Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism and Implications for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: The Case of Abdullah Azzam

Stephanie Scott-Smith[a], Mariam Farida[b], Julian Droogan[c1]

[a]PhD Candidate Macquarie University, [b]Lecturer Macquarie University, [c]Associate Professor, Macquarie University

Abstract

Social mobilisation theory (SMT) remains an underutilised lens in examining how religion can be central to radicalisation processes. This paper provides a novel application of SMT to better appreciate the role played by religious ideologues in mobilising individuals to Salafi-jihadist violence through appeals to group and individual benefits. It also considers the implications for preventing and countering violent extremist efforts. The paper conducts a comprehensive thematic analysis of the messaging of the Salafi-jihadist preacher Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, who was highly influential in the mobilisation of mujahideen foreign fighters to Afghanistan following the 1979 Soviet invasion. Through the structured thematic analysis of 38 of his texts in English translation, a set of key religious themes are identified and mapped. The application of SMT to these themes demonstrates that while Azzam clearly employed religious views in his highly successful propaganda, he also drew on stories of the miraculous, a concept difficult to analyse using SMT. An appreciation of the role that religious ideologues can play in influencing violent extremism has implications for preventing and countering violent extremism practitioners. These include the need for a more nuanced understanding of the specific narratives used by ideologues in appealing to group benefits, and a greater appreciation of the irrational aspects of violent extremist narratives.

Introduction

Social Mobilisation Theory (SMT) provides a useful tool to chart how networks of individuals sharing identity traits, but with conflictual aims, can be mobilized to common purpose (Della

---

[1] Corresponding Author Contact: Julian Droogan, Email: julian.droogan@mq.edu.au, Department of Security Studies and Criminology | Faculty of Arts, Building 25WWB, Level 6, Office 642, Macquarie University, NSW 2109, Australia

Porta 2018). A focus on the processes of mobilisation reveals how identity discourse can incentivise participation in forms of political violence and terrorism (e.g., Johnston and Noakes 2005; Snow 2013; Alimi and Johnston 2014), but rarely on how an individual's religious beliefs relate to this process. This is despite religion having been shown to provide a set of beliefs and values that can be mobilised to engineer group action (Devine et al., 2015). The role that adherence to a religion may play in pathways into terrorism remains a contested, if marginal, field of enquiry in terrorism studies. Indeed, questions of the causality between religion and individual and group radicalisation have been surprisingly little discussed in the literature, to the point where they have been described as "erased" (Dawson 2021). There is evidence that, at least in the context of Islam, individual terrorists are often not very pious or deeply educated about religious doctrine or practice (Hassan 2012). Bakker's 2006 examination of more than 200 militant jihadists, for example, found that less than a quarter were raised in religious families and that another quarter were converts to Islam. In interviews conducted with returned foreign fighters it has similarly been found that when a better opportunity was presented they largely chose to renounce extremism. This is unlikely to occur if a person is primarily motivated by sincere religious adherence (Neumann et al., 2018).

Yet terrorist groups inspired by Salafi-jihadist ideology do make explicit appeals to religion in their communications to air grievances, motivate their members, and offer salvation (Farida 2020; Droogan and Peattie 2018). Additionally, Horgan and Holbrook (2019) explore how ideology plays an important role in motivating and sustaining terrorist activities, arguing that terrorism is not solely a result of religious or political ideologies but is influenced by a combination of factors including personal grievances, social networks, and psychology. They emphasize how the examination of ideology is key to understanding how inspirational outcomes such as status, belonging, and reward, operate in defining allegiances and roles, and the pull of intangible rewards such as salvation through martyrdom.

Despite this, terrorism studies often present religion as offering little utility in explaining the motivations or behaviours of terrorists, in part because these behaviours are ofttimes diverse or indistinguishable from those who are non-religious (Gunning and Jackson

2011). Terrorists, it is claimed, may have a relatively superficial relationship with a religious ideology, and may instead be involved for opportunistic, circumstantial, or criminally profitable motives. Some may even be unaware of the type of religious or ideological movement they are involved in (Bartlett and Miller 2012).

Yet persistent links have been demonstrated between the theological justifications for terrorism and deviant and extremist 'cultures of violence' across the world's major religious traditions, as well as various sects, cults, and new religious movements (Juergensmeyer 2017). The importance of religious narratives in Salafi-jihadist recruitment propaganda has been identified (Droogan and Peattie 2017; 2018), while Baker, Vessey, and McEnery (2021) have highlighted how the language of violent jihad evolves over time, reflecting changes in tactics, strategies, and ideological shifts within the movement. Despite this, there has been less exploration of the extent to which religious doctrines and themes in themselves may mobilise individuals to violent action, or what this may mean for preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) initiatives.

There is benefit then in bringing conceptual nuance to discussions about the role religious beliefs and narratives play in encouraging some individuals to take up Salafi-jihadist violence against the state. One way of doing this is to better define the role played by charismatic religious leaders, variously termed 'spiritual sanctioners' or ideologues, in mobilising followers to action. While theological understanding may not always be a dominant factor in a person's decision to engage in terrorism, the role played by 'spiritual sanctioners' in this process has been shown to be significant (Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman 2009).

This paper provides a comprehensive thematic analysis of the messaging of one such highly influential ideologue, the Salafi-jihadist preacher Abdullah Yusuf Azzam (b. 1941 – d. 1989), who was heavily involved in the global mobilisation of mujahideen foreign fighters to Afghanistan following the 1979 Soviet invasion.[2] Through detailing exactly how Azzam used

---

[2] While there is argument as to whether the Afghan mujahideen of the 1980s fit formal definitions of terrorism, this discussion centres on the political question of whether Soviet-backed and occupied Afghanistan was a legitimate state. Certainly, the Afghan mujahideen were a violent extremist group, some of whose Arab elements

religious narratives to mobilise groups to violence we can better appreciate some of the broader contexts within which radicalisation may occur, and test the utility of social mobilization theory for charting these wider social processes. This can enhance our ability to respond effectively to contemporary recruitment efforts for religiously motivated violence, and to construct more effective preventative and countering programs.

This close thematic analysis of Azzam's discourse moves beyond the existing literature which primarily provides accounts of the discourse and narratives adopted (Müller 2019; Lea-Henry 2018; Schnelle 2012; Li 2012; Maliach 2010; Cook 2007). Here, we identify and map the specific themes Azzam used in his narratives and how these worked to mobilise parts of the global Muslim *ummah*, for instance by shifting the focus of radical Islamist politics from the local to the transnational.

Abdullah Azzam was a highly successful recruiter who left copious primary sources of his speeches and writings. These can be used to build a comprehensive picture of the religious themes he employed in his influential calls to jihad, and the relative importance religion held in mobilising the faithful. Azzam's personal example and copious ideological writings have also gone on to influence subsequent influential ideologues, such as Osama bin Laden and Anwar Awlaki, and groups, such as al-Qaeda (AQ) and Islamic State (IS) (Maliach 2017). Indeed, the networks Azzam helped establish in Afghanistan became the core of the jihadist movement in the 1990's and 2000's, with former Arab mujahideen playing a major role (Hegghammer 2020; Maliach 2017).

Social mobilisation theory seeks to explain how people can be motivated to engage in potentially costly behaviour, where proposed benefits emerge at the group rather than individual level. Yet relatively few studies have used an SMT lens to examine the process of violent extremist group mobilisation (Farida 2018; Lindvall 2018). The current study contributes to this literature by using SMT as a tool to identify mobilising strategies in Salafi-jihadist narratives and why they are effective in motivating collective action.

---

went on to form the core of al-Qaeda and other Salafi-jihadist terror organisations (see Emanuilov and Yashlavsky 2011: Chapter 6).

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

It is clear from this thematic analysis that Azzam successfully used several religious themes to motivate individuals to violent extremism through an appeal to the group and individual benefits that were thought to accrue from these actions. However, Azzam's narrative did not primarily highlight religion as an abstract motivation (Devine et al., 2015), but rather intertwined his religious views with the history of Islam, the political context of the Cold War era, and its impact on the Middle East. Azzam's narrative was not driven by any instrumentalist 'use' of religion, but rather that he truly believed he was part of "a cosmic war, wherein there is no country, only a cosmos of good and evil forces waging an eternal fight for righteousness" (Marby 2015, p. 199), and that this narrative was central in mobilising the faithful to violence. Azzam's ability to utilise emotions such as, anger, resentment, and frustration, which can be powerful drivers that push individuals towards adopting radical ideologies and engaging in terrorism (van Stekelenburg 2017), are key to his mobilising narrative.

However, close thematic analysis also reveals that social mobilisation theory, while useful in determining the role of religion in motivating individuals to engage in violence, does have limitations when considering the importance of the irrational and miraculous to group mobilisation. Some scholars have noted the significance of Azzam's miracle stories for the development of hagiography in jihadist literature (Müller 2019), yet the motives for including these stories are debated (Ramsay 2023; Müller 2019; Cook 2007). The mobilising power of religious miracles is not well explained by a SMT framework. Stories of miracles, or *karamat* (divinely bestowed gifts and favours), are omni-present and significant in jihad (de la Paz 2022). They serve as sources of emotional and symbolic capital for individuals, groups, and movements. Yet, there remains a lack of comprehensive knowledge about this topic. Further investigation would not only shed light on a less-explored aspect of these movements but also contribute to the progress of research in the emerging field of religion in military contexts and battlefields. By noting this gap and offering a way of integrating 'the miraculous' into SMT, this paper offers a more nuanced way of thinking about the role of the irrational in group

mobilisation processes. Additionally, the paper provides a nuanced way of answering how miracle narratives influence "individual attitudes and behaviour" (de la Paz 2022, p. 11).

Method

This paper presents the results of thematic analysis of 38 of Abdullah Azzam's publicly available texts translated into English. Primary sources were collected from websites, including you YouTube and archive.org, and verified as authentic using cross-referencing with controlled databases (University of Oslo and jihadology.org). Although we worked with translations, one member of the research team is a native Arabic speaker and was able to check translations and to clarify any vague or confusing words.

