The trouble with radicalization

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Ever since the term 'radicalization' entered the public vocabulary,[1] some academics have devoted their energies to proving that the phenomenon which it seeks to describe does not exist. Andrew Hoskins and Ben O'Loughlin, for example, claim that radicalization is a 'myth' promoted by the media and security agencies for the purpose of '[anchoring] news agendas … [and legitimizing] policy responses'.[2] Objectively, they argue, the term's many variations—such as 'online radicalization'—'make little sense'.[3] Frank Furedi pursues a similar line. He argues that assertions of radicalization and governments' responses to it 'always [have] a fantasy like character', and that they have been designed to make the alienation of young Muslims sound like a 'psychological virus', distracting attention from 'the very real cultural divisions that afflict British communities today'.[4] Meanwhile, the University of Aberystwyth is hosting an entire research centre whose title— Centre for the Study of 'Radicalisation' and Contemporary Political Violence— suggests that the people involved in it do not believe in the subject they study.[5]

The 'radicalization deniers' are missing the point. As this article will show, radicalization is not a myth, but its meaning is ambiguous, and all the major controversies and debates that have sprung from it are linked to the same inherent ambiguity. The principal conceptual fault-line is between notions of radicalization that emphasize extremist beliefs ('cognitive radicalization') and those that focus on extremist behaviour ('behavioural radicalization'). This ambiguity explains the differences between definitions of radicalization; it has driven the scholarly debate; and it provides the backdrop for strikingly different policy approaches. Rather than denying its validity, this article calls on scholars and policy-makers to work harder to understand and embrace a concept which—though ambiguous—

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[1] Until the early 2000s, hardly any references to radicalization could be found in the academic literature. The rise to prominence of the term seems to be intimately linked, therefore, with the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. See Peter R. Neumann, 'Introduction', in Peter R. Neumann and Jacob Stoil, eds, *Perspectives on radicalisation and political violence* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2008), p. 3.

[2] Andrew Hoskins and Ben O'Loughlin, 'Media and the myth of radicalization', *Media, War and Conflict* 2: 2, 2009, p. 107.

[3] Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 'Media and the myth of radicalization', p. 109.

[4] Frank Furedi, 'Muslim alienation in the UK? Blame the Israelis!', *Spiked*, 9 Feb. 2009, http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php?/site/article/6187/, accessed 14 May 2013.

[5] Centre for the Study of 'Radicalisation' and Political Violence (CSRV), University of Aberystwyth: see http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/research/aber-research/research-centres-and-groups/csrv/, accessed 14 May 2013.

is likely to dominate public discourse, research and policy agendas for years to come.

The first section of the article deals with definitions of radicalization. It introduces different 'end-points' of radicalization—cognitive and behavioural—and shows how the meaning of radicalization can vary with time and place. The second section looks at the scholarly debate, which has revolved around the relationship between cognition and behaviour. The final section deals with the policy implications of such debates. It delineates the two major paradigms for *countering* radicalization—labelled 'European' and 'Anglo-Saxon'—and shows how they reflect the concept's key ambiguities.

What radicalization?

There is no agreed definition of radicalization. Definitional issues, however, are the principal source of many controversies and misunderstandings that surround radicalization, and it is important, therefore, to explain key distinctions. There are two major areas of contention and ambiguity: one relates to the 'end-points' of radicalization; the other is about context and normative issues.

'End-points'

At the most basic level, radicalization can be defined as the process whereby people become extremists.[6] The first part of this definition—the idea of radicalization as a process—is not particularly controversial. No one who studies radicalization believes that individuals turn into extremists overnight, or that their embrace of extremism is caused by a single influence. Virtually all academic models of radicalization—such as Fathali Moghadam's 'staircase',[7] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko's 'pyramid',[8] or Zeyno Baran's 'conveyor belt'[9]—conceptualize radicalization as a progression which plays out over a period of time and involves different factors and dynamics. They differ when it comes to length and complexity, but they all subscribe to the idea that 'becoming extremist' is a process, and that studying radicalization is about discovering the nature of that process.

The more ambiguous part of the definition is the concept of extremism, which—according to Roger Scruton—can have several meanings. It may describe *political ideas* that are diametrically opposed to a society's core values, which—in the context of a liberal democracy—can be various forms of racial or religious

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[6] David Mandel explains the relationship between radicalization and extremism as follows: 'Radicalization is to extremism as velocity is to position. That is, radicalization is a (positive) change in the degree of extremism expressed by an individual or group'. See David R. Mandel, 'Radicalization: what does it mean?', in Thomas Pick, Anne Speckhard and Beatrice Jaunch, eds, *Homegrown terrorism: understanding the root causes of radicalisation among groups with an immigrant heritage in Europe* (Brussels: Institute of Physics Press, 2009), p. 111.

[7] See Fathali M. Moghadam, 'The staircase to terrorism: a psychological exploration', *American Psychologist* 60: 2, 2005, pp. 161–9.

[8] See Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, 'Mechanisms of political radicalization: pathways toward terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20: 3, 2008, pp. 415–33.

[9] See Zeyno Baran, 'Fighting the war of ideas', *Foreign Affairs* 84: 6, Nov.–Dec. 2005.

supremacy, or ideologies that deny basic human rights or democratic principles. Or it can mean the *methods* by which actors seek to realize *any* political aim, namely by 'show[ing] disregard for the life, liberty, and human rights of others'.[10] There is no agreement, in other words, about the end-state of radicalization.[11] While some consider radicalization to be a purely cognitive phenomenon that culminates in 'radically' different ideas about society and governance, others believe that it ought to be defined by the (often violent or coercive) actions in which those ideas result. As a consequence, many governments and academics draw distinctions between (cognitive) radicalization on the one hand and, on the other, 'violent extremism' (US government),[12] 'action pathways' (Randy Borum)[13] or 'behavioural radicalization' (Lorenzo Vidino).[14]

Many of the definitions of radicalization that are currently used by governments can be distinguished by their emphasis on one or the other interpretation. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for example, views radicalization as a purely cognitive phenomenon, consisting of 'the movement of … individuals from moderate mainstream beliefs to extremist views'.[15] The authors of a US Congressional Research Service report express similar views, arguing that (Al-Qaeda-related) radicalization is 'the process of acquiring … radical, extremist or jihadist beliefs'.[16] Charles Allen of the US Department of Homeland Security places more emphasis on (violent) action but leaves open the possibility for purely cognitive forms of extremism. Defining radicalization as 'the process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence', his definition considers a whole range of end-points.[17] The British government's definition is the most explicit in connecting radicalization with violent action and, more specifically, terrorism. Stating that radicalization is 'the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then to participate in terrorist groups',[18] it maps out a clear trajectory which culminates in the decision to join a terrorist group.

