

In Every Zealot is Deep Doubt

Islamism and the Role of Psychology amongst British Muslim Students

NAEEM MEER

Drawing on Razzaque's seminal book, *From Human Being to Human Bomb* which identifies patterns of extremist thought processes amongst young British Muslims, this study is the very first attempt at empirically testing such a concept and establishes a precedent for the study of the links between psychology and Islamism that continue to be critically underdeveloped. By analysing responses from two small samples, a test group of British Muslim UCL students and a control group of British non-Muslim UCL students, this project attempts to pioneer the use of alternative methods in the fight against extremism and ambitions to serve as a small but noteworthy part of an improved holistic national and international policy in the United Kingdom.

Keywords: Extremism, Islamism, psychology, terrorism, UK

Introduction

The decade following the events of 11 September 2001 produced a number of fundamental shifts in government policies and societal mind-sets that will undoubtedly affect future generations. The scale of the terrorist threat posed by radical jihadists has redefined the way in which the 'West' (loosely defined as Western Europe, North America and Australia) looks at religion, culture, immigration and integration.

The UK is among a few countries to be hit by jihadi terrorism through the 07 July 2005 bombings of three underground trains and

one bus, leaving the country in a frantic search for culprits and answers. This work argues that one such malefactor (although not the only one) is Islamism; the ideology that categorises Islam as not only a faith but also a political movement. Its all-encompassing format fits easily into debates on multiculturalism and identity. It is also possible to affirm that although not every Islamist is a jihadist, every jihadist is an Islamist. Successive British governments have focused on legislation aimed at tightening security measures, updating durations of custody and engaging with Muslim groups in order to defuse social tensions and decrease the likelihood of radical elements thriving in disenfranchised Muslim communities. However, there is an area that has not been researched enough in the understanding of the origins of Islamism, and by extension its violent component.

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This work uncovers the unique role of psychology in the formation of a young British Muslim male's mind and the possible implications that this can have in structuring a polarised view of the world, facilitating his interest for Islamist ideas. This topic is extremely timely and fascinating, given that we have arguably reached a point in which past explanations have not attenuated the movement and new pathways need to be explored in the understanding of the Islamist phenomenon if it is to be challenged effectively. Dr Russell Razzaque, a consultant psychiatrist based in East London, has pioneered the idea of using a scale that might highlight certain predispositions for radical beliefs.¹ An adapted version of this scale will be tested in this project for the first time in order to assess the likelihood of such a link between psychology and extremism.

Given that Islamism is often misunderstood and misinterpreted, a short segment will familiarise the reader with what are the basics of Islamism as well as a short historical perspective on the evolution of the ideology and its offshoots. A literature review will then establish an overview of the research that has been produced with regards to the psyche of Islamists along with a comment on where the main concepts are headed and what ideas dominate the debate. This section shows that a tremendous gap in the current literature makes this study both relevant and necessary. A methodology section will follow and outline the approach used in this study and the ways in which the data was collected. Then, two separate analytical sections will chart the study's findings both through basic descriptions and advanced statistical methods. A short recommendation section will ensure that the

research is grounded in public policy and will precede the conclusion; the latter will be coupled with a critical evaluation of the project so as to fully assess the limitations of the study and highlight the areas that need further development.

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Literature review

Given that it is only very recently that studies and analyses have begun to emerge on the specific subject of the processes of radicalization amongst Muslim individuals, there is not a clear variety of opinions in the available literature. This review will try to highlight the current ideas and trends present in the thematic areas of radicalisation and psychology. It will gradually become clear to the reader that there is an evident gap in the literature and that too often do researchers and experts jump from individual personality and group influence to terrorism, without pausing at the intermediate level of Islamist radicalisation. Before becoming a terrorist, a person is a fundamentalist, focused and uncompromising in his beliefs. For this reason, it is crucial to start analysing relations between individuals and the rest of society and specific attitudes pertaining to a certain vision of the world before we can attempt to move on and dissect an individual's actions.

One recent publication by Brooke Rogers has efficiently summarised the three theoretical contributions of psychology to the realm of violent radicalization. These are the Psychoanalytic approach, the Cognitive approach and the Social approach. The main caveat of this differentiation-which limits us in using it as a tool to understand aspects of Islamism-is that it is a classification linked to terrorism, therefore adding the element of violence to the analysis. Nevertheless it is still a valid breakdown and cases like the one of Omar Sharif, a British national groomed by Hizb ut-Tahrir to become a suicide bomber in Israel, reminds us of the links between non-violent and violent forms of extremism. Nevertheless, these three approaches communicate the feeling that the relation between psychology and radicalisation needs to be explored further.