We adopted thematic analysis as our analytical approach to identify emergent themes and allow for the generation of novel ideas and connections between themes. The thematic analysis was conducted using a grounded theory approach to identify unanticipated terms, concepts, and themes within Azzam's work, drawing such themes as they emerge from the text itself. The data analysis method is summarised in Figure 1.
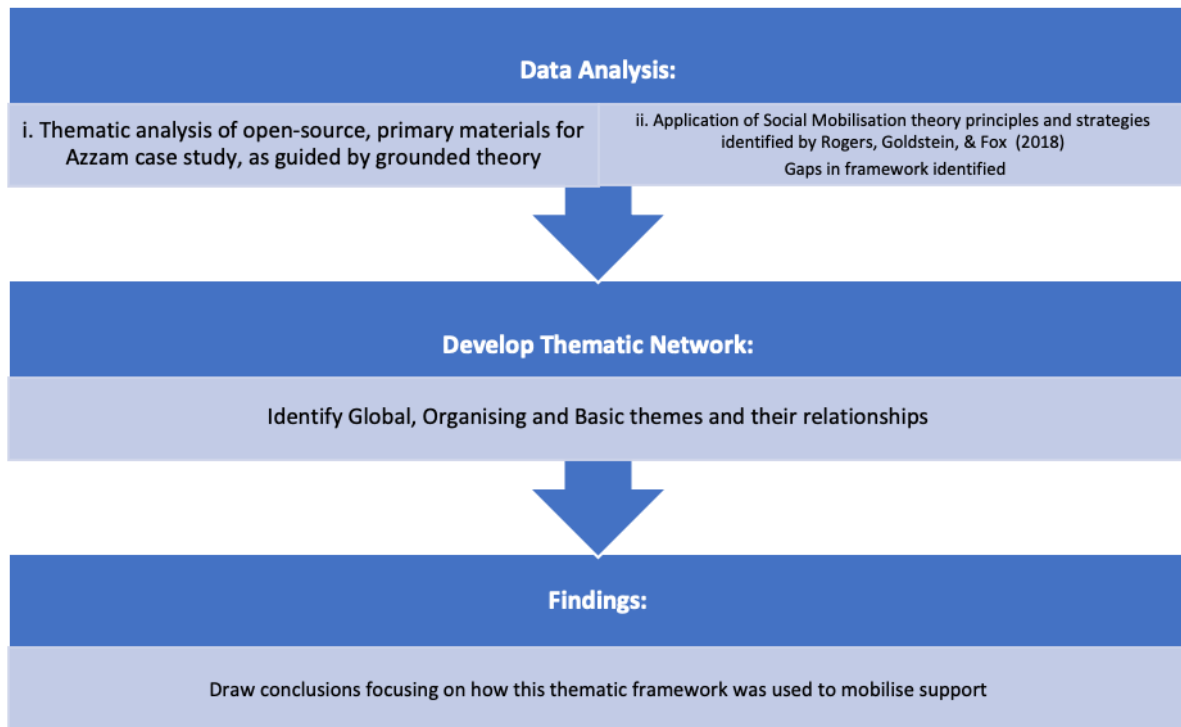
Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

Data Analysis:

i. Thematic analysis of open-source, primary materials for Azzam case study, as guided by grounded theory

ii. Application of Social Mobilisation theory principles and strategies identified by Rogers, Goldstein, & Fox (2018)
Gaps in framework identified

Develop Thematic Network:

Identify Global, Organising and Basic themes and their relationships

Findings:

Draw conclusions focusing on how this thematic framework was used to mobilise support

Figure 1. Steps in Data Analysis Process and Development of Thematic Network

The process of thematic analysis through a grounded theory approach moved through four steps: familiarisation with the data; identifying themes; reviewing and analysing themes to identify structures; and constructing a theoretical model whilst continuing to check this against new data (Chapman et al., 2015). To ensure analytical rigour in the identification of themes, Strauss and Corbin's (1998) three stages coding process was adopted: 1) open-coding to develop categories of information; 2) axial-coding to select dominant codes and assist with their interconnecting with other codes; and 3) selective-coding to assist with building the narrative that connects the categories and produces a discursive set of theoretical propositions (Strauss and Corbin 1998). NVivo-12 software was employed to ensure the accurate and systematic collating of themes, and to assist with their comparison. This method can be summarised as continually comparing and categorising themes across cases, and thus allowing for analysis that goes beyond the semantic content of the data.

Once collated, the themes emerging from the narratives were consolidated and analysed to develop the thematic framework. Attridge-Stirling (2001) has highlighted the lack of tools available for the analysis of qualitative data and to address this gap, proposed a way for themes to be presented in an accessible and transparent manner. Thematic networks are web-like illustrations that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text (Attridge-Stirling 2001, p. 385). This tool has been successfully adopted in the thematic analysis of jihadi magazines such as *Inspire* and *Dabiq* (Droogan and Peattie 2017; 2018).

The basic principles of this visualisation are as follows: rectangular boxes represent basic themes, circles represent organising themes, and squares represent a global theme. Arrows indicate the relationships between basic themes, organising themes, and global themes; they do not indicate relationships between basic themes themselves. The visualisation is presented as web-like nets to ensure the fluidity of the themes is emphasised, avoiding any sense of hierarchy, and allowing for the interconnectivity of the themes throughout the network to be displayed in a clear and concise manner (Attridge-Stirling 2001) (see Figure 2).
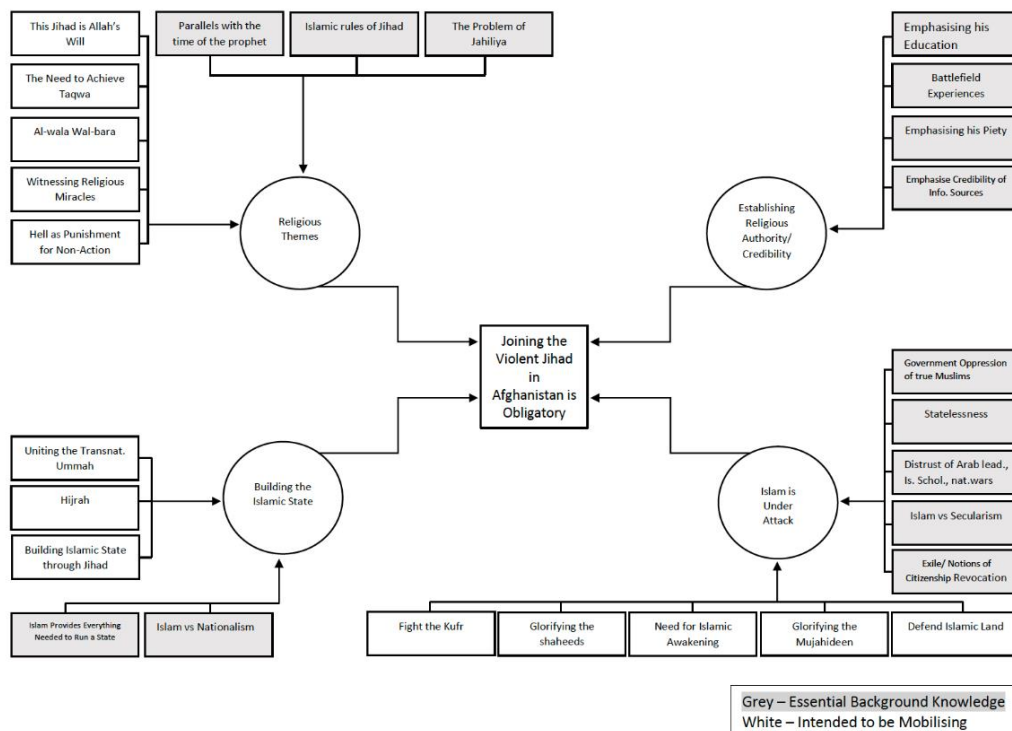
Figure 2: Azzam's theme relationships

Abdullah Azzam and his works

Abdullah Yusuf Azzam was born in the West Bank village of *Seelet al-Hartiyeh* in Palestine in 1941. He joined the Jordanian chapter of the Muslim Brotherhood at 15 years of age in response to his family's loss of land (Hegghammer 2020). After Azzam married in 1965, he continued to live in Palestine to enable his studies, later completing a degree in Islamic law from Damascus University (Schnelle 2012). By 25 years of age, Azzam was working as a teacher providing *dawa* (Islamic proselytism) with the Muslim Brotherhood, but he emigrated to Jordan in 1967 following the six-day war (McGregor 2003). From this time, Azzam lived life as a refugee, moving around the Middle East for teaching opportunities at several

universities (Hegghammer 2020). He moved to Egypt in 1973 to continue his studies, completing a PhD in the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence from the prestigious al-Azhar University in Cairo (the preeminent school of Islamic studies). In 1981 Azzam moved to Pakistan to assist in the effort to free Afghanistan from Soviet control, and eventually playing a leading role in organizing Arab participation in the Afghan jihad (Hegghammer 2020).

On 24 November 1989 while on his way to the Peshawar Mosque for Fridays' sermon, a bomb destroyed Azzam's car killing him, his two sons, and another passenger (McGregor 2003). The news of his 'martyrdom' came as a significant shock to the mujahideen movement, with thousands of his supporters attended his funeral. Those responsible for the assassination were never identified, despite several theories being presented.

Azzam was one of the most influential jihadist ideologues, and remains a highly respected figure in the world of radical political Islam (Hegghammer 2020). He has been credited as the key ideologue responsible for the first global mobilisation of militant foreign fighters to Afghanistan. His most influential works on the mobilisation of the Afghan mujahideen, *Defence of Muslim Lands: The First Obligation After Iman* (1984); and *Join the Caravan* (1987), argued for the global Islamic *ummah* to unite in jihad against the Soviet invaders, and that this was a religious obligation for Muslims (see Schnelle 2012; Maliach 2017; Lea-Henry 2018; Aboul-Enein 2008; Hegghammer 2020). Other works such as *The Signs of Allah the Most Merciful Ar-Rahmaan in the Jihad of Afghanistan* (1983) outlined the multitude of miracles which allegedly occurred in Afghanistan during the war and argued that these were reflective of Allah's support of the mujahideen.