Connected to the discussion about 'end-points' of radicalization is the question of what—if any—relationship exists between (extremist) ideas and (extremist) action. For some, the two are separate phenomena that need to be distinguished from each other. Brian Jenkins, for example, differentiates radicalization—which,

[10] Roger Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan dictionary of political thought*, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[11] See Mandel, 'Radicalization', pp. 101–14.

[12] See e.g. the American government's 'countering violent extremism' strategy paper: The White House, 'Empowering local partners to prevent violent extremism in the United States', Aug. 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf, accessed 14 May 2013.

[13] Randy Borum, 'Rethinking radicalization', *Journal of Strategic Security* 4: 4, 2011, p. 2.

[14] Lorenzo Vidino, *Countering radicalization in America: lessons from Europe*, United States Institute for Peace Special Report, Washington DC, Nov. 2010, p. 5.

[15] Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Radicalization: a guide for the perplexed* (Ottawa, June 2009), p. 1.

[16] Jerome Bjelopera, *American jihadist terrorism: combating a complex threat* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, Nov. 2011), p. 2.

[17] See 'Threat of Islamic radicalization to the homeland', written testimony of Charles E. Allen, Assistant Secretary of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, before the US Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 14 March 2007, p. 4.

[18] HM Government, *The United Kingdom's strategy for countering international terrorism* (London: Home Office, June 2009), p. 41.

he believes, is about 'internalizing a set of beliefs'—from (Al-Qaeda-related) recruitment, which entails 'transforming oneself into a weapon of jihad'.[19] Others are more explicit in tying the two together. As mentioned above, the Department of Homeland Security's definition suggests that an extremist mindset (or 'extremist belief systems') is the precondition for 'the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence'. It implies, in other words, that terrorists become cognitive extremists first, and then—for whatever reason—decide to pursue their extremist aims by violent means. This seems to make instinctive sense, given that we know terrorists are no more 'crazy', irrational or clinically psychotic than the population at large,[20] and that 'all kinds of action—moderate, angry, very angry and even violent—[are] the product of reasoning'.[21] Yet, as we shall see, it is precisely this assumption which has recently been attacked by researchers who claim that cognitive extremism is just one of many 'pathways' into extremist action, and that not all terrorists are motivated by extremist ideas.

Context and normative issues

The second area of contention relates to context and normative issues. As Mark Sedgwick and others have pointed out, the word 'radical' has no meaning on its own.[22] Its content varies depending on what is seen as 'mainstream' in any given society, section of society or period of time. Different political, cultural and historical contexts, in other words, produce different notions of 'radicalism'. In North Korea, the principle of free speech would be considered radical, whereas in western countries it is a mainstream belief. In the 1980s, the idea of gay marriage used to be seen as radical, if not outrageous, yet nowadays it is those who oppose it, not its supporters, who are portrayed as 'fundamentalists' and 'radicals'. What this means is that labelling people or groups as radical will often—if not always—trigger the question 'radical in relation to what?' The same is true for the process of *becoming* radical: depending on what one considers mainstream or acceptable, the adoption of certain beliefs or behaviours may be seen as radicalization, 'going progressive', 'becoming a born-again believer' or 'returning to the roots'.[23]

As a result of being vague and context-dependent, the word 'radical' is not always associated with extremism, nor does it necessarily imply a 'problem' that needs to be studied and solved. On the contrary, in the United States, for example, not only is being radical no crime, the very idea of 'radicalism' has positive connotations in a nation whose founding principles were seen as radical,

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[19] Testimony by Brian M. Jenkins, RAND Corporation, presented before the House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment, 5 April 2007, p. 3.

[20] See Jerrold M. Post, 'Psychology', in Club de Madrid, *Addressing the causes of terrorism* (Madrid, 2005), pp. 7–12.

[21] Rachel Briggs, Catherine Fieschi and Hannah Lownsbrough, *Bringing it home: community-based approaches to counterterrorism* (London: Demos, 2006), p. 42.

[22] Mark Sedgwick, 'The concept of radicalization as a source of confusion', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22: 4, 2010, pp. 479–94. See also Mandel, 'Radicalization', p. 105.

[23] The word 'radical' stems from the Latin word for root, *radix*, and was—for a considerable period—thought to be an expression for 'going to the roots'. See Mandel, 'Radicalization', p. 102.

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even revolutionary, at the time. In the words of the eminent historian Gordon S. Wood, '[The American revolution] was the greatest revolution the world has known, a momentous upheaval that not only fundamentally altered the character of American society but decisively affected the course of subsequent history.'[24] Accordingly, American history books are full of reminders that many of the rights and freedoms now taken for granted were fought for by individuals who were condemned as dangerous 'radicals' by their contemporaries. Those espousing the abolition of slavery 'faced violent mobs and hostile legislators who interfered with their mail and destroyed their presses'; women campaigning for their right to vote 'were called "hysterical" and … banned from public speaking'; the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr was 'smeared and threatened' by the government.[25] Arguably, this collective experience has taught Americans of all political persuasions that 'radicals' are an essential part of their national story, and that, on many occasions, they have been drivers of 'progressive' change and renewal.

It comes as no surprise, then, that past attempts at 'tackling' radicalization have often been greeted with suspicion, if not hostility, by American libertarians and liberals. Any mention of the word 'radicalization' by politicians or government officials tended to be seen as a politically motivated attack on free speech and constitutionally guaranteed freedoms. Rather than fighting terrorism, so the argument went, government's actual aim—its 'hidden agenda'—was to marginalize and criminalize people whose views were critical of the status quo. The entire concept of radicalization, in other words, was little more than a Trojan horse allowing governments to clamp down on dissent and portray progressive and unconventional views as dangerous. Many of these arguments surfaced during the debate about the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act 2007, which passed the US House of Representatives but never made it onto the floor of the Senate. Throughout its passage, the bill prompted angry opposition from liberals, right-wing libertarians and civil rights groups, who described it as 'Orwellian' and 'McCarthyite'.[26] Dennis Kucinich, a left-wing Democratic member of Congress, called it a 'thought crime bill',[27] while Ron Paul, a libertarian Republican, said its introduction was 'unwise and dangerous'.[28] Ironically, even the John Birch Society, which made its name with paranoid witch-hunts of suspected communists during the Cold War, called for the bill to be struck down, pointing out that several of the Founding Fathers would have been guilty of violent radicalization had the law been enacted in their day.[29]

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[24] Gordon S. Wood, *The radicals of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1991), p. 5.

[25] Timothy McCarthy and John McMillian, *The radical reader: a documentary history of the American radical tradition* (New York: Free Press, 2003), pp. 3–4.