In the psychoanalytical approach explained by Brooke Rogers, the notion that is most relevant to us is the Absolutist/Apocalyptic Theory, where individuals are extremely polarised regarding moral issues, easily believe in conspiracies and await a messianic symbol. Theodor Adorno's works on the authoritarian personality are part of this category and it is not surprising Razaque builds his Ideological Extrem-

ism Vulnerability Scale on these premises. The cognitive approach developed by Martha Crenshaw argues that actions can be rationally explained based on the environment a person finds himself or herself in. Through Rational Choice Theory, we might be able to address the sources of certain behaviours and explain them. The drawback with this analysis is that certain psychological elements are not rationally explainable given that the individual himself might not know where a certain belief of his comes from. Finally, the social approach can also be useful in showing that a person's ideas are a product of the group he associates with and empowers him, but here again the authors miss the point that there is something to be said about differences in people who are attracted to such extremist groups: by definition it means that they already lack such interactions and are looking for membership in a circle.

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A highly fascinating analysis that deserves a much deeper focus looks at the foundations of personalities as the product of varying parental connections with the children at a very young age. Based on previous research, Razzaque explains that the more formal and hierarchical a relation will be between the parent and the infant, the more the child will develop an “insecure-avoidant” style of interaction that can unfortunately be more common in Asian and Muslim households.² Without immigrants being the only recipients of potentially distant upbringings, this is important because the child will in turn lack the ability to identify a positive role-model (usually his father) and will end up searching for an alternative that can never be as satisfying as the attention of a parent.³ This inquiry joins the idea put forward by Mitscherlich in which he explains that during crucial formative years, adolescents are in a phase in which they need to find themselves because they feel useless; thus we see the undeniable importance of the teenage years as vectors of a positive or negative image of oneself and the world around us that Islamist recruiters can abuse by entertaining ideological fallacies in the eyes of very impressionable people in need of guidance.⁴ At university in the UK, the “lash culture” involving large consumptions of alcohol and drugs can be a strong factor in tipping the balance in favour of social retreat and isolation for some young British Muslims who are not used to it.⁵

Finally, it is worth mentioning the role of integrative complexity in the study of Islamism. It has been pointed out that, often, certain individuals, whether Islamists or not, have a certain way of recognising

and integrating conflicting viewpoints and perspectives. According to Suedfeld, Integrative Complexity is a measure of how someone will make decision and process information; this is relevant to our study because one of the main characteristics of all radical ideologies is their inability to accept other opinions and to integrate different thought structures. An enquiry into the levels of integrative complexity of respondents in a research could be an avenue to explore in the future.

As shown, the literature surrounding the study of psychology, non-violent extremism and Islamism is particularly weak and lacks specific examination. After eleven years of an increased fight against terrorism and radicalisation, it is exceptionally striking that no more material or research has been produced on the topic.

Data and Analysis

The underlying question structuring this project is whether or not there is a link between vulnerable personalities-understood as those predisposed to be subdued by extremist ideologies, and Islamism in particular.⁶ This study deploys a scale that borrows notions from psychology to gather data and see if a causal link is present among students.

The null hypothesis is therefore:

H_0 : *There is no causal link between vulnerable personalities and Islamist views.*

This project seeks to disprove the null hypothesis in order to establish the veracity of our alternative hypothesis:

H_1 : *There is a causal link between vulnerable personalities and Islamist views.*

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Basic Statistics from Test Group and Control Group

		Test Group %	Control Group %
Graduate Level			
	Undergraduate	38	5
	Postgraduate	62	95
Degree			
	Medical Studies	38	0
	Sciences	33	9
	Humanities	19.5	67

		Test Group %	Control Group %
	Other	9.5	24
Age			
	18-25	57	57
	26-30	24	33
	31-35	9.5	5
	36-40	9.5	5

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Test Group

From the data collected, the significant highlight regarding the test group (British Muslim students) is that there is a clear overrepresentation of scientific studies, in particular around the medical field. This indicates that Muslim students often choose to pursue “hard” subjects that are inherited from a cultural tradition that favours the arts and humanities in a lesser way. With a combined total of 71%, Medicine and Science topple Humanities (almost 20%) and other topics. The age differences are fairly regular with a clear majority of postgraduates and more than half of the respondents being aged 25 or under.

Control Group

Composed of British non-Muslim students, the control group is heavily dominated by Postgraduates and there is a striking absence of any of the respondents studying Medicine and a mere 10% pursuing a science-based degree. Most of the students are completing their studies in humanities but the age gaps are similarly divided between a strong majority of under 25-year olds (57%), approximately a third of respondents between the ages of 26 and 30 and smaller numbers of older student.

