

Why some Muslims become Radicals
An Amsterdam case study

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1. Introduction

Since the events of 9/11 Muslim radicalism and terrorism is one of the major political concerns in the world. The 2004 train bombings in Madrid, the murdering of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in the same year and the 2005 terrorist attacks in London have increased the sensitivity of Western publics and authorities towards radicalization processes within Muslim communities.

In this paper we present data collected in the city of Amsterdam. After the murder on Theo van Gogh the Amsterdam municipal government launched a policy program to increase social cohesion in the city and to fight radicalization processes within the Amsterdam Muslim community. Part of this policy program was the organization of an extensive study on radical Islamic discourse in the city and determinants of radicalization processes (Slootman and Tillie 2006). This paper presents some of the main results of this study. Our study combines the results of a participant observation study of 4 months in a group of 12 radical Muslims (so-called *salafi jihadi's*) with the results of a survey among a representative sample of the Amsterdam (Muslim) population. To our knowledge this is a unique combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to study radicalization processes within local Muslim communities. The results are presented as follows. In section 2 we will discuss, using known literature and in-depth interviews, radical Muslim discourses and formulate their most important characteristics. We will argue that a combination of two dimensions determines the receptivity to radicalization processes: a *political* dimension (perceiving the position of Islam as threatened plus a willing to act on this issue) and a *religious* dimension (having orthodox religious worldviews). In section 3 we present data on the presence of receptivity to radicalism among Amsterdam Muslims. Section 4 studies variables, which determine high scores on the combination of the political and religious dimension. This enables us to identify the main determinants of radicalization processes. Section 5 presents our conclusions.

2. Previous research on Muslim radicalism

There are surprisingly few empirical studies on Islamic radicalism with one important exception: the study by Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Joachim Mueller and Helmut Schroeder, *Verlockender Fundamentalismus (Luring fundamentalism)*, published in 1997. {Heitmeyer, 1997 #460} They have, in 1995, interviewed 1221 Turkish high school students (from Allgemein- und berufsbildenden Schulklassen, p. 45), aging from 15 to 21 years. The survey

was undertaken in Nordrheinland-Westphalen. The schools were selected in some large cities (Koeln, Dortmund), in smaller towns (Bielefeld and Hamm) and in rural areas. The authors claim a high level of representativity. Nearly three quarters of the respondent was between 15 and 17 years old. 78 per cent of the respondents was born in Germany, but 94 per cent of the respondents still had the Turkish nationality. Nearly 60 per cent claimed to be Sunnite, while 13 per cent claimed an Alavite identity.

As a process, fundamentalism is defined as ‘the transformation of the Islamic religion into a *political ideology*’ (Heitmeyer et al. 1997, p. 30) Ideology, in turn, is conceived here as the result of an intellectual exercise that twists reality to monopolize the interpretation of the world. In its content fundamentalism is conceived in terms of a power struggle against enlightenment. Thus the longing of religious people for a transcendental meaning of life is transformed into a closed world view. The purpose of fundamentalism is to incorporate all Muslims into a Islamic community, in which the sharia is the anchor point.

We do not fully agree with the authors’ concept of ideology because it assumes a reality that is initially ‘untwisted’ and which is only twisted by ideologists. In our opinion there is no such thing as an ‘untwisted’ reality. What is specific of an ideology, is that it combines a coherent and systematic interpretation of reality, which we call a (religious) doctrine, with a mythical ontology which in the case of Muslim fundamentalism takes the form of religious transcendentalism (see Fennema 1997). Yet the conception of fundamentalism of Heitmeyer et al. are well taken.

In their survey Heitmeyer et al. have undertaken a series of items, which refer to religious orthodoxies. These items can be categorized according to four aspects: (1) the universal validity of Islam; (2) the need to live according to the rules and regulations set forth in the Koran; (3) the superiority of Islam over other religions and (4) the need and duty to propagate the Islam in Germany. Some fifty percent of the Turkish Muslims that were interviewed supported the first three aspects, but the tendency to proselyte was somewhat lower: 36 percent of the young Muslims expressed the opinion that they were ordained to spread their faith among the Germans.

Heitmeyer and his team also tried to measure the feelings of being threatened. Forty per cent of the respondents saw Zionism, the European Union and the USA as a threat to Islam, and sixty per cent thought that the war in Bosnia showed that the West wants to oppress Muslims (p.124).

We would argue that as Heitmeyer et al. define fundamentalism theoretically as a political ideology, the feeling of being threatened *as a group* should indeed enter into the operationalisation of the concept. Hence it is indeed a good idea to see fundamentalism as a combination of orthodoxy, proselytism and the feeling of being threatened.

Heitmeyer et al. also measured the propensity to use violence. They distinguish between propensity to use violence that is motivated by individual religiosity (religious fanatics), by political identity and by political instrumentalism (p. 145). However, the authors admit that there are no quantitative results to substantiate this distinction. From their survey results one may conclude that 36 per cent of the respondents is willing to use violence against non-believers, if that would benefit the Islamic Community. 27 per cent is willing to use violence to spread the Islamic faith. 23 per cent of the respondents said they were willing to kill somebody who actively fights against Islam. The number of respondents that is willing to use violence to defend Turkey or the national honor of Turkey is even higher. We see here that Heitmeyer and associates are not fully consistent in the theoretical model, because the concept of Turkishness is nowhere linked to the concept of fundamentalism and yet it is assumed that those youngsters that are willing to use violence to defend the honor of Turkey are somehow touched by fundamentalism.