[26] See e.g. Peter Erlinder, 'Inherent powers, ignoble history make new idea anything but innocuous', *Pioneer Press*, 20 Dec. 2007; Jeff Knaebel, '"Thought crimes", HR 1955 passed, with 404 votes', LewRockwell.com, 5 Nov. 2007, http://www.lewrockwell.com/knaebel/knaebel11.html, accessed 14 May 2013.

[27] Dennis Kucinich, quoted in 'Kucinich on HR 1955', *Independent*, 3 Dec. 2007.

[28] Ron Paul, quoted in '"Homegrown terror" act an attack on internet freedom?', *AntiWar.com*, 7 Dec. 2007, http://www.antiwar.com/paul/?articleid=12015, accessed 14 May 2013.

[29] 'Senate could vote on thought crimes bill soon', John Birch Society, 30 Nov. 2007, http://infolution.wordpress.com/2007/11/30/law-teachers-oppose-hr-1955/, accessed 14 May 2013.

Many of the arguments will, no doubt, be familiar to anyone who has been involved in debates about defining terrorism.[30] Like terrorism, the term 'radicalization' is considered political, and its frequent use—especially by governments and officials—is believed to serve political agendas rather than describe a social phenomenon that can be studied and dealt with in a dispassionate and objective manner. For many, in other words, radicalization, like terrorism, is in the eye of the beholder: 'one man's radical (or terrorist) is another man's freedom fighter'.[31] In fact, if anything, the trouble with radicalization is even more pronounced, and less easily resolvable, than the difficulties surrounding the definition of terrorism. For, with terrorism, there is an objectively definable core—a violent tactic, sometimes a strategy, which can be distinguished from other means and modes of pursuing violent conflict.[32] Radicalization, by contrast, is inherently context-dependent, and its meaning will always be contested.

The academic argument

Much of the scholarship about radicalization has emerged in the wake of the September 11 attacks. The topic has become fashionable and the debate has, at times, been vigorous and controversial. Most recently, two prominent scholars—John Horgan and Randy Borum—have attacked not individual authors and works but the very idea of studying cognitive radicalization and its utility for understanding how people become terrorists. Speaking at a symposium on 'Lessons learned since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001', Horgan argued that the focus on how people adopt extremist beliefs has been a costly and counterproductive failure: 'I am not entirely convinced that we should have allowed [cognitive] radicalization to take center stage. Our preoccupation, if not obsession, with [cognitive] radicalization has actually come at the expense of increasing our knowledge and understanding of terrorist behavior.'[33] More specifically, Horgan claimed that academics' emphasis on cognitive radicalization has produced the widely held— yet, in his view, fundamentally flawed—assumption that extremist beliefs are the precursor to violent action: 'We tend to assume a kind of unidirectional relationship. In other words, if you become [a cognitive radical], the chances are you will probably become [a terrorist], given the right sort of circumstances. Prevent someone from being a [cognitive] radical, and then you will prevent someone from becoming a terrorist. And this is the inevitable logic.'[34] Borum has made similar claims. In the winter 2011 issue of the *Journal of Strategic Security*, he warned that '[a] focus on radicalization … risks implying that radical beliefs are a proxy—

[30] For an overview, see Alex P. Schmid, 'Terrorism: the definitional problem', *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 36: 2, 2004, pp. 375–419.

[31] See e.g. Boaz Ganor, 'Is one man's terrorist another man's freedom fighter?', International Institute for Counterterrorism, n.d., http://www.ict.org.il/ResearchPublications/tabid/64/Articlsid/432/Default.aspx, accessed 14 May 2013.

[32] See Peter R. Neumann and M. L. R. Smith, *The strategy of terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[33] John Horgan, remarks at START Symposium, 'Lessons learned since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001', Washington DC, 1 Sept. 2011, http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/TenYearA, accessed 14 May 2013.

[34] Horgan, remarks at START Symposium.

or at least a necessary precursor—for terrorism'. He continued, 'We know this not to be true.'[35]

What Horgan and Borum are implying is that there is no inevitable link between (extremist) political beliefs and (violent) political action, and that the two phenomena should therefore be studied separately. In their view, not only will 'there … always be far more radicals than terrorists',[36] but terrorists do not always hold strong political beliefs. Being a cognitive extremist, in other words, is neither sufficient nor necessary as a condition for becoming a terrorist. In Borum's words, 'many terrorists—even those who lay claim to a "cause"—are not deeply ideological and may not "radicalize" in any traditional sense … Some terrorists—perhaps even many of them—are not ideologues or deep believers in a nuanced, extremist doctrine.'[37]

The two scholars' conclusion is seductively simple: since cognitive radicalization is just one of many 'possible pathway[s] into terrorism involvement',[38] looking at political ideas—and the process by which people adopt them—is not essential. As Horgan puts it: 'If our ultimate objective is to stem and control the growth of terrorism, a central [and] continuing focus on [cognitive] radicalization may ultimately prove unnecessary.'[39] In Borum's view, scholars need to focus on studying individuals' 'action pathways' into terrorism,[40] not the cognitive extremism that may—or may not—inspire violent political action. In his opinion, 'Conflating the two concepts [will undermine] our ability to effectively counter either of them.'[41]

This section of the article provides an examination of these two academics' arguments and concludes that their claims are problematic. It demonstrates that, in practice, it is impossible to separate political beliefs from political action, and that attempting to do so obstructs a holistic understanding of radicalization; that not every 'true believer' is an ideologue, and that ideological sophistication is not, therefore, an appropriate test for the relevance of cognitive radicalization; and that any attempt at understanding individuals' 'action pathways' without looking at the social movements and counter-cultures from which they have emerged is bound to be shallow.

Beliefs and action

For followers of the academic debate about radicalization, many of the claims made by Borum and Horgan are not surprising. No serious academic argues that all—or even most—cognitive extremists will go on to embrace violence. The notion of a 'unidirectional relationship' between beliefs and terrorism may exist

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[35] Randy Borum, 'Radicalization into violent extremism I: a review of social science theories', *Journal of Strategic Security* 4: 4, 2011, p. 8.
[36] Horgan, remarks at START Symposium.
[37] Borum, 'Radicalization into violent extremism I', p. 9.
[38] Borum, 'Radicalization into violent extremism I', p. 8.
[39] Horgan, remarks at START Symposium.
[40] Borum, 'Radicalization into violent extremism I', p. 30. Also Borum, 'Rethinking radicalization', p. 2.
[41] Borum, 'Rethinking radicalization', p. 2.

in the minds of some right-wing bloggers, but it has never gained traction among members of the scholarly community. None of the widely used models and theories of radicalization suggest that beliefs or ideologies are the sole influence on or explanation for why people turn to terrorism. Indeed, Borum's own review of the radicalization literature does not cover any model, theory or approach that could be classified as mono-causal, nor has he identified any academic study or report that would posit a 'unidirectional relationship' between extremist beliefs and terrorism.[42] At best, therefore, the critique by Horgan and Borum is based on a straw man.

