

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



EXPLAINING THE IMPACT OF EXTREMIST GROUPS IN UK
AFTER 9/11

MASTER'S THESIS
Ghazal ALHALIQ

Department Of Political Science And International Relations
Political Science and International Relations Program

FEBRUARY, 2024

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FEBRUARY, 2024

ONAY SAYFASI

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “EXPLAINING THE IMPACT OF EXTREMIST GROUPS IN UK AFTER 9/11”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the References. (05/01/2024)

Ghazal ALHALIQ

FOREWORD

I dedicate this thesis to the unwavering support and love of my family, my brother, especially my sister, whose encouragement has been my constant source of strength throughout this academic journey.

To Joseph, my husband whose sacrifices and belief in my abilities have shaped the person I am today. Your endless encouragement and understanding have been my guiding light.

February, 2024

Ghazal

ALHALIQ

EXPLAINING THE IMPACT OF EXTREMIST GROUPS IN UK AFTER 9/11

ABSTRACT

The present thesis examined the concept of extremism: its definitions, forms, and the causes behind its appearance in societies. The study also traces the origins of extremism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It examines how the 9/11 incident affected the US as a pivotal moment in contemporary history and draws a connection between radicalism, violence, and the worldwide jihad using Al Qaeda as an example. The descriptive narrative method was employed to explain the features and roots of Islamic extremism and review the characteristics of far-right British extremist groups in the UK as a case study. The narrative technique was chosen because it is frequently employed to describe a phenomenon and gain a deeper understanding of people and communities. The study demonstrated the extent to which extremism has a direct impact on both individuals and societies. It also showed that social and economic inequality, political unpredictability, ideological division, and autocratic administrations are common contexts in which extremism thrives. Furthermore, mosques, religious lectures, social networking sites, and electronic platforms all contribute to the propagation of extremism. Furthermore, radical ideologies become a concerning modern threat. This thesis also highlights the significance of detailed and context-specific measures as well as the necessity of cooperation between governments, civil society, and technology suppliers to counter extremism.

The current study adds to the body of information about extremism in academia, explains its reasons in general, and offers strategies for countering it. It advocates for holistic measures that promote inclusiveness, education, and social cohesion as crucial elements in reducing the impact of extremist ideology on global society by thoroughly addressing the underlying causes and manifestations of extremism.

Keywords: Extremism, Jihadism, Al-Qaeda, 9/11, Far-Right.

11 Eylül SONRASINDA İNGİLTERE'DEKİ AŞIRI GRUPLARIN ETKİSİNİ AÇIKLAMAK

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, aşırıcılığın tanımlarını, şekillerini, toplumlarda ortaya çıkış nedenlerini ve ayrıca aşırıcılığın üç dindeki (Yahudilik, Hıristiyanlık ve İslam) kökenlerini tespit etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Modern tarihte bir dönüm noktası olarak ABD'ye yönelik 11 Eylül saldırılarının rolünü ve etkilerini ve aşırılık, şiddet ve küresel cihat arasındaki bağlantıyı, bir paradigma olarak El Kaide'yi inceliyor.

Çalışma, İslami aşırıcılığın özelliklerini ve kökenlerini tanımlamak için betimleyici anlatım yöntemini kullanıyor ve bir çalışma vakası olarak Birleşik Krallık'taki aşırı sağcı İngiliz aşırılıkçı grupların niteliklerini inceliyor. Anlatı yaklaşımının seçilmesinin nedeni genellikle bireyleri ve grupları daha iyi anlamak ve bir olguyu tanımlamak için kullanılmasıdır. Araştırma, aşırılığın toplumları ve bireyleri doğrudan ne ölçüde etkilediğini ortaya koydu. Ayrıca aşırılığın genellikle sosyal ve ekonomik eşitsizlikler, siyasi istikrarsızlık, ideolojik kutuplaşma ve demokratik olmayan hükümetlerle karakterize edilen ortamlarda geliştiğini de ortaya çıkardı. Üstelik camiler ve dini vaazların yanı sıra elektronik platformlar ve sosyal paylaşım sitelerinin de oynadığı rol aşırılığın yayılmasını kolaylaştırıyor. Dahası, aşırılıkçı ideolojiler endişe verici bir çağdaş sorun olarak ortaya çıkıyor. Bu nedenle bu tez, hükümetler, sivil toplum ve teknoloji sağlayıcıları arasındaki işbirliği ihtiyacını vurgulayarak aşırılıkla mücadelede kesin ve bağlama özgü stratejilerin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Mevcut araştırma aşırılığın akademik anlayışına katkıda bulunmakta, bunun motivasyonları hakkında genel bir bilgi sağlamakta ve bununla yüzleşmek için öneriler vermektedir. Aşırıcılığın temel nedenlerini ve tezahürlerini kapsamlı bir şekilde ele alarak, aşırılıkçı ideolojilerin küresel toplum üzerindeki etkisini

azaltmada temel bileşenler olarak katılımı, eğitimi ve sosyal uyumu teşvik eden bütünsel yaklaşımları savunur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aşırılık, Cihatçılık, El Kaide, 11 Eylül, Aşırı Sağ

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Extremism is a critical problem facing modern societies in several countries: Christian, Jewish, Islamic, or even secular. Extremist activities have negative impact on the structure and fabric of a society and human behavior and relationships in general. Scholars, international organizations, and states refer to extremism with several terms. However, it is generally defined as thoughts and behavior that are not in-line with the prevalent and common norms. It is the outcome of an argument between parties with divergent interests or aims, as well as the use of force and violence to impose and seize those goals and objectives. For millenniums, the phenomenon has existed in human history.

The two phenomena are key challenges for societies. They are considered global challenges, affecting several societies worldwide. Hence, scholars, researchers, jurists, and international organizations. have been interested and have paid attention to these issues.

Many societies suffered from extremism in one way or another. Differences in the ways societies have known the phenomenon are attributed to variations in institutional awareness of extremism and the ways to fight it.

Clearly, the September attacks on America caused a key change in the meaning of extremism, which is manifested in the analyses and writings on the concept. Writers framed the concept to find out the causes leading to people's adherence to violent ideologies and thus carry out terrorist missions (Schmid 2013). The UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council have reported that violent fundamentalism have grown to become a sophisticated threat that calls for an urgent action (UN.org).

The origins of extremism can be traced in all main religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Hence, it cannot be attributed to a specific religion, race, or society. Marieme Hélié-Lucas defines fundamentalism as “political movements of the extreme right, which in a context of globalization ... manipulate religion, culture or ethnicity, to achieve their political aims.” (Hélié-Lucas 2001)

The phenomenon of extremism is mainly social; it is a deviation from a society’s prevalent system, principles, values, and thoughts. In the recent socio-economic situation, developing a conceptual understanding for extremism is not an easy task. Thus, identifying hardliners and extremists is relative. Nevertheless, the concept generally indicates violating social rules and values and adherence to verbal or physical violence to implement extremist thoughts. As reported by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), extremism is ‘Promoting views which foment and incite violence in furtherance of particular beliefs, and foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence.’ (OECD 2020)

Extremism is also defined by The British government as ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.’ In the UK, freedom and law prevail; the country sets an example for coexistence of various races, ethnicities, and faiths. For example, Islam is the second fastest-growing doctrine in the country. In 2011, Muslims made 4.4% of the population with 2,516,000 Muslims (ONS 2018). However, the growing number of Muslims in the UK has been under scrutiny as a result of the spread of Islamophobia in Europe, which in turn grows from the rising extremist organizations.

The present research sheds light on the origins of Islamic extremism the alQaeda’s role in constructing the ideology of Jihad, particularly in Europe and the UK as the main focus in the study. The two concepts (British extremism and Islamophobia) are also examined as a full and sufficient framework in the development of British society.

B. Research Questions

The research is formulated to answer these questions:

1. What are the origins of extremism, and how is it formed in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?
2. How do we describe the impact of al-Qaeda in shaping the ideology of jihad and extremism after 9/11?
3. Who poses the greatest danger and threat to British society, the Islamists or the British extremists?
4. What are the reasons for the emergence of extremist groups, such as the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defense League (EDL), and do they have any influence in formulating the state's policy against Muslims?

B. Significance Of The Research

The thesis addresses the 9/11 incident as a key factor in the change in the world order. The rise of al-Qaeda played an important part in formulating extremism. Osama bin Laden announced *Jihad* [fight] against America, taking a fatwa from the Qur'an and Sunnah in 1998 that called for killing the Americans and attacking the West. Bin Laden alluded to interpretations of the Qur'an, drawn from cultural and religious principles (9/11 Commission Report 2001). The research explores Islamic extremism: its origins and rise, taking into account the rise of Islam's abhorrence and the escalation of European extremism, particularly in the UK, and its impacts on society. Further, this study significance stems from its attempt to identifying Islamic Fundamentalism's similarities and differences with British radical movements that call for preserving the British legacy.

C. The Research Hypotheses

The thesis examines the effects of controversial phrases on British society, including "Sharia," "Jihad," and "Islamic caliphate." Consequently, the following would be the primary hypotheses:

H₀: The ideology of extremist groups has no connection with the influence on societies.

H₁: The ideology of extremist groups affects societies.

H₂: The ideology of extremist groups does not affect societies.

D. Methodology

The descriptive narrative approach was used as the research methodology. Following the narrative approach is attributed to its frequent use to gain better understanding of individuals, communities, and phenomena. Similarly, the descriptive method is used in qualitative studies; it is used to find out, investigate, and report repeated patterns. (Braun and Clarke 2006). The descriptive form of writing portrays a person, place, or community, allowing readers to conceive the topic and live researcher's experience.

Qualitative approach in research is based primarily on gathering data through interviews; however, researchers can also get data through observations and documents since the process of gathering data is relative to 'asking, watching, and reviewing' (SB, 2009). Therefore, the present research applies the descriptive narrative approach to explore Islamic extremism's features and origins. The study also investigates the characteristics of British extremist organizations.

E. Resources

The researcher qualitatively analyzed articles, books, letters, dialogues, interviews, focus groups, and autobiographies.

F. Fund/sponsorship

The researcher did not receive any sponsorship on this research.

G. Ethics

The present research involves controversial concepts, such as religion, Jihad, extremism, and political violence. It aims to shed light on Islamic religious paradigm with Jihadi ideology; however, there is no emphasis of direct factor in Islam's connection to violence. Religions play a key role in justifying violence to their followers; Islam is no exception. Hence, this study is an objective and impartial in a manner that does not harm the people of the examined nations.

H. Literature Review

Previous studies on the topic can be categorized into two groups: literature on extremism and Jihad and their connection to al-Qaeda until 9/11, and studies on extremism in the UK that included Islamic groups and the far-right movements.

(Brachman 2009), in *Global Jihadism Theory and Practice*, explores and analyzes the thoughts held by extremists: jihad, loyalty, disavowal, takfir, and monotheism. The book displayed many Jihadist important studies and several conversions to the Salafist doctrine. The consequences of the 9/11 attacks, how they dramatically changed the world, and the coinage of the new terms of extremism and terrorism were investigated by (Quénivet 2005). The writer argued that a significant portion of the literature advocates countering terrorism through military action. Thus, he argued that the UNSC's action after 9/11 is considered self-defense.

(Byman and Williams 2015) conducted comparative research titled "Al Qaeda: Jihadism's Global Civil War (2015)", in which they compared al-Qaeda after its fragmentation and the rise of the Islamic State in the Levant and their hierarchal structure. They reported that unlike al-Qaeda's 'far-enemy' strategy, IS follows the 'near enemy' ideology.

In contrast, (Copsey 2004) presents a thorough and lucid examination of the British National Party's political legitimacy fight and its history, making it evident that the party's essential beliefs are overtly fascist.

Using three case studies with young, white, working-class males who were part of the English Defense League, (Treadwell and Garland 2011) looked at how a particular kind of violent masculinity and extremism is created. The writers aimed to show that not only is violence produced by society and institutions, but it is also psychologically acceptable on a personal level. It is clear that this violence is directed towards the Muslim community in the UK.

II. ORIGINS OF EXTREMISM

- A. The origins of the term extremism
- B. Extremism in the three monotheistic religions (Islam, Judaism, Christianity)
- C. The literature of jihadism and its origins in Islam
- D. Salafism and Wahhabism
- E. Conclusion

According to (Tarhini 1992)¹, as hostilities like those between the Persian, Greek, and Roman empires were religious and civilizational in nature, the struggle between the East and West was not a result of 9/11. The conflicts between the East and the West persisted, leading to the strictly religious Crusades.

The Cold War came to an end at the end of the 1990s with the fall of the USSR and the communist states in Eastern Europe. The world and international relations were then led by the United States in a unipolar system, particularly from a political and military perspective when George H.W. Bush announced the New World Order. However, a horrific attack permanently altered the balance of power between America and the world.

Over two decades back, terrorist attacks signaled the start of a new age in global politics, and its impact is being felt today. There was an attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center in New York City, with four commercial civilian jets targeted to strike important and sensitive locations. The terrorist operation resulted in the death of 2,977 victims and 19 attackers (The Washington Post 2013). Thousands died later due to the attacks because of debris, injuries, and fumes left by the collision.

¹ (Riley-Smith 2008): The Crusades were characterized as religious, in addition to several factors, including economic, livelihood, and the reason for the spread of feudalism, in addition to Europe's expansionist desire and its conflict with Islamic civilization.

Scholars agree that, aside from the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7 by the Japanese, 1941, this is the deadliest and most vicious terrorist act in modern history, targeting American territory and airspace (TSA.gov).

In (Rabasa, Waxman and Larson 2004) view, the incident has drastically changed political atmosphere in the Muslim arena and worldwide, which affected U.S. security.

International law and collaboration in the fight against terrorism underwent a significant change.² The Anti-terrorism Legislation Act, which supported the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan under the pretext of the "War on Terror," was thus justified in part by the September attacks. The thesis that follows describes how such extreme events affected international relations and the emerging world order, and how they fundamentally altered our world.

A number of developments have taken place on the global landscape, such as the rise in Islamophobia in the US and the West as a whole. Furthermore, a large number of people were impacted by racist and derogatory comments, as well as identity-based killings directed towards Muslims, Arabs, and Indians. Furthermore, the demonization of Islam as the source of terrorism had an impact on political, academic, media, and cultural traits. Even while Islamophobia isn't as prevalent as it once was, it nevertheless has an impact on Western and American popular culture.

The emergence of the Clash of Civilization theory, coined by Samul Huntington in the 1990s was another key change. The theory was brought to the front again. The theory provided an explanation of how international relations developed based on the idea that religious and cultural symbols like crosses and veils have a tremendous comeback and that religion serves as the fuel for civilizational conflicts.³

Even though the UN and other international political, cultural, and religious associations supported the idea of "dialogue of civilizations and religions" before and after 9/11, the world continued to focus on the idea that international politics was and is a religious-civilizational war.

² See (Quénivet 2005).

³ See (Huntington 1996).

In addition, after 9/11 religion became involved in global politics, marking another change, as faith contributed to forming foreign policies in some states. Following September 11, religion has come to define identity. Its significance has grown in areas where religion has a broad influence on national and international policies, as secular liberal trends have emerged in opposition to conservative religious movements that have an impact on both the East and the West.

The phrase "war on terrorism" indicates the final shift that has occurred since 9/11. International politics started to take shape under the "war on terror," as vast sums of money were allocated to fighting terrorism. Furthermore, intelligence and security agencies have coordinated more than political and economic cooperation in international interactions. Furthermore, the war on terror has been at the center of a lot of scholarly, artistic, and cultural endeavors.

As a pretext for starting a global war on terrorism, the events of September 11 demonstrated that extremist terrorist organizations are capable of causing more harm even than the most organized intelligence and research centers—by viewing terrorism as an international threat rather than a local or regional one. Obviously, what made the 9/11 bombings more severe and serious were the subsequent reactions under the ruling and decision-making neoconservative party in Washington.

The United States of America was a dominant force and the world's leader in many domains at the time these attacks occurred, which explains why America responded to these attacks with overwhelming force in an effort to demonstrate its global leadership.

The significance of 9/11 attacks from a geographical perspective were the most significant event that transformed history and world order. The consequences were severe not only because of the number of victims or the organization that identified and planned or attacked the targets; rather, the reason for this was that the impacts took time to manifest; 22 years later, the consequences are still being felt. The idea of the "war on terror" is a narrative about America's position in the world following the September

events, a rhetorical device, and an interpretation of actual events; fear was a tool, not an opponent (Bacevich 2002).⁴

The list of terrorist activities is limitless since, in the brief time after Al-Qaeda's in Afghanistan, numerous other organizations and groups with numerous sleeper agents arose in the area. With a great deal of terror and devastation, extremist beliefs developed into ISIS, which proclaimed an Islamic state. As these two nations served as the groups' vital center and breeding ground—particularly following the US assault on Iraq—it stands to reason that the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan were the primary cause of their formation and escalation in intensity.

Even with their harshness and losses, the world's greatest catastrophic tragedies have taught us valuable lessons about human activities throughout history. Following the conclusion of the European religious conflicts, the Peace of Westphalia was established in 1648, depriving the Church of its political power and allowing religious and sectarian tolerance. (Patton 2019). Furthermore, the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, which ended the Napoleonic Wars, established the guidelines for contemporary international relations that would later be applied to the two World Wars and the creation of the UN. Regarding the 9/11 tragedy, it brought about international cooperation against terrorism—a threat that affects all people—and the start of a true conflict that tackles the root causes of the problem.

The battle on terrorism is undoubtedly a two-edged sword because politics and religion are entwined with security. Hence, religions became a theater of war, struggle, and annihilation because of the attacks, which were used to further extremism and terrorism. Muslims and Islam in America and Europe were seen as a danger to Western national security.

In addition to altering geopolitics, the bombings severely damaged the travel and aviation industries globally, leading to more stringent security measures. This involves setting up the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the US and other like organizations across the globe. In response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the federal government passed laws aimed at enhancing security for travelers. In order to enforce

⁴ See (Holloway 2008).

total control, travelers are now subject to extremely thorough checks prior to boarding aircraft, and sophisticated thermal devices and surveillance cameras have proliferated.⁵

On the geography of intolerance and extremism, the events of September marked a new beginning; books, articles, studies, and theories emerged, pointing changes and analyzing extremism and terrorism.

Numerous terrorist acts have occurred throughout Europe and the rest of the world as a result of the current "wave" of terrorism, including Madrid and London bombings in 2004 and 2005, the Paris attacks in 2015 and 2016, Brussels bombings in 2016, and Manchester Arena bombing in 2017. The Somali Al-Shabaab, who executed several operations and bombings in Africa; the last was carried out in Nairobi in 2020.

From the remnants of Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and the Salafi-jihadists in the UK, new extremist organizations have surfaced under religious guises as a result to the expansion of anti-terrorism laws and the military actions of the United States and the West.

In the present study, the history of modern extremism is traced with the emergence of Al-Qaeda's as a symbol of jihadist extremism in the 1980s and continues with the emergence of new groups and movements from Al-Qaeda in Europe, particularly the UK. In contrast, intellectual extremism in Britain is studied in terms of radical, racist parties and organizations. Over the past 20 years, jihadism in the UK has changed and been impacted by a variety of causes, including social dynamics and geopolitical developments. Because of immigrants from all over the world, British culture is marked by a high degree of population variety, which has led to a wide array of philosophies, faiths, and cutlery. Links between UK-based people and jihadist groupings were fostered when British warriors were drawn to fight (jihad) against the Soviets in Afghanistan during the 1980s and 1990s. The London bombings in 2005 had raised concerns about domestic terrorism in the 2000s.

Within the framework of the present study, religious fundamentalism and its varieties are examined in relation to the arise of extremist ideologies in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United Kingdom.

⁵ See (Blalock and Kadiyali 2007).

A. The Roots

Extremism acts are not new; several of the most ancient practices date back almost two millennia to the Roman Empire. (Koomen, Pligt., 2018). The promotion of extreme political, social, or religious beliefs and practices is known as extremism. It frequently entails deviating from conventional wisdom, advocating radical viewpoints that are incompatible with a community's accepted norms. Extremists may support using violence to further their objectives, which could result in acts of terrorism and other violent crimes.

Extremism has historical roots rather than being a creation of the modern era, regardless of its outward manifestations. Many sects and organizations were formed over the ages in an effort to spread their hatred, win over the public, and destroy other organizations at any costs. A novel severe religious, ideological, and behavioral extremism has emerged as a result of political and religious killings as well as physical liquidations. Extremism is an intellectual, social, and historical phenomena associated with human inclinations and lifestyles that serve as a haven for those seeking to defend their values and interests against oppression and violence. It frequently entails straying from morality or conventional beliefs, endorsing radical viewpoints that are incompatible with accepted social norms. Extremism typically encourages the use of violent methods to accomplish objectives that will fuel terrorism and other violent crimes. It hasn't only occurred in cretinous religions, societies, classes, or cultures; examining human history, it would be discovered that it is replete with instances of violence and extremism, dating back to 264 BC in ancient Rome and extending over a century until the 21st century, when Al-Qaida and ISIS emerged.

B. The Origins Of The Concept

The Roman invasion of Carthage in the second century BC is a clear illustration of extreme behavior in early human history. At least 150,000 Carthaginians perished when their city fell, and the Romans assaulted them for religious and cultural grounds. (Berger 2018). We may also look back at the bloody religious conflicts of the Middle

Agas and the devastation and deaths they caused. During that time, there were two types of religious wars: Christian-led and Islamic-led.

Hence, extremism is ‘a political or religious idea or action that is not normal or acceptable by the majority of people’ (The Oxford Advanced American Dictionary n.d.). In a more comprehensive and universal definition, it is “political movements of the extreme right, which in a context of globalization ... manipulate religion, culture or ethnicity, to achieve their political aims.” (Hélie-Lucas 2001). Further, radicalization can be defined as ‘acquisition of extreme ideas’ and ‘the path to political violence.’ (Coolsaet 2010).⁶

The British government defines extremism as: “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.”⁷ (2003). Additionally, several definitions are provided by academics and international organizations in a variety of languages, concepts, and fashions; however, it is agreed that extremism is characterized by hatred for a religion or sect, a tendency toward the extremes of the political spectrum, and a viewpoint or issue that deviates from common sense, reason, and logic.

Literature on the topic categorizes extremism as the following.

Political extremism: prioritizing one’s need over others’. A person with a harmonious passion works toward a major goal or objective while making time for other important commitments. (Vallerand, 2010). Political fanatics hold underlying convictions about various political matters. To find people who share their ideals, they try to communicate and exchange ideas (VCU, 2023). The foundation of the far-left and far-right, which embraces anarchy and rejects capitalism, are examples of political extremism.

Political extremism also involves embracing extreme political views on political affairs. Authoritarian devotion to political beliefs without considering opposing viewpoints, a refusal to engage in dialogue or reach a compromise, and the use of harsh language or

⁶ For more definitions see: (Schmid 2013).

⁷ (The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism 2003).

coercion to further political objectives are examples of how the idea might be demonstrated. Political violence, or the use of violence or the threat of violence to further political objectives or exert pressure on and influence government actions, is a feature of patterns of political extremism. It also includes disapproving of democratic institutions and declining to acknowledge lawful governments that deviate from radical ideologies. Another pattern is the opposition to political pluralism, which is the rejection of living together with different political opinions and endorsing political views of authoritarian theocratic ruling nature.

Religious ideological extremism: Extremists of his type take their faith literally and strictly, often opposing coexistence with other faiths and promoting their ideologies as the only right interpretation. Along with advocating for violence against non-believers, they could also have a distinct take on differing spiritual teaching. (Sageman 2008) describes religious extremists as driven by a desire for martyrdom and rage at apparent injustice.⁸ The traits of religious ideological extremism can be summed up by several factors. One of these characteristics is violence; radical religious believers frequently resort to suicide terrorism, mass shootings, and bombings—such as the recent spate of mass shootings in the US—in order to achieve their political or religious goals. The majority of them were characterized as hate crimes motivated by the shooters' race or religion, in which they were exposed to violent extremist material and became radicalized online. (njj.ojp.gov). This is on top of the suicide attacks against Shiites that the Islamic State in Iraq has carried out.