Whilst his contribution as a charismatic ideologue has been well established, there remains a need to better identify the mobilising themes found in these works to better grasp how his message was able to inspire so many to risk their lives in a foreign land. This is particularly important given components of his narrative have been so heavily influential for subsequent terror groups including both AQ and IS (see Ingram 2016; Maliach 2017; Hegghammer 2020).

Azzam's Narratives

The thematic framework for mobilisation within Azzam's narratives

Central to Azzam's attempts to mobilise the transnational *ummah* was his core argument (represented in Figure 2 as the central circle) that joining the jihad in Afghanistan was *fard ain*, a religious obligation, because Afghanistan (a supposedly 'Islamic land') had been invaded by non-Muslims. That defensive jihad can only be performed in relation to the invasion of Afghanistan was a central element of his narrative. Azzam argued that Muslims were suffering due to the spiritual void that secularism had caused in distancing the *ummah* from religion. He asserted that returning to what he considered true Islam is the only solution, and violent jihad was thus a current obligation.

This militant jihad was essential to protect Afghans, to protect Islamic land from non-believers, and to defend the *ummah* against the global eradication of Islam. This was also a broader vision for ongoing jihad, not specific to Afghanistan. As seen in Figure 2, surrounding this global theme ('joining the jihad is obligatory') are four organising themes:

1. Azzam provides both religious authority and battlefield credibility,
2. Therefore, his narrative is aimed at ensuring the whole of the Muslim *ummah* achieve *taqwa* (piety), because
3. Islam is currently under attack, and
4. Building an Islamic State will serve in the survival and propagation of Islam.

These organising themes are grouped as such; establishing religious authority and credibility, core religious arguments, Islam is under attack, and the importance of building an Islamic State, which feed into the evidence for the overall mobilising argument; that violent jihad is obligatory. The witnessing of religious miracles in Afghanistan, and the exalted characters of both the shaheeds and the mujahideen, provide evidence that the jihad is sanctified by Allah.

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

Azzam's narrative does not employ religion as an abstract motivation (Devine et al., 2015), but as intertwined with the history of Islam, in particular the Islamic revival of the Twentieth Century, experiences of colonisation and occupation, and the threat posed by growing westernisation, materialism, and secularism. It was also interwind with the political context of the Cold War era and its impact on the Middle East.

The role of religious themes in Azzam's narratives

The analysis of Azzam's speeches and writings demonstrates that he primarily attached his mobilising narrative to key concepts related to Islamic jurisprudence. Table one outlines the recurrence of the primary mobilising themes identified.
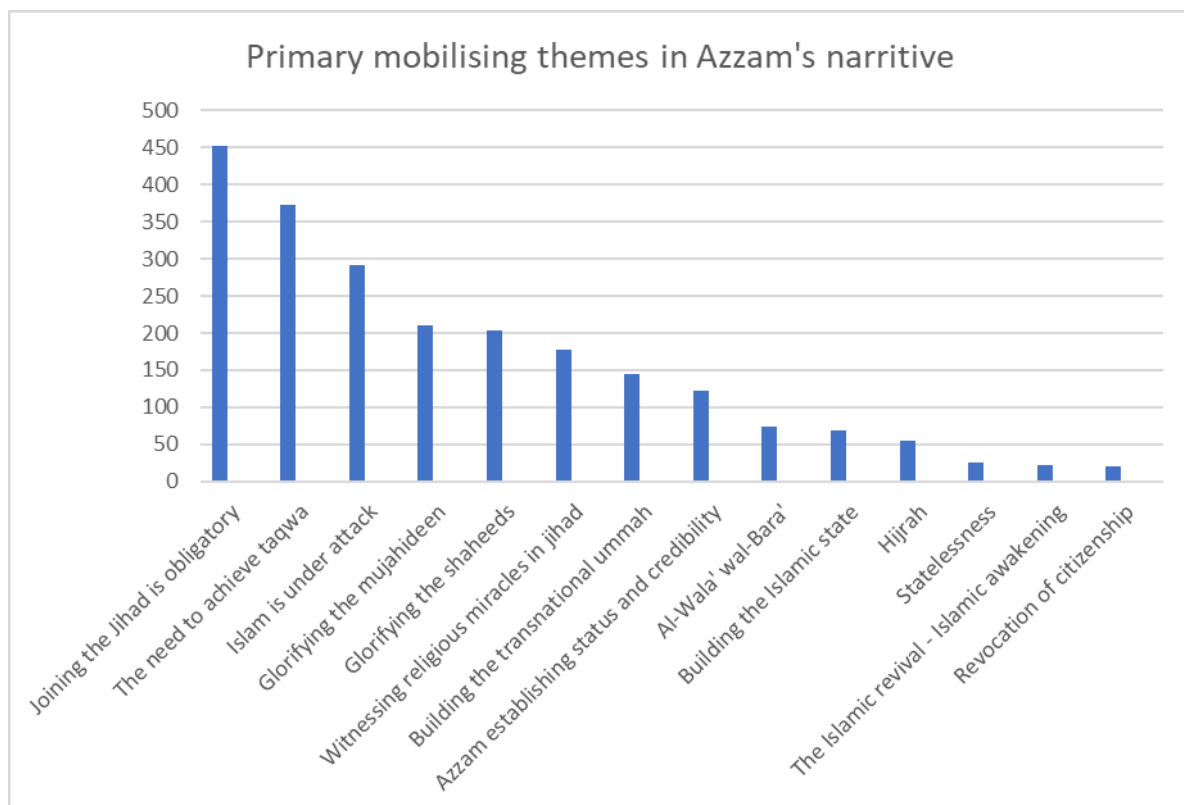

Table 1. The primary mobilising themes in Azzam's narrative

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

Azzam centred his narrative on a set of key Islamic tenets (for example jihad, *taqwa*, *hijrah*) and positioned himself as a credible religious authority. By applying SMT, the invasion of Afghanistan presents itself as the crisis which triggered a cognitive opening in audiences, prompting their reassessment of religious attitudes and highlighting the need for imminent action (Neumann et al., 2007) by which militant jihad becomes the only option. The role of religion as a collective identity was used by Azzam to enhance the notion of belonging within the transnational mujahideen who travelled to Afghanistan (Theme: 'building the transnational *ummah*').

He repeatedly states that individuals must face high risks and costs because God demands this as a condition for spiritual reward. The cost includes leaving the comforts of life in favour for violent jihad against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, a potentially deadly endeavour. Yet it has been shown that a person's choice to move to high cost/risk activism can be understood as a rational decision if religious ideology and soteriology are taken seriously (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler 2006). For those who joined, the costs were outweighed by what Azzam argued were the spiritual benefits. Within a SMT framework, attaching his narrative to religious tenets conforms to the principle of connectedness, which suggests that social mobilisation efforts are more effective when they leverage the structure of people's networks of relationships and the platforms that maintain those networks (Rogers, Goldstein and Fox 2018). Azzam utilised the transnational Muslim *ummah*, in the hope that his audience would spread this narrative as 'true Islam' within their social networks, enhancing the likelihood that they would mobilise *en mass*.

The obligation of jihad and need to achieve taqwa

The theme of obligatory jihad sees Azzam argue that the precise conditions for an obligatory militant response had been met under Islamic law because Soviet troops had invaded Muslim lands. In Islamic law there are two basic forms of obligation: that fulfilled by the community (*fard kifaya),* and individual obligations such as praying and fasting (*fard*

ayn). Azzam argued that defensive jihad (the defence of Muslim lands) was *fard ayn* (meaning a compulsory duty incumbent upon all Muslims).[3]

Within a SMT framework, identity relevant strategies are reflected in these themes. These strategies align the desired behaviours (in this case, joining the jihad in Afghanistan) with the ways people see themselves or would like to see themselves (i.e., as 'true Muslims') (Rogers et al., 2018). For example, Azzam emphasises that engaging in jihad is the only way to fulfil religious obligation as a Muslim and to achieve *taqwa* (piety). *Defence of Muslim Lands* (1984) is also presented as a fatwa, or religious edict, Azzam utilised his network to have the text endorsed by leading clerical names. This endorsement was made possible in the context of a politically charged decade where anti-communist sentiment was at a peak which expanded Azzam's audience for his narrative (Aboul-Enein 2008). Table 2 shows the prevalence of Azzam's use of obligatory jihad and details the related basic themes.

