

Can the violent *jihad* do without sympathizers?

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Abstract

Interviews and public information were used to establish the role of sympathizers in the continuation of the violent jihad. Sympathizers are indispensable in some respects, but in others, it is unnecessary or unfavorable for extremists to resort to them. This means that the role of sympathizers is smaller than assumed by many counterterrorist officials and academicians, but this is not because sympathizers are deterred by possible reprisals for their support. It is because assailants sometimes deliberately choose not to recourse to sympathizers. This means that the role of sympathizers does not solely depend on their partisanship and fear of retribution alone, but also on the strategic choices made by Muslim extremists. Their impact on the role of sympathizers in collective violence is neglected in both Donald Black's 'geometry of terrorism' theory and Roger V. Gould's rational choice theory of collective violence.

Introduction

Several terrorist fighters are convinced that Muslim extremism cannot do without Islamic communities tacitly or openly approving of the violent jihad.¹ Last year, an employee of the German intelligence service expressed this view as a result of the arrest of fifteen extremists who would belong to a network that was concentrated in Ulm and Neu Ulm and that would have been occupied with recruiting, counterfeiting passports, and fundraising.² According to him Muslim communities had withhold certain activities from the authorities and had even actively supported some of these activities. There are also academicians who emphasize the importance of sympathizers in relation to the violent jihad. For instance, Benjamin Barber, author of '*Jihad vs. McWorld*', remarked in an interview that: 'The problem is not terrorists. There are only a few crazy terrorists. The problem is a large number of people who are not terrorists but who look the other way or support the terrorists'.³ Roberta Senechal de la Roche has argued that support of third parties is a necessary precondition of all kinds of collective violence, hence not only of violence committed in the name of jihad.⁴ Collective violence could not surpass the level of impulsive, incidental outbursts without this support of third parties.

These policy makers and academicians implicitly assume that intergroup struggle is a sufficient condition for group participation in violent conflict. According to Roger V. Gould, most sociological explanations of group conflict are based on this presupposition. However, one can wonder whether that is justified in case of the jihad. After all, it is imaginable that sympathizers are backed down from actively supporting the preparation of the jihad because of fear of retribution. Especially in a time when Muslims run the risk of being considered a potential terrorist on the basis of a shared faith only, this fear could deter them from aiding extremists with the preparation of violence.

Therefore, the assumption that sympathizers are prepared to transform their support of the jihad into concrete aid might prove problematic. This raises the question whether the constituencies of Muslim extremists really play an indispensable role in the preparation of the violence committed in name of the jihad. Moreover, if sympathizers do not play a decisive role in certain respects, is this because they are not prepared to transform their support of the jihad into action in fear of retaliation or are there other reasons responsible for this? The role of sympathizers was ascertained with respect to three preparatory activities that mostly precede terrorism, yet do not necessarily end up in it. The activities consist of international migration, financing, and communication. The analysis was restricted to the activities of terrorist networks that have committed themselves to a global struggle between 'pure' Muslims and infidels and that are operational in Europe and North America. Networks that had originally been committed to local political-religious conflicts in Arabic countries yet have subsequently become active in western countries for this global battle were counted among this category as well.⁵ Among the most important representatives of these global jihadist networks are Al-Qaeda, Ansar al-Islam, the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA), and the Takfir wal Hijra movement.

Interviews and public publications like papers, (official) reports, newspaper articles, and scientific publications were used to answer the central questions.⁶ The interviews were held between Mai and July 2004 with eight officials who had recently been involved in counterterrorism in the Netherlands.⁷ Respondents were asked open questions concerning Dutch criminal cases on the violent jihad they had been involved with directly or indirectly. The questions referred to how defendants had gained entrance to the Netherlands, how they managed to stay, how they generated income, and how they communicated. With respect to each of these strategies, questions were posed on whether, and if so, how they resorted to governmental agencies, kin, sympathizers, and criminal organizations.

The next section deals with the theory on the role of constituencies in collective violence. The following section presents the data analysis. Conclusions are drawn in the final section.

