EXAMINING POLITICAL RADICALIZATION USING SIGNIFICANCE QUEST THEORY (TERRORISM JUSTIFYING IDEOLOGY FRAMEWORK)

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Criminal Justice – Master of Science

2020

ABSTRACT

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One framework of radicalization, called Significance Quest Theory (SQT), is based on assumptions that an individual's quest for personal significance is the lead factor in promoting political radicalization. Under the framework of Significance Quest Theory (SQT), an individual is pushed towards political radicalization through three distinct means: needs, narratives, and networks. These factors have been found to increase terrorism involvement, yet quantitative studies are meager. This thesis represents needs, narratives and networks with locus of control, modernization, reliance on religious leaders, and religiosity to examine how these are related to political radicalization among a sample of youth. Using a secondary dataset of 928 youth from Egypt (Alexandria, El-Minya, Cairo) and 954 youth from Saudi Arabia (Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam/Khobar), the present study assessed whether needs, narratives and networks as represented by locus of control, modernization, relying on religious leaders, and religiosity are relevant factors in explaining political radicalization (Moaddel, Karabenick, & Thornton, 2010).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

Political radicalization is an increase in preparation for, as well as dedication to, intergroup conflict (McCauley, & Moskalenko, 2008). Radicalization conveys alteration in behaviors and beliefs that often "…increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the ingroup" (McCauley, & Moskalenko, 2008, p. 416). Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) investigated 117 homegrown jihadist terrorists from both the United Kingdom and the United States and found most of peaceful Muslims do share feelings of grievance in opposition to the West, which they evaluated as political radicalization (McCauley, & Moskalenko, 2017). Notably, there are various factors involved in political radicalization, such as negative life experiences leading to fundamental uncertainty or one's loss of significance, the role of one's ideology, and the spur on searching for as well as the shift in identity towards groups with compelling ideals and norms (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018). Additionally, Borum (2015) stated that excitement along with adventure has frequently been cited to describe the reasoning behind individuals' participation in political radicalization, yet experiential proof regarding the matter has been unreliable up to this point. When comparing individuals who are either more or less politically radicalized, one is likely to discover differences in both feelings and beliefs among these individuals. Radicalized groups are often politicized (i.e., having a mutual grievance along with ascribing responsibility to an adversary) and stress intergroup conflict and direct violence or action as the answer for social inequality instead of legal forms of political objection (Thomas, McGarty, & Louis, 2014). Conceptually, radicalization includes the growing grounds and/or justification of the utilization of extreme means (i.e., incorporating violence) and the belief system (i.e., ideology) that "the means justify the ends" (Azzi, 2011; Thomas, McGarty, & Louis, 2014, p. 16; van Stekelenburg, & Klandermans, 2011). In contrast to

radicalization, the concept of politicized activism includes a fight for the minds as well as the hearts of third parties (i.e., authorities as well as the voting public); radicalization action plans do not include directly persuading/convincing outsiders (i.e., third parties) or onlookers (i.e., bystanders) to help the cause (Becker, Tausch, Spears, & Christ, 2011; Della Porta, 1995; Thomas, McGarty, & Louis, 2014). Individuals, masses, and groups can become radicalized in numerous manners, but the central idea is that all radicalization, except for lone-wolf terrorists, involves earlier identification with a group which considers itself in conflict with (an)other group(s) (Abrahams, 2017). Smith (2015) noticed that hate, anger, and humiliation are emotions most frequently ascribed to those who are politically radicalized.

There are numerous potential definitions of radicalization, yet the vast majority of depictions include social psychological differentiations between feelings, behaviors, and beliefs (McCauley, & Moskalenko, 2008). Radicalization might be related to a syndrome of beliefs regarding one's present circumstance as well as circumstances in history: "We are a special or chosen group (superiority) who have been unfairly treated and betrayed (injustice), no one else cares about us or will help us (distrust), and the situation is dire—our group and our cause are in danger of extinction (vulnerability)" (McCauley, & Moskalenko, 2008, p. 416). Gøtzsche-Astrup (2018), mentioned how the current body of information about radicalization identifies negative life experiences resulting in the loss of personal significance or fundamental uncertainty breeds radicalized ideals. For example, these negative life experiences may include incidents of discrimination, self- or existing (i.e., existential) uncertainty, personal significance being lost, or being humiliated (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018; McCauley, & Moskalenko, 2017; Webber, & Kruglanski, 2018). Explanations for and the shift of individual identity to groups with strong standards as well as norms compromising sacred values, allow extreme ingroup defenses and can

result in extreme actions such as terrorism (Bélanger, Caouette, Sharvit, & Dugas, 2014; Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018).

The empirical facts increasingly point to some precursors of radicalization (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018). Evidence from interviews/surveys with formerly radicalized people from ISIS (Neumann, 2015) and other extremist groups (Reinares, 2011; Webber, & Kruglanski, 2018) have indicated that individuals join or are recruited by radicalized groups through grievance, ideologies, faith, or a combination of these (Neumann, 2015; Webber, & Kruglanski, 2018). Particularly individuals who felt they have been discriminated against are easy targets for radicalization as the group provides a much-needed collective identity (Abrahams, 2017; Azzi, 2011; Della Porta, & LaFree, 2012McCauley, & Moskalenko, 2017). Moreover, in a vicious circle, social groups that are deemed vulnerable to radical propaganda due to being discriminated against and/or excluded tend to be treated as potential risks, thus further strengthening their sense of discrimination as well as exclusion. Two assumptions have been made by Della Porta, and Haupt (2012) to address these issues. First, procedures of radicalization in political collections include pertinent cognitive mechanisms. Environmental (political, cultural, and social) features are mediated by the militants' reality perceptions where their political inclusion grows. The principal tool for deciding the link between individual motivations (i.e., at the micro-level), and environmental conditions (i.e., at the macro-level), is the examination of the militants'/activists' perceptions of their identity and the environmental conditions of the small-group dynamics escalating and radicalizing their participation (Della Porta, & Haupt, 2012).

Some factors of Significance Quest Theory (SQT) emphasize the quest for personal significance as a vital motivational force pushing people in the direction of political radicalization. For instance, when individuals have been mistreated, excluded, experienced loss

of personal significance, and/or discriminated against, they are at high risk of political radicalization. I will go on to introduce SQT.

There are numerous theories and/or frameworks that can be used to define the concept of political radicalization (Van Den Bos, 2018). For the purpose of this thesis, I propose a single underlying framework to explain political radicalization. The theory that will be used in this research is based on Kruglanski's (2014) Significance Quest Theory (SQT; or Terrorism-Justifying Ideology Framework). SQT defines radicalization as a development of supporting and putting radical behavior into practice (Van Den Bos, 2018). As many researchers have noted, SQT mentions that goals play a vital role in human behavior (Kruglanski, et al., 2002; Shah, Friedman, & Kruglanski, 2002). Furthermore, Kruglanski, Gelfand, Bélanger, Sheveland, Hetiarachchi, and Gunaratna (2014), defined SQT by distinguishing between the quest for personal significance (i.e., the motivational constituent) that describes an objective (the Needs), the ideological constituent where the utilization of violence is made legitimate (the Narratives), and the social process where they strengthen as well as share the ideology (the Networks).

The present study assesses the potential effects of needs, narratives and networks on political radicalization among youth in the Middle Eastern countries of Saudi Arabia (i.e., Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam/Khobar) and Egypt (i.e., Alexandria, El-Minya, Cairo). Needs are represented by measures of locus of control, narratives with measures of modernization ideals, and networks with reliance on religious leaders and religiosity.

