



ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

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ABSTRACT

This report examines Islamic radicalization in Massachusetts by applying an integrated analysis of the state's multi-faceted Muslim community. Given the historic and continued commitment to religious freedom in Massachusetts, instances of radicalization within the state are a unique phenomenon. This report begins with a very broad approach: The first section highlights the demographic make-up of the Muslim population of Massachusetts, as well as the history of the Islamic community. Next, the report examines the internal make-up of the Muslim population today – the groups, mosques, and Islamic centers. Finally, the paper narrows its focus, zeroing in on specific criminal proceedings and radicalization case studies. The findings reveal that the Muslim community of Massachusetts, while not immune to clashes with those outside the community and instances of radicalization, is generally tolerant, far-reaching, and embraced by other religious communities.

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

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INTRODUCTION

On April 15, 2013, when two bombs exploded during the Boston Marathon on historic Patriots Day, all eyes were on Massachusetts. The explosions, set off with pressure-cooker bombs, caused three casualties and over two hundred and fifty injuries – many of the victims requiring amputations. Immediately following the bombing in Boston, before the identities of the suspects were confirmed, the press and population of Massachusetts began to tie the acts of terror to Islam. Experts appeared on the airwaves and in news articles, informing the public on the dangers of “radicalization.” Indeed, the two brothers responsible were motivated by extremist Islamic beliefs.¹ These events, while making Islamic radicalization in Massachusetts a “hot topic” issue, should be placed within the larger and more historical context of a significant and generally peaceful community in a state founded on the ideal of religious tolerance. While this research examines this incident alongside other instances of Islamic radicalization in the state of Massachusetts, it should be stressed that religious pluralism is a foundational aspect of the state’s history and legislature.

The Islamic community of Massachusetts is far-reaching, well organized, and generally embraced by other religious communities, both within and outside the state. The history of this community dates back to the early 1900s when immigrants from Syria and Lebanon arrived in the town of Quincy, looking for work in the shipyards, the granite industry, and textile factories. Since the arrival of these first immigrants, the community has grown significantly, with its largest and most influential groups residing in the towns of Quincy and Sharon.

¹ Seelye, Katharine Q., Michael S. Schmidt, and William K. Rashbaum. "Surviving Suspect is Charged by U.S. in Boston Attack." *New York Times*, Apr 23, 2013.

The Islamic community of Massachusetts has often been used as an example of the establishment and growth of Islamic communities in the United States as a whole. Its saga of relations (both good and bad) with non-Muslim neighbors, its experiences facing threats, arson attacks, and zoning battles, and ultimately its successful relations with other communities of faith have paralleled the experiences of other American Muslim communities.² Furthermore, the community's religious practices are recognized within and protected by the state legislature; the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha (عيد الأضحى) *'Īd al-ʿAḍḥā*, "Feast of the Sacrifice"), celebrated to commemorate the prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son for God, for example, is a formal holiday in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.³ This does not mean, however, that the community is immune from radical influences.

The research described here examines the various elements of the Islamic community of Massachusetts, with a particular focus on the growth of Islamic radicalization in the state, and possible evidence of terrorist activity. First, the demographic make-up of the Muslim population of Massachusetts is examined, as well as the history of the Islamic community, focusing on tensions with the outside community. Next, this paper examines the internal make-up of the Muslim population today – the groups, mosques, and Islamic centers. Finally, the paper addresses trends of radicalization – potential dangers as well as known radical organizations and individuals, zeroing in on specific criminal proceedings and case studies.

² Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc,

³ Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (2013, August 23). "Statewide Legal Holidays, Other Holidays, and Major Religious Observances in Massachusetts ." The Official Website of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/resources/holidays.html>.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Although the U.S. Census does not collect information about religions, the highest estimates place the percentage of Muslims in the United States at about two percent of the population.⁴ The U.S. Muslim community represents immigrants from an estimated seventy-seven countries – creating an ethnically and racially diverse community. Pew surveys demonstrate that more than three-quarters of all Muslims in the United States are South Asians, Arabs, and African American, with the most significant differences lying between the immigrants and African American Muslims due to different styles of worship and world-views based on countries of origin.⁵

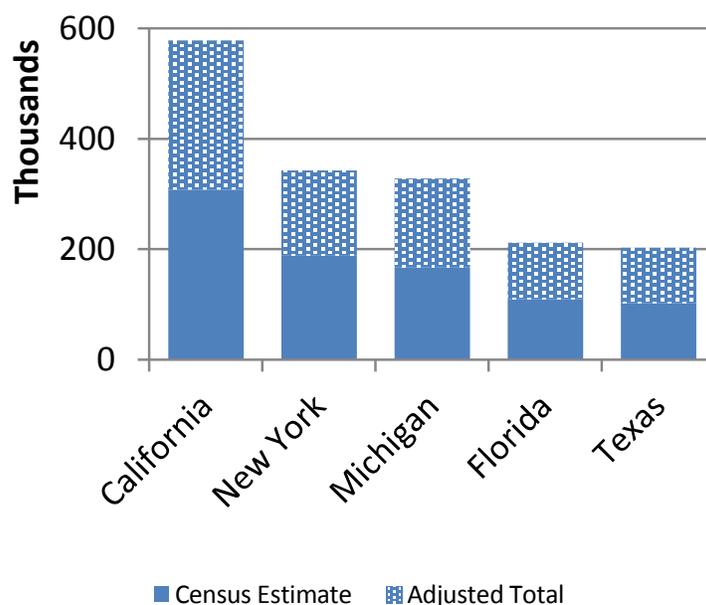
According to a 2011 US Census, Massachusetts is ranked 9th among states with the most Arab-American residents, with an estimated 65,150 individuals (See Figure 1 for the top five states). This estimate is more than double the first Census measurement of ethnic Arab-Americans in Massachusetts in 1980, showing that Massachusetts has had one of the fastest growing Arab populations in the country.⁶

⁴ Johnson, Toni. “Muslims in the United States.” *Backgrounders*, Council on Foreign Relations, September 19, 2011.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ State Profile: Massachusetts. 2011. Arab American Institute. Retrieved December 5, 2012, from http://www.aaiusa.org/index_ee.php/pages/state-profiles#massachusetts

Figure 1. States with Significant Arab-American Populations, 2010



2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates— U.S. Census Bureau

Immigration: According to the 2010 U.S. Census data the countries of origin of the largest number of new Arab immigrants to Massachusetts are Lebanon (6,235), Morocco (6,133), Egypt (4,048), Syria (1,872), and Iraq (1,150).⁷

Identification: The 2010 U.S. Census' ancestry question defines the primary ethnic identification of "Arab" as including Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Arab or Arabic. The Census defines "Other Arab" by the countries Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Arabic-speaking persons who identify as Assyrian/Chaldean, Somali or Sudanese, are not aggregated as Arab in Census reports. According to the 2010 Census, approximately 51% of Arab-Americans in Massachusetts

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. *2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*: U.S. Community Survey Office

have Lebanese roots, or still identify as Lebanese. Furthermore, since 1990 there have been significant increases in the number of residents who are of Moroccan and Egyptian descent. 8% of respondents identify as “Arab/Arabic.”⁸

Religion: However, it is important to note that not all Arabs are Muslims: In 2011, there were a total of 39 Mosques in Massachusetts.⁹ In 2010, the total number of Muslim adherents was 21,768, a 47.5% decrease from 2000.

Massachusetts Religious Traditions, 2010

	Congregations ¹⁰	Adherents ¹¹	Adherence Rate ¹²	% Change from 2000
Muslim Estimate	39	21,768	3.3	-47.5%

The Association of Religion Data Archives 2010¹³

HISTORY OF MUSLIM POPULATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

Small-scale migrations of Muslims to the United States took place from 1840, with the arrival of Yeminis and Turks, through World War I. Immigrants from Arab areas of the Ottoman Empire settled primarily in Dearborn, Michigan; Quincy, Massachusetts, and

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Defined by the researchers as groups of people who meet regularly at a pre-announced time and location.

