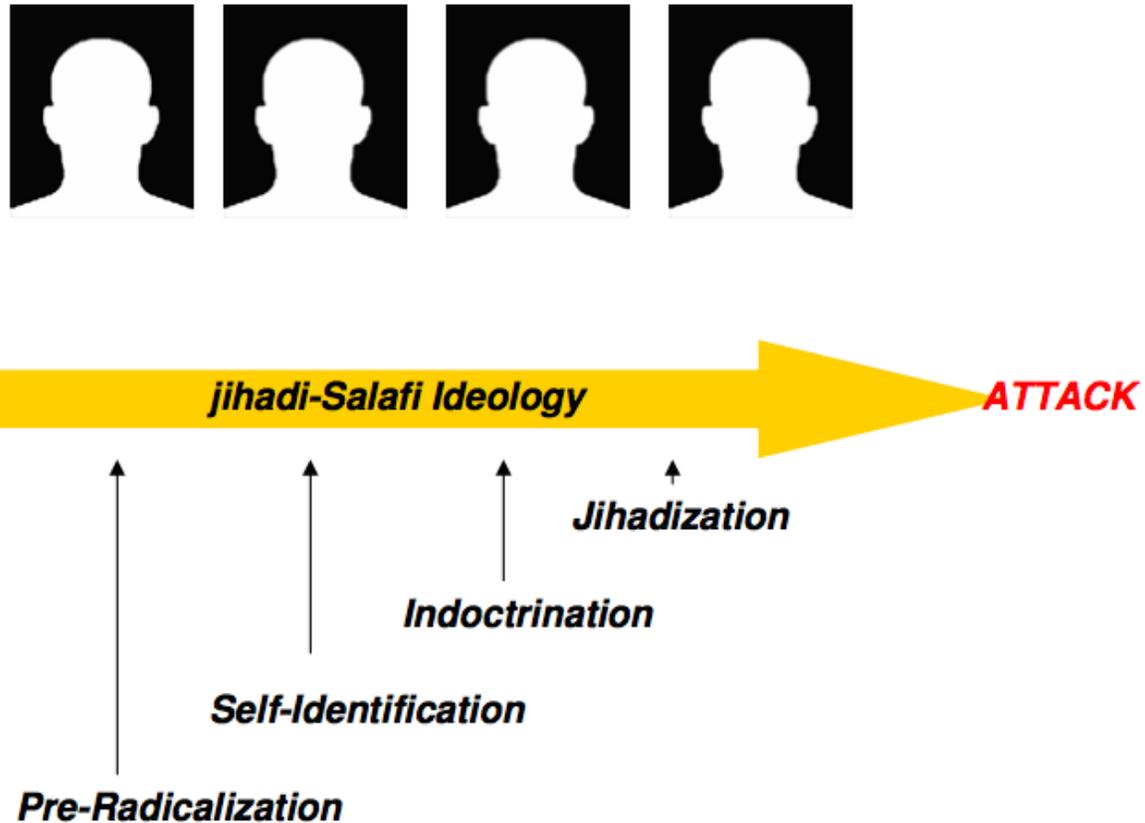
The NYPD theory was developed to provide “a conceptual framework for understanding the process of radicalization in the West.”³¹ They examined several case studies and have determined that radicalization in the West is, first and foremost, driven by the Salafi-jihadist Ideology. The ideology, they claim, has a religious dimension, a political dimension and an appeal.

³¹ Mitchel D. Silber, Arvin Bhatt and et. al, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” *New York City Policy Department*, 2007. (http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf)

According to Dr. Assaf Moghadam, the Salafi-jihadist ideology is a religious ideology. It contains all of the four core functions of an ideology, which are raising awareness of particular issues to an “in-group,” attributing blame of the issues to some “out-group,” creating a group identity and offering a specific program of action to resolve the issues at hand. Unlike secular ideologies, such as communism and fascism, the Salafi-jihadist ideology also invokes religion. Salafi-jihadists describe themselves and their enemies in religious terms, they describe their strategy and mission as religious, and they justify acts of violence with selective references to the Qur’an.³² Thus, we must understand that radicalization in the West is not driven by mainstream Islam, but by Salafi-jihadism.