Following the analysis favoured by Razzaque, this work firstly examines the data collected according to ten different, but often interlinked, clusters in order to have an insight into the thought processes of the respondents in the test group and in the control group.

Conventionalism

According to Razzaque, conventionalism is defined as ‘a rigid adherence to conventional values’⁷ assessed through high responses to the following four statements from the Ideological Extremism Vulnerability (IEV) Scale:

Statement 1: Obedience and respect for authority are the most im-

portant virtues that children should learn.

Statement 2: A person who has bad manners, habits, and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people.

Statement 3: If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.

Statement 4: The businessman and the manufacturer are much more important to society than the artist.

These are used because together they indicate a propensity to not challenge common social assertions and can later on be associated with a closed mind-set. For both the Test Group (British Muslim students) and the Control Group (British non-Muslim students), responses were taken and scores added through Microsoft Excel. The minimum possible score was 4 and the maximum possible score was 16. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 2: Summary of Responses: Conventionalism

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	5	5
Mean	9	9
Max Value	13	13

The results for both groups are identical and that all values are fairly similar.

Authoritarian Submission

The IEV Scale defines authoritarian submission as ‘a submissive, uncritical attitude towards idealised moral authorities’⁸ that respond to the following three statements:

Statement 1: Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues that children should learn.

Statement 5: Science has its place, but there are many important things that can never be understood by the human mind.

Statement 6: What the world needs most, more than laws and political programs, are courageous, tireless, devoted leaders in whom the people can put their faith.

These statements highlight a respect and deference for perceived leaders that can be either real or imagined. The minimum possible score was 4 and the maximum possible score was 12. All results have

been rounded to the unit.

Table 3: Summary of Responses: Authoritarian Submission

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	3	3
Mean	8	7
Max Value	12	11

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The control group has on average lower values than the test group. With a mean of 8 compared to a mean of 7, the test group can be said to be slightly more responsive to submission to authoritative figures that they perceive to be a source of undisputed ruling. A higher maximum value for the Muslim students (12 rather than 11) also goes to show this higher receptiveness.

Authoritarian Aggression

Authoritarian aggression is ‘the tendency to be on the lookout for, and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate certain conventional values.’⁹ Six statements from the IEV enable us to assess such vulnerability:

Statement 2: A person who has bad manners, habits, and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people.

Statement 3: If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.

Statement 7: What young people need most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for justice in the world.

Statement 8: An insult to our honour should always be punished.

Statement 9: Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse.

Statement 10: Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of immoral, crooked, and feeble-minded people.

These statements shed light into the students' responses to actions that they perceive as morally and socially wrong and to the individuals indulging in them. The minimum possible score was 6 and the maximum possible score was 24. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 4: Summary of Responses: Authoritarian Aggression

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	8	8
Mean	14	12
Max Value	21	19

We can see that once again the test group's responses are higher than the ones of the control group. Given that British Muslim students are more submissive towards idealised figures than British non-Muslim students, it is logical that they also score higher as defendants of such conventions and values. Their mean and their maximum value are both two points higher.

Anti-intraception

Anti-intraception, understood as being the 'opposition to the subjective, the imaginative and the tender-minded,'¹⁰ is evaluated by the following four statements:

Statement 3: If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.

Statement 4: The businessman and the manufacturer are much more important to society than the artist.

Statement 11: Nowadays, more and more people are prying into matters that should remain personal and private.

Statement 13: Wars and social troubles may someday be ended by an earthquake or flood that will destroy the whole world.

These declarations are intended as indicators of a respondents' ability to think outside of a rational framework and appreciate the value found in variety and choice. The minimum possible score was 4 and the maximum possible score was 16. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 5: Summary of Responses: Anti-Intraception

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	5	6
Mean	9	8
Max Value	14	13

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From the above table, we can see that the test group scores higher on the anti-intracception scale, both on the mean and on the maximum value, reinforcing the observation that Muslim students are less likely to be outgoing, extraverted and appreciative of the differences that society has to offer.

Superstition and Stereotypy

Razzaque sees superstition and stereotypy as a result of ‘a belief in the mystical nature of fate and a disposition to think in rigid categories’¹¹ and for this trait he outlines three statements that need to be looked at:

Statement 5: Science has its place, but there are many important things that can never be understood by the human mind.

Statement 12: People can be divided into two distinct classes: the weak and the strong.

Statement 13: Wars and social troubles may someday be ended by an earthquake or flood that will destroy the whole world.

These statements seek to highlight the role that categorisation and judgmental behaviour play in a respondents thought process. The minimum possible score was 3 and the maximum possible score was 12. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 6: Summary of Responses: Superstition and Stereotypy

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	4	3
Mean	7	6
Max Value	11	10

We can see that not only all values are higher for the test group, but that the minimum value that is available is also higher, meaning that the cut-off point for this personality trait is higher amongst British Muslim students. This confirms that there is a more superstitious

mind set amongst the Test group and that stereotyping is more common.