¹¹ Defined by the researchers as those with an affiliation to a congregation including attendees, members, and children who are not members.

¹² Defined by the researchers as the number of Muslim adherents per 1,000 population

¹³ Association of Religion Data Archives. "State Membership Report: Massachusetts Religious Traditions, 2010."

Retrieved January 13, 2013, from

http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/s/25/rcms2010_25_state_name_2000_ON.asp

Ross, North Dakota.¹⁴ In the 1960s and 1970s mosques were largely located in urban centers and college towns supporting Muslim students. These students have since matured, dispersed around the country, and lead to a growth of mosques in small towns. In 2009, a Gallup poll placed the percentage of U.S. Muslims as the second-highest level of individual education brackets among major religious groups in the United States.¹⁵



Original Quincy Mosque, 1964¹⁶

The century from 1820 to 1920 was characterized by diverse European immigration to America. During this period Quincy grew from a town of 1,600 residents to a city of nearly 50,000, changing into an ethnically and religiously diverse community. Thus, the waves of immigrants who would change the composition of Quincy from 1820 to 1920

¹⁴ M'Bow, A. M. and A. M. Kettani. 2001. *Islam and Muslims in the American Continent*. Beirut: Center of Historical, Economical and Social Studies.

¹⁵ Johnson, Toni. "Muslims in the United States." *Backgrounders*, Council on Foreign Relations, September 19, 2011.

¹⁶ Lahaj, Mary. 2014. "Summary of ICNE History." Islamic Center of New England. Retrieved February 2, 2013, from <http://icne.net/history>

conformed to the larger national pattern of immigration.¹⁷

In the early 1900s immigrants from Syria and Lebanon came to work in the Quincy shipyards as well as the granite industry—which underwent a tremendous expansion after 1825. At first, the granite industry attracted American-born workers from elsewhere in New England, then increasingly, immigrants. The growth and increasing diversity of Quincy in the 19th century can be seen in the Massachusetts State Census. In 1855, immigrants constituted 26% of the total population of 6,000. Of the immigrants, 80% were Irish and almost all the others were from elsewhere in the British Isles. In 1895 immigrants reached their peak percentage of the overall population: 34% of a total population of 21,000. By 1915, while the percentage of immigrants dropped a point to 33%, the total population of the city doubled in 20 years to 41,000. The 1915 census lists more than a dozen countries of origin for significant numbers of immigrants to Quincy.¹⁸

These immigrants, under the leadership of Imam Mohammad Omar Awad, would gather regularly for prayer and observance.¹⁹ Omar, unlike most of the other Lebanese immigrants settled in Quincy Point, could read and write. He galvanized the group to organize and, given his extensive knowledge of the Qur'an and religious history, was often depended upon for citing the moon at the beginning and end of Ramadan, marrying, counseling, burying, and reading and writing correspondences in Arabic. Omar became the first official Imam by consensus and served until 1982.²⁰ By 1934 the Quincy community had formed a social, cultural, and charitable organization called the Arab American Banner Society, and conducted meetings in a house on South Street. The community organized informal religious lessons for their children, gathered for Friday prayers, and celebrated the two big Muslims feast days, Eid al-Fitr at the end of the

¹⁷ Quincy Historical Society. 2007. *Four Centuries of New Americans: Residents, Immigrants, and Heritage in Quincy*. Boston: University of Massachusetts

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc,

²⁰ Haddad, Y. Y. 1994. *Muslim Communities in North America*. Albany, New York: State University of New York

month of Ramadan and Eid al-Adha, the feast of sacrifice during the time of pilgrimage to Mecca.²¹

In 1962, after three decades of temporary housing, the leaders of the Quincy Muslim community decided to build a mosque on South Street, and the new building was completed in 1964. In the decade between 1964 and 1974, the small group of Muslims tripled. During this time the community struggled with questions relating to the legalities of Islamic law and Muslim life in a non-Muslim society. The question of how to manage the mosque's saving account arose – specifically, what should be done with the interest money. These difficulties led to the decision to look for a trained Sunni Imam who would have answers to such questions.²² In 1982 ten “orthodox” Imams from Lebanon were sponsored by the Muslim World League²³ to provide religious leadership in America. The director of the Muslim World League in New York, Dawud Assad, recommended Talal Eid to his supporters and friends at the Quincy Center. Thus, by the early 1980s the community had hired its first full-time Imam.²⁴

Talal Eid received his degree from the School of Legislation and Law at the al-Azhar University in Cairo. In the late 1970s he was appointed as a full-time Imam in a mosque in Tripoli, Lebanon; unwilling to support the Lebanese civil war, he applied for a position in America. He was nominated to the Muslim World League (of Mecca) by the Mufti of Lebanon and recommended for appointment in America. He arrived to New England in March 1982 at age 30.²⁵ Imam's Eid's duties to the Quincy community included leading prayer, teaching school, participating in interfaith activities, performing burials, giving

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ The Muslim World League (MWL) is part of a worldwide network of largely Saudi-funded groups. The MWL maintains offices in many Muslim-majority countries as well as in European nations with relatively large numbers of Muslims, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. The primary focus of the organization is to promote Islamic teachings and encourage religious observance, as well as providing general information about Islam. The MWL provides such information through publishing and media outreach, and coordinates the regional activities religious scholars and the establishment of Islamic centers.

²⁴ Haddad, Y. Y. 1994. *Muslim Communities in North America*. Albany, New York: State University of New York

²⁵ Ibid

lectures, providing family counseling, and witnessing conversions and marriages. During Eid's term, the Quincy Center's board began to clearly delineate (and limit) the scope of the religious director's responsibilities: Article V of the constitution spells out the terms of office, including length of tenure, and the classification of the Imam as a salaried functionary of the mosque (the sphere of influence limited to the realm of religious matters).²⁶

Thus, by the 1980s and 1990s, Quincy had become a center for the Massachusetts Islamic community. The community was strengthened by the formation of the Quincy Islamic Center, which was led by Dr. Abdul Karim Khudari from 1983-1989. Giving interfaith relations high priority, Khudari initiated meetings with organizations such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and formed the Islamic Interfaith Committee, which met on a regular basis with the Massachusetts Council of Churches. In 1985, interfaith activities increased at the Quincy mosque. After terrorists were reported to have taken hostages aboard a TWA plane²⁷ and demonstrators burned the Ayatollah Khomeini in effigy outside the mosque, a public relations committee was formed at the center.²⁸

In March of 1990 a three-alarm fire swept through the Quincy mosque, destroying the dome, the education wing, and much of the prayer hall. The fire, which caused an estimated \$500,000 worth of damages, was attributed to arson, although the investigation was inconclusive and no arrests were made²⁹

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ TWA Flight 847 was an international flight that was hijacked by members of Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah on June 14, 1985 after taking off from Cairo. The hijackers sought the release of 700 Shi'ite Muslims from Israeli custody.