Far more problematic is the two scholars' underlying assertion that political beliefs are overrated in, if not irrelevant to, understanding behavioural radicalization. Instead of calling on researchers to tease out the often subtle and complex interactions between beliefs and non-belief-related factors, they are dividing cognitive and behavioural radicalization into two separate questions—'why' and 'how'— proclaiming that studying the former is an 'obsession' which 'may ultimately prove unnecessary'.[43] Ultimately, therefore, their argument is an attempt to 'depoliticize' political violence, which—if taken seriously—would undermine, not enhance, current efforts at gaining a better understanding of radicalization.

In reality, the role of beliefs and ideology in behavioural radicalization is obvious and well documented.[44] What made Irish Republican Army recruits blow up police stations in Northern Ireland while Tibetans have resisted the 'occupation' of their homeland peacefully needs to be explained, at least in part, with reference to the different ideologies that members of the two nationalist movements have come to accept as true. Similarly, what commands political and 'quietist' Salafists to pursue their faith through peaceful activism (or no activism at all) while 'jihadist' Salafists have joined terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda must be understood by looking at, among other factors, the different strands of their belief system and what they say about the circumstances in which using violence is permitted or even obligatory.[45] Indeed, without reference to beliefs, none of these behaviours make any sense. Whereas 'physical force Republicanism' teaches potential recruits that constitutional Irish nationalism is ineffective because the British government will 'not be moved by anything [but armed struggle]',[46] Tibetan separatists regard the use of violence as the ultimate betrayal of their movement's principles. While 'quietist' Salafists demand loyalty even to oppressive 'princes', jihadists are quick to pronounce anyone who fails to adhere to their interpretation of Islam as infidels against whom 'jihad'—defined, by them, as violent action—is

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[42] Borum, 'Radicalization into violent extremism I', pp. 7–36; Randy Borum, 'Radicalization into violent extremism II: a review of conceptual models and empirical research', *Journal of Strategic Security* 4: 4, 2011, pp. 37–62.

[43] Horgan, remarks at START Symposium.

[44] For definitions of ideology, see John Gerring, 'Ideology: a definitional analysis', *Political Research Quarterly* 50: 4, 1997, pp. 957–94.

[45] See Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29: 3, 2006, pp. 207–39.

[46] Gerry Adams, quoted in Brendan O'Brien, *The long war: the IRA and Sinn Fein—1985 to today* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1993), p. 117.

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mandatory.[47] Simply put, what makes some individuals resort to political violence while others do not is, in many cases, impossible to understand without looking at the ideological assumptions which they have come to accept and believe in.

It is precisely because of the inherently political nature of politically motivated violence that terrorist groups and their members are defined with reference to their ideology. David Rapoport's 'four waves of modern terrorism'—the anarchist, anti-colonial, new left and religious waves—get their names from the types of belief systems to which they are related.[48] This is not to say that ideology is always the principal reason for people joining terrorist groups, nor does it imply that every single participant in any of those waves has been 'deeply ideological'. But the typology sheds light on the ebbs and flows in radicalization across time and space. Why, for example, did upper-middle-class students from countries like the United States, West Germany and Italy choose to become terrorists in the 1970s but not in the 1950s or 1990s? What makes western Muslims passionate about jihadist groups in far-flung places like Somalia, Syria, Chechnya and Iraq instead of similarly adventurous and violent groups closer to home? In both cases, the answer will have to address the spread of ideologies and belief systems in certain places and at certain times. Indeed, rather than dismissing the study of cognitive radicalization as 'unnecessary', a sophisticated approach would aim to understand why certain belief systems resonate with certain populations, and—correspondingly—what combination of factors explains their lack of resonance and decline.

To be fair, Borum points out that 'adopting extremist beliefs … is one possible pathway into terrorism', and he concedes that it could be useful to 'bring out into the open the distinctions among radical extremist [*sic*] ideologies'.[49] But he fails to draw the obvious conclusion, namely that researchers need to devote more, not less, attention to understanding the nature and dynamics of extremist belief systems and their relationship with other factors and influences. Instead of promoting a holistic understanding of radicalization, he chooses to maintain the barrier between belief and action, calling on researchers 'to be less focused on *why* people engage in terrorism and more focused on *how* they become involved'.[50]

Activists and ideologues

Like their other claims, the assertion by Horgan and Borum that involvement in terrorism is not always the result of 'deep' cognitive radicalization will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the academic literature on social movements. As early as 1980, David Snow, Louis Zurcher and Sheldon Ekland-Olson found that most members of political and social groups were recruited through 'preexisting or emergent interpersonal tie[s]'.[51] In 1988, Donatella della Porta highlighted

[47] See Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement'.
[48] David C. Rapoport, 'The four waves of modern terrorism', in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James Ludes, eds, *Attacking terrorism: elements of a grand strategy* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press), pp. 46–73.
[49] Borum, 'Radicalization into violent extremism I', pp. 8, 10.
[50] Borum, 'Rethinking radicalization', p. 2 (emphasis added).
[51] David A. Snow, Louis A. Zurcher and Sheldon Ekland-Olson, 'Social networks and social movements: a microstructural approach to differential recruitment', *American Sociological Review* 45: 5, 1980, p. 798.

the importance of 'personal linkages, many to close friends or kin', in left-wing terrorist groups in West Germany and Italy.[52] Marc Sageman produced similar findings for members of Al-Qaeda in his 2004 study *Understanding terror networks*.[53] There is nothing new or noteworthy, therefore, in saying that extremist political beliefs are not the only—or even the predominant—variable involved in 'making a terrorist'.

The problematic and, in many respects, misleading part of Borum's argument is the idea that, for political beliefs and cognitive processes to be considered relevant, individuals need to be 'ideologues or deep believers in a nuanced, extremist doctrine'. In Borum's mind, in other words, exposure to political beliefs must lead to ideological sophistication, or else it should be dismissed altogether. In reality, of course, no political organization or movement—be it a political party, single-issue movement or terrorist group—is filled with ideologues.[54] As anyone who has ever been involved in political activism will know, most participants are not intellectuals who have spent months studying their movement's texts; but they often have a good sense of, and commitment to, core principles and ideas, and they are motivated by the group's analysis—however simplistically expressed—of what is wrong with society, who is to blame, and what needs to be done to fix it.[55] Not every member of Al-Qaeda, for example, will be fluent in the history and evolution of jihadist doctrine, but their involvement in terrorism may nevertheless be driven by a sincere belief in the notion of the 'West at war with Islam' and a genuine sense of obligation towards defending their Muslim 'brothers and sisters'. Not every 'true believer' is automatically an ideologue; and it makes no sense, therefore, to use 'intellectual sophistication' as a test for cognitive radicalization.