These figures are so high that we may safely assume that there was in 1995 a high propensity among young Muslims in Germany to use violence for religious or political purposes.

In our own theoretical approach we will not use the term fundamentalism, but prefer the word radicalism to refer to a political ideology that is opposed to the mainstream political thought and tendentially also opposes the democratic system of governance. The religious aspect of Muslim radicalism is referred to as Muslim fundamentalism.

2. Radical Muslim discourse

Before we discuss the most important characteristics of the discourse of Muslim radicalism, we relate this discourse to the broader political-religious tradition of Islam. Here we follow to a large extent the work of Frank Buijs, Froukje Demant and Atef Hamdy (Buijs, Demant et al. 2006). Within Islamic faith four religious worldviews can be distinguished: conservatism; pragmatism; modernism and fundamentalism. According to the conservative Muslims, Islam brings an encompassing message to mankind in which all essential questions are answered. Already in the early days of the Islam all important religious rules were formulated and

modernization is thus not necessary. Watt describes the main characteristics of *Islamic conservatism* as follows (Watt 1988):

- Conservatism presupposes a non-changing static world. Islam is rooted in reason and human nature does not change, therefore no new problems arise. There is no need for social change and no need for reformulating the *sharia*, the by God inspired laws that serve as compass in daily life. A non-changing world is as well a goal as a fact of life.
- Islam is the ultimate religion that answers all religious and moral questions until the end of days.
- The Koran contains the words of Allah, revealed to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel. Allah is of all times independent of cultural influences. His words are to be taken literally and do not need any historical interpretation. Conservatives intensely distrust any ‘outside’ influence on the Islam.
- The world is separated in *dar al-islam* (areas where Islamic leaders rule, the *sharia* is implemented and Muslims can practice their religion) and *dar al-harb* (areas where non-Islamic leaders rule.) Between the two areas there exists an unavoidable tension that will resolve in favor of the *dar al-islam*.
- The starting period of Islam, led by Mohammed and, later, the four Caliphs, is seen as the most ideal society to which mankind should commit itself.

Pragmatism is a long tradition within Islam, especially because of many experiences with worldly leaders who wanted to ‘use’ Islam as a tool in their power politics. It developed especially as a reaction to Western colonialism where the main strategy was to accommodate to existing power structures. “If we can’t beat them and if we do not want to join them, we have to learn from them” became the most important rule of Islamic pragmatists. Pragmatism conflicts with radicalism for the latter wanted to adjust the world to their religious principles (Brown 2000). Despite this conflict, pragmatism is still very influential and is in the present Western world the most common reaction of Muslims in non-Muslim countries (Shadid and Koningsveld 1996).

Modernism or *liberalism* consists of only a small segment of the Islamic community. Modernists defend an ongoing reinterpretation of the moral ideal. They defend the moral independence of man and his ability to develop his own individual moral knowledge. Moral autonomy creates the possibility of a radical reinterpretation of the rules of the Koran and the

Sunnah. The Koran should not be read literally. Modernism can result in secularism if the outcome of the reinterpretation is the abandonment of Islamic rules.

In the *fundamentalist* view, present-day Islam is seen as a threatened religion in a spasmodic and modernizing world. As a reaction to this thread, fundamentalists strive for a revival of the ‘golden age’ of Islam; implementation of the Islamic laws and submission of the individual to an orthodox interpretation of the Islamic moral system. Fundamentalists resist reinterpretation or change of the moral ideal, because man is always subjective and reinterpretation will always reflect self-interest. They agree with the conservatives that the period of the Prophet and the four Caliphs reflected an ideal world. But contrary to the conservatives they feel that the present day situation is far removed from this moral ideal. In the fundamentalist view Islamic rulers fail to implement Islamic laws. This threatens the very existence of the Islamic community. Muslims have to search for new ways to fight this thread. In this sense fundamentalism is *innovative* traditionalism (Buijs, Demant et al. 2006, p.37). There is something inherently unstable in the fundamentalist worldview, because to be conservative implies a will to conserve, while the revolutionary fervor implies an innovative moment. We find here a contradiction that has been found in the German ‘Conservative Revolution’ (see Boterman 1992). Depending on the emphasis that is put on the historical-religious aspect or on the political aspect, fundamentalism can also be labeled Salafism or Islamism. Many orthodox Muslims call themselves *salafi*, indicating that they want to live like Muslims in time of the Prophet (*salaf* means ‘early generation’).