Solidarity and supporting terrorism

Senchal de la Roche has founded her argument that sympathizers are vital for terrorism on Donald Black's 'geometry of terrorism' theory.⁸

Black conceives terrorism as a specific kind of social control; aimed at the correction of deviance. In case of terrorism, social control would be carried out by way of 'self-help'. He defines self-help as 'the expression of a grievance by unilateral aggression'.⁹ Usually self-help is related to societies in which individuals depend on themselves in conflicts because the state has no monopoly on the execution of violence. However, according to Black, self-help is also present in areas where it is difficult for civilians to resort to the authorities. Terrorism would refer to a specific kind of self-help: *'pure terrorism is self-help by organized civilians*

who covertly inflict mass violence on other civilians'.¹⁰ In short, terrorism is about structural violence employed to more or less randomly chosen opponents by civilians who organize themselves in secret. This means that terrorism can be distinguished from smaller scale types of violence like feuding and from collective forms of violence with a more impulsive, incidental, or overtly character like riots, lynchings, vigilantism, and civil wars.

Black states that terrorism can only occur when there exists a large social distance between an aggrieved group and a group that is blamed for it, while the physical distance between both groups is small.¹¹ The social distance can cover different dimensions: cultural – for example with respect to differences in language, philosophy of life, and ethnicity; relational – for example the amount of mutual contacts, friendships, and marriages – and hierarchical – for example the differences in power and status. Social distance sets off a clear image of an enemy and reduces the threshold to victimize as many random victims as possible among the enemy, while the physical vicinity offers the occasion to make these victims.

According to Senechal de la Roche a large social distance between parties does indeed explain why conflicts are fought out violently instead of peacefully,¹² but not why the violence is applied recurrently and well-organized instead of incidentally and unorganized.¹³ She ascribes latter to the social distance within and among third parties. Violence could only surpass the incidental and unorganized character when third parties are involved in a conflict that are very partisan, in the sense that they clearly choose one side. There is question of '*strong partisanship*' when third parties support one party against the other and are solidary among themselves. Mutually solidarity especially occurs when the social distance between parties is small, which means: participating actively in each other's lives and being culturally homogenous and interdependent. Maximal partisanship occurs when all parties involved are polarized: two sides of homogeneous groups that are at great social distance of each other.

Polarization generates a 'gravitating' force attracting newcomers indirectly to one of both sides.

The violence committed in the name of the jihad is also recurrent and well organized. The global list of insurgencies expands further everyday. These attacks are often preceded by long and profound preparations and involve extremists who contacted people in different countries. So, if Senechal de la Roche is right than third parties sympathizing with the jihad ought to play an indispensable role in the jihad. However, is this true? Are the constituencies of the jihad willing to actively support the preparation of insurgencies committed in the name of the jihad?

As mentioned before, Roger V. Gould argues that sociological theories on collective violence like those of Black and Senechal de la Roche assume too easily that solidarity automatically implies preparedness of individuals to actively contribute to collective violence.¹⁴ However, sympathizers can also decide not to contribute on the basis of their awareness that they can be avenged for it personally: 'Any confrontation between collections of people – whether the boundary dividing them is one of class, ethnicity, neighborhood, clan, race, gender, or religion – involves the possibility that group action will not occur because behavior is dominated by individualistic motives'.¹⁵ His research on feuding in nineteenth century Corsica has indeed ascertained two factors restricting the willingness of individuals to participate in collective violence on behalf of their reference group.

First, conflicts stemming from group contention were less often resolved violently than conflicts originating from one-on-one contention because the antagonists took into account the possibility that the violence would escalate. After all, group contention implied that opponents were part of a group that could be mobilized to strike back.¹⁶ Moreover, it occurred that kin of the perpetrators were seldom victimized when they did not contribute to the violence themselves or helped to escape the culprit. According to Gould this meant that

‘avengers did not randomly choose from the offender’s kin group, but rather targeted kin who declined to distance themselves from the offender or his action. Far from treating the solidarity of the rival groups as given, then, vendettas of this sort were sanctions *against* solidarity.’¹⁷ This mechanism would deter individuals to manifest solidarity with their kin: ‘When retaliation is conditional on demonstrations of solidarity, a potential aggressor is disciplined *ex ante* by the knowledge that drawing on allies will provoke retaliation by the victim’s allies, and an aggressor’s allies know *ex post* that they are not potential targets for retaliation as long as they have refrained from helping the others’.¹⁸

On the one hand, Gould argues that his findings with respect to avenging on Corsica in the nineteenth century can not automatically be generalized to other historical and geographical contexts, but on the other hand he does not rule this out beforehand either. Indeed, it is imaginable that both factors that deterred Corsicans from helping kin in case of conflicts, also restrain the constituencies of the jihad to support the preparation of terrorism.