²⁸ Haddad, Y. Y. 1994. *Muslim Communities in North America*. Albany, New York: State University of New York

²⁹ Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc,

Nation of Islam

The Quincy Center served as a training ground for many future Islamic leaders in Massachusetts. For example, Shakir Mahmoud, a young African-American who converted to Islam in 1964, came to the center to study “orthodox Islam.” Influenced by Malcolm X and dissatisfied with the teachings of the Nation of Islam, Shakir sought instruction at the Islamic Center, and became a member in 1973.³⁰ Shakir was eventually called to teach Islamic Studies at Temple #11 in Dorchester, once assigned to Malcolm X, and in 1977 became Imam. Under his leadership the community moved towards the Sunni Islam espoused by Warith Deen Mohammed and in 1984 the name of the mosque was changed from Temple #11 to Masjid al-Qur’an.³¹

Dar ul-Islam Movement

The Dar ul-Islam movement sprang from the Islamic Mission of America, which was founded in 1924 by Sheikh Daod Ahmed Faisal and based in Brooklyn, New York. The Islamic Mission encouraged African-Americans to reclaim their Islamic heritage as well as their American allegiance.³² Over time the Mission’s Muslim immigrants and American-born converts split into two factions – the New Americans and the New Muslims. The New Muslim break-away group, led by Rijab Mahmud and Yahya Abdul Karim, founded a new mosque in Brownsville, Brooklyn in 1962 under the title of Dar-ul Islam.³³

³⁰ Haddad, Y. Y. 1994. *Muslim Communities in North America*. Albany, New York: State University of New York, . 311

³¹ The Pluralism Project. *Islam in Greater Boston*. Boston: Harvard University

³² Dannin, Robert. 2002. *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

³³ Ibid

By the mid-1970s Dar ul-Islam had grown in popularity with at least thirty-one mosque-based Sunni Muslim family communities. These communities were located principally in cities along the eastern seaboard and in its larger metropolitan areas. Furthermore, Dar ul-Islam was the largest indigenous Sunni Muslim group in the United States until 1975, when Warith Deen Muhammed proclaimed Sunni Islam as the religion of the Nation of Islam, recruiting an estimated 100,000 members. Nonetheless, many of the early Dar ul-Islam mosques constructed in Massachusetts have remained to this day.³⁴

In 1980, the movement was renamed Jama'at al-Fuqrah under the leadership of Indian Sufi shaykh. Eventually the member communities affiliated themselves with Atlanta's Imam Jamil Al-Amin, joining thirty mainstream Muslim communities in the United States and the Caribbean as members of the Islamic Shura Council of North America alongside the Ministry of Warith Deen Mohammed. Today, this council continues to coordinate the activities of immigrant and indigenous Muslims in America.³⁵

Sharon

Even before the devastating fire of 1990, the Quincy community was outgrowing the South Street mosque and had been looking for a larger home. In 1991 the community found a large building for sale in Milton, a town that is adjacent to Quincy.³⁶ However, when the city government of Milton was consulted about the purchase of this building, a few residents protested the construction of an Islamic Center in their town, claiming concerns over a considerable increase in traffic. The Islamic community interpreted

³⁴ Haddad, Y. Y. 1994. *Muslim Communities in North America*. Albany, New York: State University of New York

³⁵ The Pluralism Project. 2014. *African-American Islam Reformed: "Black Muslims" and the Universal Ummah*. Boston: Harvard University

³⁶ Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc,

these protests as manifestations of prejudice and discrimination.³⁷ During this period of controversy, the local paper's headline read "Thousands of Muslims Coming for Prayers to Milton."³⁸ Plans for the new center in Milton came to an abrupt end in November 1991 when the contested land was bought by a group of Milton neighbors opposed to the construction of an Islamic Center in their community. As a result, the nearby town of Sharon became an area of interest. On December 24, 1991, 55 acres of farmland in Sharon were purchased by the Islamic Center of New England at a cost of \$1.15 million for the construction of an Islamic Center.³⁹ To avoid the reoccurrence of situation like the one in Milton, the Muslim community adopted a plan to introduce themselves to the town of Sharon. They gave an educational videotape on Islam to every neighboring household on the road where the new center would be constructed, expressing the sincere wish to answer any and all questions. Their proactive energy seemed to work, and the town of Sharon began to open its doors to the new Muslims. Sharon, a newer town than Milton and not nearly as wealthy, proved more amenable to an Islamic Center. It also had (and still has) a considerably large Jewish community: The rabbi of Temple Israel, Barry Starr, called a meeting of the Sharon Clergy Association to provide its members with an opportunity to meet representatives of the Muslim community. The clergy voted unanimously to welcome to the prospective Islamic Center, and printed their endorsement in the local paper, under the headline "Sharon Welcomes Islamic Center."⁴⁰

³⁷ Haddad, Y. Y. 1994. *Muslim Communities in North America*. Albany, New York: State University of New York, 312

³⁸ Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc,

³⁹ Haddad, Y. Y. 1994. *Muslim Communities in North America*. Albany, New York: State University of New York

⁴⁰ Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc,

Relationship between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in New England:

The Example of the Islamic Masumeen Center of New England

While the relationship between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in New England have always been cordial, varied approaches to events abroad have become a source for concern amongst mosque leaders. Members of the Shi'ite mosque, the Islamic Masumeen Center of New England, maintain connections with local Sunni mosques such as the Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland and the Worcester Islamic Center. Sectarian differences are countered with dialogue-based outreach events, geared towards building a strong sense of community amongst all Muslims in Massachusetts. For example, the Islamic Masumeen Center of New England welcomes Iranian Muslim groups to use their center and to participate in interfaith and outreach programs. Additionally, the mosque participates in the Middle East Forum in Stow, Massachusetts. This forum, organized by the First Parish Unitarian Church of Stow and Acton, offers the chance to discuss Muslim and Christian relations in the Middle East.⁴¹

Founded in 1995, the Islamic Masumeen Center serves the growing South Asian Jafari community, mostly of Pakistani descent. The center, located in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, offers Sunday school language classes in Urdu and Arabic to solidify the community's ties to South Asia. Because the center is one of only a few Shi'ite Islam mosques in New England, its members are spread across the area and willing to make a lengthy trip to attend services. The mosque, led by Imam Shoeb Bhinderwala, welcomes over 200 worshippers during main holidays. The center is run by two leadership groups – The Masumeen Charitable Trust (consisting of fourteen trustees who make decisions

⁴¹ The Pluralism Project. *Islamic Masumeen Center of New England*. Boston: Harvard University

regarding the mosque) and the Imamia Muslim Foundation Executive Committee (comprised of six members who run activities and raise funds).⁴²

In 2002, founding member Mahmud Jafri started the Muslim-Jewish Dialogue of Greater Boston. This dialogue group conducts interfaith events, including sports events for those attending the International Summer School on Religious and Public Life, and runs a weekly radio program. In 2006, over fifty people gathered at the group's annual meeting to discuss the controversy surrounding the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center lawsuit. After 9/11, neighbors to the Shi'ite mosque expressed support for the community, sending gifts and well wishes.⁴³

ORGANIZATIONS

Student Groups

During the 1960s, Boston witnessed a demographic shift – an influx of students from predominantly Muslim countries. Concurrently, in 1963, the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) was founded at the University of Illinois. MSA was the first nationwide Islamic organization and shortly following its founding, active Islamic societies began to crop up at Harvard, MIT, Boston University, Northeastern, Wentworth Institute, Suffolk, and Tufts. While some of these societies are directly affiliated with the national MSA, such as the MIT Muslim Students' Association, others, such as the Harvard Islamic Society, are not.⁴⁴ Although the MSA was initially influenced by the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and the Jamaat-i Islami of the Indian

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

subcontinent and funded by the Muslim World League, these influences waned as the organization became larger and increasingly heterogeneous.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, a report issued by the New York City Police Department in 2007 noted the contribution of MSA chapters to the proliferation of Islamist and Salafist-based radicalization.⁴⁶ This report triggered broad monitoring of Muslim college students⁴⁷ at schools including the Ivy Leagues colleges of Yale and the University of Pennsylvania.⁴⁸ In 2012 the national organization Muslim Advocates filed a federal lawsuit calling on the NYPD to halt discriminatory surveillance (*Hassan, et al. v. The City of New York*). Given this controversy surrounding the MSA (and targeted surveillance and intelligence gathering in general), it is important to note that, rather than breeding grounds for radicalization, Massachusetts Muslim student groups serve as source for tolerance and understanding. These groups generally play an educative role on campus, often engaging in joint activities with other religious groups on campus and working to promote understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim students.