Power and 'Toughness'

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Additionally, Razzaque suggests that there is a 'preoccupation with the dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dichotomy, plus identification with power figures and an exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness'¹² which is highlighted by no less than eight statements:

Statement 6: What the world needs most, more than laws and political programs, are courageous, tireless, devoted leaders in whom the people can put their faith.

Statement 7: What young people need most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for justice in the world.

Statement 8: An insult to our honour should always be punished.

Statement 12: People can be divided into two distinct classes: the weak and the strong.

Statement 14: No weakness or difficulty can hold us back if we have enough willpower.

Statement 15: It is best to use a dictatorship in hard times to keep order and prevent chaos.

Statement 16: Most people don't realise how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret places.

Statement 20: The true God-fearing way of life is disappearing so fast that force may be necessary to preserve it.

These statements uncover a predisposition to a heightened sense of being on the right side of society as well as feeling a connection to an idealised elite. The minimum possible score was 8 and the maximum possible score was 32. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 7: Summary of Responses: Power and 'Toughness'

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	11	11
Mean	19	16
Max Value	27	23

British Muslim students score considerably higher than their

non-Muslim counterparts for this characteristic; their mean is 19, compared to 16 for the control group. However, they both have the same minimum value of 11. Finally, a 4-point difference in their maximum value places the test group significantly higher in terms of adherence to values of strength.

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Destructiveness and Cynicism

Through five statements, Razzaque’s IEV Scale defines destructiveness and cynicism as ‘a generalised hostility and vilification of all things human.’¹³:

Statement 17: Human nature being what it is, there will always be war and conflict.

Statement 25: Man on his own is a helpless and miserable creature.

Statement 26: Unfortunately, a good many people with whom I have discussed important social and moral problems don’t really understand what’s going on.

Statement 27: Most people just don’t know what’s good for them.

Statement 31: There is good in everyone.

These statements show that the respondent generally does not have a high esteem of his fellow humans and thus is more likely to approve the imposition of behaviours and actions onto them (usually through the medium of an idealised moral figure as identified previously through the propensity to authoritarian submission). The minimum possible score was 5 and the maximum possible score was 20. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 8: Summary of Responses: Destructiveness and Cynicism

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	9	7
Mean	13	11
Max Value	17	16

This table displays once again higher numerical values for the test group; two points separate the minimum value and the mean while as only one point separates the two maximum values. It is interesting to note that both minimum values are quite distant from the minimum possible score for this question.

Projectivity

Projectivity, or ‘the disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world’¹⁴ has five statements to assess its impact:

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Statement 11: Nowadays, more and more people are prying into matters that should remain personal and private.

Statement 13: Wars and social troubles may someday be ended by an earthquake or flood that will destroy the whole world.

Statement 16: Most people don’t realise how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret places.

Statement 18: Nowadays, when so many different kinds of people move around and mix together so much, a person has to protect himself especially carefully against catching an infection or disease from them.

Statement 19: The wild sex life of the old Greeks and Romans was tame compared to some of the goings-on in this country, even in places where people might least expect it.

These statements not only embody the impact of unconscious thoughts on a respondent’s ability to comprehend the world around him, but they also show the void that flawed ideologies can fill with esoteric explanations. The minimum possible score was 5 and the maximum possible score was 20. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 9: Summary of Responses: Projectivity

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	8	8
Mean	13	11
Max Value	19	15

Although both the test group and the control group have the same minimum value of 8 and their respective means follow the pattern seen in a majority of previous tables (usually a difference of two points for British Muslim students), this time the maximum value of the test group is significantly higher with a four-point increase and almost reaches the maximum possible score for this statement.

Sex

The IEV Scale’s sex cluster helps us identify the respondents that have an ‘exaggerated concern with sexual “goings-on”’¹⁵ through only two

statements, although these could be refined:

Statement 9: Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse.

Statement 19: The wild sex life of the old Greeks and Romans was tame compared to some of the goings-on in this country, even in places where people might least expect it.

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These statements are very useful, especially if coupled with other clusters, in understanding a respondent's approach to his own sexuality through the vision he makes of the social order around him. The minimum possible score was 2 and the maximum possible score was 8. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 10: Summary of Responses: Sex

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	2	2
Mean	5	4
Max Value	8	7

This cluster is particularly revealing because it is only the second time that a maximum value matches the maximum possible score and once again it emanates from the test group. The Appendix 4 can also tell us that more than one respondent scored an 8 for this statement.

