



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Becoming a European homegrown jihadist: a multilevel analysis of involvement in the Dutch Hofstadgroup, 2002-2005

Schuurman, B.W.

Citation

Schuurman, B. W. (2017, January 26). *Becoming a European homegrown jihadist: a multilevel analysis of involvement in the Dutch Hofstadgroup, 2002-2005*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45328>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45328>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/45328> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Schuurman, B.W.

Title: Becoming a European homegrown jihadist: a multilevel analysis of involvement in the Dutch Hofstadgroup, 2002-2005

Issue Date: 2017-01-26

**Becoming a European homegrown jihadist:
A multilevel analysis of involvement in the
Dutch Hofstadgroup, 2002-2005**

Bart Schuurman

Becoming a European homegrown jihadist: A multilevel analysis of involvement in the Dutch Hofstadgroup, 2002-2005

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,

volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op donderdag 26 januari 2017
klokke 16:15 uur

door

Bart Willem Schuurman

geboren te Muscat (Oman)
in 1983

Promotor: Professor dr. Edwin Bakker
Copromotor: Dr. Quirine Eijkman

Promotiecommissie:

Professor dr. Beatrice de Graaf (Universiteit Utrecht)

Professor dr. Isabelle Duyvesteyn

Professor dr. John Horgan (Georgia State University)

Professor em. dr. Alex Schmid

Professor dr. Bernard Steunenberg

Professor dr. Kutsal Yesilkagit

Parts of this research were supported by grants from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds and the Fulbright Visiting Scholar program.

Contents

1. Introduction	11
1.1 The Hofstadgroup – Islamist terrorism in the Netherlands	11
1.2 Studying involvement in European homegrown jihadism	13
1.3 Existing literature on the Hofstadgroup	16
1.3.1 Journalistic accounts of the Hofstadgroup	16
1.3.2 Primary-sources based academic research on the Hofstadgroup	17
1.3.3 Secondary-sources based academic research on the Hofstadgroup	18
1.3.4 Insights by proxy	20
1.3.5 Research on the Hofstadgroup by government agencies	21
1.4 Claim to originality	22
1.5 Research questions	22
1.6 Research method	23
1.7 Sources of information	25
1.7.1 Using police files to study terrorism	25
1.7.2 Using interviews to study terrorism	27
1.8 Ethical guidelines	28
1.9 A note on terminology	29
1.10 Thesis outline	29
2. Studying involvement in terrorism	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.2 Issues in terrorism research	31
2.2.1 An overreliance on secondary sources	32
2.3 Making sense of involvement in terrorism	35
2.3.1 Structural-level explanations for involvement in terrorism	37
2.3.2 Group-level explanations for involvement in terrorism	39
2.3.3 Individual-level explanations for involvement in terrorism	41
2.3.4 Interrelated perspectives	42
2.4 Limitations	42
2.5 A definitional debate	44
2.5.1 Terrorism	44
2.5.2 Radicalism and extremism	46
2.5.3 Jihad & homegrown jihadism	46
2.6 Conclusion	48

3.	A history of the Hofstadgroup	49
3.1	Introduction	49
3.2	The emergence of homegrown jihadism in the Netherlands	49
3.3	2002: The Hofstadgroup's initial formation	50
3.4	2003: Would-be foreign fighters and international connections	51
3.5	2004: Individualistic plots and the murder of Theo van Gogh	53
	3.5.1 Towards the murder of Theo van Gogh	55
	3.5.2 Violent resistance to arrest	58
3.6	2005: From 'Hofstad' to 'Piranha'	59
	3.6.1 Spring and summer 2005: renewed signs of terrorist intentions	61
	3.6.2 The second and third potential plots come to light	62
3.7	An overview of the court cases	64
3.8	Conclusion	66
4.	The ideological and organizational nature of the Hofstadgroup	67
4.1	Introduction	67
	4.1.1 Drawing the Hofstadgroup's boundaries	67
4.2	Homegrown jihadism	67
	4.2.1 The Hofstadgroup's homegrown aspects	68
4.3	Ideology and terrorism	69
	4.3.1 The Hofstadgroup's ideology	71
4.4	Defining terrorist organizations	76
	4.4.1 The Hofstadgroup's organizational structure	76
4.5	Group involvement in terrorism?	79
4.6	Conclusion	81
5.	Structural-level factors: facilitating and motivating involvement	83
5.1	Introduction	83
	5.1.1 Structural-level factors influencing involvement in terrorism	83
5.2	Preconditions: providing opportunities for terrorism	85
	5.2.1 The Internet	85
	5.2.1.1 The Internet and the Hofstadgroup	86
	5.2.2 Popular support for terrorism	87
	5.2.2.1 Popular support for the Hofstadgroup	87
	5.2.3 External assistance	88
	5.2.3.1 The Hofstadgroup's external connections	88
	5.2.4 Social or cultural facilitation of violence	91
	5.2.4.1 Social facilitation for violence and the Hofstadgroup	92
	5.2.5 Ineffective counterterrorism	92
	5.2.5.1 Counterterrorism lapses as enablers of the Hofstadgroup ..	93

