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The Mujahedin

Defining the Terrorists and Their Organizations

THE GLOBAL Salafi jihad is a new development in the annals of terrorism. It combines fanaticism, in its original sense of "excessive enthusiasm in religious belief" (Taylor, 1991), with terrorism against a "far enemy," a global target to bring about a utopia. This fanaticism embraces an eagerness to die and kill for the cause. This glorification of the notion of *shahada* (literally the testimony of faith, but now also meaning martyrdom) is an inherent aspect of this new form of global terrorism, and can be understood only in its religious context. I submit that the new global Salafi mujahedin are sufficiently distinct from other terrorists that an in-depth study of their specific characteristics, patterns of joining the jihad, and behavior is needed. So far, the statements about them are based on anecdotal evidence or speculations derived from popular prejudice and conventional wisdom about evil people in general and terrorists in particular. My aim is to provide a general empirical study of these individuals to add to what is known and to correct some widely disseminated misconceptions.

The discussion here includes only those Muslim terrorists who target foreign governments and their populations, the "far enemy," in pursuit of Salafi objectives, namely the establishment of an Islamist state. Drawing these boundaries removes many terrorists from consideration, but my concern is that an overly inclusive sample may obscure important factors that might help us to understand this phenomenon.

Specifically, I eliminate all non-Muslim terrorists, as well as Muslim terrorists involved in domestic insurgency and in urban warfare against their own governments. I do not include Muslims fighting for the "liberation" of Kashmir or Chechnya, for these seem to be straightforward jihads, like the former Afghan or Bosnian jihads as defined by Azzam. Likewise, many Muslims fighting in Central Asia seem to be fighting an internal insurgency, a simple domestic Salafi jihad rather than a global one. Algerian terrorists who confine their activities to Algeria are likewise involved in a domestic Salafi jihad, which resembles an insurgency against their government based on a mixture of domestic grievances and religious fanaticism. I do include, however, those Algerians who committed terrorist attacks against French targets, as in the waves of terrorism in France in 1995 and 1996. They clearly did so not to change the French government but to fight the "far enemy" that prevented the establishment of an Islamist state in their own country.

The empirical world is rarely as tidy as we want it to be. It does not easily fit into our analytical categories and requires us to make difficult decisions in the selection of our data. Palestine is one such difficult choice. Azzam defined the struggle for the liberation of Palestine as a straightforward jihad rather than as an effort to establish a Salafi Islamist state. Indeed, many Palestinian terrorists have traditionally been secular rather than religious, although religious fanaticism seems to be ascendant. Furthermore, the Palestinian struggle involves complex social, economic, and political grievances as well as the goal of "liberation" of a former Muslim land. To include the Palestinians, therefore, would muddy the more purely ideological waters of the global Salafi jihad. I suspect that Palestinian terrorism is significantly different from the global Salafi jihad in terms of the people it attracts and their behavior. The global Salafi mujahedin in my sample have a very different profile from that of the extensive sample of Palestinian suicide terrorists described by Ariel Merari (1990).

Perhaps the most controversial decision I made was to exclude from this analysis the imprisoned leadership of the Egyptian Islamic Group (EIG). The EIG has been blamed for many terrorist acts in Egypt and abroad against Egyptian targets. The imprisoned leadership approved of these operations. But it was quite clear that they were part of a simple Salafi jihad. The terrorizing of tourists in Egypt in the 1990s was not an end in itself but an attempt to discredit the state. By demonstrating to the

world the government's inability to protect tourists, the terrorists succeeded in undermining the economy by disrupting the major national industry. The leadership believed that this campaign would increase the hardship of the masses, who would blame the government and mobilize to overthrow it. When this strategy backfired and turned the population against the EIG, the imprisoned EIG leadership recognized their error and completely reversed tactics in 1997, initiating a nonviolent strategy, which is still holding up. In the process, the EIG leadership has even abandoned its jihad and has become closer to the dawa strategy.

Despite the exclusion of the imprisoned EIG leadership, I have included the expatriate EIG leadership, for it played an important role in the ideological development of the Muslim revivalist movement from a simple jihad in Afghanistan to a Salafi jihad to the global Salafi jihad. Throughout the past decade the exiled EIG leaders have flirted with the global Salafi jihad at many points. They have supported its operations, met and plotted with their global colleagues, and in turn received support from the global Salafi jihad in terms of funds and logistics for their in-country operations. They had dual membership in al Qaeda and the EIG. The targeting of tourists started to become an end in itself, because of both their corrupting effect on society and their financial support for the Egyptian government. When the EIG leadership imprisoned in Egypt issued its nonviolent initiative, the expatriate leaders rejected it. There is evidence that the Luxor massacres that took place after this initiative were an attempt by the exiled leadership to undermine it and force the continuation of the strategy of violence. Eventually, they resigned from the ruling council of the EIG to make room for leaders supporting the new strategy. They earned a place in my sample, alongside their rivals from the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), who had made the transition from a Salafi jihad to a global Salafi jihad. The EIJ has been a significant part of the global Salafi jihad. Its leader al-Zawahiri is the jihad's main ideologist, and its leadership comprises the majority of al Qaeda's ruling council (shura). Indeed, in June 2001, the EIJ and al Qaeda merged to form al-Qaeda al-Jihad.

The global Salafi jihad is an Islamic revivalist social movement. It consists of people and organizations in various degrees of formalization who share the same ideology and mission. Al Qaeda and EIJ are well-defined organizations whose leadership supports terrorist operations. So are the

Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia and Malaysia, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines, and the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC) in Algeria. Other groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines and the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA) in Algeria have lapsed into pure criminality and lost the support of al Qaeda, the vanguard of this movement. Less well defined are the small illegal Moroccan clusters around charismatic preachers, which have various names but are grouped under the amorphous social movement called the Salafia Jihadia. The global Salafi jihad also includes apparently unaffiliated individuals who pursued the goals of the jihad, such as Abdul Basit Karim (Ramzi Yousef), who received support from the jihad for his operations. His role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 1995 Bojinka plot to blow up airplanes over the Pacific leaves no doubt that he was a part of this global movement without being a formal member of any of its organizations.

With the above considerations in mind, I kept the sample focused exclusively on the global Salafi jihad in order to reveal some specific patterns that might have been obscured by a more inclusive selection (see Pape, 2003).

Problems in Gathering Information

Collecting data on global Salafi mujahedin presents a series of challenges, mostly resulting from a general lack of information. I included only those mujahedin on whom enough background information was available to include them in empirical generalizations as to age, origin, religious commitment, and education. Although several hundred mujahedin have been arrested in the past several years, there is not enough information to include most of them in this study. There is evidence that those on whom enough information exists are not a representative sample of the rest. This inevitably slants this study in specific directions, which I will shortly discuss, and affects the validity of some of my conclusions.

My sources of information were all in the public domain. I did not have direct access to the mujahedin or to any government's secret reports. Global Salafi jihad organizations like al Qaeda are clandestine organizations, very secretive about their members and operations. Often, they deny or obfuscate their very existence and do not take official credit for successful operations. They do not grant access to their members, and their leaders' few interviews are well-orchestrated propaganda exercises with poor documentary value. There are no available official documents on their members and organizations, making it difficult to gather representative information. Even captured mujahedin have been reluctant to speak freely with academics or journalists for fear of betraying their cause, putting themselves at risk of retaliation from former comrades or undermining their criminal defense or post-trial appeals. They reject any social science project that would diminish the validity of their mission—jihad in the path of God.

But even assuming no intent to deceive, the rare prison interviews must be viewed with skepticism. Acceptance of responsibility does not protect from a tendency to distort the past to make it consistent with one's present self-concept; "confessions" may not accurately reflect historical events or states of mind. Nevertheless, when transcripts of such interviews exist, they cannot be ignored because of their potential to shed light on clandestine events and on states of mind. Governments have also been reluctant to grant access to those they have captured. Their priorities are to protect information that might be vital to their fight against terror, including the extent of their knowledge about terrorist organizations and operations, and to prevent communication between the prisoners and their former comrades.

My sources included the documents and transcripts of legal proceedings involving global Salafi mujahedin and their organizations, government documents, press and scholarly articles, and Internet articles. The information was often inconsistent. I considered the source of the information in assessing facts. In decreasing degrees of reliability, I favored transcripts of court proceedings subject to cross-examination, followed by reports of court proceedings, then corroborated information from people with direct access to the information provided, uncorroborated statements from people with that access, and finally statements from people who had heard the information secondhand. "Experts" fall into the last category for their reliability as sources of information depends on their diligence as historians.

