

A History of the Hofstadgroup

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Abstract

This Research Note provides a chronological overview of the most important events that occurred during the 2002-2005 existence of the Dutch Hofstadgroup. This group is frequently cited as a leading example of the 'homegrown' jihadist threat that arose in Europe from 2004 onwards. Despite this status in the literature, a detailed and above all primary sources-based account of the main developments of this group has so far been missing. With this contribution, the authors hope to provide fellow researchers with a useful resource for their own work on the Hofstadgroup and homegrown jihadism more broadly.

Keywords: *homegrown, jihadism, the Netherlands, Hofstadgroup*

Introduction

There is an ongoing need within the field of terrorism studies for rich, detailed and primary-sources based descriptions of terrorist groups and incidents.[1] The value of such accounts is twofold; they provide precise and reliable insights into a particular group, individual or event and those same qualities make them valuable for use as building blocks in other scholars' research. This Research Note provides a thorough chronological description of a well-known example of European 'homegrown' jihadist terrorism by focusing on the Dutch Hofstadgroup's activities during its 2002-2005 lifespan. Ultimately, the authors hope that this description can become a useful resource for other scholars interested in the Hofstadgroup in particular and homegrown jihadism in general. Four specific arguments are advanced for this contribution's relevance.

First of all, numerous publications take the Hofstadgroup or elements thereof as a case study but most do not provide more than a cursory glance at the group's activities and development.[2] Secondly, while some of the studies that do present detailed accounts of the Hofstadgroup are enlightening and informative, the accuracy and reliability of even the best accounts is marred by a reliance on newspaper articles as sources or by a lack of references altogether.[3] Although newspaper articles are a necessary staple in terrorism research as they are frequently the only readily available sources, media reports may be biased, often offer only brief descriptions of events and can be inaccurate.[4] Thirdly, some accounts of the Hofstadgroup betray a less than objective approach to the subject matter.[5] Finally, many existing publications are in Dutch, leaving room in the English literature on homegrown jihadism for a detailed description of this group.[6]

In a more general sense, even though almost ten years have passed since Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by a Hofstadgroup participant, the group is still a worthy subject of investigation because many aspects of this phenomenon remain contested. The most notable of these concerns the very nature of this group. Although frequently presented as a key or even 'quintessential' example of homegrown jihadist terrorism, closer examination reveals it is more accurately described as an amorphous collective of radicalised young Muslims centered around a hardcore of extremists.[7] Although these extremist elements underwent an organisational and ideological development towards a jihadist terrorist network, this process was never fully completed. Essentially, the arrests of 2004 and 2005 decimated the Hofstadgroup, forestalling its maturation into a full-fledged jihadist terrorist network.[8]

The Dutch police files on the various investigations into the Hofstadgroup are the most important primary sources used in this Research Note.* Additional information is taken from five semi-structured interviews;

two with former Hofstadgroup participants and three with Dutch government officials who were involved in the Hofstadgroup investigation in some capacity. Although extensive and detailed, these sources also have several drawbacks that must be acknowledged. First of all, both contain their own biases. The police files predominantly document findings that can be used to prosecute the suspects and may therefore underexpose exculpatory evidence. The interviewees might spin stories to present themselves in a more favorable light or they may simply have forgotten relevant facts due to the passage of time.[9] A second drawback is that these sources are not publically available, making it difficult for readers to comparatively assess the present study against others. Thirdly, the conditions for the use of both types of sources stipulate complete anonymity, which means that none of the participants in the Hofstadgroup can be named here—although some of their names are in the public domain. While this decreases the readability of the narrative, this downside is outweighed by the benefits in terms of reliability and detail that these sources accord.

A Clarification of Premises

Several assumptions underlying this analysis need to be clarified. First of all, the name ‘Hofstadgroup’ is inherently misleading as it was coined by the Dutch secret service, the AIVD, and was not used by the group’s participants.[10] This relates to the second point alluded to earlier, namely that whether or not a recognisable group ever existed, let alone a *terrorist* organisation or network, is a matter of ongoing debate.[11] The use of the ‘Hofstadgroup’ designation is upheld here because it has become the accepted name for this group in the literature. Thirdly, based on the authors’ estimates, the Hofstadgroup encompassed approximately 38 individuals. Included in this number are all of the persons arrested in conjunction with the various criminal investigations linked to Hofstadgroup and those who participated in group meetings at least twice. Naturally this definition of ‘participation’ is contestable, but it provides a suitable starting point for the following discussion. Finally, because space constraints prohibit an exhaustive reconstruction of events, the focus is on the key participants and the most important developments. Topics such as the court cases or descriptions of day-to-day life in the group are not discussed here.

2002: The Hofstadgroup’s Initial Formation

The earliest references to the Hofstadgroup stem from 2002. Approximately halfway through the year, the group managed to attract the AIVD’s attention, although the intelligence service only labeled them as the ‘Hofstadgroup’ from October 2003 onwards.[12] Little is known about the group’s activities at this point in time, but it appears that group meetings were taking place by the end of 2002. A middle-aged Syrian asylum seeker took a prominent role during these so-called ‘living room meetings’ as a religious instructor.[13] He does not appear to have spoken of the use of violence or participation in jihad directly, yet his teachings conferred a dogmatic and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. This formed a fertile base for some participants’ subsequent radicalisation into a decidedly extremist, pro-violence, interpretation of Islam based primarily on Salafi-Jihadist principles.[14]

These meetings were held in various locations, with an internet café in Schiedam and the residence of Van Gogh’s to-be murderer in Amsterdam being used regularly.[15] A first hint that elements of the group were developing extremist views manifested itself towards the end of the year. In November, one person who would feature prominently in the group’s extremist core supposedly spoke out in favor of a mass-casualty bombing attack.[16] It is interesting to note that initial group formation appears to have been based primarily on pre-existing ties of friendship and not, as some authors have claimed, on active recruitment.[17] Many participants had grown up in the same neighborhoods, attended the same schools or knew each other

through their local mosques.[18] In the words of one former participant, the Hofstadgroup was a 'circle of acquaintances'[19]

2003: Would-be Foreign Fighters and International Connections

At the start of the year, a prominent Hofstadgroup participant and a friend of his attempted to join Islamist rebels in Chechnya. They were arrested by local authorities just after they crossed the border with Ukraine and were sent back home after questioning. Upon return to the Netherlands they were interrogated further by both the Dutch police and the AIVD.[20] That summer, two other Hofstadgroup participants separately undertook travel to Pakistan where they allegedly met each other for the first time at a Quran school. However, chat messages written after their return and intelligence information paint a different picture; these imply that both underwent or at least sought paramilitary training in Pakistan or Afghanistan. That this trip was more than an opportunity to study Islam abroad is underlined by a farewell letter one of the two young men left for his family, in which he expressed his desire to remain in the 'land of jihad'.[21] The group's 2003 activities underline the importance of contextual factors; principally the 2001 intervention in Afghanistan, the 2003 war in Iraq and, more locally, the example set by two young Dutch Salafists who in 2002 traveled to, and were killed in, Kashmir.[22]