---

[3] This radical view of jihad was first espoused by Ibn Taymiyyah around 1258 CE (656 AH) and centres on the need for all Muslims to collectively respond to attacks on Muslim territory.
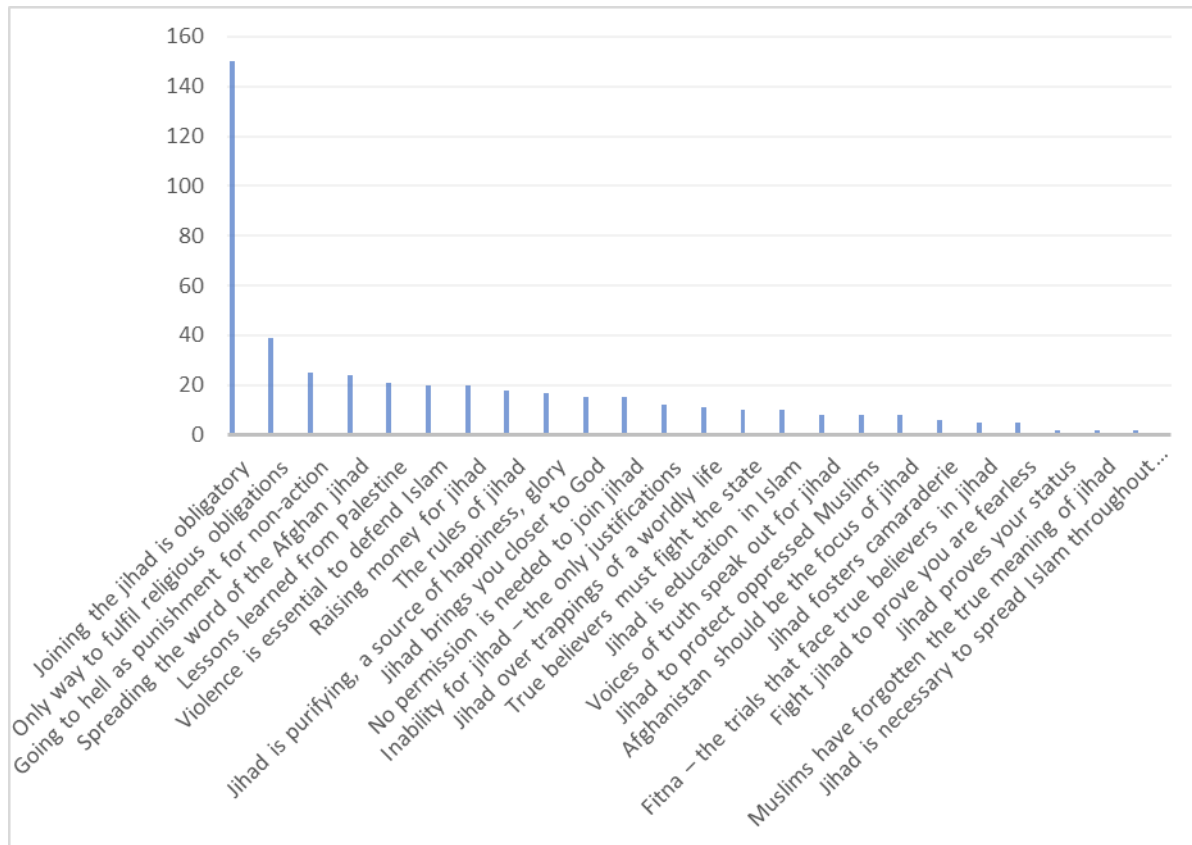
Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

Table 2. Prevalence of obligatory jihad and associated sub-themes

Establishing status and credibility

Rhetorical ability has been highlighted as an important component of successful social mobilisation (McClenon 1988) and Azzam appears to have been aware of the need to be seen as a credible source. Azzam was aware that the acceptance of his ideology as true Islam was heavily influenced by perceptions about his credibility as an interpreter of Islam. The audience may have mobilised because they took the content of Azzam's narrative seriously, believing he presented the exclusive strategy to salvation (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler 2006). For instances, his references to his own militant activities through his youth, his presence in Afghanistan, and references to classical Islamic texts which he argues are the only reliable and validated sources.

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

Close analysis of Azzam's narratives reveals that whilst he does speak about his own experiences of statelessness and exile on occasion, these were not the most prominent ways that he attempted to establish credibility. Table 4 shows the most prominent themes associated with Azzam's attempts at providing status and credibility.
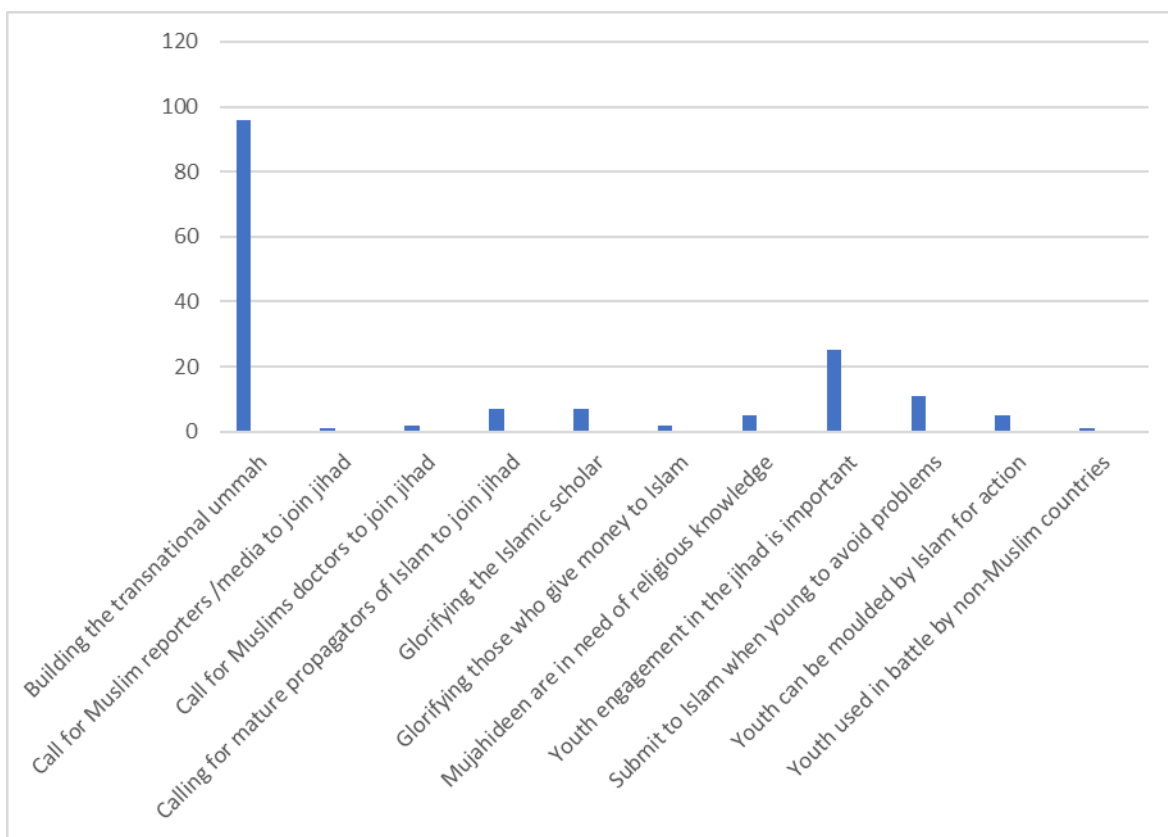

Table 3. Prevalence of building the transnational *ummah* and associated sub-themes
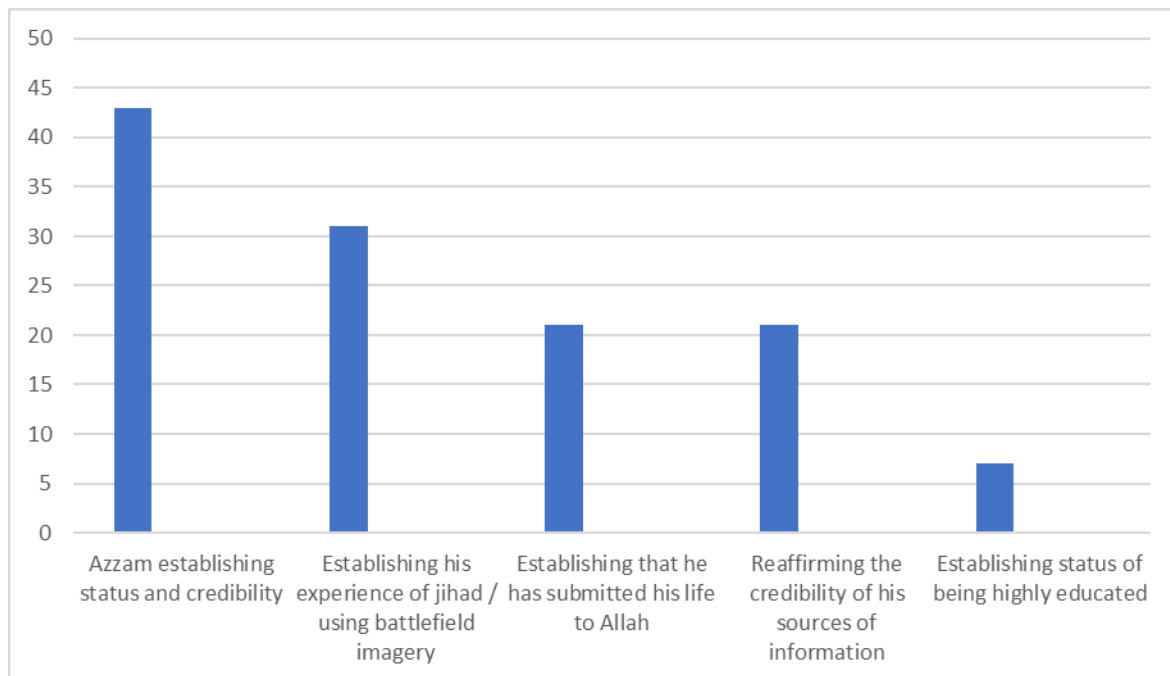
Table 4. Prevalence of establishing status and credibility and associated sub-themes

Azzam's narrative structure ensured the benefits of mobilisation always outweigh the potential costs. For those who accepted his message, a refusal to engage in the high cost/risk decision to join the jihad was a violation of self-interest because non-action was a sin and would lead to eternity in *Jahannam* (Hell). The identified themes also suggest Azzam was aware of the audience weighing of pros and cons of joining jihad. For example, Azzam provided direction for how his audience should deal with opponents to his narrative; those who disagreed were asleep, apathetic, or actively hostile toward Islam.

Religious miracles and the glorification of mujahideen and shaheeds

As illustrated in Table 1, Azzam used stories of religious miracles in Afghanistan to highlight that the conflict was God's will. For instance, his book *The signs of Allah the Most Merciful Ar-Rahmaan in the Jihad of Afghanistan* (1983) focuses solely on documenting eye-witness accounts of miracles which occurred in Afghanistan. Azzam links these miracles to those described in the Quran to further connect jihad within the context of Islam. This theme

also sought to eradicate any fear of engaging in armed conflict, lowering the potential cost to those who mobilise. Azzam does this by emphasising how Allah protected the mujahideen and warned of oncoming attacks, and that Allah provided resources to mujahideen fighters when they were most in need. Similarly, the martyrs (*shaheed*) are described as living forever in paradise because of their noble deeds. Their death is framed as further evidence of divine intervention, with Azzam describing the bodies as smelling of musk, weeping, smiling, continuing to bleed, and impervious to decomposition.