The collected information suffers from several limitations. First, the mujahedin selected are hardly representative of the global Salafi jihad as a whole. Although the judicial system might prosecute all involved, jour-

nalists and scholars tend to focus on leaders, people they can investigate, and unusual cases. Leaders set the tone and direction for these groups, but usually are not representative of the overall membership. Lack of investigative opportunity also slants a sample because of the neglect of significant portions of a group. Little is known about the perpetrators of the November 13, 1995, bombings of the Saudi National Guard training center in Riyadh, the June 25, 1996, bombing of the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, and the Saudis involved in the September 11, 2001, atrocities because the Saudi government has not allowed independent investigation on its soil. Finally, by definition, unusual cases are not representative. For instance, the presence of members of the elite and Western converts to Islam in jihad organizations arouses interest by challenging the conventional wisdom. Their inclusion in this sample detracts from the more mundane militants. Since much of my data comes from journalists, the result is somewhat biased toward leaders and unusual cases, and tends to ignore those who cannot be investigated and downplay the rank and file.

Second, reliance on journalistic accounts is fraught with danger. There is much misinformation in the press. Information about clandestine groups is truly difficult to acquire. Many journalists do not seem to distinguish explicitly between sources who had access to the information and those who did not. For instance, many have accused the U.S. government of directly funding or even training the original global Salafi mujahedin in Afghanistan. This is based on a complete misunderstanding of the U.S. role during the war. As noted in the previous chapter, the only two people who had real access to this type of information and went public are Brigadier Yousaf, head of the Pakistani ISID Afghan Bureau, and Milton Bearden, the CIA chief of station in Islamabad at the time. They both categorically deny any direct link between the U.S. government and the early mujahedin. Indeed, al-Zawahiri's book denies it as well. Yet this has not stopped many journalists, who should know better, from continuing to make this claim.

Lack of direct access to information feeds the wildest rumors. During the Soviet-Afghan war, many journalists in Peshawar retired to the USAID guesthouse, which was the only bar in town. Between drinks, they exchanged outlandish stories, some of which found their way into print later on. When challenged on publication of a story without additional confirmation, one of them told me, "The story is too good to check." The

practice of interviewing other journalists or scholars with a similar lack of access for confirmation is no more valid. This second "source," more likely than not, has heard the same information from the same original source, leading to a false sense of confirmation and a rehash of the rumor mill.

Furthermore, journalists are born storytellers. Unfortunately, information is typically received in fragments. There is a strong tendency to fill in the gaps between facts in order to construct a better narrative, a practice that leads to many inaccuracies when the fillers assume lives of their own in later accounts. This uncomfortably disjointed nature of an evolving story may also lead to speculations, which later turn out to be erroneous. It is important to follow the developments of a story to correct original inaccuracies. For instance, Ahmed Ressam, the Millennial Bomber (more on whom in Chapter 4), had made up a story of militancy and imprisonment by Algerian authorities to support his application for political asylum when he first came to Canada to avoid deportation back to Algeria. Laidi (2002: 231-232) and Gunaratna (2002: 110), in their otherwise excellent accounts of the global jihad in Europe and around the world, uncritically repeated this tale and added various details. At his trial, Ressam admitted that he made up this story (Ressam, 2001: 537), and Bernton and colleagues (2002) convincingly refuted the political discrimination story in a comprehensive investigation of Ressam's life prior to his leaving Algeria.

Likewise, in the post-9/11 hysteria, many people were arrested and suspected of terrorism merely because of often unwitting association with known terrorists. Many Muslims share Salafi beliefs but stop far short of violence. Often journalists and law enforcement officers do not distinguish between Tablighis, peacefully preaching dawa, and mujahedin conducting violent operations. Although arrests are front-page news, there is rarely any fanfare about exoneration. More sinister was the use of this hysteria to settle personal accounts. Abderrezak Besseghir, a baggage handler at the Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, was set up as a terrorist by his inlaws as retaliation for his presumed involvement in his wife's death. False accusations of terrorism have also been used in custody disputes; in such a dispute disguised as a terror case, Hany Kiareldeen was incarcerated in New Jersey for nineteen months. No evidence of wrongdoing was ever presented, ostensibly for reasons of "national security" (Purdy, 2003). These cases underline the importance of following the developments of a story.

Third, a more pervasive problem I encountered is reliance on retrospective accounts from principals and witnesses, which are subject to the biases of self-report and flawed memory. Even when there is an attempt to provide information as factually as possible, accuracy is limited because of the reconstructive nature of human memory (Schacter, 1995, 1996, 2001). People reconstruct their experience as narratives consistent with their present beliefs, which may be at variance with the actual past. This is usually done inadvertently, due to the natural distortions of memory. Less innocent are the intentional distortions in self-presentation. Even the most racist person does not portray himself as a bigot. In gathering the data, I have not encountered any admission of pure prejudice against the West, Jews, or the United States. Mujahedin and their sympathizers' attitudes toward this trio are usually couched in terms of an unavoidable defense forced upon them by the violent exploitation of or discrimination against Muslims. These self-serving retrospective accounts contrast sharply with the transcripts of terrorists' conversations recorded secretly by the police in Milan, Hamburg, and Montreal, in which the violence of the words and the prejudices of the speakers are disturbing. These elements do not surface in retrospective accounts.

Perhaps the greatest limitation on this inquiry is the lack of a relevant control group, specifically Muslims with similar background and activities who did not participate in the jihad despite having had an opportunity to do so. Finding such a group would be extremely difficult in our present culture. Most governments have taken a punitive strategy toward people who toyed with the idea of joining the jihad. Like the Lackawanna Six, a group of Yemeni-American men suspected of belonging to an al Qaeda terror cell in western New York who were sentenced to a decade in prison, they have been prosecuted for simply undergoing training in al Qaeda camps despite the fact that they eventually decided to walk away from the jihad. In this punitive environment, it is not surprising that few people come forward and tell about their past association with the jihad. A focus on this group, however, and an understanding of how its members are systematically different from those who joined the jihad would be very relevant for countering the jihad. Although the absence of a control group means that any findings and interpretations based on the data are necessarily suggestive hypotheses, there is still a great deal to be learned from an empirical examination of the global Salafi jihad.

Profiles of the Mujahedin

What sets global Salafi mujahedin apart? On the surface, they are all Muslims who accept the Salafi interpretation of Islam. The temptation is therefore strong to blame Islam, or its Salafi variant, for this type of terrorism. But this common feature is based on the definition guiding my selection and its explanatory value is therefore tautological.

The search for common features explaining why individuals become involved in global terrorism may be divided into three general approaches. The first is that the terrorists share a common social background. The second is that terrorists share a common psychological make-up. The third is that some people became terrorists because of their particular situation at the time of recruitment. The rest of this chapter will be an empirical analysis of each of these sets of variables as a potential explanation for why people join a movement of global terrorism.

The unavoidable problem in the common features approach to the study of terrorism is what might be called the fundamental issue of specificity. Although numerous people share many of the postulated individual features or are exposed to the same social factors, very few go on to carry out terrorist acts. The inability of specific factors, singly or in combination, to distinguish future mujahedin from nonmujahedin limits our ability to make statements that are specific to terrorists. Identification of variables specific to the creation, maintenance, and demise of terrorists requires comparison with a relevant control group of nonterrorists.

Social Background

The focus on the background of the mujahedin gives us the opportunity to empirically test the popular social explanations of global terrorism. The common stereotype is that terrorism is a product of poor, desperate, naïve, single young men from third world countries, vulnerable to brainwashing and recruitment into terror. Unpacking this formula, the geographical origins of the mujahedin should be not only the third world, but some of the poorest countries of the third world. It also implies that they come from the lowest socioeconomic strata. Their naïve vulnerable dimension implies that they either are brainwashed early into hatred of the West or are relatively uneducated and susceptible to such brainwash-

ing as young adults. In this sense, they are relatively unsophisticated and local in their outlook. A broad experience of the world might be protective against the alleged brainwashing that presumably led to their conversion to terrorism. The desperation implies that either they have no occupational opportunities or these are extremely limited. They are single, for any strong family responsibility might prevent their total dedication to a cause that demands their ultimate sacrifice.