CHAPTER II:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework of Political Radicalization

The radicalization process is one where someone comes to adopt or support extreme behaviors as well as attitudes that enables participation in activities that most may consider as violating significant social norms (Kruglanski, Gelfand, Bélanger, Sheveland, Hetiarachchi, & Gunaratna, 2014). For instance, killing civilians is an extreme form of violating significant social norms, which has been in the forefront of policies since the 9/11 attacks. The purpose of this research is to contribute to this understanding. Kruglanski and colleagues (2014) have developed a framework of radicalization dependent on the idea that the quest for personal significance comprises a significant motivational force pushing people toward political radicalization or violent extremism (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014; Kruglanski, et al., 2013; Bélanger, Caouette, Sharvit, & Dugas, 2014; Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009; Webber et al., 2018). This framework is known to some as Terrorism Justifying Ideology or as Significance Quest Theory (SQT) (Kruglanski, Jasko, Webber, Chernikova, & Molinario, 2018). The theory asserts that desiring to matter and having meaning in one's life, is the predominant need in which underlies political radicalization (Frankl, 1959; Murray, 1999). Research guided by the SQT theory has demonstrated that, when dispossessed of significance, individuals become strongly prompted/inspired to start actions that permit them to reinstate a feeling of significance (Schumpe, Bélanger, Moyano, & Nisa, 2020). Dugas et al. (2016) in a series of cross-cultural studies, noticed that significance can be reinstated by means of self-sacrifice for an extremely/favorably worthy cause. Vitally, self-sacrifice is explained as the psychological willingness to suffer and eventually to die for a reason (Bélanger, Schumpe, Menon, Ng, & Nociti, 2018). Consequently, self-sacrifice has three components: motivational (i.e., the

willingness), a cost (e.g., suffering/pain, and eventually one's death), and lastly, an ideological component (e.g., a reason/cause) (Bélanger, Schumpe, Menon, Ng, & Nociti, 2018). The concept of self-sacrifice displays/carries some similarity to numerous other psychological constructs. For instance, as mentioned by Bélanger, Schumpe, Menon, Ng, and Nociti (2018), self-sacrifice resembles the constructs of goal commitment, altruism, and egalitarianism. As specified by SQT theory, self-sacrifice amounts to important means to restoring one's significance. In a string of cross-cultural investigations, Dugas et al. (2016) noticed that by means of self-sacrifice, one can restore their significance for an extremely valued reason/cause. For instance, Palestinians as well as Iraqi refugees who live in Jordan announced greater willingness to sacrifice oneself when feeling insignificant (Dugas et al., 2016; Schumpe, Bélanger, Moyano, & Nisa, 2020). Schumpe, Bélanger, Moyano, & Nisa (2020) stated that experimentally foiling participants' need for belongingness along with competence also led to an increase in individual's readiness to sacrifice themselves. Dugas et al. (2016) final research discovered that sacrifices for the desire of a significant reason increases one's sense of significance. Participants, after remembering a time when they sacrificed for a cause versus remembering an experience that was pleasurable, announced greater significance, pride, purpose in one's life, and personal worth (Schumpe, Bélanger, Moyano, & Nisa, 2020; Dugas et al., 2016) when they recalled sacrificial experiences.

I will review the SQT theory with its three components, comprising of: motivational, ideological, and social components which push people to adopt as well as engage in extremist attitudes and behaviors (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014). The measures of SQT's three components in my research are as follows: locus of control (motivational/needs component), modernism (ideological/narratives component), and relying on religious leaders and religiosity (social/networks component). We will review below: (1) the Quest for Significance as a

significant propelling force of human conduct, (2) the belief system/ideology in demonstrating adequate methods for accomplishing significance, and lastly, (3) the social processes that induce the significance quest and get people to espouse extreme conducts/behaviors as means of significance achievement (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014, p. 424). Notably, significance quest is believed to lie at the heart of numerous motivational constructs formerly documented as causing violent extremism (Webber, et al., 2018). These motivational constructs of Significance Quest Theory are comprised of, but are not restricted to, retribution, humiliation, injustice, loyalty to a leader, honor, etc. (Gambetta, 2005; Stern, 2004). Therefore, the significance quest construct unifies these apparently/seemingly different reasons/motivating forces under the same umbrella.

Quest for Significance (Needs) and Political Radicalization

The quest for significance is described as the need to feel that one's life matters along with having a meaning (Bélanger, Caouette, Sharvit, & Dugas, 2014; Kruglanski, 2013; Kruglanski, et al., 2013). It is a human fundamental to wish to be loved, valued and respected, in other words to be of significance (Bäck, Bäck, Altermark, & Knapton, 2018; Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014). Social exclusion brings about significance loss, evoking a quest for significance, searching for a right set of circumstances in order to retrieve one's significance, characterized in conformity with the shared reality or the ideology of one's group (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018; Kruglanski, 2013). Notably, an individual's ideologies (i.e., belief system) is internalized as one's perspective (i.e., world view), along with a guide based on what is either right or wrong, just or unjust, or bad or good. Frequently when one is faced with a triggering/provoking occurrence initiating the significance motivation, meaning instigating one's need for personal significance resulting in the path to radicalization. As mentioned by Kruglanski, Gelfand, Bélanger, Sheveland, Hetiarachchi, and Gunaratna (2014), a typical,

however not an exclusive provoking occasion, is one involving a loss of significance (LoS) for the person. Furthermore, this theory has mentioned that when individuals experience loss of personal significance, for instance because of achievement failures, abuse, social rejection, social alienation, not having control of one's life, and more, one's motivation to restore one's significance might force these individuals in using extreme measures (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). Notably, as mentioned above, social alienation is another form of loss of significance that has been explored and mentioned in numerous theories of radicalization (e.g., Silber, & Bhatt, 2007; Horgan, 2005), defined as the sense of detachment from cultural as well as social participation (Giffin, 1970). We presume that the common subject/theme across encounters of disappointment as well as frustration is the motivating force in establishing one's sense of significance, a sense of mattering and having meaning (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017).

Work on terrorist networks by many researchers on Muslim European Diasporas have emphasized the quest for social as well as emotional support as a reason for membership in terrorist networks by those who felt turned down/rejected by and estranged by their local communities (Kruglanski, & Fishman, 2009; Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009). As stated by Jasko et al. (2019), "For individuals who belonged to less radical groups, on the other hand, quest for individual significance was positively related to support for violence" (p. 18). Significantly, when there was an impact/effect of individual significance quest on violence, this effect was not brought by ideological extremism (Jasko et al., 2019). This indicates that people looking for personal significance may discover violence especially attractive or interesting, paying little attention to their level of commitment to the reason/cause (Kruglanski et al., 2013; Jasko et al., 2019). Indeed, when individuals participate in political actions in the

interests of significant social values, they obtain a feeling of personal significance (Jasko, Szastok, Joanna, Maj, & Kruglanski, 2019). Additionally, Jasko, Lafree, and Kruglanski (2017) in a sample of almost 1,500 ideological extremists discovered a pattern of outcomes that to a great extent matched their predictions in which nearly all of the indicators/measures of loss of significance were positively connected to the likelihood of political violence. For instance, at the bivariate level they discovered that when people encountered failure at their workplace, rejected/turned down in social relationships, or abused, were more likely to use violence in order to engage in their ideological objectives (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). By all means, these results as stated above are compatible/consistent with the theory of choice, which is the SQT theory (Kruglanski et al., 2014).

Locus of Control is described as how strongly individuals believe they have control over the experiences as well as situations affecting their lives in which results in aggression (Gaskell, & Smith, 1985; Canetti, Hall, Rapaport, & Wayne, 2013; Reynolds, 1976). Various authors have called having no-control in one's life as ELOC (i.e., External Locus of Control) (Ahlin, 2014; Bhatia, & Golin, 1978; Rotter, 1966), but will be referred to in this thesis as no/less control. It is expected for those with no/less control than those with internal locus of control (ILOC) (i.e., those believing of having control) to show greater aggression in response to frustration (Bhatia, & Golin, 1978). In other words, people with an ILOC believe in having control over the outcomes resulting from their behaviors, while individuals with no/less control do not expect their behavior to affect the end result (Ahlin, 2014). As stated by Rotter (1966), ILOC is said to be a protective element against violence. Additionally, the orientation of locus of control is learned and can be altered, including "…learning what we have control over versus what we do not, as well as learning what choices we can make" (Ahlin, 2014, p. 2698). As stated in various

articles, when individuals believe more strongly that they have no control over their lives, they become more likely to utilize extreme measures/means in achieving their goal of increasing their significance (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). Notably, Ahlin (2014) found that individuals "frustrated with a situation are more likely to resort to aggressive behavior" if they also have no/less control (p. 2698). On one hand, individuals with an ILOC would then be better than individuals with no/less control in controlling their responses to circumstances, thus portraying those who have self-control versus those who do not (Bhatia, & Golin, 1978; Ahlin, 2014).

Moreover, locus of control is different than self-control. This is only noted in my discussion to clarify the difference among locus of control along with self-control. Locus of control is interested about results relating to behaviors, though self-control concerns only to the behavior as well as the impulsivity, taking risks, in addition to lack of ability to postpone/delay satisfaction related to participating in a behavior in which it is not related to the results that are associated with it (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). In a study conducted by Tubbs (1994), it was found that the connection of antisocial behavior of Japanese youth is the failure to have learned self-control, and the impression that the locus of control is therefore external (i.e., meaning they have no/less control). Therefore, locus of control is the central problem that underlies other issues and the way in which this applies to learning or the failure in learning self-control, whereby results in certain behavior (i.e., in this case it leads to political radicalization) (Tubbs, 1994). Additionally, an individual may use violence in order to re-secure a feeling of control in their lives, or in their relationships. For example, Huynh, et al. (2019) found men using violence in order to re-gain their sense of control in their relations with women alongside of achieving/attaining their fantasies of male power.