As an illustration, consider the four British Muslims who carried out the London transport bombings in July 2005. None of them would have passed Borum's test for cognitive radicalization because their level of ideological sophistication was low, and none has ever been described as an 'ideologue'. Yet Mohammed Khan, the cell's ringleader, was by any account strongly politicized, and had been known as an active promoter of extremist causes for years.[56] Germaine Lindsay, a Jamaican-born convert to Islam, had closely followed one of Britain's most notorious 'hate preachers', Abdullah Al Faisal, whose tapes and recordings he listened to daily long before meeting Khan.[57] Shehzad Tanweer seems to have taken little interest in the nuances of jihadist ideology, but regularly joined Khan at extremist lectures and took part in the production of DVDs that promoted violent jihad.[58] According to Petter Nesser, he was 'an idealist with a social consciousness and a vocation for

[52] See Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social movements: an introduction*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 118.
[53] See Marc Sageman, *Understanding terror networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
[54] Della Porta and Diani, *Social movements*, ch. 5.
[55] Della Porta and Diani, *Social movements*, pp. 74–9. Also Neil J. Smelser, *The faces of terrorism: social and psychological dimensions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 54–89.
[56] See Shiv Malik, 'My brother the bomber', *Prospect*, 20 June 2007.
[57] See 'Profile: Sheikh Abdullah al-Faisal', BBC News, 25 May 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6692243.stm, accessed 14 May 2013.
[58] Petter Nesser, 'Joining jihadi terrorist cells in Europe', in Magnus Ranstorp, ed., *Understanding violent radicalisation: terrorist and jihadist networks in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 104–6.

community work and activism'.[59] Hasib Hussain, the fourth bomber, is in fact the only member of the cell who fits the idea of a 'non-political' terrorist: he appears to have 'stumbled' into the group, and—other than making supportive references to Al-Qaeda at school—displayed no signs of cognitive radicalization.[60]

While it is obvious that factors *other* than cognitive radicalization played an important part in all four of these cases, it seems clear that at least three of the individuals were influenced by political beliefs and ideologies, and therefore that cognitive radicalization cannot be written out of the script entirely. In saying that ideology is overrated unless individuals have become full-blown 'ideologues', the critics of cognitive radicalization are setting the bar too high, and they are likely, therefore, to fail to detect the very nuances and subtleties which, in other contexts, they berate others for ignoring.

Social movements and terrorist groups

Scholars such as Marc Sageman have long called for a more sophisticated understanding of individuals' 'turn to violence', so that terrorists and others who resort to political violence can be distinguished from those who express their (extremist) convictions by peaceful means.[61] Borum and Horgan share this view but go much further. Not only do they believe, like Sageman, that more attention should be given to the 'turn to violence'; they claim that scholars' preoccupation with the wider aspects of the problem—the 'bigger issue[s] from which terrorism arises'[62]—has been pursued 'at the expense of increasing our knowledge and understanding of terrorist behavior'.[63] Simply put, from their perspective, looking at the big political, social and contextual issues that surround people's pathways into terrorism is a waste of time which prevents scholars from understanding terrorist behaviour.[64]

The principal flaw in this argument is the notion that terrorism—and the people who perpetrate it—can be isolated from the social and political context in which they emerge. In making their case, Horgan and Borum are repeating the cardinal sin of 'terrorism studies', which tends to lump together groups and individuals in vastly different situations of violent conflict just because they use similar tactics. Yet tactics do not have causes, and terrorism—as Brian Jenkins pointed out—is often no more than 'the thin crust atop a very deep pie'.[65] As a consequence, any explanation of political violence that aims to reconstruct 'action pathways' but fails to examine the 'deep pie' of political and social context is bound to remain shallow.[66] The violence and terrorism of, say, the Ku Klux Klan

[59] Nesser, 'Joining jihadi terrorist cells', p. 105.
[60] Nesser, 'Joining jihadi terrorist cells', pp. 106–7; also 'Profile: Hasib Hussain', BBC News, 2 March 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12621387, accessed 14 May 2013.
[61] See e.g. Sageman, quoted in 'Winning and losing in the war on terror', San Diego State University, 5 Feb. 2010, http://newscenter.sdsu.edu/sdsu_newscenter/news.aspx?s=71884, accessed 14 May 2013.
[62] Horgan, remarks at START Symposium.
[63] Horgan, remarks at START Symposium.
[64] Borum, 'Rethinking radicalization', p. 2.
[65] Brian Michael Jenkins, 'Foreword', in Ian O. Lesser, Bruce Hoffman, John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, Michele Zanini and Brian Michael Jenkins, eds, *Countering the new terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999), p. viii.
[66] See Andrew Silke, 'An introduction to terrorism research', in Andrew Silke, ed., *Research on terrorism: trends, achievements and failures* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), p. 15.

cannot be explained solely through the 'action pathways' of *other* groups who have engaged in similar tactics. It clearly needs to consider the history and politics of the American South, and also the ideas, context and conditions that have given rise to the Klan in its non-violent incarnations.[67] If anything, the two approaches—behavioural and contextual—are complementary, and it is not helpful, therefore, to say that one is pursued 'at the expense' of the other.

A more helpful approach is social movement theory, for which terrorism 'does not emerge out of a vacuum' but is connected to larger protest movements and countercultures.[68] Those movements can be amorphous and fairly unstructured, consisting of many different groups and organizations. Their members' attitude is oppositional and anti-system, though not always consciously 'political'.[69] Most importantly, they all draw on large repertoires of collective action, which may range from entirely peaceful and legal to high-risk, coercive, illegal and occasionally violent tactics.[70] The boundaries are pliable, and so are the identities of the individuals who are involved with one or another kind of tactics.