Geographical Origins

Where are the mujahedin from? Looking at the sample as a whole, about two-thirds of the 172 mujahedin in the sample come from Saudi Arabia (31), Egypt (24), France (18), Algeria (15), Morocco (14), and Indonesia (12). Parsed this way, we would be hard pressed to find a common pattern among them. Analyzing the various linkages among the terrorists, four large clusters emerged in the previous chapter on the evolution of the jihad. The first consists of the Central Staff of al Qaeda and of the global Salafi jihad movement in general. The terrorists in this cluster form the leadership of the movement. Most of them were involved in the Afghan-Soviet war and were the founding members of al Qaeda. They are not usually directly involved in operations, but inspire and approve them from afar. They provide training, some financing, and sometimes logistical support for the global Salafi jihad in general. They are also responsible for propaganda in support of the jihad. The second large cluster includes terrorists coming from Core Arab states (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Kuwait). The third cluster represents jihad members coming from North Africa, also known as the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) but also people whose families were from the Maghreb but who were born and grew up in France. The fourth cluster is Southeast Asian and consists of the members belonging to the Jemaah Islamiyah centered in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Although I define these clusters geographically, assignment to a cluster is not based solely on geographical origin. It is based on the pattern of interaction among the terrorists. For instance, four members of the Hamburg clique that was responsible for the 9/11 operation were Moroccans (Mounir al-Motassadeq, Abdelghani Mzoudi, Said Bahaji, and Zakarya Essabar). Because they interacted with other members of the Core Arab cluster and were supported by the Central Staff responsible for

this cluster, I classified them with the Core Arabs, despite the fact that three of them were born in the Maghreb. There was a lot of interaction among members of the same cluster, but almost none between them and members of different clusters. I will return to the emergence and structure of these clusters in Chapters 4 and 5.

Reorganizing the data according to the pattern of interactions, the Central Staff cluster contains 32 members; the Southeast Asian cluster, 21; the Maghreb cluster, 53; and the Core Arab cluster, 66. Each cluster has its distinctive profile, which I will develop in this chapter.

Almost two-thirds of the terrorists forming the Central Staff come from Egypt (20, or 63 percent). The rest come from Saudi Arabia (3), Kuwait (3), Jordan (2), Iraq, the Sudan, Libya, and Lebanon (1 each). The Egyptian representation at the leadership level is notable because Egyptians constitute only 14 percent of the overall sample. The Egyptians at the leadership level joined al Qaeda during its formation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They were mostly Islamist militants, imprisoned after the assassination of President Sadat (see Chapter 2). When they were released from prison, they went to Afghanistan because of continued government persecution. They were already dedicated terrorists before coming to Afghanistan as illustrated by their imprisonment for political reasons. Of the first cluster, 15 of 26 (58 percent) on whom I have data had been imprisoned prior to joining the jihad. This contrasts sharply with the other

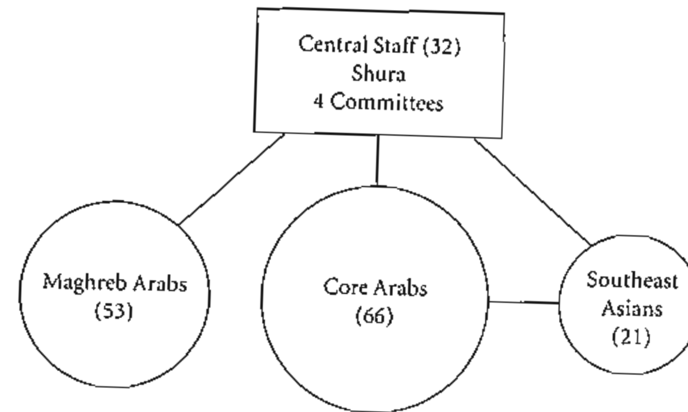

Figure 1. The Global Salafi Jihad

three clusters (only 9 of 118, or 8 percent). The Egyptian militants brought their Qutbian ideology with them and expanded it into the global Salafi jihad. They also constitute the backbone of the leadership of the global jihad, dominating in numbers and ideas the rest of the cadres of this movement, who come almost exclusively from the Core Arab world. Contrary to popular belief, the roots of the global Salafi jihad are therefore not Saudi or Afghan, but Egyptian.

Indonesians (12 of 21) dominate the Southeast Asian cluster, which also includes Muslims from neighboring states: Malaysia (3), Singapore (2), and the Philippines (2). Most of the members of the Jemaah Islamiyah were connected to two Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and Malaysia, founded by the group's leaders.

The largest clusters are from the two Arab regions. The Core Arab cluster is dominated by a large Saudi contingent (28, or 42 percent) with smaller contributions from Egypt (4), Yemen (4), Kuwait(4), Morocco (4), England (3), Pakistan (2), Syria (2), the United States (2), Canada (2), and the United Arab Emirates (2). The Maghreb Arab cluster comes from France (18), Algeria (15), Morocco (10), and Tunisia (5). Most of the French contingent consists of second-generation Frenchmen of Maghreb origin, although there are a few French converts to Islam in this group.

The global Salafi jihad has evolved over time. It originated in Egyptian Muslim militancy. The Indonesian contingent is probably the second oldest and developed during its exile in Malaysia in the 1990s. It conducted no significant terrorist operations until its return to Indonesia in 1999 after the overthrow of the Suharto regime. The two Arab clusters came later to the jihad. The Maghreb Arab cluster joined when its peaceful political aspirations were thwarted in Algeria. After an Islamist victory in the first-round legislative election in December 1991, the second round was cancelled in January 1992 to prevent an Islamist takeover of the legislative body. The Bosnian war in the early 1990s became another rallying point for joining the jihad. This war also inspired the Core Arab cluster, although that group seems to have responded more to the direct appeal of Osama bin Laden in the late 1990s.

Before leaving this topic, let us look at the countries not represented. Perhaps the biggest surprise is the lack of representation from Afghanistan, with the exception of Wali Khan Amin Shah, who was a personal friend of bin Laden and Abdul Basit Karim. Afghanistan was the site where the

jihad started and the place of training and refuge for the jihad for more than a decade. Somehow, the global mujahedin did not mix with the Afghans. This underscores the fact that the global Salafi jihad is not an Afghan phenomenon. Other countries not represented in the global jihad despite their large Muslim populations include India, Bangladesh, Turkey, and Palestine (not counting the Palestinians from the diaspora). Pakistan, the country of so many madrassas (Islamic schools), is also greatly underrepresented, with the exception of its Baluchi minority, who are generally hostile to the Punjabi majority, and expatriate Pakistanis who grew up in Britain.

Not surprising is the fact that Iranians and Shia Muslims in general are not represented at all in the global Salafi jihad. This jihad is strictly a Sunni affair run by people who consider the Shia to be heretics. This did not prevent the government of Iran from collaborating with the global jihad now and then, but their clashing ideologies prevented any formal or sustained partnership from forming.

Socioeconomic Status

The conventional wisdom is that terrorism is fueled by poverty in an asymmetrical power situation. Terrorism is the weapon of choice of the dispossessed and powerless against an all-powerful state. Although this argument arose in national liberation struggles, it has been too easily generalized in discussions of global terrorism.

I have divided my sample into upper, middle, and lower class, according to the socioeconomic status of the terrorists' families of origin. Even taking into consideration all the information available, this required sometimes crude judgments on my part.

Of the 102 people on whom I was able to gather data, 18 were upper class, 56 were middle class, and 28 were lower class (Table 1). This overall pattern hides significant differences among the various clusters. The Central Staff and Core Arab clusters are similar and skewed toward overrepresentation of the upper and middle classes. The leadership and the largest cluster of the jihad therefore come principally from the upper and middle classes. The Southeast Asian cluster is solidly middle class whereas the Maghreb Arab cluster is evenly divided between the middle and lower classes. Most of the people who came from the lower classes were

Table 1. Socioeconomic Status of Family of Origin

	Upper Class	Middle Class	Lower Class	Total
Central Staff	5	7	2	14
Southeast Asian	–	10	2	12
Maghreb Arab	–	16	15	31
Core Arab	13	23	9	45
Total	18	56	28	102

from the "excluded" second generation from the Maghreb or had emigrated from the Maghreb. The converts to Islam also came from the lower classes. But overall, about three-fourths of global Salafi mujahedin were solidly upper or middle class, refuting the argument that terrorism arises from poverty. The exception was the "excluded" Maghreb Arabs in France and half of the Western Catholic converts to Islam.

Education

A common complaint in the West, directed especially at Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, is that both countries encourage a system of education that preaches hatred of the West, and makes young people susceptible to the Salafi message of global jihad against the West. In our sample of 137 terrorists, only 23 (17 percent) had an Islamic religious primary and secondary education (Table 2). The rest went to secular schools. These schools in a country such as Saudi Arabia include a heavy dose of Islamic preaching. In most other countries, however, they are indeed secular. Half (11) of those who had an Islamic religious education were Indonesians who went to private Islamic boarding schools, specifically the two schools connected with Abu Bakar Baasyir and Abdullah Sungkar, the Pondok Ngruki in Indonesia and the Pesentren Luqmanul Hakiem in Malaysia. Half of the rest went to madrassas, because they seemed to be the only available school for poor people in their area of the world (sub-Saharan Africa and the Philippines). Again, the data refute the notion that global Salafi terrorism comes from madrassa brainwashing, with the exception of the Indonesian network. Even if we add to this subsample all the Saudis, who receive a large dose of religious teaching in their education, the total (56 or 41 percent) still does not reach a majority of the sample.