Ideological Justification of Violence (Narratives) and Political Radicalization

Certainly, loss of significance by itself scarcely ensures an individual to engage in forms of violent extremism or in this case, political radicalization. Crucially, the existence of an ideology that enthusiastically praise violence as a valid/legitimate as well as successful methods for achieving significance (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). Opportunities for gaining significance simply initiates the objective/goal of significance, nevertheless individuals are directed to suitable/proper means for achieving this goal by means of their belief systems, including collective belief systems or ideologies that the members of the group agree with (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014). A *terrorism-justifying ideology* is described as a specific collective belief system acknowledging extremist activity (i.e., political radicalization) as the suitable method in fulfilling one's significance quest (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014; Leader Maynard, 2014). Dugas, and Kruglanski (2014) defined ideology as "…a shared reality adopted by members of a group and propose that individuals are exposed to an ideology through their social bonds" (p. 427). Thus, the way an individual is affected by their social networks is intertwined/connected or linked two or more things closely with the group's ideology they subscribe to. With regards to political radicalization, this insinuate the group's ideology justifying violence as a mean while their social networks issues reinforcement of and a general agreement concerning this specific set of beliefs. Nevertheless, latching on/holding on to an empowering ideology is one way of reinstating/restoring one's feeling of significance (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014). By not having any other ideologies to go to, extremist ideologies provide an appealing option for discovering significance as well as empowerment.

The central argument of this section is that Eastern civilization ideologies (i.e., family change and economic development) can be explained by either Modernism versus

Fundamentalism/Traditionalism orientation (Uluç, 2004; Owusu□Ansah, 2006; Ridgeon, 2005). Modernism is the main concept as opposed to traditionalism/fundamentalism. In this scenario Modernization is defined as individual's exposure to ideas that will make them either more fundamentalist or more modern. More modern in this discussion means that individuals believe that people should marry at older ages, have more children, women's status increasing, young people should have more freedom to blend/socialize with their opposite sex, polygamy should decrease among men, etc. Noteworthy, the marked difference between fundamentalism as well as modernism in Islamic cultures (i.e., Islamic modernism) might be ascribed to the impacts of ideology (Moaddel,1998). As defined by various researchers, fundamentalism has to do with the rejection and an attack on Western culture sexual licentiousness as well as its cultural decadence of overindulgences (Moaddel, 1998; Ridegon, 2005). In other words, fundamentalism has to do with individuals believing more polygamy being carried out by men, women and men not being in the same settings at all times, women not having much freedom of expression, status, and so forth. In addition to that, fundamentalist find switching to European clothing distasteful, for example, wearing hats (Moaddel, 1998). On the other hand, modernism has to do with the ethical explanation of the Qur'an alongside of favoring education for women as well as participation in social affairs, opposed to polygamy and isolation (Moaddel, 1998; Ridegon, 2005). Modernization has been connected with outbreaks of terrorism as gatherings/groups deprived by a world that is constantly changing react in violence (Lutz, & Lutz, 2014). Gupta (2009) mentioned that the process of modernization unavoidably insinuates change. This widely encompassing change includes individuals' perspectives/attitudes, beliefs; most importantly, it undermines the current social, political, and economic power structure (Gupta, 2009). As a result, fear as well as uncertainty among a large number of people is created in which it is argued

by Gupta (2009) that violent conflicts are brought about. Moreover, a few academic studies, although without a lot of experiential proof, have discovered that Islamic religion is more traditionalist/fundamentalist and more inclined to conflict as well as violence, both nationally (i.e., domestically) as well as globally (i.e., internationally) (Ben-Dor, & Pedahzur, 2003; Fox, 2003; Fox, 2012; Nuruzzaman, 2017). Notably, Islamic ideology is usually described as a politicized form of Islam in amalgamation with an extremist explanation, where other deviations or religions from an individual's own explanation are rejected, deviating people are not allowed, and violence might be promoted in defending one's ideologies/beliefs (Sadowski, Endrass, & Zick, 2019).

Interestingly enough, all through the 1960's-1980's Islamist groups recourse to terrorism and political violence (i.e., in this case political radicalization) nourishing the expectation they could start a sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government (Armborst, 2014). As mentioned by Armborst (2014), jihadi fundamentalists sometimes resort to violence in order to either seize political organizations or to put an end to them. Also, Pasquinelli (1998) stated that fundamentalism concentrates on "…their relations to modernity and tradition" (pp. 14-16). Indeed, it can be differentiated by its references to a text (e.g., Quran, or the Bible), believed to possess revealed and unerring truths (Pasquinelli, 1998). Additionally, fundamentalism battles against the notion that there is only one single way to modernity. As mentioned by Pasquinelli (1998), although fundamentalists use modern technology to convey their message, they limit people's freedom of choice and erasing the line between politics and religion, which is central to the impression of modernity of Westerners. Deckard, and Jacobson (2015) conducted a survey of 1,200 Muslims who live in Western Europe and by controlling the demographic variables of this research, they found that usually, respondents from more flourishing financially families are

more probable practicing Islam in a manner closely connected with fundamentalism. They are said to be more traditionalist concerning gender roles, search for the universal implementation of Islamic law, along with including/welcoming views/perspectives related with a more politicized Islam (Deckard, & Jacobson, 2015). They also found that these respondents embracing this set of belief are more likely to favor using violence to protect their faith (Deckard, & Jacobson, 2015). In addition to that, recent research has found radicalization to be correlated with fundamentalist religious beliefs (Deckard, & Jacobson, 2015). Moaddel, and Karabenick (2008) conducted surveys of Saudi and Egyptian youths, ranging in age from 18-25 in which they found, individuals with higher levels of fundamentalism to a greater extent "rely on religious authorities as the source of knowledge about the sociopolitical role of Islam, support religious law, be fatalistic, and feel insecure" (p. 1675). Moreover, by accepting traditionalism one is now aware of the communist idea has now been assigned to faith. The community that are presupposed by this procedure is defined as a *collective of believers* (i.e., or otherwise known as a *community of destiny*) where individuals join together in their collective faith past their specific identification, which doing so is exceedingly dangerous and results in violence (Znepolski, 2017, p. 481). By all means, as mentioned by many authors in various research, the concept of *religious fundamentalism* portrays the condoning and supporting religious violence in regard to comprehension of the relationship between violence and religion; emphasizing the use and support of violence by fundamentalist individuals rather than modernized individuals (Busch, 2018, pp. 60-61; Cliteur, 2010a, pp. 235-249). Crucially, religious fundamentalism as portrayed in the media is often associated with violence and is equivalent to terrorism (Sadowski, Endrass, & Zick, 2019).

Group Processes (Networks) and Political Radicalization

The need to belong is a fundamental human need. In fact, social context is important when it comes to political radicalization. Baumeister and Leary (1995) have found cited evidence that forming and preserving social relationships is of central importance of human motivation (Dugas, Bélanger, Moyano, Schumpe, Kruglanski, Gelfand, Touchton-Leonard, & Nicoti, 2016). The third component of SQT theory is the network component, referring to the group of individuals that agree and accept the narrative (Kruglanski, Jasko, Webber, Chernikova, & Molinario, 2018). The way in which it plays a part in a person's radicalization is twofold: (1) contact with such network makes a violence justifying narrative cognitively reachable to an individual, and (2) the network's support for the narrative proves its validity and serves as proof of its robustness/soundness and its accuracy (Kruglanski, Jasko, Webber, Chernikova, & Molinario, 2018). Individuals, through social networks are introduced to an influence process by which the individual eventually gets persuaded and winds up embracing the perspective as well as the world view of the network (Kruglanski, 2013). As a matter of fact, it is such an influence process that is crucial and does not need/require a broad network of interconnections with radically minded people. Suffice it if the people come under the influence of a sole rousing/inspiring person, be it a charming propagandist on the world wide web, or Ali Ghuffron, in the event of the Bali bombers, the remainder is history (Kruglanski, 2013; Milla, Faturochman, & Ancok, 2013).

Moreover, as with ideology, group processes/networks further the action that is yet to take place by masses of individuals that are humiliated to committed terrorists (Webber, & Kruglanski, 2018). Webber and Kruglanski (2018) in their research found that "…without network connections there would be 'a lot of angry young Muslims, but no real terrorists' as they

would not know where or whom to turn to remedy their situations" (p. 132). This is regarding the examination of the radicalization of Islamic extremists in the diaspora (Webber, & Kruglanski, 2018).