Within Salafism three directions can be distinguished: a-political salafi’s; political salafi’s and salafi-jihadi’s. *A-political salafi*’s have a strong religious orientation. They keep away from politics, mainly because they feel that only Allah is entitled to make laws. They want to live as puritan as possible, away from ‘bad’ influences. Increasing religious knowledge and practice *dawa* (spreading the religious message) is very important. *Political salafi*’s differ from the a-political salafi’s in their political and societal engagement and in their tractability to religious leaders. Political salafi’s strive for innovation in an active manner. They use *dawa* to islamize their environment but also use (political) opportunities to change society. Their political activities are purely instrumental. That is, even if they participate in the democratic process, this does not imply that they are in favor of democratic governance. Political salafi’s reject violence (in the host society) since one cannot practice *dawa* by force. They are critical to religious leaders, since these leaders are human beings who can make mistakes. Using the Koran and the *Hadith* religious leaders can therefore be criticized. Political salafi’s have a

more individualistic religious doctrine. Finally, *Salafi-jihadi*'s feel that a great part of the Muslim world is corrupt. In this they follow the thoughts of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1973). They are convinced that they are the only true Muslims. The *fitna* (chaos) is partly caused by Muslims themselves and partly the result of actions by enemies of the Muslim world. Salafi-jihadi's find it critical that the decay of the Muslim world is stopped. For this cause violence is a legitimate tool. One does not need the agreement of religious leaders since these leaders are dishonest. Salafi jihadi's have an individualistic interpretation of Islamic faith. Jihadi's do not recognize democratic laws. Some of the jihadi's practice *takfir*, that is, declare other Muslims as non-believers.

The thoughts of Qutb and Mawdudi are the foundations of modern Islamic radicalism. Islamic radicalism is characterized by a delegitimation of (democratic) society. Muslim radicals strive for a complete transformation of society. Islamic radicalism can be described as a set of attitudes, which we present below as a series of six items. We subsequently define extremism as radicalism that is violence prone. To measure extremism we add three more items to the radicalism scale. Radicalism is, in our view, still compatible with democratic governance, since democratic governance does not need consent of all its citizens, as long as there is compliance. Extremism is not, because it defies compliance to the rules and regulations of democratic governance.

Islamic radicalism:

1. The Islam is being threatened;
2. Politicians contribute to this marginalization; resistance against them is justified;
3. Religious leaders confirm to this situation and are therefore betrayers;
4. The basics of faith should be restored by a literal interpretation of the Koran;
5. The own religion is superior and should be politically implemented;
6. The true believer should play an active role in this.

Additional convictions Islamic extremism:

7. Realization of the ideal, divine society is the highest goal;
8. Each Muslim should strive for this goal, while doing this all means are allowed (including violence);
9. The Muslim and non-Muslim world are incompatible ('us' against 'them') and non-Muslims are demonized.

As suggested by Heitmeyer et al., the radical mood is expressed in a combination of religious and political attitudes. In our survey, the religious dimension is predominantly reflected in items 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9. The political dimension is mainly reflected in items 1, 2, 6 and 8. Those Muslims who score high on both dimensions are receptive to Islamic radicalism

3. Measuring the receptivity to Islamic radicalism.

3.0 Introduction

In section 2 we observed that Islamic radicalism is a set of attitudes that combines orthodox religious viewpoints with a need for political action (to defend Islam or to implement Islamic law). From this it follows that Muslims who combine orthodox religious viewpoints with the feeling that Islam is threatened, are more sensitive to the delegitimation process described above. If, on the other hand, one feels that Islam is threatened in Western society but one has no orthodox attitudes, the chances of becoming a Muslim radical are smaller. If one has no orthodox attitudes and one does not feel that Islam is being threatened, the chances of becoming a Muslim radical are very small indeed.

If orthodox attitudes and an urge for political mobilization are combined, the chances that a process of delegitimation comes about are biggest. Thus the question is how many Amsterdam Muslims combine orthodox religious viewpoints with a need to politically defend the position of Islam in (Dutch) society? In other words, how many Amsterdam Muslims are receptive to radicalization processes?

In order to address these questions we developed a series of survey questions, which measure orthodoxy and the feeling of urgency to act politically on the Islam issue. Additional questions were asked to measure distrust in the political elite, dissatisfaction with religious leaders, a utopian worldview (as reflected in item 7 above) and a dichotomous world-picture (item 9).

3.1 Orthodoxy

In 2005 we conducted in collaboration with the municipality of Amsterdam a survey among the Amsterdam population (N= 2.977). Of the 2.977 respondents, 321 respondents identified themselves as Muslims. The data collected from these 321 respondents are representative for

the Muslim population of 16 year and older in Amsterdam. We asked three questions to measure the concept of orthodoxy. These questions form a so-called ‘orthodoxy scale’ which runs from 0 (not orthodox) to 3 (orthodox)¹:

1. What do you think of the following statement: my religion is really superior to other religions. This statement was presented to all respondents who identified with a religion (N= 1033). The answers ‘agree’ or ‘fully agree’ were considered as an expression of orthodoxy.
2. The next statements reflect possible ways of interpreting the Koran: (a) there is only one interpretation of the Koran that all Muslims should endorse; (b) on practical points Muslims can adapt the interpretation of the Koran to the specific situation in The Netherlands; (c) each Muslim can interpret the Koran as he or she feels. Which of these statements reflects your opinion? Asked to all respondents who identified as Muslim, (N= 321). If the respondent chooses statement (a), this is considered an ‘orthodox’ answer.
3. Follow-up question: do you agree with the following statement: Muslims should go back to the original roots of Islam. Asked to all respondents who choose statement (a) above (N=138). ‘Agree’ is considered an ‘orthodox’ answer.