Table 2. Type of Education

	Secular	Religious	Total
Central Staff	24	3	27
Southeast Asian	8	11	19
Maghreb Arab	49	–	49
Core Arab	33	9	42
Total	114	23	137

Another argument linking education and future terrorism is that the potential terrorists were relatively ignorant and therefore susceptible to later brainwashing by a terrorist organization (Table 3). In our sample, there is information on the level of education of 132 terrorists: 22 (17 percent) did not graduate from high school; 16 (12 percent) graduated from high school only; 38 (29 percent) had some type of college education; 44 (33 percent) graduated from college; 7 (5 percent) had the equivalent of a master's degree; and 5 (4 percent) had the equivalent of a doctoral degree. Over 60 percent have had at least some college education, which makes them, as a group, more educated than the average person worldwide, and especially more educated than the vast majority of people in the third world.

From a cluster perspective, the Central Staff of the global Salafi jihad was fairly well educated—88 percent had finished college and 20 percent had doctorate degrees. The Southeast Asian cluster featured mostly people who had gone to Islamic boarding schools, namely the two schools run by Baasyir and Sungkar. Many went on to teach and preach. In the Core Arab cluster, the Saudis were the least educated. Those who went to Europe to pursue advanced studies were, of course, better educated than

Table 3. Educational Level Achieved

	Less Than High School	High School	College	B.A/B.S.	M.A.	Doctorate	Total
Central Staff	1	1	1	16	1	5	25
Southeast Asian	–	2	3	8	4	–	17
Maghreb Arab	13	8	9	6	1	–	37
Core Arab	8	5	25	14	1	–	53
Total	22	16	38	44	7	5	132

those who stayed home. The Maghreb Arabs were the least educated and most likely to have dropped out of school prematurely.

It appears that the global Salafi mujahedin were much better educated as a group than their parents. As such, they aspired to rise above their original socioeconomic background; the majority had gone to college. This refutes the image of this group as a relatively ignorant, naïve group, unsophisticated in the ways of the world. On the contrary, the data better support the opposite argument that this group is composed of truly global citizens, familiar with many countries—the West as well as the Middle East—and able to speak several languages with equal facility. This refutes the hypothesis that ethnocentrism produces terrorism. It does not mean that the global mujahedin were equally at home in the West and in their original countries, as we shall see later on. But their cosmopolitan outlook undermines the argument that ignorance of and lack of contact with the West was a precondition for terrorism. On the contrary, their world experience contrasts sharply with that of most Western students, who are not familiar at all with the Middle East and could be more aptly charged with ethnocentrism.

It might be assumed that the terrorists were drawn mostly from faculties of religious studies. This is true for the Southeast Asian cluster, as most of its members were closely tied to one of two Islamic boarding schools. But most of the other terrorists came from technical faculties such as science, engineering, or computer science, with little representation from the humanities or social sciences. Even their ideologues were not trained clerics. Qutb was a journalist, Faraj an engineer, al-Zawahiri a physician, and Mustafa Kamel (a.k.a. abu Hamza al-Masri) a civil engineer. This Muslim revivalist social movement relied on direct interpretation of the Quran and hadith, unmediated by any traditional Islamic interpretative school. This autodidact attitude toward the scriptures is encouraged by Salafi ideology, which rejects centuries of Islamic thought. The greater religiousness in technical/scientific disciplines is consistent with surveys of faith among faculty in the West (Stark and Finke, 2000).

The data on the socioeconomic and educational background of the mujahedin in this sample empirically refute the widespread notion that terrorism is a result of poverty and lack of education. On the contrary, the global Salafi mujahedin came from relatively well-to-do families and were much better educated than the average population, both in their home

countries and in the West. This middle-class, relatively well-educated background of the terrorists is consistent with studies of many other forms of terrorism, and contrary to popular conceptions. Merari's sample of PLO terrorists captured during the 1982 Lebanon War, however, came from poor refugee camps and were relatively uneducated (Merari, 1990 and 1991). This difference between the global Salafi mujahedin and Palestinian terrorists challenges the assumption that terrorists are fundamentally similar and can be lumped together for analysis (see Pape, 2003).

Faith as Youth

Contrary to the notion that the mujahedin had been brainwashed into extremist religious beliefs from childhood (the "green-diaper" baby theory), there might have been a shift in devotion to Islam from childhood to early adulthood among the individuals in the sample (Table 4). There was information on childhood faith of 117 people; of those 9 were Christians, who must be removed from the sample. Of the rest, 53 (49 percent) were described as religious children. Breaking down this sample according to clusters, as expected in terms of consistency with their early religious life, 13 of 16 global Salafi jihad Central Staff were considered religious as children. This pattern is identical to that of the Southeast Asian cluster, linked together by their attendance at two Islamic boarding schools. The Core Arab cluster showed religious devotion early, as 24 of 39 (62 percent) were described as religious. The overwhelming exception to this was of course the Maghreb Arab cluster. France is a strongly secular country, objecting even to the wearing of veils in school. Likewise, the three Maghreb Arab countries of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco have stressed secularism over Islam. It is no wonder then that only 3 of 37 (8 percent)

Table 4. Devotion As Youth

	Religious	*Secular*	*Christian*	*Total*
Central Staff	13	3	1	17
Southeast Asian	13	3	1	17
Maghreb Arab	3	34	6	43
Core Arab	24	15	1	40
Total	53	55	9	117

showed any Islamic religious devotion as youths. This strong secularism coupled with the size of this cluster skews the overall sample to reject the green-diaper baby theory. The other three clusters robustly support this theory, as 50 of 71 (70 percent) were described as religious as young men.

Occupation

The popular wisdom on terrorists suggests that they were desperate people, with little economic opportunity or without a decent occupation. In this sample, I collected occupational information on 134 people (Table 5). At the time they joined the jihad, 57 were professionals (physicians, architect, preachers, teachers), 44 had semiskilled occupations (police, military, mechanics, civil service, small business, and students), and 33 were considered unskilled. So only a quarter of the whole sample could be considered unskilled workers with few prospects before them. These unskilled terrorists were heavily concentrated in the Maghreb Arab cluster (20 out of 40) and most were involved in petty crime (false documents traffic, thefts, credit card fraud) in support of the jihad. The rest of the sample showed the same type of upward mobility found in terms of educational levels. An argument can be made that, far from being a product of falling expectations, the jihad was more a result of rising expectations among its members.

Family Status

The final social stereotype about terrorists is that they are single men, lacking any attachment to society as a whole, which allows them to perform terrorist acts without being weighed down by their responsibilities or fears of reprisals on their families.

Table 5. Occupation

	Professional	*Semiskilled*	*Unskilled*	*Total*
Central Staff	17	9	1	27
Southeast Asian	14	3	1	18
Maghreb Arab	4	16	20	40
Core Arab	22	16	11	49
Total	57	44	33	134

In the sample, marital status information was available for 114 people: 83 (73 percent) were married and 31 single, including one who was a homosexual. Again, there seems to be a cluster factor in play. Of the Central Staff and Southeast Asian clusters, all 37 terrorists in these samples were married. Most had children. The two Arab clusters also showed a married majority, but some mujahedin were still too young to be able to afford to marry.

This high rate of marriage is consistent with the tenets of Salafi Islam, which encourages its faithful to marry and have children. Most of the single men in the last two clusters were single because of age, student status, and financial inability to support a family. Those who were full-time mujahedin living with other mujahedin were encouraged to marry their comrades' sisters and daughters. Indeed, these mutual marriages sealed their religious and political relationships.

The nature of the marriages varied immensely. Although some wives helped their husbands in their mission, most of these were not marriages in the Western sense. The wife was segregated according to Salafi rites and often kept in the dark about her husband's activities. A prototypical illustration is Mira Augustina, the Indonesian wife of Omar al-Faruq. She had been at an Islamic boarding school when she got a call from her father to come home because there was someone who wanted to marry her. She arrived the next day after a twelve-hour bus ride and married al-Faruq that day. She later said that her father must have trusted her future husband completely, otherwise he would not have allowed him to marry her. She never knew that al-Faruq came from Kuwait or what he did. He left the house early in the morning and returned late. She never asked what he did all day and al-Faruq never told her (Murphy, 2003). They had two children together. He was arrested in June 2002 on his way to the mosque. She did not hear from him again and did not search for him. She later said, "When we got married, he made me promise that if he disappeared one day, I would not go looking for him. So I kept my commitment and didn't search" (Ratnesar, 2002).

This marital status profile is unique to the global Salafi jihad. Studies on other types of terrorism report that most terrorists are unmarried and

that those who are married tend to sever family ties upon embarking on a terrorist career.