Take, for example, Germany's former foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, who took part in, organized and spoke at numerous peaceful student demonstrations during the late 1960s and 1970s. He also worked for a left-wing publishing house and bookshop in Frankfurt. At the same time, as a member of the group Revolutionärer Kampf (Revolutionary Struggle), he participated in numerous street battles, and was pictured beating up a police officer in 1973.[71] He never joined a terrorist organization, but was close friends with several people who did and repeatedly came out in their defence: 'To distance ourselves from the [militants]', he said in 1976, 'would be to turn against our own.'[72] What Fischer's remarkable story shows is the seamlessness with which members of countercultural social movements move in and out of different kinds of collective action, including high-risk and violent activism. It also illustrates the enormous distortions and misrepresentations that would result from separating out 'action pathways' into terrorism while ignoring the context and dynamics of the wider social movements that have produced them. After all, from a social movement perspective, pamphleteering, street protests, street battles, fire bombings and assassinations may not all *be* the same, but they are *of* the same: they are collective expressions of political ideas.[73]

On paper, Borum's warning against 'conflating' cognitive radicalization and 'action pathways' into terrorism looks like common sense. Yet the messy reality

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[67] See William W. Zellner, *Countercultures: a sociological analysis* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), ch. 2.
[68] Sageman, quoted in *United States of America* v. *Tarek Mehanna*, 'Revised expert opinion notice', unpublished court document, p. 2. For the fundamentals of this approach, see Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Sidney Tarrow, *Power in movement: social movements and contentious politics*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Introduction', in Quintan Wiktorowicz, ed., *Islamic activism: a social movement theory approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 1–33.
[69] Jeffrey Bale, interview with author, 7 Feb. 2011.
[70] See della Porta and Diani, *Social movements*, ch. 7.
[71] Jochen Kummer, 'Der Fischer und die Frau', *Welt am Sonntag*, 14 Jan. 2001.
[72] Fischer, quoted in Albrecht von Lucke, *68 oder neues Biedermeier: Der Kampf um die Deutungsmacht* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2008), p. 28.
[73] Ryan Evans, email conversation with author, 20 March 2012.

of social movements and countercultures means that those kinds of distinction—however convenient and comforting—are often difficult to maintain. Indeed, this section of the article has provided several reasons to support the argument that a full understanding of why people come to embrace terrorism can only be obtained through a *holistic* understanding of both cognitive and behavioural processes: one which, rather than separating one from the other, attempts to makes sense of how ideas and action are related. The next section will show how this argument has played out among policy-makers and politicians.

The political argument

The academic debate about radicalization may seem far removed from the realities of fighting terrorism and preventing extremism. Yet the issues it has thrown up are arguably of much wider and more practical significance than may at first appear. The disagreements over the meaning of radicalization and how it should be understood have come to be reflected in different policy approaches towards *countering* radicalization—each rooted in different assumptions, philosophical traditions and historical experiences. This section delineates the two main traditions and identifies the principal trade-off that appears to be involved in opting for one or the other. It also spells out the risks and tensions inherent in both approaches, which—as will be shown—can lead to unintended consequences that negate the policies' respective aims. The trouble with radicalization, therefore, is not confined to the ivory towers, but poses profound dilemmas for policy-makers who are hoping to prevent terrorism and/or maintain cohesive and democratic societies.

Two approaches

The two policy approaches that are described in the following are ideal types. Labelling them 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'European' respectively is not meant to provide an accurate description of past or current policies in specific countries or geographical entities. Rather, it refers to the different historical experiences and philosophical traditions in which the two approaches are rooted, and—in doing so—helps to explain the vastly different assumptions, objectives and policy instruments to which they have given rise.

The Anglo-Saxon approach aims to deal with behavioural radicalization, especially acts of terrorism and violence. The threshold for government intervention is individuals' intention to break the law, not their political ideas or motivations. From this perspective, freedom of speech is near absolute, and people's political views—however extreme, anti-democratic, offensive or divisive—are none of the government's business as long as they are expressed peacefully and do not inhibit others' right to do the same. This principle also applies to lifestyles or religious practices, which people should have the right to express free of government interference, manipulation or fear of surveillance. Indeed, followers of the Anglo-

Saxon approach will argue that any attempt to change people's (extremist) views or obstruct their freedom of expression would be anti-democratic and misguided, and—if anything—make them *more* willing to resort to illegal means.[74] In other words, like Horgan and Borum, Anglo-Saxons are keen to separate cognitive radicalization—which they see as legitimate and irrelevant *vis-à-vis* the use of political violence—from pathways into violence and terrorism.

The most obvious source of the Anglo-Saxon approach is a passionate belief in freedom of speech, which—in the United States—is first among the constitution's amendments. Equally important, however, is a strong sense of confidence in the robustness of democratic institutions. Neither Britain nor the United States has any recent historical experience of having their respective constitutional orders overthrown. There may have been 'Red Scares' and moral panics about ethnic minorities, but none that would have prevailed or captured the imagination of anything but a tiny segment of the population.[75] As a result, non-violent extremists are not generally regarded as a political threat whose activities need to be curtailed or countered by the government. On the contrary, Anglo-Saxons are confident that every free society can—and must—tolerate a degree of extremism, and at the same time can be safe in the knowledge that extremists have no chance of taking power as long as they remain non-violent and the governments do not overreact.

In practical terms, since Anglo-Saxons believe counter-radicalization to be mostly about stopping people from breaking the law, they argue that the police should be in charge.[76] From their perspective, counter-radicalization remains part of counterterrorism—albeit one that includes 'softer' and longer-term activities, such as reaching out to communities, creating awareness and placing more emphasis on prevention. Anglo-Saxons, in fact, do not like using the term 'counter-radicalization', which they believe smacks of 'thought police', preferring to talk of 'countering violent extremism'.[77] Their emphasis on illegal behaviour not only helps the authorities to avoid any suspicion of political bias, it also permits the forming of strategic partnerships with cognitive (but strictly non-violent) extremists, who may be seen as credible interlocutors to be 'empowered' against their violent counterparts.[78] It is this practice that contrasts most markedly with the European tradition.

The European approach aims to confront cognitive *and* behavioural radicalization, but places more emphasis on the former. Not only is there a presumption that extremist ideas can lead to extremist violence, extremist ideas on their own are

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[74] According to Sageman, for example, countercultural movements that espouse extremist views can 'help liberal democracies evolve into just and fair societies': see Sageman, quoted in *United States of America* v. *Tarek Mehanna*, 'Revised expert opinion notice', p. 2.
[75] See Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig interpretation of history* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965).
[76] See 'Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group', Homeland Security Advisory Council, Department of Homeland Security, Spring 2010, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/hsac_cve_working_group_recommendations.pdf, accessed 14 May 2013.
[77] See e.g. 'Fact sheet: the Department of Homeland Security's approach to countering violent extremism', Department of Homeland Security, n.d., http://www.dhs.gov/dhss-approach-countering-violent-extremism, accessed 14 May 2013.
[78] See Shiraz Maher and Martyn Frampton, *Choosing our friends wisely: criteria for engagement with Muslim groups* (London: Policy Exchange, 2009).