Table 1 gives the frequencies of the answers to the first ‘superiority’ statement.

Table 1 – ‘My religion is really superior to other religions’

| | N | (fully) agree % | (fully) disagree % | DK/NA % | Total % |
|---------------|------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------|---------|
| All believers | 1033 | 18 | 69 | 13 | 100 |
| Religion* | | | | | |
| Christianity | 533 | 11 | 83 | 6 | 100 |
| Islam | 321 | 36 | 38 | 26 | 100 |
| Hinduism | 44 | 12 | 83 | 5 | 100 |
| Judaism | 29 | 11 | 82 | 7 | 100 |
| Buddhism | 52 | 4 | 90 | 6 | 100 |
| Other | 98 | 16 | 70 | 14 | 100 |
| All Muslims | 321 | 36 | 38 | 26 | 100 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | |

¹ Mokken scale analysis: H= .42, which is a moderate scale strength.

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|----|----|----|------|
| Moroccan | 164 | 37 | 39 | 24 | 100 |
| Turk | 82 | 35 | 28 | 37 | 100 |
| [Non-industrialized | 47 | 46 | 39 | 15 | 100] |
| [Surinamese | 15 | 27 | 40 | 33 | 100] |

*Sum of all religions greater than 1033, since some respondents identify with more than one religion.

Of all religions, Muslims find their own religion more superior than other believers (36%); also more Muslims give no opinion on this issue (26%). In this the answers of Amsterdam Muslims differ from the answers of all other Amsterdam believers. Moroccan Amsterdam Muslims and Turkish Amsterdam Muslims do not differ in their agreement with the statement. Moroccan Muslims more explicitly disagree with the superiority of their own religion. Especially Muslims from non-industrialized countries find their own religion superior (47%). Surinamese Muslims express this opinion relatively less. However, these figures should be interpreted with some caution given the small number of cases in these rows.

With respect to statement 2 (interpretation of the Koran), 43% of all Amsterdam Muslims think that there is only one interpretation of the Koran that all Muslims should endorse. 20% feel that on practical points Muslims can adapt the interpretation of the Koran to the specific situation in The Netherlands, whereas 17% think that each Muslim can interpret the Koran as he or she feels. 20% does not give an opinion to this statement. Of the 138 respondents who think that there is only one interpretation of the Koran that all Muslims should endorse, 39% agrees to the statement that Muslims should go back to the original roots of Islam. 39% disagrees and 22% does not give an opinion.

In table 2 we report the scores of Amsterdam Muslims on the orthodoxy scale.

Table 2 – Presence of orthodoxy within Amsterdam Muslim community

| | N | Orthodoxy 0 % | Orthodoxy 1 % | Orthodoxy 2 % | Orthodoxy 3 % | Total % |
|---------------------|-----|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| All Muslims | 321 | 43 | 29 | 18 | 10 | 100 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| Moroccan | 164 | 44 | 29 | 16 | 11 | 100 |
| Turk | 82 | 42 | 28 | 18 | 12 | 100 |
| [Non-industrialized | 47 | 34 | 25 | 30 | 11 | 100] |
| [Surinamese | 15 | 53 | 33 | 7 | 7 | 100] |

From table 2 we can conclude that 10% of the Amsterdam Muslims score high on the orthodox dimension, that is, they react to all three statements with the ‘orthodox’ answer. If we combine scores 2 and 3, Turkish Muslims are slightly more orthodox than Moroccan Muslims. Muslims from non-industrialized countries score highest on the orthodox scale, while Surinamese Muslims score lowest.

3.2 Islam threatened

As we saw above, the second dimension of Islamic radicalism is the feeling that Islam is being threatened. For example the attitude that Dutch politicians contribute to the marginalization of Islam or the feeling that Islam is superior and should have more political impact and that the true believer should play an active role in this. In our survey three questions were asked as a proxy to measure the feelings of threat among Amsterdam Muslims:

1. In the Netherlands much is said and discussed about the Islam. Do you follow this debate? Asked to all respondents (N=2.977).
2. Some people find this debate too positive others find it OK others find it too negative. What do you think? Asked to all respondents who follow the Islam debate (N= 2.499) If respondents find it negative this is taken as a perception of threat.
3. Follow-up question to all respondents who find the debate too negative (N= 973): what do you want to do to change this? (Possible answers range from ‘nothing’ to a whole range of democratic activities to violence; the latter end of the scale is conceived as a feeling of urgency).

The last two questions were used to construct an ‘Islam as political issue’ scale. This scale ranges from 0 (Respondent does not follow the debate) to 2 (Islam as political issue, that is, respondent finds the debate too negative and wants to do something about it, that is, all answers to question 3 except ‘nothing’). In table 3 the answers to statement 2 are given.