Psychological Explanations

A second set of explanations for the global jihad focuses on individual factors, especially psychological explanations. Such popular explanations are based on the belief that "normal" people do not kill civilians indiscriminately. Such killing, especially when combined with suicide, is viewed as irrational, based on widespread faith in the general goodness of man. This faith is best relegated to philosophical religious debates about human nature, for it is not amenable to empirical testing. But the hypothesis that this aberrant behavior is the result of some mental abnormality or pathology can be tested. Such explanations focus on the search for some special inner attribute of terrorists that distinguishes them from normal people and explains their behavior. Many proponents of psychological explanations of terrorism are themselves mental health professionals, who know little about terrorism in general and even less about the global Salafi jihad.

Lack of empirical data is the plague of overt psychological research on terrorists and leaves this field open to wild speculations. In this section, I will stay on solid empirical ground and test some of the more fashionable psychological theories of terrorism. The detailed biographical data necessary for such testing was not available for the entire sample, therefore selective biographical fragments on some individuals will be used. I have focused on ten mujahedin on whom more biographical information is available either from court testimony or extensive investigative reporting. Arranged chronologically from the time they joined the jihad, they are Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Mahmud Abouhalima, Khaled Kelkal, Ahmed Omar Sheikh, Ahmed Ressam, Kamel Daoudi, Mohamed Atta, Ziad Jarrah, and Habib Moussaoui.

Mental Illness

The mental illness thesis provides a quick and comforting explanation for terrorism. In terms of major mental disorders, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV), the data confirm the absence of major mental disorders among the terrorists in the entire sample. One had probable mild mental retardation or borderline intellectual functioning (Stephane Ait Iddir) and two others had some form of psychotic disorder in early adulthood (Wail Mohammed al-Shehri and Othman al-Omari). This is about the incidence of these disorders in the general population.

A variant of the mental illness thesis is the argument that terrorists suffer from overvalued ideas, like people with body dysmorphic disorder, who have anorexia nervosa (McHugh, 2001). This is another way of saying that the global Salafi mujahedin are fanatic. But this is not a mental disorder, but a defining and guiding principle of their lives. Otherwise, we would have to include in the mental disorders any strong beliefs, whether they be religious, political, vocational, or recreational.

Another variant of the abnormality thesis is that terrorists are sociopaths, psychopaths (Cleckley, 1941), or people with antisocial personality disorder (DSM-IV). These terms are generally used to mean that terrorists are recidivist criminals, due to some defect of personality. By definition, the modern concept of antisocial personality disorder has its antecedents in childhood and requires the evidence of conduct disorder before the age of fifteen. Out of sixty-one people on whom I had some fragment of childhood data, only four had evidence of a conduct disorder (Amrozi, Mouloud Bouguelane, and two of the Christian converts, Richard Reid and Jose Padilla). The rest of the sample seem to have had normal childhoods without any evidence of getting into trouble with the law.

On a logical basis, although antisocial people might become *individual* terrorists, they would not do well in a terrorist *organization*. Because of their personalities, they would not get along with others or fit well in an organization, whether in the business world, the army, or a terrorist cell. They lack dedication, perseverance, and ability to sacrifice for the cause, as most spectacularly required in martyrdom. In group activities, they cannot coordinate with others and are disruptive and incapable of discipline. They are least likely to join any organization that makes great demands on them and would be weeded out early if they attempted to join. An example might be Moussaoui, who at his hearings has shown himself to be unruly. The same qualities were apparent to Riduan Isamuddin (a.k.a. Hambali) and Sufaat, his hosts in Malaysia, who asked Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to recall him. In England and the United States be-

fore his arrest, he demonstrated the same pattern of behavior. There is evidence that Mohammed and Ramzi bin al-Shibh congratulated themselves for not including him in the 9/11 plot for fear that his antics might have jeopardized the operation. The perpetrators of the hijackings on September 11 did not show the slightest sign of belligerence. They were not hostile, violent, or macho throughout their yearlong stay in the United States. Yet, when the moment came, they killed enthusiastically. Perhaps the argument can be made that in an organized operation demanding great personal sacrifice, those least likely to do any harm *individually* are best able to do so *collectively*.

A more common popular meaning of the various antisocial labels is that terrorists are simply criminals. This removes terrorism from the realm of politics to the realm of crime and law enforcement. Are terrorists just people who break the law?

About one quarter of the sample were involved in petty criminal activities, such as forgery, document trafficking, credit card fraud, and marijuana dealing. They were exclusively the Maghreb Arabs in Europe and North America who acted in logistical support of the global jihad. Some had prior petty criminal activities and joined the jihad specifically to abandon this unclean lifestyle, which was often combined with drug abuse. This was the appeal of Salafi Islam for many of the converts. However, after joining the jihad, they returned to petty crime—without the drug abuse—in support of the cause but not as a source of personal profit, which is the common criminal motive. This small-scale criminal activity is formally sanctioned by fatwas and is consistent with the notion of takfir. Therefore, it appears that terrorists are not just criminals in the usual sense; they break the law in the path of God and not for personal benefit.

One specific characteristic of terrorist activity, their suicide in the process of killing, immediately raises the possibility of mental illness. Most people can conceive of killing for a cause, as police and military are called to do. But for most, suicide is simply beyond the call of duty and therefore must be indicative of some sort of underlying pathology. Yet the type of self-sacrifice called for in the jihad, *shahada*, is the highest form of altruistic sacrifice for the cause. Like the Japanese kamikaze (Morris, 1975; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002) and the Shi'ite martyr, the Salafi shahada takes place in a specific social, historical, religious, and cultural context that re-

jects suicide but legitimizes and encourages the nobility of martyrdom. Far from being mentally ill, the global Salafi *shahid* views it as an honor to sacrifice his life for God and is viewed accordingly by his companions and friends. Even the Christian Bible recognizes the value of such sacrifice: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 16:13). The desire for martyrdom in the latest phase of the global Salafi jihad is indicated by the now common remark directed at the United States: "We love death more than you love life."

This failure of mental illness as an explanation for terrorism is consistent with three decades of research that has been unable to detect any significant pattern of mental illness in terrorists. Indeed, these studies have indicated that terrorists are surprisingly normal in terms of mental health.

Terrorist Personality

Despite the above consensus, some versions of the mental illness thesis still survive among mental health professionals, who seek an explanation for terrorism in terms of pathological personality dynamics. Such personality disorders involve an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior, including cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and impulse control elements, which deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment. At present, the most fashionable versions of this thesis stem from neo-Freudian theories (Post, 1984, 1986a, 1986b, 1990/1998). While acknowledging the lack of *major* psychopathology in terrorists and *substantially* acknowledging their normality, these sophisticated versions claim that terrorists suffer from some form of personality pathology due to childhood trauma. That is, psychological forces compel them to commit acts of violence. These arguments take three forms.

PATHOLOGICAL NARCISSISM

All versions of the personality pathology thesis confidently assert that terrorists share common personality characteristics without providing any supporting data. They are action-oriented, aggressive people, who are stimulus-hungry and seek excitement. Their common psychological defense mechanisms are "externalization" and "splitting." These last two

characteristics are often found in individuals with narcissistic personality disorder, as defined by neo-Freudian theorists like Otto Kernberg and Heinz Kohut, who argued that the characteristics are the result of childhood narcissistic wounds.

The essence of the theory is that narcissistic wounds at an early age split the self into a grandiose "me" and a hated and devalued "not me" projected onto outside specific targets, which are blamed and transformed into scapegoats. Unable to face his own inadequacies, the potential terrorist needs a target to blame and attack. Acknowledging the "paucity of data to satisfy even the minimal requirement of social scientists" and "the lack of a control group," the champion of this thesis, Jerrold Post, cites the descriptive studies of the 1970s German terrorists to show that "a great deal has gone wrong in the lives of people who are drawn to the path of terrorism," namely the loss, at an early age, of one or both parents (25 percent), severe conflicts with authorities, and frequent episodes of school and work failure (Post, 1990/1998: 28). Two types of inner dynamics might heal a fragmented identity, resolve the split, and enable the individual to be at one with himself and society. The "nationalist-separatist" terrorists are loyal to their parents, who reject the regime: they are carrying on the mission of their parents, who were wounded by the regime. The "anarchic-ideologues" are disloyal to their parents' generation, which is identified with the regime. Through terrorism, they are striking at their parents, seeking to heal their inner wounds by attacking the outside enemy. Post's followers (Pearlstein, 1991; Gilmartin, 1996; Volkan, 1997; Akhtar, 1999) are mental health professionals with little experience with terrorism. Their speculations about childhood victimization leading to "pathological" or "malignant" narcissism (or pathological anger or rage) and terrorism lack Post's careful statements about the absence of empirical evidence for this theory.