September – October 2003

These two men returned from Pakistan separately in September. Later that month, AIVD intelligence revealed that one of the Pakistan-goers may have returned on the instigation of an unnamed 'emir' who tasked him with 'collecting balloons'. According to a fellow Hofstadgroup participant, this particular traveler had returned to 'play a match' before Ramadan that year (which began on the 27th of October). Around the same time it was also discovered that this individual, together with the person who tried to reach Chechnya and a third participant in the Hofstadgroup, were in contact with a Moroccan man living in Spain who was sought by the Moroccan authorities for his involvement in the 2003 Casablanca bombings.[23]

The Hofstadgroup participant who had been tasked by the unknown emir, traveled to Barcelona in the first week of October to meet the Moroccan man. While there, he also met an acquaintance of the Moroccan suspect who Spanish authorities believed had ties to the Iraqi terrorist organization Ansar al-Islam. Another Hofstadgroup participant communicated with the Moroccan man via telephone from the Netherlands and apparently received instructions to procure 'a notebook' and 'credit'. Other topics of conversation were 'shoes class 1 and class 2' and 'things that come from Greece or Italy'. The Moroccan suspect also mentioned that he would send a man from Belgium to meet the participant he had been phoning with. Whether this meeting occurred is unclear, although two of the participants who were in contact with the Moroccan individual traveled to Belgium on the 15th of October 2003 for unknown purposes.[24]

On the 14th of October, the Spanish authorities arrested the Moroccan suspect. A day later, the AIVD informed the Dutch public prosecutor's office about the travels to Pakistan/Afghanistan and the Spanish connection. The police arrested five Hofstadgroup participants on the 17th of October. These included the three individuals who undertook travel abroad, two of whom were in contact with the Moroccan man, another person who was also in contact with the Moroccan individual and the middle-aged Syrian religious instructor. House searches turned up books, tapes and digital materials espousing an extremist interpretation of Islam, study notes on martyrdom, an unknown (at that point) person's will expressing a desire to die as a martyr and, in the case of one of those arrested, materials suggestive of an interest in constructing an explosive device. All of the suspects were released at the end of October for lack of evidence.[25]

The police were thus unable to substantiate the possibility that the suspects were planning a terrorist attack or assisting foreign groups or individuals in doing so. Given that two of those arrested had in September and October been trying to encourage other young Dutch Muslims to travel to Pakistan, a likely explanation for the 'emir's' task is that it was to inspire others to make the trip. The communication with the Moroccan suspect in Spain is harder to explain, although possibly the Hofstadgroup participants were providing logistical assistance with acquiring a passport ('notebook') and money ('credit'). What the other terms referred to, and what type of 'match' was to be played before Ramadan remains unclear.

December 2003

On the very last day of 2003, one of the Pakistan travelers undertook a second journey to that country, this time accompanied by a fellow Hofstadgroup participant. Scarcely more than a week later, on the 9th of January 2004, both of them returned to the Netherlands. The sources provide three different explanations for this rapid return. In the first one, recounted by one of the travelers, the two men visited an Islamic school some forty to fifty kilometers from Islamabad for an 'intake' interview. Once there, they were warned that they could be arrested which prompted the duo to leave the country. The second explanation stems from the two-time Pakistan traveler, who allegedly told witnesses that they were detained by American soldiers in Afghanistan and sent back to the Netherlands. The third explanation comes from a witness, who said that one of the travelers had told him they were detained by unknown persons and given the choice of leaving immediately or being handed over to the local Pakistani authorities.[26]

2003 and the Radicalisation of Van Gogh's To-Be Murderer

Judging by the tone and contents of his writings and translations, 2003 also saw the man who would murder Van Gogh in November 2004 rapidly embrace more radical and fundamentalist views.[27] This process was accompanied by a withdrawal from 'mainstream' Dutch society; he quit his job, stopped volunteer work for his local community in June and distanced himself from non-religious old friends. Around the same time he adopted the clothing, facial hair style and convictions of a fundamentalist Muslim, leading him to become known as 'the Taliban' among youths in his Amsterdam neighborhood. Of particular interest is the finding that he travelled to Denmark in October. The sources do not reveal what the Hofstadgroup participant did there, but it is possible that he visited a Syrian preacher who lived there. The preacher was a friend of the Hofstadgroup's Syrian religious instructor and occasionally travelled to the Netherlands to visit him.[28]

2004: Individualistic Plots and the Murder of Theo van Gogh

With the exception of the short second trip to Pakistan, the Hofstadgroup appears to have undertaken very few, if any, communal activities during 2004. Whereas burgeoning collective efforts involving at least parts of the group could be identified in 2003, such as the contacts with the Moroccan suspect and the attempts to encourage other Dutch Muslims to travel to Pakistan, 2004 was characterized by distinctly individualist initiatives. Although the reasons for this change were manifold, including a lack of organizational structure and clear leadership, the importance of the October 2003 arrests in this regard cannot be overlooked.[29] A former participant described the arrests as resulting in an acutely heightened sense of paranoia and a preoccupation with personal safety. This was debilitating to the point that the interviewee designated the Hofstadgroup as being effectively crippled by early 2004.[30] In 2004, the Dutch contribution to the war in Iraq and the terrorist attack in Madrid proved to be important sources of inspiration for the group's most extremist participants to begin considering the possibilities of waging violent jihad in the Netherlands.[31]

January – March 2004

While the realization that they were under surveillance dampened group-based activities, a small number of individuals were not deterred. Peters' analysis of the writings of Van Gogh's to-be killer, shows that this participant moved from radical (i.e. not necessarily violent) convictions to distinctly extremist (i.e. clearly pro-violence) ones around March 2004.[32] His ongoing radicalisation into violent extremism would lead him, around the summer of that year, to embrace the view that blasphemers ought to be killed.[33] This provided him with both the motive and the justification for murdering the writer and filmmaker Van Gogh, who was very outspoken in his criticism of Islam and Muslims and often presented his arguments in a coarse fashion.