Muslim extremists fight powerful leaders in western and Arabic countries and choose their victims because of general characteristics ascribed to the enemy (e.g., nationality, religion, or ethnicity) rather than because of wrongful conduct by specific individuals. This ‘logic of collective liability’ entails that a large group considers itself a potential victim of the jihad and, consequently, perceives a common interest to fight it.¹⁹ The Establishment is motivated to take the initiative to counter the jihad because terrorism undermines their authority and because civilians hold the authorities responsible for the protection of their security. This means that sympathizers may fear the retaliation of a large group of powerful opponents when they actively support the preparation of the jihad. This can deter them from actually giving it. At the same time, it is difficult for counter terrorists to determine who belongs to the enemy. On Corsica solidarity was based primarily on kin relationships that were publicly known,²⁰ while with respect to the jihad solidarity is based on shared faith that is much more difficult to ob-

jectify. As a result, Muslims can easily be accused falsely of contributing to the preparation of the jihad. This is more likely to happen, as the threat of insurgencies is perceived as more real. The awareness that the slightest hint can be enough to become a suspect of supporting the jihad can be yet another deterrent.

In sum, it is imaginable that sympathizers do not play the decisive role in the preparation of the jihad that is assumed by Senechal de la Roche's theory on collective violence because of fear of retaliation or some other reason. In the next section, we will analyze the role of sympathizers with respect to three preparatory activities: international migration, financing, and communication.

International migration

The violent jihad is a transnational phenomenon par excellence.²¹ Al-Qaeda has had a safe haven in Afghanistan between 1997 and 2001 when the Taliban ruled this country. According to the *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, at least twenty thousand recruits from all parts of the world have been trained in camps in Afghanistan.²² Subsequently, these recruits have participated in battles in countries like Bosnia, Chechnya, and Iraq or they have returned to their countries of origin. Nowadays extremists from all over the world travel to Iraq to fight against the United States and their allies, and take their experience home to their countries of origin.²³ Extremists have also left countries in order to follow a religious education in a Koran school, *madrassa*,²⁴ or to visit radical imams in mosques. Furthermore, some have intermediated between terrorist cells in different countries. Transnationalism requires of Muslim extremists to manage the entrance to and residence in other countries.

There are indications that militant Muslims have been brought into countries with the help of smugglers from countries like Albania, Turkey, and Latin America.²⁵ In two cases

sympathizers may have provided help. The first case concerned a man who was about to be arrested by the German police for supporting terrorist activities against the Americans in Iraq. He was able to flee to the Netherlands with help of a smuggle network and subsequently would have got help to board an airplane to Syria by somebody who had entrance to airport Schiphol before he was finally arrested (interview). In the second case an anonymous source witnessed that a man with a double nationality helped the spiritual leader of the Moroccan group 'Salifa Jihadia' on airport Heathrow when he worked there as a site manager for a Canadian airline.²⁶ In the meanwhile, both the site manager and the spiritual leader are incarcerated in Morocco due to their involvement with the assault in Casablanca in 2003.

Once extremists have entered a country, they can avoid contacts with state agencies entirely by residing illegally. Extremists who domiciled illegally have indeed been arrested in different countries. However, illegal immigration and residence have clear disadvantages for extremists since they can be incarcerated and extradited because of their illegal status alone.

Therefore, many extremists try to enter a country by obtaining a residence permit. Hundreds are known to have succeeded in this.²⁷ Several insurgents of assaults in the United States and in Europe have acquired a tourist, student or business visa, while others have been granted political asylum, sometimes after several applications under different names. Still others have obtained a legal residence permit because they married a wife with the nationality of the country of destination. Some of these women sympathized with the jihad,²⁸ while others were used unwittingly as accomplices.²⁹

Muslim extremists need passports and identity papers in order to obtain residence papers. Counterfeiters have provided extremists with false papers, either by stealing these documents, buying them from persons who declare theirs missing, or fabricating them.³⁰ Some of these counterfeiters were radical Muslims themselves,³¹ others were criminals seeking profits by selling false papers to whoever was willing to pay for them.³² In one case, ex-

tremists may have resorted to corrupt officials. According to an immigration adjudicator of the U.S. Immigration and Nationalization Service, an illegal Moroccan, who had connections with alleged September 11 ringleader-hijacker Mohammed Atta and Usama Bin Laden's brother Khalil, would have obtained a residence permit for a sham marriage by bribing immigration officials.³³ The Department of Homeland Security would have deported this illegal immigrant without hearing him as a material witness in the lawsuit this designated whistleblower filed against her superiors. Another example demonstrated that profit seeking caused even sympathizers to withhold extremists identity documents. Top plotter of the Sept. 11 attacks, Ramzi Binalshibh, did not get a stolen passport from a friend at Ansar-Al-Islam he knew from a training camp in Afghanistan because he did not have the cash to buy it from him.³⁴ In short: extremists do not only obtain counterfeited identity papers from sympathizers but also from criminals and corrupt officials.

