Chapter 2

Immigration and Muslim Extremists in the Post-9/11 World

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The most important means of countering Muslim extremists in the Western world in the post-9/11 era of Islamist terrorism are intelligence-gathering, policing, and security services. In addition, there are other means within the wider community that can assist this frontline work. These means include the "war of ideas" that must be waged against extremism within the Arab-Muslim world and in Muslim communities in the West through our media and within our education, social, and political institutions. This chapter will focus on what I describe as an exercise in the "sociology of immigration" as it helps to explain the origin and growth of extremism in Muslim immigrant communities in the West. Such a discussion of this aspect is often neglected. The nature of immigration to Canada and other Western liberal democracies needs to be re-examined, as does the extent to which immigration and extremism—in this chapter, Muslim extremism—are connected.

About immigration

There is general agreement in the study of immigration on the nature and causes of migration. Civil unrest and wars, socioeconomic inequality, and

poverty are among the main "push" factors in the movement of people across natural or political boundaries. Market needs in terms of skilled and unskilled labour, demographic needs in terms of sustaining or increasing population levels, and the benefits of rich economies are the "pull" factors that attract people to move from depressed zones of the world to prosperous zones.

Canada has been well-served by immigration at various stages in its history—for example, during the populating of the West in the early part of the twentieth century. While questions have been raised regarding the net economic benefit to Canada in the last 25 years, as the earnings of immigrants have fallen well below those of Canadian-born and earlier immigrants, Canadians in general have not taken issue with immigration policy on economic grounds. The view of immigration as a negative-sum phenomenon has been based, for the most part, on culture and race, rather than economics. But since the 1960s, any merit of such arguments has been mostly discounted in the liberal democracies of Europe and North America in favour of economic arguments.

However, here we may recall the warnings of Enoch Powell, a British Member of Parliament, which were most compellingly stated in his deeply controversial speech of April 20, 1968, at a Conservative Party gathering in Birmingham. Four decades later, his speech is remembered mostly for being considered inflammatory by his peers. But the main point of Powell's speech was to show how unrestricted immigration was inexorably and unalterably changing the nature of British society. For Powell, it was about numbers: "bearing in mind that numbers are of the essence: the significance and consequences of an alien element introduced into a country or population are profoundly different according to whether that element is 1% or 10%" (1991: 373–79). Powell's warning went unheeded and he was removed from the Conservative's shadow cabinet. His political career never recovered from the controversy created by his remarks, even though there was much support for his views among voters. Today, Powell's words have a haunting presence in Britain, which was rocked by "homegrown terror" and suicide bombings in London in July 2005. That particular terrorist attack was perpetrated by Muslims extremists who were born in England.

Comparative profile of immigration in the second global century

Let us consider briefly some salient features of immigration to put the consensus on the subject in context, and show why security concerns have placed this consensus under siege since 9/11. In this discussion, I will rely on the work of Jeffrey Williamson (2005) and the figures on mass migration he compiled. Williamson points out that the world is experiencing the second "global century," which began around 1950. In this view, the first global century (based on years for which figures are available) began around 1820 and ended with World War I. During the first global century, barriers to trade and to the flows of labour and capital came down and helped spread prosperity. Between 1914 and 1950, there was a retreat from the gains of the first global century as a result of wars and economic depression. In the second global century, increased and concerted efforts have been made to repair ruptures after the first global century. The end of the Cold War has accelerated the pace of the second global century as globalization has become an irreversible phenomenon.

In terms of immigration, or mass migration from poor to prosperous zones in the second global century, Williamson notes that the annual increase of immigrants to North America and Europe was gradual until the mid-1970s, after which it rose sharply to one million immigrants per year in the 1990s. As Williamson writes, "the absolute numbers by then were similar to those reached during the age of mass migration about a century earlier, but they were smaller relative to the destination country populations that had to absorb them" (2005: 1). His figures reveal that, contrary to popular belief, the number of immigrants entering the United States as a percentage of the population remains well below the peak reached in the first global century. As Williamson notes, "the annual immigration rate fell from 11.6 immigrants per thousand in the 1900s to 0.4 immigrant per thousand in the 1940s, before rising again to four immigrants per thousand in the 1990s" (2005: 1).