Interpersonal relations and social networks provide vital connections for recruiting individuals into either terrorist organizations and/or gangs. An individuals' network of personal relations and social relations to particular people frequently plays a central role in decisions to join such groups of either gangs and/or terrorist group. This is due to the fact that occasionally, the decision to join either gangs and/or terrorist groups is made by the groups itself (i.e., meaning their network of personal and social relationships) among a young group, which is the primary method of individuals joining radicalized, gangs, or terrorist groups. For instance, Della Porta (1992) mentions among Italian extremists, the decision to become a member of an underground organization is hardly an individual one. Much of the time it included circle/cliques of one's friends. At times recruiting individuals was determined by the person's solidarity with a significant friend who was apprehended or needed to go underground (Della Porta, 1992). Therefore, portraying that individuals are in fact more likely to join such groups through either having friends who are either in such groups or a group of friends that one has. More recently, Sageman (2004) examined the cases of roughly 172 global Salafi *mujahedin* where they discovered that almost two thirds became a member of the *jihad* as a whole as part of a small group or had a long-lasting friend who joined previously. Noteworthy, for most terrorist new members/recruits, their initial approach or introduction to/experience with the terrorist organization comes from somebody they know. On the other hand, a recruiter might utilize newcomers to establish or indicate alternative possibilities or influence other significant relations to hook the person (Sageman, 2004; Sageman, Smith, & Smith, 2005). Not to forget, a social

network influence on a person is also entwined with the ideology of the groups (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014).

Additionally, social networks have been used to recruit members of gang. Minnis, vanDommelen-Gonzalez, Luecke, Cheng, Dow, Bautista-Arredondo, and Padian (2015) in their research found that social networks recruited high risk youths in order to have them join their gang and commit more violence than they already have, either individually or with their gang members. Moreover, Mokounkolo (2004) found that being a member of a gang as well as security is important because they predict a culture of violence. In addition to that, Jasko et al. (2019) defined diaspora as "…a community that has been vocal and supportive of continuing conflict", where they found that such individuals were significantly more encouraging and in favor of violent extremis than others who do not have such connections (p. 3). If one were to simply have a friend who is already dedicated to a violent route, it would increase one's own personal involvement, through various ways, either committing terrorist acts, simply using violence among politically radicalized people or adolescents being involved in illegal political behavior, which in this case is political radicalization (Jasko et al., 2019). As found in many researches, individuals who belong to a radical group in contrast to those with moderate groups, may in fact strengthen one's opinion that violence is a suitable mean in addressing the concept of quest of significance (Jasko et al., 2019; Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). However, these results supported this presumption concerning friends and to some degree concerning significant others and sometimes even local support network (Verkuyten, 2018), yet not regarding family members (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). Noteworthy, people that develop more fundamentalist opinions slowly become more isolated from friends as well as family and increasingly rely on and are loyal to small fundamentalist groups (Verkuyten, 2018).

Additionally, there is a possibility of self-selection process, where people who become attracted/interested to extremist ideology go seek for like-minded individuals (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017).

According to Moaddel and Karabenick (2008), respondents having higher levels of fundamentalism are more likely to rely on religious authorities as the origin of understanding regarding Islam's sociopolitical role, supporting religious law, feeling insecure, and being fatalistic. Etzioni (2006) found that for those individuals who are more fundamentalist than moderates, are more likely to rely on religious leaders in support of using violence as a means. Furthermore, due to religion being able to provide a motivation for either justifying use of violence and violent behavior or peaceful conducts particularly when inequalities happen, relying on religious leaders can be important proponents for supporting nonviolent actions to actual or perceived lack of fairness or justice (Busch, 2018). Busch (2018) mentioned that religious leaders discern violence as a suitable method to achieve a goal/an end. Additionally, religious leaders use religion to advocate, condone, and instruct believers to perpetrate acts of violence or in this case, political radicalization (Bradley, 2010; Busch, 2018; Cliteur, 2010a; Cliteur, 2010b).

Religiosity is another contentious variable that has been related to violent radicalization (i.e., or in this case political radicalization), pointing to the significance of one's religion for oneself as well as one's religious involvement level in terms of frequency of participation to non-organized as well as organized religious activities (Gorsuch, & McPherson, 1989; Rousseau, Ghayda, Miconi, Lecompte, Mekki-Berrada, Habib El, & Youssef, 2019). Even though we have a tendency to witness on each day a public rhetoric associating religion, particularly Islam, with violent radicalization/extremism, empirical proof supporting of this relationship continues to lack (Misiak, Samochowiec, Bhui, Schouler-Ocak, Demunter, Kuey, . . . Dom, 2019; Verkuyten,

2018). Conversely, religiosity is a reported protective factor of violence/delinquency in both minority as well as majority samples (Massarwi, Khoury-Kassabri, & Eseed, 2019; Sharma, Mustanski, Dick, Bolland, & Kertes, 2019). In a study conducted by Massarwi, Khoury-Kassabri, and Eseed (2019) on 2811 Arab Muslims ranging from 13-18 years in age in Israel, they found religiosity playing a protective role in the prevention of teenagers' violence as well as lessening the impacts of delinquent peers. In another study, Coid, Bhui, MacManus, Kallis, Bebbington, and Ullrich (2016) found that religion/religiosity may be a protective factor "…but may determine targets of violence following radicalization" (p. 491). In addition to that, Simon, Reichert, and Grabow (2013) found religious identity/religiosity does not foster political radicalization, particularly amongst the Turkish and mainly Muslim migrants whom have high perceived identity incompatibility. By all means, the discrepancies in studies regarding religiosity's role could point to/indicate that religiosity will at the same time be a protective factor for a majority of the youth (Laird, Marks, & Marrero, 2011), while also occasionally become a risk factor for a few once there is adhesion to religious information and understanding given through either the internet or by means of mentors or radicalized friends (Roy, 2004; Roy, Munson, & Munson, 2005; Roy, Sinanovic, & Sinanovic, 2005; Rousseau, Ghayda, Miconi, Lecompte, Mekki-Berrada, Habib El, & Youssef, 2019).

In this research, I am representing the needs, narratives and networks with measurable concepts and providing an empirical test. For instance, previous qualitative research has assessed the relationship between needs and political radicalization. However, to my knowledge no research has assessed the relationship between the modernization (i.e., the Narratives Component), religiosity, and relying on religious leaders (i.e., the Networks Component) and political radicalization in a sample including youths in the middle eastern countries. The present

study addresses this gap in the literature by testing the utility of the SQT's three components of needs, narratives and networks with measurable concepts by running an empirical test of each of the scales I have made for the purpose of this study. Additionally, this study is significant in this sense that it will contribute to literature as well as provide information for future researchers and students.

CHAPTER III:
METHODS

The Present Study

This thesis builds on prior research and examines political radicalization through SQT by using measures of locus of control, modernization, reliance on religious leaders and religiosity in order to represent each of the SQT's main three components of Needs, Narratives, and Networks. I investigate the utility of political radicalization among a unique sample of youth in Middle Eastern countries of Saudi Arabia and Egypt to determine whether elements of SQT lead to radical political beliefs among youth. To my knowledge, the dataset used in this research has not been used to examine political radicalization of youth and particularly the concepts of locus of control, modernization, relying on religious leaders, and religiosity have not been examined as precursors of political radicalization.

This study seeks to answer the following research hypotheses:

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question: What is the role of Significance Quest Theory (SQT) in explaining radical political beliefs?

Hypothesis 1: Youth who believe they have less control of their lives are more likely to have radical political beliefs.

Hypothesis 2: Youth who are more fundamentalist/traditionalist are more likely to have radical political beliefs.

Hypothesis 3: Youth who rely on religious leaders are more likely to have radical political beliefs.

Hypothesis 4: Youth who have higher levels of religiosity are more likely have radical political beliefs.