Furthermore, extremists are intolerant to sects and individuals who of different beliefs; they don't respect other people's differences and try to put their beliefs into practice in whatever manner they can. As we witness with Salafists and jihadists refusing to practice the same religion as another group, the Shiites, or with ecclesiastical differences and debates in Christianity, intolerance does indeed exist even among members of the same faith. The third characteristic is authoritarianism; some religious fanatics reject democracy and the rule of law, advocate authoritarian rule based only on their religious convictions, and demand for the creation of theocratic states and severe

⁸ (Wibisono 2019).

religious legislation. The idea of an Islamic Caliphate and the demand for Islamic rules rather than those of the civil state are two examples. Religious ideological extremism is also featured by its social ideological extremism; extremists build opinions and attitudes on social affairs, such as gender, sexuality, nationality, or race. For example, throughout history, there have been instances of extreme racism and attacks against Black people by White offenders.

Extremism has deep and multifaceted roots that frequently stem from ideological, social, political, and economic issues. There are numerous common variables that contribute to the growth of extremist views and actions, even while the precise causes can differ substantially depending on the situation. Some of those factors are listed below.

Social and economic factors like poverty and unemployment: Extremism can flourish in an environment of economic instability and opportunity gaps because people may turn to extreme ideas to vent their frustrations. Vulnerable regions that are home to extremist groups, such as the Middle East, Asia, the US, and the UK, are associated with religious extremism. (James 2006). Personal social and psychological factors include complaints and feelings like alienation and exclusion, rage and irritation, grief and a deep sense of unfairness, and rigid dichotomous thinking (CSIS.gov, 2013).

Marginalization: Extremist beliefs can give those who feel alone and marginalized in society a feeling of purpose and belonging, which makes them more susceptible to their influence.

Political factors: People who live under autocratic or oppressive regimes may get frustrated and disappointed and resort to radical beliefs as a form of protest.

Political instability: Extremist groups who want to take advantage of the disarray are frequently seen emerging in areas experiencing political unrest or violence. A few instances are Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Ideological/religious factors: Examples include the belief in sacred historical mission and belief in apocalyptic prophesy; a Salafi-jihadi interpretation of Islam; a violent jihadi mission; a sense that Islam is under siege; and seeking to protect ummah under assault. These ideas also include the notion that moral secularism is embodied in Western society (European Commission, 2016).

Propaganda and social media facilitate communication and the virtual exchange of comparable extreme viewpoints. The radicalization process is accelerated by the Internet. It makes self-extremism more likely. Al-Qaeda, for instance, used pamphlets, movies, and CDs to spread its ideology.

C. Extremism in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity

Religious extremism is present in all religions, but particularly in the monotheistic religions. It can be expressed as an individual or collective extreme attitude towards a faith or a sect. Right-wing extremist parties and organizations have also arisen in Western cultures. These groups use the radicalism of some Islamists and their terrorist attacks to further their political agendas and advance their own views. Their ideologies are often blended with racist, religious, and political themes.⁹

There are instances in all religions and sects of people who have religious beliefs that are in opposition to reason; extremists frequently hold on to their beliefs and don't consider viewpoints in light of justice and reason whereas they hold themselves entitled to practice a certain religion or denomination. The various beliefs of groups in all monotheistic faiths went beyond their nature as human traditions and inclinations for particular individuals to fundamentally sacred laws and beliefs as though they were pivotal verses of the holy books. Sectarian extremism is one of the most dangerous forms of religious extremism to humanity.

Terrorism for the previous three decades is undoubtedly religious, and all signs prove that it will remain so for the foreseeable future.

1. Extremism in Judaism

According to the Talmud, the earliest forms of fanaticism and fundamentalism emerged in ancient Jewish communities when residents were persuaded by divine commandments to kill and commit suicide (Bodoff 2005). There are 4 sects in Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and "Renewer". There are also the Samaritans who refer to themselves as the Children of Israel and reject the Talmud. Many conflicts and

⁹ For more readings: (Clarke 2017).

strife exist within Judaism among internal sects. Israel was established in the wake of Jewish immigration to Palestine by the end of the 19th century. Conflicts between Jewish and Arab nationalisms during the interwar period and splits among the Zionists, which sought to restore a Jewish state—ideally in the old lands of Israel and currently in Palestine—followed the declaration of Israel. (Charters, 2007). The Zionist movement is extremist religious and ideological in nature and a colonialist movement that occupied the Palestinian land by force with colonialist ambitions¹⁰.

In the modern era, terrorism and fanaticism can be traced in the practices of the Hagenah and the Arjun gangs in murdering and intimidating the Palestinians at the wake of the establishment of Israel. Among the most well-known Jewish-Zionist groups is Irgun Zfai Leumi (National Military Organization), known as Irgun, and the Stern Gang (referred to as Lehi, an abbreviation of Lehami Herut Yisrael). Both organizations exploited terrorism to further their political agendas by posing as extreme religious sects. There have been several terrorist attacks by entities or organizations, including attacks on individuals, homes, crops, and places of worship. One of the most horrifying incidents occurred at the Ibrahimic Mosque in Hebron in February 1994. Baruch Goldstein, a Zionist extremist affiliated with the far-right Kach movement, used a gun machine to kill Muslims who were praying, resulting in 29 deaths and approximately 150 injuries (Hammad, Tahboub and Tahboub 1994). One of the modern instances of Jewish extremism is the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 by the extremist “Yijal Amir,” who took offense at Rabin’s deviation from the Torah and his accommodation of the Palestinians.

2. Extremism in Christianity

Religious extremism has always occurred in various countries, and during Europe's feudal era, the religious phenomena dominated people's thoughts more than their own interests. It is evident in the perversion of sacred texts, and it was embodied by church leaders who exploited the guise of religion to sell indulgences to common

¹⁰ See (Pappé 2005).

people. Nevertheless, Western civilization mitigated some fundamentalism after conflicts and assaults.

The Romans' violent and intimidating tactics persisted for decades even after the its fall, from the medieval Crusades and the devastation they inflicted throughout Europe to contemporary Christian parties and organizations.

Extremism, which was founded on doctrinal disagreements and religiously motivated political wars, has engulfed Christianity itself. Violent clashes started between Rome, the capital of the Christian West, and Constantinople, the capital of the Christian East, as a result of the rivalry between Christian emperors, kings, and clergy in the East and West. (whose Emperor Constantine made the capital of the Byzantine state and the seat of the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiastical patriarchate - the Church of Hagia Sophia in the year 335 AD). Due to protracted confrontations resulting from Constantinople's decision to forge a different course for itself than Rome, Rome was forced to launch multiple military campaigns. Christian communities were divided, and disagreements between Eastern and Western Christianity led each side to believe in its own legitimacy. As a result, both parties had to fight for a long time to revert to their preferred brand of Christianity.

Later Christian extremism and feudalism ran counter to the spirit of modernity and enlightenment, which inexorably and gradually stripped the church of its authority of punishment and discipline by transferring these functions to the nation-state (Clarke 2017).

Even though terrorist groups are considered political forces today in Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America, the US is the birthplace of the first modern extremist group, the Knight of the Ku Klux Klan (Chalmers 1987). Under the slogan "Kill in the name of God", One of the nation's first hate groups, the Klan was founded in 1866 to oppose the rights of African Americans. It promotes the superiority of the white race, targeting other races and ethnic groups besides blacks, such as Latinos, Irish, Jewish, and Muslims, Native Americans, immigrants, homosexuals, and atheists (S. Johnson 2015). Since its formation three generations ago, this organization has engaged in a number of terrorist acts that include the killing, running over, and attacking of places of worship, all in the name of extremism and fanaticism.

Another example of a violent, radical Christian movements that has killed people in opposition to abortion is the Army of God (AOG). (Sam-Kpakra, Odessa Katumu 2016). This group was founded in the 1980s and has since carried out terrorist attacks on physicians and demolished hospitals while defending the categorization of abortion as evil. Numerous religious organizations, including several Christian denominations and pro-choice activists and groups, have strongly denounced AOG and its activities. To prevent violence and uphold public safety, law enforcement agencies aggressively supervise and investigate persons connected to the AOG.

After September 2001, Christian fundamentalism went beyond national boundaries. Europe (UK), for instance, has a lengthy history of Christian-inspired radicalism practiced by the extreme right, far left, English Defiance League, and British National Party (BNP) (EDL). We shall go into more information about these two parties in the upcoming chapters.

3. Extremism in Islam

Islam is the birthplace of radicalism, which peaked in the seventh century under the leadership of a sect known as the Kharijites during the civil war of Fitnah¹¹ (656-661 C.E), where Sunni and Shi'a started to form (J. T. Kenney 2006). Racism, terrorism, and death have been replaced by this gap between the two sects that endures today. Many movements of the modern day, including Al-Qaeda and ISIS, are seen as the ideological and intellectual offshoots of these Sunni sects that propagate their philosophy. Conversely, the Houthi organization, Hezbollah, and the Shiite armed militia were all extensions of the sectarian extremism that stoked religious conflict and violence.

Islamic fundamentalism is extreme religious opinions or practices in the Islamic background. It is frequently stressed that Islamic extremism is an extreme interpretation of Islamic ideas or a strong application of Sharia, not Islam as a religion. Islamic extremism can take the form of many types of religious violence as well as attitudes,

11 Fitnah is: *ibtila'* or test, in Arabic describes a test but subsequently to indicate disbelief and killing (See: al-Nihayah, 3/410). For more, see Hans Wehr, Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, Edited by J Milton Cowan, Third Edition, New York, 1976.

opinions, and behaviors. By definition, Islamic Extremism is “an ideology that advocates the reorganization of society around fundamental- lists Islamic principles opposing tolerance, differences of thought, and individual liberty” (osce.org).

The term will be examined through Wahhabism, Salafism, and jihad, where a great controversy that attributes jihad to religious extremism exists. In the West, perceptions of jihad and the idea that Muslims or non-Muslims are unbelievers have sparked alarming reactions. In American and European popular discourse, jihad is associated with holy war and the beheading of infidels. Still, these impressions stem from the idea that these convictions, as terrorist organizations define them, also represent broader Sunni and Shiite perspectives on them. Therefore, this misconception distorts both the public's perception of Islam as a complex religion and the security community's perception of terrorist dangers stemming from certain, extremist interpretations of jihad.

Hence, since every Islamic organization included on the list of terrorists encourages holy jihad, jihad is inextricably tied to terrorism and Islamic extremism. Al-Qaeda is the most prominent in this regard.

D. The Literature Of Jihad And Its Origins In Islam

For the last two decades, the growth of jihadism has been gradual, even though it seems to be happening more quickly than before in Muslim nations and elsewhere. It has been linked to terrorist attacks in many countries for the past three decades. The holy Quran made numerous references to jihad and exhorted both the people and the country to wage war because it is regarded as the authoritative source of Islamic teachings.

The Prophet Muhammad introduced the message of Islam at Mecca to counter the pagan culture that was prevalent at the time. This marked the beginning of the jihad. As Islam grew, jihad took on both offensive and defensive forms during the later centuries of the Islamic Caliphate.

Tracing the term '*Jihad*' in English, it is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary since the 1860s by its Arabic roots: 'religiously obligatory campaigns to conquer non-Muslims.' (The Oxford Advanced American Dictionary n.d.)¹² The word

¹² See (Sedgwick 2015).

originates from Arabic indicating the struggle to face hardships and sufferings to achieve goals (Ali al-Haskafi, 1968). It also means the strife to fight the infidels¹³. Moreover, the word indicates the power of Muslims to resist evil and chase falsehood. It starts with an individual's battle against evil within by defeating the devil and making an effort to oppose evil in the community around them. It concludes with an individual pursuing evil wherever it may be found, to the best of their ability.

Conversely, Western scholars define Jihadism as the present ideas for extreme Islamic ideologies that demand the use of violence to limit non-Islamic impact and to establish “a true” Islamic order with Sharia (Brachman 2009).

When the word "jihad" is employed, it refers to the combat of the unbelievers in order to forward the word of God. However, jihad is not just about fighting; it also involves spending money. Jihad is a slippery, elusive concept and Muslims dispute its meaning in both language and law. (Maher 2017). We can connect the Jihadist movement to extremist groups because they use this term to defend their military actions; they see it as waging war to raise the Islamic flag, which is really more like reestablishing a Sharia-compliant caliphate state.

Sayyed Qutb is arguably one of the most important theorists of contemporary jihad; during the modern colonial era, jihad began to be associated with certain philosophers, concepts, and methodologies. Because Salafist jihadi groups cite Sayyid Qutb's publications, some scholars see him as one of the pioneers of Salafist jihadi philosophy.¹⁴⁻¹⁵

The new growth of jihad in Islam has emerged within factions of the radical Salafist school of Islam, where a new Islamic state exists by going back to the original beliefs and practices of the first original generations of Muslims, even though traditional descriptions of jihad still have sway over many Muslims. These factions are the ones that influenced Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.

¹³ See more about jihad meaning: (Al-Hamad 2001).

¹⁴ See “Why and how was Sayyed Qutb impressed by Maududi?” 2018.

¹⁵ The great impact of Qutb on of Al-Qaeda members should be noted. Perhaps the most notable of them was Abdullah Azzam, the spiritual leader of the “Afghan Arabs”.

E. Salafism and Wahhabism

The researcher draws upon Salafism and Wahhabism in the present study because of the 9/11 attacks, as investigations revealed Wahhabism and Salafism's responsibility for the terrorist network of Al Qaeda and its leader, Bin Laden (The 9/11 Commission).

1. The Beginnings

When Muhammad bin Abdullah, the Prophet of Islam, brought Islam to the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century AD, the pre-Islamic era came to an end. The idols were worshipped by the warring tribes residing in the Arabian Peninsula. Therefore, pagan religion was the most common religion. Fighting idolatry, Islam emerged to promote monotheism. The Prophet Muhammad and his adherents spent many years promoting Islam throughout the world, reaching as far as China. Islam was a single sect and doctrine throughout the time of the Prophet Muhammad; but, following his passing and under the caliphate rule, sects and ideological divisions started to arise in the core ideas of religion and faith, and the emergence of heresies and sects persisted. Islam was a single sect and doctrine throughout the time of the Prophet Muhammad; but, following his death and under the caliphate rule, sects and ideological divisions started to arise in the core ideas of religion and faith, and the emergence of heresies and sects persisted. (Ba Abdullah and Ba Karim. 1994).

After centuries of dispute and disagreement among Islamic sects, a reform movement appeared in Saudi Arabia called Wahhabism. It is movement that aims to purify Islam of innovations or practices that divert from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and his companions (Alhaliq 2023).

Also, it is named after Muhammad Bin Abd Al-Wahhab (1703-1791), a Sunni scholar who attempted to refine practices of Islam as embodied in the Quran and Sunna. The Wahhabist ideology is predicated on a number of social restrictions, including the segregation of the sexes, the outlawing of alcohol and the driving of women (applied in Saudi Arabia), the structuring of the educational system, and many others. Nonetheless, the most significant of these is the use of force to carry out the holy jihad against the unbelievers. Thus, that served as the ideal ground for the ideology of al-Qaeda (Prokop 2003).

Wahhabism emerged as a movement to rectify the aberrant social and religious environments that had developed in the Arabian Peninsula. It aimed to purify Muslim beliefs and eradicate customs and practices that had spread throughout the Islamic world and were deemed by Wahhabism to be incompatible with the core principles of monotheistic Islam. This included supplication, asking for blessings from graves and saints, and disbelieving in any form.¹⁶⁻¹⁷

Wahhabism is usually linked with Salafism. They have different historical origins but have been traveling over the world for the past few years.¹⁸ Salafism emerged at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century in the Arab East. In Arabic, Salaf means past and elapsed; by definition, it means retrieving the deeds of virtuous companions who lived throughout the first three centuries of Islam (Bakr 2009). Salafi comes from the Salaf al-Salih, the first three generations of Muslims. Al-Salaf appointed to prophet Muhammad and his companions (*Sahaba*) and the two generations that succeeded them (*al tab'iun* and the *tabai al tabi'in*).

Ibn Taymiyya (a jurist, hadith scholar, commentator, and diligent Muslim scholar among the Sunni scholars and one of the most prominent Muslim scholars during the period 1300–1306), reported that Salafi views stem from a literal reading of the major texts in Islam, which goes so far as to comprehend God's bodily attributes.

The ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah served as the foundation for modern Salafi philosophy. In the Arabian Peninsula, Wahhabism gave rise to Salafism. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab claimed that most Muslims had strayed from the original monotheistic path in the early 1740s. He believed that modern Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula had reverted to the religious ignorance (*jahiliya*) that existed prior to the advent of the prophet Muhammad, who drove out pagan tribes from the Arabian Peninsula (Tauris, 2009).

¹⁶ More details: Force and Fanaticism: (Valentine 2015).

¹⁷ See (Commins 2009).

¹⁸To learn more about Wahhabism, jihad and Saudi Arabia see: (Choksy and Choksy 2015).

A large number of Arabs and non-Arabs adopted Islam as its influence grew. As a result, there were more races and sects, which caused them to depart from the true principles of Islam. “Salafism” can be essentially an appeal to return to taking Islam from its pure origins, the Qur’an and Sunnah, with “understanding the predecessors of the nation.” This is because throughout the nation's history, there have been deviations from the true understanding of Islam, as evidenced by the ways in which the Qur'an and the Sunnah have been interpreted. These deviations have been symbolized by various innovative and misguided sects, including the Kharijites, Jahmiah, Shiites, Mutazilites, Sufis, secularists, and others.¹⁹

The idea of modern violent jihad, which emerged in 1980 in reaction to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan by enlisting and training foreign warriors, allows us to subjugate both Salafism and Wahhabism. The goal of the al-Qaeda organization was to drive the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan, a Muslim nation. The phrase "Salafi jihadism" refers to the use of violent jihad as the only means of establishing a worldwide Islamic caliphate (Al-Hudhayan 2018).

The Salafi-jihad ideology distinguishes between those who adhere to its teachings and those who do not, just like any other radical ideology. The main rationale for suicide strikes is that Muslims of other sects are branded apostates and Westerners are labeled as unbelievers; both groups deserve to die. (Moghadam, 2008).

F. Assessment of Chapter

The above chapter examined the pre and post September attacks world order and the key changes in political, religious, ideological, and security fields. Furthermore, the examination has focused on the effects of the establishment of anti-terror laws and the battle against terrorism on the global stage, as well as the subsequent changes in international relations.

¹⁹ The researcher points out here that the purpose of this research is not religious or jurisprudential, and it needs to address the depths of interpretation but rather sufficient coverage and explanation to convey the main idea.

The term "extremism" has been studied from a variety of perspectives, both individual and institutional. All agree, nonetheless, that it requires sharp, extreme, and exaggerated perspectives, which could result in aggressive or violent behavior.

The findings show that extremism is not exclusive to any one religion or society; it can exist in any sect or religion. It can manifest in ideas, beliefs, and behavior. The 9/11 attacks significantly affected religious, political, and economic attitudes, perceptions, and interactions in the US and worldwide. It should be noted that official extremism refers to extremism that transcends national boundaries and affects entire nations. It can be state terrorism and extremism, directed either inward against its own people or outward against other countries.

Extremism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam was also discussed, along with its conceptions and causes depending on societal or personal reasons. The history of Islamic extremism, from the religion's inception to the present, was extensively discussed. Jihad was originally used to refer to the call to battle the infidel West and defend Islam and Muslims; militant groups used this term to create fanaticism. Lastly, the significance of Salafism and Wahhabism in contemporary extremism was discussed, along with how they served as the foundation and source of inspiration for Al- Qaeda's ideologies.

III. THE ROLE OF AL-QAEDA IN BUILDING THE IDEOLOGY OF EXTREMISM

- A. Introduction
- B. Literature and Ideology:
- C. Beginning of Al Qaeda and the Soviet Invasion
- D. Al-Qaeda after 9/11

A. Conclusion

Extremist organizations often appear irrational and mysterious; an organization or group is usually described as an extremist when it uses violence, terrorism, and weapons to achieve its goals, is against any compromises or opposition, and is intolerant of dissent among its affiliates.

Al-Qaeda is linked to extremism in this research because of its symbol and connection to the bloodiest and most terrorist operations in modern history. Moreover, conceptually, Al-Qaeda differs significantly from other terrorist organizations and groups from a structural perspective, where it proved a challenge to law enforcement due to its unprecedented transactional nature.

Generally, Al-Qaeda adopts the ideology of jihad against what it calls infidel governments, whether Western or Arab, under Islamic cover and calls for the liberation of Muslim countries from foreign presence. The United States and many countries classify it as a global terrorist organization (Foreign Terrorist Organizations. FTOs).

The 1980s of the twentieth century represent the peak of the Islamic tide that was spreading with force and violence in the Middle East, especially in the Arab countries. The Soviet invasion was the reason for declaring Islamic jihad in Afghanistan. It influenced the souls of the Arab-Islamic youth in the Arab and Islamic world and worldwide. The invasion of Afghanistan was the first jihadist war. Islam is against foreign invasion, and that is why the issue of declaring jihad, its approval, and its fatwas

received widespread resonance in most Arab countries. Abdullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden were the first to call for global jihad in Afghanistan.

With the growth of the system of jihadist ideology and jihad fatwas to defend the Islamic nation in Afghanistan and other Islamic arenas that are subject to the rule of foreign aggression (American and Soviet), jihadism entered the global stage as a reaction to the dynamic of globalization. This was subsequent to the international transformation following the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan and its collapse and the emergence of the United States as a dominant imperial power seeking to impose a new world order. With the paths of global transformation, Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda began to target the United States because it is an infidel force hostile to Islam, exploiting the mobilization of the nation and youth and calling them for jihad. From here, Bin Laden began planning the September 2001 attacks, that were carried out by four civilian aircraft and killed about 3,000 people (9/11 Commission Report, 2004).

Al-Qaeda has always been associated with extremism, terrorism, and bloodshed over the past three decades. After the September events and in an official declaration of the global war on terrorism, the United States fired the first bullet and military action in Afghanistan about three weeks after the attacks in response to the mastermind of the events, Bin Laden. Within a short period, the United States forces, and their allies were able to overthrow the Taliban regime, which ended with the presence of American forces that continued in Afghanistan for an additional 18 years.

Back to the September attacks, a group of young men carrying jihadist ideology carried out suicide operations by hijacking four commercial airplanes. ‘In a true suicide attack, the terrorist knows fully well that the attack will not be completed if he is not killed in practice.’ (Ganor 2002). We may notice from the above the solid ideological influence on the mentality of this organization. How were 15 young men of different nationalities brainwashed and convinced to carry out these attacks and hijack four airplanes led by the Egyptian Mohamed Atta? (The Hamburg Connection 2005).²⁰

²⁰ See Jean Bodiaro et al., **The Mentality of Terrorism: Why They Fight with Their Death**, Translated by: **Bassam Hajjar, Beirut Casablanca, Arab Cultural Center, 2003**

It is less an organization than an ideology (Burke 2004). Al-Qaeda is one of the most powerful terrorist organizations in the world, with a global reach and a rich history of publications, books, videos, and propaganda. The organization and its affiliate groups have been responsible for many of the deadliest terrorist attacks in the past three decades. Al-Qaeda was distinguished by its religious ideology mixed with politics, and it had a strong influence around the world, East and West, under the leadership of Bin Laden as the most wanted man in history (Zernike and Michael T. 2011).

Since 2001, Al-Qaeda has been attempting to expand its influence beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan by establishing a network of affiliates with regional bases. Following its partial collapse, Al-Qaeda's central planning authority has been transferred to its regional affiliates outside Afghanistan. These affiliates continue to take advantage of areas lacking governance, causing instability and increasing their power.

Ultimately, Al-Qaeda faces a particular distinction due to its transnational activity, which can attract unwanted attention and threats in the global fight against terrorism. The most significant threat posed by Al-Qaeda comes from its most vital branches in the Middle East. Looking to the future, global terrorist organizations will continue to pose an interconnected threat. However, the factors that will help Al-Qaeda continue to implement and ideologize its goals more extensively than others are unity between its leadership and a cohesive and attractive rapidly spreading media apparatus.

After the 9/11 attacks, the researcher concluded that the violent suicide bombings that took place in London on July 7, 2005, demonstrated the brutality and ability of Al-Qaeda to pose the most potent threat to global security, especially the Western ally of the United States, and demonstrated the extent of its ability to recruit and penetrate Europe, especially the UK. The bloody events in London demonstrated Al-Qaeda's ability to expand and develop new strategies through small groups that adopt Al-Qaeda's ideology locally without returning to the central leadership in Afghanistan. This is due to the practical information, internet network, and recruitment centers in mosques and Islamic centers.