April 2004

Several other notable developments took place before that time, however. On the 8th of April a supermarket in Rotterdam was robbed by two men armed with automatic weapons. Although the suspicion could not be substantiated by concrete evidence, the robbers likely received help getting into the store from one of its employees—the Hofstadgroup participant who tried to reach Chechnya a year earlier. Minutes after the robbers got away with approximately 700 Euros, one of them was arrested and later confirmed as an acquaintance of the store's Hofstadgroup employee.[34] Several Hofstadgroup participants have since claimed that the second robber was also involved in the group and only managed to 'evade' the police because he was in fact an AIVD informant.[35]

May – June 2004

On the 18th of May, the police received information which raised the possibility that the supermarket employee was involved in preparations for a terrorist attack. Several weeks later, on the 7th of June, that same individual was captured on security cameras walking around the AIVD's headquarters in Leidschendam, apparently measuring distances by taking equally spaced steps. These events contributed to his second arrest, on the 30th of that month. Among the items encountered in the ensuing house search were photographs, maps and directions, downloaded from the internet, that described the AIVD headquarters, but also the nuclear reactor in Borssele, the House of Representatives, the Ministry of Defense, Amsterdam Schiphol airport and the barracks of the Dutch commando's in Roosendaal. Other finds included a bullet proof vest, firearm components that could be fitted to the weapons used in the supermarket robbery (two magazines and a silencer), electrical circuits, night-vision goggles, household chemicals, fertiliser, documents espousing an extremist interpretation of Islam, jihad 'handbooks' and a hand-written will in the suspect's name.[36]

While indicative of an interest in improvised explosive devices (IED), it should be noted that the electrical circuits and chemicals were everyday, over-the-counter items that had not (yet) been combined into an explosive device or its precursor components. It should also be emphasised that the particular type of fertiliser found turned out to be unsuitable for making an explosive substance.[37] Hence, the suspect does not appear to have had the capacity to construct an actual bomb at that point in time.

Also in June, two other Hofstadgroup participants were found to have inquired about fertiliser at a garden store. Whether this had anything to do with interest in constructing an IED remains unclear. However, it is noteworthy that the individual arrested on the 30th was found in possession of a list of addresses of that particular chain of stores.[38] Secondly, on the 6th of June, two different Hofstadgroup participants, in the company of two acquaintances who do not appear to have been directly involved in the group, traveled to

Portugal.

Following a tip-off likely provided by the AIVD, in which the possibility was raised that the goal of this trip was to commit a terrorist attack during the European soccer championships or to kill former Portuguese Prime Minister Barosso, the four travelers were arrested by the Portuguese police on the 11th and their whereabouts searched. No evidence was uncovered to substantiate any of the terrorism related hypotheses or a later claim by a witness that the trip's goal was to acquire weapons. In light of the lack of incriminating evidence, it may simply have been the case that the Hofstadgroup participant who came up with the idea for the trip in the first place, an illegal immigrant from Morocco, was telling the truth when he stated that he had wanted to benefit from a Portuguese amnesty for asylum seekers. Similarly, there is little to contradict his companions' claim that they went along to enjoy a holiday.[39]

Despite the lack of incriminating evidence, all four travelers were handed over to the Portuguese immigration police on the 14th of June for 'visa irregularities' and sent back to the Netherlands several days later. Upon his arrival at Schiphol airport, the trip's initiator was questioned by the Dutch police. One particularly interesting aspect of this conversation is that he warned the police of a friend of his who, he claimed, spoke a lot of jihad, adhered to the ideology of 'takfir' (declaring other Muslims apostates [40]) and who wanted to join the jihad in Chechnya. This friend would later commit the murder of Van Gogh.[41] What motivated the person being questioned to divulge such information is unknown.

Two other developments round off this overview of the eventful month of June 2004. On the 14th, the mother of two Hofstadgroup participants filed a statement with the police declaring that she and her daughters felt threatened by her two sons' extremist and violent behaviour to the point that they moved out of their own home.[42] Investigations conducted later in 2004 also revealed the 14th of June to be the first day on which an AIVD interpreter leaked confidential information to two Hofstadgroup participants; one of them received a 'weekly report' on the group in June and the other a wiretap in August. The leak was discovered in September 2004 when a Dutch newspaper faxed a part of the weekly report to the AIVD. The interpreter was a prior acquaintance of one of the group's participants, for whom the AIVD employee had bought a travel ticket from Al Hoceima (Morocco) to Amsterdam in May 2003.[43] Why he leaked this information and what, if any, effect the files had on the Hofstadgroup remains unknown.

August 2004

On the 29th of August, the Somali-born Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali appeared for an in-depth interview on the TV-program 'Zomergasten' (summer guests). As part of the show, a short Islam-critical film she had recently made with Van Gogh called 'Submission, part 1' was broadcast.[44] The film, which contains fragments in which Quranic verses are projected on semi-naked women, was met with either disgust or indifference by the Dutch Muslim community.[45] But among the Hofstadgroup the film evoked some particularly strong reactions, which is perhaps unsurprising as having renounced her Muslim faith, Hirsi Ali was already a particularly hated public figure in Islamist circles.[46]

On the 30th, a message appeared on MSN Group 'Muwahhidin De Ware Moslims' (Muwahhidin The True Muslims[47]). This website was administered and frequented by Hofstadgroup participants, e.g. for the purposes of propagating the increasingly extremist texts written by Van Gogh's to-be killer. It was also used to get in touch with other young Dutch Muslims who held similar ideas or could be persuaded to do so. The message, titled 'The unbelieving diabolical mortada [apostate], Ayaan Hirsi Ali', was posted by an individual on the group's edges. In it, the author claimed that the 'Muwahhidin Brigade' had uncovered Hirsi Ali's residence, proceeded to publish that presumed address in full and also posted a picture of Van Gogh.[48]

A second message followed on the 4th of September and was openly threatening. Writing of Hirsi Ali, the author claimed that 'wherever she hides, death shall find her!'[49]. The messages' author was arrested on the 14th of September.

September 2004

On the 15th of September, the Dutch police received an anonymous e-mail warning them that two individuals were potentially preparing a terrorist attack. The anonymous source had supposedly been asked by two 'terrorists' to commit attacks in the Netherlands, with the House of Representatives and Amsterdam's red light district as possible targets. Unfortunately, the available sources divulge no further information on this potential terrorist plot.[50] Interestingly, however, one of the two supposed terrorists was an active participant in the Hofstadgroup. In September, he responded affirmatively to a question posted on the website 'TawheedWalJihad' inquiring whether it was a Muslim's duty to kill those who insulted the prophet Muhammad. To substantiate his argument, the Hofstadgroup participant relied on a translation of Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya's argument to this extent. The translation of the influential 14th century Salafist scholar's writings on this subject had been the work of Van Gogh's future killer. The individual acting as an 'online helpdesk' on extremist matters was arrested on the 8th of November because he had issued death threats to Dutch politician Geert Wilders using the aforementioned website.[51]

November 2004

On 2 November 2004, the Dutch filmmaker and writer Theo van Gogh was murdered while cycling to work in his hometown of Amsterdam. The killer cycled up alongside Van Gogh, shot him several times with a pistol and then tried to decapitate the dead or dying victim with a kukri knife. Without having accomplished this task, he decided to pin a prepared note to the dead man's chest with another knife in which he threatened Hirsi Ali with death. Calmly reloading his HS model 95 firearm, the killer then walked towards a nearby park where a shoot-out with police officers ensued. After running out of ammunition and being shot in the leg, Van Gogh's murderer was arrested. Three other people were also hit by the gunman's bullets; one bystander in the leg, another in the heel of her foot and one police officer in his bulletproof vest. Upon being taken into custody, the killer was told that he was lucky to be alive; he responded that he had hoped to die.[52]