Post's twin dynamics of disloyalty to parents or the state fails, however, to explain the global Salafi jihad. By definition, this jihad is not directed at the state (near enemy) where the mujahedin grew up but at the United States or the West (far enemy). So they could not avenge their parents against their native state or strike out against their parents in the symbol of their native state. The West or the United States did not "wound" their parents in the "nationalistic-separatist" logic, and their parents are often

hostile to the West rather than identifying with it, in the "anarchic-ideologue" logic. The logic of the global Salafi jihad is altogether different.

I was able to gather some short descriptions of the childhoods of sixty-nine mujahedin. The vast majority were positive or neutral labels; shy, introverted, serious, quiet, bright, excellent student, loner, pleasant, easygoing, happy, gentle were recurrent descriptors. They were not indicative of any antecedents of a narcissistic personality disorder. On the contrary, the data suggest that these were good kids who liked to go to school and were often overprotected by their parents. It seems that the loners slightly outnumbered the outgoing children.

Searching childhood information on sixty-one people, I found no evidence of "childhood trauma" described by self, friends, or relatives. Of course, psychological trauma and humiliation might not leave any outside trace that could be noticed by family or friends. But if the trauma was significant, someone was likely to have known about it. There were three whose fathers died before they were ten, two who lost their fathers as adolescents, and one whose father suffered a debilitating stroke when he was ten. In terms of family integrity, six witnessed a divorce or final separation of their parents when they were young. One of them suffered the double misfortune of the father leaving the family to its own means and the mother developing polio. Two others were abandoned by their parents and grew up in foster care; they both had troubled childhoods (Bouguelane and Richard Reid). A few had fathers working abroad while their mothers stayed in their original countries with their own families. Two suffered physical abuse by their fathers. In terms of personal hardship, one became blind as an infant; another had a right-hand birth defect; a third had an ulcer as an adolescent requiring convalescence away from home.

As a group, they had surprisingly little personal trauma in their lives, given their origin (third world with higher mortality rate than the Western world or excluded segment of the Western world). Another form of collective experience that might be construed as a "trauma" leading to long-term resentment is the humiliation of discrimination experienced while growing up in a foreign country. Out of 158 people, 43 (27 percent) grew up in a country as refugees, second generation, or "guest workers." The vast majority of these were sons of Maghreb Arabs in France, Pales-

tinians in the Middle East, and Pakistanis in Kuwait or England. But even in these cases, their hostility should have been directed to the host country rather than the United States or the West in general, according to the pathological narcissism theory.

In terms of the ten more detailed biographies, there is no evidence of pathological narcissism. If anyone had it, it should have been the leader, Osama bin Laden. Yet, one of the most attractive features about him is specifically his lack of narcissism, his humility, which impresses his followers and admirers—especially because he had the means to live luxuriously and chose to give up that lifestyle to live simply, among his mujahedin. His statements are also self-deprecating rather than grandiose. The only trauma in his childhood is the fact that his father died when he was around ten. Otherwise, he lived the privileged life of a prince. Although al-Zawahiri does not share bin Laden's humility, there is no evidence of trauma in his childhood. He does not mention any in his autobiography (al-Zawahiri, 2001). Abouhalima mentioned no childhood trauma in his interviews with the press and researchers. Kelkal also suffered no trauma in his childhood, which he described as happy. His first possible trauma was his arrest at the age of nineteen, too late to cause the type of narcissistic wound described by Kernberg and Kohut. Ahmed Omar Sheikh had a rather idyllic childhood in prestigious private schools. His interest in politics came at the age of nineteen. Ressam's childhood did not include any trauma, except for the development of a stomach ulcer at the age of sixteen, for which he traveled to Paris and convalesced alone for a few months. He was not yet political when he left Algeria at the age of twenty-five in search of a decent job. Kamel Daoudi did suffer at the hands of his father, who beat him with a wooden paddle when he got poor grades. Fortunately for him, he was an excellent student, who was described as the very model of integration in school. His rebellion came in early adulthood after a relatively apolitical and normal childhood. Mohamed Atta suffered no childhood trauma. If anything, he was overprotected by his mother. Ziad Jarrah was a very happy child without any hint of trauma.

Habib Zacarias Moussaoui may be the only one with a traumatized childhood. His father physically abused his family, but not the boys. His mother left her husband when Moussaoui was four and put him in an orphanage for a year. When he was twelve, they moved to the south of France, where finances were tight for two or three years. Moussaoui, however,

seemed to have weathered the storm well, was a popular child, and dated a blonde girl. He liked to party, but reported some racism at school. He did well until he moved to London in his early twenties. There he grew more distant from his family and friends and got involved with a Salafi crowd.

Unlike many political organizations, Salafi groups are careful to avoid a cult of personality, for they believe that everything belongs to God. Indeed, they take seriously the notion of Islam as submission, and this is not compatible with a narcissistic cult of personality, which often degenerates into a pyramidal organization, with all the controls lying with the leader. Al Qaeda's structure is quite opposite, with a large degree of local autonomy and initiative.

A variant of the childhood trauma thesis is the argument that early exposure to terrorism can lead to the development of terrorism in the adult. This variant may or may not be combined with the notion of relative deprivation. The sample does not support this thesis. While such an argument can be advanced for regions with intractable conflicts and refugee camps, such as Palestine, it is not relevant for the global jihad. These terrorists were not exposed to terrorism as young people, and they came from relatively well-off social backgrounds on the average.

PARANOIA

A second variant of the personality pathology thesis reformulates the above dynamics to claim that terrorists suffer from paranoid personality disorder, defined according to the DSM-IV. Specifically, they exhibit a pervasive distrust and suspicion of others such that their motives are interpreted as malevolent (Robins and Post, 1997). But this clinical definition is quickly watered down to include a broader definition of a personality style and outlook characterized by guardedness, suspiciousness, hypersensitivity, isolation, and especially the defense mechanism of projection. They warned that they would use these terms interchangeably (5). The DSM-IV atheoretical perspective is further left behind in a flurry of theoretical speculation.

The core dynamic of the paranoid personality is surprisingly similar to that of malignant narcissism. Ideas of persecution and grandeur are a shield against uncomfortable feelings of depletion, inadequacy, shame, and vulnerability. The dynamic consists of a triad of insatiable narcissis-

tic entitlement, inevitably leading to disappointment, disillusionment, and frustration when the narcissistic needs are not satisfied, and producing narcissistic rage due to the rejection of the entitlement and a sense of betrayal. This rage is projected onto scapegoats—hence the need to have enemies (Volkan, 1994)—and results in violence. This is the core of the "psychopolitics of hatred" (Robins and Post, 1997). The origin of this dynamic is the "paranoid-schizoid position," a phase of normal childhood development as postulated by Melanie Klein. This primitive psychological state is characterized by a split between the idealized good, pleasurable, loving object (the good mother) and the bad, uncomfortable, persecuting object (the bad mother). Indeed, these theorists consider religious concepts of God and the devil as projected representation of these early fantasy objects. In this stage, a child's distress concerning the aggressive hatred within himself is relieved by splitting off and projecting the bad part (the internal persecutor) outward onto others and retaining the good parts inside, idealizing them. Paranoid people never mature beyond this stage or they revert to it under stress, channeling aggression to the scapegoat.

Group paranoia is viewed simply as a manifestation of the leader's pathology. The followers suffer from a deprecation of their blemished personalities and demonstrate a readiness to hate, to imitate, to uncritically believe, and to attempt the impossible. Religious ideology provides a rationale for followers who yearn for a calling, a group to join, a leader to follow, in order to flee from the self (Robins and Post, 1997: 100). Their sense of self rests upon the integrity of their belief system, which protects them against painful psychological disintegration. From this perspective, their actions are defensive aggression against an enemy challenging their belief systems, which thereby threatens their psychological integrity. But it is not the beliefs that generate the passion of their striking out. These beliefs are like a container for powerful dangerous feelings. Attacks upon such beliefs threaten to break this container and overwhelm the follower with these feelings. Such attacks therefore provoke a passionate, often violent response.

This account, which depends on mysterious internal forces that cannot be formally surveyed, is of course not refutable. None of the ten biographies of mujahedin made any mention of a painful split self, using violence as a form of self-healing. The deprecation of religion implied in

this account would greatly offend any subject in the sample, and not for the reasons suggested in the account.

Every religious or political ideology provides a way to interpret the world. It is easy to label any such interpretation a conspiracy. Demonstrations that many political and religious movements contained elements of a conspiracy theory are trivial and not analytically useful. What needs to be shown is that the leaders and followers in these movements either suffer from paranoid personality disorder or paranoid dynamic triad, rooted in arrested psychological development at the "paranoid-schizoid" position. Granted, such a demonstration would be difficult without access to "inner" data, but until then, this thesis remains a speculation not backed by any empirical evidence.