Table 3 - Some people find this debate too positive, some find it OK while others find it too negative. What do you think?

| N | Too negative % | OK % | Too positive % | DK/NA % | Total % |
|---|-------------------|---------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|------|
| All respondents who follow debate | 2499 | 39 | 36 | 7 | 18 | 100 |
| Religion | | | | | | |
| No religion | 1600 | 39 | 37 | 8 | 16 | 100 |
| Christianity | 449 | 33 | 41 | 6 | 20 | 100 |
| Islam | 251 | 53 | 21 | 6 | 20 | 100 |
| Hinduism | 39 | 26 | 33 | 23 | 18 | 100 |
| Judaism | 28 | 32 | 50 | 0 | 18 | 100 |
| Buddhism | 48 | 46 | 27 | 4 | 23 | 100 |
| Other | 86 | 41 | 27 | 7 | 25 | 100 |
| All Muslims who follow debate | 251 | 53 | 21 | 6 | 20 | 100 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| Moroccan | 132 | 51 | 22 | 6 | 21 | 100 |
| Turk | 61 | 39 | 34 | 7 | 20 | 100 |
| [Non-industrialized | 34 | 71 | - | 6 | 24 | 100] |
| [Surinamese | 12 | 50 | 33 | - | 17 | 100] |

Of all Amsterdam inhabitants of 16 year and older 39% finds the debate on Islam in the Netherlands too negative, while 36% has no problems with the debate on Islam. 18% has no opinion, or does not want to give one, on this subject. Not surprisingly, a majority of the Muslim population finds the debate too negative (53%). Within the Muslim population of Amsterdam, more Moroccans than Turks find the debate too negative (51% versus 39%). Muslims from non-industrialized countries are most critical in their evaluation of the Islam debate in The Netherlands: 71% of this group finds the debate too negative.

Table 4 gives the answers to the third statement: what do you want to do to change the negative debate in The Netherlands?

| Table 4 - What do you want to do to change the negative debate in The Netherlands? | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| | N | % |
| All Muslims who find Islam debate to negative | 133 | 100 |
| Nothing, it will turn out all right | 12 | 9 |
| Nothing, personally I can not change anything | 38 | 29 |
| Don't Know/ No Answer | 15 | 11 |
| <i>Subtotal: do nothing</i> | 65 | 49 |
| Join debate (letters to the press, join discussion) | 39 | 29 |
| Join demonstration | 16 | 12 |
| Sign petition | 17 | 13 |
| Give money for action | 9 | 7 |
| Damage property | - | - |
| Threaten to use violence | - | - |
| Eventually use violence | 2 | 1.5 |

| | | |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Other | 16 | 12.0 |
| <i>Subtotal: do something</i> | 99* | 51 |
| *some respondents selected 2 or more activities | | |

51 % of the Amsterdam Muslims wants to do something against the, in their view, negative Islam debate in The Netherlands. Most of them want to join the debate, followed by sign a petition and join a demonstration. 2 respondents explicitly mention the use of violence. However, given the sensitivity of this answer it is very hard to judge the value of these responses.

In table 5 we report the scores on the ‘Islam as political issue scale’. We distinguish between various religious and ethnic groups. As already indicated, scores vary between 0 (no political action) and 2 (Islam debate too negative, plus wants to act on this issue).

Table 5 – Islam as political issue scale

| | N | Score: 0 % | Score: 1 % | Score: 2 % | Total % |
|---------------------|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| All respondents | 2977 | 67 | 15 | 18 | 100 |
| Religion | | | | | |
| No religion | 1883 | 67 | 15 | 18 | 100 |
| Christianity | 533 | 72 | 13 | 15 | 100 |
| Islam | 321 | 58 | 21 | 21 | 100 |
| Hinduism | 44 | 77 | 14 | 9 | 100 |
| Judaism | 29 | 69 | 17 | 14 | 100 |
| Buddhism | 51 | 57 | 12 | 31 | 100 |
| Other | 98 | 64 | 10 | 26 | 100 |
| All Muslims | 321 | 58 | 21 | 21 | 100 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | |
| Moroccan | 164 | 59 | 16 | 25 | 100 |
| Turk | 82 | 69 | 16 | 15 | 100 |
| [Non-industrialized | 47 | 49 | 32 | 19 | 100] |
| [Surinamese | 15 | 64 | 29 | 7 | 100] |

18% of the Amsterdam population thinks the debate on Islam is too negative and wants to act on this. For the Amsterdam Muslims this figure is 21%, and for the Amsterdam Buddhist population this percentage is even 31%. Percentages for Christians and Jews are lower (15% and 14%). If we look at the Muslim population only, Moroccans are most willing to act on the Islam issue (25%). For Turks this percentage is significant lower.

3.3 Combining the religious and the political

We argue that a combination of (high) scores on the orthodox religious dimension with (high) scores on the political dimension imply receptivity to radicalism. In this section we will see whether (a) scores on the two dimensions are correlated and (b) how many Amsterdam Muslims combine high scores on both dimensions. The first question is relevant since, if a correlation would exist, orthodoxy would increase the receptivity to radicalism and/or the other way around. If the two are not correlated the religious and the political domain are two independent dimensions and scores on the one does not give us any information on scores on the other. This has important consequences since in this situation orthodoxy does not necessarily result in receptivity to radicalism; nor does the feeling that Islam is threatened necessarily contribute to receptivity to radicalism.