Nine witnesses later reported having seen the killer at different locations along the route Van Gogh usually travelled to work between early October and the day of the murder. Two witnesses, independently of each other, claim to have seen the killer on the 1st of November standing with his bike along Van Gogh's usual route, observing passing cyclists. This implies that Van Gogh's attacker had carefully chosen where to strike and perhaps even that the second of November was not his first attempt to kill the filmmaker.[53]

There has been considerable speculation about the rest of the group's involvement in or knowledge of this premeditated murder. Yet the available evidence indicates that the murder was planned, prepared and executed solely by the attacker himself.[54] Based on his explanation in court, he appears to have been primarily driven by a sense that it was an individual believer's duty to behead those who insulted Allah and his prophet, as Van Gogh had allegedly done with his movie and writings. He took full responsibility for his actions and claimed that he would have done exactly the same had the blasphemer been his brother or father. [55]

Van Gogh's murder was the only actual terrorist attack carried out by a Hofstadgroup participant. By leaving a message threatening Hirsi Ali on his victim's body, and through six other 'open letters' that were to be

published by his compatriots, the killer made clear that his goal was not just to kill the filmmaker, but to use his death to send messages to several audiences; threatening ones to unbelievers and 'apostate' Muslims and inspirational calls to action to what he dubbed the 'Muslim youth'.^[56] As such, it falls clearly within Schmid's definition of terrorism and cannot be labeled as 'simply' a murder.^[57]

The authorities responded to the murder by arresting most of the known members of the Hofstadgroup on the day of the murder. Two, however, managed to evade apprehension. One was the middle-aged Syrian man who had provided religious instruction to the group. Aided by several acquaintances, he left the day that Van Gogh was killed, traveling via Belgium and Greece and entering Syria illegally via Turkey. Despite the striking coincidence, the police investigation was unable to ascertain with any degree of certainty whether or not the Syrian man was aware of the murderer's plans. The second participant who got away was a member of what could be dubbed the group's extremist core and who featured earlier as the initiator of the trip to Portugal. Where precisely he went after evading arrest has remained unclear. He may have travelled back to his family in Morocco in November 2004 and spent a considerable amount of time until his arrest in June 2005, probably living in Brussels or possibly in Luxemburg, from where he would occasionally travel to the Netherlands.^[58]

The most dramatic episode in the arrests of suspected Hofstadgroup members occurred during the early hours of the 10th of November 2004. As a police arrest squad tried to force the door on the apartment of two suspects in The Hague around 02:50 in the morning, they found that it had been barricaded from within and could only be partially opened. The suspects had prepared for the police's arrival and discussed beforehand how to respond to it. Mere moments after the squad's attempt to force entry to the apartment, one of its occupants threw a hand grenade through the crack between door and doorframe, which passed the officers standing on the landing and bounced down the outdoor stairwell to the street where it exploded on the pavement. Moments after realizing a grenade had been thrown at them, one of the police officers fired twice at their attacker, both shots hitting the wall just beside his head. The grenade's explosion injured five policemen, one of them seriously.^[59]

The arrest squad was forced to pull back and a stalemate ensued that was only ended by the deployment of a military special forces unit at the end of the day.^[60] Until that time, the two suspects made various phone calls to friends and family, announcing their imminent martyrdom, hastily wrote wills and made several prank calls to the emergency services asking for the police to come and rescue them from the 'masked scary men' surrounding their home.^[60] They also threatened to blow up the entire street with twenty kilograms of explosives, provoked the officers to shoot them and were seen waving a sword and firearm that would later turn out to be a fake. Towards the end of the afternoon, the special forces operators went into action. After 18 tear gas canisters were fired into the apartment through its windows, the two suspects clambered over their own barricades onto a balcony. Special forces soldiers in an opposite building then ordered them to raise their hands. When one of the suspects appeared unwilling to comply, a warning shot was fired. The suspects were then told to undress and descend into the garden via a ladder. As the unresponsive suspect was observed reaching into his jacket pocket, he was shot in the shoulder. Subsequently, both suspects complied with the soldiers' orders, climbed down to the garden and were taken into custody. No explosives were found in the apartment, but the suspects' pockets did contain three additional hand grenades.^[61]

2005: From Hofstadgroup to 'Piranha'

The November 2004 arrests ended what could be called the 'first generation' Hofstadgroup. Yet no more than a couple of months later, from approximately April 2005 onwards, a small group re-emerged that, with regard

to its participants, ideological convictions and practical intentions, was a direct successor to the 2002-2004 Hofstadgroup. This 'second generation' has become known under the name of the police investigation into its activities, i.e. the 'Piranha' group. Despite the separate investigations and court cases, the Piranha group was essentially a continuation of the Hofstadgroup and is treated here as such.

The group's 2005 resurgence was made possible by three factors. First of all, the individual arrested in June 2004 after snooping around the AIVD headquarters was acquitted and released in April 2005. Thus, one of the more extremist individuals in the Hofstadgroup was able to continue his activities. Secondly, another member of the Hofstadgroup's extremist core had evaded arrest in November 2004 and remained at large until his apprehension in June 2005. During this interval, he contributed to the radicalisation of several young women on the Hofstadgroup / Piranha group's edges and strengthened the new group's operational capabilities by procuring three firearms. These two men appear to have formed the new group's main protagonists. Of the remaining nine individuals ultimately earmarked as suspected members of the Piranha group, all but two had been on the original Hofstadgroup's edges. The arrest of most of the original participants seems to have brought these peripheral individuals forward into positions of increased prominence.[62]

From its April 2005 starting point, the Piranha group displayed some interesting differences from its predecessor. Most importantly, there appeared to be a burgeoning sense of hierarchy, tenuous indications of a return to more *group-based* efforts and, importantly, clearer signs that these efforts were in the service of *terrorism related* goals.[63] Under the overall guidance of the individual released in April 2005, some of the participants in the Piranha group appear to have become involved in the development of three potential terrorist plots. The first appears to have been focused on several Dutch politicians, with particular interest shown in Hirsi Ali. The second one had as its target an El Al airliner, while the third envisioned a double strike; first at the AIVD headquarters and then at several Dutch politicians.