Yet the mobilising potential of religious miracles is not well explained within a SMT framework. The use of nontangible spiritual incentives has been highlighted as playing an important part in the cost/benefit analysis of attracting participants to religious wars (see Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler 2006). For example, this can include the promise of special favours from Allah and entrance to paradise. However, Azzam's emphasis of religious miracles as a mobilising theme falls outside this scope. This is because stories of miracles do not directly promise anything to the audience. The function of these stories in the mobilisation of participants appears to be through enchantment and providing further proof of the divine nature of the war, that the Afghan people were blessed, and encouraging the endurance of those already involved.

This finding highlights one problem in the underlying assumptions of SMT: that principles of mobilisation serve rational, or at lease functional, ends. Consequently, it is useful to enhance SMT by referring to ways of understanding behavioural motivation in non-functionalist terms. When analysing religious cultures set apart from a Western enlightenment process, then, there is strong utility in considering non-functionalist paradigms. As noted by Saniotis (2005, p. 538):

> In the case of jihadists, their actions seek to re-enchant the world with sacred meaning. Thus, in Weberian terms, violence 'creates a pathos and a sentiment' for invoking the sacred. In other words, violence becomes a means of achieving mystical mastery or restoring the power of the sacred cosmos in an otherwise 'disenchanted world,' characterised by 'rationalisation' and 'secularisation'.

In applying this premise, Azzam's use of religious miracles re-enchants the world, and enhances the audience's belief in a cosmic religious war played out on earth. Tracing this struggle through to the current war, Azzam's descriptions of the violent interventions of God during battle and the symbolic imagery of shaheeds smiling and smelling of musk, are designed to inspire and terrify his audience. Whilst not accounted for by SMT, ultimately this re-enchantment of the world is crucial to the success of Azzam's narrative in mobilising support for religious war.

Statelessness

The theme of statelessness was used primarily as supporting evidence for the notion that Islam was under attack. A description of Azzam's use of statelessness and associated basic themes is found in Table 6. Azzam referenced the occupation and disappearance of Muslim lands, argued that jihad would serve to protect from the displacement of the Muslim *ummah*, described the plight of Afghan refugees, and condemned nationalism and the symbolism of Muslims wanting Western passports.
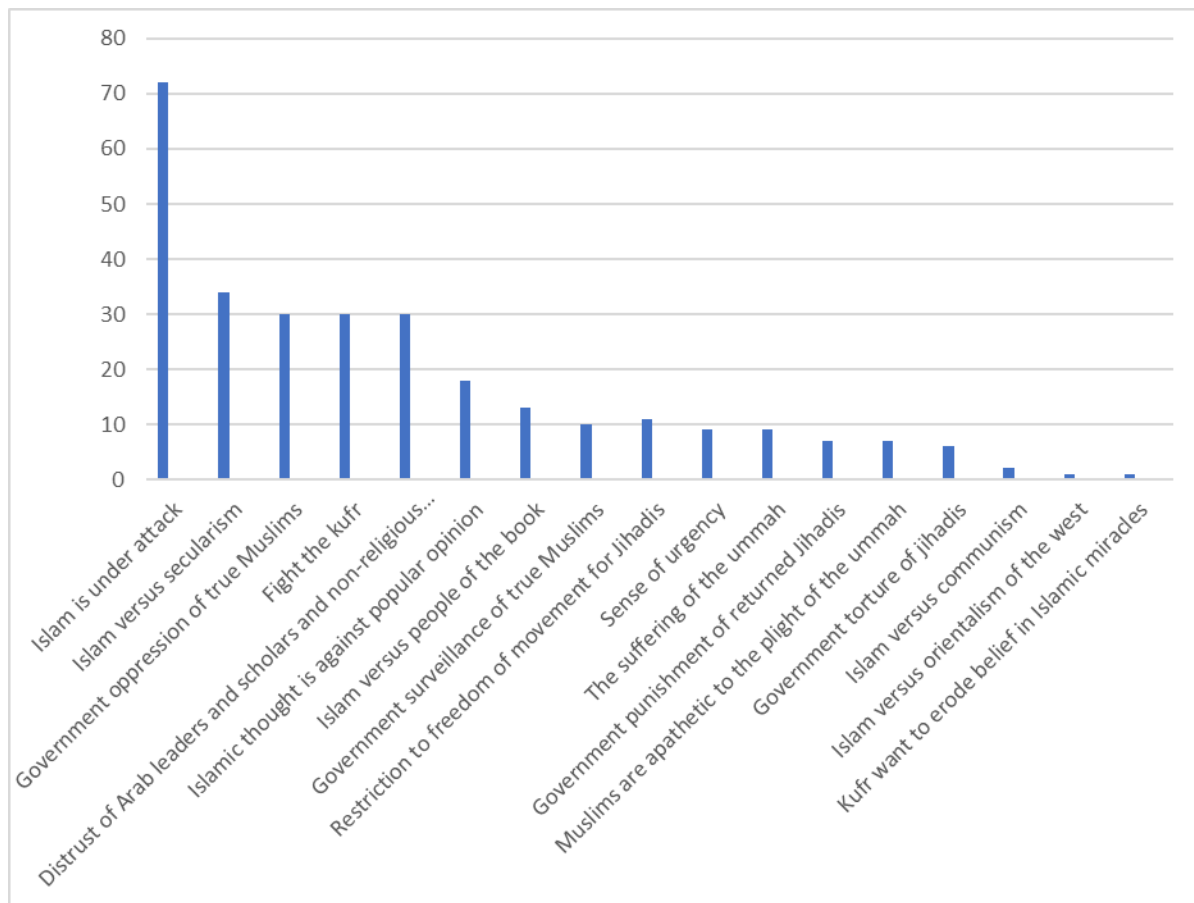
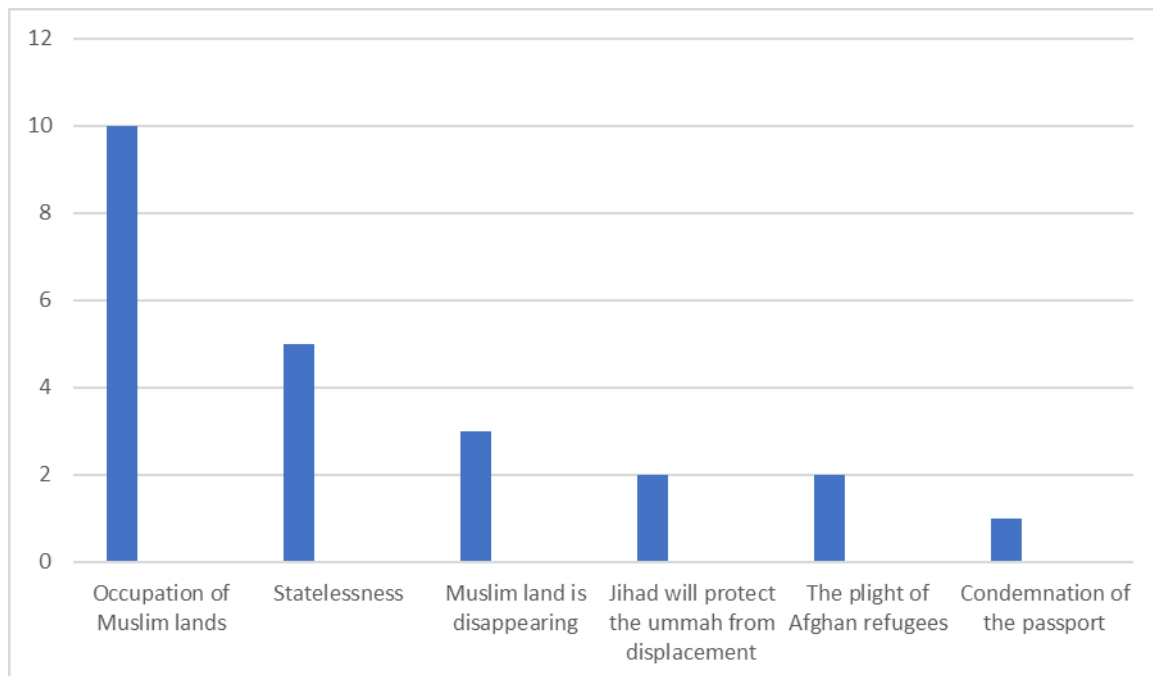Table 5. Prevalence of 'Islam is under attack' and associated sub-themes

Table 6. Statelessness and associated sub themes

That the *ummah* had no homeland and were also losing Muslim land is highlighted in such quotes as:

> ...many times, I would ask my students: 'Who is more powerful: Allah, or America?' Confused, they would answer: 'Allah, of course.' […] I would say: 'By Allah, had the Arab governments believed that Allah is more powerful than Israel - which is weaker than America - they would not have abandoned their religion in such a manner, and they would not have had such fear of Israel (From the Words of Abdullah Azzam: How to Deal With Allah, p. 22).

It is worth noting that within the basic theme of 'occupation of Muslim lands', Azzam draws on personal experience, discussing the impact the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land had on his life. Within his text Hamas Historical Roots and Charter (1989), he states: "I

followed the events of the expulsion of the Palestinian people from Jordan to Syria, and then their eviction from Syria and their gathering in Lebanon" (p. 3).

Azzam also uses the plight of Palestine as an occupied territory as a warning, drawing parallels to the invasion of Afghanistan, stating:

> If only the Muslims had fought in Palestine, in spite of the corruption that was present in the early stages, and before the situation had become aggravated with the arrival of George Habash, Naif Hawatma, Father Capici and their likes, Palestine would not have been lost (Memories of Palestine 1989, p. 4).