As the proportion of foreign-born people to native population changed, the effects of the immigration flow were felt in the host country. Between 1965 and 2000, the percentage of a host country's total population comprised of foreign-born people increased from 6% to 13% in North America,

and from 2.2% to 7.7% in Europe.[1] The source-area composition of legal immigrants to the United States during this period also shifted dramatically. More than half of those who immigrated between 1951 and 1960 originated from Europe, around 40% were from the Americas (of this number, more than 25% came from Mexico), and just over 6% were from Asia. Between 1991 and 2000, the source-area composition showed a sharp decline from Europe to approximately 15%, from the Americas an increase to under 50% (Mexicans accounted for half of this number), and a dramatic five-fold increase in immigrants from Asia to 30.7%. In the same period, the number immigrants from Africa also rose dramatically (more than six-fold) from 0.6% to 3.9% (Williamson, 2005: 4).

The figures for Canada provided by Statistics Canada are comparable to those in the United States. In 1961, 85.71% of immigrants to Canada were from Europe and 2.0% were from Asia. In 2001, 42.0% were from Europe and 36.5% were from Asia. The huge surge of Asians arriving in North America after 1970 can be partly explained by recognizable push factors, such as wars and the search for economic opportunities, as in other periods of migration growth. But the surge also coincided with and benefited from a transportation revolution that brought transcontinental wide-body jetliners into operation. The economy of travel dramatically changed as a result. First, the cost of traveling declined despite oil price increases in 1973-1974 and 1979, and later the steady rise in fuel prices during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Secondly, transcontinental and transoceanic travel time by airplanes took a fraction of the time spent travelling by sea before wide-body jetliners were introduced in the 1960s.

We have not yet worked out the implications of this revolutionary change in moving people and what it has meant for migration and the receiving host countries. We need to take into account these implications

1 For the purpose of this migration study, North America consists of Canada and the United States, and excludes Mexico. Europe includes the former communist countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Population movement has occurred from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union into Western Europe; consequently, the percentage of foreign-born people in the western half of Europe is much larger than that of Europe as a whole (Williamson, 2005: 2–3).

in order to determine whether the words "immigrant" and "immigration" carry the same meaning as they did before 1960, or whether we need to introduce new terms such as "migrant worker." In a global economy, such terms may provide a better understanding of why newcomers—in particular, those within Muslim communities in North America and Europe—are resisting integration or assimilation into the host country's political culture.

Immigrant Muslim communities in Canada and the United States

The number of Muslims in Canada and in the United States as a percentage of the total population is still very small but is showing the most rapid growth among religious groups in these countries. A recent Pew Research Center on Muslim Americans estimated that the number of Muslims in the United States, based on the Census Bureau data, is 2.35 million—about 0.8% of a total population of over 302 million (2007: 3). Two-thirds (65%) of adult Muslims in the United States are foreign-born, and 39% have immigrated to the States since 1990.

Similar to the United States, Canada's census data show a relative surge of Muslim newcomers in the 1990s. In 1991, there were 253,265 Muslim Canadians, making up 0.9% of the total population. Ten years later, the Muslim population had doubled. In 2001, there were 579,640 Muslim Canadian, accounting for 2.0% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2003: 8, 18). In 2006, there were an estimated 700,000 Muslim Canadians, making up 2.2% of the population. The median age of Muslim Canadians is 28 years—the youngest in the country based on religious affiliation—which means that they have the most rapid growth potential of all religious communities.

Immigrants or migrant workers

In the conventional or traditional sense, an immigrant is an individual who leaves his native country—for whatever combination of push or pull factors—for an intended host country with the commitment to permanently adopting it as his country in the fullest meaning, accepting its values,

participating in its political culture, and giving it his unreserved loyalty. Before World War II and for sometime until the 1950s, traveling by way of trains or ships took many weeks and entailed considerable expense. This contributed to the psychological aspect of the decision-making involved in starting out as an immigrant. There are many poignant stories of these journeys—stories of leaving behind native lands with some certainty of never returning, and of anticipating the new lands as well the accompanying challenges of settlement and assimilation. Immigration involved cutting one's ties in order to enter a new world. An immigrant was, for the most part, brimming with gratitude for the opportunities open to him that did not exist or were denied him in his native country.