April 2005

One of the first things the individual released in April 2005 did was to approach an old acquaintance, someone who had been in contact with Hofstadgroup participants from approximately the end of 2003. During the trial against the Piranha suspects, this person claimed to have been coerced and threatened by the group's two ringleaders, for instance into renting a house for the group in Brussels and occasionally supplying participants with money.[64] In contrast, the other suspects in the Piranha case have claimed that this individual was in fact very radical, not at all involuntarily associated with them and purely motivated to give incriminating testimony in court to avoid being sentenced.[65] Although the currently available data do not allow these conflicting claims to be convincingly resolved, it should be noted that this was one of the witnesses whose testimony a Dutch court qualified as unreliable.[66]

Police intelligence from early April 2005 indicated that the individual recently released from detention had gathered a new group around him, that he wanted to die as a martyr and that he was driven to rectify the '1-0' in the unbelievers favour.[67] This latter point indicates that he was at least partially motivated by a personal desire for revenge for his arrest and incarceration. This motive also appears in various writings by and about this individual, which highlights his experience of poor treatment by the Dutch justice system and police and, especially, his adversarial relationship with the AIVD.[68]

May 2005

The Piranha ringleader who had been a fugitive since November 2004, allegedly told two other participants that he had a CD-ROM with instructions on how to make a suicide vest and that the required components could be bought in Germany. In the same period, this individual turned up in possession of three firearms; a Czech 'Skorpion' version 61 submachine gun (also referred to as a 'baby Uzi'), an Agram 2000 submachine gun with a separate silencer and a .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver. In May, he also instructed a participant to visit the group's other leader, the man released from custody in April, to pick something up. This turned out to be a piece of paper printed in an internet café which listed the names, addresses and telephone numbers of several Dutch politicians.[69]

June 2005

June was a particularly interesting month with several noteworthy developments. On or around the 15th, the fugitive and a companion took two other participants to a large park in Amsterdam to fire one of the submachine guns at a tree.[70] Several days later, on the 20th, the aforementioned companion phoned a family member who worked at a pharmacy in The Hague. The companion asked for the addresses of the politicians who frequented it and was particularly interested in Hirsi Ali's, but was not given any such information.[71] The next day, police officers conducting surveillance in The Hague recognised the fugitive they had sought since November 2004. At the time, he had been staying with an acquaintance, someone who appears to have been pressured into providing shelter and transportation.[72]

This was also the case a day later, on the 22nd of June, when the acquaintance was instructed to drive the fugitive and a companion to Amsterdam. Both of them seemed tense and the fugitive made their driver take evasive maneuvers twice, in an apparent attempt to shake off any possible tails. Upon arrival in Amsterdam, he took over the wheel and drove towards the train station Amsterdam Lelylaan, where he and his companion got out. Upon reaching the platform, both were apprehended by a police special intervention unit. At the time, the fugitive was carrying the loaded Agram 2000 in his backpack. In the driver's home, the police found a handwritten and coded note listing the addresses of four Dutch politicians that appears to have belonged to the two people who had just been arrested. Their interest in the whereabouts of Dutch politicians and Hirsi Ali in particular, something corroborated by the statements of two inmates who met them in prison, raises the possibility that they planned to assassinate one or more of these individuals.[73] Their arrest marks the end of this first potential terrorist plot.

Two days after the arrests, on the 24th of June, the group's remaining ringleader phoned one of his imprisoned Hofstadgroup friends. He mentioned being unable to sleep since the arrests, that 'the earth is very warm at this moment' and that there was a story which had not yet made the newspapers and which would astound his friend.[74] The next day he phoned again and cryptically talked of a 'soup' that was still boiling but would make it onto television soon.[75] On the 29th of April, just after this person's release from prison, the police had begun an investigation into the network surrounding him called 'Paling' (eel). After these mysterious phone calls and the other events of June, the police suspected that the individual in question was plotting terrorism related crimes. Indicative of the investigation's changed focus it was renamed 'Piranha' on the 28th of June.[76]

July 2005

Approximately a month later, just after midnight on the 26th of July, police officers observed the Piranha

group's main protagonist enter a park in The Hague in the company of an unknown male. Not much later a bang was heard. Its source has never been discovered. Another interesting July development occurred two days later, when the AIVD informed the police that they had indications that the group's remaining leader was involved in terrorist activities.[77]

August 2005

Starting in early August, the second potential terrorist plot attributable to the Piranha group began to manifest itself. Police intelligence reports indicated that a group of young men of Moroccan descent in Amsterdam West, including two Piranha participants, were working on a plan to shoot down an El Al plane at Schiphol airport, possibly using some type of Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG). The reports raised the possibility that one individual had been tasked with conducting a reconnaissance of a particular area of Schiphol airport and that the plot was being funded by a levy on criminal proceeds of acquaintances of the Piranha ringleader in Amsterdam and The Hague. The intelligence information, however, could not be determined to be 'reliable'. [78] Subsequent police investigations were unable to substantiate the intelligence information and thus raise the possibility that no such plot existed to begin with. [79]

In contrast to the 'first generation' Hofstadgroup, 'living room meetings' did not feature as prominently in the 2005 Piranha continuation. While various participants did visit each other and although some individuals provided religious instruction, relatively large-scale group meetings such as those that were held at the house of Van Gogh's killer were not noted in the available sources. A likely explanation is that the Piranha group had developed a much more acute sense of operational security and was wary of indoor gatherings. Several meetings were held outdoors in public places, such as on the 24th of August in The Hague, when four Piranha participants were observed together, on the 7th of September in Amsterdam, when two individuals met and exchanged a package, and on the 11th of October when five suspected members of the Piranha group met in The Hague. [80]

September 2005

In September 2005, the Piranha group's principal protagonist met a Belgian national of Moroccan descent at a train station in The Hague. According to police information, the Belgian man declined the protagonist's request to participate in a 'kamikaze operation' on the grounds that he was already planning something in Morocco. [81] A different take on the episode is given by Groen and Kranenberg, who describe the Belgian man as a cousin of a participant of the 'original' Hofstadgroup and as supposedly offering three female suicide bombers to his Piranha contact, who these authors claim declined the offer because he wanted men only. The Belgian man was arrested in Morocco in November 2005 on charges not related to the Piranha case. The available data offer no further information on the incident and the Belgian man later retracted his statement about the meeting, making it impossible to determine precisely what was discussed. [82]

October 2005

The third and final potential terrorist plot came to the fore in October. AIVD information dated earlier that month indicated that the Piranha group's participants were, to differing degrees, involved in preparations for a terrorist attack in the Netherlands. This potential attack was to occur before the 31st of October, the date set for the main protagonist's appeals hearing. The plot was thought to consist of two parts; one group of attackers would target politicians while the second would force entry to the AIVD headquarters and blow it

up. None of the perpetrators expected to survive the attacks. However, the AIVD information also indicated that the Piranha ringleader was looking for additional weaponry; ten AK-47 assault rifles, two silenced pistols and ten suicide vests containing eight kilograms of explosives each. The individual in question apparently expected a call from someone to discuss delivery of these goods. Phone intercepts revealed that a meeting between a possible supplier and the ringleader was arranged for the 12th of October. However, despite agreeing to the time and place over the phone, the Piranha participant did not show up.[83]

The next day, the police received additional information from the AIVD that precipitated the suspects' arrest. Most important was a videotaped will in which the group's main protagonist, seated next to the Skorpion submachine gun, threatened the Dutch state and its citizens for, among other things, its involvement in the Iraq war. Until the Dutch 'left Muslims alone and chose the path of peace' the 'language of the sword' would reign.[84] He also appeared to bid his family farewell by stating that he 'commits this deed out of fear for the punishment of Allah'.[85] In addition, he called upon other Muslims to rise up in defense of oppressed co-religionists worldwide and spoke out in support of several arrested Hofstadgroup participants.[86] Just how the AIVD got its hands on this video has remained unclear. One possible explanation, provided by the Piranha participant in question, is that an AIVD informant assisted with the recording and then supplied it to the AIVD after staging a burglary as cover for the tape's disappearance.[87]

Acting on the above information, the police arrested the remaining Piranha suspects on the 14th of October without incident. Among the items found during the ensuing house searches were three gas masks, several balaclava's, radical and extremist materials and, notably, a document made by one of the suspects called 'lessons in safety' which reflected the Piranha group's greater awareness of and concern for the authorities' interest in them.[88] The remaining two firearms – the Skorpion and the revolver – were, however, not recovered at this time. They were found on the 28th of August 2006 in the cellar of one of the Piranha suspects' home by plumbers called in to address flooding on the premises.[89] The October 2005 arrests effectively put an end to the Hofstadgroup.