Mosques/Islamic centers

The Islamic Society of Boston

The Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) was organized in 1981 as an association of Muslim student organization at Harvard University, MIT, Boston University, Northeastern University, Tufts University, Wentworth Institute, and Suffolk University. Eventually, as more and more Muslim students came to schools in Boston, became involved in the

⁴⁵ Curtis, Edward E. 2010. *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*. New York: Facts On File, Inc. 411

⁴⁶ Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (New York Police Department, 2007).

⁴⁷ An Associated Press investigation revealed that, beginning in 2006, police infiltrated dozens of Muslim student groups and investigated hundreds more: Detectives from the NYPD talked with local authorities about professors, sent undercover agents on student trips, and trawled Muslim student websites.

⁴⁸ Hawley, Chris. "NYPD monitored Muslim Students all over Northeast." *Associated Press*, Feb. 18, 2012.

Muslim Student Associations, and decided to stay after graduation, ISB grew into a separate organization, serving Muslims in the Cambridge area. ISB has shifted demographically over the years, starting with a largely Arab population but currently representing an estimated twenty-seven different ethnicities.⁴⁹

Masjid al-Quran in Roxbury

The predominantly African-American mosque, associated with the Nation of Islam, participated in fund-raising and other support activities for the Islamic Society of Boston's Roxbury Center.⁵⁰ This community was founded in the 1940s, under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, by a group of musicians, who were concerned with addressing "the degradation of African-American minds" and journeying towards orthodox Al-Islam. The musicians met weekly in private homes, eventually electing Minister Lloyd Williams into leadership and making his home the major meetinghouse to propagate and practice the Nation of Islam. As membership grew, the need for a larger place of worship arose in the early 1950's. The community eventually purchased a Synagogue for sale in 1957, establishing the eleventh Temple in the Nation of Islam (Temple #11). The community continued to transition throughout the years. Malcolm X (Al-Hajji Malik Al-Shabazz), the Regional Minister of this area, considered Temple #11 his home and the infamous play "Orgena" was produced there, causing an intense stir in the Nation of Islam.

Thirty years later the Boston community was hit hard by the excommunication and ultimate murder of Al-Hajji Malik Al-Shabazz. Following the death of Elijah Muhammad, Imam Warith Deen Mohammed was elected as the leader of the then Nation of Islam – a date that was marked by the 1976 Saviors Day Parade. Imam Warith Deen

⁴⁹ The Pluralism Project. 2009. *Islamic Society of Boston*. Boston: Harvard University

⁵⁰ See the [Case Studies](#) section of this paper for information about this incident of radicalization.

Mohammed redirected the community onto a course of orthodox Al-Islam, renaming the place of worship Masjid Al-Quran (MAQ).⁵¹ From a large sect preaching nominal Islam, the group evolved into a Sunni Islamic community with substantive ties to a larger international community of similar religious adherents.⁵²

The current leader is Imam Taalib Mahdee. Born and raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Imam Taalib earned an Associate Degree from Roxbury Community College and a B.S. in Human Services from New Hampshire College. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) in 1980, and in the summer of 1989 he traveled to Cairo, Egypt to study Arabic at Al-Azhar University. In the spring of 1990 he was part of a national delegation of Clara Mohammed School educators who traveled to Saudi Arabia to analyze its educational system. Imam Mahdee participates in several community organizations, each representing a diverse population such as the United Way Faith and Action, Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, Islamic Council of New England and the Muslim American Society Northeast Region Council. Currently, he is the resident Imam of Masjid Al-Qur'aan.⁵³

Quincy and Sharon Mosques

Imam Eid has more than three hundred children enrolled in weekend education programs and two congregations in Quincy and Sharon. Imam Eid's role has grown: "It's not only about educating the Muslims," he says, "but I also have to do my share in educating non-Muslims, because living in a pluralistic society you have to establish friendly relations with people who believe differently than you." As one of Boston's most prominent and

⁵¹ Masjid Al-Qur'aan. 2011. "About Us." Retrieved March 8, 2013, from <http://www.masjidalquran.org/aboutUs.html>

⁵² Allen, Ernest Jr. 1996. "Religious Heterodoxy and Nationalist Tradition: The Continuing Evolution of the Nation of Islam." *The Black Scholar* 26, (3-4): 2

⁵³ Masjid Al-Qur'aan. 2011. "Imam Taalib J. Mahdee." Retrieved March 8, 2013, from <http://www.masjidalquran.org/imamTPage.html>

visible Muslim leaders, Imam Eid participates in three or four interfaith Thanksgiving services and is called upon constantly to speak in churches, synagogues, civic organizations. For example, on a given day, he answers questions at Cambridge City Hall, rushes to the Quincy mosque for Friday prayers, and then leads a session on Islam with nurses from the Children's Hospital.⁵⁴

In 2001, Imam Eid was interviewed by Robert Tomsho of the *Wall Street Journal*. Eid, originally from Lebanon, spoke about the fear of attacks his Quincy congregation faced following 9/11. At the time, rocks had been tossed through the windows of Muslim-owned stores in Quincy, and the Quincy Islamic Center received phone threats. In nearby Weymouth, the pump of a gas station owned by an Arab-American was set on fire, and an Iraqi-born businessman in Plymouth claimed racial hatred to be the cause of a fire that destroyed his pizza shop. In the interview, Eid explained how his wife Hend feared that her hijab would prompt harassment, and waited until just before closing time to shop for groceries. His eldest daughter, who was seven months pregnant, only reluctantly used the subway to get to her job in nearby Boston. In 2001 the Islamic Center (a combination of mosque and cultural center) was home to more than 800 local Muslims who traced their lineage to more than two-dozen countries. Early in Eid's tenure as imam, supporters of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini tried to pass out literature at the mosque, and he ordered them to leave. Later, during military hostilities between Iraq and Iran, the mosque's leaders quietly lobbied members from the two countries to leave their differences at the door.⁵⁵

On May 15 2007, Eid became the first Muslim cleric appointed to the US Commissioner on International Religious Freedom. Today he is the Muslim chaplain at Brandeis University.

⁵⁴ Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc,

⁵⁵ Tomsho, Robert. "An Imam Who Fled Terror in Lebanon Now Fears it in Quincy." *Wall Street Journal*. September 19, 2001

CASE STUDIES

Now that I have surveyed the demographics and history of the Massachusetts Muslim community, I will address specific situations in which Islamic radicalization took place. The following case studies include examples of funding and propagation of radical Islamic ideology, as well as instances of both planning and implementing acts of terror.