Apart from smuggling and providing false documents, sympathizers have also helped extremists residing in foreign countries. Extremists have used their networks of family, friends, and co-religionists to approach official agencies for work, housing, medical care, or social benefits. However, on the other hand, extremists sometimes have deliberately chosen to avoid the Muslim community altogether, because they wanted to go unnoticed. For example, they have behaved like westerners or have married non-Islamic women.³⁵ For the same reason mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed commanded the hijackers of the September 11 attacks to avoid the Muslim community in the United States as much as possible.³⁶

In short: although sympathizers are important for facilitating the international migration of extremists, profit seeking can withhold sympathizers to assist extremists. Profit seeking also enables extremists to resort to criminals and corrupt officials who do not care about the jihad. Moreover, extremists sometimes deliberately choose *not* to recourse to sympathiz-

ers in order to avoid suspicion. In these instances, it is *unfavorable* for extremists to resort to sympathizers.

Financing

Islamist networks need money to survive and to execute their activities. They use two strategies to get the necessary financial means. Either they look for sponsors or they generate revenues themselves.³⁷ Both strategies will be discussed separately.

Sponsoring

Sponsors can be states or organizations. Countries that have been suspected of supporting the violent jihad financially are usually ruled by an elite of which at least a section sympathizes with the violent jihad. This applies to countries like Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan.³⁸

Terrorists misuse the so-called *zakat* – one of the five religious duties of the Islam – in order to receive sponsorship of organizations. Zakat is the obligation of every Muslim to donate a share of one's own resources to the needy. It is an attractive means to raise money for extremists because it appeals to the religious duties of all Muslims. Moreover, donators have just little control over the destination of their contributions. This offers Muslim extremists the possibility to use contributions for the jihad without knowledge and consent of the donators. Radical imams have been arrested for passing on charity money raised in mosques to terrorist organizations³⁹ and radical believers have coerced moderate imams to hand over such money.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the assets of branches of foundations like Al Aqsa, Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), Al Haramain en Muwaffaq have been frozen because they sup-

plied money to terrorist organizations.⁴¹ Sometimes this happened because of extremists that had infiltrated a legitimate foundation and sometimes it happened with the approval of the executive committee.⁴²

This means extremists often profit from zakat without the knowledge and consent of the donors. Extremists also profit unobvious from the habits of Muslims and migrants in order to transfer money. Militant Muslims employ *hawala* to do this.⁴³ There are clear indications that rich Arabs have transferred money to Al-Qaeda thru the hawala system.⁴⁴ Hawala is used to transfer money from one party to the next outside the official financial circuit.⁴⁵ It is founded on the mutual trust that all parties concerned will repay their debts.⁴⁶ It appeals to Islamic terrorists since it leaves few traces and does not stand out because millions of migrants use it. However, this does not mean that hawala bankers do not keep accounts at all.⁴⁷

Furthermore, Muslim extremists resort to money transfer services of businesses like *Western Union*.⁴⁸ For example, the hijackers of the September 11 attacks received 20.000 dollar thru this company. As is true for hawala, money transferring is especially popular among migrants for providing and receiving cash money because it is also possible in countries where not everybody has a bank number.⁴⁹ After it became known that this form of money transferring was also used for terrorist purposes, Western Union was compelled in the United States to pass on information on transfers to enforcement agencies. Nowadays, the agents of Western Union are perceived to be a larger risk with respect to financing terrorism than the customers. For this company screens these, mostly foreign, agents only marginally.⁵⁰

In short, Muslim extremists can recourse to sponsors who sympathize with the violent jihad. Besides, they resort to third parties who are secretly used by extremists. Latter parties concern Muslims who stick to the religious duty of zakat and immigrants who use hawala bankers or money transfer companies. They are instrumental to extremists by sharing habits

that are familiar to the extremists without their knowledge or consent. This means it is unnecessary for extremists to resort to sympathizers in order to generate and transfer money.