Generalised Rigidity

As one of the all-encompassing clusters, generalised rigidity informs us on the 'dogmatic thinking'¹⁶ of the person and as such is comprised of fifteen statements from the IEV Scale:

Statement 21: If people in one's own group are always disagreeing among themselves, that is probably a rather healthy sign.

Statement 22: No one has a "mission in life" that he must accomplish no matter what.

Statement 23: It is necessary to be on guard against certain ideas, depending on where they originate from.

Statement 24: Truth is so elusive that no one can say when he has it.

Statement 25: Man on his own is a helpless and miserable creature.

Statement 26: Unfortunately, a good many people with whom I have discussed important social and moral problems don't really un-

derstand what's going on.

Statement 27: Most people just don't know what's good for them.

Statement 28: To compromise with our political opponents is dangerous because it usually leads to the betrayal of our own side.

Statement 29: It is annoying to listen to a speaker or teacher who seems unable to make up his mind about what he really believes.

Statement 30: For most questions there is only one right answer once a person is able to get all the facts.

Statement 31: There is good in everyone.

Statement 32: There is something to be appreciated in all forms of art.

Statement 33: I usually try to keep a fairly open mind on most issues.

Statement 34: It is possible that there are many versions to the 'truth'.

Statement 35: People cannot be expected to stick to the same opinions month after month.

These statements epitomise some of the respondents' major characteristics, especially with regards to their general way of accepting the society around them and their approach to the uneven shifts in one's social interactions. The minimum possible score was 15 and the maximum possible score was 60. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 11: Summary of Responses: Generalised Rigidity

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	24	22
Mean	34	29
Max Value	45	37

This is again a clear example of the higher levels of generalised rigidity that can be witnessed in the test group of British Muslim students. All three values are higher than the ones from the control group; the mean is 5 points higher, the maximum value is a staggering 8 points greater and even the minimum value starts at 24 compared to 22 for British non-Muslim students.

Total Score

Gained from the responses to all 35 questions, the total score enables us to start with the most significant of results, namely the overall 'vulnerability to extremism'¹⁷ that the Ideological Extremism Vulnerability

Scale is intended to highlight.

Together, these statements help us identify which respondents are the most at risk of succumbing to the lure of an extreme ideology given their already vulnerable mind set, and see where they situate themselves in a group. The minimum possible score was 35 and the maximum possible score was 140. All results have been rounded to the unit.

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Table 12: Summary of Responses: Extremism

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	64	87
Mean	83	114
Max Value	113	140

The above table regarding total scores is particularly striking due to the fact that the control group scores much higher than the test group in all the values. British non-Muslim students seem to be far more vulnerable to extremism as attested by their mean of 114 compared to 83 for British Muslim students. These values are interesting because they go against the grain compared to the previous ten cluster results and they also seem to suggest a difference in mind-sets between the control group and the test group that is above average and where the gaps between scores are much higher than what has been previously witnessed in selected clusters.

Islamism

A result of the eight additional questions included in the questionnaire that was given to both groups, the Islamism cluster focuses on the scores of the following eight embedded statements:

Statement 1: Islam should guide an individual's personal life but should also serve as a basis for political and social structures.

Statement 2: The most appropriate source of judicial ruling amongst Muslim communities is the Sharia.

Statement 3: The Islamic world has never been so unstructured and is in dire need of a political movement that will unite it and lead it to its resurgence.

Statement 4: Islamic governance is a better model than democracy and takes into consideration everyone's needs.

Statement 5: British foreign policy applies double standards and is

harsher with Muslims than with non-Muslims.

Statement 6: Not all Muslims have the same ability to understand the larger issues facing the Islamic community and it is crucial for a small group of enlightened individuals to lead the way.

Statement 7: Females who wear the veil have a better understanding of the role of women in a community.

Statement 8: Men and women have different characteristics and it is normal to think of ways to address issues concerning them differently.

Together, these statements are intended as strong examples of an individual's sharing of the basic guidelines common to Islamist groups and can thus give us an idea of how far an individual is in his assimilation of this ideology. For example, Statement 4 is intended as a measure of a respondent's trust in the virtues of the Caliphate and Statement 6 shows a person's belief in an elite group of people (or vanguard) as leaders of a new Muslim world. The minimum possible score was 8 and the maximum possible score was 32. All results have been rounded to the unit.

Table 13: Summary of Responses: Islamism

	Test Group	Control Group
Min Value	12	10
Mean	20	15
Max Value	28	22

As expected, the test group comprised of British Muslim students scored significantly higher than the British non-Muslim students of the control group (a mean of 20 compared to a mean of 15). This is normal given that their faith puts them more at risk of being convinced by those who believe in the political component of Islam. It is nevertheless very interesting to note that some participants have scored high on the Islamism scale even though they are not Muslims; this could mean that some of the core ideas of Islamism are shared by individuals of other faiths.