5.2.6	Political opportunity structure	94
5.2.6.1	Political opportunity structure and the Hofstadgroup	95
5.3	Preconditions: providing motives for terrorism	96
5.3.1	(Relative) deprivation and intergroup inequality	96
5.3.1.1	Relative deprivation and the Hofstadgroup	98
5.3.2	Political grievances	100
5.3.2.1	Political grievances among Hofstadgroup participants	100
5.3.3	A clash of value systems?	102
5.3.3.1	The Hofstadgroup as a clash of value systems	102
5.4	Structural-level precipitants: <i>Submission, part 1</i>	103
5.5	Conclusion	104
6.	Group dynamics I: Initiating and sustaining involvement	107
6.1	Introduction	107
6.1.1	Group dynamics and involvement in terrorism	107
6.2	Terrorist group formation	109
6.2.1	The Hofstadgroup's formation	110
6.3	Social identity and the benefits of group membership	112
6.3.1	Social identity and the Hofstadgroup	113
6.4	Socialization into a worldview conducive to violence	114
6.4.1	Revisiting the Hofstadgroup's ideology	115
6.5	The underground life	116
6.5.1	The Hofstadgroup's increasing isolation	117
6.6	Social learning theory	118
6.6.1	Social learning in the Hofstadgroup	119
6.7	The influence of leaders	121
6.7.1	Leaders and authority figures in the Hofstadgroup	121
6.8	Peer pressure	123
6.8.1	Peer pressure among Hofstadgroup participants	124
6.9	Conclusion	126
7.	Group dynamics II: Involvement in acts of terrorist violence	129
7.1	Introduction	129
7.1.1	Group-level explanations for terrorist violence	129
7.2	Organizational structure and lethality	130
7.2.1	Organizational lethality and the Hofstadgroup	130
7.3	Group influences that lower barriers to violent behavior	131
7.3.1	Diffusion of responsibility and deindividuation	131
7.3.1.1	Diffusion of responsibility, deindividuation and the Hofstadgroup	132

7.3.2	Authorization of violence	132
7.3.2.1	Authorization of violence and the Hofstadgroup	132
7.4	The rationality of terrorism	135
7.5	Terrorism as the result of strategic considerations	137
7.5.1	Strategic rationales and the Hofstadgroup	138
7.6	Terrorism as the result of organizational dynamics	140
7.6.1	Organizational rationales for terrorism and the Hofstadgroup	142
7.6.1.1	The group as a vehicle for redemptive violence	142
7.6.1.2	The influence of role models on the use of violence	143
7.6.1.3	Interaction with the Dutch authorities	143
7.6.1.4	Competition with other extremist groups	144
7.7	Conclusion	145
8.	Individual-level analysis I: Cognitive explanations	147
8.1	Introduction	147
8.1.1	Structuring the individual-level of analysis	147
8.2	Radicalization	148
8.2.1	Radicalization and the Hofstadgroup	152
8.3	Fanaticism	154
8.3.1	Fanaticism and the Hofstadgroup	156
8.4	Cognitive openings and unfreezing	157
8.4.1	Cognitive openings, unfreezing and the Hofstadgroup	158
8.5	Cognitive dissonance and moral disengagement	161
8.5.1	Cognitive dissonance, moral disengagement and the Hofstadgroup	163
8.6	Conclusion	165
9.	Individual-level analysis II: Terrorists as psychologically distinctive	169
9.1	Introduction	169
9.1.1	Are terrorists abnormal?	169
9.2	Psychopathology	170
9.2.1	Mental health issues and the Hofstadgroup	171
9.3	Psychoanalysis	172
9.4	Significance quests and identity-related alienation	173
9.4.1	Significance quests and the Hofstadgroup	174
9.4.2	Identity-related alienation and the Hofstadgroup	176
9.5	The terrorist personality or profile	176
9.5.1	Personality characteristics and the Hofstadgroup	179
9.6	The role of emotions	181
9.6.1	Anger and frustration	181
9.6.1.1	Anger, frustration and the Hofstadgroup	182

9.6.2	Mortality salience	184
9.6.2.1	Mortality salience and the Hofstadgroup	184
9.7	Conclusion	185
10.	Conclusion	187
10.1	Introduction	187
10.2	Key findings	188
10.3	Implications for research on European homegrown jihadism	191
10.3.1	The ‘driving force’ of involvement processes is liable to change	192
10.3.2	Involvement in extremist and terrorist groups takes various forms ..	193
10.3.3	The nature of the group shapes the involvement experience	194
10.3.4	Fanaticism rather than radicalization	194
10.3.5	Involvement as personal expression rather than strategic calculation	195
10.3.6	No victimization or psychopathology	196
10.3.7	The often-overlooked role of chance	196
10.4	Policy-relevant implications	197
10.5	Limitations and future research	198
10.6	Toward a more empirical study of terrorism	199
	Bibliography	201
	Nederlandse samenvatting	229
	Acknowledgements	235
	Curriculum vitae	237