Al Kifah

During the 1980s and well into the 1990s, Boston was home to a branch of the Al Kifah Center. The center, based in Brooklyn, New York, and later renamed Care International, Inc., was a significant source of recruiting and financing networks that supported Chechen jihadists. Al Kifah, originating from the military jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan, formed a network of centers in the United States to help support the efforts of Afghan and Arab mujahedeen. The centers solicited donations and recruited fighters, of which at least four were from Boston. Eventually, these networks refocused their activities on non-combative goals, with the exception of the Brooklyn network. The Brooklyn network's leaders helped facilitate the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and were instrumental in planning and attempting to execute a subsequent plot during the following summer to blow up the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels in New York. While the Brooklyn Al Kifah office was shut down following the discovery of the tunnels plot, the Boston office continued to operate under a new name and with a new focus, foreign fighter efforts in Bosnia and Chechnya.⁵⁶

The Boston Branch, established in the early 1990s, emerged from the World Trade Center investigation unscathed. Less than two weeks following the bombing, the head of the Boston office, Emad Muntasser, changed the center's name from Al Kifah to Care International. Care received a tax exemption under the title of a non-political charity, yet

⁵⁶ Berger, J. M. "Boston's Jihadist Past." *Foreign Policy*, April 22, 2013

continued to fund jihad overseas, focusing on conflicts in Chechnya and Bosnia, but reaching around the globe to anywhere mujahedeen were fighting. Care's tactics were characterized by dinner speeches and events at local universities and mosques, including Boston University, MIT, and Boston College as part of Friday services or under the auspices of the local Muslim Students Association, running "phone-a-thons" to appeal for funding and arranging public screenings of jihadist videos.⁵⁷

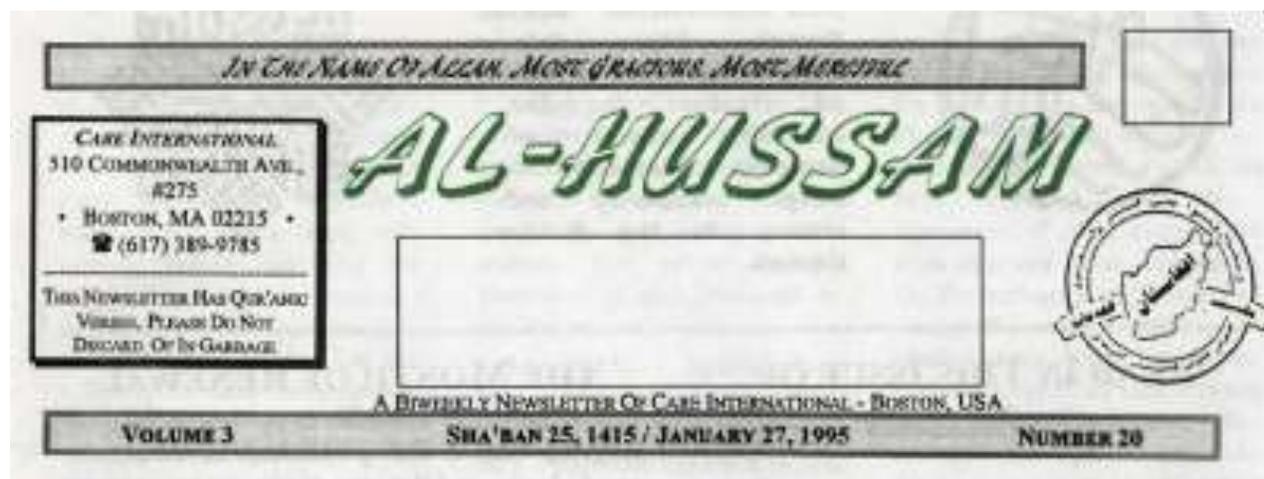
The charity was run by a mix of American citizens and immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa who were often disappointed with the local Boston Muslim community which was not particularly interested in their cause. Since the local Muslims were perceived among Care's leaders as reluctant to donate funds for the network's radical speakers, Care generally avoided bringing prominent speakers to the city. When such speakers did travel to Boston however, they often lectured on the topic of Islamist conflicts in Chechnya and Bosnia. Mohammed Zaki, an American born citizen of Egyptian descent, based in San Diego, frequently traveled to Boston to take part in Care events. He was involved in several charities that helped supply the mujahedeen in Bosnia and Chechnya and distribute propaganda to support the efforts.⁵⁸

Zaki, who traveled to Boston in 1993 and 1994, had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan alongside the mujahedeen as an American recruit, and became known as "Abu Umar the American." While in the mujahedeen camps, he made videotapes to take back to the United States for fundraising. In the mid-1990s Zakri changed his focus to Chechnya, recruiting other Americans to serve as Islamist foreign fighters. During this time Zakri recruited Aukai Collins. After waging war in Chechnya, Bosnia, and Kosovo, Collins returned to the United States in the 1990s to work with the FBI as an informant.

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Ibid

In 1995 Zaki traveled to Chechnya and, a month after his arrival, was killed in a Russian shelling.⁵⁹



Boston-based *Al-Hussam* newsletter⁶⁰

The English and Arabic newsletter comprised of short and informative news items regarding the global jihad, *Al Hussam*, was also a recruiting tool for the Boston office. Most of the newsletter's writing concerned Bosnia but updates also focused on Egypt, Chechnya, Algeria, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The newsletter would occasionally interview prominent mujahedeen commanders and movement leaders. One such leader was Shamil Basayev who masterminded the 2004 Beslan school massacre in which 331 people were killed. Following an incident in which Basayev took hundreds of hostages at a hospital, *Al Hussam* published a review in praise of the formation of Chechen suicide brigades.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Ibid

Funding for Care came primarily in the form of checks from around the United States, often with the words “martyr’s family” or “Chechen Muslim fighters” in the memo line. According to the Justice Department, the total funds collected from 1993 to 2003 amounted to \$1.7 million.⁶² The money, sent to front organizations in Bosnia and Chechnya, was laundered through other fraudulent charities such as the al Qaeda-linked Global Relief Foundation and Benevolence International Foundation in Chicago. A portion of the funding for Care, from \$1,000 to \$20,000 in individual transfers, also went to support Chechen Islamist fighters (listed as orphanages and refugees officially). Through a series of middlemen, these funds were transferred to a contact in Chechnya.⁶³

Although the FBI was monitoring Care for nearly a decade, it was not until the shift in U.S. government policy following 9/11 that the Justice Department shut down the Global Relief Foundation and the Benevolence International Foundation. When the two organizations’ offices were raided, checks and receipts from Care were found alongside extensive evidence of support for foreign fighters in Chechnya and Bosnia. In 2005 Boston prosecutors pursued Care’s directors and officials in court, and Samir Al Monla, Muhamed Mubayyid and Muntasser were charged with filing false tax returns and misrepresenting their political and militant activity as relief for orphans and widows for nonprofit tax exemption. While the defendants were convicted, they received minimal sentences: Al Monla and Muntasser were released from prison and are currently living in the United States. Mubayyid was deported and is living in Australia. Care shut down in 2003, when the IRS and FBI embarked on an aggressive investigation, and the formal network collapsed.⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Berger 2013

Ptech Inc.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President George Bush launched Operation Green Quest – a team of law enforcement officers with financial expertise investigated how terrorists move their money and where. The government used this team's findings to freeze financial assets, impose fines, seize money, and launch legal proceedings.⁶⁵ As a result of this investigation, the Treasury Department released a list of 39 names and groups of terrorism financiers.