In the larger sample under study, I did not detect a pattern of paranoid personality disorder or lifestyle before joining the jihad. The nature of a clandestine organization implies some concern with security and secrecy for mere survival. This is realistic, not paranoid. Any politically violent group, whatever its ideology, would also demonize its opponent and stockpile weapons for the fight. This again is in the nature of the organization and does not imply paranoia. The only meaningful way to detect clinical or lifestyle paranoia in terrorists is to look at their psychological adjustment before they joined the jihad. Since this adjustment is by definition of long duration with roots in adolescence, this personality trait or disorder must have preceded joining the jihad.

In the ten detailed biographies, only al-Zawahiri's history gives some hint of paranoia preceding his joining the jihad. He formed his own clandestine group with his friends and brother during adolescence, more than twenty years before founding al Qaeda. While he exhibited some of the behaviors delineated in the preceding paragraph, it is difficult to know whether to attribute them to his innate personality or to the necessity of surviving in a hostile environment. Unlike bin Laden's leadership style, however, which was to promote cooperation among disparate terrorist groups and discourage internal Islamist rivalries, al-Zawahiri's style in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad was far more confrontational and led to many splits and challenges. Leaders of al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah never resorted to frequent purging of the inner circle, a symptom of paranoia according to the above thesis (Post, Ruby and Shaw, 2002a and 2002b). Indeed, infighting among Muslims (*fitna*) is a great sin and specifically

proscribed by the Quran. Such infighting is a source of discomfort among many mujahedin, who prefer to strike at the true infidel.

One would be hard pressed to find elements of paranoia in the pre-Afghanistan bin Laden. Abouhalima, Sheikh, Ressam, Jarrah, and Moussaoui were happy young men, devoid of any hints of paranoia. Daoudi and Atta were introverts who did not seem paranoid. Kelkal was embittered by his imprisonment due to being caught in a stolen car, but he did not seem paranoid before his conversion to terrorism.

AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

A more recent publication (Post, Ruby, and Shaw, 2002a and 2002b) tried to revive the Authoritarian Personality project of the 1950s (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950). This thesis postulated that punitive child raising results in a personality style characterized by conformity, submission to authority, and aggression toward outsiders. In the ten mujahedin biographies, harsh child raising is present in only two cases. For the majority, it seems that the opposite might be true; the children were overprotected in very caring families with often doting parents, as illustrated by bin Laden, Sheikh, Atta, and Jarrah.

The revived Authoritarian Personality formulation results in a series of propositions characterizing charismatic leader-follower relationships. It postulates that the group uncritically follows the leader's directives and that the leader has a history of violence. Neither is true of the global Salafi jihad, which prominently features local initiative and decentralized decision-making. Bin Laden had no history of violence before joining the jihad.

Authoritarianism is contrary to the tenets of Salafism, which preaches that only God is superior to men, who should relate to each other as equals. Qutb stressed that all authority belongs to God. Intentionally or not, the leadership style in al Qaeda is not an authoritarian one. There is no consolidation of decision-making in its leader. Its structure is not hierarchical or modeled after a military organization, and there has been no split as a result of leadership decisions. All these factors are assumed to have high relevance in predicting terrorism. They do not apply to the global Salafi jihad, which is characterized by decentralization in decision-making, a horizontal fluid structure, and a surprising absence of periodic purges of leadership that are so common in other terrorist organizations.

The main problem with the personality pathology explanation of terrorism is the lack of relevant data. The hypothesis is based on outdated theories, which did not survive the empirical scrutiny of psychiatric concepts following the publication of the DSM-III in 1980 and are no longer relevant to psychiatric or psychological research and practice. All of these core concepts predate this empirical revolution in the field. The survival of such now quaint theories might be due to the insularity of this research, which is sheltered from peer scrutiny and criticism. When these Freudian or neo-Freudian arguments are published in the terrorism literature, political scientists do not believe they have the expertise to challenge them. When they are published in the psychological literature, the references to mysterious "secret" data supporting these theories intimidate psychologists.

The personality pathology thesis suffers from the fundamental problem of specificity. Concepts are stretched to be all-inclusive and lose their analytic usefulness. Such accounts become post-hoc stories that have no practical value. Conspiracy theories are a ubiquitous feature of human life, not particularly indicative of mental pathology and definitely not specific to terrorists. Experts on terrorism have tried in vain for three decades to identify a common predisposition for terrorism. The most extensive research projects focused on former German and Italian terrorists from the 1970s. These studies concluded that there was no psychological profile for terrorism. In addition, recent comprehensive reviews of the evidentiary basis of this thesis have found it to be completely unfounded (Silke, 1998; Horgan, 2003). The personality pathology thesis is not relevant to the global Salafi jihad.

Circumstances of Joining the Jihad

These social and psychological approaches to terrorism neglect the social context around the decision to join the jihad. Joining the jihad is actually a process and not a single decision. The formal induction into al Qaeda often took place in Afghanistan, when the novice pledged *baya*, a formal oath of loyalty, to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. That there are no captured records of who joined and who did not presents a problem for this study. "Joining the jihad" is understood here as the decision to go

somewhere for training, whether Afghanistan (the most common destination), Bosnia, the Philippines, Malaysia, or Indonesia. Formal recruitment took place at these training sites. It is important to note that not everyone who participated in the training joined the jihad. Indeed, only a minority of the trainees, perhaps 10 to 30 percent, were invited to join.

Age

Some analysts claim that terrorists join as immature naïve young men, vulnerable to indoctrination (Merari, 1990 and 1991). In my sample, the average age for joining the jihad was 25.69 years. In terms of clusters, the Southeast Asians were older as a rule and averaged 29.35 years. Much of the leadership of the Jemaah Islamiyah had been exiled to Malaysia in the 1980s and constituted the core of mujahedin who were still directly involved in operations. The Central Staff cluster, however, was also older than the average at 27.9 years. The two Arab clusters were younger, with the Core Arab being the youngest of all (23.75 years). This last group's average age might be lowered by the 9/11 group from Saudi Arabia, who tended to be younger and had joined the jihad a few months before the operation.

The above does not support the immaturity thesis. Most people joined the jihad well past adolescence when they were responsible young men in their mid-twenties and should have been able to resist any mysterious brainwashing.

Place of Recruitment

Out of 165 mujahedin on whom there is information, 115 (70 percent) joined the jihad in a country where they had not grown up. They were expatriates—students, workers, refugees, fighters (in the jihad against the Soviets)—away from home and family. Another 14 were second generation in France, Britain, and the United States, where they might have felt a strong pull for the country of their parents and not been completely embedded in the host society. In France, they were part of the "excluded" generation. Therefore, a remarkable 78 percent were cut off from their cultural and social origins, far from their families and friends. The remaining 36 (22 percent) included Saudis who participated in the 9/11 attacks and

the May 2003 Riyadh bombings, and Moroccans who were too poor to travel anywhere and were involved in May 2003 Casablanca bombings.

For the Central Staff, the most common place where the conversion to the global jihad took place was the Sudan. For later cohorts, with the exceptions of the Saudis from the 9/11 group and the the majority of Southeast Asians, conversions to the global jihad took place in the West, mostly in France, Germany, and England. The Indonesians had joined the global jihad in Malaysia, where the eventual leadership of the Jemaah Islamiyah had been exiled.

Faith

There was a definite shift in degree of devotion to Islam in adulthood by the mujahedin, preceding their recruitment into the jihad. This is not surprising given the fact that the global Salafi jihad is a Muslim revivalist organization. Of the 155 mujahedin on whom I could find relevant information, all but one were considerably more devout right before joining the jihad than they had been as children. More than 99 percent were very religious at that time, often donning Afghan, Pakistani, or traditional Arabic garb and growing beards, as opposed to the 49 percent who were devout as children. The largest shift was in the Maghreb Arab cluster, which went from 8 percent to 100 percent in terms of their commitment to Islam. This new faith was the Salafi version of Islam for 97 percent of the terrorists.

Lonely people look for companionship. In an expatriate community, especially in an unwelcoming non-Muslim Western country, the most available source for companionship with people of similar background is the mosque. Disillusioned with the society that excluded them and the empty promises of the Left in France, second-generation or expatriate Maghreb Arabs went to the mosque and met new friends. Islam was a way to restore their dignity, gain a sense of spiritual calling, and promote their values.

We should be careful not to ascribe a causal relationship to this increased devotion on the part of future mujahedin. This shift in faith may very well be a reflection of a more general process of engagement in the jihad. In this case, it would be more indicative of an effect rather than a cause of this process. At this point, the evidence is still descriptive and

does not yet justify conclusions about the contribution of this increased faith to the process of joining the global jihad.