The answer to the second question, that is how many Muslims combine high scores on both dimensions, informs us about the receptivity to radicalism among the Amsterdam Muslim population.

The most important conclusion from our study is that orthodoxy and the feeling that Islam is being threatened are *not* correlated (Pearson's $r = -0.05$). Thus orthodoxy does not result in political mobilization on the Islam issue, and mobilization on the Islam issue does not contribute to religious orthodoxy. With respect to receptivity to radicalism we refer to table 6 and table 7. In table 6 we provide the matrix of the two dimensions, which can be presented safely as we know now that these dimensions are unrelated.

Table 6 – Combination of religious and political dimension, Amsterdam Muslims, N=321 (100%)

| Islam as political issue | | | | | Islam as political issue | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----|----|---|--------------------------|-----------|---|----|----|----|-------|
| Orthodoxy | | 0 | 1 | 2 | Total | Orthodoxy | | 0 | 1 | 2 | Total |
| | 0 | 25 | 18 | | 43 | | 0 | 25 | 9 | 9 | 43 |
| | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 16 | 6 | 7 | 29 |
| | 2 | 33 | 24 | | 57 | | 2 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 18 |
| | 3 | | | | | | 3 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| Total | | 58 | 42 | | 100% | Total | | 58 | 21 | 21 | 100% |

24% of the Amsterdam Muslims combine a score of 1 and higher on both dimensions. One-third scores only on the orthodoxy scale, while approximately one fifth of the Amsterdam Muslims scores only on the political scale. If we focus on the 24% who have a positive score on both the religious and the political dimension, we see that only 2% of the Amsterdam Muslims combine a high score on the religious dimension with a high score on the political dimension. These 2% are in our view most receptive to radicalism.

4. Explaining receptivity to radicalism

As we have identified the group of Amsterdam Muslims who are receptive to radicalism, the next question is how do we explain the combination of (high) scores on the religious dimension and (high) scores on the political dimension? To answer this question we compare the 24% with positive scores on both dimensions with the 25% of the Amsterdam Muslims who score 0 on the orthodoxy scale and 0 on the political scale. We use multinomial logistic regression analysis to study possible determinants of receptivity to radicalism. The dependent variable is dichotomous: (0) no score on both dimensions and (1) scores 1 or higher on both dimensions.

As independent variables we have used:

- *Ethnicity*. There are reasons to expect that Moroccans are more receptive to radicalism than Turks. In Amsterdam the social-economic position of Turks is better and they are less often unemployed. The Turkish community is better organized, the level of social capital in the Turkish community is higher and thus more (collective) problems can be solved within the Turkish community itself. Also we expect feelings of discrimination to be lower since a lot of the public discussion is focused on Moroccans. Turks are seen as better problem solvers than Moroccans who sometimes are accused of having a victim-mentality.
- *Age*. Young Muslims are expected to be more receptive to radicalism than older Muslims. Youngsters are more oriented to (Dutch) society than older -first generation- immigrants. They want to be accepted in society and are therefore potentially more responsive to feelings of discrimination and stigmatization (integration paradox). The chance of a moral vacuum is greater. Older immigrants have stronger ties to the country of birth where religion has an embedded place in society. Also young people

are more ‘identity-searching’ and hence more vulnerable to ideologies that are very clear in their dos and don’ts.

- *Generation.* The same argument goes for the second versus the first generation. The integration paradox is supposed to be stronger among immigrants from the second generation than among immigrants from the first generation.
- *Education.* Theoretically the influence of education is not straightforward. Lower educated Muslims are more in a deprived position, while for higher educated Muslims the integration paradox is greater. Here we find it more an empirical question whether education influences the receptivity to radicalization processes.
- *Gender.* We expect no differences between men and women with respect to high scores on the orthodox religious and political dimension. Known radical groups in The Netherlands consist of men and women. Our impression from interviews and fieldwork is also that (young, religious) men and women are on the same ‘quest’ to relate to the Islam. In the media it are mostly men who are portrayed negatively which can result in feelings of discrimination. But women wear headscarfs and perceive discrimination on this issue.
- *Income, employment, size of household.* Theoretically one can expect that Muslims in a lower socio-economic position are more receptive to radicalism. Therefore we included income, employment and size of household in our analyses. We expect respondents with a low income, who are unemployed or member of a large household (which in the Amsterdam case can be interpreted as a proxy to bad housing conditions) to be more receptive to radicalism.
- *Membership organization, voluntary work, political participation, political knowledge.* Membership of an organization, voluntary work, political participation or political knowledge point to social integration within society. Therefore we expect members of organizations, Muslims who do voluntary work, who politically participate or who know a lot about the political system, to be less sensitive to radicalization processes. However, the integration paradox can imply that the same characteristics combined with a perception of discrimination in Dutch society can result in radicalization. The murderer of Theo van Gogh, Mohammed B., is a case in point here, since he was a very active member of Dutch society. Among other things, frustrations from this participation resulted in his radicalization process.