Generating revenues

Sponsorship does certainly not cover all expenses of extremists. Only some recruiters are released from generating revenues, and occasionally elite Al-Qaeda members have provided 'seed money' to cells that enabled them to execute part of their plans. In general, extremists have to manage themselves financially largely.⁵¹ Consequently, certain individuals and cells are occupied predominantly or even entirely with acquiring revenues for the jihad. For this, they do not receive active support of sympathizers.

Extremists have yielded revenues by undertaking licit and illicit enterprises. Al-Qaeda has owned retail, transport, and industrial businesses that were not only used as a storefront to launder money and transport weapons but also as an independent income source. In this case, they can resort to *consumers*. They buy goods without knowing that the revenues are used for the jihad.

Furthermore, although the 9/11 Commission stated that hard evidence was lacking,⁵² other sources claim that jihadist groups have made alliances with organized crime. Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas would have been engaged in drug trade, human smuggling, and counterfeiting of American dollars, audiovisual material, perfumes, and brand clothing in the border area between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay⁵³ and elsewhere.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Al-Qaeda would have operated in diamond smuggle in western Africa.⁵⁵ This would mean that extremists recourse to criminal *business partners* that do not sympathize with the jihad but act out of self-interest.⁵⁶

Other cells have engaged in criminality to generate revenues. The explosives that were used for the train bombings in Madrid were traded for XTC and soft drugs, for example.

The 'gang of Roubaix' has robbed in order to finance a bombing during the G-7 in Lille according to the French public prosecutor.⁵⁷ In England, a gang has furnished the jihad with large sums of money through a large banking swindle combined with shoplifting. The gang members bought clothes and electronics with bank checks that were based on fraudulent bank numbers and swapped these goods for cash before it became clear that the bank checks were not covered.⁵⁸ In the Netherlands, supporters of the Takfir Wal Hijra movement have been arrested and convicted for robbing, pick-pocketing, trade in counterfeited brand clothing, credit card fraud, drug trade, and telecom fraud (interview).⁵⁹

Many extremists specialize in crimes that are multifunctional to them. For example, the trade in false documents does not only bring forth resources but also enables militant Muslims to hide their identity.⁶⁰ In the Netherlands suspects have been arrested who had used several identity documents at the same time. This enabled them to conceal that they had encountered the police previously (interview). Likewise, counterfeited identity papers have been used to obtain social security numbers. A Dutch investigation brought to light, for example, that several suspects of facilitating terrorism had applied for a social security number with the help of counterfeited French identity cards (interview). Telecom fraud is also multifunctional because it generates both revenues and communication means. Fencing stolen cell phones and telephone cards, not paying off phone bills, hacking telephone centers, and selling hacked information to phone shops are different kinds of telecom fraud.⁶¹

The victims of crimes are of course no sympathizers of the jihad. Yet, this is precisely the reason why, for instance, the supporters of the Takfir Wal Hijra movement commit crimes. They perceive criminality as a way to proceed their battle with other means than violence. According to them, criminality does not only help to finance terrorism but also victimizes the enemy.⁶²

In short, the role of sympathizers is limited with respect to generating revenues. First, extremists are forced to resort to other parties like consumers and criminal business collaborators because the donations of sponsors fall short. Second, criminality offers the possibility to victimize the enemy by other means than violence. Therefore, when extremists resort to others than sympathizers in order to generate revenues this can at the same time be a necessity and a deliberate offensive choice.

Communication

Muslim extremists resort to all sorts of communication means for their activities: couriers, letters, cell phones and satellite telephones, short wave transmitters, e-mails, chat groups, and websites. Usually they shut out the social environment anxiously in order to keep their plans secretly. They cut themselves off the outside world, for instance, by arranging face-to-face meetings, sending encrypted messages, using voice over the Internet, or telephoning by means of 'easy room' telephone cards which could be bought and filled up from all over the world and which have been removed by now.⁶³ However, extremists do use the social environment in order to mingle unobvious among a larger public. In this case, it is irrelevant whether the public sympathizes with the jihad or not.