In contrast, a migrant worker remains situated in two countries: his native home and his place of his work. He does not have to make the same choices an immigrant makes, and he is not asked to make these choices by the host country, since his presence is acknowledged as temporary. A migrant worker is not a new phenomenon, although globalization has contributed to the increasing demand for and the supply of migrant workers. For example, this phenomenon is apparent in the oil-rich Persian Gulf states where the economy is sustained by migrant workers.

But what happens when the host country admits migrant workers and allows them to stay on as immigrants? This phenomenon of migrant workers becoming immigrants can be observed in the surge of migration to Europe in recent decades, and the dissonance between the expectations of the host country and the behaviour of newcomers. This surge occurred as push and pull factors coincided. Over the past 30 years, the phenomenon of failed and near-failed states has created a dramatic increase in push factors, resulting in a surge of migrants from states in Asia and North Africa that have a Muslim majority population. The impact of the revolution in transportation also occurred during this period. This revolution made it possible for an individual in Asia, for example, to have his breakfast in Karachi and look for dinner in New York City or Toronto on the same day.

Moreover, the new arrival process an immigrant faces in the host country often does not require him to submit himself to the sort of preparation immigrants of an earlier era did. The documents provided by the host

country, which may include accelerated citizenship, can in some cases be papers of convenience that allow the immigrant to reside in his adopted country and earn income there, while still being able to be connected to his native country with which he did not cut his umbilical ties. Most host countries would not require him to do so.

Host country dilemma

Since the late 1960s, host countries—particularly, those in Western Europe—have been squeezed by changes in internal political-cultural debates, and by the arrival of newcomers who are mostly from parts of the world once ruled as colonies by some of these countries. By questioning their country's colonial-imperialist past, as well as racism, fascism, and wars, the 1960s generation in the West began chipping away at their respective national identities. When Deconstruction[2] came into vogue, deconstructing the legacy of the Enlightenment in modern Europe and North America deprived the West of its ability to face the cultural opposition from marginal groups and developing societies. In due course, the weakening of the Western identity left a space to be filled. Since Western liberal democratic societies became more averse to demanding that newcomers embrace any part or the whole of their identity, such identity being subjected to critical re-examination, these newcomers were increasingly left to their own resources to shape their views about themselves in foreign lands.

It has been said that there is a hole at the centre of liberalism, for it does not address the subject of group identity (Fukuyama, 2006). Classical liberalism was concerned with acquiring and defending individual liberty from the clutches of collectivism—that is, politics that are organized around the identity of tribes, nations, castes, class, church, or mosque. Classical liberalism was also a product of Christian Europe. As Europeans chiseled away their national identities in the post-Christian age, they were faced

2 Traced back to contemporary French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, Deconstruction began to be used in literary, historical, and cultural studies in the 1960s. The American Heritage Dictionary (2005) defines it as a philosophical movement and theory of literary criticism that questions traditional assumptions about certainty, identity, and truth.

with the problem of reconciling their liberalism and secularism with the group identity of newcomers—especially the group identity of Muslims, which is based on their religion.

The answer to the liberal problem came in the form of multiculturalism, an idea promoted most vigorously in Canada, despite the protests of Québec elitists who wanted the country to remain bicultural. Multiculturalism offered the tantalizing prospect of moving the post-Christian West into an openly pluralist society in which different cultures could coexist harmoniously on the basis of equality, without having to adopt the "melting pot" approach of the United States. This policy of multiculturalism was an invitation to newcomers to maintain their own respective religious-cultural values, while embracing cultural relativism—the belief that all cultures are equal. Western liberals concurred that, given the history of Europe and North America, the West did not possess the moral authority to demand that immigrants reform their cultural values in accordance with the values of the host country in order to be accepted as equal members in Western societies.

But liberalism's silence on group identity and group rights was not a matter of forgetfulness; it was a recognition that when the individual and collective collide, the freedom of the individual takes precedence. By promoting multiculturalism, Western liberals began undermining liberalism, since all groups do not embrace liberal values equally, and Muslims, in particular, remain resistant to the idea of individual rights and gender equality (Lewis, 2004; Meddeb, 2003; UNDP, 2002). In practice, multiculturalism has tended towards a plural "monoculturalism" that allows cultural groups to withdraw into their own spaces (Sen, 2006). The effort of Muslims in the West to secure host countries' recognition of their group rights in law—the rule of *shariah* (Islamic laws)—based on the premise of multiculturalism is not surprising. Denying the demands of the Muslims while subscribing to multiculturalism further complicates the liberal problem.