Conclusion

This Research Note presented a primary-sourced based overview of the most important developments in the 2002-2005 existence of the Dutch Hofstadgroup, a group that is frequently cited as one of the leading examples of the 'homegrown' jihadist threat that arose in Europe from 2004 onwards. By virtue of the sources used, this contribution is distinguished from existing chronological accounts of this group in terms of the level of detail provided and the reliability of that information. It thereby offers a valuable resource for other researchers interested in the Hofstadgroup or the broader phenomenon of homegrown jihadism. Although the overview presented here is unique in terms of descriptive detail and use of primary sources, many open questions for future research remain. Most importantly, while the present Note goes some way towards explaining *what* happened, *why* or *how* these events occurred are questions that have so far not been addressed in a systematic and empirically-grounded fashion. Hopefully, the near future will see greater use of primary sources-based research to answer the why and how questions raised by the Hofstadgroup.

* The authors received written permission from the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice to use these sources on 8 March 2013. In accordance with the terms of use, they are utilized solely for a PhD thesis and related articles on the rise and development of the Hofstadgroup.

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Notes

[1] Marc Sageman, "The Stagnation in Terrorism Research," *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 26, No. 3, September-October 2014: 8.

[2] The Hofstadgroup has been studied from numerous perspectives. Several authors have looked at the role of women in and around the group: Janny Groen and Annieke Kranenberg, *Women Warriors for Allah: An Islamist Network in the Netherlands* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Beatrice De Graaf, *Gevaarlijke Vrouwen: Tien Militante Vrouwen in Het Vizier* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012), 249-40. Others have looked at how broader societal factors influence the attitudes of young Muslims in the Netherlands and set some of them on a path towards radicalization: Frank J. Buijs, Froukje Demant, and Atef Hamdy, *Strijders Van Eigen Bodem* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006). Some scholars have looked specifically at the Salafist movement in the Netherlands and how its development helped bring about the Hofstadgroup: Martijn De Koning and Roel Meijer, "Going All the Way: Politicization and Radicalization of the Hofstad Network in the Netherlands," in *Identity and Participation in Culturally Diverse Societies*, ed. Assaad E. Azzi, et al. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 220-38. Several studies focus primarily on the backgrounds and motives of individual participants of the Hofstadgroup: Ruud Peters, "Dutch Extremist Islamism: Van Gogh's Murderer and His Ideas," in *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences*, ed. Rik Coolsaet (Farnham / Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 145-59; Martijn De Koning, "Changing Worldviews and Friendship: An Exploration of the Life Stories of Two Female Salafists in the Netherlands," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (London / New York: Hurst, 2009), 372-92; Marion Van San, Stijn Sieckelinck, and Micha De Winter, *Idealen Op Drift: Een Pedagogische Kijk Op Radicaliserende Jongeren* (The Hague: Boom, 2010), 44-53; Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo Van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007); Arjan Erkel, *Samir* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2007); Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko, *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 85-88. Another set of studies has focused on multiculturalism and the problematic integration of Muslim immigrants in Dutch society as causal factors: Paul Cliteur, "Religieuze Terrorisme En De Lankmoedige Elite," in *Gaat De Elite Ons Redden? De Nieuwe Rol Van De Bovenlaag in Onze Samenleving*, ed. Krijn Van Beek and Marcel Van Ham (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2007), 207-35; Bart Jan Spruyt, "'Can't We Discuss This?' Liberalism and the Challenge of Islam in the Netherlands," *Orbis* 51, no. 2 (2007): 313-30; Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2005): 120-35; Rob De Wijk, "The Multiple Crises in Dutch Parallel Societies," in *Between suicide bombings and the burning Banlieues: the multiple crises of Europe's parallel societies*, ed. Rob De Wijk, Samir Amghar, and Amel Boubekeur, ESF Working Papers (Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies, 2006), 7-14; Geert Mak, *Gedoemd Tot Kwetsbaarheid* (Amsterdam / Antwerp: Atlas, 2005); Abigail R. Esman, *Radical State: How Jihad Is Winning over Democracy in the West* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010). The Hofstadgroup has featured prominently in analyses of the role of the internet and the influence of a militant Salafist ideology on radicalisation processes and it has been the subject of social network analyses: Frazer Egerton, "The Internet and Militant Jihadism: Global to Local Re-Imaginations," in *Cyber-Conflict and Global Politics*, ed. Athina Karatzogianni (Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2008), 115-27; Frazer Egerton, *Jihad in the West: The Rise of Militant Salafism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12, 18, 29-36, 48, 75-83, 97-125, 29, 45-51; Renée Van der Hulst, "Terroristische Netwerken En Intelligence: Een Sociale Netwerkanalyse Van De Hofstadgroep," *Tijdschrift voor Veiligheid* 8, no. 2 (2009). Finally, the Hofstadgroup is one of the anonymised cases in a study on jihadist terrorism in the Netherlands: C.J. De Poot et al., *Jihadi Terrorism in the Netherlands: A Description Based on Closed Criminal Investigations* (The Hague: Boom Juridische Uitgevers / Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum, 2011).

[3] Petter Nesser, *Jihad in Europe: Patterns in Islamist Terrorist Cell Formation and Behaviour, 1995-2010* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2012), 332-58; Marc Sageman, "Hofstad Case & the Blob Theory," in *Theoretical Frames on Pathways to Violent Radicalization*, ed. Scott Atran, Marc Sageman, and Rogier Rijkema (ARTIS Research & Modelling, 2009), 13-29, 82-99; Lorenzo Vidino, "The Hofstad Group: The New Face Terrorist Networks in Europe," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 7 (2007); Beatrice De Graaf, "The Van Gogh Murder and Beyond," in *The Evolving Global Terrorism Threat: Cases from 9/11 to Osama Bin Laden's Death*, ed. Bruce Hoffman and Fernando Reinares (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 144-87; Security & the Rule of Law Project Transnational Terrorism,