For example, some of the September 11 insurgents have used public libraries,⁶⁴ other Al-Qaeda members have resorted to Internet cafés,⁶⁵ and Dutch convicts mostly called from telephone booths (interview). Phone shops also play an important role in the preparation of terrorism (interview).⁶⁶ For example, five people have been arrested in the Dutch town Schiedam for using a phone shop for conspiring and stocking chemical ingredients of explosives.⁶⁷ In September 2003 the United States have requested the Dutch government to extra-

dite three persons who had contacted an American suspect of connections with Bin Laden in a phone shop using false telephone cards.⁶⁸

Phone shops provide facilities to phone and use the Internet. Usually these shops specialize in these services but sometimes laundries, barbershops or Islamic butchers exploit one or two telephone lines in their businesses. Most customers of phone shops are migrants who want to contact their relatives abroad. Hawala bankers also like to operate from phone shops because of this concentration of migrants.⁶⁹ Both the background of the clientele and the presence of hawala bankers attract Muslim extremists to phone shops. In there, they can communicate with foreign contacts unobvious because the majority of the customers use phone shops for this reason too and they can recourse to hawala banker to transfer money. Muslim extremists use crowds in order to act unobtrusively without appealing for sympathy for their cause at all.

The Internet also enables jihadists to operate unobvious. However, in this case sympathizers do also play a significant role. The Internet contains countless chat groups, web sites, web logs, and news groups concerning the Islam that are chiefly visited by Muslims.⁷⁰ Many of them perceive the Internet as a concrete manifestation of a global Muslim community, *ummah*.⁷¹ Radical Muslims who promote the jihad also mingle in these Internet environments.⁷² Although one source indicates that substantial evidence is lacking,⁷³ many others state that Muslims use these sites for recruiting, conspiring, and fundraising.⁷⁴ Potential recruits who have been spotted in chat rooms receive surveys and are tested on- and off-line before recruiters decide whether they will be accepted as new members.⁷⁵

The Internet also plays an increasingly important role in the training and education of new recruits since the destruction of the training camps in Afghanistan.⁷⁶ The Internet contains elaborate instruction manuals on abduction, guerilla tactics in cities, and military battle techniques for jihadists,⁷⁷ and a film has been posted on a site that explains stepwise how to

explode bombs with the help of cell phones, just as the commuter train bombings in Madrid were committed.⁷⁸ The Internet is also used for religious education. Saudi Arabic mullahs have provided Dutch radical Muslims with advice, for example.⁷⁹

The Internet is an attractive medium to extremists because it enables them to communicate with people all over the world anonymously. They can conceal and change their identity by ditching old e-mail addresses and creating new ones⁸⁰ and by stealing unguarded server space.⁸¹ Jumping virtually from one computer to the next offers a possibility to conceal their physical location. Anonymity can also easily be preserved because hosting companies hardly check the minimal information they demand from their customers.⁸² Terrorist groups also advise readers on Jihadist Web sites of ways to circumvent hackers or government officials from tracking them down.⁸³

In short, militant Muslims use their social environment to mingle unobvious among an ignorant larger public that usually does not consist of sympathizers. Extremists move into public establishments like libraries, cyber cafés, phone shops, and the virtual *ummah*. The popularity of latter two locations shows that extremists prefer to immerge in a larger crowd that is dominated by migrants or Muslims. Just as we have seen with respect to financing it is true that Muslim extremists often profit from their habits independent of their views on the violent jihad.

Conclusion

We have looked into the role of the constituencies of Muslim extremists with respect to the preparation of the violent jihad. It occurred that they play an essential role in certain aspects. Sympathizers perform as sponsors, counterfeiterers, Internet specialist, or propagandists. How-

ever, extremists also recourse to migrants and Muslims who share several habits yet are completely unaware of the intentions of extremists. For example, they secretly use hawala bankers to transfer money, human smugglers to cross borders, and the Islamic ‘online community’ to communicate. They also misuse the religious duty of Muslims to donate a share of their resources to the needy. Extremists also resort to non-Muslims. They appeal to corrupt immigration officers and criminals. They also use non-Muslims as consumer or as victim of criminality.