9/11 and homegrown terrorism

The recent Islamist terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC, were followed by terrorist attacks in Madrid, Amsterdam (the killing

of Theo van Gogh), London, and elsewhere, as well as riots in France. Since 9/11, there have also been a number of planned terrorist attacks in the United States, Britain, and Canada that have been foiled. All of these events have their roots in the politics and cultural-political upheavals within the Arab-Muslim world. When four British-born Muslim suicide-bombers attacked London on July 7, 2005, Tony Blair, Britain's Prime Minister, clearly expressed his view on the origin and spread of Islamism—the converting of Islam from a faith-tradition into a political ideology with an emphasis on *jihad* or holy war—in relation to the making of Muslim fanatics who are going to war against the West. Blair noted that "its roots are not superficial, but deep, in the Madrassas of Pakistan, in the extreme forms of Wahhabi doctrine in Saudi Arabia, in the former training camps of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, in the cauldron of Chechnya, in parts of the politics of most countries in the Middle East and many in Asia; in the extremist minority that now in every European city preach hatred of the West and our way of life" (Blair, 2005).

How far the roots go back is beyond the scope of this chapter, but a number of observations can be made. Large-scale Muslim migration to Europe and North America after the 1970s and during the surge in the 1990s has coincided with the revival of a Muslim fundamentalism that changes into Islamist extremism, and with the retreat in the Arab-Muslim world from its hesitant opening to modern politics based on secular nationalism.

For secular-minded Arabs, the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967 brought a humiliating end to the Pan-Arabism of Egyptian dictator, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and this defeat spurred the revival of Islam as preached by the Muslim Brotherhood and financed by the Saudi Wahhabists. In 1971, Pakistan broke apart in the midst of a brutal civil war, mass killings by the military in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), and a humiliating military defeat in its war with India. In Iran, the Shah's regime faced increasing opposition from anti-royalists who succeeded in driving the Shah into exile and making it possible for fundamentalist religious forces led by Ayatollah Khomeini to secure power. The former Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq engaged in a long-running war in the 1980s, and many were dislocated as a result of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. Political

instability and violent attacks shook Algeria, and great bloodshed continues in the endless Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These events together created a push factor for Muslims to migrate to the West.

The arrival of Muslims from failed and failing states, which began in the 1970s, occurred as Europe and North America entered a new era of economic expansion in which the West opened doors to immigration from non-traditional areas of the developing world, including the Middle East and North Africa. The slow demographic shift caused by declining birth rates began in this era, as did the full-blown intellectual engagement in deconstructing liberalism. The Muslims who arrived in the West came into this environment and settled as immigrants, but had most of the characteristics of migrant workers.

The new arrivals founded their own institutions for meeting their religious-cultural needs. The most important institution that was built was the mosque, which provided day-care for children and religious education, and became a centre for social networking. Much of this was not entirely new for the West, which had already experienced cycles of earlier migrations of ethnic and religious groups within its own cultural boundaries. What was new about the most recent phase of migration was the new arrivals—in particular, Muslims from the Arab-Muslim countries of Asia and Africa—who came from outside of the West's cultural boundaries and were not prepared to fully accept the host country's culture. In time, Muslims constructed their own cultural wall between the host country and themselves, assisted with funds from oil-rich Arab countries—especially Saudi Arabia. This cultural wall was invisible at first, and no one in the host country paid much attention to what was taking place behind it. It is estimated that, between 1973 and 2003, about $70 billion US was distributed by the Saudi Wahhabi establishment for Islamist missionary work, and a portion of this money flowed into building mosques and related activities of Muslim communities in Europe and North America (Allen, 2006: 277; Alexiev, 2003; Ehrenfeld, 2005; Levitt, 2003).