B. Literature and Ideology

Al-Qaeda grew out of the Mujahideen²¹ movement, which challenged the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan with the Taliban beginning in the late 1970s (Mazzetti 2011).²² It is a multi-national and multi-ethnic organization founded during jihad. The organization was given this name from the word al-Qaeda, an Arabic word meaning the base (Oxford Bibliographies) because it started a database with the names of the mujahideen in Afghanistan and the military and logistical training they received (The Service Bureau). The organization's call for international jihad was founded by Azzam and Bin Ladin.²³

Global Islamic jihad and foreign fighting have been demonstrated as the ideological basis for Al-Qaeda. This phenomenon has manifested itself in many other conflicts in the Islamic world, starting with Afghanistan in the 1980s and Bosnia to Chechnya in the 1990s, passing through Iraq and Somalia in the first decade of the millennium, all the way to Syria. This is in addition to what was around it in the second decade of the millennium after the militarization of the Syrian crisis.

After the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union and communism²⁴, jihad entered the global stage as a reaction to globalization and the new order, as Al-Qaeda worked to build a jihadi organization that sought to stop Western hegemony in the

²¹ Mujahideen: who are fighting for Islam and Muslims: Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary & Thesaurus, **Cambridge Press**.

²² For more Taliban details, see: (dni.gov).

²³ The first use of the term Al-Qaeda was for the first time in 1988 when Abdullah Azzam used it in a magazine called "Al-Jihad." His idea was based on forming an organization providing social services to Muslims.

It will be a base for the Islamic Renaissance. The base was never intended to be a base in the military sense but rather in the social sense, to expel the occupiers from the lands of Islam. For more, see Pervez Musharraf: **Memoirs on the Line of Fire Memoirs of the President of Pakistan, Publications Distribution and Publishing Company**, 2007, p. 283

²⁴ In reading Francis Fukuyama, he sees that the end of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism not only ended the traditional conflict but also put an end to history that suffered from bitter conflicts, and with this end, history stabilizes with global capitalism and liberal democracy.

region, especially the United States, as Al-Qaeda's first enemy. Thus, Bin Laden declared war on the world's greatest superpower from the caves and mountains of Afghanistan (Atwan 2008). The beginnings of Al-Qaeda go back to the 1980s, specifically 1988, in Afghanistan, where the mountains were a center for training mujahideen and setting up camps due to their rugged nature and difficulty reaching them. The militia war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was an incubator for the contemporary stage in developing the revolutionary Salafist ideology and approach.

Al-Qaeda sought to establish an Islamic state and caliphate to resist Western influence and implement Islamic law in its controlled areas. The basic ideology of the organization is the doctrine of jihad in the face of the American occupation of Afghanistan. With the development of Al-Qaeda, its goal became to confront all regional governments while confronting the distant enemy represented by Western governments (Al-Sayyid Al-Ashri Hassan 2015).

The organization derived its ideology from the scholar and jurist Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), whose writings adopted that God's oneness and sovereignty preclude human rule and that the only legitimate form of government is a Muslim caliph (Atwan 2008).²⁵ Al-Qaeda is based on atheological Salafist Islamic reform ideology and associated with armed resistance under the name of "defensive jihad"²⁶ (Bavy, 2006). While Qutb was in prison from 1954-1965, he wrote and inspired his followers to fight against the enemy and Muslim tyrants who had not applied Sharia and Islamic laws. Politically radicalized religious activists applied Qutab's ideologies and principles to fight the West and Western-influenced Muslim leaders. After the September attacks, researchers and analysts called Qutb the philosopher of terror, as he was the godfather of Azzam and Bin Laden, from whom the central nucleus of Al-Qaeda (Gerges 2011). Qutb spent a period in the United States in the 1950s, which made him develop theological ideas by making the United States the first enemy of Islam and Muslims,

²⁵ More about Qutub see: (**John L. and Emad El-Din 2018**)

²⁶ Defensive jihad is an armed struggle against an invading force. It is the duty and obligation of all healthy Muslims to defend Islam and any danger that threatens Muslims. See **Jihad, Radicalism, and the New Atheism Cambridge University Press, 2017. pp.18-32.**

putting them under constant threat. From this point, the importance of jihad was manifested.

The Soviet invasion in 1979 and its aftermath for ten years was a factor that attracted those joining the ranks of the mujahideen from all over the Arab world. Mujahideen fighters flocked to Afghanistan during this period for the sake of jihad and to support Muslim armed militias against infidel communist control, in their view. The researcher suggests that Al-Qaeda's unique ability to expand and establish new branches globally can be attributed to its funding and continuous development, setting it apart from other ideological organizations. Perhaps the presence of a powerful financier is behind this. Bin Laden was the son of a wealthy Saudi family. His family owned billions, and his father was a significant contractor close to the Saudi royal family²⁷. Al-Qaeda also differs from other organizations in that it poses an unprecedented threat to the United States and its allies and global security in general. Although it is the most hunted terrorist group in history, Al-Qaeda's campaign of jihad is tending to outlast itself and the current generation of Islamists. This is because Al-Qaeda's real power lies in its global infrastructure and members and its comprehensive and highly attractive ideology (Gunaratna 2005). Laden's charisma and presence among millions of audiences worldwide cannot be denied. This was evident in the videos the organization broadcasted through its use of resonant language and a strong presence. In addition to the organization's ability to deliver speeches and spread convincing ideas that dazzle the mind of a young generation full of revolutionary jihadist ideas.

The researcher divides the goals of the emergence of Al-Qaeda into two parts. A simple general section that addresses the public with attractive, resonant slogans that tickle the religious feelings of the simple Muslim person to spread the Islamic religion and establish the Islamic Caliphate by the provisions of the Qur'an and Sunnah in the world. It targets those it calls infidels and Arab Islamic regimes that do not apply Islamic

²⁷ Bin Laden (1957-2011) is considered one of the most wanted and controversial figures, as he was born to Muhammad Bin Laden, of Yemeni origins, and he had 52 brothers and sisters. His father had strong ties with the House of Saud. He had jihadist religious tendencies since his youth, during which he met Abdullah Azzam at Abdullah bin Abdulaziz University. See David Johansson and Beth Rowen, **Most-wanted terrorist is killed in Pakistan**.

law and follow the Western, secular, atheistic approach. As for the second section, it is the theoretical jurisprudential part, which has its basic foundations in the Sunni Salafist movement. It is a theoretical section derived from the Salafī jihadi ideology and its theoreticians, as it is characterized by violence and extremism.

Al-Qaeda's thought was built on several significant doctrines that derived from Salafist jihadism. The concept of monotheism (Tawhid) is essential in the Salafist ideology in general, but it is central to the discourse of Salafist jihadism. The concept is manifested in the rejection of being ruled by any doctrine other than what God has revealed in all aspects, and the apostasy of the rulers and Man-made laws, and is socially manifested in the ruling perception of society that has become characterized by globalization and atheism (Havely 2012). Another concept of Al Qaeda is Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Kufr. It is a term used by Muslim scholars to refer to those countries under Muslim sovereignty, sometimes considered "the home of Islam" (Encyclopedia of the Middle East, 2019). Dar al-Kufr means homelands of non-Muslims, is considered a jurisprudential term in Islamic history, as Dar al-Islam is a country subject to the authority of Muslims, and the lands of infidelity are ruled by non-Muslims, who are infidels. Therefore, they are not countries of peace.²⁸

Al-Qaeda used the concept of Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Kufr by applying it to Afghanistan since it is among the countries of Islam whose rulers are characterized by infidelity. Thus, it turns into Dar al-Kufr. Therefore, it must be returned to Dar al-Islam by applying the provisions of Islam by preparing the Islamic army to achieve victory for Islam and expanding the scope of Islam by exporting it and spreading it to the rest of the world. All of this is done through carrying out jihadist operations.

The concept of loyalty and disavowal means supporting the believers and disavowing the unbelievers and being hostile to them. However, the jihadi Salafists believe that innocence does not stop at hatred but rather extends to the necessity of takfir. They write about its complexity and importance, especially about the ruling

⁹Aside from the religious and jurisprudential aspects, contemporary scholars believe that the United Nations Charter makes all countries considered a place of peace, except areas of conflict and war. Hamid Al-Hajj, **International Systems in Law and Sharia**, 1974, pp. (183-184).

regimes in the region, which are described by them and in their literature as tyrants. This is the primary reason for al-Qaeda's hostility to America, the West, and their allies.

1. Peshawar, al-Qaeda's First Base

The organization's Office was established in Peshawar on the Afghan border, where the entry of Arab mujahideen into Afghanistan was organized and supervised by Abdullah Azzam in 1984 (Al-Hudhayan 2018). At the same time, Azzam was a leading figure capable of controlling the Mujahideen, while Bin Laden provided financial support and spent money on Azzam and his followers (Maline 2012)²⁹. Abdullah Azzam played the godfather role in influencing the youth of that period and pushing them to fight under the banner of religion. He wrote many books and founded an organization in Pakistan that worked on recruiting young people to fight in Afghanistan. He traveled extensively to give lectures, not only to the Middle East but also to European and American countries. His message in all these activities was the same: every Muslim must fight in Afghanistan to defend their Muslim brothers and stop the danger of atheist infidel states. Under the supervision of Azzam, the Services Bureau trained thousands of jihadists in Al-Qaeda training camps, after which they carried out operations in several regions that witnessed regional conflicts, civil wars, and political unrest to support Islam and Muslim countries.

The establishment of Al-Qaeda had an initial core aim to fight against the communists in the Soviet war in Afghanistan. The United States supported this cause as it viewed the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan between the communists and Afghans allied with the Soviet forces on the one hand and the Afghan mujahideen on the other hand as a clear case of expansion and aggression.

It can be generally said that Al-Qaeda's goals from the perspective of the United States and the West are to expel Western influence from the Islamic world, unify Islamic society around the world, overthrowing ruling regimes that are viewed as non-Islamic

¹⁰ Azzam wrote the book **“Follow the Caravan,”** a book and symbol that adds to the global jihad. For more, see the book **“The Caravan”** by Thomas Hegghammer. According to Azzam, the author reviewed Azzam's biography and collected hundreds of documents and lectures to decipher the codes of jihad.

and infidel, and ultimately, establishing an Islamic caliphate derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. This is in addition to recruiting and training individuals to launch attacks, and destabilizing economies and local governments by attacking security services, government targets, and foreign military bases supporting them (Cronin , et al. 2004).

C. Beginning of Al Qaeda and the Soviet Invasion

Afghanistan was the starting point and nucleus of the Salafist jihadist groups in the 1980s in the raging battles of the Afghan mujahideen factions against the Soviet army and its Communist allies in Kabul. A generation of Arabs believed and dreamed of establishing valid Islamic rule to replace the ruling Arab regimes, which they considered to be apostate and dictatorial.

The pace of jihad increased after the interests of the Afghan mujahideen in liberating and confronting their country against communism converged with the interests of the United States in preventing communist Russia from expanding further into the region. Just as the United States helped the Afghan mujahideen through money and weapons, Arab and Western countries also sent volunteers and support for the jihad, such as Britain and The Gulf countries, the first of which was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through Pakistan for considerations, the most important of which is fear of the communist tide and the danger it poses to their regimes (*Council on Foreign Relations, 2014*).

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 extended the period of the Cold War and the ongoing international conflict between the United States, represented by the Western symbol, and the Soviet Union, represented by the Eastern symbol. Jimmy Carter (39th President of the United States from 1977 to 1981) claims that the invasion was a strategic major challenge and a significant threat to the West since the Second World War (Walsh 1980). Therefore, the United States government began supporting the mujahideen to defend Afghanistan's sovereignty and religious freedom and to deter Soviet expansion in the Middle East (Lowenstein, 2016).

The armed resistance in Afghanistan was not considered terrorist or illegal. The United States supported this resistance and prolonged the Soviet-Afghan conflict by

providing moral, material, and military support to the Afghan resistance and Mujahedin factions through the supply of weapons. For the United States, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan represented an apparent and provocative attempt to overthrow a legitimate sovereign government. It effectively ended the period of easing tensions between the two superpowers known as détente (Afghanistan: U.N./U.S.S.R. Impact 1980). It has come to symbolize the arena for settling scores between the Eastern and Western camps.

The Afghan war marked the emergence of a pattern of global jihad with an increase in the call and ruthlessness to defend it as an Islamic country exposed to an infidel foreign invasion represented by the Soviet Union. The Afghan experience worked to attract jihadists from all over the world. Consequently, the Afghan jihad drew the most prominent symbols of Salafist jihadism, such as Abdullah Azzam, Bin Laden, Al-Zawahiri, and the Arab jihadists, to begin establishing their camps, which formed the phenomenon of Arab Afghans. During the ten years of war, the Red Army was unable to defeat the Afghan mujahideen despite its technological and military superiority. This is due to the geographical nature of Afghanistan, its rugged mountains, and the difficulty of reaching fighters.

In line with their goal to defend the Islamic world from communism, which was considered infidel and against Islamic principles, Al-Qaeda underwent significant changes in 1989, as the Soviet forces left Afghanistan and the Soviet-backed Kabul government fell in 1992. This led to a conflict and violent war between Afghan armed factions until the emergence of the Taliban movement in 1994, which took control of most of the Afghan territories.

When the Soviet military mission in Afghanistan ended, some mujahideen wanted to expand the scope of their operations to include extending Islamic jihad in other parts of the world. They were led by Bin Laden as he founded Al-Qaeda with jihadist goals in Afghanistan and outside it, and he had his jihadist project against the Communist governments in the Arab region (Al-Tawil 2017). It can be asserted that Afghanistan was exploited at the end of the 1980s to prepare and train Arab elements, in addition to contributing to the general project of the Mujahideen, which was to establish an Islamic state in Afghanistan after the overthrow of the communist regime that the Russians left behind after their withdrawal.

After the end of the Cold War, George W. Bush called for a new world order that created a new vision and ideological beginning for Al-Qaeda. During the Afghan-Soviet experience, Al-Qaeda emerged as a new and clear enemy to the United States of America. The ideology of the new Al-Qaeda became represented by building a jihadi system that would lift Western hegemony over Arab and Islamic countries and primarily fight American globalization.

Several reasons made the United States of America the greatest enemy of Al-Qaeda and its most significant concern and target. Among these reasons, Al-Qaeda's belief that the United States provides support to Israel (the traditional enemy of Arabs and Muslims), its allies, and infidel dictatorial regimes. The presence of American military bases in Arab countries during the Gulf War period which gave the green light for the United States to blatantly intervene in the region. It can be said that Al-Qaeda's ideology was developed as a deterrent force to confront US imperialism and expansionism in the region. From an academic standpoint, the theoretical jihadi ideology has matured amidst these repercussions. Still, it needs organized planning from a practical standpoint that demonstrates transformation, maturity, and depth and directs it toward the global path. From here, Bin Laden began preparing for the September 11 attacks.

When the organization carried out its first two operations in the United States, a young extremist trained in one of bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan attacked American soil by planting a truck bomb under the World Trade Center (1993). The strategy to bring down the towers failed, but six people were killed and more than a thousand injured (fbi.gov). After that, attacks continued by Al-Qaeda to prove its presence and its military and tactical strength. The organization launched attacks on United States embassies in 1998 in Dar Al Salaam, Tanzania, Nairobi, and Kenya, resulting in 224 deaths, including 56 U.S. government employees and contractors, and over 4,500 injuries (U.S. Department of State).

At the beginning of the 20th century and the 2000s, Al-Qaeda continued to plan its violent attacks.³⁰ On October 12, 2000, terrorist extremists blew up a small boat filled with explosives next to the American ship Cole while it was stopping for fuel in Yemen. The attack killed 17 Navy sailors³¹, injured nearly 40 other crew members and caused extensive damage to the ship, in which is known as the USS Cole incident (Department Of Defense). Then, the events of September 2001 followed.

The September attacks were the turning point in al-Qaeda and its global escalation, changing the world and the international system forever. The beginnings of planning for these attacks go back to the nucleus of the Berlin cell under the leadership of Mohamed Atta, the leader of these groups when 19 people hijacked four planes and directed them as missiles to hit the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon, and another crashed in Pennsylvania.¹²

D. Al-Qaeda After 9/11

After Bin Laden's long-standing and persistent threats and warnings to attack the United States were carried out on 9/11, 2001, Bin Laden and his associates later issued several statements confirming Al-Qaeda's responsibility for the attacks on New York and Washington. Following a consistent pattern, bin Laden admitted his support for the hijackers, prayed for them, and justified the reasons for the attacks as a defensive reaction on behalf of Muslims to the violations carried out by the United States. The United States of America, headed by George W. Bush (2001-2009), fought extremist political Islam groups in Afghanistan, especially Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and groups linked to them. The war that started as a consequence of the September 2001 attacks, which extremist political Islam

³⁰ It should be noted here that Al-Qaeda attempted to carry out attacks whose plan to bomb Los Angeles Airport on the eve of the millennium celebrations failed.

¹² To learn more about the details of the September attacks, who were the perpetrators, what were their nationalities, how were they linked to Al-Qaeda, what was their ideology, and the beginnings of the Hamburg cell, see **9/11: The Essential Reference Guide** edited by **Stephen E. Atkins**, 2021

groups orchestrated, continued with full force until 2008. During this time, the US administration led by George Bush pursued conservative policies and adopted a hardline approach against these groups. However, at the end of his term, this approach ended.

Subsequently, the United States accused Al-Qaeda and its leader, Bin Laden, of launching the attacks. After that, terms such as ‘the Crusade war’ and ‘war on terrorism’ appeared by George Bush. Since then, these terms have been formed and repeated by politicians and writers, taking on a cultural and religious perspective that continues today. Several days after the attacks, President George Bush addressed Congress in a speech in which he said that from today onwards, the United States would consider any country that harbors or supports terrorism to be a hostile regime, declaring his country on ‘war alert.’ (Bush 2002).

The reaction to the September attacks was a strong and resonant speech by George Bush announcing the beginning of the fight against terrorism and identifying the countries of the ‘Axis of Evil’ - North Korea, Iran, and Iraq — as rogue states that he said harbored, financed and aided terrorists. (Bush: 2002). Then Syria, Cuba, and Libya were added. ‘The Axes of Evil’ was considered a threat to the international community because they possess weapons of mass destruction. From this gate, the United States began a brutal and prolonged war, whether in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Following the Al-Qaeda attack, Washington responded with a decisive and forceful approach, capturing Kabul and launching airstrikes on Bin Laden's strongholds in Afghanistan. The Taliban, which had been providing a haven for Al-Qaeda leaders for decades, as well as several jihadist groups, were quickly defeated during the war on terrorism. Consequently, the United States established a new government in Kabul, which became an ally of the United States.

The United States of America engaged in a prolonged war against extremist Islamic groups, particularly Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. This war continued until 2008, when the conservative and extremist approach of the US administration towards these groups ended. The administration was characterized by its fusion of religious ideology and extreme conservatism, as well as its commitment to a more rigorous foreign policy led by George W. Bush against extremist political Islam groups, especially after the events of September 2001.

Although the war in Afghanistan is the longest in the history of the United States, as it lasted 18 years, the effects of its invasion of Iraq led to hostilities that continue to this day since the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein and the Arab Socialist Baath Party.

The laws, policies, and declarations of the "War on Terror" were successful in weakening Al-Qaeda after the 9/11 attacks by arresting and assassinating many of its leaders. Nevertheless, the researcher believes that the United States was unable to eliminate Al-Qaeda through its anti-terrorist operations completely. Instead, the organization became a decentralized system, becoming more of an ideology than an organization. The management system also collapsed from the mountains of Afghanistan after the United States had attacked it. After the US military intervention in Afghanistan destroyed Al-Qaeda's shelters, the organization formed an alliance with the Taliban, relocated to the northwest border areas, and began planning new attacks.

Al-Qaeda used to have a hierarchical structure with a relatively small and geographically limited membership. It claimed to be the global leader of international Islamic jihad. However, Al-Qaeda's essential leadership weakened, and the United States and its allies attacked it. As a result, regional branches of Al-Qaeda grew in places like Afghanistan and other parts of the world. Additionally, the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has significantly altered Al-Qaeda's position (Congressional Research Service, 2022).

In March 2003, George W. Bush launched his military campaign against Iraq, which was supposed to bring down the curtain on the last operation of the "War on Terror" policy by ending the dictatorial rule of Saddam Hussein and replacing him with a new democratic system that would be the beginning of a new Middle East. Nevertheless, the policy of unjustified violence, oppression, and the killing of many civilians led to the emergence of new factions of extremist jihadists. All of this provided a new environment and ground to embrace Al-Qaeda because of the chaos there.

From the above, it is clear that the 1980s and 1990s were the initial and essential periods and the beginning of Salafist jihadism. During the Cold War, tensions between significant powers defined the global political landscape. With the rise of globalization, this paradigm shifted, particularly following the occupation of Iraq. Al-Qaeda clearly

expressed hostility to the United States, the West, and Arab regimes, viewing them as infidels.

Al-Qaeda has expanded and spread in the virtual world and across Internet networks by finding innovative and contemporary techniques in recruitment, implementation, and precise targeting by entering the cyber and digital world. The organization is considered one of the armed extremist organizations most interested in media spread, as electronic jihad has become one of its most important advantages. Al-Qaeda worked to spread its Salafist jihadist ideology through videotapes (such as bin Laden's famous speeches) and broadcasting military training operations to demonstrate the organization's strength (Weimann 2004).

There is no doubt that the United States exaggeratedly exploited the events of September to achieve expansionist goals to lead the world under the pretext of the war on terrorism. This is evident in the war on Iraq under the pretext that it threatens global security by possessing weapons of mass destruction.

The policy of creative chaos pursued by the United States after the invasion of Iraq created a suitable environment for extremist religious organizations by creating a civil war between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds. Creative chaos was disclosed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2005 by overthrowing dictator regimes and bringing democracy to the region (Mohamed and Mudhe Gerow 2019).³² As a result of the post-September events and the resulting invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, new extremist organizations emerged as a reaction.

1. Al-Zarqawi And The New Organization

After the fall of Baghdad and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, new factions and organizations emerged, the most important of which was a global Sunni

³² The term 'creative chaos' is attributed initially to the orientalist Bernard Lewis, who called for it in the Middle East to bring democracy in the face of extremist Islamic terrorism. See: (Lewis 2008).

jihadist organization under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi³³; the Jordanian-born terrorist and Al-Qaeda affiliate had established a branch in Iraq. Various religions and ethnicities, including Sunnis, Shiites, Yazidis, and Kurds, characterize Iraqi society. Therefore, Al-Zarqawi's organization became a symbol of Sunnis and the American resistance. He established the Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad organization (Congregation of Monotheism and Jihad) and then joined Al-Qaeda. It was more violent and brutal, attacking and killing civilians. Jihadist Salafism is based on an intellectual and ideological basis shared by Bin Laden and Al-Zarqawi. Still, there is a difference in concepts and application in terms of fighting the enemy: Al-Zarqawi called for fighting local Arab Islamic regimes while Bin Laden was more global in fighting the West, the United States, and Israel.

After the killing of Bin Laden in an air strike on May 2, 2011, the jihadi scene changed. Al-Qaeda was no longer the premier global jihadi organization, as the Islamic State and other militias emerged and came to the forefront. Al-Qaeda reorganized itself and began establishing regional branches, establishing branches in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Somalia, and even reaching out to Europe. The organization, under the leadership of Al-Zarqawi in Iraq, adopted terror tactics and violence strategies without control, killed many civilians, and carried out many suicide operations. This continued until the killing of Al-Zarqawi in 2006, after which he announced the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi as the caliph of the Muslims.