The radicalization process, as determined by the NYPD, is composed of four phases. Each stage has its own unique characteristics and the model is sequential, though individuals do not always follow the progression exactly. The four stages can be summarized in the image below.

³² Assaf Moghadam, “The Salafi-Jihad as a Religious Ideology,” *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 3 (2008). (<http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-salafi-jihad-as-a-religious-ideology>)



Source: NYPD

Stage 1: Pre-Radicalization- describes the individual's world—his or her pedigree, lifestyle, religion, social status, neighborhood and education—just prior to their journey of radicalization.

Stage 2: Self-Identification- the individual begins to explore Salafi Islam, while slowly migrating away from his or her former identity, which is now redefined by Salafi philosophy, ideology and values. The catalyst for this is often a cognitive event or crisis that challenges one's certitude in previously held beliefs. The two indicators for this stage are progression or gravitation towards Salafi Islam and regular attendance at a Salafi mosque.

Stage 3: Indoctrination- the individual intensifies his or her beliefs, wholly adopts Salafi-jihadi ideology and concludes, without question, that the conditions and circumstances exist where action (i.e. militant jihad) is required to support and further the Salafist cause. The two indicators for this stage are withdrawal from the mosque and politicization of new beliefs.

Stage 4: Jihadization- members of the cluster accept their individual duty to participate in jihad and self-designate themselves as holy warriors or mujahedeen. The group will ultimately begin operational planning for jihad or a terrorist attack. Jihadization is a very complex stage and has a variety of indicators including traveling abroad, “outward bound”-like activities, mental reinforcement activities, researching on the Internet, reconnaissance/surveillance and acquiring material to develop a device.

Terrorist Activity in New Jersey

Al-Qaeda and Affiliates

Al-Qaeda is more responsible for terrorist attacks against New Jersey’s residents than any other terrorist organization. The organization has inflicted the greatest harm on New Jersey during the 9/11 attacks. A very small number of New Jersey’s Muslims have also been radicalized to join al-Qaeda and adhere to its global ideology. We will mention cases of this in the subsequent pages. Since 9/11, the organization has changed substantially. Al-Qaeda began as a relatively defined organization, but now it is primarily a decentralized group of affiliates that carry the brand name. There are five official affiliates among numerous unofficial affiliates. The official affiliates include al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Shabab, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent and Jabhat al-Nusra. Al-Qaeda core still exists, but it is quite weakened. As we

have seen from the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, these affiliates are extremely capable and dangerous.

Al-Shabaab Connection:

Mohamed Mahmood Alessa is from North Bergen, New Jersey and was born to Palestinian-Jordanian parents. According to Alessa's mother, he attended local public elementary school, two Catholic grade schools, a boarding school in Connecticut, a school for troubled youth, three Muslim schools and two public high schools. He frequently got in trouble for fighting or his speech.³³ From 2005-2006, which was at North Bergen High School and KAS Prep, Alessa threatened to blow up the school, mutilate gays and punish women who were not subordinate to men.³⁴ He posed such a safety threat that in 10th grade he received lessons in a local public library under watch of a security guard. Alessa was known for being a difficult adolescent and family friends watched him scream at his mother, vandalize his father's car and knock food off the shelf in a deli. His parents brought him to therapists, and he was prescribed medicine for anger management. Sometime around 2007, however, he stopped taking his medicine and stopped seeing therapists.³⁵ According to the family's neighbor, Wilmer Precilla, he would make derogatory remarks against Hispanics in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood and would then try, unsuccessfully, to join a Dominican gang.³⁶

Carlos "Omar" Eduardo Almonte is a native of Santiago, Dominican Republic. Almonte was raised Roman Catholic in Elmwood Park, New Jersey. He had a troubled youth and was arrested three times in less than four

³³ Kareem Fahim, Richard Pérez-Peña and Karen Zraick, From Wayward Teenagers to Terror Suspects, *The New York Times*, June 11, 2010.