Regression and Analysis Results

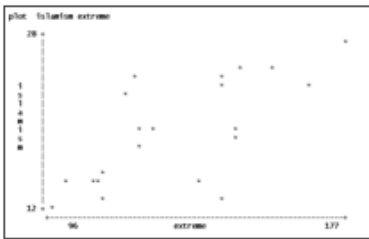
With the available data, a number of statistical tests were possible. Correlation showed that the two variables of interest; someone's general

extremism and their penchant for Islamism-may have a relationship. However, correlation does not mean causation and a linear regression was therefore needed for further analysis. Correlation is the degree to which two variables vary together. If an increase in one variable also matches an increase in another variable, then they are positively correlated and vice versa.

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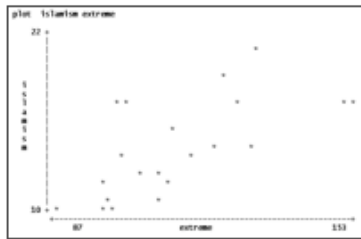
Correlation

Figure A: Test Plot Islamism v. Extremism



	extreme islamism	
extreme	1.0000	
islamism	0.6868	1.0000

Figure B: Control Plot Islamism v.



	extreme islamism	
extreme	1.0000	
islamism	0.6664	1.0000

From the above scatter plots and correlation outputs of both the test group and the control group, we can see that the two variables analysed- a respondent's level of extremist mind set (coded 'extreme') and a respondent's sympathy with Islamist beliefs (coded 'islamism')-are indeed correlated. This can be witnessed thanks to the fact that the scatter plots in Figure A and Figure B enable a regression line to pass at average distance of all the points. Furthermore, the correlation between someone's level of extremism and his level of Islamism is positive and, given that the results are both higher than 0.60, it is a strong correlation. This tells us that the more someone is extreme, the more likely he is to espouse radical Islamist views. The figures are logically higher for the test group made of British Muslim students but it is interesting to see that overall, the more non-Muslim students of the control group are extreme, the more they are also sympathetic to Islamist views. However, correlation does not imply causation, though it brings us closer to inferring it. Applying regression techniques will account for variation in the data.

Regression lets us look at the effect of one variable on another whilst controlling or holding for the effects of another. It does not only help

us with variance but it also enables us to predict a relationship and its likelihood of being present in the wider population. Linear regression minimises the sums of squares between variables to fit a line which can predict the outcome of a dependent variable, based on a number of independent variables. Figures C and D are bivariate regressions that do not control for other variables while as Figures E, F and G includes dummy variables. Initially, separate basic regressions for the test group and for the control group were used to regress the “extreme” score onto the “Islamism” score in order to see how a respondent’s personal-ity affects their level of Islamist beliefs.

Regression

Figure C: Regression Results for British Muslim Students

reg islamism extreme						
Source	SS	df	MS			
Model	239.128332	1	239.128332			
Residual	267.824049	19	14.0960026			
Total	506.952381	20	25.347619			
					Number of obs =	21
					F(1, 19) =	16.96
					Prob > F =	0.0006
					R-squared =	0.4717
					Adj R-squared =	0.4439
					Root MSE =	3.7545
islamism	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
extreme	.1534232	.0372498	4.12	0.001	-.0754586	.2313879
_cons	-.4720865	4.94627	-0.10	0.925	-10.82475	9.880576

Figure D: Regression Results for British Non-Muslim Students

reg islamism extreme						
Source	SS	df	MS			
Model	112.193495	1	112.193495			
Residual	140.473172	19	7.39332482			
Total	252.666667	20	12.6333333			
					Number of obs =	21
					F(1, 19) =	15.17
					Prob > F =	0.0010
					R-squared =	0.4440
					Adj R-squared =	0.4148
					Root MSE =	2.7191
islamism	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
extreme	.135554	.0347975	3.90	0.001	-.0627219	.208386
_cons	-.8187597	4.019241	-0.20	0.841	-9.231127	7.593608

The two tables above show us that a 1 unit increase in extremism leads to a corresponding 0.15 unit increase in Islamism (Figure C) and a 1 unit increase in extremism leads to a corresponding 0.14 unit increase in Islamism (Figure D). Comparing results in Figure C and Figure D, we can see that in both cases the higher the extreme score, the higher the Islamism score. Both are significant at the 0.1% level but the fit of these

models is not suitable for inference because of the low R-squared values of 0.47 (Figure C) and 0.44 (Figure D). Once again, the results are somewhat unsurprising for the test group but it is interesting to see similarities with the control group, even though its respondents are not Muslims. This shows a causal link between vulnerable personalities and consideration for extreme Islamist beliefs.