It must be noted that the killing of Bin Laden caused a significant setback and fragmentation in Al-Qaeda organization, as it was no longer as strong, glamorous, and

³³ Al-Zarqawi was born in 1966 in Jordan to a low-income family. His life turned from deviance to extremism in Jordanian prisons and his meeting with Salafi-jihadi sheiks. After his release from prison, he went to Afghanistan to receive military training, then went to Iraq to establish a branch of Al-Qaeda under the name Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad. He was distinguished by his brutal and horrific methods of killing and kidnapping. Many of his terrorist acts were broadcast on tape around the world. See Gunaratna et al., **Abu Musab Al Zarqawi: a new generation terrorist leader, RSIS Commentaries. Singapore: Nanyang Technological University, 2004.**

propaganda-based. However, after the decline and weakness of Al-Qaeda, the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) was an indication of the beginning of a new era of jihadist terrorism, or what we can call hybrid organizations, as they carried religious, ideological thought, but in a more violent and terror-hungry manner. Among the characteristics of organized military militias and terrorist organizations, they have a declared the goal of establishing a kind of “caliphate” according to their concept and an organized strategy for survival, expansion, and growth militarily, politically, socially, and economically, to establish the Islamic caliphate throughout the world. Al-Qaeda's ideology and goals were mainly focused on fighting the Crusader expansion represented by the United States, the West, and Israel. As for ISIS and Al-Zarqawi, their goals were focused on a sectarian and local basis, but the main enemy remains the West and the United States of America (Byman and Williams 2015).

Extremist groups emerging after the partial collapse of Al-Qaeda in Syria and Iraq, including Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, have the intent and ability to direct attacks against the West. The UK is a high-priority target for Islamic extremists. Although the current primary focus is on terrorism emanating from the Middle East, specifically Syria and Iraq, the threat of terrorism also emanates from other parts of the Middle East and regions such as North, East, and West Africa and South and South-east Asia (Security Service.mi5.gov.uk). Considering this chaos, extremist Islamic groups were able to penetrate Europe, especially the UK. Individuals are recruited through religious gatherings in mosques and religious centers to fight in Syria, Iraq, and the UK.

E. Assessment of Chapter

The name Al-Qaeda has always aroused terror and fear when it is mentioned due to its notorious reputation over the years. However, if we delve into its structure and ideology, we see a lot of literary and intellectual depth rich in theories and literature of jihad. It was not a random organization; instead, it was organized, structured, and based on focal ideas ,making it widely known and widespread. The most important foundations of Al-Qaeda and its literature were Salafist jihad, which derived from the

theoretician Sayyid Qutb, and how the leaders of Al-Qaeda derived their ideas from him, then jihad against the Soviet Union, which is more the shield of aggression on behalf of the Muslim nation in Afghanistan against communism, through the Arab Afghans and their spiritual father, Abdullah Azzam. His and Bin Laden's financial role in financing the equipment was discussed, starting from Peshawar. After that, the organization's goals turned into global jihad that went beyond the borders of Afghanistan and the declaration of a worldwide armed jihad campaign against the United States, Israel, and the West.

The researcher then moved on to present the beginnings of Al-Qaeda with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, where jihad at that time was considered a legitimate act under the assistance of the United States to contain communist expansion, its greatest enemy. After the Red Army left Afghanistan and withdrew, Bin Laden began to see the danger coming from American intervention in the Middle East, especially the Arab and Islamic nations, so he declared hostility towards it and the West. Al-Qaeda began carrying out operations targeting Americans in Yemen, Dar Al Salaam, and Nairobi before carrying out the September 2001 attacks, which were an eternal stain on world history, international relations, and terrorism.

After the September attacks, the United States responded with punitive measures. The country gained the world's sympathy and passed the anti-terrorism law in its name, allowing it to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. The ensuing wars were long and grueling, with all parties suffering heavy losses. Despite the United States attacking Al-Qaeda's mountainous strongholds in Afghanistan and working to weaken and dismantle the organization, Al-Qaeda was able to form new centers, taking advantage of the chaos in Iraq and the Levant. The American invasion of Iraq left behind an arena of chaos that was suitable for the emergence of Al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq and the Levant. This branch later transformed into the Islamic State (ISIS) under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Following the events of September, the role of Al-Qaeda was weakened due to the concentrated and robust attacks carried out by the United States and its allies. Nevertheless, the group still posed a significant threat in the world, particularly in Europe and the UK, where it managed to infiltrate and recruit individuals into European and British society. Additionally, it also attracted British fighters to Iraq and Syria.

Extremist organizations came after the events of September with a violent and terrorist ideology twice that of Al-Qaeda. Al-Zarqawi, the leader of ISIS in Iraq, carried out the most horrific operations of killing and destruction against civilians, whether local or foreign, and his brutality exceeded all imaginations. After his death, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi succeeded him as the caliphate of a Muslim nation, exploiting the militarization of the Syrian crisis in the region to create more armed militias.

In the 9/11 aftermath attacks, the United States of America used the opportunity to announce the war on Afghanistan and Iraq. The reason given was the war on terrorism and the need to eliminate the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. However, the US had other hidden goals, such as emphasizing American hegemony as the only one in the world and pleasing and consoling the American people who were experiencing anger and depression after the events of September. The US succeeded in overthrowing the Taliban regime and destroying the infrastructure of the Al-Qaeda organization, but it did not eliminate it. The remnants of Al-Qaeda were fragmented into smaller, more dangerous organizations in the Middle East, extending to Europe.

F. Endnote

³⁴ Abdullah Azzam's (1941-1989) personality is considered one of the pivotal figures and has a significant influence and presence in all Islamic movements. The researcher believes that Abdullah Azzam played the most critical and fundamental role in the globalization of extremist Islamic thought. He is the one who made it cross-border, and the main reason for that is the fighters who cross the borders between Arab countries to fight on the conflict fronts under the slogan of jihad, influenced by Azzam. The prominent example here is Afghanistan, which attracted thousands of fighters from Islamic countries. He issued and published an official fatwa saying that jihad was obligatory for every Muslim, which opened the door to extremism. By tracing Azzam's thought through his most important influence, the medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyyah

³⁴ Andrew McGregor, "Jihad and the Rifle Alone": 'Abdullah 'Azzam and the Islamist Revolution. *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 23(2), 2003, 92–113.

Sayyid Qutb, we see how Azzam's ideology transformed radical Islam from a collection of disparate movements defined by national borders into a powerful movement in the international arena. He was the ambassador of the Afghan jihad in the Arab world.

³⁵ Sayyed Qutb (1906-1966): He was born to a well-to-do family in Egypt and received a good education. Then, he traveled to the United States to complete his studies, and there, he received a cultural shock towards the West and America, which formed his subsequent extremist ideas. He then devoted himself to theoretical Islamic writing during the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. He was imprisoned more than once because of his ideas that were opposed to the Egyptian government at the time, and he was accused of conspiring against the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood, whose activities were prohibited. He wrote his most important books and radical ideas in prison, then Gamal Abdel Nasser executed him.

³⁵ To view the bibliography of Sayyid Qutb and his influence on contemporary thought, John L. Esposito, Imad al-Din Shaheen

Oxford University Press, August 8, 2018. Also Sayed Khatab, **The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah**, **Taylor& Francis Group, London And New York**, 2006

IV. EXTREMIST ISLAMIC GROUPS IN THE UK

- A. Introduction
- B. Islamic Extremist Organizations
- C. al-Muhajiroun
- D. Londonistan
- E. Conclusion

The terrorist attacks in New York State on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent wars on Iraq and Afghanistan exposed the West to the threat of notions of extremism that it had never seen before. While political ideologies and ethnic tensions shaped many conflicts during the Cold War and their devastating aftermath, the events of 2001 and their aftermaths polarized individuals toward ends that culminated in progressive radicalization. Since then, most countries have been suffering from the effects of the attacks.

As is the case in many regions and countries around the world, extremism in the United Kingdom is a troubling issue that includes different ideologies and beliefs. It is important to note that extremism can appear in various forms, including political, religious, and social extremism. In the United Kingdom, efforts have been made to combat extremism and promote social cohesion, but challenges remain. The rise of right-wing extremism has been a significant concern in recent years due to its extremist policies towards the Muslim community in the UK. Far-right extremist groups and individuals promote nationalistic and xenophobic ideologies, often targeting immigrants, religious minorities, and other marginalized communities. The UK government, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organizations are working to counter the influence of these groups through various initiatives and campaigns.

In addition, Islamic extremism is another form of extremism that has been the focus of attention in the United Kingdom. Some individuals and groups adhere to

extreme practices of Islam, which may lead to extremism and, consequently, violence. Extremism in the UK is a multi-faceted issue involving different ideologies and motivations. It is not limited to a specific group, religion, or ethnicity. The UK has faced challenges from domestic far-right and radical Islamist ideologies on both sides.

The UK is a country of freedom and the beating heart of Europe in its ancient constitutions. The country is generally known to be a democracy with a strong emphasis on individual liberties and human rights. One of the most significant aspects of our society is freedom of expression. The United Kingdom places excellent importance on valuing freedom of expression (Legislation.gov.uk). People are generally free to express their opinions and beliefs, even if they are controversial, if they do not incite violence or hatred. The United Kingdom respects freedom of religion; people enjoy the freedom to practice any religion or belief system, and there are laws in place to protect individuals from discrimination based on their religious beliefs, as long as it does not lead to the practice of terrorist or extremist acts.

In addition to political freedom, freedom of the press, and privacy, The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy, meaning that citizens have the freedom to participate in the political process. They can vote in elections, join political parties, and participate in political activities. In terms of the rule of law, the United Kingdom enjoys a well-established legal system based on the rule of law. Courts operate independently, ensuring individuals can access justice and a fair trial.

Just as the September 11 attacks affected the entire world, it also affected the United Kingdom and its internal and external policies and the fight against terrorism. In addition to the July 7 bombings, the UK has implemented a specific counter-terrorism strategy. The bombings in London on 7/7 had a significant impact on the definition of threat, effectiveness, cooperation, and leadership as perceived by the UK government, local communities, and the media (Griffith-Dickson, Dickson and Ivermee 2014).

The phenomenon of extremism in the United Kingdom is controversial due to the diverse demographic composition of society where Islam is the second fastest-growing religion in the country, where the number of Muslims in 2011 was 2,516,000, counting for 4.4% of the total population (ONS (2018)). Due to the increase in extremist

organizations, islamophobia has spread across Europe. In The UK, in particular, the rise of the Muslim population has been a focus of attention.

A. Islamic Extremist Organizations

It is often assumed that Islamic extremism is driven by social and psychological factors, particularly feelings of dissatisfaction and grievances. The idea is that these grievances stem from social, economic, and political challenges, leading to distress and pushing people towards collective action. The British government defines extremism as: “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.”

In the 21st century, academics, politicians, and decision-makers face interconnected challenges related to extremism in societies with concerns about the impact of ethnocultural diversity and immigration. The United Kingdom is an example of this, as it has received waves of immigration worldwide. The latest statistics indicate that in the year ending June 2021, India, Poland, and Pakistan were the top three countries of birth for the foreign-born (Migrants in the UK: An Overview 2022).

This social diversity and the presence of citizens from different backgrounds led to blocs and organizations that express their affiliation, ideological, and intellectual orientation through cultural, linguistic, or religious centers. This chapter focuses on extremist Islamic groups and organizations, and individuals because they are an important phenomenon that has become part of British politics.

For many years, there has been a noticeable increase in extremist ideas in Europe in general and The UK in particular, to the point that Europe has become the exporter of terrorist fighters to the Middle East region, where many fighters belong to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State and hold British citizenship as they later filmed many films proving their presence there, through which they threatened Britain.³⁶ Due to time constraints

³⁶ Perhaps one of the most conservational videotapes affiliated with ISIS is the tape called Jihadi John, which is a pseudonym for a person named Muhammad Jassim Emwazi. He is known as the perpetrator of the execution of foreign hostages. Muhammad was of Kuwaiti origins and immigrated

and a general disregard from European leaders towards this dangerous expansion, Europe has begun to feel the presence of an impending threat. This threat's complexity is evident because it resides at the very heart of Europe. This expansion means the practice of extremist behavior comfortably on European soil and the demand to change European values in favor of those values adopted by extremist organizations. In addition to the extremist British groups that call for hate speech and Islamophobia, fighting the Islamic presence on its lands, and returning to the mentality of white supremacy and that Great Britain is for the British.

The events of September 11 and the subsequent war of the United States in alliance with The UK against Al-Qaeda and its allies opened the arena of war inside the UK, and these groups began recruiting British Muslims, whether children of immigrants or those wishing to participate, most of whom were young men below thirty.

The aftermath of the 7/7 attacks brought to light the organizations and individuals responsible for extremism. The attack caused psychological distress to UK citizens and revealed the problem of domestic radicalization as a primary trigger of terrorism and extremism. Despite this, it is essential to note that the majority of British Muslims are upstanding citizens who feel a part of the British community and oppose terrorist attacks.

The Islamic community in the United Kingdom has a strong presence and influence, both socially and politically, as the United Kingdom has hosted many immigrants fleeing the oppression and dictatorship of their country's regimes in search of safety. However, some extremist groups and individuals have exploited the existing freedoms and free intellectual and ideological space, in addition to political freedom and freedom of belief and religious practices, by exporting extremist ideologies. These groups call for the establishment of an Islamic state and caliphate throughout The UK and the fight against deviation and European values of pornography, drugs, perversion, and alcohol. The

to the United Kingdom in 1994 with his family. He is of British nationality. John was famous for his bloodshed and brutality as he carried a knife to slaughter the hostage in front of the recorded camera and wore a black scarf to cover his entire body except for his eyes. He killed many foreign hostages. See **The Hunt for British jihadist 'Jailer John'**". TheTimes.co.uk 21.8 2016.

streets of Britain witnessed many demonstrations and tours of people with extremist ideology, calling for the introduction of Islamic law in The UK and the elimination of democracy there and all the principles upon which Britain was founded.

The UK government's official position regarding the drivers of extremism is that extremism can emanate from all religions, races, and beliefs. However, extremist ideologies may use religious or ethnic language to legitimize their target audience (Dawson and Godec 2017).

The United Kingdom has a long and rich history of terrorism and extremism linked to Northern Ireland and the unrest there due to Sectarian clashes between Catholic separatists and Protestant unionists³⁷ and the shift in focus from Northern Ireland to Islamic extremism in the wake of the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001. Subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and even Syria and the Middle East, as well as the continuing threat from terrorists to spread Islamic extremism, such as Al-Qaeda and, more recently, ISIS, have put Islamic extremism at the top of their agenda.

With the increase in terrorist threats and risks in The UK in recent years, one of the reasons for this is mosque and extremist discourse, leaflets, language, education, and Qur'an centers, and the neglect of training imams³⁸ or even monitoring them as required, which has obligated the British authorities to develop local and national strategies and

³⁷ The War in Northern Ireland, also known as the Northern Irish Conflict or the National Struggle, was a long-running conflict between British forces and Irish nationalist and republican groups in Northern Ireland. The competition began in the early 1960s and continued until the end of the 1990s. The Catholic nationalist movements, demanding secession from the United Kingdom and joining Northern Ireland to the Irish Republic in the south, were facing British forces and incoming groups. The region was subjected to terrorist operations and attacks from both sides, and events of violence and escalation accompanied the war. The decisive wars marked the daily lives of civilians in the region and negatively affected the economy and society. The resulting war ended with peace agreements in 1998, officially announced as the "Belfast Peace Agreement" or "Long Friday Agreement." These agreements established a new northern government and a mechanism for Irish republican involvement in northern affairs. They resulted in a relative truce and improved regional security and economic conditions. For more, see: Imperial War Museum, www.iwm.org.uk

³⁸ Imam is considered an essential Islamic leadership position. In the Sunni Muslim tradition, Imam is primarily used as the title of the prayer leader of a mosque.

programs to prevent extremism, combating extremism and combating terrorism. But the issue has become more complex; British societal and national security is exposed to more “security shocks,” the difficulty of controlling dangerous extremist elements, who move with some ease within British soil under the guise of calling for Sharia and Islam.

Islamic organizations in Europe are generally divided into two types. The first type is public organizations or associations that undertake religious, social, and educational activities and have ties that vary in strength with the Muslim Brotherhood. They are either advocacy associations, sympathetic associations, or associations officially affiliated with the Brotherhood. The second type is more specialized entities complementary to the Islamic advocacy network, such as youth and student associations, women’s associations such as the “European Forum for Muslim Women,” charitable associations such as “Islamic Relief,” “Ibn Sina” medical associations, and Palestinian associations “Palestine Relief and Support Committee.” These charities are not banned and carry out their charitable activities legally without prosecution. In 2011, in England and Wales, there were 115 terrorists in custody, of which 79 were associated with Al-Qaeda or its affiliates. The latest reports by the House of Commons estimate that there are 48 illegal international terrorist organizations in the UK, in addition to 14 organizations proscribed concerning Northern Ireland (House of Commons. Home Affairs Committee, 2011).

The terrorist threat and extremism in the UK today is dominated by individuals or small groups operating outside organized terrorist networks, creating chaos within society. This is a trend that makes terrorists challenging to predict, identify, investigate, and disrupt (The Secretary of State for the Home Department, 2023). Regardless of their names and goals, the British government has included many of these organizations on the lists of terrorist groups and organizations, whether they have a presence inside or outside the United Kingdom. This list includes:³⁹

- Abdullah Azzam Brigades
- Abu Nidal Organization

³⁹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266038/List_of_Proscribed_organisations.pdf

- Abu Sayyaf
- Aden-Abyan Islamic Army
- Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya
- Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya
- Al-Muhajiroun
- Al Murabitun
- Al Qaeda
- Al-Shabaab
- Ansar al-Islam
- Ansaru
- Ansar Bait al-Maqdis
- Armed Islamic Group, also known as G,IA
- Asbat al-Ansar
- Egyptian Islamic Jihad
- Hamas
- Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen
- Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami
- Harkat-ul-Mujahideen
- Harkat-ul-Ansar
- Hezbollah Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
- Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
- Jaish-e-Mohammed
- Jamaat Ansar al-Sunna (formerly Jaish Ansar al-Sunna)
- Jamaat Ul-Furquan
- Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen
- Jemaah Islamiyah
- JundallahKhuddam ul-Islam
- Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
- Lashkar-e-Toiba
- Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group

- Muslims Against Crusades
- Palestinian Islamic Jihad
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command
- Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
- The Saved Sect
- Tehrik Nefaz-e Shari'at Muhammadi (Home Office 13 December 2013).

It should be indicated that the Muslim Brotherhood is considered one of the most influential organizations that engage in political Islamic activity in the United Kingdom. Still, it is not included in the lists of terrorist groups. The Brotherhood has gone from having no organizational presence to becoming the most powerful group among British Muslims (Whine 2005).

Britain was distinguished from the rest of Europe by being the first haven for the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe after the tightening noose on them in Egypt and the Arab world during the 1940s. Since the founding of the Brotherhood by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, the United Kingdom has embraced the group and its leaders and transformed itself into a center for the group, allowing the latter to cross into Europe and find a safe habitation.

The approach and policy of the Muslim Brotherhood are characterized by flexibility and distance from violence and extremism, as they describe themselves as moderate Muslims. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Muslim Brotherhood and its associated organizations shifted towards a new political activity strategy in Western countries. This strategy aimed to promote the Muslim Brotherhood overseas while also preserving the autonomy of Muslim communities in the UK. This shift in strategy saw the Muslim Brotherhood move away from violent means and towards a more political approach. The goal was to create a network of Islamic organizations that could influence Western governments and shape policies in favor of Muslim communities. However, this strategy has been controversial, with some accusing the Muslim Brotherhood of promoting extremist views and undermining Western values (The House of Commons, 2015).

According to a government report in 2015, the Muslim Brotherhood was not found to have any links to terrorist-related activity in the UK. Additionally, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) has condemned terrorist activities carried out by Al-Qaeda in the UK (Jenkins and Farr 2015).

The roots of the reasons that helped extremist groups in the UK to penetrate and spread can be traced into several complex political and social fields, the most important of which are:

Immigration: The Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi communities expanded their presence in Islamic immigration to Britain after World War II, and then diversity began to dominate the Islamic community there in the 1970s, with the increase in Arab and African immigration.

Population divisions: Muslims account for 4.4% of the British population (Office for National Statistics. 2022). The Islamic community is characterized by ethnic and sectarian diversity. Due to the great weight of South Indian Muslims within the community, the Deboni, Barelvi, and Sufi sects dominate the doctrinal orientations of the majority of British Muslims, with a small presence of Ahl al-Hadith, (Sunnah).

Financial marginalization: Statistics from 2015 show that 50% of British Muslims are poor, compared to 27% of Sikhs, 22% of Hindus and 19% of British Catholics. The increase in Muslim poverty rates is due to factors such as poor qualification for the labor market, low income, and a large number of unproductive children (Department for Work & Pensions, UK,2013).

Racism and Islamophobia: Islamophobia refers to irrational hostility towards Islam and Muslims. Many cases confirm bias against them, ranging from ridicule and insults to murder. There is also racial discrimination based on race; 92% of Muslims are non-white, especially Muslims in Ireland and Wales.

Political Mosques: The movement to build mosques in the United Kingdom has doubled during recent decades, in proportion to the growth of the organization and the growth and increase in the number of immigrants from Arab and Islamic countries seeking asylum or studying there. In 2017, statistics indicated that there were 1,825 mosques in the United Kingdom (Center For Research and Evidence on Security Threats, 2018).

There is no denying the fact that certain mosques have been linked to extremist individuals and organizations. Internal conflicts within mosques, such as issues with administration and elections, as well as conflicts between neighboring mosques or those from different sects, are also a cause for concern. Mosques in the UK have always held community and political functions, with imams serving as local, regional, and sometimes national representatives. This was particularly important before establishing national representative bodies like the Muslim Council of Britain. Unfortunately, with the increase in extremist rhetoric and incidents, mosques have become targets for hate crimes.

Hate crimes have been on the rise in recent years and have become a growing concern for mosques in the UK. According to a report from the Press Association, the incidents of hate crimes targeting mosques across the country more than doubled between 2016 and 2017.

Police officials recorded 110 hate crimes directed at Muslim places of worship, like smashing windows and bomb threats, between March and July this year, up from 47 over the same six-month period in 2016⁴⁰.

B. al-Muhajiroun

Islamist immigrants in Britain form a vital part of the country's cultural and religious diversity. The United Kingdom is a destination for many immigrants of Muslim origins. These migrants come from various nations, including countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and reach for various reasons, including seeking work, political asylum, and family unity.

The Muslim community in Britain includes a wide range of people, from people born in Britain and raised there to recent immigrants. They vary in values, traditions, and religious orientations. They participate in various aspects of daily life in the UK,

⁴⁰ See M, Naqshbandi, *Islam, and Muslims in Britain: A Guide*. London: City of London Police. (This the guide includes a section on mosques, including visitor etiquette, 2006.

including education, work, and cultural and social life. It is worth noting that Muslim immigrants in the UK sometimes face challenges, including discrimination and cultural challenges. However, the British government supports the cultural and social integration of migrants and Muslim communities, including education, employment, and social support programs. There are also efforts by Muslim communities in Britain to increase understanding and understanding between different religions and cultures and to promote coexistence and community safety.

There is a history of the presence of extremist Islamic groups in the UK, which includes Al-Muhajroon and some people who were born and raised in Britain. These groups may adopt extremist ideologies, whether religious, political, or ethnic. These can include extremist Islamist groups, the far right, and other extremist groups. Such groups often take a violent approach to achieve their goals, which may be part of their activities. This chapter will discuss the Al-Muhajiroun Islamic community in the United Kingdom. The researcher chose the Al-Muhajiroun group because its members were responsible for carrying out the 2005 London bombings⁴¹, and because this group has a long and rich history with the ability to influence individuals and change British society.

Al-Muhajiroun is (Arabic for “the Emigrants” المهاجرون) is a network that has been outlawed due to its practice of convincing young Britons into its extreme ideology and high-risk activism. It is an extremist Islamic organization that originated in the United Kingdom in the 1990s. Founded by controversial cleric Omar Bakri Muhammad, the group called for the establishment of an Islamic state based on a strict interpretation of Islamic law. Al-Muhajiroun has gained attention for its provocative and extremist rhetoric and has often participated in public demonstrations and recruitment efforts.

The group has faced legal challenges and increased scrutiny by British authorities. Although banned in the United Kingdom in 2004, the organization operated under different names and through other branches. Anjem Choudary, a prominent

⁴¹ Newsnight's Richard Watson has followed the extremist group al-Muhajiroun for 16 years. In this film, he reveals how the group became a crucible of home-grown terror, from the 7/7 London bombings to the recent London Bridge attacks. See: www.bbc.co.uk/newsnight

member of Al-Muhajiroun, played an essential role in the group's activities and was later convicted of calling for support for a banned terrorist organization in 2016.

