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

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Propositions based on the PhD thesis

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

By Bart Schuurman

1. Involvement in European homegrown jihadism cannot be adequately understood through the use of singular theoretical perspectives.
2. Without appreciating the dynamic nature of involvement processes, whereby the factors that initiate involvement are distinct from those that sustain involvement which are again different from those that lead some individuals to plan or commit terrorist violence, a comprehensive understanding will remain out of reach.
3. For most participants, involvement in the Hofstadgroup stemmed more strongly from shock at the geopolitical activities of Western states and an altruistic desire to help co-religionists in warzones than from an extremist interpretation of Islam.
4. Participation in the Hofstadgroup as well as the planning and execution of terrorist attacks derived more often from a desire to express a newfound sense of identity and group-solidarity rather than from the desire to use (the threat) of violence for strategic purposes.
5. Research on terrorism is held back more by the lack of empirical data than the lack of consensus on how to define the object of study.
6. The empirical substantiation of existing insights into the processes that lead to involvement in terrorism should be given precedence over the development of new theoretical models.
7. The conceptual, theoretical and empirical deficiencies of 'radicalization' as an explanation for involvement in terrorism obscure rather than illuminate this process and the concept should therefore be abandoned.
8. Government agencies stand to gain far more than they risk by allowing researchers access to restricted materials on terrorism.
9. The societal and political debates on terrorism need to move away from the overly simplistic and poorly supported dichotomy of seeing terrorism as the result of either mental health issues or deprivation.
10. There exists a 'radicalization industry' in the Netherlands that is as dubious as the concept on which it is based.