- *Identification with ethnic group.* We expect Muslims who strongly identify with the ethnic group to be more sensitive to radicalization processes. If one strongly identifies with for example the Moroccan community and feels that this community is discriminated against, this could result in a radicalization process.
- *Visiting mosques.* Given the independence of scores on the religious and political dimension, we expect *no* correlation between practicing the Islam and receptivity to radicalism. Religious commitment and political mobilization are uncorrelated.
- *Feeling home, (perception of) discrimination, political distrust, low political efficacy, and democratic attitude.* We expect Muslims who feel marginalized to be more receptive to radicalization processes. Therefore Muslims who do not feel at home in (Amsterdam) society; who perceive a lot of discrimination, who distrust the political elite and who have the feeling that in politics one can not achieve their goals (low political efficacy) are expected to have higher score on the orthodox religious and political dimension. Also Muslims who reject democracy are expected to be more receptive to radicalization processes since they do not identify with the dominant political system in the Western world.
- *Subjective social isolation.* (Young) people need acceptance, trust and support. In a perceived situation of social isolation these assets are missed. In the literature on psychological safety and *identity threat* the consequences of such a situation are sketched (Straw, Sandelands et al. 1981; Kahn 1990; Edmondson 2003; Major and O'Brien 2005). One of the reactions is a so-called *external locus of control*. In this situation subjects do not seek their (perceived) disadvantaged position in their own actions, but blame their social surroundings. This also results in 'self-victimizing' and a lack of self-knowledge (Major and O'Brien 2005). We expect people in such a situation to be more receptive to radicalization processes. We include four questions in our analysis which refer to a situation of subjective social isolation: (1) 'There are only a few people to whom I can really talk'; (2) 'Even from your close relatives you can expect not much attention'; (3) 'Often I feel left out' and (4) 'There is nobody who gives special attention to you'.

The results of our analysis are presented in table 7.

Table 7 – Multinomial logistic regression analysis sensitivity to radicalism

| | | Combination of religious and political dimension | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--|---|-------------|----|-------------|----|
| | | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
| Pseudo-R ² | | 0.23 | | 0.31 | | 0.45 | |
| Constant | | | | | | | |
| Ethnicity | Moroccan | . | | . | | . | |
| | Turk | 0.77 | | 0.84 | | 0.70 | |
| Age | 16-18 | 4.13 | * | 3.77 | * | 12.5 | ** |
| | 19-34 | . | | . | | . | |
| | 35-54 | 0.47 | | 0.51 | | 0.27 | |
| | 55+ | 0.36 | | 0.49 | | 0.22 | |
| Generation | 1st | 0.48 | | 0.59 | | 1.05 | |
| | 2nd | . | | . | | . | |
| Education | Non | 1.54 | | 1.13 | | 1.06 | |
| | Low | . | | . | | . | |
| | Middle | 3.54 | * | 3.39 | * | 5.43 | * |
| | High | 0.99 | | 0.82 | | 0.57 | |
| Gender | Man | . | | . | | . | |
| | Women | 0.65 | | 0.99 | | 0.87 | |
| Income (euros) | <700 | 1.83 | | 2.36 | | 3.91 | |
| | 701-1000 | 0.59 | | 0.68 | | 1.01 | |
| | 1001-1350 | . | | . | | . | |
| | 1351-2050 | 1.20 | | 1.00 | | 1.79 | |
| | 2051-3200 | 2.19 | | 3.29 | | 6.10 | |
| | 3201+ | 0.38 | | 0.35 | | 0.32 | |
| Employment | Unemployed | . | | . | | . | |
| | Employed | 1.15 | | 1.53 | | 0.85 | |
| Size of household | 1 person | . | | . | | . | |
| | 2 | 1.04 | | 0.74 | | 1.84 | |
| | 3 | 1.00 | | 0.71 | | 0.50 | |
| | 4 | 1.24 | | 0.81 | | 1.22 | |
| | 5 | 1.66 | | 0.84 | | 0.84 | |
| | 6 | 1.22 | | 0.62 | | 1.95 | |
| | 7 | 0.96 | | 0.86 | | 1.30 | |
| | 8 persons | 1.76 | | 1.33 | | 0.75 | |
| Membership organization | None | | | . | | . | |
| | At least 1 | | | 2.15 | | 1.27 | |
| Voluntary work | No | | | . | | . | |
| | Yes | | | 1.69 | | 2.20 | |
| Identification with ethnic group | Totally not | | | 0,00 | | 0,00 | |
| | Not | | | 1.05 | | 0.70 | |
| | Neutral | | | . | | . | |
| | Yes | | | 2.35 | | 2.59 | |
| | Absolutely | | | 4.56 | ** | 6.47 | ** |
| Visiting mosque | No | | | . | | . | |
| | Yes | | | 1.76 | | 1.98 | |