On this list was Yasin Al Qadi, a member of one of Saudi Arabia's wealthiest families, alleged Al Qaeda financier, and major investor in the Massachusetts computer software firm, Ptech Inc. The firm, which held contracts with government agencies (including the departments of Energy, Education, and Veteran's Affairs, was investigated by agents from the Customs Service, FBI, IRS, Secret Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Massachusetts State Police, to determine whether any classified material made its way into the hands of the firm's investor. In the middle of the night of December 5, 2002, law enforcement officials visited Ptech's Headquarters. Al Qadi was officially identified by the Treasury Department as using his Islamic charity group to funnel millions of dollars to the Al Qaeda network.⁶⁶

In 2009 Al Qadi filed a lawsuit in Washington D.C., to be removed from a U.S. list of people accused of financing Al Qaeda. He denied the accusations that his charitable

⁶⁵ "Feds Launch 'Operation Green Quest.'" *The Associated Press*, February 11, 2009

⁶⁶ Serrano, Richard A. and Elizabeth Mehren. "The Nation; Terror Investigators Search Software Firm; an Alleged Al Qaeda Financier Invests in the Massachusetts Firm, a Government Contractor." *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 7, 2002

foundation was a front for Al Qaeda, stating that his foundation was closed before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. On October 5, 2012, Al Qadi was removed from the blacklist.⁶⁷

Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center

The Islamic Society of Boston's Mosque and Cultural Center (ISBCC) in Roxbury faced significant obstacles to its conception. The construction of this center marked the third expansion of the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) since 1981. The center broke ground on November 2002 at an onsite ceremony in Roxbury attended by Mayor Thomas Menino, U.S. Representative E. Capuano, Imam Talal Eid (then representing the Islamic Center of New England), and Boston City Councilman Chuck Turner.⁶⁸ However, by 2005, there were deepening suspicions between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Boston area:⁶⁹ Officials of the Cambridge-based Islamic Society of Boston were accused of sympathizing with Islamic extremists. After 9/11, the potentially lethal threat of mosques run by radical clerics and funded by Saudi Arabia came to the forefront of public debate. The 9/11 Commission commented on such funding, stating that the propagation of Wahhabism through funding was "exploited by extremists to further their goal of violent jihad against non-Muslims."⁷⁰ Additionally, in 2005 Freedom House documented the penetration of U.S. mosques by Saudi-supplied Wahhabi literature, providing the backdrop for the questions raised about the Islamic Society of Boston's past and present leaders and the deal in which the land for the mosque was acquired. These allegations of extremism battered the Islamic Society's plan to construct a Cultural Center in Roxbury.

⁶⁷ Rubinfeld, Samuel. "UN Removes Saudi Businessman from Al Qaeda Blacklist." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 8, 2012

⁶⁸ The Pluralism Project. 2007. *Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (Roxbury)*. Boston: Harvard University

⁶⁹ "[T]here is a lot of misunderstanding among Americans about Islam, and quite frankly among Muslims about American culture and society," said Salma Kazmi, assistant director of the Islamic Society of Boston. "This feeds a lot of resentment and mistrust, the sense of people generally being against us."

⁷⁰ Jacoby, Jeff. "A Lawsuit without Merit." *Boston Globe*, Jun 27, 2007

While the original completion date for the mosque was November 2004, in December of 2005 the project was still facing delays and rising construction costs.

In October 2005, Islamic Society officials filed a lawsuit against media reports and statements by various groups linking mosque officials to terrorist groups. The defendants included The Boston Herald, WFXT-TV (Channel 25), the David Project, and Steven Emerson, a specialist on terrorism. In the suit, the Islamic Society denied any connection to radical Islam, alleging that the David Project, news reporters, and others deprived the Boston Muslim community of the free exercise of their religion under the Constitution. The lawsuit contested claims that “ISB receives funds from Wahhabis and/or Muslim Brotherhood and/or other Saudi/Middle Eastern sources,” stating that it was “defamatory to falsely accuse the ISB of financial ties to Saudi Arabia.”⁷¹ The David Project countered that the Islamic Society of Boston was interfering with constitutional rights by seeking to stifle questions about anti-Israel and pro-extremist public statements by some of its past and present officials.⁷²

The Islamic Society also contended that a suit filed in November 2004 by Mission Hill resident James C. Policastro was part of a conspiracy to stop the construction of the new Roxbury mosque. Policastro's suit alleged that the deal reached in 2000 by the society and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, providing the land for the mosque, allowed the society to purchase the land too cheaply. This purchase, according to Policastro, violated constitutional provisions prohibiting government from unfairly assisting religious institutions. Under the 2000 deal, the Islamic Society of Boston bought the Roxbury land, valued at \$401,187, for \$175,000. The remainder was to be paid in kind: the Islamic Society was to maintain a playground and park by the Roxbury parcel for 10 years, offer

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Abraham, Yvonne and Stephen Kurkjian. "Praised as Beacon, Mosque Project Stall Amid Rancor; Allegations Said to Harm Funding for Roxbury Center." *Boston Globe*, Dec 18, 2005

lectures on Islam at Roxbury Community College next door, help develop an Islamic library there, and assist the college foundation in fund-raising.⁷³

The difficulties surrounding the project raised concerns among Muslims in the area: “The mosque project is significant not just to members of the Islamic Society, but to tens of thousands of other Muslims who have migrated to Massachusetts from Nigeria, Somalia, Morocco, and elsewhere during the 20 years since the idea of building a major mosque was conceived.”⁷⁴

Ultimately, the lawsuit did not end well for the mosque. During discovery, documents were uncovered suggesting that at least \$7.2 million was wired to the society from Middle Eastern sources, mostly in Saudi Arabia. For example, in December 2005, the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah wired two \$250,000 payments to the mosque’s general contractor’s Citizen’s Bank account.⁷⁵ In addition, society leader, Abdurahman Alamoudi pled guilty to a 2003 indictment for his role in a terrorism financing scheme and is serving a 23-year prison term. On May 29th, the Islamic Society dropped its lawsuit.⁷⁶

In January 2007, the ISB formally admitted to receiving a \$1 million loan from the Islamic Development Bank, with headquarters in Saudi Arabia, to partially fund its ISB Cultural Center in Roxbury in 2005. The bank also financed projects jointly with the United Nations and the US government. The Islamic Society of Boston turned to the Middle East for assistance in funding its \$14 million mosque because obtaining interest-free (sharia-compliant) funding is a religious mandate.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Jacoby, Jeff. "A Lawsuit without Merit." *Boston Globe*, Jun 27, 2007

⁷⁶ Rakowsky, Judy. "Lawsuits Dropped, but Battles Over Boston Mosque Continue." *The Jewish Daily Forward*, June 29, 2007

⁷⁷ Masse, Jessica "Islamic Society's Turn to Get Answers." *Boston Globe*, Jan 24, 2007

The Islamic Development Bank, a subsidiary of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (of which each of the conference's 56 member nations are shareholders, with the largest shares owned by Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Libya), has become a leading funder of suicide bombing, providing financial subsidies to the families of terrorists.⁷⁸

According to the ISBCC website, today the Roxbury mosque is up and running with a girl scouts program, athletic league, teens committee, college committee, youth empowerment program, and even its own twitter account. ISBCC is the largest Islamic center in New England, and the second largest on the East Coast. Operated by the Muslim American Society (MAS Boston), ISBCC provides a broad range of social services for the local Muslim and non-Muslim community. Successful projects in the recent past include the diversity training of hundreds of Boston police officers and law enforcement officials, the distribution of 'udhiya meat to local Muslims and non-Muslims, reaching hundreds of youth with leadership and spiritual development programs, mobilizing Muslims to become civically and politically active, establishing a Speakers Bureau to address hundreds of requests for speakers on Islam, and initiating interfaith projects with local Christian and Jewish communities.