- “The ‘Hofstadgroep,’” in *TTSRL Contextual Papers* (The Hague: TTSRL, 2008); Albert Benschop, “Chronicle of a Political Murder Foretold,” Sociosite, http://www.sociosite.org/jihad_nl_en.php.
- [4] Roberto Franzosi, “The Press as a Source of Socio-Historical Data: Issues in the Methodology of Data Collection from Newspapers,” *Historical Methods* 20, no. 1 (1987): 6-9; Frederick Schulze, “Breaking the Cycle: Empirical Research and Postgraduate Studies on Terrorism,” in *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements and Failures*, ed. Andrew Silke (London / New York: Frank Cass, 2004), 163; Tom Quiggin, “Words Matter: Peer Review as a Failing Safeguard,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 2 (2013): 73-76.
- [5] Vermaat’s account is informative and based on some interesting sources. Unfortunately it suffers from the author’s lack of an objective approach to the subject matter. Emerson Vermaat, *De Hofstadgroep: Portret Van Een Radicaal-Islamitisch Netwerk* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2005). Wessels’ less than objective approach asserts itself in the first pages of his book, where he assumes the Hofstadgroup’s suspects’ guilt and criticizes the public prosecutor’s chosen strategy even though the court cases were still ongoing at that point in time. M. Wessels, *De Radicaal-Islamitische Ideologie Van De Hofstadgroep: De Inhoud En De Bronnen* (The Hague: Teldersstichting, 2006), 2-3.
- [6] Several Dutch journalists have provided well-researched accounts of the murder of Van Gogh and the events surrounding the Hofstadgroup: Siem Eikelenboom, *Niet Bang Om Te Sterven: Dertig Jaar Terrorisme in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2007); Jutta Chorus and Ahmet Olgun, *In Godsnaam: Het Jaar Van Theo Van Gogh* (Amsterdam: Contact, 2005); Sanne Groot Koerkamp and Marije Veerman, *Het Slapende Leger: Een Zoektocht Naar Jonge Jihad-Sympathisanten in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Rothschild & Bach, 2006); Erkel, *Samir*.
- [7] Vidino, “The Hofstad Group,” 579.
- [8] Bart Schuurman, Quirine Eijkman, and Edwin Bakker, “The Hofstadgroup Revisited: Questioning Its Status as a ‘Quintessential’ Homegrown Jihadist Network,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Forthcoming): 1-23.
- [9] John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 15.
- [10] Commissie van Toezicht betreffende de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, “Toezichtsrapport Inzake De Afwegingsprocessen Van De Aivd Met Betrekking Tot Mohammed B.,” (Commissie van Toezicht betreffende de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, 2008), 8.
- [11] Schuurman, Eijkman, and Bakker, “The Hofstadgroup Revisited,” 1-20.
- [12] J.P.H. Donner and J.W. Remkes, “Kamerstukken 2, 2004-2005, 29854, Nr. 3,” (The Hague: Sdu Publishers, 2004), 5, 18.
- [13] General Intelligence and Security Service, “Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat,” (The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service, 2006), 37.
- [14] Police Files Hofstadgroup, VERD: 19480, 705-706, 747; 01/17: 4095; NCTV, “Personal Interview 1,” (The Hague 2012), 2; Public Prosecutor 1, “Personal Interview 1,” (The Hague 2012), 8.
- [15] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/18: 89-90.
- [16] Ibid., AHA02/19: 100.
- [17] Leiken, “Europe’s Angry Muslims,” 125; Emerson Vermaat, “Samir a[.] -a Terrorist in the Making or a Real Terrorist?,” *Militant Islam Monitor.org*, 23 November 2005, 2.
- [18] Police Files Hofstadgroup, VERD: 19444, 59, 675, 717, 858-860, 877, 916, 980, 994, 20079, 112, 115, 174; GET: 18215, 312-313, 374-375, 414, 20348; 01/17: 4176; AHA03/20: 1227; Erkel, *Samir*, 78-79.
- [19] Hofstad Former 3, “Personal Interview 1,” (Leiden 2013), 4.
- [20] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/01: 33; GET: 18061-62; Mayke Calis, “‘Iedereen Wil Martelaar Zijn’; Het Avontuur Van De Amsterdamse Moslim Mo (16),” *Rotterdams Dagblad*, 29 March 2003.
- [21] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/01: 140-41, 63; AHA04/21: 1657, 66; AHA05/22: 2176; AHD07/36: 8401-02; AHD08/37: 569-571, 595-597, 618-619, 635-637, 715-717, 767-769, 773-775, 880, 919-931; AHD09/38: 9049, 54-56.
- [22] De Koning and Meijer, “Going All The Way,” 227-231; Samir A[.], “Deurwaarders,” (2004) 11.
- [23] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/01: 23-24; Samir A[.], «Deurwaarders Van Allah,» (2004 / 2005) 33.

- [24] Ibid., 01/01: 23-25; AHA01/18: 80-81; RHV01/66: 18845-46.
- [25] Ibid., 01/01: 24-27; RHV01/66: 18792; Donner and Remkes, „Kamerstukken 2, 2004-2005, 29854, Nr. 3,“ 25-26.
- [26] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/13: 141-43; GET: 18840, 452.
- [27] Peters, „Dutch Extremist Islamism,“ 145-59.
- [28] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/01: 32, 37; GET: 8349, 18415; VERD: 9754; Commissie van Toezicht betreffende de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, „Toezichtsrapport Inzake De Afwegingsprocessen Van De Aivd,“ 11; Jaco Alberts et al., „De Wereld Van Mohammed B,“ *NRC Handelsblad*, 9 July 2005; Chorus and Olgun, *In Godsnaam*, 61; Annieke Kranenberg, „De Zachte Krachten Achter Mohammed B,“ *De Volkskrant*, 20 November 2004.
- [29] Schuurman, Eijkman, and Bakker, “The Hofstadgroup Revisited,” 1-20.
- [30] Hofstad Former 3, “Personal Interview 1,” 5.
- [31] De Koning and Meijer, “Going All The Way,” 232; Hofstadgroup Former 1, “Personal Interview 2,” 22-23.
- [32] Peters, “Dutch Extremist Islamism,” 152-55.
- [33] Ibid., 155-56.
- [34] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/01: 38-39.
- [35] Erkel, *Samir*, 209; De Graaf, *Gevaarlijke Vrouwen*, 262; Janny Groen and Annieke Kranenberg, “Saleh B. Wel Terroristisch Actief,” *De Volkskrant*, 2 June 2007; Jaco Alberts and Steven Derix, “Het Mysterie Van De Onbekende Extremist,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 October 2005.
- [36] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/01: 38-45.
- [37] Ibid., 01/01: 48-49.
- [38] Ibid., 01/01: 40; 01/13: 175.
- [39] Ibid., 01/13: 104; AHA03/20: 859; GET: 18375; VERD: 20347-48; RHV02/67: 19216-18, 91-92; Diogo Noivo, “Jihadism in Portugal: Grasping a Nebulous Reality,” (Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano, 2010), 6; Vidino, “The Hofstad Group,” 583.
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- [41] Police Files Hofstadgroup, AHA03/20: 859-61; RHV02/67: 19292.
- [42] Ibid., 01/01: 141; AHA03/20: 831.
- [43] Ibid., 01/13: 104; AHA05/22: 837, 1811-13, 37; David J. Kilcullen, “Subversion and Countersubversion in the Campaign against Terrorism in Europe,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 8 (2007): 657; Jaco Alberts and Steven Derix, “Aivd-Stuk Lekte Uit Naar Extremisten,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 9 November 2004.
- [44] The film can be viewed online. See, for instance: YouTube, “Submission: Part 1,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6bFR4_Ppk8. Data retrieved 15 April 2014.
- [45] “Hirsi Ali Zoekt Tegenstanders Voor Haar Wedstrijd,” *De Volkskrant*, 30 August 2004.
- [46] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/13: 74, 161-62; Erkel, *Samir*, 223.
- [47] ‘Muwahhidin’ refers to Muslims who uphold a strict belief in the concept of tawhid (the unity of god). See: John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 146.
- [48] Police Files Hofstadgroup, AHA04/21: 1324-39, 42; AHA05/22: 2339; 01/17: 4002-03, 25-26, 47; Benschop, “A Political Murder Foretold”.
- [49] Police Files Hofstadgroup, AHA04/21: 1325.
- [50] Ibid., 01/01: 179-80.
- [51] Ibid., 01/01: 160, 67, 200-01, 03; Benschop, “A Political Murder Foretold”; Peters, “Dutch Extremist Islamism,” 156.
- [52] J.P.H. Donner and J.W. Remkes, “Kamerstukken 2, 2004-2005, 29854, Nr. 1,” (The Hague: Sdu Publishers, 2004), 1-2; Frits Van Straelen, “Requisitoir in De Strafzaak Tegen Mohammed B,” (Parketnr 129227-04: Arrondissementsparket Amsterdam, 2005), 10-27; Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/13: 95. Available at: <http://vorige.nrc.nl/krant/article1867376.ece>. Retrieved 23 April 2014.