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There may be other variables which could be included to improve the fit. Neither of the previous regressions holds for a respondent's faith. By using a dummy variable that codes a respondent 1 if they are Muslim and 0 if they are not, we will be able to refine our models.

Figure E: Total Regression Results Including Dummy for Religion

reg islamism extreme muslim						
Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs = 42	
Model	607.62789	2	303.813945		F(2, 39) =	28.93
Residual	409.514967	39	10.5003838		Prob > F =	0.0000
					R-squared =	0.5974
					Adj R-squared =	0.5767
Total	1017.14286	41	24.8083624		Root MSE =	3.2404
islamism	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
extreme	.1467151	.0254085	5.77	0.000	.0953216	.1981086
muslim	2.500143	1.086459	2.30	0.027	.3025722	4.697714
_cons	-2.093784	2.987508	-0.70	0.488	-8.136588	3.949021

Figure E shows that for a 1 unit increase in extremism there is a corresponding 0.15 unit increase in Islamism, controlling for the Muslim variable. Additionally, there is a 2.5 unit increase on the Islamism score if a respondent is Muslim, which makes sense given that being an Islamist is a combination of being Muslim and holding extreme views. This time we can see that there is a significant causal link between the "extreme" score and "Islamist" score given the t-value of 5.77, the fact that $[p>|t|] < 0.000$ and an R-squared value of 0.59.

For this reason I do not accept H_0 , I can reject the null hypothesis and consider the alternative hypothesis H_1 to be true. There is strong evidence of a link between a person's extreme mind set and his Islamist affinities; more thoroughly, there is a causal link between vulnerable personalities and Islamist views.

As this research has now shown that causal links can be inferred between extremist personalities and Islamism through the use of regression, it can be useful to delve deeper into our possibilities by attempting to use different variables in the same model. For example, we

can control for the respondents' subject of studies to find out whether those reading sciences are more at risk of being convinced by Islamists. It might be the case that a scientific mind-set has an incidence on various attitudes.

Figure F: Total Regression Results Including Dummy for Science

. reg islamism extreme science						
Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs = 42	
Model	569.284681	2	284.642341		F(2, 39) =	24.79
Residual	447.858176	39	11.483543		Prob > F =	0.0000
					R-squared =	0.5597
					Adj R-squared =	0.5371
					Root MSE =	3.3887
Total	1017.14286	41	24.8083624			
islamism	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
extreme	.1593753	.0258323	6.17	0.000	.1071245	.211626
science	1.379489	1.125181	1.23	0.228	-.8964046	3.655382
_cons	-2.954156	3.095419	-0.95	0.346	-9.215233	3.306921

Figure F tells us that there are no causal links between whether a respondent studies science and his level of belief in Islamism. With $t=1.23$, the “science” variable is not significant.

Even though it has been said that Islamism attracts those who attempt to interpret sacred scriptures in a similar way as scientific textbooks,¹⁸ the above table does not give us scientific proof for that claim.

Given our data, another possibility would be to look at specific personality clusters gathered from the Ideological Extremism Vulnerability Scale and see if useful inferences can be made. The cluster pertaining to power and “toughness,” where the respondent is exceedingly preoccupied with the dominance-submission dichotomy can be an interesting place to start with its relation to Islamism.¹⁹

Figure G: Total Regression Results for Power and Islamism

. reg islamism powerandtoughness muslim						
Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs = 42	
Model	614.282881	2	307.14144		F(2, 39) =	29.73
Residual	402.859976	39	10.329743		Prob > F =	0.0000
					R-squared =	0.6039
					Adj R-squared =	0.5836
					Root MSE =	3.214
Total	1017.14286	41	24.8083624			
islamism	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
powerandto-s	.7324216	.1246288	5.88	0.000	.4803361	.9845071
muslim	2.824871	1.05586	2.68	0.011	.6891912	4.96055
_cons	2.808412	2.136213	1.31	0.196	-1.512487	7.129312

Here we see a positive causal link which is strongly significant with $t=5.88$ and $p=0.000$. Therefore for a 1 unit increase in power and

toughness there is a corresponding 0.73 unit increase in Islamism, controlling for the Muslim variable. Future studies might attempt to regress all the variables as well as look at other specific clusters.