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/12/nyregion/12suspects.html?pagewanted=1&r=0>)

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

months for petty crimes. At the end of the summer of 2004, Almonte converted to Islam. According to a friend, his interest began when he heard someone preaching at the Garden State Plaza mall in Paramus. He visited mosques in Paterson and Union City, and took the name Omar. There is a police report on May 23, 2009 about a fight that broke out in the family. Almonte began preaching about Islam to his brother, who objected, and it escalated into a physical fight.

Alessa and Almonte met sometime in 2005 and were members of the same friends group, which they called the PLO. Alessa was not particularly religious then, but Almonte was becoming more so since he was a recent convert. In October 2006, the FBI received a tip that Alessa and Almonte were talking about holy war and killing non-Muslims. The authorities were in contact with and informed by Almonte's family. In 2007, the two travelled to Jordan, attempting to join al-Qaeda and infiltrate the Iraqi border. They were turned away at the border and never contacted by al-Qaeda.³⁷ On a Facebook page in October 2008, Almonte posted quotes from Salafi jihadists like Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza al-Masri.³⁸ In 2008 and 2009, Alessa started lecturing about God and grew a beard. They became friends with Bassem, who offered to put them up at his house in Egypt. Bassem, however, was an undercover police officer.³⁹

Alessa and Almonte were arrested on June 5, 2010 at the JFK International airport. They attempted to fly from New York to Egypt and then travel to Somalia. In Somalia they had plans to join al-Shabaab, which is an official al-Qaeda affiliate

³⁷ Perry Chiamonte, "Bloodlust of NJ 'jihadists,'" *New York Post*, June 7, 2010. (<http://nypost.com/2010/06/07/bloodlust-of-nj-jihadists/>)

³⁸ Kareem Fahim, Richard Pérez-Peña and Karen Zraick, From Wayward Teenagers to Terror Suspects, *The New York Times*, June 11, 2010.

(http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/12/nyregion/12suspects.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0)

³⁹ Ibid.

as of February 2012.⁴⁰ Both Alessa and Almonte admitted to acquiring, viewing and displaying to others extremist materials. The materials—produced by and relating to al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab and other groups—justified killing any of the individuals who opposed them.⁴¹ To prepare for their journey to Somalia, they saved and pooled thousands of dollars, physically conditioned themselves, and performed combat simulations. Both men plead guilty.⁴²

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Connection:

Sharif Mobley was born in January 1984 in Buena, New Jersey to a family of Somali descent. Mobley’s high school classmates remember him for being very religious, with a small group of friends.⁴³ Many thought of him as a class clown and he enjoyed martial arts. He was always trying to convert non-Muslim friends to Islam. His father noted that Sharif was more connected to the faith than himself. Mobley attended the Quba Mosque in West Philadelphia during his childhood and for part of his adult life.⁴⁴ When he was a child, he was enrolled in a weekend Arabic literacy and Qur’anic study program at the mosque. After the program ended in 1994, Imam Anwar Muhaimin claims he did not see him until 2002 when he would come to prayers “very infrequently.”⁴⁵ The imam stated that he was never an established member.

⁴⁰ Katherine Zimmerman, “Al Qaeda and its Affiliates in 2013,” *AEI Critical Threats Project*, Apr. 25, 2013. (<http://www.criticalthreats.org/al-qaeda/al-qaeda-affiliates>)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “Two New Jersey Men Plead Guilty To Conspiring To Kill Overseas For Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization Al Shabaab,” *United States Department of Justice*, Mar. 3, 2011. (<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nj/Press/files/Alessa,%20Mohamed%20et.%20al.%20News%20Release.html>)

⁴³ Peter Finn, “The post-9/11 life of an American charged with murder,” *The Washington Post*, Sept. 4, 2010. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/04/AR2010090403328.html>)

⁴⁴ David O’Reilly, Michael Matza, Jacqueline L. Urgo, and Elisa Lala, “Shock and disbelief follow terrorism arrest,” *Philly.com*, Mar. 13, 2010. (http://articles.philly.com/2010-03-13/news/25215990_1_sana-a-al-qaeda-prayers)