- [53] Van Straelen, "Requisitoir in De Strafzaak Tegen Mohammed B.," 9-10.
- [54] Ibid., 6-7; Public Prosecutor 2, "Personal Interview 1," (Amsterdam 2012), 1-3; Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/01: 93-96; NCTV, "Personal Interview 1," 6; Steven Derix, "Hoe Kwam Toch Die Vingerafdruk Op B'S Brief?," *NRC Handelsblad*, 27 July 2005.
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- [56] Peters, "Dutch Extremist Islamism," 156-57.
- [57] Alex P. Schmid, "The Definition of Terrorism," in *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, ed. Alex P. Schmid (London / New York: Routledge, 2011), 86.
- [58] Police Files Hofstadgroup, AHA02/19: 755; GET: 4069; Public Prosecutor 1, "Personal Interview 1," 17, 42; Groen and Kranenberg, *Women Warriors for Allah*, 84-85.
- [59] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/13: 38, 95-96, 105-06, 71; GET: 18011, 235-237; AGV01/62: 7967-04.
- [60] For more information on this special forces unit, see: M.J. De Weger, "Continuïteit En Verandering: Het Nederlandse Stelsel Van Antiterreureenheden Sinds Zijn Oprichting," in *Terrorisme: Studies over Terrorisme En Terrorismebestrijding*, ed. E.R. Muller, U. Rosenthal, and R. De Wijk (Deventer: Kluwer, 2008), 630.
- [61] Police Files Hofstadgroup, AHA07/24: 3112.
- [62] Ibid., 01/01: 131; 01/12: 9-10; 01/13: 71; AHA02/19: 610-14; AHA07/24: 3087-127; AGV01/62: 17969-8005; GET: 8011, 8235-8237. A partial account of these events can be found here: The Hague Court of Appeal, "LJN BC2576," (2008).
- [63] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/17: 4085-86, 128, 179, 201; Police Files Piranha, REL00: 55, 62, 205; Public Prosecutor 1, "Personal Interview 1," 42.
- [64] Schuurman, Eijkman, and Bakker, "The Hofstadgroup Revisited," 1-20.
- [65] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 61-63, 82-83, 85-86, 104-05, 58-60, 211-14; Sageman, "Hofstad Case," 85.
- [66] Annieke Kranenberg and Janny Groen, "Kroongetuigen Vallen in Eigen Kuil," *De Volkskrant*, 2 December 2006; "Getuige Piranha-Zaak Zelf Radicaal," *ibid.*, 28 October.
- [67] Kranenberg and Groen, "Kroongetuigen Vallen in Eigen Kuil."
- [68] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 29; NOVA, "Informatie Aivd En Politie Uit Strafdossier," <http://www.novatv.nl/page/detail/nieuws/8239/Informatie+AIVD+en+politie+uit+straf dossier>.
- [69] De Graaf, *Gevaarlijke Vrouwen*, 273; Erkel, *Samir*, 199-200, 06-08, 18-19, 27-28, 40-41.
- [70] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 61-62; Bart Den Hartigh and Alexander Van Dam, "Requisitoir 'Piranha' Deel 1," (2006), 70.
- [71] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 213.
- [72] Ibid., REL00: 158-60.
- [73] Police Files Hofstadgroup, AHA06/23: 2564-600, 618-620.
- [74] Ibid., AHA06/23: 2587-89, 96, 610-612, 713, 755-756; 01/17: 4236-38, 41; Police Files Piranha, REL00: 99; 1056.
- [75] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 144-45.
- [76] Ibid., REL00: 144-45.
- [77] Ibid., REL00: 28-29, 34.
- [78] Ibid., REL00: 39-40; NOVA, "Informatie AIVD En Politie Uit Strafdossier".
- [79] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 40-42; NOVA, "Informatie AIVD En Politie Uit Strafdossier".
- [80] Den Hartigh and Van Dam, "Requisitoir 'Piranha' Deel 1," 5; NOVA, "Informatie AIVD En Politie Uit Strafdossier".
- [81] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 43-44; Den Hartigh and Van Dam, "Requisitoir 'Piranha' Deel 1," 7.
- [82] Police Files Piranha, 151-52, 91-92.

[83] Groen and Kranenberg, *Women Warriors for Allah*, 144-46.

[84] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 46-53; NOVA, "Informatie AIVD En Politie Uit Strafdossier".

[85] NOVA, "Videotestament Samir A.-Vertaling Nova," NOVA, <http://www.novatv.nl/page/detail/nieuws/8887/Videotestament+Samir+A.+--+vertaling+NOVA>.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] De Graaf, *Gevaarlijke Vrouwen*, 273-74.

[89] Police Files Piranha, REL00: 57, 161; Roel Meijer, "Inhoud Van De Religieuze En Ideologische Documenten Aangetroffen in Het Beslag Van Verdachten in Het Piranha-Onderzoek," 1-74.

[90] Den Hartigh and Van Dam, "Requisitoir 'Piranha' Deel 1," 8; Groen and Kranenberg, *Women Warriors for Allah*, 134-35.