The current ISBCC Imam Suhaib Webb is a contemporary American Muslim Imam who received his BA in Education from the University of Central Oklahoma and was trained privately with "a renowned Muslim Scholar of Senegalese descent." He later received training in Islamic Law at Al-Azhar University in the College of Shari'ah. He bases his leadership at ISBCC on balanced and moderate Islamic teachings.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Jacoby, Jeff. "A Lawsuit without Merit." *Boston Globe*, Jun 27, 2007

⁷⁹ The Pluralism Project 2007

Tarek Mehanna

On April 12, 2012, Sudbury resident Tarek Mehanna was sentenced to seventeen years in federal prison. In December 2011, Mehanna was convicted by a jury of four terrorism-related charges and three charges related to providing false information to the government. He was then convicted of conspiracy to provide material support to al Qaeda, conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country, conspiracy to make false statement to the FBI, and two counts of making false statement. According to trial testimony, Mehanna discussed a desire to participate in violent jihad against American interests and the desire to die on the battlefield, attempting to radicalize others through the distribution of jihadi videos.⁸⁰

In 2004 Mehanna and two of his associates traveled to the Middle East, seeking military-type training at a terrorist training camp that would “prepare them for armed jihad against U.S. interests, including U.S. and allied forces in Iraq” (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2012, n/a). Mehanna continued his interests after returning to the United States by providing material support, translating, and posting al Qaeda recruitment videos and other documents. During a 2006 interview with the federal authorities about his 2004 trip to Yemen, Mehanna provided false information.⁸¹

In April of 2012, Mehanna was sentenced in federal court in Boston on three charges related to lying to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and four terrorism-related charges. He is currently serving a seventeen and a half year prison sentence.⁸²

⁸⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2012. *Tarek Mehanna Sentenced in Boston to 17 Years in Prison on Terrorism-Related Charges*. Lanham: Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Valencia, Milton J. "Mehanna Gets More than 17 Years in Jail." *The Boston Globe*, April 13, 2012

Boston Bombers

On April 15, 2013, during the Boston Marathon, two pressure cooker bombs exploded near the finish line on Boylston Street at 2:49 pm. Three people were killed and 264 were injured – many of whom lost limbs. The Boston community responded quickly. First-responders and bystanders immediately mobilized to heal those who were maimed and the local media response was controlled and careful.⁸³ The Federal Bureau of Investigation, assisted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the National Counterterrorism Center, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Drug Enforcement Administration, treated the bombings as a terrorist attack and in a news conference held on April 18th, three days after the attacks. The FBI released photographs and surveillance videos of the two suspects – initially identified as unnamed suspects 1 and 2.⁸⁴ Evidence emerged confirming that two brothers, who had immigrated to the United States as refugees, were responsible: Tamerlan Tsarnaev and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.

Following the April 18th release of photographs, MIT police officer Sean A. Collier was shot multiple times by the suspects and killed. The brothers then carjacked an SUV in Allston-Brighton, taking the owner hostage and releasing him at a gas station on Memorial Drive in Cambridge. A chase ensued – the police and the suspects traded gunfire and pipe bombs thrown from the vehicle. On a Watertown street, a pitched gun battle followed, in which a transit police officer was critically wounded and Tamerlan Tsarnaev was shot and fatally wounded while wearing explosives. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev managed to escape.⁸⁵

⁸³ Gunaratna, Rohan, and Cleo Haynal. 2013. Current and Emerging Threats of Homegrown Terrorism: The Case of the Boston Bombings. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7 (3): 44-58

⁸⁴ Montgomery, David, Sari Horwitz, and Marc Fisher. "Police, Citizens and Technology Factor into Boston Bombing Probe." *The Washington Post*, Apr 21, 2013

⁸⁵ Seelye, Katharine Q., William K. Rashbaum, and Michael Cooper. "2nd Bombing Suspect is Captured, Wounded, After A Frenzied Manhunt Paralyzes Boston." *New York Times*, Apr 20, 2013

The manhunt that followed resulted in the shutdown of the city of Boston and the surrounding residential neighborhoods: Transit service was suspended, area college classes were cancelled, train service halted, the Red Sox game at Fenway Park postponed, and Governor Deval Patrick urged residents to stay inside all day. On April 19th the suspect was found hiding in a dry-docked boat in Watertown, wounded.⁸⁶

A Massachusetts grand jury returned a 30-count indictment against Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, seventeen of which could bring a life sentence or the death penalty. This indictment confirmed that during the hours he was hiding Tsarnaev penned a confession – taking responsibility for the bombings and referring to the victims as “collateral damage.” The first count against Tsarnaev is of conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction resulting in death, noting “overt acts” committed to further the conspiracy.⁸⁷

Such conspiracy was reportedly influenced by the Al Qaeda online magazine *Inspire* which offered instructions on how to make a pressure cooker bomb. According to the indictment, Tsarnaev downloaded other thematically similar books sometime before the bombings such as “The Slicing Sword, Against the One Who Forms Allegiances With the Disbelievers and Takes Them as Supporters Instead of Allah, His Messenger and the Believers” and “Defense of the Muslim Lands, the First Obligation After Imam.” The indictment also points to internet orders for electronic components that could be adapted for the use in making IEDs.⁸⁸ On July 10, 2013, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev had his first court appearance, pleading not guilty to thirty charges.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Peters, Justin. "Burner Phones, a Scrawled Message on a Boat, and Other Information from the Indictment Against Dzhokhar Tsarnaev." *Slate*, June 27, 2013

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Sweet, Laurel J. "Court Papers Say Dzhokhar Tsarnaev had Fractured Skull, Hand After Manhunt." *McClatchy - Tribune Business News*, Aug 20, 2013

The Radicalization of the Tsarnaev Brothers

Scholars and practitioners in the field of counter-terrorism generally agree that suspects Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev were self-radicalized homegrown terrorists, asserting that the brothers were motivated to call attention to violence occurring against Muslims around the world. While Tamerlan's YouTube account reveals an interest in Salafism, the Boston bombers were not directed by Al Qaeda or part of a broader Islamist conspiracy. Although Tamerlan Tsarnaev traveled to Russia in January 2012, it has not been determined whether the Boston Marathon bombing is tied to the ongoing terrorist activity in Dagestan, Chechnya, or the Caucasus Emirate.⁹⁰ The House Homeland Security Committee's 2014 report on the bombing investigation speculates that Tamerlan "possibly had the opportunity to meet with rebel fighters," who "may have helped to fuel his radicalization." However, the report admits that American "investigators have not found proof of these meetings."⁹¹ Yet, even by presumably seeking out approval and training during his stay in Russia, Tamerlan fits the profile of a self-radicalized terrorist. Only a few weeks after Tamerlan returned to the U.S. a YouTube account was created under his name, indicating "some degree of radicalization had taken place in Russia." The account shows that Tamerlan viewed multiple Russian-language videos on Islam and compiled a playlist of jihadi videos.⁹² While the details of the Tsarnaev brothers' radicalization remains vague, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev confirmed during interrogation that he and his brother had no outside help.⁹³ Thus, the brothers, while inspired by militant jihadism, operated alone.

⁹⁰ House Homeland Security Committee. March 2014. *The Road to Boston: Counterterrorism Challenges and Lessons from the Marathon Bombings*. Retrieved 5/3/2014, from <https://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/documents/Boston-Bombings-Report.pdf>

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Pape, Robert A. "Echoes of London: The self-radicalized profiles of the Boston suspects are familiar." *The Boston Globe*. Apr 26, 2013

However, the radicalization process that led these two men to plan a terrorist attack is still under debate. Although scholarship on the topic has been limited, many experts in the field have expressed their views through Op-Ed articles and interviews. Generally, while some scholars treat religious fundamentalism as a cause of politically motivated anger, others treat it as a consequence. Scholars such as Robert Pape argue that the Boston bombers were driven by anger over U.S. policies in the Muslim world: Their religious fundamentalism served as an enabler of their political cause.⁹⁴ Pape compares the brothers to the 2005 London bombers, illustrating their similar socioeconomic profiles – both were self-radicalized and acted mostly on their own and were highly socially integrated: Tamerlan, who was older when his family moved to the states and less comfortable among Americans, won a New England Golden Glove championship and aspired to represent the United States in the Olympics. Dzhokhar was an honors student in a competitive Cambridge public school, the captain of his wrestling team, and became a naturalized United States Citizen in 2012.⁹⁵ Other scholars stress the Tsarnaev family's experience as a member of a discriminated minority in a conflict zone, highlighting the brothers' minority identity and feelings of alienation, as well as Tamerlan's personal grievances and external influences. Such analyses showcase the brothers' desire for "a better life in the afterlife."⁹⁶ By emphasizing the brothers' feelings of failure and isolation, this approach attributes the radicalization process to personal vulnerability rather than to political cause. Yet, there is still a great deal of information about the brothers' radicalization process that remains unknown. As Dzhokhar's trial approaches and his lawyers plan his defense, this case study continues to unfold.