Azzam rarely drew on his own experience as a stateless person unlike the theme of exile. Instead, he told stories involving other mujahideen or stories from the Quran, linking the theme to religious motivation. His connection to a Muslim identity appears to have held more significance towards his worldview than his Palestinian heritage, emphasised by limited acknowledgements to his own Palestinian identity. Furthermore, Azzam's narrative does not focus on his own experience of statelessness. This is despite Azzam's refugee status and statelessness (Hegghammer 2020; Lea-Henry 2018; Aboul-Enein 2008).

Loss of citizenship

Azzam also frames 'expulsion' in religious terms and argues that the only way for the success of the jihad and the Islamic awakening is through suffering and hardship. This basic theme was also used as supporting evidence for the claim that Islam was under attack. A description of Azzam's use of these is found in Table 7.

Table 7. Themes associated with Revocation of citizenship

The need for action as being relevant to an individual's identity is also highlighted within this theme. In particular, Azzam uses the strategy of hypocrisy avoidance. That is, when people become aware that their behaviours have been inconsistent with a desirable identity, they can be especially likely to subsequently perform identity-consistent behaviour (Rogers et al., 2018). Azzam suggests that those who speak or act against Islam must be exiled or subjected to another punishment at the hands of true believers. The need to accept his interpretation of religious jurisprudence is therefore key to the audience proving themselves as true believers.

Journeying from place to place is a theme within Azzam's narrative and is framed as being reflective of the resilience and strength of a true believer committed to the defence of Islam. Azzam implies that being 'expelled' is a normal experience of Muslims throughout the history of Islam. Thus, the jihad in Afghanistan is framed as an extension of this same narrative of the Muslim *ummah*, and that Islam is still under attack.

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

To Azzam, the goal of jihad is obtaining an Islamic homeland, or Islamic state, from which the faithful can continue to propagate the religion, and from which the stateless *ummah* cannot be expelled. Within Azzam's narrative, the land is only important as it serves the function of allowing the religion to grow, strengthen, and improve itself as opposed to any sense of identity fostered through the traditional notion of citizenship or nationalism. He simultaneously argues the only way for the Islamic awakening to occur, and for success in jihad, is through suffering and hardship, and that this suffering is directly referenced in the Quran as being part of the path to success.

Discussion

A series of principles central to social mobilisation processes can been identified in Azzam's writings. Azzam clearly and consistently attached his mobilising narrative to concepts taken from Islamic jurisprudence and the wider religio-political debates current among Muslim communities at the time. Five key SMT principles have been identified in the seminal work of Rogers, Goldstein and Fox (2018), who argue that mobilisation efforts tend to be more effective if the messaging speaks to people's sense of connectedness (Connected), where messaging is personalised (Personal), where reputation relevant behaviour is observable (Accountable), when group norms are conveyed (Normative), and where behaviour aligns with the way people see themselves (Identity-Relevant). The final stage of the coding analysis used an iterative approach to matching the SMT principal to the themes. This was achieved by analysing the fit between the SMT definitions and the content of basic themes (see *Figure 2*).

Azzam's work reflects each of these SMT principles as identified below:

- Connected: Muslims are framed collectively as being part of the transnational *ummah*. Azzam's narrative was also spread via established Muslim religious networks.

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

- Personal: Azzam used personal interactions, via his sermons to highlight the potential benefits and beneficiaries of mobilisation, and enhance the effectiveness of his narrative (e.g., synchrony, or using coordinated behaviours, is emphasised through his recounted battlefront stories glorifying the mujahideen who are working together, enhancing their social bonds and collective identities).

- Normative: Azzam establishes his religious authority and dictates the audience expectations of community approval and disapproval of joining the Afghan jihad, as it is framed as an obligation for all true Muslims (otherwise titled 'injunctive norm salience' (Rogers et al., 2018).

- Accountable: Azzam emphasises that God is omniscient and will hold those unwilling to join the jihad accountable (e.g., spreading the word of the Afghan Jihad, hell as punishment for non-action).

- Identity-relevant: Azzam emphasises a shared threat to the *ummah* stemming from the unjust treatment to those who share that identity. He also emphasises the supposed illegitimacy of Muslim scholars and others who are unwilling to join or are speaking out against the Afghan Jihad.

Azzam successfully mobilised individuals to violence through a collective argument based upon his interpretation of religious principles. His overall narrative was that Islam as a collective, and the individual Muslims who make it up, were under global attack and so needed to wage a defensive yet violent counterattack (as seen in Figure 2 and Table 5). This sense of individual and collective vulnerability could be countered through the cultivation of a transnational religious affiliation through which engaging in violent jihad became a collective group identity and obligation. The claimed necessity of participating in jihad was a form of collective action that resulted in broad social goods for the world's Muslims, but also in the dutiful fulfilment of obligation by the individual despite high personal risks and costs. At a communal level this would result in the creation of a transnational Muslim community through the creation of an Islamic homeland or 'state'. At a personal level, it would result in a

reaffirmation of the faith and hopeful attainment of spiritual rewards in this and the next life. Both these communal and personal benefits were contrasted with the undesirability of the current 'stateless' and vulnerable nature of the world's Muslims. Throughout, Azzam was careful to frame his message in a way to demonstrate his supposed authenticity and credentials as a learned and trusted religious authority (as seen in Table 4). Finally, this entire narrative was given credibility through accounts of religious miracles and enchantments that supposedly accompanied the glorification and martyrdom of mujahideen and shaheeds.

Clearly, Azzam, taken as a case study, demonstrates that religious narratives espoused by spiritual sanctioners and ideologues can provide a narrative framework capable of mobilising individuals towards violent collective action, particularly when drawing on elements of communal and individual religious duty. Indeed, previous work on spiritual sanctioners and ideologues has shown that they can be of high importance in Salafi-jihadist social networks, (Lia 2009; al-Saud 2018; Winter and al-Saud 2016), but not why this is the case. For instance, Klausen (2021) in a study on 350 jihadists in Western states found that fewer than 10 percent were Muslim converts, but around 80 percent were connected to social networks that could be traced back to one of four prominent Islamist leaders in London. Clearly, social networks influenced by spiritual sanctioners are important in the adoption of Salafi-jihadist inspired terrorism as a social process. However, through a close thematic analysis of their narratives, and consideration of how these serve to mobilise individuals, we see that their influence extends beyond knitting together social networks to providing crucial ideological and religious inspiration and instruction. This religious inspiration allows individuals to act in ways that may be counter to their interests and on behalf of the collective group and the wider principles it embodies.

SMT provides a useful lens through which to observe exactly how Azzam wielded religious themes, as his narratives emphasise the key idea that individuals must face high risks and costs because of a group obligation that God demands as a condition for higher spiritual reward (Table 2). However, this study has also identified problems with the application of SMT to the religious mobilisation of violent extremists, particularly in the seemingly

anomalous use of hagiographies of martyrs and stories of the miraculous. Azzam's use of religious miracles to mobilise his audience is an important, if little understood, feature of his narrative, and one that is unable to be fully understood through a social mobilisation theory lens alone. This is because SMT does not make provision for how signs of the divine or miraculous can bestow a perception of legitimacy upon an individual or cause. A modification to social mobilisation theory's functionalist framework to allow for irrational factors of 'enchantment' would allow a more nuanced understanding of narratives inspiring jihadism, and perhaps religiously motivated violence more broadly.

The adoption of SMT to the works of a successful terrorist ideologue and recruiter demonstrates one way that religion can play a significant role in an individual's pathway to violence. This has implications for how processes of individual radicalisation are conceived, and their relationship to wider currents of group mobilisation that are the common concern of terrorist propaganda. An examination of Azzam suggests that even if an individual's motivations towards violent extremism is highly context-specific, shared violent religious concepts such as jihad and martyrdom can be presented as a common solution and play a role in group and individual mobilisation. Indeed, groups such as AQ, IS, and Hezbollah have a long tradition of successfully linking historical and political grievances with current affairs and a religious framework of meaning to attract recruits. For one example among many, Hezbollah deliberately coined the use of *taklif shari* (religious duty) in their attempts to mobilise individuals to fight in Syria, using religion as a rhetorical framework to achieve pragmatic political outcomes (Farida 2020).

This study has shown that religious sanctioners such as Azzam serve an important function in presenting a religious ideology that enables groups and individuals. However, it is important to note that narratives have the potential to persuade independent of context (Braddock and Horgan 2015). Therefore, understanding the ways narratives are effective at persuading has significant implications for the work of preventing and countering violent extremism practitioners (P/CVE). For example, understanding how narratives persuade assists in constructing effective counter narratives (Braddock and Horgan 2015), and in developing

inoculation strategies so that audiences are better equipped to challenge perceptions of credibility of groups across the spectrum of violent extremism (Braddock 2022; Saleh, Roozenbeek et al., 2021), and build resistance to disinformation (Lewandowsky and Yesilada 2021). Indeed, research has stressed the care and complexity needed to design and evaluate narrative-based interventions within P/CVE, with a 2020 systematic review finding limited evidence to support the claims of counter-narrative effectiveness at reducing intent to act violently (Carthy et al., 2020). Another review highlighted that disinformation susceptibility is poorly linked to basic psychological theory and existing theoretical models (Ziemer and Rothmund 2022).

That said, there is the necessity of bringing issues of religious narratives (or, if preferred, 'ideology') back into discussions about pathways into and away from terrorist violence (Dawson 2019; 2021). But this needs to be done in a sensitive and nuanced manner that highlights the role of specific influential ideologues. Education about the normative versus the deviant manifestations of a religion, and engaging in discussions about the role that religious ideologues can play in religious mobilization, would allow policymakers and practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that may contribute to radicalisation and violent extremism. Practitioner education and discussion about religious ideologues would, for example, promote the development of more targeted counter-narratives that challenge influential texts produced by ideologues rather than broader religious concepts or principles (Zeiger 2016). A more comprehensive understanding of the role played by the narratives espoused by religious ideologues would also help identify the interrelationship of root causes, such as social, political, and ideological grievances, which can then inform more targeted forms of intervention to address these issues effectively.