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Overtime, Mobley started becoming more political and there were increased tensions with his friends. After he completed high school, he worked as an unskilled laborer including at nuclear power plants. In 2004, Mobley went on the Hajj to Mecca for the first time. He lost his interest in martial arts competitions after the Hajj and went back to Mecca as a guide two more times. When he encountered a former friend who joined the U.S. army, Mobley called him a “Muslim killer.” In the summer of 2005, Mobley met Nzinga Saba Islam and married her three months later. In January 2007, they had a daughter and they moved to Newark, Delaware six months later. The family sometimes attended services at the Islamic Society of Delaware.⁴⁶

Islam said that she and Mobley were thinking about moving to an Arab country so that they could learn Arabic and deepen their knowledge of Islam. They became friends with a Yemeni family that ultimately inspired them to move to Yemen in July 2008. In Yemen, they became acquainted with the radical American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, whose teachings they listened to on CDs. They returned to the U.S. in October so that Islam could give birth to a son. In December, they went back to Yemen.

According to a U.S. official, Mobley rarely attended language class and would instead facilitate the movement of extremists to Yemen on behalf of AQAP. After an AQAP attack, the couple wanted to return home. When Mobley went to the U.S. embassy for extra pages in his passport and an exit visa, he was interviewed by the FBI and said to be “uncooperative.” The couple later realized they were under surveillance and they decided to never leave the apartment except to go to the embassy or buy food. Mobley was arrested by Yemen’s Political Security

⁴⁶Robert Mackey, “American Held in Yemen After Shootout,” *The New York Times News Blog*, Mar. 11, 2010. (http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/american-held-in-yemen-after-shootout/?hp&_r=1&gwh=44B927B339FCDFEA091F3AFC4AC85E933&gwt=pay)

Organization and was shot in the process. He was sent to the hospital where he was denied the request to speak with his wife. FBI agents arrived and were trying to have him reveal the location of Anwar al-Awlaki. In the hospital, he killed one guard, wounded another and attempted to kill himself.⁴⁷

Hamas

Hamas is a designated terrorist organization in the United States, Canada, Israel, European Union, Egypt and many other countries. The organization, which is headquartered in Gaza with strongholds throughout the Palestinian Territories, is an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Egypt recently declared the entire Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization.⁴⁸

Hamas is a hybrid terrorist organization and is deeply rooted in Palestinian society. The organization is Islamist and performs da'wah activities, which makes it appealing for the more religious sector of society. In comparison to their political rival, Fatah, they suffer from less corruption, which understandably makes the organization more attractive. Nonetheless, Hamas is a terrorist group and intentionally targets civilians through rocket attacks and suicide bombings.

New Jersey has a number of imams who have been allegedly tied to Hamas. Imam Mohammed Qatanani was born in Nablus and moved to Paterson in 1994. He became the head imam of the Islamic Center of Passaic County, New Jersey's largest mosque. Qatanani has been highly praised as a voice of moderation and tolerance. The day after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Qatanani

⁴⁷ Peter Finn, "The post-9/11 life of an American charged with murder," *The Washington Post*, Sept. 4, 2010. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/04/AR2010090403328.html>)

⁴⁸ Shadia Nasralla, "Egypt designates Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist group," *Reuters*, Dec. 25, 2013. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/25/us-egypt-explosion-brotherhood-idUSBRE9BO08H20131225>)

instructed his congregation to help the FBI with Arabic translations.⁴⁹ However, he failed to mention his detention in Israel in 1993 on his green card application.⁵⁰ According to Israeli court records, Qatanani confessed before a judge in 1993 to charges of membership in Hamas and providing services to Hamas.⁵¹ On September 4, 2008, a U.S. Immigration Court judge in Newark dismissed charges against Imam Mohammed Qatanani, rejecting government claims that the cleric failed to disclose information about a prior arrest and conviction in Israel for allegedly being a member of Hamas.⁵²

Sheikh Reda Assayyid Shata is currently the Imam of al-Aman in Middletown, New Jersey. He was born in Egypt on April 30, 1968. His entire education took place in Cairo's famous al-Azhar University. He presents many lectures and lessons in mosques and Islamic centers throughout the United States.⁵³ Shata is a known Hamas supporter and considers them a powerful symbol of resistance. When Israel executed Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a founder of Hamas, Shata went to a memorial service for him and publically stated that the "lion of Palestine has been martyred."⁵⁴ Despite having dined with former New York City Mayor Bloomberg, Shata has been under NYPD surveillance and classified as a "Tier One" person of interest.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Brian Donohue, "Paterson imam fights deportation," *NJ.com*, May 7, 2008.