Table 7 - continued

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Feeling home | Yes | . |
| | A little bit | 3.72 |
| | No' | 3.00 |
| Discrimination | There is no discrimination | . |
| | There is discrimination | 1.09 |
| | There is a lot of discrim. | 5.53 * |
| Political distrust | None | . |
| | Somewhat | 1.68 |
| | Quite some | 2.46 |
| | A lot | 1.51 |
| | Very much | 73.8 * |
| Low political efficacy | None | . |
| | Somewhat | 0.33 |
| | Quite some | 0.93 |
| | A lot | 1.32 |
| | Much | 2.67 |
| | Very much | 0.56 |
| Political participation | None | 0.56 |
| | Low | . |
| | More | 1.44 |
| | High | 0.84 |
| Democratic attitude | None | 0.96 |
| | Somewhat | 0.78 |
| | High | . |
| Political knowledge | None | 0.61 |
| | Somewhat | . |
| | High | 1.56 |
| Social isolation 1 | Disagree | . |
| | Agree | 4.47 * |
| Social isolation 2 | Disagree | . |
| | Agree | 1.60 |
| Social isolation 3 | Disagree | . |
| | Agree | 0.41 |
| Social isolation 4 | Disagree | . |
| | Agree | 0.24 |

To control for indirect effects table 7 presents three models. In the first model we test demographic variables only. In model 2 adds 'civil society' variables. Model 3 tests all variables in our analysis. The following variables have significant effects on the receptivity to radicalization:

- Age (16-18 year old)
- Level education
- Identification with ethnic group

- Perception of discrimination
- Political distrust
- Subjective social isolation 1: there are only a few people to whom I can really talk

That is, Muslims between 16-18 years old, who have a middle level of education, who strongly identify with their ethnic group, who have strong feelings of discrimination, strong feelings of political distrust and who perceive themselves in a situation of social isolation are more receptive to radicalization processes.

5. Conclusion

This paper is, to our knowledge, the second attempt to measure and explain Islamic radicalism in Western Europe by using survey techniques. The first quantitative research among Muslim youth by Wilhelm Heitmeyers and associates (1996) in Germany showed a high inclination to use violence. We found no such inclination among similar groups of Muslims in Amsterdam. How to explain these differences in outcome? The first explanation is in the method of the research. Heitmeyer et al. interviewed the Turkish youngsters in the classroom, while the survey in Amsterdam was done on a strictly individualistic basis. It may well be that this difference in interview setting has made a big difference in the way the respondents reacted to the same sort of questions. The second possible explanation is the national context. The research by Heitmeyer et al. was done in Germany, right after a wave of violence directed against Asylum seekers and Turks. {Koopmans, 1996 #547} In The Netherlands there was no such wave of anti-immigrant violence in the nineties. {Duyvene de Wit, 2001 #381} Hence the young Turks may well have had more reason to feel threatened and hence more inclined to use violence themselves. A third explanation for the spectacular difference in findings may be in the historical context. The survey of Heitmeyer et al. was done in a period where the specter of Muslim terrorism did not yet haunt Europe. Hence the expressed willingness to use violent means may have had in 1995, another meaning than it had ten years later, when the use of violence was directly associated with Muslim terrorism, especially in The Netherlands. We are inclined to think that the latter two societal explanations are more important than the methodological explanations of the differences in outcome.

What we share with Heitmeyer and his associates is the conviction that Muslim radicalism (which they call fundamentalism) is the result of two different attitudinal dimensions. One is related to religious orthodoxy, the other to the feeling of being threatened as a group. The

most important finding of our research is that these two dimensions are not correlated. This means that there is no causal connection between Islamic orthodoxy and the feeling that Islam is being threatened, in either way. This finding has important implications for state policies that are directed against Islamic radicalism: orthodoxy in itself does not lead to delegitimization of the democratic process. It is only in combination with feelings of marginalization and threat that processes of radicalization tend to occur. This combination is in its strongest form found among 2 percent of the Amsterdam Muslim respondents. In its weaker forms there is a tendency to be receptive to radicalization among 24 percent of the respondents. We should add here that the items that measure feelings of being threatened as a group are too few to draw very strong conclusions. In this sense our research needs to be expanded and repeated to be able to draw some more robust and reliable conclusions.

When we turn to the explaining factors for the existence of receptivity to radicalism we have some amazing findings. First, contrary to the common wisdom, Moroccans are NOT more receptive to Muslim radicalism than Turks. Receptivity to radicalism is NOT more frequent among the lower educated, nor among the very highly educated Muslims. Muslims with a professional training seem to be most receptive. What is also striking is that visiting a mosque does not have a positive or negative impact on receptivity for radical ideas. But this may be due to contradictory causal processes. Starting from social capital theory, we would have had expected the active Muslims to be less receptive to radical ideas, because they are part of a civic community which prevents feelings of political distrust {Fennema, 2001 #200} and estrangement. The fact that we found a positive correlation between feelings of social isolation and receptivity to radicalism would support this theory, although we found no significant positive correlation for membership of associations. The other theory is that the change of being an orthodox Muslim is higher among Muslims that visit a mosque regularly. We will in future analysis control for orthodoxy to see whether the social capital theory is supported by our data.

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