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## Three Myths (and Realities) about Muslim Convert Radicalization

**MYTH:** Converts are religious zealots (Source: Cottey, S. (2016, January 25). *The Atlantic*.)

- *Reality:* Muslim converts and born Muslims actually exhibit similar levels of religious commitment. In fact, Muslim converts are *more* religiously pluralistic than born Muslims, and are *less* likely to hold sectarian views.

Source: Pew Research Center. (2011). Muslim Americans: No sign of Grown in Alienation or Support for Extremism.

**MYTH:** Converts turn to radical Islam as a protest against society (Source: Roy, O. (2006). *Globalized Islam*.)

- *Reality:* Not necessarily: research on British and American converts suggests many feel a close connection with both their British or American *and* Muslim identities. Similarly, the majority of British converts surveyed say there are more *good* things than *bad* in British society. (Source: Brice, M. K. (2010). *A minority within a minority: A report on converts to Islam in the United Kingdom*; Evans K (2016), April 21) *US Studies Online*)

**MYTH:** Marginalization and deprivation drive Muslim convert radicalization (Source: Mullins, S. (2015). Re-Examining the Involvement of Converts in Islamist Terrorism: A Comparison of the US and UK. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 9(6).)

- *Reality:* It's not so simple. Research on Muslim converts in the US, Canada, and UK, suggests that Muslim converts in the general population also experience similar marginalization (e.g. racially, socially, psychologically, economically). Therefore, relative deprivation and marginalisation cannot alone explain Muslim convert radicalization. Our project seeks to understand and explain what *does* drive the process. (Source: Brice (2010); Pew (2011); Flower, S., & Birkett, D. (2014, July). *(Mis)Understanding Muslim Converts in Canada*; Senzai, F. & Bazian, H. (May 2013). *The Bay Area Muslim Study*)