Methods

Sample

The dataset for this thesis was collected by Moaddel, Karabenick, and Thornton (2010), titled "Youth, Emotional Energy, and Political Violence: The Cases of Egypt and Saudi Arabia Survey, 2005", also known as the YEEPV Study. They gathered data by conducting face-to-face interviews with youth in six different cities, three cities in Saudi Arabia (i.e., Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam/Khobar) and three cities in Egypt (i.e., Alexandria, El-Minya, Cairo) between January 2005 and July 2005. The purpose of the original data collection was to explore the cultural and sociopolitical attitudes of Saudi Arabians and Egyptians youths. Notably, their survey primarily focuses on: (1) the sources of epistemic authorities in which youths rely in shaping their opinions regarding different cultural as well as social issues and deciding their careers; (2) the extent of youths being aware of development ideas; (3) youth's orientations toward these issues as the relationship between politics and religion, form of government, Western culture, and social status of women, and; lastly (4) youth's attitude regarding religion and religiosity. Their sample involved all youths ranging from 18 to 25, where a representative sample of 928 youth were from Egypt and a total representative sample of 954 youths in Saudi Arabia, in which each city had its own percentage of youth sampled (Moaddel, Karabenick & Thorton, 2010). For instance, a total of 289 youths was from Cairo, 291 were from Alexandria, and 325 were from El-Minya; a total of 472 youths was from Jeddah, 321 were from Riyadh, and 160 were from Dammam/Khobar. The authors of this study did not over-sample nor weight their sample (Moaddel, Karabenick & Thorton, 2010). Moreover, as the basis of this research, I chose the regions of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Notably, the reason to which it is important to look at this Middle East regions are as followed. The Middle East is a hotspot in terms of conflict and

particularly in terms of issues about terrorism (Corm, 2016; LaFree, Morris, & Dugan, 2010; Piazza, 2007). Therefore, it is reasonable to look at these areas. As stated by El Ashkar (2018), the revolutions that has happened throughout the years in the Middle East has had negative serious impacts in which has resulted in the growth of violence, terrorism as well as religious extremism, and lastly the entry of the entire Middle East region into a never done or known before disastrous circumstance of international conflict. In other words, the entire Middle East region has therefore become a hotspot for international conflict occurring throughout the years due to the growth of violence, terrorism and so on. The way of representing the violence and conflict in the Middle East is because of violence being the result of "backward cultures" (Tuastad, 2003). The concept of backward cultures is "…lacking a forward-moving historical process", in which deciding whether a culture is advanced or not have been produced solely by Western culture ("Turkish columnist criticizes Western perception of Islam as "backward culture"', 2011). In another study conducted by Piazza (2007), it was found that a more important predictor of terrorist attacks in the Middle Eastern countries is the intensity of failures of the state, or incidents/periods of acute/or intense political lack of stability limiting central government presentation/projection of domestic power/authority, affected/suffered by states in the area/region.

Sampling for the original study was done through representative sampling of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Moaddel, Karabenick, and Thornton, 2010). Representative sampling is otherwise known as stratified sampling (Wilks, 1940). Representative sampling is defined as the sample of people to be polled be a "'properly balanced cross section" of the various important groups of individuals which form the population to be sample" (Wilks, 1940, pp. 262-263). By a "properly balanced cross section" of the populace, means that a sample of people where the vital

groups are defined by some relevant categorization of the people that compose the populace are represented in the sample in proportion to the number of people in these populace groups (Wilks, 1940, p. 263).

This dataset is useful for this current test of SQT because the survey questions incorporated concepts that are then used in this thesis to measure political radicalization (the dependent variable), and elements of needs, narratives and networks (here represented by locus of control, modernization, reliance on religious leaders and religiosity) which are then examined as precursors of political radicalization.

Measures and Scales

Table 1 outlines the independent and dependent variables used in this thesis. All explanatory variables are self-reported opinions of youth from the Moaddel, Karabenick, & Thornton (2010) dataset. The dependent variable is a measure of radicalization.

Political Radicalization

The dependent variable is a combined measure of questions taken from the "The Cases of Egypt and Saudi Arabia Survey, 2005 Study" survey dataset that are used in this study to represent radicalized attitudes. A scale variable was created from two survey items that asked respondents about their opinions concerning political radicalization. The Cronbach's alpha (α) for the DV variable was .470. These items are: "Armed struggle often leads to fitneh (trouble), even though it may cause injury to the enemy". The other item is: "Killing of civilians is acceptable if it helps defeat the enemy and win the war" (See Table 1). Responses for each item are on a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*Strongly agree)* to 4 (*Strongly disagree).*

It is crucial to justify the low values of some of my variables Cronbach's alphas. Noteworthy, SQT is a new theory, which has not been tested in terms of quantitative tests.

Therefore, one way I can test the SQT theory is by conducting this research with reasonably chosen variables. It is difficult to quantitatively test terrorism theories since most causative studies to date had been qualitative in nature. In this thesis, I am attempting to represent SQT with reasonable items to represent its basic elements is attempted. Doing so allows me to test these basic elements using SQT theory, which otherwise would be very hard to test. Thus, although some of scales used in this study have low Cronbach's alphas, these are natural constraints with using a secondary dataset. The scales still represent substantive items that reasonably represent SQT elements as conceived by Kruglanski et al. (Kruglanski, et al., 2002; 2014).

Covariates

Locus of Control. The main independent variable, locus of control (based on SQT theory), comprises two items that asked respondents if individuals feel they have entirely free choice and control in their lives or not, also the extent to feeling optimistic/pessimistic about one's future. The Cronbach's alpha (α) of the main IV variable, Locus of Control is .548. Responses for each item are on a 10-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*none at all*) to 10 (*a great deal*). Additionally, the directionality, especially across the items for each scale are as followed Notably, the directionality of youths' locus of control portrays higher numbers of the scale meaning being more politically radicalized.

Modernization. Modernization is a combined measure of five items that evaluated the youths' opinions about what does underdeveloped country needs to do in order to achieve economic development. The Cronbach's alpha (α) of the Modernization variable is .529. Each item had a 4-point Likert scale response set, which ranges from 1 (*Strongly Agree*) to 4 (*Strongly*

Disagree). A higher score of youths' being more modernized means they are more politically radicalized.

The original investigators conceptualized that if individuals were to be more modern, this would mean that they would believe individuals should marry at older ages, have less children, agree that women's status should be increased, young people should be given more freedom to blend/socialize with their opposite sex, polygamy should be decreased among men, etc. (Uluç, 2004; Owusu□Ansah, 2006; Ridgeon, 2005). Therefore, being more modern implies that an individual is less likely to resort to political radicalization, rather than if they were to have been more fundamentalist/traditionalist regarding their ideologies (Deckard, & Jacobson, 2015; Moaddel, & Karabenick, 2008).

Reliance on Religious Leaders. Reliance on religious leaders is a combined measure of five items that asked youth if they rely on (i.e., that is, believe and trust) religious leaders. The response set ranged in scale from 1 to 5; 1 being "Do not rely" and 5 "Rely completely". Example items are: "The role of women in society and politics", "Politics and forms of government", and "Your education and career choice". This measure displayed excellent reliability. The Cronbach's alpha (α) of the Reliance on Religious Leaders variable is .817. Higher scores of reliance on religious leaders means more radicalized.

Religiosity. Religiosity is a combined measure of six items that asked youth's questions regarding Islam and non-Islamic religions as well as Muslims against/versus non-Muslims with regards to one's religiosity. The Cronbach's alpha (α) of the Religiosity variable is .526 (See Table 1). Each of the seven items in this measure had a 4-point Likert scale response set, from 1 (*Strongly agree)* to 4 (*Strongly disagree)*. For instance, some example items are: "Islam should be the only religion taught in our public schools", "Non-Muslim religions have a lot of strange

beliefs and pagan ways", and "People who belong to different religions are probably just as nice and moral as those who belong to mine". Notably, the directionality of the Religiosity scale is that if a youth has less scoring of religiosity, they are more politically radicalized. Also, none of the six items in this combined measure was reverse coded.

Country. The present study controlled for Country. Youth were asked to self-report whether they are from Saudi Arabia (50.7%) or Egypt (49.3%) at the beginning of the interview (0 = Saudi Arabia; 1 = Egypt). Noteworthy, there is one category (Egypt = 1) compared to the reference category (Saudi Arabia = 0).