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seen as problematic and potentially dangerous. For Europeans, therefore, the threat from extremism goes far beyond individuals breaking the law and engaging in violence; it is political. They strongly believe that, having successfully exploited and manipulated the very freedoms that democracy offers, extremist movements can turn into 'active and aggressive threat[s] towards the constitutional order'.[79] Moreover, in the process of doing so extremist movements divide and polarize societies, and they may succeed in creating a climate of permanent intimidation and fear in which people are unable to enjoy their constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.[80] Terrorism, therefore, is not the only problem caused by extremism, nor does it represent the 'root cause' against which governments' efforts should be directed. Europeans regard terrorism as a symptom, reflecting a wider failure to confront extremist ideas and the people who espouse them.

The origins of the European approach lie in the first half of the twentieth century, which saw many European democracies being challenged and destabilized by extremists from the left and the right. In Italy, Benito Mussolini's Fascists launched their march on Rome and took power in 1922. Germany's National Socialists gained just 2.8 per cent of the vote in 1928, but increased their share to 33.1 per cent four years later and paved the way for Adolf Hitler to become chancellor. For Europeans, this period (and the resulting catastrophes of the Second World War and the Holocaust) demonstrated that—given the right conditions— extremist movements can rapidly become mainstream, attract mass support, gain power through elections and (ultimately) destroy democracy without a single shot being fired. The lesson is that democracy is fragile, and that it needs to be defended long before its enemies break laws or resort to violence. According to the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper:

If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them … We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law, and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal.[81]

The rise of fascism, which Popper had in mind, may no longer be seen as the sole or principal extremist threat. But the historical experience with fascism has come to be deeply ingrained in many European policy-makers' minds and continues to shape their attitude towards contemporary extremism. At the most basic level, it underlies their conviction that radicalization is primarily a political threat, which needs to be confronted as such.

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[79] This is the German Constitutional Court's benchmark for banning extremist political parties. See David Charter, 'Fight to ban far-right party begins after it is linked to race murders', *The Times*, 24 March 2012.

[80] According to the Dutch domestic intelligence agency, the threat from extremism includes 'the creation of parallel community structures with forms of self-defined justice and the propagation of anti-democratic behaviour which could result in polarization, inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions and serious social unrest'. See Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst (AIVD), *The radical dawa in transition: the rise of Islamic neoradicalism in the Netherlands* (The Hague, 2007), p. 10.

[81] Karl Popper, *The open society and its enemies*, vol. 1: *The spell of Plato*, 4th edn (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 293.

For Europeans, it follows that counter-radicalization cannot be left to law enforcement alone. It may overlap with counterterrorism, but it goes well beyond efforts aimed at stopping terrorist plots and tracking down suspects—however broadly these efforts are conceived. Europeans believe that counter-radicalization is about promoting democracy and citizenship, while challenging the ideas and political grievances that extremists are exploiting in order to win people's hearts and minds. It is a continuous political and civil effort, which needs to draw on the resources of different government departments—not just those charged with security-related matters—and, even more broadly, involve civil society at large. Partnerships with community organizations are welcome, but those community groups cannot themselves be extremist. In the eyes of Europeans, empowering non-violent extremists to defeat the violent ones would be a deeply cynical strategy, contradicting the policy's wider aims and producing adverse results in the longer term.

The trade-off

The two approaches both claim to counter radicalization, yet they are clearly very different and, in some respects, mutually exclusive. Indeed, they are often said to involve a trade-off between short-term counterterrorism and longer-term societal cohesion.[82]

The Anglo-Saxon approach is portrayed as being 'better' at dealing with short-term security threats. Because of its narrow focus on violence and law-breaking, it allows for resources to be targeted more efficiently. It also enables governments to enter into partnerships with non-violent extremists, who are said to have greater credibility and access to individuals who are vulnerable to being recruited by terrorist groups than genuine moderates—'quietist' Salafists, for example, who reject violence but promote separation from mainstream society.[83] On the other hand, such partnerships are likely to undermine the 'genuine moderates' who are sincere in their commitment to non-violence and democracy but do not reach into extremist countercultures. In helping to promote non-violent extremism, the longer-term consequence of the Anglo-Saxon approach may, therefore, be to foment the very attitudes and structural causes that have given rise to terrorism in the first place. The British government's 2010 Citizenship Survey, for example, found that rejection of communal mixing and distrust of political institutions correlated with higher levels of support for 'violent extremism'.[84]

As a result, followers of the European approach consider the narrow focus on preventing terrorism to be short-sighted and superficial. They argue that their emphasis on promoting democratic values is better suited to dealing with anti-democratic (yet largely non-violent) countercultures, such as the neo-Nazi

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[82] See e.g. Lorenzo Vidino, 'Europe's new security dilemma', *Washington Quarterly* 32: 3, Oct. 2009, pp. 61–75, http://csis.org/files/publication/twq09octobervidino.pdf, accessed 14 May 2013.

[83] Vidino, 'Europe's new security dilemma', pp. 66–8; also Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy'.

[84] Citizenship Survey, cited in HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, Cm 8092 (London: Home Office, June 2011), p. 18.

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movement in the former East Germany. The European approach not only tackles subversion and social unrest, it also helps to eliminate the long-term ideological and structural 'breeding grounds' out of which terrorism emerges. The downside is that Europeans have fewer options when it comes to countering terrorism in the short term. Resources are spread more thinly, and officials are limited in their choice of community partners, having ruled out cooperation with the ones that are potentially most powerful in preventing individuals from turning to violence. Furthermore, given that acts of terrorism can be the cause—not just the consequence—of social unrest and community tensions, the Europeans' relative lack of attention to violent behaviour may also (inadvertently) undermine their own long-term objectives.

The problem with this supposed trade-off is the absence of empirical evidence to support it. For example, the notion that non-violent extremists are more effective than others at reaching people who are at risk of being recruited into terrorism is based almost entirely on the experience of Bob Lambert, whose Muslim Contact Unit at the London Metropolitan Police empowered non-violent Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood against Al-Qaeda.[85] Lambert's counterterrorist successes are beyond doubt, but he offers no control group, and it is impossible, therefore, to know what might have happened had other, similarly 'edgy' but less politically controversial groups been given the same job.[86] The same problem exists with long-term efforts aimed at changing people's ideas. It is notoriously difficult to isolate the impact of such programmes from the many other factors to which individuals are exposed. As a result, even where individuals have moderated their beliefs, it is hard to prove that it was a particular programme or initiative that caused them to do so.[87]

Indeed, even if all the assumptions turned out to be correct, the trade-off is likely to be more complex than has been suggested. Precisely how short-term counter-terrorism and long-term societal cohesion are correlated may depend on—and be affected by—many additional factors and circumstances, such as the specific type of extremism, the nature of society and the political environment. Needless to say, finding answers to this question requires research that looks beyond individuals' 'action pathways' into terrorism to examine the complex nexus between belief and behaviour *as a whole*.