Over the years, numerous individuals associated with Al-Muhajiroun have been involved in terrorism-related activities, both domestically and internationally. The group's influence and activities have been a source of concern to the UK authorities, and efforts have been made to confront its ideology and prevent extremism within communities.

Al-Muhajiroun and similar extremist groups have had a significant, albeit negative, impact on society. Their provocative rhetoric, recruitment efforts, and extremist ideology have presented challenges to social cohesion, community relations, and national security. Here are some of the ways through which groups such as immigrants can influence society:

Radicalization: Extremist groups can contribute to the radicalization of individuals, especially vulnerable and confused youth. Their messages, often disseminated online or via social media, can attract individuals who may be susceptible to extremist ideologies, leading to potential acts of violence or terrorism.

Community division: The activities of extremist groups can create divisions within communities, reinforcing mistrust and fear. This division can be along religious, ethnic, or cultural lines, disrupting social harmony and integration efforts.

Public fear and stigma: The actions of extremist individuals associated with these groups can incite fear and suspicion among the public. This fear can stigmatize specific communities, affecting social relationships and interactions.

Influencing foreign policy: Extremist activities can affect a country's foreign policy decisions, especially in areas where these groups operate or have relationships. This could lead to geopolitical tensions and conflicts.

Legislative changes: Governments may enact stricter laws and regulations to counter the activities of extremist groups. While these measures aim to enhance security, they can also raise concerns about civil liberties and individual freedoms, especially after the accidents and bombings that occurred in the United Kingdom in 2005.

Security measures: Extremist activities often lead to increased security measures, whether in reality or online. While these measures are necessary for public safety, they can also impact people's daily lives and privacy.

Impact on Education: Educational institutions may be affected as authorities work to prevent radicalization. Programs and initiatives are implemented to promote awareness and tolerance and prevent extremist ideologies from taking root in schools and universities.

Media Influence: The activities of extremist groups can shape public opinion and perceptions through media coverage. There may be a risk of sensationalism or the perpetuation of stereotypes that can contribute to misinformation or biased views.

The origins of the Al-Muhajiron go back to Saudi Arabia, which means "The Emigrants." It is a proscribed militant (Maajid, 2014) where Omar Bakri Muhammad, a Syrian, established a branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir (Hizb ut-Tahrir Al-Islami) in the early 1980s after fleeing Lebanon. Omar Bakri's movement gained the ability to move around through personal contacts. The movement began to gather freely, and people began to gather in various Islamic universities. He started issuing publications in 1983 under the name "Al-Muhajiroun" (an appropriate name because most members were non-Saudi foreign students).

The movement operated in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the mid-eighties of the last century until a series of arrests led to the cessation of its activity. Omar Bakri Muhammad was forced, after pressure from the Saudi authorities, to leave the country in 1987 and traveled to Britain, where he began preparing to establish the Al-Muhajiroun group and transfer its activities there.

Al-Muhajiroun is widely considered a terrorist organization by many countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States. While the group has changed its name and structure several times to evade legal restrictions, its activities and ideologies have consistently promoted terrorism and violent extremism. It calls for the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Britain in particular and the establishment of Sharia rule based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Individuals linked to the Al-Muhajiroun group have participated in various terrorist plots and attacks, both locally and internationally. The group's founder, Omar Bakri Muhammad, and senior member Anjem Choudary, among others, have faced legal consequences for their involvement in activities promoting terrorism and supporting banned terrorist organizations. Omar Bakri

Mohammed has been dismissed as *persona non grata* in the UK and banned from returning to be succeeded by Anjem Choudary (Kenney, et al. 2013).

Due to its involvement in terrorism-related activities and its advocacy of violence, Al-Muhajiroun and its various branches have been banned in several countries, making it illegal to be a member of or support the organization. This ban was imposed to prevent the spread of extremist ideologies and maintain national security. According to the Centre for Social Cohesion, 15% of all those convicted in the UK of terrorism-related offenses had either been members of the organization or had known links to it (Centre for Social Cohesion, 2009).

It is known that this group expresses clear and explicit hostility towards Western values and society through preaching in mosques, pulpits, and Islamic educational centers. Its primary purpose was the establishment of the Islamic state by offering the foundation for violent activities in Britain and legitimizing violent activities abroad (Gillan 2002). Al-Muhajroon was known for its anti-Western rallies, support of shari'a law, and praise of the 9/11 terrorists, labeling them as the "Magnificent 19" (Booth 2009).

The clear goals of Al-Muhajroon are to create public awareness about Islam, sway public opinion in favor of Sharia, encourage members of society that Islam is inherently political and a viable ideological alternative and is the only solution, unite Muslims on a global scale in the threats facing the Islamic nation, and resume Islamic life by reconditioning the Islamic Caliphate (Wayback Machine, 2006).

Since 9/11, it has become a significant focus in debates about political expression and national security policies in the United Kingdom due to its past and current support for the use of violence. The basic principle of the organization is to use violent force to establish Islamic states wherever there are Muslims, including the UK. Many members of Al-Muhajiroun went to Afghanistan to fight against US-led forces in Afghanistan following the September 11 attacks, and the group issued a fatwa (jurisprudential opinion) supporting jihad against coalition forces in Iraq where many British nationals

traveled to fight in Iraq and later Syria.⁴² The group also calls for supporting and defending Muslims in lands and countries ruled by non-Muslims, such as Chechnya, Kashmir, Palestine and Iraq.⁴³

The UK government has taken legal measures to counter the influence of Al-Muhajiroun and similar extremist groups, aiming to maintain national security and social harmony.

This leads to answer one of the questions: **Do Islamic extremist groups impact British society?**

C. Londinstan

London has always been a center of attraction, tolerance, and coexistence between different religions, cultures, and ethnic diversity. The other side is that the British capital has turned, since the 1990s, into an arena in which a broad mixture of supporters of political Islam movements and groups that call themselves “jihadist” is active but are classified as terrorist or extremist by many governments, first in the Arab world and later in other countries—the West itself. London has attracted Islamists from all directions because it occupies an advanced financial position, hosts Arab media, and is characterized by long-standing respect for freedom of expression, in addition to the ease of obtaining political asylum there. Extremist Islamic groups have long sought to establish an Islamic caliphate in all parts of the world, especially in the United Kingdom, due to the presence of a wide range of expression, freedom, and freedom of religion and belief.

The term "Londonistan" was used by French intelligence men at the time to describe a pejorative political-religious term used to describe the British capital, London(vifindia.org) about many dissidents from the Middle East and North Africa who

⁴² To know more about British ISIS fighters, see Wintour, Patrick; Watt, Nicholas, “**Up to 400 British citizens may be fighting in Syria, says William Hague.**” *The Guardian*, 16 June 2014.

⁴³ For this analysis, the researcher gathered all written notices, lectures, and brochures from the movement at the time.

were conspiring to overthrow secular governments in countries such as Egypt, Yemen, and Algeria (Gardner 2014).

However, in general, "Londonistan" is a term that some individuals have used to criticize or describe London, particularly in the context of its perceived tolerance or accommodation of Islamist extremism. The term is a portmanteau of "London" and "Pakistan" or "Afghanistan," suggesting that London has become a haven for Islamist radicalism, comparable to countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan, known for their association with extremist ideologies. The term became widely used in the international counter-terrorism community, making it a popular buzzword.

It's important to note that the term "Londonistan" is highly contentious and has been criticized for its negative and divisive connotations. Critics argue that it oversimplifies a complex issue and unfairly stigmatizes an entire city or community. Like many other major cities, London is diverse and home to people from various backgrounds and beliefs.

Efforts of law enforcement, intelligence agencies, and communities in London and the UK are ongoing to counter radicalization, promote social integration, and ensure national security. The situation is multifaceted and cannot be accurately captured by a single term.

British journalist Melanie Phillips published a book entitled "Londonistan, 2006: How Britain Created a Terrorist State at Home," in which she documented the emergence and growth of extremist Islamic groups within the United Kingdom and how British governments allowed the hosting of extremist thinkers fleeing their country in the Middle East.

Freedom, openness, and the liberal political and religious climate in London represent a double-edged sword. The atmosphere created an ideal opportunity for individuals and extremist groups to plan and carry out acts of violence and radicalization. Prominent names of extremist preachers who were involved in planning terrorist attacks in the Middle East, such as Abu Hamza al-Masry, Abu Qatada, and Anjem Choudary, represented a strong example of Britain over the past decades providing a refuge for many terrorists. In the world, although it later deported some of them due to pressure from the United States and others to prosecute them.

Mainly, the term "Londonistan" can be used to express criticism of the city due to the rise of extremist Islamic activities or the belief that London allows excessive tolerance of extremist Islamic groups. The term refers to the idea that London has become a place where extremist Islamic movements can operate or flourish without effective confrontation from the authorities. This term has sometimes been used in negative contexts or to express concerns about excessive tolerance or ineffective responses to challenges related to religious extremism. However, it should be noted that this term is often considered controversial, and the situation reflects complex and diverse challenges in greater London society, which can show different viewpoints among individuals on how to deal with tolerance, national security, and cultural diversity.

There are two distinct yet closely related forms of Islamic extremism in the UK. One has emerged from the influx of foreign radicals from North Africa and the Middle East, who arrived in large numbers as immigrants during the 1980s and 1990s. The other form of Islamic extremism is the result of the British Muslim community, particularly those who arrived from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kashmir during the 1970s and 1980s, developing extremist views (Phillips, 2006). As a result, London has become the world's center for Islamism outside the Middle East and Afghanistan for the last three decades.⁴⁴

The origins of Islamic extremism in the United Kingdom are complex and multifaceted, shaped by a combination of historical, geopolitical, social, and economic factors. It is essential to note that the vast majority of Muslims in the UK reject extremism and violence. It has been argued that Islamic extremism, especially in its violent form, has been historically a political rather than a religious phenomenon (Giuriato & Macolinario, 2002), as it has noticed the willingness of extremists to achieve the Caliphate and fight against Western secularism. The concept of Ummah, which means Muslim community, is mainly responsible for tactic support for terrorism among

⁴⁴ Islamism is a multifaceted ideology encompassing political, religious, and social dimensions. It functions as both a movement organization and a form of government. Islamism is the term given to the extreme shape of politicized Islam. Also, it calls for the restoration of the Caliphate. See more: (Strindberg 2011) **Islamism, Religion, Radicalization, and Resistance, Cambridge CB2, UK.**

European Muslim communities, such as the bombings of 2005 in London and Madrid (Bawer 2006).⁴⁵

Islamic extreme groups in the UK basically divert from the central ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt by the Salafists Hassan al-Banna and Qutb. It is widely believed that there are several factors and causes that led to the rise of extremism in the UK, including:

1. The roots of Islamic extremism in the UK can be traced back to various historical events, including conflicts in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. It is believed that some individuals who migrated to the UK may have been influenced by political and religious ideologies shaped by these conflicts. In recent times, the emergence of international jihadist movements like Al-Qaeda and their ideologies have had a profound impact on individuals within the UK. Thus, the influence of figures like Osama bin Laden has reached some segments of the Muslim diaspora residing in the UK.
2. Radicalization and Recruitment: The radicalization process, where individuals adopt extreme ideologies, has been facilitated by factors such as online propaganda, social media, and the influence of charismatic radicalizers. Some individuals have been recruited into extremist groups or self-radicalized, leading to acts of violence. In 2011, it was reported that young university students were among the most concerning targets for extremism and terrorism recruitment in the UK⁴⁶. Officials identified 40 universities at risk of radicalization or recruitment on campus. Research has shown that between 1999 and 2009, over 30% of individuals convicted of Al Qaeda-associated terrorist offenses in the UK had attended university or a higher education institution. Furthermore, 15% of

⁴⁵ Ummah is originally an Arabic word that means the whole community of Muslims bound together by religious ties. For more, see E.J. **Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam** 1913-1936, 1987.

Nine www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/188/currentpage/16/Default.aspx, Accessed 7 October 2012

⁴⁷ Prevent Strategy, HM Government, June 2011, pp. 20-21, Available: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-strategy-review?view=Binary>, Accessed 25 August 2012

these individuals had achieved vocational or further educational qualifications (Slack 2011).⁴⁷

3. Foreign Policy and Geopolitics: UK foreign policy decisions, especially those related to conflicts in Muslim-majority countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, have been cited by some as a source of frustration and radicalization. Perceptions of injustice or grievances about global events can also contribute to extremist sentiments.
4. Social and Economic Factors: Socioeconomic factors, including discrimination, marginalization, and lack of opportunities, can create an environment where some individuals may be vulnerable to radicalization. Feeling disenfranchised or alienated may make specific individuals more susceptible to extremist ideologies.
5. Community Dynamics: Within some communities, there have been concerns about the activities of radical preachers and the influence of extremist ideologies. However, it's crucial to emphasize that the vast majority of Muslims in the UK reject extremism and are actively involved in efforts to counter radicalization.
6. Government Response: The UK government has implemented various counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization measures to address the threat of extremism. These include preventive programs, intelligence efforts, and legal measures to disrupt and prosecute individuals involved in extremist activities.

Understanding and addressing the roots of Islamic extremism in the UK involves a holistic approach that includes community engagement, education, socioeconomic development, and efforts to counter online radicalization. It's also important to recognize the diversity of the Muslim community and to avoid stigmatizing the community as a whole based on the actions of a small minority.

⁴⁷ House of Commons. Home Affairs Committee, **Roots of violent radicalization**. Nineteenth Report of Session 2010-12, House of Commons, London, The Stationery Office Limited, Vol. I, 6 February 2012, p. 13

1. London Bombings Aftermath

The London bombings, also known as the 7/7 bombings, occurred on July 7, 2005, when a series of coordinated terrorist attacks targeted the public transportation system in London. The bombings resulted in the deaths of 52 people and injured hundreds more⁴⁸. The attacks were carried out by four suicide bombers associated with radical Islamist ideologies (Al-Muhajroon affiliates).⁴⁹ The aftermath of the London bombings had several significant consequences:

Increased Security Measures: The attacks substantially increased security measures across London and other major cities. There was a heightened focus on public transportation, critical infrastructure, and large public gatherings to prevent further attacks.

Impact on Public Transport: The bombings had a lasting effect on the public's perception of safety while using public transportation. Security measures at transportation hubs were intensified, and there were changes to emergency response protocols.

Counterterrorism Legislation: The UK government responded to the bombings by introducing new counterterrorism legislation. This included measures to enhance intelligence capabilities, monitor and disrupt extremist activities, and address issues related to radicalization.

Community Engagement: Efforts to engage with communities, particularly Muslim communities, were increased to address concerns related to radicalization. Community leaders, religious figures, and organizations played a crucial role in countering extremist ideologies and fostering cooperation with law enforcement.

National Mourning and Solidarity: The aftermath saw a period of national mourning and expressions of solidarity. Vigils and memorial services were held to honor the victims, and there was a collective determination to stand united against terrorism.

International Cooperation: The London bombings highlighted the transnational nature of terrorism, leading to increased international cooperation on intelligence-

⁴⁸*The Independent*, "The 52 victims of the 7/7 bombings remembered" 6 July 2015

⁴⁹ (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/may/06/terrorism.jamiedoward>, Accessed 3 October 2012

sharing, counterterrorism strategies, and efforts to combat radicalization. After the 7/7 attacks, the UK government implemented several measures aimed at countering terrorism. These included the introduction of new anti-terrorism policies, tightening security legislation, increased passenger profiling, and a rise in the number of arrests made (The Guardian, 2009).

D. Assessment of Chapter

This chapter exclusively has examined Islamic radicalization in the United Kingdom, presenting factors and processes within the Muslim population in the UK. As emphasized, the rise of radical Islam among British-born and immigrant communities is attributed to both internal and external factors. The UK is home to an incredibly diverse Muslim population. The minorities tend to have unique religious beliefs, cultural identities, and ethnic backgrounds that set them apart from the majority. Additionally, socio-economic differences can lead to feelings of alienation within Western society and difficulties of assimilation. Muslims, particularly the youth, can be susceptible to extremist Islamic ideologies arising from foreign sources and developed within the UK. London is home to the highest number of Muslims in England, and its Muslim community is the most diverse in Europe in terms of history, language, ethnic origin, politics, and social class. There were 1,318,755 Muslims reported in 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2022). Unfortunately, the city has become a hub for recruiting, mobilizing, and financing militant Islamic groups in recent years.

The significant role and influence of extremist Islamic groups and their impact on British society, and how the British government responded to the fight against terrorism and extremism and carried out widespread arrests and deportations of controversial figures was discussed. Under the cover of Islam, these figures spread luxurious ideas and influenced the youth. Mosques and imams who are not subject to supervision have played a significant role in spreading extremist views through fatwas, religious centers, and suspicious activities.

The light was shed on the Islamic groups listed on terrorism lists, and the case of the Al-Muhajiroun group was studied due to its strong and hidden influence on society, whether Islamic or British.

Notwithstanding the British government's efforts to fight extremism through various policies, extremist ideologies and organizations continue to develop and gain supporters through numerous channels, such as mosques, Quranic schools, Islamic centers, and internet webs.

E. Endnotes

⁵⁰⁵¹ Omar Bakri Muhammad, a Syrian-British Salafist Islamic preacher born in Aleppo in 1958. A religious figure who is controversial both religiously and politically. It is also controversial because he is Syrian or Lebanese, and many rumors have been raised about him. His statements regarding the September 11 attacks, which he made in London in 2004, met with a wave of protest among the British, as he said words encouraging the launching of the September 11 attacks, one after another. He was among the many religious scholars who mourned Osama bin Laden after his death. His speeches and teachings were criticized for promoting violence and radicalization. Bakri Muhammad's inflammatory rhetoric drew attention from authorities and raised concerns about the potential influence on individuals susceptible to extremism. In 2005, following the London bombings, the UK government banned Al-Muhajiroun under anti-terrorism legislation. Bakri Muhammad left the UK shortly after the ban, and the government clarified that he would not be allowed to return.

⁵² Anjem Choudary: born 18 January 1967) is a Pakistani-British Islamist social and political activist and former leader of the extremist group Al-Muhajiroun. He gained notoriety for his radical views and involvement in activities that advocated for the implementation of strict Islamic law (Sharia) in the United Kingdom. Choudary was a crucial figure in Al-Muhajiroun, an Islamist organization founded in the UK in the 1990s. The group was known for its extremist ideology, including support for jihad and the establishment of an Islamic state. Choudary's activities have been associated with the

⁵¹ See David Smith, **ALMUHAJIROUN**, **Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies**, 2005. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep09243>

Simon Ross Valentine, **Monitoring Islamic Militancy: Hizb-ut-Tahrir: "The Party of Liberation,"** *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, Volume 4, Issue 4, December 2010.

⁵² For more details about Choudary, see Cottee, Simon. "**Anjem Choudary and the Criminalization of Dissent.**" *Foreign Policy*, 2016. Also: <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/anjem-choudary>.

extremism of individuals who later became involved in terrorist plots. His role as a charismatic figure in the extremist scene attracted followers and raised concerns about the spread of radical extreme ideologies.

⁵³ Abu Qatada: Born in Bethlehem in 1960, he moved to Jordan and sought asylum in the United Kingdom in 1993. He arrived in the UK on a forged United Arab Emirates passport. Omar Mahmoud Othman, his real name, is a Jordanian-born Palestinian cleric who gained notoriety for his association with extremist ideologies and alleged links to terrorist activities. Abu Qatada is known for his association with radical Islamist ideologies. He gained influence through his preaching, writings, and speeches that promoted an extreme interpretation of Islam. His teachings were associated with groups like Al-Qaeda. Abu Qatada was arrested in the UK in 2002 under anti-terrorism laws. Over the years, he fought deportation to Jordan, where he was wanted on terrorism charges. His legal battles involved numerous court hearings and challenges. After his deportation to Jordan, Abu Qatada faced a retrial on terrorism charges. In 2014, he was acquitted of terrorism charges in Jordan, but he remained in prison on lesser charges. In 2018, he was released from jail in Jordan.

The Deobandi⁵⁴ was a Sunni Islamic revivalist movement that originated in the town of Deoband in northern India in the late 19th century. It is associated with the Darul Uloom Deoband, an influential Islamic seminary founded in 1866. The movement aimed to promote a more conservative and traditional interpretation of Islam. Deobandis adhere to a conventional understanding of Sunni Islam. They emphasize adherence to orthodox Islamic teachings, classical jurisprudence (fiqh), and the Hanafi school of Islamic law. The Deobandi movement has had a significant impact beyond India, particularly in South Asia and parts of the Middle East. It has influenced Islamic

⁵³ See more about Abu Qatada: Jakob, Skovgaard-Petersen, "**Heirs of Abu Bakr: On the Ideology and Conception of History in al-Qaeda and Islamic State.**" *Connections* 16, no. 1 (2017): 25-36 Also: Anne Speckhard, **Abu Qatada: The "Spiritual Father" of al Qaeda in Europe reflecting on Terrorism and the Future of the Middle East as Trump takes the US Presidency.** *International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE)*. November, 23, 2016.

⁵⁴ See: Birt, Jonathan, and Philip Lewis. "**The Pattern of Islamic Reform in Britain.**" *The Production of Islamic Knowledge in Europe. London: IB Tauris, forthcoming*, 2003.

education and religious practices in countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and the United Kingdom.

The Barelvi⁵⁵ movement is a Sunni Islamic movement that emerged in South Asia in the 19th century. It is associated with the Barelvi school of thought, which follows the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. The movement is known for emphasizing the veneration of Islamic saints, intercession through saints, and a generally more liberal approach to Islamic practices than the Deobandi movement. Barelvis are known for their enthusiastic celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (Mawlid al-Nabi). These celebrations often include processions, recitation of poetry praising the Prophet, and other festivities. They tend to be Sufis.

⁵⁵ To read more about the Barelvi and other Islamic sects see: John Louis Esposito, "Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaah". The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. Oxford University Press, 2003.

V. BRITISH EXTREMISM AND RADICAL GROUPS

- A. Introduction
- B. Islamophobia
- C. The British National Party (BNP)
- D. English Defense League (EDL)

A. Conclusion

In the previous chapter, light was shed on the phenomenon of extremism in British society in terms of extremist Islamic groups and Al-Muhajroon, and how some individuals and immigrants played a substantial role in spreading radicalism and extremism. As a result, The UK has faced challenges related to various forms of extremism, including Islamic extremism. It is important to note that the situation may have evolved since then. The terrorist attacks that took place in the United Kingdom caused a surge of resentment within society. This led to the emergence of local counter-groups and an increase in feelings of hatred and racism towards extremist Islamic thought.

The "War on Terror" is the direct cause of much racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia. Racism towards Muslims dates to before the events of September 11 and the subsequent warmongering. The United Kingdom was the world's greatest hegemon before the twentieth century. Moreover, it was known for its colonialism and imperialism. The United Kingdom's imperial past has significantly impacted modern politics in the country in all respects, especially regarding immigration. The British Nationality Act 1948 grants the right to immigrate to the United Kingdom from the Commonwealth (legislation.gov.uk).

Waves of immigration from all over the world to the United Kingdom led to radical change and the emergence of a demographic map. Thus, racism against immigrants and Muslims in the United Kingdom has been a persistent issue that has

evolved, shaped by historical, social, and political factors. As a diverse nation with a history of immigration, the UK has witnessed waves of newcomers from various regions and backgrounds. However, despite the multicultural fabric of the country, incidents of racism against immigrants persist. This discrimination can manifest in multiple forms, including verbal abuse, discriminatory practices in employment and housing, and, in extreme cases, hate crimes.

White supremacy has been an alarm in the United Kingdom, as it has been in numerous parts of the world. White supremacy is an ideology that promotes the belief in the superiority of white people over people of other races. In The UK, manifestations of white supremacy can include far-right extremism, racist ideologies, and hate crimes.⁵⁶

Recently, it has become noticeable that demonstrations are taking place led by people with shaved heads, tattoos, and Western looks, carrying and chanting violent and racist slogans urging violence and hatred against Muslims in particular. It has also become common to see crowds proudly raising a large banner with the words “No More Mosques” clearly written in front of Muslims, whether British or Non-British. In the UK, instances of white supremacy are often manifested through far-right movements, nationalist groups, and individuals who hold extremist views.