Second is the need for industry practitioners to incorporate a consideration of key ideological texts and their refutation, particularly as they impact communal group outcomes. Religious mobilization to violence involves the interpretation and dissemination of influential religious texts that proclaim the sanctity of violent collective action. Countering violent extremism disengagement programs could be enhanced through a consideration of how to

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

refute the dynamics of religious mobilisation as expressed in these influential texts. Multidisciplinary teams within law enforcement, corrections, or government P/CVE programs would be one way of creating institutional capacity to raise awareness and incite discussions about pernicious and deviant religious narratives and the establishing of counter narratives. Enhancing ways to include the input and expert advice from religious professionals would build capacity through which the nuances of religious teachings can be clarified, misinterpretations can be addressed, and the negative impact on the wider group that results from following such misguided narratives be illustrated (Mandaville and Nozell 2017). This would allow for an in-depth critical examination and deconstruction of extremist ideologies that goes beyond general discussion about 'religious extremism'. By highlighting the flaws, inconsistencies, or misinterpretations contained within influential narratives by key ideologues, particularly at the level of group outcomes, CVE practitioners would better undermine the legitimacy of extremist ideologies and prevent their further spread.

However, any practitioner consideration of the role of religious ideologues and narratives needs to be done in a sensitive manner that does not conflate deviant manifestations of a religious ideology as espoused by maverick individuals with a religion's normative and non-violent mainstream. The history of P/CVE interventions includes examples where whole religions and their congregations have been conflated with extremism and terrorism leading to the heightened surveillance, marginalization, and the subjugation of whole communities (Reichenbach 2020; Mastroe 2016). Focussing discussions and programs on the works and roles of deviant ideologues, rather than the religion per say, would mitigate the risk of such conflation.

Although necessary, the countering of extremist religious narratives by policymakers also contains significant challenges and risks. For instance, it is important to repeat that not all religiously inspired terrorists are necessarily inspired by religion. An awareness of the role spiritual sanctioners and ideologues can play in radicalisation in no way supplants the consideration of other social, behavioural, and ideological drivers. Practitioner debates that oscillate between claiming religion as a primary motivation or not of violent extremism miss

the point that religious mobilisation at the communal level is one factor among many, albeit one that may be deeply rooted in the identities of many extremists.

Another challenge implicit in the consideration of the religious drivers to terrorist mobilisation is that it necessitates an acknowledgement of the irrational aspects of some people's attraction to violent extremism. This acknowledgement and acceptance of the irrational and fantastical aspects of religion, and the possible role that the adoption of violent extremism may play in re-enchanting an individual's worldview, may be challenging for western institutions and policymakers to factor and respond to (Owen and Anael 2018). It may also be legally and culturally difficult for P/CVE policy to make pronouncements on religious doctrine in many western jurisdictions because of separations of church and state and the reluctance of government to make pronouncements on the 'correct' interpretation of any one religion. However, understanding the role of the irrational, even 'spiritual', in movements such as the call to join the mujahideen in Afghanistan, or the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, provides a useful perspective on the gratifications militant religiosity holds for some individuals, and how these gratifications may need to be fulfilled in pro-social and non-violent ways during and after processes of deradicalisation or disengagement.

Finally, there is need to contextualise this research and any practical considerations that stem from it beyond a solely Islamic focus. The present case study of Abdullah Azzam pertains to a particular religious ideology, Salafi-Jihadism, in the context of Islamic mobilisation. Further research needs to be conducted to determine the extent to which spiritual sanctifiers and ideologues from non-Islamic religions successfully use violent mobilizing narratives to incite individuals to violence. If found to be present, industry education about violent and deviant currents within major religious traditions would need to be expanded beyond crude 'concerns' about Islam, to include the other monotheistic religions (Judaism and Christianity), as well as Hinduism and Buddhism. Each religion includes violent political manifestations of its faith as espoused and promulgated by extremist ideologues (Juergensmeyer 2017), and contains communities mobilised and motivated by religious fever.

Conclusion

Although religion remains a difficult and contested term to apply to discussions around radicalisation and mobilisation to violent extremism, a structured thematic examination of the work of Abdullah Azzam demonstrates how his religious narratives were used to mobilise individuals towards violent ends. This is useful for a re-balancing of academic debates about the role that religion can play in people's pathways into violent extremism and terrorism.

Throughout this study, we have underscored the importance of understanding the role of religious ideologues in these pathways. These findings also serve to fill gaps in our understanding of how their narratives can garner support and mobilise their audience to violence by highlighting the utility of Social Mobilisation Theory. Analysis of the work of Azzam reveals the presence of the key principles of social mobilisation and demonstrates that SMT provides utility in developing our understanding of how these narratives mobilise their audience. Future research should seek to better understand the mobilising effect of the more fantastical and irrational elements of religious narratives, including the use of miracles.

The adaptation of SMT principles presented in this study has the potential to increase their applicability in our ongoing efforts to understand religiously inspired mobilisation. These novel results further reinforce the importance of P/CVE policymakers and practitioners having a thorough understanding of the works of ideologues such as Azzam, and nuanced methods of incorporating informed counter narratives and perspectives.

References

Aboul-Enein, Y. (2008). *The Late Sheikh Abdullah Azzam's Books: Radical Theories on Defending Muslim Land through Jihad*. Military Academy West Point NY Combating Terrorism Center.

Alimi, E. Y., & Johnston, H. (2014). Contentious Interactions, Dynamics of Interpretation, and Radicalization: The Islamization of Palestinian Nationalism. In L. Bosi, C. Demetriou, and S. Malthaner (Eds.), *Dynamics of Political Violence: A Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict*, (169–188). London: Ashgate.

al-Saud, A. (2018). The spiritual teacher and his truants: The influence and relevance of Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi'. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 41(9), 736-754.

Attridge-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *1*(3), 385–405.

Baker, P., Vessey, R., & McEnery, T. (2021). *The Language of Violent Jihad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bartlett, J., & Miller, C. (2012). The edge of violence: Towards telling the difference between violent and non- violent radicalization. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24 (1), 1– 21.

Braddock, K. (2022). Vaccinating Against Hate: Using Attitudinal Inoculation to Confer Resistance to Persuasion by Extremist Propaganda. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 34*(2), 240-262. doi:10.1080/09546553.2019.1693370.

Braddock, K., & Horgan, J. (2015). Towards a guide for constructing and disseminating counter-narratives to reduce support for terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 39*(5), 381-404. doi:10.1080/1057610X.2015.1116277.

Carthy, S. L., Doody, C. B., Cox, K., O'Hora, D., & Sarma, K. M. (2020). Counter-narratives for the prevention of violent radicalisation: A systematic review of targeted interventions. *Campbell Systematic Reviews, 16*(3), e1106. doi:10.1002/cl2.1106

Chapman, A. L., Hadfield, M., & Chapman, C. J. (2015). Qualitative research in healthcare: an introduction to grounded theory using thematic analysis. *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 45(3), 201-205.

Cook D. (2007). *Martyrdom in Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Dawson, L. (2019). Taking Terrorist Accounts of their Motivations Seriously. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 13(5), 74-89.

Dawson, L. (2021). Bringing religiosity back in: Critical reflection on the explanation of Western homegrown religious terrorism. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 15(2).

Della Porta, D. (2018). Radicalizaiton: A Relational Perspective. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21, 461- 474.

de la Paz, A. (2022). The Genesis of Miracle Stories in Jihad. *International Studies Quarterly, 66*(4). doi:10.1093/isq/sqac078

Devine, J., Brown, G., & Deneulin, S. (2015). Contesting the boundaries of religion in social mobilization. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 10(1), 22–47.

Droogan, J., & Peattie, S. (2017). Mapping the thematic landscape of Dabiq magazine. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 71(6), 591-620.

Droogan, J., & Peattie, S. (2018). Reading jihad: Mapping the shifting themes of Inspire magazine. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 30(4), 684–717.

Emanuilov, R., & Yashlavsky, A. (2011). *Terror in the Name of Faith*. Academic Studies Press.

Farida, M. (2018). Adopting religion to meet political goals: the case of Hizbullah. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, *13*(3), 316–331.

Farida, M. (2020). *Religion and Hezbollah: Political Ideology and Legitimacy* (1st ed.). Milton: Routledge.

Gartenstien-Ross, D. & Grossman, L. (2009). *Homegrown Terrorists in the U.S. and U.K.: An Empirical Examination of the Radicalization Process*. FDD Press.

Gunning, J., & Jackson, R. (2011). What's so 'religious' about 'religious terrorism'? *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 4(3), 369-388.

Hassan, M. H. (2012). Jihad ideas of 'Abd Allah 'Azzam and their implications for national security (Doctoral dissertation).

Hegghammer, T. (2020). *The Caravan: Abdallah Azzam and the Rise of Global Jihad*. Cambridge University Press.

Holbrook, D., & Horgan, J. (2019). Terrorism and Ideology: Cracking the Nut. *Perspectives on Terrorism, 13*(6), 2-15.

Ingram, H.J. (2016). An analysis of Islamic State's Dabiq magazine. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 51(3), 485-477.

Johnston, H., and J. A. Noakes, eds. (2005). *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Juergensmeyer, M. (2017). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. University of California Press.

Klausen, J. (2021). *Western Jihadism: A Thirty Year History*. Oxford University Press.

Lea-Henry, J. (2018). The life and death of Abdullah Azzam. *Middle East Policy*, 25(1), 64-79.

Lewandowsky, S., & Yesilada, M. (2021). Inoculating against the spread of Islamophobic and radical-Islamist disinformation. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications, 6*(1), 57. doi:10.1186/s41235-021-00323-z.

Li, D. (2012). Taking the place of martyrs: Afghans and Arabs under the banner of Islam. *Arab Studies Journal*, 20(1), 12-39.

Lia, B. (2009). *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri'*, Oxford University Press.