Evaluation and Conclusion

In terms of validity, it is possible to say that this research is, more or less, valid although there are some important caveats. Not every expert in the field believes in the crucial importance of the role of psychology in tackling Islamism and this can be witnessed by the minor exposure that Razzaque's book has had in the five years that have followed its publication. Face validity is therefore not strong. The hypothesis is indeed based in theory, thus there is construct validity; a second test might nevertheless have different results. The measure is valid in content as it covers the full range of meanings that the concept can have because the way to look at personalities is to ask respondents their attitudes regarding a wide range of issues. With regards to reliability, external reliability is stronger than internal reliability because time is not as much a relevant factor in collecting responses while as slightly changing the questionnaire might lead to different responses. Given its scope and its unprecedented nature, this study naturally encounters difficulties and limitations that need to be addressed.

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Given its scope and its unprecedented nature, this study naturally encounters difficulties and limitations that need to be addressed.

First, a deeper dwelling into the literature could help us unearth relevant research that could have not been thoroughly reviewed and thus strengthen our initial assessment. The scarcity of the writings was indeed a severe hindrance. Instead of twenty-one respondents, which is not an adequate enough size for such a project, an ideal sample would have comprised at least one hundred twenty individuals, both in the test group and in the control group. Even though the overwhelming majority of British Muslims are Sunnis, it would have been important to find out about their denomination in order to potentially uncover additional differences in their responses. The survey also lacked inclusiveness by restricting the demographic to men. Even though it would be useful to incorporate young women in future surveys, it is somewhat more interesting to focus on male respondents given their predominance and visibility in extremist outfits. Age could also have been an interesting factor to look at and an analysis of different age brackets might have shown variances in the levels of extremism. A dichotomous

(yes or no) response to the question regarding family members living abroad could have similarly informed us about a possible impact on a student's personality traits.

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Time constraints and the limited pool of respondents did not enable the questionnaire to be tested beforehand. With more than 50 questions, the survey was not very parsimonious but shortening it would have compromised the data and prevented us from looking at all ten personality clusters in the IEV Scale. By asking specific questions related to Islamism that might have brought a particular issue to a respondent's attention (in this case the true aim of the research project), the study was at risk of indulging in saliency bias. Whether or not this had an impact on the responses given was not examined enough; however, this concern was partially tackled by embedding the specific questions at random throughout the IEV Scale statements. Regarding consistency bias, it was not an issue for the thirty-five IEV Scale points given that these were intended as purposefully vague. The problem could indeed have arisen for the Islamism statements if the person responding believed it was best to appear as an ideologically average person and therefore less extreme. Finally, the fact that the Muslim respondents came in part from a non-probability sample as mentioned in the methodology section, gives rise to the importance for any future researcher to find respondents from a large pool and ideally from a variety of sources.

This study is particularly useful because it can be geared towards a variety of religions and ideologies. Future researchers who focus on Jewish extremism or Christian fanaticism might find this study to be a solid starting point. Yet the possibilities for expansion do not stop at academia: the corporate sphere and other institutions could equally be interested in applying the findings of this research to their own dynamics. A company director or a human resources manager might find it useful to know more about an employee's personality in order to assess his or her effectiveness in a team setting or the appropriateness of delegating specific tasks.

In conclusion, we have seen that the academic area dealing with alternative responses to Islamism is particularly weak and lacks a diversity of expertise. The role of psychology has yet to gain a substantive foothold and the gap in the literature needs to be filled urgently if policymakers wish to tackle the issue effectively. By collecting data from two groups of British students at University College London, a Muslim

test group and a non-Muslim control group, this study was able for the first time to scientifically highlight the causal link between vulnerable personalities and Islamist beliefs. Not only does this breakthrough validate the importance of the role of psychology in understanding extremism, but it also empowers the British government to adopt novel ways of structuring its policies in order to challenge the pervasiveness of Islamism amongst Muslim communities in the United Kingdom.

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Notes

- 1 Russell Razzaque (2008), *Human Being to Human Bomb: Inside the Mind of a Terrorist*, Cambridge: Icon, p. 197.
- 2 See, for instance, M. S. Ainsworth (1979), 'Infant-Mother Attachment, *American Psychologist*, 34:10, pp. 932-937. See also: Razzaque, (2008), p. 79-80.
- 3 Razzaque, (2008), p. 81.
- 4 Alexander Mitscherlich, (1969), *Society without the Father*, London: Tavistock Publications, pp. 84-855 See: U. Hasan (2012), *The Balance of Islam in Challenging Extremism*, London: Quilliam.
- 6 Razzaque, (2008), p. 199.
- 7 Razzaque, (2008), p. 202.
- 8 *ibid*, p. 202.
- 9 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 10 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 11 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 12 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 13 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 14 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 15 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 16 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 17 *ibid*, p. 202.
- 18 See : E. Husain (2007), *The Islamist: Why I joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I saw Inside and Why I Left*, London: Penguin.
- 19 Razzaque (2008), p. 203.