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ Gunaratna, Rohan, and Cleo Haynal. 2013. Current and Emerging Threats of Homegrown Terrorism: The Case of the Boston Bombings. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7 (3): 44-58

Information Handling and Sharing Prior to the Bombing

Tamerlan and his mother Zubeidat Tsarnaev came to the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) two years before the bombing. In March 2011, the FBI received a letter from the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) expressing concern that Tamerlan and Zubeidat were adherents of radical Islam. The letter stated that Tamerlan had changed drastically since 2010⁹⁷ and was preparing to travel to Russia to join unspecified underground groups in Chechnya and Dagestan.⁹⁸ The letter, while lacking compelling derogatory information on the threat, contained detailed biographic information on the Tsarnaev family and, ultimately, requested that the FBI notify the Russian government if Tamerlan attempted to travel to Russia.

In response to the FSB letter, the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) in Boston initiated an assessment of Tamerlan Tsarnaev as a potential terrorist threat.⁹⁹ The FBI Special Agent who handled the assessment conducted database searches, reviewed references to Tsarnaev and his family in closed FBI counterterrorism cases, made an on-site visit to his former college, performed “drive-bys” of Tsarnaev’s residence, and interviewed Tsarnaev and his parents.¹⁰⁰ Three months later, on June 24, 2011, the Boston JTTF closed their assessment, having found no link to terrorism.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2013. *2011 Request for Information on Tamerlan Tsarnaev from Foreign Government*. Lanham: Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc

⁹⁸ Inspectors General of the U.S. Intelligence Community, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security. 2014. *Unclassified Summary of Information Handling and Sharing Prior to April 15, 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings*. Retrieved 5/16/2014, from <http://www.justice.gov/oig/reports/2014/s1404.pdf>

⁹⁹ House Homeland Security Committee. March 2014

¹⁰⁰ The Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General determined that the FBI Special Agent did not take certain steps during the assessment – such as contacting local law enforcement, visiting the mosque that Tsarnaev attended, and interviewing Tsarnaev’s wife. The Special Agent also failed to elicit information during the interviews about Tsarnaev’s plans to travel to Russia, changes in lifestyle, or knowledge of militant separatists in Dagestan and Chechnya.

¹⁰¹ Inspectors General of the U.S. Intelligence Community, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security. 2014

In the days that followed the bombing, members of Congress questioned the Director of the FBI, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), and other government officials about the handling of information concerning Tamerlan Tsarnaev. As a result, the Inspectors General of the Intelligence Community, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security conducted a coordinated, independent review of the handling and sharing of information prior to the bombings.¹⁰² In April 2014 the participating Inspectors General published a report, outlining 1) the extent of information available to the U.S. government concerning the Tsarnaev brothers, 2) whether the sharing of this information was “complete, accurate, and in compliance with U.S. counterterrorism and information sharing, policies, regulations, and U.S. laws,” and 3) weaknesses in procedures and protocols that inhibit the detection of potential threats to national security.¹⁰³ The report concluded that federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies “generally shared information and followed procedures appropriately” in their investigation of Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev in the years leading to the Boston bombing. However, the report states that Tamerlan should have been more closely scrutinized following his return to the United States from Dagestan in 2012.¹⁰⁴

The Boston Muslim Community’s Response

In May 2013, the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) and the New American Foundation held two panels with Muslim community leaders, Capitol Hill staffers, and policy experts in Washington, D.C. These panels addressed online extremism and how to combat it. Imam Suhaib Webb of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center spoke at the event, stressing that “the counter-extremism narrative needs to be led by the Muslim

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

community...there needs to be more community-based efforts.”¹⁰⁵ These efforts have been especially evident at the Islamic Society of Boston, where the Tsarnaevs occasionally attended mosque: Community members have worked to engage their youth in activities and develop counseling and volunteer programs.¹⁰⁶

STATE APPROACH TO RADICALIZATION

Laws

Section 23B of Chapter 184 of Massachusetts General Law (Listed under Part II – Real and Personal Property and Domestic Relations) refers to Restrictive covenants based on race, religion, national origin or sex; validity; exception:

A provision in an instrument relating to real property which purports to forbid or restrict the conveyance, encumbrance, occupancy, or lease thereof to individuals of a specified race, color, religion, national origin or sex shall be void. Any condition, restriction or prohibition, including a right of entry or a possibility of reverter, which directly or indirectly limits the use for occupancy of real property on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or sex shall be void, excepting a limitation on the basis of religion on the use of real property held by a religious or denominational institution or organization or by an organization operated for charitable or educational purposes which is operated, supervised or controlled by or in connection with a religious organization.

¹⁰⁵ Siddiqui, Sabrina, and Jaweed Kaleem. “Muslims Focus on Online Extremism, Radicalization after Boston Bombings.” *The Huffington Post*. June 4, 2013

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

Massachusetts Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC):

The council, co-chaired by Richard DesLauriers Special Agent-in-Charge of The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Boston Field Division and Attorney Carmen Ortiz, is composed of several hundred members. These members include private institutions in Massachusetts with a stake in anti-terrorism prevention and response, and representatives from almost every federal, state, and local law enforcement authority.

The ATAC ensures the coordination of terrorism prevention and response efforts and provides a forum for agencies to share information, engage in planning efforts, and identify potential terrorism links.

Funding

In 2002, Massachusetts authorized \$20 million for new equipment, including thermal imaging cameras, hazardous materials suits, to protect rescuers from biological threats. These funds were divided between police and fire departments with \$9.6 million each and the remaining \$800,000 devoted to developing a statewide emergency communication system. Following the authorization, president of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association Robert Campbell released a statement: "Law enforcement agencies today are not only fighting a war on crime, they are fighting a war on terror."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Campbell, Robert. 2002. Massachusetts: State Provides \$20M for Terror Equipment. *Organized Crime Digest* 23 (24): 6-7

CONCLUSION

One of the burning questions left in the minds of many after the Boston Bombing incident was how could such “normal” men turn so radical? This is a question that fueled many investigations into Islamic Radicalization. One such investigation was the New York Police Department’s mass spying program in Muslim communities. The New York program has watched all young Muslim men, operating on the premise that the more Muslim someone becomes, the more likely they are to become involved in violent behavior. However, it is crucial to also investigate the “tangled” aspects of radicalization, noting that a person’s gender and religious affiliation do not necessarily denote violent inclinations.¹⁰⁸ Massachusetts serves as a superb example of a state that has faced its fair share of radicalization incidents, but whose Islamic community is by no means defined by them.

While there have been many instances of radicalization in Massachusetts, the state’s Islamic communities are generally tolerant, involved in interfaith activities and outwardly condemning instances of radicalization and terror within the United States and abroad. The communities today were founded by immigrants – like those from Syria and Lebanon who worked in the Quincy shipyards and granite industry – who have contributed to and shaped the towns where they settled as well as the academic institutions they attended. These communities faced difficulties regarding funds and savings, procuring center and mosque locations, and linkages (both warranted and unwarranted) to terrorist groups. Importantly, this paper examines a few instances of radicalization amongst individuals and groups, through direct acts of violence and

¹⁰⁸ Wessler, S. F. "The Tangled Meanings – and Misuses – of Radicalization." *Color Lines*, April 25, 2013

financial connections to global networks that support terror-related violence, within the larger context of an integrated Islamic Massachusetts community.

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