Analytic Plan

First, descriptive information is presented for all variables of interest in the full sample of youths in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Bivariate analyses were then conducted to better understand the associations between all the variables of interest and collinearity statistics were analyzed. In addition to that, a Multivariate OLS Regression is a technique used to better understand the association between an outcome variable and predictor variables. Multivariate OLS Analysis will be conducted due to the dependent variable being an interval measure. Multivariate OLS Analysis (i.e., otherwise known as Linear Regression Analysis) is used in Model 1 (See Table 4). As stated by Weisburd, and Britt (2014), Multivariate OLS Regression examines the relationships among variables while accounting for possible influences from other confounding variables (i.e., control variables). Additionally, it allows for the isolation of the effect of one factor while taking into account a variety of other factors (Weisburd & Britt, 2014). Multivariate OLS Regression assumptions are as follow: random selection, independent observations, interval and/or ratio measurement, linear relationship between *X* and Y, homoscedasticity, and lastly variance in y scores should be the same for all values of x (Weisburd & Britt, 2014). The null

hypothesis (H_0) for this model is that youth's locus of control (Needs) does not have an effect on political radicalization, while controlling for other variables (e.g., their modernization ideals (Narratives) or whether they rely on religious leaders and their level of religiosity (Networks). Additionally, the other three hypotheses are as follows: Youth who are less modernized (Narratives) does not have an effect on political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, reliance on religious leaders, and one's level of religiosity; Youths' who reliance on religious leaders does not have an effect on the youths' political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, whether they are modernized, and their level of religiosity. The last null hypothesis (H_0) for this model is that youths' religiosity level does not have an effect on the youths' political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, whether they are modernized, and whether they rely on religious leaders. Moreover, the null hypothesis of this model can be stated as $\beta 1 = 0$, controlling for X2, X3, etc. (e.g., the 4 control variables as stated above). This model's alternative hypothesis (H_a) is that youth's locus of control does have an effect on the youth's opinions and actions of political radicalization, while controlling for other variables as stated above ($\beta 1 \neq 0$, controlling for X2, X3, etc.). Additionally, the other three alternative hypotheses are as followed. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this model is that youths' who are less modernized (Narratives) does have an effect on the youths' opinions and actions of political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, reliance on religious leaders, and one's level of religiosity. The next alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this model is that youth who rely on religious leaders does have an effect on the youths' opinions and actions of political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, whether they are modernized, and their level of religiosity. The last alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this model is that youths' religiosity level does have an effect on the youths' opinions and actions of political

radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, whether they are modernized, and whether they rely on religious leaders.

A potential limitation of Multivariate Regression model as stated by Weisburd, and Britt (2014), is the failure to correctly state a regression model, in which it "…may also lead the researcher to present biased estimates of the effects of specific independent variables" (p. 505). Another potential limitation is that if one were to test the same hypothesis using the same dataset as the current study, it is not guaranteed that they will use the same variables to create the same scales. This will cause different interpretation of the variables/measures used to assess the relationships of Significance Quest Theory's three main components of Needs, Narratives, and Networks on the opinions and actions of political radicalization in youth, controlling for other variables.

CHAPTER IV:
ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Study participants were 50.7% from Saudi Arabia, and 49.3% were from Egypt. Among the participants studied, the majority were males (55.8%). Political radicalization has 1.00 and 4.00 minimum and maximum variables, with mean 1.859 and SD .790. Mean levels of youths' locus of control, modernization, relying on religious leaders, religiosity, and country were 6.92 (*SD* = 2), 2.23 (*SD* = .49), 3.30 (*SD* = .98), 1.74 (*SD* = .44), .49 (*SD* = .50), respectively (see Table 2 for complete descriptive information).

Table 3 outlines the Bivariate Regression, which shows the results of political radicalization measures against every independent variable measure individually. In addition to that, Table 4 outlines the Multivariate OLS Regression. Table 4 shows the results when political radicalization measures, Locus of Control, Reliance on Religious Leaders, Modernization, and Religiosity measures are included.

Bivariate Analyses

To test the first hypothesis, a bivariate analysis was conducted in which youths' political radical beliefs is a function of whether they had no or/less control of their lives Additionally, to test the other hypotheses that youths' political radical beliefs were a function of whether they were (1) modernized, (2) relied on religious leaders, (3) had high levels of religiosity, and (4) their country of residence, a Bivariate OLS Regression analysis was carried out. Results of the Bivariate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression is portrayed to examine the statistical association between all variables of interest (See Table 3).

To test the hypothesis that youths' political radical beliefs is a function of whether they had no or less control of their lives, a Bivariate OLS Regression analysis was carried out. The

results of the Bivariate OLS Regression as portrayed in Table 3, Model 1 shows that political radicalization (DV) is statistically significantly associated with whether youths had no or less control of their lives scoring, $b = .095$, $t\ (1823) = 31.850$, $p < 0.05$ (i.e., statistically significant). Therefore, rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0) that locus of control does not predict the politically radical beliefs among youths. Youths had no or less locus of control (i.e., having no or less control in one's life) also explained a significant proportion of variance in whether the they have more political radicalized beliefs, $R^2 = .009$, $F(1, 1823) = 16.676$, $p < 0.05$ (See Table 3, Model 1).

A Bivariate Regression was again performed in order to test the second hypothesis that whether youths who were less modernized are more likely to have radically political beliefs. The results of this Bivariate OLS Regression as portrayed in Table 3, Model 2 is that political radicalization (DV) is statistically significantly associated with modernization, $b = .082$, $t\ (1811) = 18.284$, $p < 0.05$ (i.e., statistically significant). Due to the statistical significance, I reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that modernization does not predict the politically radical beliefs among youths. Additionally, youths who were less modernized also explained a significant proportion of variance in explaining youths having more political radicalized belief, $R^2 = .007$, $F(1, 1811) = 12.201$, $p < 0.05$ (See Table 3, Model 2).

The third hypothesis tests whether youths who rely on religious leaders were more likely to have radically political beliefs. The results of the Bivariate OLS Regression as portrayed in Table 3, Model 3 in which political radicalization (DV) is statistically significantly associated with youths who rely on religious leaders are more likely to have radical political beliefs scoring, $b = .074$, $t\ (1824) = 31.524$, $p < 0.05$ (i.e., statistically significant). Thus, rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0) that youths who rely on religious leaders are more likely to have radical political

beliefs does not predict the political radical beliefs among youths. In addition to that, youths who relied more on religious leaders also explained a significant proportion of variance in whether the youths were more politically radicalized, $R^2 = .005$, $F(1, 1824) = 10.076$, $p < 0.05$ (See Table 3, Model 3).

Moving on, testing the fourth hypothesis in which youths who have less religiosity are more likely have radical political beliefs. The results of the Bivariate OLS Regression as portrayed in Table 3, Model 4 in which youths with less religiosity is statistically significantly associated in whether youths were more radical politically radicalized, $b = .206$, $t\ (1827) = 16.473$, $p < 0.05$ (i.e., statistically significant). Additionally, youths who have less religiosity also explained a significant proportion of variance in whether they are more likely to have radical political beliefs, $R^2 = .042$, $F(1, 1827) = 80.607$, $p < 0.05$ (See Table 3, Model 4).

Lastly, testing the last hypothesis in which youths who are from Saudi Arabia are more likely that youths from Egypt to have more political radical beliefs. The results of the Bivariate OLS Regression as portrayed in Table 3, Model 5 in which youths who are from Egypt are more likely than youths from Saudi Arabia to be statistically significantly associated to have more political radical beliefs, $b = .134$, $t\ (1827) = 69.280$, $p < 0.05$ (i.e., statistically significant). Notably, youths who are from are more Egypt than Saudi Arabian youths explained a significant proportion of variance in whether they have more political radical beliefs, $R^2 = .018$, $F(1, 1827) = 33.346$, $p < 0.05$ (See Table 3, Model 5).

Next, I will be comparing the results of the Bivariate OLS Analysis to the results of the Multivariate Regression Analysis. For instance, in the Bivariate Analysis, I found that all of the independent variables, consisting of locus of control, modernization, rely on religious leaders, religiosity, and one's country were all factors in which the youths were more likely to have

political radical beliefs. In comparison, in the Multivariate Analysis, I found that youth's locus of control (i.e., having no or/less control of their lives) did explain youths' political radicalized beliefs, the same as in the Bivariate Analysis. The second independent variable, Modernization was found to be statistically significant in both of the Bivariate as well as the Multivariate Analysis. On the other hand, in the Multivariate Analysis, rely on reliance leaders compared to the Bivariate Analysis was found to be not statistically significant. Lastly, in the Multivariate Analysis, the independent variables consisting of one's religiosity, and one's country was also found to be statistically significant in both of the Multivariate as well as the Bivariate Analysis.