Lindvall, E. (2018). "They're coming for our games": A study of far-right social mobilization in the gaming community (Master's thesis).

Mandaville, P., & Nozell, M. (2017*). Engaging Religion and Religious Actors in Countering Violent Extremism*. Special Report 413. United States Institute of Peace.

Mabry, T. J. (2015). Nationalism, Language, and Islam. In Nationalism, Language, and Muslim Exceptionalism (pp. 197-210). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Mastroe, C. (2016). Evaluating CVE: Understanding the recent changes to the United Kingdom's implementation of Prevent. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 10(2), 50-60.

Maliach, A. (2010). Abdullah Azzam, al-Qaeda, and Hamas: Concepts of Jihad and Istishhad. *ואסטרטגיה צבא*., 2(2), 79-93.

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

Maliach, A. (2017). 'Abdullah 'Azzām - The Ideology behind Al-Qā 'ida 1. In *Faith, War, and Violence* (pp. 1-23). Routledge.

McClenon, J. (1988). Terrorism as persuasion: Possibilities and trends. *Sociological Focus*, 21(1), 53-66.

McGregor, A. (2003). Jihad and the rifle alone: 'Abdullah 'Azzam and the Islamist revolution. *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 23(2).

Müller, M. (2019). Signs of the merciful: 'Abdullah 'Azzam (d. 1989) and the sacralization of history in Jihadist literature, 1982–2002. *Journal of Religion and Violence*, 7(2), 91-127.

Neumann, K., Arendt, F., & Baugut, P. (2018). News and Islamist radicalization processes: Investigating Muslims' perceptions of negative news coverage of Islam. *Mass Communication and Society*, *21*(4), 498-523.

Neumann, P., Rogers, B., Alonso, R., Martinez, L. (2007). Recruitment and mobilisation for the Islamist militant movement in Europe. *The International Centre For the Study of Radicalisation And Political Violence*: Kings College London.

Owen, F., & Anael, J. (2018). Religion and the prevention of violent extremism: Five tips for Western governments on a religion-sensitive approach to PVE. *CSS Policy Perspectives* 6(6).

Ramsay, G. (2023). Online Jihadi storytelling: The case of Najm al-Din Azad. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 46(3), 229-248.

Reichenbach, S. (2020). CVE and constitutionality in the Twin Cities: How countering violent extremism threatens the equal protection rights of American Muslims in Minneapolis-St. Paul. *American University Law Review*, 69(6).

Rogers, T., Goldstein, N.J., Fox, C.R. (2018). Social mobilisation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 69(1), 357-381.

Saniotis, A. (2005). Re-Enchanting Terrorism: Jihadists as 'Liminal Beings'. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 28(6), 533–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500236907.

Saleh, N. F., Roozenbeek, J. O. N., Makki, F. A., McClanahan, W. P., & Van Der Linden, S. (2021). Active inoculation boosts attitudinal resistance against extremist persuasion techniques: a novel approach towards the prevention of violent extremism. *Behavioural Public Policy*, 1-24. doi:10.1017/bpp.2020.60

Schnelle, S. (2012). Abdullah Azzam, ideologue of Jihad: Freedom fighter or terrorist? *Journal of Church and State*, 54(4), 625-647.

Snow, D. A. 2013. Framing and Social Movements. In D. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, and D.McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (pp. 470–475). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

van Stekelenburg, J. (2017). Radicalization and Violent Emotions. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 50*(4), 936-939. doi:10.1017/S1049096517001020

Wiktorowicz, Q., & Kaltenthaler, K. (2006). The rationality of radical Islam. *Political Science Quarterly*, 121(2), 295-319.

Winter, C., & al-Saud, A. (2016). The obscure theologian who shaped ISIS. *The Atlantic*, 4 December. www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/12/isis-muhajir-syria/509399/

Zeiger, S. (2016). *Counter-Narratives for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in South East Asia*. Hedaya.

Ziemer, C.-T., & Rothmund, T. (2022). Psychological Underpinnings of Disinformation Countermeasures: A Systematic Scoping Review. *Psyarxiv Preprint*. doi:https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/scq5v.

Primary Sources

Booklets:

Azzam, A. Translated by Hegghammer, T., & Soliman, A. N. (2013). Memories of Palestine (ca. 1989). *Die Welt des Islams*, *53*(3-4), 460-465.

Azzam, A. Translated by Hegghammer, T., & Soliman, A. N. (2013). Ḥamās: Historical Roots and Charter (1989). *Die Welt des Islams*, *53*(3-4), 452-459.

Azzam, A. The Virtues of Martyrdom in the Path of Allah. In *The Martyrs of Afghanistan (pp. 81-88).* Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

Azzam, A. 1988. *The Lofty Mountain*. Retrieved 14/3/2020 from: [https://islamfuture.wordpress.com/2009/08/06/the-lofty-mountain/].

Azzam, A. *What goes around comes around.* Extracts from postings originally released by Azzam Publications. Retrieved 13/3/2020 from http://www.ummah.com/forum/archive/index.php/t180499.html.

Azzam, A. 1985. Martyrs: The Building Blocks of Nations. In *The Martyrs of Afghanistan (pp. 174-177).* Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

Azzam, A. 1988. A Solid Base. *In Al-Jihad Magazine,* April 1988. Accessed 5/5/2020 at http://kronosadvisory.com/Kronos_InsideTheJihad_AlQaidaAlSubah.pdf (Azzam, 1988a)

Azzam, A. The hardest aspect of the hardest act of worship in Islam: Extract from Nida'ul-Islâm vol.5 issue 22 (16/6/2013). Accessed 27/4/2020 at https://muwahhidmedia.wordpress.com/2013/06/16/the-hardest-aspect-of-the-hardest-act-of-worship-in-islam/.

From the words of Abdullah Azzam. Accessed 27/4/2020 from https://adviceforparadise.com/books/82/

Azzam, A. *Al Jihad: Linguistically and legally.* Retrieved 27/4/2020 from: https://muwahhidmedia.wordpress.com/2013/09/08/al-jihad-linguistically-and-legally/

Azzam, A. 12/12/2011. *The Soul Shall Rise Tomorrow: The Story of Marwan Hadid.* Retrieved 1/3/2020 from http://themuskplatform.blogspot.com/2011/12/soul-shall-rise-tomorrow-story-of.html?m=1.

Azzam, A. On Jihad: Its etiquettes and rulings. Accessed 26/4/2020 at https://www.tamhussein.co.uk/2018/08/jihad-according-to-abdullah-azzam/

Azzam, A. *The Tawheed of Action.* Retrieved 14/3/2020 from Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

Azzam. A. Last Will and Testament. In *Declaration of War.* Retrieved 13/4/2020 from https://english.religion.info/2002/02/01/document-declaration-of-war-of-sheikh-usamah-bin-laden-and-testament-and-last-will-of-sheikh-abdullah-yusuf-azzam/

Azzam, A. *A Message to Every Youth*. Retrieved 14/3/2020 from Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

Azzam, A. 2010. What Jihad Taught Me. In Abu-Rabi' I. (Ed.), *The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam* (pp. 42-47). London; New York: Pluto Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctt183p55h.9

Azzam, A. *Join the Caravan* (1st edition, 1987; 2nd Edition, 1988). Retrieved 20/4/2020 from Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

Azzam, A. 1983. *The signs of Allah the Most Merciful Ar-Rahmaan in the Jihad of Afghanistan*. In *The Martyrs of Afghanistan (pp. 54-60).* Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

Azzam, A. *The Ruling on Meat Slaughtered in the West.* Retrieved 14/3/2020 from: [https://iskandrani.wordpress.com/category/books-pdfs/page/1/].

Azzam, A. *Being True with Allah*. Retrieved 14/3/2020 from: [https://iskandrani.wordpress.com/category/books-pdfs/page/1/]

Azzam, A. *The Scales of Allah*. Retrieved 14/3/2020 from: [https://iskandrani.wordpress.com/category/books-pdfs/page/1/]

Azzam, A. 1984. *Defence of Muslim Lands: The First Obligation After Iman.* Retrieved 23/4/2020 from Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

Azzam, A. *Yahya Senyor al-Jeddawi* (pdf), 1985. Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Abu Abdullah al-Ma'ribi* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

- *Abu Asim al-San'aani* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Abu Saa'id al-Jeddawi* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Abu Tayyib al-Maghribi* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Jamaludeen al-Jazairi* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Nasir al-Jazairi* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Salih al-Leebee* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

- *Shafeeq Ibrahim* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Shamsudeen al-Afghani* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

-*Yaseen al-Jazairi* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

- *Diraar ash-Sheeshani* (pdf), 1989, Jihadi Document Repository at FFI/UiO, Oslo.

YouTube:

[MadnessUponMadness]. (2009, Feb 22). *Abdullah Azzam - Punishment Of The Grave* [Video File]. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WpXPFliTC4&list=PL4A3F17CBB9CA3970&index=1

[MadnessUponMadness]. (2009, Feb 25). *Abdullah Azzam - Steadfastness On The Path Of Dawah* [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9X-Vrbgg6wI&list=PL4A3F17CBB9CA3970&index=3&t=72s.

[MadnessUponMadness]. (2009, Feb 21). *Abdullah Azzam - The Miracles of Allah amongst the Muslims* [Video File]. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02YHok5LNb4&list=PL4A3F17CBB9CA3970&index=5

[naqesat]. (2013, Apr 21). Abdullah Azzam – Jihad Fard Ayn or Fard Kafaayah [Video File]. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxiLCkqZCbQ&list=PLS7utvcMauMLT6nR89gk3zaTE6B0G5Wp6&index=5

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism

About the JD Journal for Deradicalization

For more information please see: www.journal-derad.com

Twitter: @JD_JournalDerad
Facebook: www.facebook.com/deradicalisation

The JD Journal for Deradicalization is a proud member of the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).

Editor in Chief: Daniel Koehler

Scott-Smith, Farida & Droogan: Religious Mobilisation to Terrorism