Far-Right Groups: There have been far-right and white supremacist groups operating in the UK, such as the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defense League (EDL). These groups often promote anti-immigrant and anti-minority sentiments.

Increases in activities by far-right groups can observe the phenomenon of white supremacy in the UK by a few points. For example, there have been cases of far-right groups in the United Kingdom promoting white supremacist ideologies. These groups

⁵⁶ White supremacy is a historical, institutional system formed of exploitation and operation of countries, nations, and people of color by white peoples and governments of the European continent to maintain and defend a system of wealth, power, and privilege. (**The Challenging White Supremacy Workshop, San Francisco, CA**). Individuals believe (Supremacists) in white supremacy as beliefs and ideas that claim the natural superiority of light-skinned human races or “whites” over other racial groups and claim them to be at the top of the racial pyramid. For more see: Britannica.com.

often target immigrants, religious minorities, and other marginalized communities with demonstrations and anti-racist slogans.

Hate crimes: Hate crimes committed motivated by racial or ethnic bias, including those influenced by white supremacist beliefs, have been reported in the United Kingdom. These crimes can involve acts of violence, harassment, or vandalism against individuals or communities, such as attacks on mosques and places of worship.

Online Extremism: White supremacist ideologies can be spread through online platforms. Social media and other online spaces have been identified as channels through which individuals can become radicalized and exposed to extremist ideologies.

Anti-foreign sentiments: Issues linked to immigration (anti-immigration groups) and national identity can contribute to the development of white supremacist ideologies.

The fact of the far right can also be observed in a historical context, as the United Kingdom has a complex history regarding issues of race and immigration. Historical events, such as the colonial era, have left lasting effects on perceptions of race and identity. Contemporary white racist ideologies can sometimes exploit these historical narratives.

Anti-Muslim sentiments: White supremacist ideologies often intersect with anti-Muslim sentiment, contributing to Islamophobia. Far-right groups may target Muslim communities based on religious and cultural differences, which may lead to hate crimes and discrimination.

The phenomenon of far-right activity takes the form of various groups in the United Kingdom promoting white supremacist ideologies. Some of these groups use a combination of online and offline strategies to recruit and disseminate their messages. Examples include groups such as the English Defense League (EDL) and the British National Party, which will be highlighted in this chapter.

The apparent shift in far-right activity in the UK and the organization of such groups and their expansion from being small groups mainly motivated by increasing anti-immigration ideologies, asylum, and white supremacy to actual participation in terrorist activity has resulted in this aspect of the threat becoming a threat—a more substantial threat to national security than it was before. The UK government has taken

steps to address far-right extremism and hate crimes. Initiatives include monitoring extremist activities, implementing counter-terrorism measures, and promoting community unity. Whereas the UK list of banned organizations previously included international terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, Al-Muhajiroun, and ISIS, there are now numerous right-wing extremist groups listed on the British ban list that are no less dangerous and terrorist than those listed on terrorist lists.

The extreme right has emerged as a response to the global jihad movements as an independent entity working to confront them and stop Islamic expansion. The counter-jihad movements are more aggressive, chaotic, and unpredictable than other anti-immigrant and ethnic nationalist movements in Western democracies. Extremist right-wing groups and the more recent counter-Jihad movements are often linked to many broad tendencies in Islam and the West (Huntingdon 1993) or indicate to 'Eurabia' theories⁵⁷ (Ye'or 2005) and the Islamization of Europe through immigration and higher birth rates among Europe's Muslim populations (Busher 2013).

B. Islamophobia

British society is highly secularized, with most Britons holding views of agnosticism, non-theism, atheism, secular humanism, or non-affiliation (The National Centre for Social Research, 2019). Nevertheless, there are officially two certified religions in the United Kingdom, the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. Parliament is one of the leading forces in shaping and influencing religious life in the United Kingdom. One of the focal points of Parliament's relationship with religious circumstances was the enactment of the Toleration Act of 1689⁵⁸, which granted freedom of worship to nonconformists and non-church adherents. Since then, Parliament has

⁵⁷ Eurabia conspiracy theory: it is a conspiracy theory which came about Bat Ye'or by the early 2000s; it is a political neologism, a mix of Europe and Arabia, and is used to describe a far-right anti-Muslim conspiracy theory involving globalist entities

⁵⁸ For more about tolerance for nonconformists 1689, see Jager, Colin. "**Common quiet: tolerance around 1688.**" *ELH79*, no. 3, 2012: 569-596.

protected religious freedom from other religions, Christian and non-Christian, and those who do not practice or profess no faith at all.⁵⁹

Like all ideologies, the radicalization of Islam perpetuated by Western competitors in the “clash of civilizations” (Huntington 1996) has had profound social consequences. One of these reasons is the rise of islamophobia and racism around the world, especially in Europe (Grosfoguel and Mielants 2006) see that

- *Islamophobia, as a shape of racism against Muslims, does not only involve of and appear in the field of work, education, or the general societal sphere, or under the so-called global war against terrorism, or the global economy and globalization but also within the framework of the debate about Definition of Islam and its reality.*

As a notion, the term Islamophobia is relatively new in political science, with a 1997 Runnymede Trust report describing the term as “a useful shorthand for referring to fear or hatred of Islam – and by extension fear or hatred of all or most Muslims” (Trust 1997). Others used a short and narrow description of Islamophobia, such as ‘social anxiety toward Islam and Muslim cultures.’ (Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008).⁶⁰

Islamophobia has a complex history, and its roots can be traced back to various historical and geopolitical developments. It is important to note that while the term “Islamophobia” itself is relatively recent, dating back to the late 20th century, the prejudice and discrimination against Islam and Muslims have deep historical roots. The historical development of the phenomenon of Islamophobia can be traced through several stages:

Medieval Period: During the Middle Ages in Europe, especially during the Crusades (from the 11th to the 13th centuries), there was a conflict between the Christian and Islamic civilizations. This period contributed to the formation of negative

⁵⁹ Parliament, Church and Religion, UK Parliament, [http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/Transforming society/private-lives/religion/overview/church-and-religion](http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/Transforming%20society/private-lives/religion/overview/church-and-religion)

⁶⁰ For more about Islamophobia, see: Bleich, Erik. “**What is Islamophobia, and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept.**” *American Behavioral Scientist* 55, no. 12 (2011): 1581-1600.

stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western societies. This is why Islamophobia can be identified even through specific thought patterns from the eleventh to the thirteenth century because during the Crusades (1095-1291), fear, hatred, and prejudice against Islam and Muslims emerged (**Omer, 2023**).

European colonialism expanded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colonizing many Muslim-majority regions. The colonizers often justified their actions by portraying Islam and local cultures as inferior. This colonial legacy has had lasting effects on perceptions of Islam. In 1948, the Act enabled people who had previously been considered citizens of the British Empire to become citizens of the Commonwealth, giving them full rights to obtain British residency (Kepel 1997), facilitating the settlement process for immigrants of all different races and ethnicities.

Post-Cold War Era: The end of the Cold War and the rise of transnational Islamic movements led to a shift in perception of Islam. Events such as the Iranian Revolution (1979) and the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) contributed to portraying Islam as a potential threat. Global jihadist movements have contributed to the emergence of extremist Islamic movements, which work to create an image hostile to Islam. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 also intensified the negative representation of Islam and Muslims in the West and gave a malicious image by providing a stereotypical image (Edward, 2001).

Salman Rushdie's incident: In 1989, in the city of Bradford in Britain, a group of angry Muslim citizens gathered to demonstrate and burn copies of Salman Rushdie's⁶¹ book *The Satanic Verses*, who rebelled against the regime of the Islamic Leader. Ayatollah Khomeini then issued a general fatwa executing him. This decision was a great shock to the West and against the foundations of democracy and freedom of

⁶¹ Salman Rushdie is a British-Indian author born on June 19, 1947, in Bombay, British India (now Mumbai, India). He gained international fame and notoriety by publishing his novel "The Satanic Verses" in 1988. The book, which explores themes of religion, politics, and cultural identity, sparked controversy and led to a fatwa (religious edict) issued by the Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, calling for Rushdie's assassination due to perceived blasphemy against Islam. See: Goonetilleke, Devapriya CRA. *Salman Rushdie*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009.

speech, especially in Britain ((Abbas 2005); Kepel, 1997). The incident escalated feelings of hatred and islamophobia.

Post-9/11 Era: The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, had a profound impact on perceptions of Islam globally. The association of Islam with terrorism, fueled by media coverage and political discourse, has led to a significant rise in Islamophobia. Muslims, and those perceived as Muslim, faced increased scrutiny and discrimination. The period immediately following the September 11 attacks saw a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, as Islam was wrongly and unfairly linked to terrorism. The actions of a small group have been incorrectly attributed to an entire religion, leading to widespread generalizations and stereotypes. The post-9/11 era witnessed an increase in surveillance of Muslim communities and individuals. Counter-terrorism procedures led to the profiling of Muslims, impacting their civil liberties and fostering an atmosphere of suspicion.

There is no doubt that the “War on Terror” declared by the Bush administration after the attacks of September 11, 2001, is part of the declaration of a new hegemonic power in the world in order to confirm that the United States is the only remaining superpower. There is an argument that the September 11 attacks were a reflection and result of American foreign policy in the Middle East. According to this line of thinking, the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were a “boomerang” effect (Parenti 2002) of the US policy of encouraging, arming, and resourcing mujahideen and Islamic fundamentalists against the Soviet Union, mainly in Afghanistan in the 1980s (Saikal 2003). This is in addition to that the Gulf War, which the United States sponsored and armed for Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq (along with British and other European arms producers), weakened Iran in its long war. The United Kingdom was drawn into the US-led Gulf War against Iraq in 1991, with disastrous consequences for Muslims in that allied country, as well as in the United States (Pointing and Mason, 2007). As a result, it can be said that foreign energy and the United States’ approach play an active role in spreading Islamophobia.

Geopolitical conflicts: Ongoing geopolitical conflicts, especially those in the Middle East and South Asia, have contributed to negative perceptions of Islam. Wars, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, have exacerbated tensions and stereotypes. An

example of this is the image presented by extremist organizations such as the Abu Sayyaf group, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS.

Influence of the media: The media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion. Biased or sensationalist reporting can perpetuate stereotypes and contribute to the spread of anti-Islamic attitudes. Negative images of Muslims in the media have been an essential factor in the modern manifestation of Islamophobia by associating acts of violence and terrorism with Islam and Muslims.

The rise of far-right movements: In recent years, the rise of far-right political movements in different parts of the world has often been linked to anti-Muslim sentiment. Especially in Europe and the United Kingdom, these movements exploit fears of immigration and cultural change, which contributes to Islamophobia.

The United Kingdom has long followed a policy of multiculturalism⁶². In 2011, there was a poll on religion, and when Britons were asked, nearly 75% of them chose Islam as the most violent. In 2014, 35%⁶³ of Britons saw the Islamic faith as a threat.

The latest statistics related to Islamophobia and anti-immigrants indicate that refugee and migrant crises have a significant social impact, as in 2016, 28% had a negative view of Muslims⁶⁴; 32. 52% of Britons believe that increasing immigration and the influx of refugees will increase the possibility of terrorist and extremist acts occurring in the United Kingdom⁶⁵.

Lee Rigby incident: The killing of Lee Rigby refers to the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby, a British Army soldier, in Woolwich, London, on 22 May 2013. Rigby was

⁶² See After Charlie Hebdo attack in France, backlash against Muslims feared, **The Los Angeles Times**, Jan. 9, 2015.

⁶³ See **Muslim-Western Tensions Persist, How Muslims and Westerners View Each Other**, **Pew Research Centers Global Attitudes** Project Jul. 21, 2011.

⁶⁴ See Michael Lipka, "Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the US and Around the World," **Pew Research Center**, Jul. 22, 2016.

⁶⁵ See: Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes, and Katie Simmons, "Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees, Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs", **Pew Research Center**, Jul. 11, 2006.

attacked and killed by Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale⁶⁶, who were later convicted of his murder. This issue has dramatically aroused public opinion and caused great hatred and hostility towards Muslims in British society. The Brotherhood was imbued with extremist Takfiri Islamic thought, which stipulates the killing of anyone who threatens or fights Islam. They belonged to the Al-Muhajiroun group; the two brothers have a jihadist ideology and have a long history of violence and hatred (Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament).⁶⁷

The MI5 and local authorities were blamed for their negligence regarding the case by not taking preventive measures against the extremists, as they could have deported these two extremists outside the country as soon as they noticed their activity and extremist ideology before the crime occurred. This issue raised public opinion and worked to spread more Islamophobia and fear of Muslims in British society, which gave far-right movements and parties a vast space and opportunity to exploit the situation by inciting against the Muslim community and intimidating its presence in the United Kingdom.

During the past two decades, the radical right has reemerged as an electoral force in Western Europe and the UK (Golder 2016); it is a powerful political force whose role cannot be denied. The term "far right" refers to a political stance or ideology situated on the extreme right wing of the political spectrum. Various beliefs characterize far-right ideologies.⁶⁸

Nationalism: Far-right movements often emphasize a solid national identity, patriotism, and a desire to preserve or restore traditional cultural values.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ The brothers were seen in demonstrations of the Al-Muhajiroun group and raising anti-Western slogans inciting hatred and acts of extremism.

⁶⁷ For more details about this case see the full report **on the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament Report on the intelligence relating to the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby**, 2014.

⁶⁸ See: Maude, Carl. **"The Far-Right Party Family: An Ideological Approach"**, Leiden University, 1998.

⁶⁹ For more see: Camus, Jean-Yves; Lebourg, Nicolas, **"Far-Right Politics in Europe"**, Harvard University Press, Mar 2017.

Authoritarianism: There is often a preference for strong, centralized authority and a strict social order. This can manifest in support for strong leaders and a desire for law and order.

Anti-immigration: Far-right ideologies often advocate restrictive immigration policies and may express xenophobic sentiments, fearing the dilution of national identity or culture.

Anti-globalization: Some far-right movements are skeptical or opposed to international cooperation and globalization, advocating for protectionist economic policies and national self-sufficiency.

Social Conservatism: Far-right groups may promote conservative social values, opposing social changes such as LGBTQ+ rights, gender equality, and progressive social policies.

Populism: Far-right movements often engage in populist rhetoric, claiming to represent the "common people" against an alleged corrupt elite. They may criticize established political parties and institutions.

Conspiracy Theories: Some far-right movements embrace conspiracy theories, often involving perceived threats to the nation or asserting that a secretive elite is manipulating events.

Ethnic or Racial Identity: Far-right ideologies may strongly emphasize ethnic or racial identity, sometimes advocating for policies prioritizing a particular ethnic or racial group.

In general, extreme right-wing groups in Britain fear the so-called Islamization of Britain and that it will transform a secular country into a country governed by Islamic laws under the pressure of immigrants and Muslims. The term "Islamization" generally refers to the process of a society or a region adopting Islamic beliefs, practices, or norms. The idea of the "Islamization of Britain" is a complex and often controversial topic⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ It is essential to note that the term far-right is broad and diverse in political science and can include a range of beliefs and movements, each with its own nuances. The political landscape is complex, and far-right groups or movements may differ in priorities and emphases. In addition, the far right is

C. The British National Party (BNP)

The extreme right-wing movements and their offshoot groups share characteristics that are organized by nationalism and ethnic bias. Under the pretext of preserving the country's identity and its unique culture and fearing its loss because of the flood of illegal immigration that contributes to ethnic and demographic change, in addition to considering individuals of non-European origins as less superior and valuable. Hence, these currents view Islam as a threat to the West and its values, and they oppose the integration of Muslims into Western societies. For fear of the impact this will have on religious identity and societal culture, it uses violence and threats to achieve its goals. It aspires to empower the state and the ruling authorities to enhance its power.

The extreme right-wing movements do not form an utterly homogeneous bloc, do not have a unified program, and their organizations are not free of factors of conflict, division, and disintegration. Disagreements, confrontations, and exchange of criticism over trends or slogans often broke out among them. For example, some organizations criticize their counterparts because it does not place racism at the core of their programs or do not seek to struggle on the ground to achieve their goals. They agree to acknowledge the feasibility of pursuing violent extremism and its ability to produce the desired impact.

It appears that far-right organizations share generalities and agree on ultimate goals. Still, they always differ in mechanisms and means, and the exchange of criticism and contradiction in orientations may lead to some cracks and schisms within their ranks. Despite their differences, they unite under extreme nationalist, xenophobic, racist, religious fundamentalist, or other reactionary views (Carlisle 2005).

Since the post-World War I period, far-right extremism has become more prominent in the United Kingdom with the rise of Nazism, fascism, and anti-Semitic ideologies. In the following years, the extreme right was characterized by an explicit and clear racist character. In the sixties and seventies, and with extremist white nationalist

often used in contrast to the far left, where the political center represents more moderate or centrist positions.

organizations, opposition to the immigration of non-whites and Asians emerged, represented by the National Front and then the British National Party. In the 1980s, the British Fascist Leagues appeared, which formed the basis and ideology of the British Defense League, which declared its desire to preserve British culture in its vision, and those who launched their campaigns against the presence of immigrant ethnic minorities and opposed what they considered to be an increasing number of asylum seekers (Web.archive.org).

The British far-right emerged from within the fascist movement, which was founded by Oswald Mosley⁷¹ and the British Union of Fascists and was banned during World War II.

The British National Party (BNP) is a far-right political party in the United Kingdom. It was founded in 1982 and associated with nationalist, anti-immigration, and anti-European Union sentiments. The BNP has been known for its controversial and divisive positions on issues related to race, immigration, and multiculturalism. The party was first established by John Hutchins Tyndall⁷², a British fascist political activist. He was a leading member of various small extremist neo-Nazi groups during the late 1950s and 1960s. On several occasions ran unsuccessfully for election to the House of Commons and the European Parliament.

At its peak in the mid-2000s, the BNP gained some electoral success, winning seats in local elections and the European Parliament. However, the party has faced criticism for promoting racist ideologies, and its leaders have been involved in legal battles over alleged racial discrimination.

Over time, the BNP's influence and electoral success declined. By the early 2010s, the party had lost most of its elected positions and faced internal divisions. The

⁷¹ Oswald Mosley: 1896- 1980, an English politician who led the British Union of Fascists and the Union Movement. Those movements were known for extreme right allocating anti-Semitic propaganda, organizing aggressive protests in the Jewish sections of East London, and wearing Nazi-style uniforms. He wrote a book explaining his ideologies: Mosley, Oswald. *The alternative*. Ramsbury: Mosley Publications, 1947.

⁷² See: Renton, David, "Tyndall, John Hutchyns (1934–2005)". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

decline of the BNP coincided with the rise of other right-wing and populist movements in the UK.

The British National Party (BNP) is the most influential radical right-wing political party in the history of British elections. It is the twenty-first century's fastest-growing political party (Ford and J. Goodwin 2010). The first authentic appearance of the British National Party (BNP) was in 1982, and it attracted members from several different far-right groups across the United Kingdom, most remarkably the National Front (Copsey, 2004). Under the headship of Nick Griffin,⁷³ elected in 1999, the new BNP attempted to distance itself from the negative extremist image it had acquired through its early existence as a political party, adopting several agenda changes to portray itself as an ideological far-right party.

In the 1990s, BNP won only one local council seat in the UK. By the end of 2003, it held sixteen, and after the 2006 local elections, it boasted 46 elected local members (Yonwin 2004). The task statement of the party, while attempting to avoid

⁷³ Nicholas John Griffin (1959): is a British politician, a previous Chairman of the British National Party (BNP), and a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for Northwest England from 2009 to 2014, when he was expelled from the European Union. Tom, Brooks, “**Nick Griffin expelled from BNP,**” **Telegraph**, 1, October 2010. His party's name has been associated with skinheads and swastikas as evidence of white extremism. Since he led the party ten years ago, he has sought to "normalize" this movement, whose roots extend to the fascist "National Front." He has a controversial past. In 1998, he was convicted of inciting racial strife when he denied the Jewish Holocaust at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. His policy is still limited to stopping all forms of immigration and the “voluntary return” of legal immigrants and British citizens of “foreign” origins. Until 2001, the party advocated forced return. The British National Party, under Griffin's leadership, is also still known for its incursions into areas known for racial tension. He gave many colloquial speeches criticizing Islam and Muslims in a harsh, sharp way. A case was brought against him related to spreading racism and hatred. The case refers to statements made by Griffin two years ago in which he said that Muslims had turned Britain into a “terrifying, unbearable place.” British National Party, “**Nick Griffin, The BNP: Anti-asylum protest, racist sect or power-winning movement?**”, 2003.

charges of overt racism, illustrates that it shares with other far-right groups the notion that white people are under threat and need the protection of a dedicated political party: 'The British National Party exists to secure a future for the indigenous peoples of these islands in the North Atlantic which have been our homeland for millennia' (British National Party, 2005).

Since the 1970s, there has been a great debate among writers and thinkers about using the concepts of extremism and discrimination. By replenishing traditional concepts of extreme racism, which are characterized by offensive, hostile, segregationist, and racist principles, new forms of racism have been proposed that support equality and highlight cultural and racial differences more diplomatically (Billig, *The notion of 'prejudice': Some rhetorical and ideological aspects* 1988). Nevertheless, they eventually fall under the same meaning. The new racist nationalist terminology seems innocuous, smoother, and different from the old extreme racist expressions. Still, the language of modern extreme racism is just as effective in marginalizing and excluding minorities. The British National Party uses different rhetoric in private than in public, such as biological racism, anti-Semitism, and conspiracy theories (C. W. Leach 2005). The party uses these slogans and this method in its ideology and agenda, trying to ward off criticism that accuse it of racism and extremism.

The revival of interest in the British far-right due to the current domestic growth in support for the British National Party demands an inquiry into its ideology and political targets. The party is intensely hostile to liberal democracy, and this hostility comes from its revolutionary and fascist agenda. The fact that the BNP is a fascist party is vital and cannot be ignored.

(Copsey, 2004) classified the British National Party as belonging to fascist ideology, as its leader, Roger Griffin, called for the glorification of fascism as a form of extreme populist nationalism that wanted to revive the English nation through social revolutions and a radical policy that purifies the nation of its impurities.

The 2005 London bombings had a significant impact on increasing hostility and hatred towards Islam and Muslims, especially the extreme right and the leaders and followers of the British National Party. Many publications, slogans, articles, and statements were issued denouncing this terrorist act. Nick Griffin published an article in

2005,⁷⁴ stating that Islam is an aggressive, violent religion and that the Qur'an encourages violence and the commission of extremism. He presented several Qur'anic verses as evidence and gave Muslims in Britain the choice of either changing the Qur'an and the verses it contains or leaving the country.

In subsequent articles and statements,⁷⁵ Griffin portrayed Britain as a vast, unexploded bomb of racial and religious tension and blamed the London bombings on multiculturalism and immigrants. He and his followers followed up with statements by blaming the political elite, the Muslim community, and the police.

If we look at who supports and votes for the British National Party, we see that it is popular among the white middle class. BNP supporters have a clear social outline: primarily middle-class and working-class men with low educational qualifications. Though they are concerned about their treatment in working-class jobs, BNP voters are less expressively poorer and are just slightly more likely to be unemployed. BNP voters also have clear political preferences: they are wary of immigration and intensely aggressive toward the political establishment (Ford and J. Goodwin 2010).

The objectives of the British National Party's agenda and general goals can be drawn from several points:

Nationalism: The BNP has historically emphasized British nationalism, advocating the protection of what it considers the interests and identity of the indigenous population of the United Kingdom.

Anti-Immigration Stance: The party has been known for its solid anti-immigration stance. It has called for stricter immigration controls and, at times, expressed concerns about the impact of immigration on cultural and economic aspects of British society.

Withdrawal from the European Union (EU): The BNP has supported the idea of the United Kingdom withdrawing from the European Union, citing concerns about national sovereignty and control over domestic policies.

⁷⁴ Nick Griffin, **Home-grown terrorists**. Downloaded from the BNP.org website on 09/08/2005: <http://www.bnp.org.uk/columnists/chairman2.php?ngId=22>

⁷⁵ Nick Griffin, **A challenge to Iqbal Sacranie and the Muslim Council of Britain**, 2005

Cultural Preservation: The party has emphasized preserving British culture and values, expressing concerns about what it perceives as the dilution of national identity due to multiculturalism.