Multivariate Regression Analyses

To test the hypothesis that the role of Significance Quest Theory (SQT) in explaining youths' radical political beliefs is a function of locus of control (Needs), Narratives (i.e., (1) whether they relied on religious leaders, (2) were modernized), Networks (i.e., one's level of religiosity), and lastly one's country (0 = Saudi Arabia; 1 = Egypt), a Multivariate Regression analysis was executed. Results from the Multivariate Regression analysis are presented in Model 1 (Table 4). The results indicate that the explanations of political radicalization (DV) were statistically significant as predicted by youth's locus of control (i.e., having no or/less control of their lives). Explanations of political radicalization are significant as predicted by youth's who relied more on religious leaders. In addition to those, explanations of political radicalization are significant as predicted by youth's who were less modernized and who were instead more fundamentalist/traditionalist as well as youths with lower levels of religiosity, and lastly youths' who's country is Saudi Arabia instead of Egypt, $b = .36$, $t\,(1818) = 11.74$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected since the results were found to be statistically significant. Political Radicalization also explained a significant proportion of variance in youths' locus of

control, whether they relied on religious leaders, were modernized, their level of religiosity, and country $F(5, 1800) = 21.52$, $p < 0.00$, with a R^2 of 0.055.

Interpreting the Bs (Coefficients) of each scale are as follow. Youths' Locus of Control (i.e., those with no or/less control of their lives) is statistically significant of youths' political radicalized beliefs. Referring back to the literature above on "Needs", individuals who believe they have no or less control over their lives become more likely to use extreme measures in achieving their goal of increasing their significance (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). In addition to that, individuals that are frustrated with a situation become more likely to use aggressive behavior when they have no or less control, this is also due to the fact that such individuals have no self-control (Ahlin, 2014; Bhatia, & Golin, 1978). Thus, locus of control is predictive of youths' political radicalization, with those who had no or less control in their lives showing to have higher radically political beliefs. A unit increase in locus of control corresponds to a 0.06 decrease (i.e., Beta) in radicalization. Meaning, individuals who admitted less control over their lives have higher radical political beliefs than those who have more control of their lives (i.e., higher number, more radicalized).

It was found that modernization/modernism concept is statistically significant in which for every unit increase in modernization, political radicalization scores increased by .067 controlling for all other variables (e.g., Locus of Control, Rely on Religious Leaders, one's level of Religiosity, and Country). Moreover, it was statistically not significant for those who relied on religious leaders, for every unit increase in reliance on religious leaders, political radicalization scores increased by .007 than those who did not rely on religious leaders. Additionally, it was found to be statistically significant for youth's level of religiosity for which for every unit increase in one's level of religiosity, political radicalization scores increased by .174 controlling

for locus of control, modernization, relying on religious leaders, and country. Lastly, it was found that Country was statistically significant, meaning the Country variable is also predictive of political radicalization (coded as Saudi Arabia = 0, Egypt = 1), with Egyptians scoring .066 higher than Saudi Arabians in political radicalization. Therefore, meaning Egyptians youths were more radicalized than Saudi Arabians youths, yet this is because Egyptian youths scored .188 higher than Saudi Arabians youths in having more radicalized political beliefs. The standardized coefficients (Betas) indicate that among all the explanatory variables assessed, Religiosity had the largest effect on the youth's opinions of political radicalization. This is because the Religiosity variable had a score of .174 compared to the rest of the variables respectively (i.e., locus of control = 0.060; modernization/modernism = .067; reliance on religious leaders = .007; and country = .066).

Regarding tests for multicollinearity for this analysis, it was indicated that a very low level of multicollinearity was present (*VIF* ranging from 1.013 to 1.383; Tolerance ranging from .723 to .987) (See Table 4). The results of this Multivariate Regression analysis provided confirmation of the research hypothesis regarding to one's locus of control (having no or less control), whether they relied on religious leaders, were less modernized and instead more fundamentalist, and their country (from Saudi Arabia more than Egyptians) significantly predicting political radicalization. Noteworthy, individuals who have no or less control over their lives have higher radical political beliefs than those who do have control of their lives (i.e., this is for Locus of Control in which the higher number means that youths are more radicalized). Moreover, that modernization/modernism concept is statistically significant in which I found an increased in scoring for those who are less modernized and more fundamentalist/traditionalist in having more political radical beliefs while controlling for all other variables (e.g., Locus of

Control, Rely on Religious Leaders, one's level of Religiosity, and Country). In addition to those, reliance on religious leaders was found to be not statistically significant, meaning those who relied more on religious leaders had less political radical beliefs than those who relied less on religious leaders. Also, it was found that youths' who had lower level of religiosity had more political radical beliefs than those who had higher level of religiosity while controlling for locus of control, modernization, relying on religious leaders, and country. Lastly, the Country variable was found to be statistically significant, meaning that the youths from Saudi Arabia were more likely to have more political radical beliefs than those from Egypt. Therefore, all of these results point to supporting of my hypothesis for this research, in which goes on to support the SQT Theory based on its components of Needs, Narratives, and Networks.

CHAPTER V:
DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis study tested the SQT Theory in explaining Political Radicalization. The SQT Theory is in fact comprised of three main components of Needs, Narratives, and Networks. In this present study I tested out a few variables in which I made scales for in defining the three main components of SQT Theory. The first variable is the concept of locus of control in which I used in defining the Needs component of SQT. The second and third variables of my research, including the concepts of Modernization/Modernism in explaining the Narratives component. Furthermore, in order to explain the last component of SQT, which is the Needs component I used the Reliance on Religious Leaders, and Religiosity variables. Finally, I controlled for the Country of origin of the youths', whether they were from Saudi Arabia or from Egypt in finding which of these two countries have more political radical beliefs than the other country. Moreover, the supposed effect of "Needs" component per the theory is that individuals in order to gain back their sense of significance are going to have more political radical beliefs than those who do not need to regain their sense of significance or prove of their importance in their own lives and others as well. In fact, this supposed effect of "Needs" component was confirmed with the locus of control variable in this research in which was found that individuals are more likely to have more political radical beliefs if they feel insignificant in their lives as well as having no or less control in their lives as well. Moving on to the "Narratives" component per the theory was that individuals who have an existing ideology in which enthusiastically praise violence as a successful and valid methods for gaining significance (Jasko, LaFree, & Kruglanski, 2017). Opportunities for achieving significance simply initiates the objective of significance, nevertheless individuals are directed to proper methods for reaching this goal through their belief systems that includes collective belief systems or ideologies that members of the group agree

with (Dugas, & Kruglanski, 2014). In fact, this was confirmed here with the Modernization/Modernism variable in explaining the findings that was found in this research. Moreover, the supposed effect of the "Networks" components per the theory was that individuals are more likely to have more political radical beliefs if they already know someone involved in such groups or the fact that they might rely on their religious leaders in gaining their significance back in their lives and gain importance as well as findings meaning. Yet, this was confirmed here with the Reliance on Religious Leaders as well as the Religiosity variables used in this research in explaining the Networks component of SQT theory, which stated that individuals do rely on their religious leaders and having less levels of religiosity in individuals is more likely to cause individuals to have more political radical beliefs. This study bridges the gap between the concepts used in this research, portraying the three main components of Significance Quest Theory (i.e., Needs, Narratives, and Networks) research, and political radicalization research for the first time.

The hypotheses for my Bivariate Regression Analysis was that youths' political radical beliefs is a function of whether they had no or/less control of their lives. Alongside of this, is the Bivariate Regression Analysis for each of the independent variables and the main dependent variable and seeing their effect on one another individually, and separately. Moving on, the hypotheses for the Multivariate Regression Analysis are as followed. The first hypothesis is that youths' political radical beliefs is a function of whether they had no or/less control of their lives, while controlling for other variables (i.e., Modernization, Reliance on Religious Leaders, Religiosity, and Country). The controlled variables are: if youths were more fundamentalist than modernized, relied on religious leaders, had less level of religiosity, and their country of origin (i.e., whether they were from Saudi Arabia or from Egypt). Additionally, the other three

alternative hypotheses are as followed. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this model is that youths' who are less modernized (Narratives) does have an effect on the youths' opinions and actions of political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, reliance on religious leaders, one's level of religiosity, and one's country of origin. Furthermore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this model is that youths' who reliance on religious leaders does have an effect on the youths' opinions and actions of political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, whether they are modernized, and their level of religiosity, country. The other alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this model is that youths' religiosity level does have an effect on the youths' opinions and actions of political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, whether they are modernized, whether they rely on religious leaders, and country. The last alternative hypothesis (H_a) is that youths' country of origin, especially if they are from Saudi Arabia rather than Egypt does have an effect on the youth's opinions and actions of political radicalization, while controlling for locus of control, whether they are modernized or fundamentalist, whether they relied on religious leaders, and one's level of religiosity). In all, the results from the present study suggests that youth's locus of control, whether they relied on religious leaders, were modernized, their level of religiosity as well as their country of origin were found to be statistically significant predictors of whether the youth had radical political beliefs. Notably, the results were relevant in many articles concerning one's locus of control, whether they relied on religious leaders, and if they were less modernized. However, previous research stated that one's level of religiosity was not a predictor of youths' radical political beliefs, yet this study found this to be no true. A potential limitation here is that the variables chosen in this present study in which scales were created for each may necessarily not be used by

another individual/researcher in the future in the same way. Therefore, not resulting in the same results as found in this present study.