(http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/topstories/index.ssf/2008/05/paterson_muslim_leader_fights.html)

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Dwoskin, "Supporters Rally in Newark as an Imam's Trial Opens," *The New York Times*, May 9, 2008. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/09/nyregion/09imam.html>)

⁵¹ Brian Donohue, "Witness says imam admitted belonging to Hamas," *NJ.com*, May 8, 2008.

(http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2008/05/authorities_say_imam_belonged.html)

⁵² Walter Ruby, "Cleared in court, imam praises Jewish supporter," *The New Jersey Jewish News*, Sept. 11, 2008. (<http://njewishnews.com/njn.com/091108/njImamPraisesJewish.html>)

⁵³ Sheikh Reda Shata, "Curriculum Vitae of Sheikh Reda Assayyid Shata," *Sheikh Reda Shata*. Accessed Apr. 2, 2014. (<http://www.redashata.com/English/index.php?page=bio>)

⁵⁴ Andrea Elliott, "To Lead the Faithful in a Faith Under Fire," *The New York Times*, Mar. 6, 2006.

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/06/nyregion/06imam.html?pagewanted=all>)

⁵⁵ Eileen Sullivan, "NYPD spied on city's Muslim anti-terror partners," *Associated Press*, Oct. 6, 2011.

(<http://www.ap.org/Content/AP-In-The-News/2011/NYPD-spied-on-citys-Muslim-anti-terror-partners>)

September 11, 2001 Attacks

New Jersey was greatly impacted by 9/11 and has the second highest casualty toll after New York.⁵⁶ According to the NJ 9/11 Memorial Foundation, 749 New Jersey residents were killed on September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in Shanksville, PA.⁵⁷ Given that this radicalization project will include an account of 9/11 in other states, I will only cover United Airlines Flight 93, which departed from Newark, New Jersey. All of the information presented can be found in the 9/11 Commission Report.

By 7:39 AM, Saeed al Ghamdi, Ahmed al Nami, Ahmad al Haznawi and Ziad Jarrah checked in at the United Airlines ticket counter for Flight 93, going to Los Angeles. The four men passed through the security checkpoint. By 7:48 AM, all four of them were seated in first-class seats in close proximity to the cockpit. Due to Newark Airport's heavy morning traffic, the plane took off at 8:42 AM, more than 25 minutes late. When United 93 departed, the crew was unaware of the hijacking of American 11. By 8:46 AM both American 11 and United 175 had been hijacked. Both the FAA and the airlines share responsibility for failing to notify other planes quickly enough. United only made decisive action to take defensive action at 9:19 AM, when a flight dispatcher began warning his 16 transcontinental flights on his own initiative. United 93 received this warning at 9:24 AM. At 9:32 a hijacker made the announcement, "Ladies and Gentlemen: Here the captain, please sit down keep remaining sitting. We have a bomb on board. So, sit." Jarrah, the one who could pilot the plane, then instructed the plane's autopilot to head east. A woman was being held captive inside the cockpit, and one of the hijackers killed or otherwise silenced her. Several

⁵⁶ "Our Story: New Jersey's 9/11 Collection," *State of New Jersey Department of State*, 2011. (http://www.nj.gov/state/museum/dos_museum_exhibit-911.html)