The Muslim children of the new arrivals who came of age in the 1990s found themselves caught between two worlds—that of their parents, to which they could not return, and that of the West, which their parents did not fully accept. After 9/11, the West began to awaken to the story of these

children who were growing into adulthood (Malik, 2007). This generation of youth has been inducted into the globalized version of an historical Islam that harkens back to an idealized and airbrushed seventh century of the Common Era (or the first century of the Islamic calendar), which emphasizes the collective Muslim identity of the *ummah*—the community of believers. This idealized conception is the version of Islam that dwells exclusively and obsessively on the idea of *jihad* (holy war), the religious obligation of Muslims that is preached by the Wahhabi imams or those associated with the politics of the Muslim Brotherhood in mosques that are funded by money solicited from Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Libya, within the Shiite branch of Muslims with support from Khomeini's Iran. This brand of Islam has appealed to rootless young Muslims by providing them with a group identity that carries with it the romanticism of belonging to an international faith-community—the *ummah*—which transcends borders and ethnic markers.

This ideology (Islamism) has given that small segment of Muslims striving for political activism the ready-made cause of opposing the West as an imperial hegemon in its relations with the Muslim world. For the Islamists and their sympathizers, the Muslim world is a victim of the Western world, which has exploited its resources and occupied its lands in the Middle East (Palestine), South Asia (Kashmir), the Caucasus (Chechnya), and Southeast Asia (islands in the Indonesian and the Philippines archipelago). In the post-9/11 world, recruits known as "homegrown terrorists" have come out of the ranks of the Islamists.

Islamism, as an ideology and an organizing principle for religiously-based political parties, eventually supplanted secular-nationalist parties within the Muslim world during the 1990s. In the West, Islamism was imported into Muslim communities, and gradually acquired a presence in the media through organizations such as the Council on Islamic-American Relations in the United States and its branch in Canada, the Muslim Council of Britain, and similar organizations in France and elsewhere in Europe. Its presence was established in educational institutions through campus organizations such as the Muslim Student Association, and in the wider Muslim community through organizations such as the Islamic Society of North America. It was only a matter of time before

these Muslim organizations would position themselves in the political arena of host countries, claim to represent Muslim communities as voting blocs, and receive excessive attention from mainstream, established political parties—particularly those on the left—seeking electoral support in return.

Islamism acquired respectability in the West during the last quarter of the twentieth century by escaping scrutiny. Muslim dissenters opposing Islamism remain ostracized within larger Muslim communities and, ironically, are marginalized by the mainstream Western media and political parties. Muslims who embrace liberal values and are at ease in the West are viewed with suspicion by Islamists, and are increasingly intimidated with threats of violence for being opponents of Islamism.

The "Rushdie affair" remains the most prominent cultural indicator of the rise and spread of Islamism in Europe and North America and its assault on the core values of the West. The Rushdie affair first took flight in 1988 in the Muslim communities of Britain, where people publicly burned Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, which they condemned as being blasphemous. In February 1989, it became an international affair after Ayatollah Khomeini issued his infamous *fatwa*—a legal opinion of a Muslim religious scholar—calling for Rushdie's murder (Ruthven, 1990).

Conclusion

The West significantly contributed to the increasing prominence of Islamism before 9/11 through its naivety, its ignorance, its openness to the movement of funds from the Middle East to Muslim immigrant communities, and its reluctance to publicly declare Islamism to be an ideology that is unacceptable in liberal democracies. The West also contributed by exhibiting a degree of willingness to accommodate the requirements of Muslim practices and entertaining the argument for permitting the use of *shariah* law.

Many in the West now face the urgent task of examining the extent to which harm caused by the rise of Islamism and homegrown terrorism is self-inflicted. This task will require a frank critical assessment of how multiculturalism has contributed to the erosion of the West's own universal

values of individual rights, gender equality, democracy, and secularism. The Islamist war against the West is far from over, and the Islamists are not yet prepared to offer any terms for their surrender—i.e., to cease their waging a campaign against the West. This war has all the signs of generational conflict, similar to the Cold War between the West and the former Soviet Union. Its Cold War experience should be valuable to the West in its conflict with Islamism, for, not unlike Communism, Islamism is internationalist in its scope and agenda. If it confronts Islamism, the West does not face even a remote possibility of military defeat, as was the case with fascism and communism. But by failing to require Muslim immigrants to adapt and abide by Western values, on the same basis as all other immigrants, the West does face the insidious unraveling of the values and political culture that make a free society.

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