What's Happening and Some Clarifications

Furthermore, based on these findings in my Multivariate OLS Regression (Table 4), modernization is not the opposite of religiosity, but in some ways just because one is modernized does not mean that one can be radicalized and maybe modernization happens only in certain areas of the Middle East. For example, in Saudi Arabia there is a lot of wealth as well as a lot of modernization based on some measures that the Western measures can say that. From firsthand knowledge, being born in Iran and going to school for a while, I know that our schools are separated by gender all because boys will get distracted by girls. Although, Iran is modernized in this day and age, there is always going to be that religious divisions between males and females whether its regarding education, socioeconomics, rights, and marriage and parental rights. In fact, the males place is always taken precedent over a female in the Middle Eastern countries. In addition to that, when I traveled to Turkey, I realized that even though they are super modernized, if women were to wear a headscarf/hijab they will be denied access to universities and colleges. In order to get approved to these places they would have to take their hijab off. This was interesting to see, because one would assume since they are so modernized, they will allow women to social and blend with the other gender or they will increase women's status. In reality they will always be more fundamental in a sense. Additionally, the R-Square for Table 4 is only 6%, therefore there could be other things that my model may not have or why it could be low.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study is not without limitations. First, due to the Significance Quest Theory being a new theory in explaining political radicalization among youth in the Middle East has yet to be used in research. Therefore, new and improved research could use these new main components of SQT theory in explaining political radicalization in the future. Additionally, most of the scales/variables returned a low reliability score, which is a problem in of itself because it could hinder the results to be found to be statistically significant or vice versa. Another reason to which why I had low reliability scoring for most of the variables/scales is because of the reason stated earlier above concerning the use of this new SQT theory and its three main components of Needs, Narratives, and Networks in explaining political radicalization. Future research should ensure to use multiple sites in their studies to increase the generalizability of results, to ensure an adequate sample size to detect effects, and to better consider the Needs, Narratives, and Networks components of SQT using the variables discussed in this research. Lastly, future studies should utilize longitudinal data to establish whether youths respond negatively to political radicalization by having no or/less control of their lives, less modern and more fundamental, relying on religious leaders more, and having lower levels of religiosity.

Implications

The present study holds important implications for both science and practice. This study adds to the current body of literature by empirically testing how the three components of Needs, Narratives, and Networks (i.e., components of SQT Theory) using variables of locus of control, relying on religious leaders, modernization, and one's level of religiosity effect political radicalization in a sample including youths in Egypt and Saudi Arabia for the first time. The inclusion of locus of control, relying on religious leaders, modernization, and one's level of

religiosity are new components in the Significance Quest Theory literature. The present study also uses clear and distinct measures of locus of control, modernization, relying on religious leaders, and one's level of religiosity. Furthermore, the way in which my findings would be used in decreasing terrorism and violence in the future is discussed below. Firstly, by restoration of motivational balance of individuals in which points to them not finding joining such radical groups to be significance promoting as they expected (Reinares, 2011). Therefore, looking for other alternative avenues to gain back their significance, which results in decrease in terrorism and political radical beliefs. Secondly, as stated by Kruglanski, Jasko, Webber, Chernikova, and Molinario (2018), the concept of ideological disillusionment provides proof that individuals with political radical beliefs or extremists many times leave radical movements therefore decrease in terrorism due to being disillusioned with the ideological narrative, precisely with the features of it in which is concerned with moral justification for using violence (Kruglanski, Webber, & Koehler, 2018; Reinares, 2011). Lastly, alternative networks can be influenced to make it easier for individuals to withdraw from being political radicalized in which would therefore decrease terrorism (Kruglanski, Jasko, Webber, Chernikova, and Molinario, 2018). As a researcher, by having first-hand knowledge of middle eastern cultures (i.e., from Iran) and while American might look at these findings and say that this is easy and to cut down on the religious fundamentalism, but in reality it is crucially not practical due to having a democracy at all times. In fact, due to the democracy, individuals are not given any freedom by any means to express themselves or better yet given any sort of means to gain significance in one's life, because then the religious government who leads and runs the whole country, specifically middle eastern countries would then become scared and try to shut people down in which leads to a blood bath

and wars and individuals getting killed just because they went against the norms and spoke out or acted different.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Main Independent and Dependent Variables and Scales Used

	n	%
Male	1051	55.8%
Female	806	42.8%
Explanatory variables	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha
Locus of Control		.548
Some people feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives, while other people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them	6.42	
To what extent are you optimistic/pessimistic about your future	7.39	
Scale: min/max value: 1-10; Mean: 6.924; Stddv: 2.002		
Modernization (In order for an underdeveloped country to achieve economic development…)		.529
Its people should marry at older ages	8.42	
It should increase the status of women	9.31	
More young people should choose their own spouse	9.32	
It should decrease the number of men having more than one wife	9.02	
It should allow young people more freedom to mix with the opposite sex	8.26	
Scale: min/max value: 1-4; Mean: 2.225; Stddv: .492		
Rely Religious Leaders (Religious leaders…)		.817
The role of women in society and politics	3.59	
Politics and forms of government	3.36	
Your education and career choice	3.12	
Evolution: explanation of how plants and animals have evolved	3.19	
Western societies and foreign culture	3.31	
Scale: min/max value: 1-5; Mean: 3.304; Stddv: .976		
Religiosity		.526
Islam should be the only religion taught in our public schools	8.77	
Muslims are the only ones who will go to heaven, and the rest of the people from other religions will not go no matter how good they are	8.71	
Non-Muslim religions have a lot of strange beliefs and pagan ways	8.86	

Table 1. (cont'd)

People who belong to different religions are probably just as nice and moral as those who belong to mine	8.42	
I would like my religious leaders to meet with the leaders of other religions	8.45	
If it were possible, I'd rather have a job where I worked with people with the same religious views I have rather than with people with different views	8.63	
Scale: min/max value: 1-3.50; Mean: 3.50; Stddv: .440		
COUNTRY		
Native Egyptian	954	50.7%
Arab (non-Egyptian)	928	49.3%
Dependent variable	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha
Political Radicalization		.470
Armed struggle often leads to fitneh (trouble), even though it may cause injury to the enemy	1.77	
Killing of civilians is acceptable if it helps defeats the enemy and win the war	1.75	
Scale: min/max value: 1-4; Mean: 1.859; Stddv: .790		

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

Variable		All Youth (*N*=1882)	
	N(%)	Mean(SD)	Range
Political Radicalization		1.85(.61)	1-4
Locus of Control		6.92(2)	1-10
Modernization		2.23(.49)	1-4
Rely Religious Leaders		3.30(.98)	1-5
Religiosity		1.74(.44)	1-3.50
Corigin (Country)		.49(.50)	0-1
Saudi Arabia (i.e. = 0)	954(50.7%)		
Egypt (i.e. = 1)	928(49.3%)		
Sex	1857(98.7%)	.43(.49)	0-1
Female (i.e. = 0)	806(42.8%)		
Male (i.e. = 1)	1051(55.8%)		

Table 3. Bivariate Analysis Model (Full Analysis).

	Model 1			
	B	S.E.	Beta	t
Locus of Control	-.038	.009	-.095*	31.850
	R-Squared: .009			
	Model 2			
Modernization	.131	.038	.082*	18.284
	R-Squared: .007			
	Model 3			
Rely Religious Leaders	-.060	.019	-.074*	31.524
	R-Squared: .005			
	Model 4			
Religiosity	.369	.041	.206*	16.473
	R-Squared: .042			
	Model 5			
Egypt (i.e., = 1) **	.212	.037	.134*	69.280
	R-Squared: .018			

Note: * = $p < 0.05$.

**Country (i.e., 0 = Saudi Arabia).

Table 4. Multivariate Regression Analysis Predicting Political Radicalization (Full Analysis).

				Collinearity Statistics	
	B	S.E.	Beta	Tolerance	VIF
Locus of Control	-.024*	.009	-.060	.963	1.039
Modernization	.108**	.037	.067	.987	1.013
Rely Religious Leaders	.006	.021	.007	.772	1.296
Religiosity	.315**	.045	.174	.843	1.186
Country (0 = Saudi Arabia; 1 = Egypt)	.105*	.043	.066	.723	1.383
	R-Squared: .055				
Note: The mean difference is significant at the * $p < 0.05$ ** = $p < 0.001$					

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