⁵⁷ "The People," *New Jersey 9/11 Memorial Foundation*, Accessed Apr. 2, 2014. (<http://www.nj911memorial.org/people/>)

passengers and crew-members made phone calls to their family, friends and colleagues, informing them of the situation; all understood the plane had been hijacked. The hijackers were aware that the passengers were making these calls, but did not seem concerned. A passenger had been stabbed and two people were lying on the floor. There was no evidence of any firearms or explosives. During at least five calls, information was shared about the other attacks and one passenger indicated there was a vote on whether to revolt, in which they decided to act. The passenger revolt began at 9:57 AM. Jarrah responded by rolling the plane left and right and pitched the nose of the plane up and down. At 10:00:03 AM, Jarrah stabilized the plane. Jarrah asked a hijacker if he should finish it off and he was instructed to wait. The passengers continued to revolt and Jarrah stopped the violent maneuvers at 10:01:00 AM, while saying “Allah is the greatest!” He was then instructed to “Pull it down! Pull it down!” A hijacker yelled “Allah is the greatest” while there were sounds of the passenger attack continuing and the plane crashed in an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The terrorists planned to crash the plane in the Capitol or the White House, but they were defeated by the passengers of United 93.⁵⁸

Lone Wolves

Yousef Mohamid al-Khattab of Atlantic City, New Jersey was born to a Jewish family under the name Joseph Leonard Cohen. Some sources claim that he has dual citizenship with Israel and was a Haredi Jew during some point of his life.⁵⁹ Al-Khattab claims he converted to Islam after talking with a Muslim from the United Arab Emirates on a Jewish chat room while living in Netivot, Israel in

⁵⁸ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. (Philip Zelikow, Executive Director; Bonnie D. Jenkins, Counsel; Ernest R. May, Senior Advisor). *The 9/11 Commission Report*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.

⁵⁹ “Jewish-born Terrorist Pleads Guilty,” *The Jewish Week*, Nov. 4, 2013.

(<http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/national-news/jewish-born-terrorist-pleads-guilty>)

1998.⁶⁰ The two of them maintained back and forth conversations for two years. After reading an English translation of the Qur'an, he decided to convert and took the name Yousef Mohamid al-Khattab.⁶¹

He moved to a Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem, but in 2007 returned to the United States. When he returned, al-Khattab helped start Revolution Muslim—a radical Islamist group that became a gateway for young jihadists in the U.S. interested in joining militant groups abroad. Revolution Muslim became a popular online site encouraging Muslims to support Osama bin Laden, Anwar al-Awlaki, al-Qaeda, the Taliban and others engaged in or espousing violent Jihad. Al-Khattab posted a video about the conflict in Gaza that suggested viewers to seek out the leaders of Jewish Federation chapters and “deal with them directly at their homes.” Furthermore, he posted a video and photo about the Chabad headquarters in Brooklyn with a map and directions. There was also a link that contained a manual for building explosive devices.

Al-Khattab pleaded guilty on October 30, 2013 and on April 25, 2014, he was sentenced to two and a half years in prison.⁶² Al-Khattab stated, "What I did was stupid and it was wrong and I am paying the price for that now, period."⁶³ He claims that he “fell in” with people who were more radical than he was, but law enforcement officials claim he spearheaded the group’s radicalization efforts.⁶⁴ According to Mitchell Silber, executive management director of K2 Intelligence

⁶⁰ Bilal Haye, “Yousef Al-Khattab, Man Behind Virulent Islamic Website, Grew Up Jewish,” *The Brooklyn Ink*, Apr. 23, 2010. (<http://thebrooklynink.com/2010/04/23/11041-yousef-al-khattab-man-behind-virulent-islamic-website-grew-up-jewish/>)

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Matt Zaposky, “New Jersey man sentenced to prison for extremist Islamic Web posts,” *The Washington Post*, Apr. 25, 2014. (http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/new-jersey-man-to-be-sentenced-for-extremist-islamic-web-posts/2014/04/24/406e65a8-cbc4-11e3-93eb-6c0037dde2ad_story.html)

⁶³ Dina Temple-Raston, “The Jewish Kid from New Jersey Who Became A Radical Islamist,” *NPR*, Apr. 25, 2014. (<http://www.npr.org/2014/04/25/306533963/the-jewish-kid-from-new-jersey-who-became-a-radical-islamist>)

⁶⁴ Ibid.

and former NYPD terrorism expert, “Al-Khattab was one of the two leaders of the group, he was a chief propagandist, he was an organizer, he was a provocateur.”⁶⁵

Fort Dix Plot

Five men conspired to attack “as many soldiers as possible” at Fort Dix. Three of the conspirators were brothers—Dritan Duka, Shain Duka and Eljvir Duka. They are ethnically Albanian from the former Yugoslavia and operate a roofing business in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. The Duka family lived in the United States illegally.⁶⁶ The other two conspirators include Eljvir’s brother in-law Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer and Serdar Tatar, a Turk.⁶⁷ One other individual, namely Agron Abdullahu, was accused of aiding and abetting the Duka brothers’ illegal possession of weapons.