Law and Order: The BNP has sometimes highlighted law and order issues, calling for stricter measures on crime and perceived threats to public safety.

Anti-Establishment Sentiment: The BNP has positioned itself as an anti-establishment party critical of mainstream political parties and institutions. It has presented itself as an alternative voice challenging what it sees as the failures of the political establishment.⁷⁶

In the 2010 general election, the British National Party filed a record of 338 candidates, receiving 563,743 votes, but did not win a single seat in Parliament (M. a. Taylor 2010). In the aftermath of the election, the party was also plagued by infighting and disputes over fears about the party's finances and Nick Griffin's leadership. Party membership also failed after the general election, leading to the rise of breakaway groups, such as Britain First, Britannica, and the British Democrats. Currently, Adam Walker leads the party; it can be classified as a minor party with no elected representatives at any level of the UK government.

D. English Defense League (EDL)

“English Till I Die”

As a young and newly established organization, the English Defense League, which had only recently been formed, became the most critical far-right street movement since the National Front. It is growing in power and plans to target some of the most prominent Muslim communities in the UK. The English Defense League (EDL) emerged in 2009 as a mass street protest movement against Islamist movements and against protests calling for Islamic extremism. The English Defense League asserted from the beginning that it was neither fascist nor violent, but when hearing the chants of the members and the slogans they proclaim, racism and extremism are present. Unite

⁷⁶ There are also goals for preserving the environment, animals, and senior citizens, as well as health, education, and defense. For more, see <https://bnp.org.uk/policies/>.

Against Fascism (UAF)⁷⁷ says the British Defense League is clearly a wing of the British National Party.

With internal divisions occurring in the extreme right, especially the British National Party, several movements emerged, including the English Defense League, founded by former party members. There was increasing concern and expectation focused on the English Defense League (EDL) due to its violence and extremist radicalism, which is a protest movement in the streets. The supporters contributed to violent protests in many cities and towns (Treadwell and Garland 2011). The reasons for the overwhelming anger among members of the English Defense League can be explained by the fact that they are driven by instability, a feeling of deprivation, anger, and alienation, in addition to a sense of threat from Muslims, immigrants, and foreigners, which leads to frustration and failure to advance life (Standing 2011).

There is a consensus among thinkers and authors that the EDL is not an old-fashioned party or a typical classical far-right lobby (Copsey, 2010 25). The old classic fascist ideological goal does not drive the EDL. Copsey described the EDL as a social movement blending contemporary far-right ideology and extreme nationalism, aggressive and anti-Muslim agenda. In brief, the English Defense League can be described as a new anti-Islamic social movement. The English Defense League has concerns and principals that converge around a core concern: “The Dangerous Muslim.” Since 9/11 and the 7 July London bombings, Muslim societies in the UK have become connected to deeper fears about Britain’s increasing diversity and the apparent loss of a cohesive national character, and this is what has facilitated The British Defense League surfacing (J. Treadwell 2013).

The league organized dozens of protests and marches, whether quick or constant, which often descended into violence, clashes, and vandalism of the property and shops of Muslims and Asians. The cost of policing demonstrations was estimated to be more than

⁷⁷ Unite Against Fascism (UAF): “Unite Against Fascism” is a new broad national unofficial campaign formed to defeat the far right and fight racism in the UK, uniting trade unions, anti-racists, anti-fascists, extreme MEPs in general, religious groups, and all opponents of the far right. It was formed in Great Britain in late 2003

<https://web.archive.org/web/20031228214511/http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/1880/sw188012.htm>

£10 million in September 2011, with more than 600 arrests made associated with the EDL protests and riots (Jackson, Pitchford and Preston 2011). Hence, we notice the substantial influence of this league and other extreme right-wing groups on society and the state by provoking riots and sectarian strife and creating a feeling of insecurity among all components of society, in addition to government spending on police and security to contain the riots and repair what was destroyed during the angry demonstrations and violent attacks.

The EDL claims that it does not have any political ambitions and is not interested in participating in electoral or parliamentary legislative politics, so it does not make publications or plans. Therefore, the only written texts of the association are found on the official website where articles, goals, and news are located.⁷⁸ The English Defense League has long considered Muslims' rejection of extremism as deceiving; these are only formal statements that have no basis in truth, referring to several extremist Islamic groups, such as the Al-Muhajiroun group. From here, the League indicates that Islamic extremists are not sincere. Otherwise, they would not have founded these groups if they genuinely intended not to be extremists (Kassimeris and Jackson 2015).

The English Defense League (EDL) has been criticized for promoting anti-Islamic sentiments and engaging in activities that have had an impact on Muslims in the United Kingdom. The effects on Muslims can be diverse and may include the following:

Islamophobia: The EDL has been accused of promoting Islamophobia through its rhetoric and actions. This can contribute to an atmosphere of fear and hostility for Muslims living in the UK, potentially leading to discrimination and hate crimes.

Community Tensions: The EDL's demonstrations and events have sometimes led to tensions between different communities. Muslims, as a minority group, may feel targeted or marginalized, and there can be concerns about community cohesion and relations.

Fear and Insecurity: Muslims may experience a heightened sense of fear and insecurity due to the EDL's anti-Islamic stance. This can affect individuals psychologically. It impacts their emotional well-being and belonging.

⁷⁸ englishdefenceleague.org.

Counter-Protests: In response to the EDL's activities, counter-protests and initiatives have promoted unity and tolerance. While these efforts may offer support to the Muslim community, they also highlight the challenges posed by extremist ideologies.

Engagement and Dialogue: Some organizations and individuals within the Muslim community may actively engage in dialogue to foster understanding and dispel misconceptions. Building bridges between different communities becomes crucial in addressing the impact of divisive ideologies.

The League regularly claims a membership of over 50,000, but it is unclear what "membership" means. It also claims that many of its supporters are women, who are called (the EDL angels).⁷⁹ The EDL supporters are young, male, and anti-immigration; more than a third of respondents identified themselves as BNP voters (Taylor and Walker 2011). This perspective shows the strong bond and link between the English Defense League and the British National Party. The English Defense League is distinguished by its electronic online activities on its website, Facebook pages, and other social networking sites, as it does not own a newspaper or magazine. This, of course, carries a whole chain of benefits. It is cheap and effective, accessible to everyone, and a relatively risk-free way for creating networks of like-minded individuals beyond the core leadership (Copsey, 2010).

E. Assessment of Chapter

The previous chapter covered the case study for this research, the United Kingdom, where Islamophobia was discussed: its definition, and the reasons for its emergence. Islamophobia is generally described as negative feelings of hatred and hostility towards Muslims, Islam, and the primary culture. The term Islamophobia is somewhat new in political science, but it is old in meaning since the Crusades, through the post-Cold War period, to the post-September era. The September attacks in the United States had a significant impact, deepening Islamophobia and negativity against Muslims around the world. The terrorist acts gave the impression that most Muslims are extremists, and after that came the 7/7 London bombings, in addition to individual

⁷⁹ Interview with Tommy Robinson, 8 Oct 2010.

incidents committed by extremist individuals, such as the stabbing incident of Lee Rigby since his murderers were affiliated with the Al-Muhajiroun group, which received widespread anger in British society, whether from organizations or Individuals. This increased popular discontent with immigrant minorities and Islam in general. Many Britons agree that Muslims play a significant role in spreading violence and extremism among immigrants, according to studies reviewed. Many of them supported that Islam is a religion prone to violence. These factors have helped the emergence of far-right movements worldwide, especially in Europe and the United Kingdom. Whether they are official parties, unorganized groups, random facilitators, or individual events. Far-right parties and movements have adopted an extremist ideology in combating immigration and the spread of Islam through vibrant speeches glorifying the British white race and attacking everything alien and external to the national community.

The British National Party, which was founded in 1982, was discussed from the perspective of the extreme right and a review of some of its prominent leaders, the most important of whom is Nick Griffin, who is distinguished by his clear and frank hostility to Islam and everything that is (non-British nationalist). The party raises slogans against immigration, which has increased in recent years. At its core, this party consists of a national fascist ideology and a mixture of European neo-Nazism. The party lived for several years of success and fame on a societal level without having an effective political influence. It entered Parliament, but its luster disappeared, and its popularity declined. Several movements emerged from the party, including the National Front and the English Defense League.

In general, there are several effects of the extreme right-wing movements in Britain on society, politics, and even individuals. Among the most important effects is the increase in violence and crime, as the far right causes an increase in incidents of violence and hate crimes against individuals and ethnic minority groups. The far-right contributes to social division through discourses of division and exclusion, leading to societal tension and division. From a political perspective, far-right groups can exert political pressure to influence legislation and policies that suit their agenda and mobilize to serve them.

The English Defense League, a pro-active movement that emerged in the United Kingdom around 2009 as a response to Islamic extremism and immigration, was discussed. This League emerged from the English National Party, as most of its members believed in the party and voted for it. This association does not have an ideology written in books, magazines, or newspapers. Still, it does most of its activities by attracting members via the Internet and social networking pages, through speeches against immigrants and Muslims, and glorifying everything that is a national British heritage. The British National Party and the English Defense League have several features in common. Both are far-right political groups in the United Kingdom. The similarity can be included in the following points:

Nationalism and anti-immigration sentiments: Both the BNP and the EDL espouse far-right ideologies that are often characterized by nationalism, anti-immigration sentiment, and a focus on preserving what they perceive as traditional British values.

Concerns about Immigration: Both groups have expressed concerns about immigration and have called for stricter immigration policies. They argue that immigration negatively impacts the cultural and economic fabric of the country. Thus, they emphasize a solid national identity and often oppose what they see as threats to British culture and heritage.

Criticism of Islam: The EDL has been known for its strong opposition to Islam. It has organized protests against what it perceives as the Islamization of Britain. The BNP has also been critical of Islam in its political discourse.

Anti-EU Sentiment: Both groups have opposed the European Union (EU) and have been critical of the UK's membership in the EU. Their anti-EU stance aligns with their broader nationalist positions.

Controversial Rhetoric: The BNP and the EDL have been criticized for using inflammatory and controversial rhetoric, including statements that have been perceived as racist, xenophobic, or Islamophobic.

Political Activism: While the BNP has been involved in electoral politics and has contested elections, the EDL is more of a street movement that has organized protests and demonstrations against what it sees as threats to British identity.

Legal Issues: Both groups have faced legal challenges and controversies. The BNP has been involved in legal battles over issues such as membership policies and allegations of racism.

Impact on civil society: where far-right groups can target local communities and civic institutions, negatively impacting society. As for media and social networking, the far-right influences use the media and social networks to spread their messages and promote their ideas. Authorities and civil society face challenges in dealing with these issues, including monitoring extremist activities, stimulating communication and understanding between components of society, and promoting the values of inclusion and equality.

There are also less prominent similarities; for instance, most far-right groups also pose a threat to national security, and right-wing extremism can lead to terrorist incidents through demonstrations and attacks on targeted groups and individuals.

F. Endnotes

The National Front is a British extremist political movement with fascist origins and ideology. It was formed from an association of right-wing groups in 1967: the League of Empire Loyalists, the British National Party, and the Racial Preservation Society. The immigration issue is the core of this movement. In general, Nazi ideologies are considered the fundamental basis of most right-wing parties and movements, especially in Britain, where fascism is the basis of the British National Party, the English Defense League, and the British Front.

Islamization⁸⁰: Generally, it refers to the process by which a society or a region undergoes a transformation influenced by Islamic principles, values, and practices. This term is often used in discussions related to cultural, social, and political changes, and it can be interpreted in various ways depending on the context and the speaker's perspective. The term is sometimes used by critics who express concern or opposition to what they perceive as an increasing influence of Islam in various aspects of society. This

⁸⁰ For more see: Rahman, Fazlur. "Islamization of knowledge: A response." *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 5, no.1, 1988.

might include the adoption of Islamic cultural practices, the implementation of Islamic law (Sharia), or demographic changes due to the growth of the Muslim population.

Tommy Robinson (1982) is a British political activist associated with far-right and anti-Islam movements in the United Kingdom. He first gained public attention as a co-founder and spokesman for the English Defense League (EDL), a street protest movement known for its strong opposition to what it perceived as the Islamization of the UK. Robinson later left the EDL in 2013. He has continued to be involved in activism and commentary, mainly focusing on issues related to Islam, immigration, and what he perceives as threats to British identity. Robinson has been a controversial figure, drawing both supporters and critics. Supporters see him as a defender of free speech and a critic of political correctness, while critics accuse him of promoting Islamophobia and engaging in hate speech. Robinson has faced legal issues, including convictions for contempt of court. In 2018, he was sentenced to prison for contempt of court related to a case involving reporting restrictions. The sentence was later quashed, but the case brought attention to issues related to reporting on legal proceedings and free speech⁸¹

⁸¹ For more see: Allchorn, William. "Tommy Robinson and the UK's post-EDL far right: how extremists are mobilising in response to online restrictions and developing a new 'victimisation' narrative." *Democratic Audit Blog*, 2018.

VI. CONCLUSION

This thesis “Explaining the Impact of Extremist Groups in the UK After 9/11,” which consists of four chapters, has dealt with extremism, its origins and history, and the effect of extreme groups in the UK as a study case in addition to official definitions, whether from a government, an international organization, or a political scientist. Extremism refers to endorsing or supporting extreme, radical beliefs, ideologies, or actions. It involves moving away from mainstream or moderate positions within a society or political system. Extremists often refuse to compromise and may pursue their goals with intense and unrelenting zeal.

This research has answered several pivotal questions discussed in the previous chapters. What are the origins of extremism? How is it formed in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? How do we describe the impact of al-Qaeda in shaping the ideology of jihad and extremism after 9/11? Who poses the greatest danger and threat to British society, the Islamists or the British extremists? What are the reasons for the emergence of extremist groups such as the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defense League (EDL), and do they have any influence in formulating the state's policy against Muslims?

Although 22 years have passed since the events of 9/11, 2001, it remains a decisive date in the modern world, as it led to the emergence of the new world, whether in politics, international relations, or foreign policies, even leading to a new system of security and protection of airports that did not exist earlier. The perception and view of Islam and Muslims have changed forever, whether from the United States of America or the rest of the world. The term “War on Terror” appeared as a violent reaction to the events of September, and the response was brutal from the United States and its allies.

At that time, small groups of Arab hijackers of different nationalities seized four airplanes that took off from New York, Boston, and Washington to San Francisco and Los Angeles and used them to attack prominent buildings in New York and Washington,

causing the death of 3000 people. Al-Qaeda was responsible for these attacks, with Bin Laden's confession, and the mastermind was Egyptian Muhammad Atta, who received his training in Afghanistan. The United States, which was subjected to these terrorist attacks, remains engaged in global operations to eliminate threats posed by organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS to this day.

Following the attack, the United States embarked on an international campaign to eliminate Al-Qaeda and all countries that provide a habitat for terrorist groups after the organization claimed responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. One of the results of this sentence was the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, which lasted for many years, causing massive losses in civilian lives and military spending, which was worth trillions of dollars.

The 9/11 attacks led to the emergence of new terms and the deepening of other terms, such as extremism, terrorism, the war on terror, and Islamophobia. This research has focused on the meaning and history of extremism and Islamophobia and their connection to extremist groups.

Extremism can appear in different forms, including political, religious, or social extremism. It is not limited to a specific ideology or belief system but can be linked to any ideas that fall outside the generally accepted norms of society. Extremist ideologies may be characterized by fanaticism, radicalism, and a willingness to use or endorse violence to achieve their goals. Extremism has a long history since the existence of humanity, which is naturally inclined to conflict. There are many definitions of extremism, whether from individuals or international organizations. Still, they agree that extremism is simply deviating from everything acceptable to societies and deviating from the norm by practicing violent behavior, whether in thought or action. The history of extremism is complex and multifaceted, spanning various regions, cultures, and ideologies. Extremism can manifest in political, religious, social, or other ideological contexts.

In this research, the researcher also discussed the history of extremism in three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which confirms that extremism does not exist in a particular religion, race, or culture per se.

A. Extremism in Judaism

While Judaism, like any major religion, has a diverse range of beliefs and practices, extremism within Judaism is relatively rare compared to some other religious traditions. However, it's important to note that extremist views and actions can be found in any religious or ideological community. In Judaism, extremist tendencies are often associated with certain fringe groups, and they do not represent the beliefs of the majority of Jewish people. Some examples of extremism within Judaism include:

Religious Zionism Extremism: Some individuals or groups within the religious Zionist movement have been associated with extremist views, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This may involve a radical interpretation of sacred texts to justify political positions, including settlements in disputed territories.

Ultra-Orthodox Extremism: While the majority of ultra-Orthodox Jews (Haredim) lead peaceful and devout lives, there have been instances of extremism within this community. This can manifest as opposition to secular education, attempts to impose strict interpretations of Jewish law on others, or incidents of violence against those perceived as violating religious norms.

Anti-Arab Extremism: In some cases, individuals with extreme views may engage in violence against Arabs or Palestinians, often rooted in nationalist or religious fervor. Such actions are widely condemned within the broader Jewish community. Zionist Jewish extremism coincided with the successive migrations of diaspora Jews from all over the world, as the Haganah and Irgun gangs practiced extremist acts against the Palestinian population, including killing and sabotage, to protect and establish the presence of the Jews and establish a state for them, because there was no defense army at that time.

It's crucial to emphasize that these instances of extremism are not representative of Judaism as a whole. Most Jewish people worldwide practice their faith peacefully and contribute positively to their communities. Judaism, like any major religion, has a rich tradition of ethical teachings, and many Jewish individuals reject violence and extremism.

Authorities within the Jewish community, as well as Israeli authorities, actively work to counteract extremism and promote dialogue and understanding between different religious and ethnic groups. Public opinion within the Jewish community is diverse, and many organizations and individuals actively advocate for peace, coexistence, and social justice. It must be pointed out here that there is a need to separate the Jewish religion from the Zionist political movement, as many of the world's Jews stand with the Palestinians and condemn the actions of the Zionist movement. At the same time, Judaism is an Abrahamic religion and one of the oldest religions, while Zionism is a political movement permeated by Jewish laws and calls for the establishment of land for the Jews in Palestine.

B. Extremism in Christianity

Christianity is diverse, and most of its followers are committed to peaceful and tolerant expressions of their faith. However, throughout history, there have been instances of extremism within Christian communities. It's essential to recognize that such extremism does not represent the beliefs of the entire Christian tradition or its diverse followers. Extremism in Christianity can be found through these points:

Crusades: In medieval Europe, the Crusades were a series of military campaigns launched to reclaim Jerusalem and other holy sites from Muslim control. The Crusades involved violence and atrocities committed by some Christian forces. **Inquisition:** The Inquisition, particularly the Spanish Inquisition, is another historical example of extremism within Christianity. It was a series of judicial institutions aimed at enforcing religious orthodoxy, often using torture and execution. **Anti-Semitism:** Historically, some Christian communities have been implicated in anti-Semitic sentiments and actions. Accusations of deicide (the charge that Jews were collectively responsible for the death of Jesus) have fueled discrimination and persecution. **Religious Wars:** In the context of the Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries, Europe witnessed religious wars between Catholic and Protestant factions, resulting in violence and religious persecution.

C. Christian Identity Movement

In the United States, the Christian Identity movement is a far-right, white supremacist ideology that uses Christian terminology to justify racist and anti-Semitic beliefs. It is a slight fringe movement and is not representative of mainstream Christianity.

Abortion Clinic Violence: There have been instances of violence against abortion providers and clinics by individuals or groups claiming to be motivated by their Christian beliefs. However, these acts are condemned by many Christians. Homophobia: Some Christian groups or individuals have held extremist views against the LGBTQ+ community, promoting discriminatory practices and policies based on their interpretation of religious teachings.

Perhaps one of the most important examples of extremism in Christianity is The Ku Klux Klan group. Which calls for the superiority of the white race over others, which justifies acts of extremism and violence. Likewise, the Christian Army of God, which called against abortion and carried out violent acts

It's crucial to stress that the actions of extremists within any religious tradition should not be taken as representative of the beliefs and practices of the entire faith community. Most Christians worldwide practice their faith peacefully, emphasizing love, compassion, and tolerance. Many Christian denominations actively promote interfaith dialogue, social justice, and human rights. Public opinion within the Christian community is diverse, and numerous Christian leaders and organizations work toward fostering understanding and cooperation among people of different faiths and beliefs.

D. Extremism in Islam

Extremism within Islam refers to interpretations of Islamic beliefs and principles that lead to the advocacy or support for radical and often violent actions. Most Muslims worldwide do not support extremist ideologies. Extremism has existed in the history of Islam since the death of the Prophet Muhammad after the emergence of strife and the entry of foreigners into Islam, with its spread and expansion in many regions. With the emergence of different sects, religious extremism emerged. Islamic extremism is represented by the following:

Jihadist Extremism: Some individuals and groups, commonly referred to as jihadists, interpret certain Islamic concepts, such as jihad (struggle), in ways that justify violence, terrorism, and armed conflict. These extremists often target perceived enemies, including other Muslims whom they consider deviant or collaborators with non-Muslim entities. Most jihadist extremists believe that the West, the United States, and Israel are the first enemies of Muslims, and every Muslim must wage jihad to stop the danger of these secular, atheist countries.

Takfirism: Takfirism is a belief held by some extremists that allow them to declare other Muslims as apostates, justifying violence against them. This has been a divisive issue within the Muslim world, contributing to conflicts and acts of terrorism.

Salafi Jihadism: Salafi jihadism is an extremist ideology that combines a strict interpretation of Salafism (an ultra-conservative form of Sunni Islam) with the belief in the use of violent jihad to establish what they see as an actual Islamic state.

Wahhabism: Wahhabism is a conservative religious reform movement of Sunni origin that originated in the Arabian Peninsula in the 18th century. While not inherently extremist, some critics argue that the strict interpretation of Islam associated with Wahhabism has contributed to the rise of radical ideologies.

Terrorist Organizations: Groups like al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) have gained international attention for their involvement in acts of extremism, claiming to act in the name of Islam. These organizations use extreme interpretations of Islamic concepts to justify their actions.

Violence Against Apostates and Blasphemy: In some countries, individuals accused of apostasy or blasphemy may face violence from extremists who believe they are acting in defense of Islam. Mainstream Muslim scholars and organizations often condemn these actions. **Political Extremism:** In some cases, political movements with Islamist agendas may adopt extremist ideologies, advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state through undemocratic means.

In later chapters, the researcher discusses jihadism, Wahhabism, and Salafism in detail. Jihadism ideology constitutes the fundamental basis of Wahhabism and Salafism, as both movements call for the necessity of jihad and fighting to support Muslims. Salafism is a Sunni Islamic religious movement that calls for correcting the Islamic

religion and purifying it of impurities and heresies. The word Salafism refers to the righteous predecessors among the Companions who practiced the Islamic religion according to its principles as it is. Salafism is a method intended to follow the proper methodology, which is the method of the Companions and those who followed them from the preferred centuries. They are not limited to names, persons, or sects, and followers of jurisprudential schools of thought are included in them as long as they are committed to the method of the righteous predecessors of acting according to the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the Companions.

Salafism formed through Wahhabism, which was preached by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab in the Arabian Peninsula. Many critics and scholars believe that extremist jihadists, terrorist organizations, and Salafist jihadism were born from the womb of Wahhabism, which many see as extremism in religion.

Between supporters and opponents of Salafist thought, the researcher believes that Salafist thought had a significant impact on the collapse of the Islamic world due to the strictness of their scholars in freezing the Muslim human mind, in addition to being a political tool used by rulers to control peoples by force, not to mention being a cause of alienation, provoking division, and rejecting unity, among the ranks of Muslims. Moderation is the basis in all aspects, so any zealotry in thoughts and forcing others to embrace it is radicalism and extremism. Salafism and Wahhabism have given a negative image of the teachings of Islam due to their severity and distance from the spirit of modernity and development.

A distinction must be made between Islamism and Salafism. Islamism is a modern ideology that aims to introduce the religion of Islam into the political sphere, an example of which is the Muslim Brotherhood. Islamists are known for forming political parties, participating in elections, and exerting pressure to introduce constitutional reforms in the regime. They are considered to be moderate Muslims. They focus their activities on governments, universities, student unions, or other institutions. As for Salafism, as previously mentioned, it sought to purify Islam from Western cultural influences and the deviations of different sects, such as the Shiites and Sufis.