Thus, backup of constituencies does not play an essential role in all aspects of the preparation of the jihad. It can be either unnecessary or unfavorable for aggressors to resort to sympathizers. It is unnecessary if extremists do not need sympathy in order to reach their goals. Extremists secretly use Muslims and migrants as a cover and as a possibility to recourse to traditions and habits that are familiar to them. Resorting to their constituencies would create unnecessary risks. It can be unfavorable to resort to sympathizers for either offensive or defensive reasons. An offensive reason applies when extremists want to continue the holy war with other means than violence by resorting to the enemy instead of sympathizers. For example, criminality not only brings in revenues but also victimizes the enemy. A defensive reason for not resorting to sympathizers is to avoid suspicion. Extremists have behaved like westerners, have married non-Islamic women, or have avoided the Muslim community altogether because they wanted to go unnoticed.⁸⁴

In short, although many scholars and terrorist-fighters automatically assume that sympathizers play a crucial role in the continuation of the jihad, this analysis showed that they often do not. This is not because sympathizers anticipate on possible reprisals for supporting the jihad, but because they are held at a distance by the assailants.

This conclusion is theoretically relevant because both Black en De la Roche’s geometrical theory of terrorism and Gould’s rational choice approach of collective violence explain

the role of sympathizers primarily on the basis of the choices made by the sympathizers themselves. According to the former strong partisanship with the aggressors determines the role played by sympathizers while according to the latter its role can be explained from the fear of retaliation of sympathizers. Current analysis suggests that the role of sympathizers not only depends on their own choices but also on those of the aggressors. The latter not automatically appreciate the support of sympathizers but deliberately choose when to resort to them. Therefore, this analysis has brought to light that the role plaid by sympathizers in collective violence cannot be understood well without taking into account the strategic choices of the aggressors. Acknowledging this would lead to a fuller understanding of collective violence than both other theories enable.

Notes

1. The jihad is certainly not violent by definition (Hashmi, Sohail H. "Jihad." In *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, edited by Robert Wuthnow, 425-26. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1998). Fighting an inner spiritual struggle for pure faith, defending the Muslim faith against aggressors, and conquering the hegemony of Muslims over non-believers are all referred to as jihad. This study is restricted to latter interpretation of the jihad. However, for matters of efficiency the adjective violent will not be added anymore when referring to the jihad below.

2. David Rising, "Two Provincial German Towns Emerging as Unlikely Center for Islamic Extremism," *Associated Press*, 1 February 2005 available at (http://news.findlaw.com/scripts/printer_friendly.pl?page=/ap_stories/1/0000/2-1-2005/20050201010014_01.html).

3. *Agence France-Presse*, "Us Remains under Terror Threat from Al-Qaeda," *Breaking News*, 7 September 2004 available at (http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2004-09-09-threat-us_x.htm).

4. Roberta de la Roche Senechal, "Why Is Collective Violence Collective?," *Sociological Theory* 19, no. 2 July (2001), pp. 126-44.

5. Bruce Hoffman, "The Changing Face of Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27 (2004), p. 550/1.

6. For a critical account of the reliability of data originating from public publications, see Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 64-68.

7. Respondents were a national prosecutor, two policy employees of the Dutch national intelligence and security service (AIVD), three analysts of the national police unit on counterterrorism and special tasks (UTBT), and two inspectors of the Rotterdam police force who lead the investigation on the preparation of an insurgency on the American embassy in Paris or an American army basis in Belgium.

8. Black, Donald, "The Geometry of Terrorism." *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1, March (2004): 14-25.

9. Black, Donald, "Crime as Social Control." *American Sociological Review* 48, February (1983): 34.

10. Black, "The Geometry of Terrorism," p. 16, italics originally.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

12. Roberta Senechal de la Roche, "Collective Violence as Social Control," *Sociological Forum* 11, no. 1 (1996), pp. 97-128.

13. Roberta Senechal de la Roche, "Why Is Collective Violence Collective?," pp. 126-44.

14. Roger V. Gould, "Collective Violence and Group Solidarity: Evidence from a Feuding Society," *American Sociological Review* 64, no. June (1999), pp. 356-80, Roger V. Gould, "Revenge as Sanction and

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- Solidarity Display: An Analysis of Vendettas in Nineteenth-Century Corsica," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. October (2000), pp. 682-704.
15. Gould, "Collective Violence and Group Solidarity: Evidence from a Feuding Society," p. 375.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
 17. Gould, "Revenge as Sanction and Solidarity Display: An Analysis of Vendettas in Nineteenth-Century Corsica," p. 692, italics originally.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 701.
 19. Black, "The Geometry of Terrorism," p. 16.
 20. Gould, "Revenge as Sanction and Solidarity Display: An Analysis of Vendettas in Nineteenth-Century Corsica," p. 702.
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