Much has been made in the media of some of the behavior of the September 11 hijackers that seems to be inconsistent with their devotion. The behaviors referred to include going out to some topless bars in Las Vegas and Florida, drinking alcohol, and even hiring an escort service, right before the 9/11 operation. This evidence does not disprove their devotion. First, one can be a sinner and still be devout. Second, as entry to paradise is guaranteed to martyrs, there is little cost to sinning one last time. Third, these were not serious violations of the central tenets of Islam. From the accounts I read, I have no doubts that the mujahedin were sincerely devout Salafists. However, this behavior might have a more ominous meaning, namely the impending immediacy of an operation, and be a cause for alarm for authorities.

Employment

Although most of the mujahedin had strong occupational skills (see above), few were employed full-time. The members of the Central Staff cluster were full-time fighters in the jihad against the Soviets at the time they decided to join the global jihad. They remained full-time mujahedin. The Southeast Asians taught at their Islamic boarding school in Malaysia while waiting for the jihad to unfold in Indonesia. The Maghreb Arabs were likely to be either students or unemployed, involved in petty crimes and living on welfare (32 of 46, or 70 percent). The Core Arabs were either students at home or involved in full-time terrorist activities abroad (30 of 55, or 55 percent), and few had full-time jobs. The discrepancy between their actual jobs and their capability is best illustrated by Wadih el-Hage. When he returned to the United States from fighting in the jihad against the Soviets, he found only two part-time marginal jobs, in a fast-food restaurant and as a janitor for the city. He later joined the global jihad by becoming the personal secretary to Osama bin Laden, which was the equivalent of a vice president for corporate development in a large corporation. His job included a large office and controlling access to his boss, with frequent travel and great responsibilities (Swartz, 2002).

Relative Deprivation

The mujahedin's lack of full-time jobs integrating them into their communities compounded their loneliness while away from home. This underemployment must have been a definite grievance and a source of frustration in these generally gifted individuals. This supports the relative deprivation thesis of the origin of terrorism (Gurr, 1970). These were, however, temporary circumstances leading to their joining the jihad, rather than structural relative deprivation in their original backgrounds. These individuals had rising expectations compared to their families of origin.

The relative deprivation thesis should not be limited to the material dimension of life. Just before embarking on the process of joining, the future mujahedin suffered from social isolation, spiritual emptiness (the impetus for their increase in devotion), and underemployment. But the relative deprivation thesis also runs into the fundamental problem of specificity. Many people are underemployed, but very few of them become terrorists. Relative deprivation would certainly increase the pool of potential mujahedin, but cannot by itself explain the association with the jihad.

Although relative deprivation (perhaps in the context of rising expectation) is not specific to terrorism, it is probably a necessary condition. People who are satisfied with life are unlikely to join a religious revivalist terrorist movement. They will continue to do what they are doing and not subject themselves to the upfront costs, social sanctions, and sacrifices involved in such a movement.

As a gloss, the immediate circumstances leading to their joining the jihad might be supportive of the frustration-aggression hypothesis. This proposed that frustration leads to aggression and aggression is the result of frustration. Again, the validity of this apparent truism depends on how frustration and aggression are defined. Further, this hypothesis is not helpful in prediction of terrorism. Many people have frustration and very few become terrorists. Its value is questionable for it consists of post hoc accounts rather than prospective ones. A variant of this hypothesis is that frustration results in rage, which leads to aggression. Although this might fit our preconception of terrorism, and it was widely broadcast in the news accounts of the 9/11 attacks, there is little evidence to indicate that glob-

al Salafi mujahedin were consumed with rage. Certainly the instructions for the preparation and the execution of the attacks left behind by al-Omari (and wrongly attributed to Atta in the media) do not mention anger or rage directed at the targets.

The frustration-aggression hypothesis not only suffers from vagueness; it also implies a certain reflexive element: aggression inevitably follows frustration. The global jihad operations are long premeditated and often well planned, as demonstrated by the 9/11 attacks, which were planned over two and a half years. The 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in East Africa took about five years to plan. This was no reflex action. This practice of long and deliberate planning seems to undermine the frustration-aggression hypothesis. How long does the frustration last? Does it ever fade away? This long duration is not consistent with the known flexibility of people's emotions, which can change quickly. A general state of frustration may eventually lead to aggression, but any nonreflexive aggression is difficult to specifically explain in terms of frustration.

Conclusion

This chapter empirically tested some of the traditional theories of terrorist behavior, namely social, psychological, and situational. The findings seem to reject much of the conventional wisdom about terrorists.

Members of the global Salafi jihad were generally middle-class, educated young men from caring and religious families, who grew up with strong positive values of religion, spirituality, and concern for their communities. There were four general patterns detected. The Central Staff consisted of Islamist militants who met and bonded together during the Soviet-Afghan war and went on to become full-time terrorists. The Southeast Asians, who went on to become members of Jemaah Islamiyah, were mostly the disciples of the two leaders of this organization. The Maghreb Arabs, either first- or second-generation in France, grew up feeling excluded from French society and were generally not religious as young people. They were still upwardly mobile compared to their parents, but in the process of moving up became isolated and sought friendships in local mosques. The Core Arabs, who grew up in core Arab lands, came from a communal society and belonged to one of the most communal of all religions. They were isolated when they moved away from their families and friends and became particularly lonely and emotionally alienated in this new individualistic environment. The lack of spiritualism in a utilitarian culture was keenly felt. Underemployed and discriminated against by the local society, they felt a personal sense of grievance and humiliation. They sought a cause that would give them emotional relief, social community, spiritual comfort, and cause for self-sacrifice. Although they did not start out particularly religious, there was a shift in their devotion before they joined the global jihad, which gave them both a cause and comrades.

Although nothing in the data challenges the rational actor theory, I will postpone a discussion of it to Chapter 5. In terms of the social explanations, the members studied did not come from poor backgrounds leading to grievances against the West. Their education was modern (except for the Indonesians) and they were not "brainwashed" into fanaticism through a madrassa education. Most became more devout before joining the jihad. Contrary to most writing on terrorists, the large majority of the individuals examined were married and most had children. Yet they were willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause. Except for the Western converts and the Maghreb Arabs, who indulged in petty crime, there is no evidence that the terrorists were hardened criminals.

In terms of psychological explanations for their participation, they did not seem to display any psychiatric pathology. There was no pattern of emotional trauma in their past nor was there any evidence of any pathological hatred or paranoia when the facts are analyzed. This "pathological hatred" much talked about in the press cannot be found in the accounts studied. From all the evidence, many participants joined in search of a larger cause worthy of sacrifice.

In terms of social psychology, the frustration-aggression hypothesis is so vague that it cannot be completely tested or refuted. Judging from their backgrounds, the members did not suffer from long-term relative deprivation or from pathological prejudice. Most were from very well-to-do backgrounds and led lives more consistent with rising expectations than relative deprivation. The Core Arabs were so well-off that their families sent them to study abroad, where their radicalization began. In their host countries, they were alienated, underemployed, and perhaps discriminated against, and therefore in a situation of relative deprivation.

In terms of generating a common profile of the global Salafi mujahed, there are as many profiles as they are clusters of mujahedin. The Southeast Asians are different from the Core Arabs, who are distinct from the Maghreb Arabs. The leaders of the movement, organized in the Central Staff, are unlike their followers. Nevertheless, there are patterns.

Just before they joined the jihad, the prospective mujahedin were socially and spiritually alienated and probably in some form of distress. They would not have been the best candidates to form a tightly cohesive group, whose members were willing to perform the ultimate sacrifice in the name of what the group stood for. Yet, this is exactly what happened. This transformation from isolated individuals to a community of fanatics is the subject of the next chapter.

FOUR

Joining the Jihad

BECAUSE ANY attempt to find a common social factor or personality predisposition for terrorism runs into the fundamental problem of specificity, profiles based on such personal characteristics as age, sex, national origin, religion, education, and socioeconomic background are of very little value in identifying true terrorists. In the case of global Salafi mujahedin, however, there is one common element that is specific to them and to no one else, and that is the fact that they have made a link to the jihad. These links are key to the dynamics of terror networks. To further our understanding of these networks, it is critical to understand how these links are formed. How does one go about joining the global Salafi jihad? To explore this question, let us examine the case histories of two terrorist cells, the plotters of the unsuccessful millennial bombing of the Los Angeles airport and the Hamburg cell responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

The U.S. Millennial Plot

Ahmed Ressam was born on May 9, 1967, at Bou Islamil, Algeria. His father, Belkacem Ressam, a hero from the Algerian War of Liberation, owned a coffee shop and a six-bedroom house. He was a devout Muslim but did not demand that his family follow his practice, and his children were not religious. Ahmed, the oldest child, was a shy, skinny boy and a decent student. At sixteen, he developed a stomach ulcer and went to Paris for a lengthy course of treatment. This set him back in his studies, and he failed