Previous chapters have focused on jihad, its role in Islamic extremism, and how it formed the primary nucleus of extremist movements such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic

State. Jihadism refers to jihad's ideological and political interpretation, an Arabic term "struggle" or "striving." In Islam, jihad is a broad and multifaceted concept encompassing various forms of struggle, including the personal spiritual battle against sin, the effort to improve society, and, in certain circumstances, armed struggle in self-defense or for the protection of religious freedoms. Jihadism, however, represents a specific and often extremist interpretation of jihad that justifies the use of violence, including terrorism, to achieve ideological or political goals.

Jihadism is a controversial and contested term within the Muslim world. Many Muslim scholars and religious leaders reject the violent interpretation of jihad promoted by jihadist groups, emphasizing the importance of a more peaceful and moderate understanding of Islam. The events of 9/11 led to the emergence of a great controversy about jihad, necessarily linking it to terrorism and extremism. Jihad is an obligation mentioned in the Qur'an, and its beginnings occurred in the era of the Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic conquests. With the expansion of Islam returning to tracing the beginnings of modern jihad, it was shaped and molded by Sayyid Qutb, one of the most significant theorists of jihad in the modern era. During the Soviet Afghan war and the overthrow of the Taliban regime, jihad became linked and became global. It started in the 1980s in Peshawar, Afghanistan, where the beginnings of the establishment of Al-Qaeda were. Al-Qaeda had the most prominent role in the emergence of the global jihad movement, which is necessarily linked to extremist thought. Evidence of this is the terrorist attacks it carried out against the United States and its allies around the world.

In the 1980s, at the peak of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, the USSR invaded Afghanistan. The Soviet goal was to support the Afghan-friendly government of the Soviet Union, which was suffering from attacks by anti-Soviet rebels. The United States financed the revolutionaries to oust the Soviets after ten years, during which it helped the Afghan mujahideen with weapons and money. Mujahideen from all over the world flocked to Afghans to confront the infidel Soviet communist invasion and support their Afghan brothers in defending their religion and homeland. Among these volunteer mujahideen were Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam. Abdullah Azzam is considered the true founder of Al-Qaeda and the first to call for global jihad, especially the Afghan one, through his speeches and lectures, as he

worked in universities and the field of education, which helped spread his ideas among the youth faster.

The name Al-Qaeda, a term of Arabic origin that means the base, goes back to the services office that Azzam established in Peshawar to collect and record data and information about the Mujahideen, and the name was given automatically. The star of Abdullah Azzam shone and dominated at that time as the leader and founder of the organization because of his attractive speeches, which attracted many Muslim supporters around the world by striking the chord of religion and one blood by the necessity of confronting the infidel communist tide that permitted the blood of Muslims in Afghanistan. The researcher believes that the speeches, slogans, language, and charisma of the Mujahid leader have a tremendous role in spreading the ideology of jihad. Back to those who carried out the September attacks were young men carrying extremist jihadist ideology; they were brainwashed and imbued with these ideas intellectually and psychologically.

When studying the case of Muhammad Atta, the leader, and mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, he appears as a modern young man who comes from an average academic Egyptian family that has no connection to extremism. He traveled to Germany to complete his graduate studies, and from here, he formed what is known as the Berlin Cell, which was the gathering center for the rest of the members involved in the attacks. It is believed he went to Afghanistan to receive training there. But what drives an individual to radicalism and embrace extremist ideology?

The factors that lead to the emergence of extremism are many and intertwined. These factors have varied between religious, political, economic, social, and intellectual characteristics. Together or separately, these factors may be one of the reasons for the emergence of fanaticism and extremism.

It must be noted that these factors overlap, so it is impossible to separate one reason from the rest of the characteristics, and one of them may be the result of another. The economic or social reason for the emergence of extremism is a definite result of religious extremism, and so are the rest of the causes of extremism. The political circumstances and situations in those societies where individuals live, especially Islamic societies, have a substantial impact on fueling extremist and radical thought in all its

forms. Authoritarian regimes also play a central role in the emergence of Islamic extremism. The government's approach to the policy of gagging mouths, putting opponents in prisons, defaming them, torturing them, humiliating them, crushing their dignity, and preventing and taking away freedoms is enough to cause extremism, extremism, and terrorism in the region. For example, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was detained in Jordanian prisons and had no Islamic extremist past or history. However, inside the jails, he adopted extremist terrorist ideology through inmates who were with him in the same prison.

Poverty, unemployment, frustration, despair, and feelings of injustice also play a role in the emergence of extremism. Unequal living opportunities as well. In addition to the absence of an influential role for the media, the media has a significant role in feeding extremist thought, as it presents programs, films, news, and so on. In most cases, it adopts an extremist approach, either disrespecting minds and religious and moral rituals or sowing discord and stirring up strife through some programs or ideas. The researcher believes al-Qaeda has a significant, effective web of propaganda and media. Al-Qaeda is distinguished from other extremist organizations in that it has broadcast hundreds of recorded tapes and enthusiastic publications characterized by eloquence and enthusiasm. The organization has a group of technical personnel and experts in the field of the Internet and the art of recording and photography.

The policies of the United States of America and the West towards Muslims have a role in fueling extremism, as the individual who belongs to these organizations sees that the West is represented by infidelity, injustice, and violence and that conspiracy theories are being hatched. Perhaps the most crucial pillar of Al-Qaeda's ideology is the fight against secularism, liberalism, and everything hostile to the values of Islam, represented by the United States, its allies, and its symbols. Therefore, the September operations were not the only ones. The organization carried out several operations, including the Dar Al Salaam-Nairobi bombing and attacking the US Navy ship USS Cole. Al-Qaeda also sought to establish an Islamic caliphate that would implement laws and Sharia derived from the Quran and Sunnah by force and jihad.

The assassination of Abdullah Azzam had global repercussions in 1989 and had a considerable impact, as many mourned him as a Mujahid leader who represented the

Afghan Arabs and the armed resistance. Then, Osama bin Laden appeared, a wealthy young man of Yemeni origins who was the leading financier of Al-Qaeda, as his family owned millions and had a close connection to the House of Saud at the time. Osama bin Laden has always caused controversy, even after his assassination. He was the most wanted man in history. His name was associated with extremism, bombing, and threats in the West, while many Muslims glorified and immortalized him. Most countries and international organizations classified him as a terrorist figure. Despite being so, he wrote many books, poetry, and theories, and his influential role on many cannot be denied.

Post 9/11 era: The attacks of 9/11 had profound and far-reaching consequences that have shaped global events in various ways. War on Terror: it's a term founded by The United States under President George W. Bush, who initiated the "War on Terror" in response to the 9/11 attacks. This led to military interventions in Afghanistan (2001) and later Iraq (2003) to eliminate terrorist threats and promote democracy. Consequently, The United States overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime, and Kabul fell.

Global Impact: The 9/11 attacks had a profound impact on international relations, leading to changes in diplomatic, security, and intelligence cooperation among nations. The attacks also prompted increased focus on counterterrorism efforts worldwide.

Emergence of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA): The TSA enhanced airport security and protected air travel from terrorist threats. It introduced new screening measures and security protocols at airports.

Increased Surveillance Measures: Governments worldwide implemented increased surveillance and security procedures in response to the perceived threat of terrorism. This included enhanced monitoring of communications and the expansion of intelligence-gathering capabilities.

The researcher believes that the US's aggressive policy towards the Middle East, especially in Iraq, has led to the emergence of new extremist groups, including groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda, and the emergence of an Islamic State in the Levant, which has benefited from regional instability and sectarian tensions. The post-9/11 era has had lasting effects on geopolitics, international security, and domestic politics. It continues to shape discussions about civil liberties, surveillance, and the balance between security and individual rights by imposing censorship and restricting personal liberties and

freedom of movement. Immigration procedures to the West and the United States have become more complex and almost impossible for some nationalities.

How did Al-Qaeda influence the ideology of jihad and extremism after the events of 9/11 described?

The September attacks on the United States came as a clear and explicit declaration of global jihad against the West by Al-Qaeda. In response, the United States and its allies invaded Iraq and Afghanistan, where they worked to destroy and pursue Al-Qaeda in the mountains of Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda has effectively used the media and propaganda to spread its jihadist ideology globally. The September attacks received widespread media coverage, and Al-Qaeda leaders, especially Osama bin Laden, used video messages to express their extremist views, promote jihad, and justify acts of violence. Jihad began to spread through propaganda and the media by showcasing the military strength of Al-Qaeda and its ability to strike the most significant force in the world.

Creating a qualitative shift from local jihad to global jihad: Al-Qaeda's ideology emphasizes global jihad against the enemies of Islam and the Umma and is not limited to a specific geographical area. This shift had repercussions because it inspired individuals and groups to look at their struggles in a broader context and to link local conflicts to a global narrative as they went beyond the boundaries of Afghanistan's jihad and moved to the United States and its allies, as they dared to carry out terrorist operations around the world.

The emergence of other organizations and factions of Al-Qaeda: After the dismantling of al-Qaeda strongholds in Afghanistan, more ferocious and dangerous organizations emerged calling for global jihad, such as ISIS in Iraq and Syria, Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula, and Morocco. ISIS in Iraq and northern Syria was the cause of the killing and displacement of countless people and the destruction, as it was brutal and cruel in implementing its beliefs.

It must be noted that the influence of Al-Qaeda is just one factor among many factors that shape contemporary jihadist and extremist ideologies, as they are not solely religiously based. The landscape is intertwined with various regional, social, and political factors contributing to the development of extremist ideology. In addition, the

rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) and its competition with Al-Qaeda has added further complexity to the global jihadi landscape.

Extremist Islamic groups in the UK: The effects and consequences of the September attacks spread to all parts of the world. The UK, like many other countries, has witnessed the emergence of various extremist groups with different ideological backgrounds. The democratic climate in the United Kingdom has allowed the independence of individuals and extremist groups to practice their activities and ideologies, as the United Kingdom owns the highest levels of democracy and liberation for individuals, and the rights of freedom of speech are guaranteed. The United Kingdom has been a safe shelter for Islamic groups. It has embraced many political Islamists from various parts of the world to escape the dictatorship of the ruling regimes, such as members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The UK has faced challenges relating to Islamic extremism, including the presence of individuals and groups espousing extremist interpretations of Islam and engaging in or supporting acts of violence. Perhaps the most important of these groups is the Al-Muhajiroun group.

Islamic extremism and its presence in the United Kingdom have several effects that can be listed in the following points:

Terrorist incidents: The United Kingdom has witnessed numerous terrorist incidents carried out by individuals or groups inspired by or affiliated with Islamic extremism. Notable attacks include the 2005 London bombings, the killing of British soldier Lee Rigby in 2013, the 2017 Westminster Bridge attack, the Manchester Arena bombing, and the London Bridge attacks.

E. Radicalization and Recruitment

There have been cases of individuals in the UK being radicalized and recruited by extremist groups. Recruitment efforts have taken place online and offline, with some individuals traveling abroad to join conflicts in regions such as Syria and Iraq.

Extremist marches and slogans: Some individuals spread extremist ideologies through marches, raising slogans, and imposing their ideas and ideology on society by confronting and fighting for European liberation and freedom.

The emergence of counter-far-right groups: Coinciding with the calls of extremist Islamic movements in the United Kingdom for the establishment of the Islamic religion and the Caliphate, the extreme right appeared due to a general feeling of threat from these groups, in addition to the far-right's demand to ban mosques and not build more. Mosques are the central circle and center for religious preaching lessons. Europe in general, and the UK in particular, suffers from a lack of knowledge of the map of mosques and the imams who deliver sermons, as many Islamic organizations, including groups with extremist ideology, participate in managing these mosques and spreading extremist ideology hostile to the countries on which these mosques themselves are based. Where sermons are circulated that contain extremist ideas and incite against the freedom of citizens, whether they are Christians, Jews, or those with other beliefs, considering them infidels, which makes mosques have a more significant role in inciting extremism.

As a result of the invasion of Islamic ideologies into the United Kingdom, Western scholars coined the term Londonistan. In the early 2000s, the term Londonistan was used to describe London as a purely Islamic city, particularly in the context of allegations or perceptions that the city had become a center for Islamic extremism and a center for individuals and groups with extremist ideologies. It has been used in different ways, but it generally indicates negativity. London has long been known in political literature as Londonistan. This name appeared a long time ago in many media outlets. It referred to the ease with which extremist Islamic movements operate in the British capital and the leniency of the British government in dealing with these movements due to the nature of the old and suspicious cooperation relationship between London and those groups. What has further consolidated this term is that the United Kingdom harbors individuals described as extremists, such as Abu Qatada, Omar Bakri Muhammad Anjem Choudary. The term Londonistan also describes the state's tolerance towards extremist Islamists and their groups by the British authorities and the government.

The British authorities must realize that allowing and condoning the movements of extremists in the United Kingdom or those who conduct religious marches to exploit freedoms in the streets of Britain is something that would help the emergence of

sectarian conflicts in the Kingdom, given that this matter would arouse the sensitivity and anger of local Christians, in the UK and Europe, who see them people living on British soil demanding the elimination of the values, principles, and constitutional and legal foundations on which the United Kingdom was founded, which will lead to the outbreak of sectarian conflicts. Such movements have already been monitored, indicating the possibility of sectarian strife erupting in some streets of the UK.

British Extremism and Radical Groups: Extremist right-wing groups in the United Kingdom appeared openly and clearly during the First and Second World Wars, with the coincidence of the emergence of Nazism and fascism in Europe. Fascism is considered the heart and central axis of far-right movements in the United Kingdom. With the emergence of waves of freedom and democracy, classical extremist fascism has become unacceptable in modern societies. But modern groups and parties have formed, keeping pace with the recent era and democracy, denouncing the Islamic threat. With the increase in the number of immigrants, the recurrence of terrorist incidents, and the raising of slogans of jihad, a sense of danger has prevailed, and that Britain is for white Britons only.

Most of these parties and groups claim that they are not extremists, but they are so at the core by following their slogans and the angry marches they organize, in addition to incidents of hate crimes against foreigners.

In general, the far right in the United Kingdom consists mainly of various groups and individuals with nationalist, anti-immigration, and anti-Islam ideologies, and sometimes believes in the supremacy of the European white race. These groups and individuals often advocate policies and positions characterized by intense opposition to multiculturalism, globalization, and perceived threats to national identity.

In this research, the researcher dealt with the British National Party and the English Defense League, representing the British extreme right. They have been chosen because the British National Party was born from the heart of fascism, despite its recent establishment in 1982 by John Hutchins, a politician with a fascist neo-Nazi character. As for the English Defense League, it is an extension of it that emerged later from the party. In addition, former party leader Nick Griffin is considered a controversial local

figure due to his harsh statements and his hostility towards Muslims by criticizing religion and the Qur'an and describing it as a religion that encourages violence.

Far-right demonstrations caused extensive property damage due to vandalism. It also drained the police budget and caused a lot of chaos through attacks on mosques. This sparked feelings of anger and resentment among the Islamic community and immigrants.

Who poses the greatest danger and threat to British society, the Islamists or the British extremists?

Extremist Islamic groups in the United Kingdom are closely linked to the far right, as their emergence was attached as a reaction to each other. Extremist Islamic groups have emerged in Europe and the United Kingdom, specifically among immigrants who seek to establish an Islamic caliphate built on Sharia law and the Qur'an, confront secularism and Western liberalism, its values and traditions, and call for jihad to support Muslims. In response to these demands, modern far-right movements and parties emerged as a reaction against everything Islamic and foreign. The growing concerns about cultural identity and national pride can fuel far-right sentiments. Concerns about cultural identity and national pride can fuel far-right sentiments. Some individuals may fear the erosion of traditional cultural values and identity, viewing immigration and multiculturalism as threats to their way of life. Far-right movements often capitalize on anti-immigration sentiment, positioning immigrants as a source of economic competition, foreign cultural invasion, or even security threats.

Comparing the danger posed by far-right extremism and Islamic extremism is complex and context-dependent. Both forms of extremism can lead to violence and terrorism and threaten societal cohesion. It is essential to recognize that acts of violence and terrorism committed by individuals or groups associated with any extremist ideology deserve condemnation and that most people who sympathize with these ideologies do not engage in violent activities. Extremist activities linked to Islamic extremism have received greater international attention, mainly due to the high-profile terrorist attacks in various countries and the negative stereotyping of Muslims. However, right-wing extremism has also been responsible for deadly attacks, and we should not underestimate its global impact. Xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment, and white

supremacist ideologies often characterize right-wing extremism. Sometimes, the far-right may gain sympathy from certain groups because it is national and local and has no external agenda other than protecting the homeland from any external cultural and religious invasion.

On the other hand, Islamic extremism may involve an extreme interpretation of Islam to justify violence and terrorism. Ideological motives differ, but both can lead to acts of violence with the same result. Islamic extremism and far-right extremism have the same results on society: destruction, hatred, and division.

As for who is more dangerous in spreading extremism via the Internet, far-right and extremist Islamic ideologies can spread through Internet platforms, as it's available to everyone, which contributes to the ease of spread and extremism of individuals. In this modern world, social media plays a massive role in spreading extremist content for both ideologies.

Ultimately, evaluating which extremism is “most dangerous” can depend on specific factors, including the region, the nature and composition of society, prevailing ideologies, and the authorities' response. In addition, the wording of this question could oversimplify the complex and evolving nature of extremism.

Does the far-right have any influence in formulating the state's policy against Muslims in the UK?

The influence of far-right groups on state politics in the UK can be a thorny topic. In general, democratic governments aim to formulate policies based on equality, justice, the rule of law, and the protection of individual rights to freedom of belief and practice of religion and cultural rituals, regardless of religious and ethnic background. However, the political landscape can be influenced by various factors, including public opinion, media narratives and amplifications, political dynamics, and public pressure. The United Kingdom is a country of laws and democracy, so it rules under democratic principles that provide equal treatment and protection of the rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious or ethnic background. State policies are expected to adhere to these principles, and any discriminatory policies would face legal action. The British authorities have deported many extremist Islamic individuals due to their danger to

society, and many saboteurs on the far-right have been tried. Everyone is under the law when committing any violations.

Despite the impartiality and objectivity of the authorities, public opinion, media plots, and political dynamics can affect some policy discussions. While far-right ideologies may find resonance and supporters in specific society layers, on the popular level, direct influence on state policies that target Muslims as a religious group would be inconsistent with democratic and legal principles.

This research proposed the following hypotheses:

H₀: The ideology of extremist groups has no connection with the influence on societies.

H₁: The ideology of extremist groups affects societies.

H₂: The ideology of extremist groups didn't affect societies.

The researcher has found that the ideology of extremist groups affects societies, which means that the hypothesis **H₁** is accepted.

Extremism, whether rooted in religious, political, or other ideologies, has various adverse effects on individuals and societies. Perhaps the most important effects and consequences of extremism are violence and terrorism.

Extremist ideologies often lead to acts of violence and terrorism. Terrorist attacks can result in loss of life, injury, and widespread fear. The psychological impact on affected communities can be long-lasting. For example, Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, due to their extremist ideology and use of killing and destruction, led to severe human and infrastructure losses in the United States, Iraq, Afghanistan, Spain, and so on.

The impact of extremism on social cohesion: Extremism can erode social cohesion by promoting mistrust and division between different religious, ethnic, or cultural groups. This can lead to broken community relationships and hinder efforts to build inclusive and diverse communities, such as Iraqi society, which suffers from severe sectarian divisions within it that have led to violent fighting between Sunnis, Shiites, and even Kurds and other minorities.

Dejection of democratic values: Extremism in all its forms is against democratic values by challenging principles such as freedom of expression, pluralism, transparency, and the rule of law. In some cases, extremist movements seek to undermine democratic institutions and replace them with authoritarian, extremist, or theocratic governance

structures far from the spirit of the state's civil laws. As an example, the rule of the Islamic Republic of Iran is subject to absolute theocratic rule by the Supreme Leader.

Radicalization and recruitment: Extremist ideologies can radicalize individuals and attract them to become involved in extremist organizations, which may lead to the recruitment of individuals to join extremist groups. This constitutes a threat to national security and contributes to the spread of violence. Such as Al-Muhajiroun and the English Defense League both work to attract individuals through leaflets, speeches, and the Internet that call for violence and promote hate speech.

Discrimination and differentiation: Extremist ideologies contribute to the discrimination and discrimination of some individuals, minorities, or communities. This can lead to social exclusion, economic marginalization, and human rights violations, such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the United States, the Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar, and the Yazidis in Iraq.

Economic impact: Extremism can have economic consequences for societies. Acts of terrorism disrupt economic activities, damage infrastructure, and lead to increased security costs and military spending. Financial instability may follow, affecting the livelihoods of individuals and communities. Annual riots and demonstrations in the United Kingdom cost a lot of money and budget for repairs and compensation carried out by members of right-wing groups.

The emergence of the term Islamophobia: With the acts of terrorism carried out by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, the negative view of Islam and Muslims around the world has deepened, increasing feelings of anger and fear of Islam, especially in the United States and Europe. In a previously mentioned poll, many Britons see Islam as a religion of violence and do not feel comfortable with Muslims.

Impact on education: Extremist ideologies may impact education systems by influencing school curricula, promoting intolerance, and undermining critical thinking. This can have long-term consequences for future generations' intellectual and social development, such as the education system in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban, where females were deprived of education, in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

International relations: At the international level, extremism can strain diplomatic relations and contribute to geopolitical tensions. Terrorist acts may lead to conflicts and

affect international cooperation efforts, causing diplomatic crises. Severe attacks, such as the 9/11 attacks in the United States, have led to increased global security concerns, reshaped international alliances, and the war on terror, which led to the war on Afghanistan and Iraq.

Refugee and migration crisis: Conflicts waged by extremists, such as those in Syria and Iraq caused by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, have contributed to refugee crises and widespread migration out of fear and in search of safer shelters. The movement of displaced people has strained diplomatic relations, especially within the directly affected areas, and led to discussions and challenges related to burden sharing, humanitarian aid, and border security, such as the Syrian refugees in the refugee camps north of Jordan, which increased the burden on the state budget as a country with limited capabilities.

The effects of extremism differ from one society to another in terms of the type of extremism, the nature of society, its components and ethnicities, and the region. Most societies are flexible, so cooperative efforts can be made to confront extremism and its effects.

F. Recommendations to Confront Extremism In Societies

Countering and preventing extremism require multidimensional efforts at the local community and global levels. Some recommendations can help counter extremism in communities:

Promoting and improving education: Education is the basic building block in building and developing societies. A comprehensive, compulsory educational system must be built to support freedom, democracy, and equality, respect the beliefs and religions of other individuals, and reject violence and extremism, as education contributes to spreading culture, awareness, and understanding among different cultures.

Supporting awareness and encouraging communication: Promoting awareness about cultural and religious diversity and fostering mutual understanding among members of society through acceptance and respect of different cultures and religions by encouraging open and constructive dialogue between different sectors of society to enhance understanding and tolerance through educational seminars and workshops.

Youth support: This can be accomplished by providing support and equal opportunities for young people, including education and employment, and empowering them to enhance their involvement in society and be influential individuals and prevent their exploitation by extremist groups by filling their free time so they do not fall victim to extremism.

Promoting positive media: The media has a significant role. A transparent and honest media that rejects extremism and calls for tolerance in all aspects of society must be created. This is done through television and radio, visual media, and social networking sites with awareness programs encouraging dialogue and promoting human values. In addition to emphasizing the need to achieve balance in presenting news while avoiding discrimination, falsification, and bias in media coverage

Anti-discrimination: Combating discrimination and social injustice may lead to a feeling of injustice and isolation. This is based on the principle of the rule of law and democracy and that all individuals are equal in rights and duties, which creates a feeling of gratitude and general satisfaction in society.

These efforts must integrate into a comprehensive strategy and system to effectively combat extremism and promote peaceful coexistence in societies. There must also be cooperation between various religious institutions to promote the values of tolerance and prevent extremist interpretations of religions. Collaboration at the international level remains important in combating extremism by strengthening international cooperation to confront the roots of extremism and sharing expertise and information to address security threats at the international level.

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