The five conspirators went to a shooting range in Pennsylvania’s Poconos Mountains and recorded video of them firing assault weapons, calling for jihad and yelling “God is great” in Arabic.⁶⁸ One member of the group took the videotape to a retail store to have it converted to a DVD. The store employees alerted the FBI, who then infiltrated the group with a confidential witness.⁶⁹ The confidential witness convinced the conspirators that he can get them the weapons they need to carry out the attack on Fort Dix. Dritan Duka and Shain Duka were

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ John Appezzato, “Father of Fort Dix suspects arrested on immigration charges,” *NJ.com*, May 10, 2007. (http://blog.nj.com/ledgerupdates/2007/05/father_of_fort_dix_suspects_ar.html)

⁶⁷ “Plans to attack US Fort Dix base uncovered; one of the plotters a Turk,” *Hürriyet*, May 9, 2007.

(http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/6484033_p.asp)

⁶⁸ Dale Russakoff and Dan Eggen, “Six Charged in Plot To Attack Fort Dix,” *The Washington Post*, May 9, 2007. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/08/AR2007050800465.html>)

⁶⁹ “Five Radical Islamists Charged with Planning Attack on Fort Dix Army Base in New Jersey,” *United States Department of Justice*, May 8, 2007.

(<http://web.archive.org/web/20070616223143/http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/files/pdf/duka0508rel.pdf>)

arrested as they attempted to purchase AK-47s and M-16s as previously arranged with the witness. The four others were arrested the same day.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Christine Hauser and Anahad O'Connor, "6 Arrested in Plot to Attack Fort Dix," *The New York Times*, May 8, 2007. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/08/us/08cnd-dix.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>)

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION

Main Findings

The Muslim population in New Jersey certainly has some radical elements, but it is by and large moderate and not connected to terrorism. Passaic, Essex and Hudson counties tend to have the largest Muslim communities in the state. These counties are located in northern New Jersey and are in close proximity to New York City. Muslims in New Jersey are largely Sunni, though there are also Shia, Sufi and non-denominational communities as well.

In this report, 98 mosques were examined. The ones worthy of interest are the Islamic Society of Monmouth County, the Islamic Center of Jersey City and the Islamic Center of Passaic County. The Islamic Society of Monmouth County was mentioned previously for its imam being a vocal Hamas supporter.⁷¹ The imam of the Islamic Center of Passaic County is an alleged former member of Hamas.⁷² The Islamic Center of Jersey City has a history of ties to radical Islam, with an imam stating in 2000 that "jihad is an absolute obligation upon those whose land has been occupied, and all Muslims have to stand together to repulse the enemy."⁷³

The largest terrorist attack to affect to New Jersey was 9/11. The most direct connection to the attacks is United Airlines Flight 93, which departed from Newark International Airport. However, many New Jersey residents work in New York City and most of those killed in 9/11 perished there. Aside from massive attacks like 9/11, New Jersey has had homegrown extremists such as those who conspired in the Fort Dix plot and others who leave the country with ties to al-

⁷¹ Ryan Mauro, "Islamic Society of Monmouth County," *The Clarion Project*, Apr. 2, 2013.

(<http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/islamic-society-monmouth-county>)

⁷² Brian Donohue, "Paterson imam fights deportation," *NJ.com*, May 7, 2008.

(http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/topstories/index.ssf/2008/05/paterson_muslim_leader_fights.html)

⁷³ "Islamic Center of Jersey City," *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*, 2010.

(<http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/404>)

Shabaab and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. In all, New Jersey has some radical elements, but the vast majority of the community is peaceful and does not adhere to the extreme Salafi-jihadi ideology. There is no trend of radicalization that can be determined at this time, but it is important that we keep our eyes open.

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