[85] See Bob Lambert, *Countering Al-Qaeda in London: police and Muslims in partnership* (London: Hurst, 2011). For a shorter summary of this approach, see Robert Lambert, 'Competing counter-radicalisation models in the UK', in Rick Coolsaet, ed., *Jihadi terrorism and the radicalisation challenge: European and American experiences*, 2nd edn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 215–26.

[86] Internal UK Home Office surveys seem to suggest that young Muslims in London who were part of Salafi-led programmes have responded primarily to their offers of employment, training and resocialization, which suggests that the religious and/or ideological component, while important, may not have been decisive. Conversation with Home Office official, April 2012.

[87] Horgan points out that many so-called deradicalization programmes, which are aimed at changing beliefs, are 'resistant to evaluation'. See Horgan, remarks at START Symposium.

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Unintended consequences

The risks and contradictions that are inherent in the two approaches are not limited to the trade-off between short-term counterterrorism and longer-term societal cohesion.

For example, a major objection to the Anglo-Saxon approach is that it fosters indifference towards hate speech and coercive (yet non-violent) behaviours. After all, from the Anglo-Saxon perspective, not only should legal and non-violent activities by extremist groups prompt no government response, they are seen as desirable expressions of political activism, because they allow people to 'let off steam', prevent them from becoming terrorists, and—more generally—'help liberal democracies evolve into just and fair societies'.[88] In reality, however, not every counterculture consists of peace-loving hippies, and not every legal or non-violent behaviour is conducive to democracy or helps societies become 'just and fair'. In the late 1990s, for example, neo-Nazi groups in the former East Germany created 'liberated zones' which immigrants were made to leave and where political moderates had to put up with intimidation and pressure. Some of the neo-Nazis' activities involved open threats and violence, but they mostly relied on aggressive speeches, public 'shows of strength', bullying, and other tactics that fell short of law-breaking and the use of physical violence.[89] By focusing on terrorism, violence and law-breaking, the Anglo-Saxon approach conveys the impression that such 'lesser' forms of coercion should be of no concern. It conflates what is *legal* and what is *legitimate*, and—in doing so—foments a civic culture in which governments and civil societies are more likely to turn a blind eye to hate speech, open expressions of racism and politically motivated intimidation, assuming that—since they are not illegal and do not involve violence—they must therefore be 'okay'.

One of the most damning accusations levelled against the Anglo-Saxon approach is that—contrary to its intentions—it encourages law enforcement to 'manufacture' illegal behaviour. In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regularly carries out so-called 'sting operations' in which agents identify cognitive extremists and then 'assist' them in translating their ideas into (prosecutable) actions, typically with the help of undercover agents or paid informants who claim to be members of terrorist organizations and provide encouragement, incentives and material support. Antonio Martinez, for example, had posted various messages in support of 'violent jihad' on his Facebook page, prompting FBI undercover agents to provide him with a fake car bomb (which he tried to set off in December 2010).[90] Similarly, the Newburgh Four, a group of 'smalltime felons' with jihadist sympathies,[91] were promised '$250,000, several luxury cars, and financing for a barbershop' by an FBI informant for their agreement to take part in a terrorist attack.[92] Civil rights organizations such as the American Civil

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[88] Sageman, quoted in *United States of America* v. *Tarek Mehanna*, 'Revised expert opinion notice', p. 2.
[89] See Burkhard Schröder, *Im Griff der rechten Szene: Ostdeutsche Städte in Angst* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1997).
[90] Bjelopera, *American jihadist terrorism*, pp. 77–8.
[91] Bjelopera, *American jihadist terrorism*, p. 106.
[92] Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, *Targeted and entrapped: manufacturing the 'homegrown threat' in the United States* (New York: NYU School of Law, 2011), p. 21.

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Liberties Union have denounced the FBI's methods in these (and many other) cases as 'entrapment'.[93] Yet, from the FBI's perspective, the lack of instruments for dealing with radicalization short of actual terrorist plotting, and the potential risk involved in allowing cognitively radicalized people to roam free, leaves law enforcement with no choice but to 'create' illegal behaviours where none had previously existed.

The weaknesses of the European approach mirror those of the Anglo-Saxon. The principal concern is that it may be used by governments to suppress dissent and harass political opponents. Because cognitive extremism is about ideas, not behaviour, the parameters for who and what should be considered a threat to the constitutional order can be changed and redefined quite easily. What constitutes subversion, in other words, is subject to the same political judgements, preferences and biases that apply to concepts like extremism and radicalization, which means that decision-makers can 'draw the line' in entirely different places. One of the most frequently cited examples is J. Edgar Hoover's FBI. Under Hoover's leadership, the Bureau kept lists of 'disloyal citizens' who were to be detained in a national emergency. It also spied on suspected communists and actively infiltrated and sabotaged civil rights organizations, including Martin Luther King Jr's Southern Christian Leadership Conference.[94] Germany's domestic intelligence services—named Offices for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz)—have considered anarchists, Turkish nationalists and even Scientologists threats to the constitutional order.[95] The far left Linke party is under Verfassungsschutz surveillance in conservatively governed German states, but has been part of governing coalitions in left-wing states.[96] Even in unquestionably democratic countries, therefore, the European approach can be too vague and subjective to avoid overreach. Popper's demand 'not to tolerate the intolerant' may be a beautiful sentiment, yet—in the hands of the wrong people—it can be a slippery slope, producing a society that is less tolerant of opposing views and, therefore, less democratic.

Conclusion

'Wherever they burn books, they will also, in the end, burn human beings.'[97] What the German poet Heinrich Heine had in mind when he wrote these words was the Spanish Inquisition and the burnings of the Qur'an that preceded the expulsion of Muslims from the Iberian peninsula. Long after Heine died, the Nazis confirmed

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[93] See Paul Harris, 'Fake terror plots, paid informants: the tactics of FBI "entrapment" questioned', *Guardian*, 16 Nov. 2011.

[94] See Tim Weiner, *Enemies: a history of the FBI* (New York: Random House, 2012), part III.

[95] For a full overview, see the annual reports of the Verfassungsschutz: Bundesministerium des Innern, *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2010* (Cologne: BfV, 2010), http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/download/SHOW/vsbericht_2010.pdf, accessed 14 May 2013.

[96] See 'Parlamentsgremium billigt Beobachtung von Linken-Abgeordneten', *Die Zeit*, 25 Jan. 2012, http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2012-01/kontrollgremium-geheimdienst-linke, accessed 14 May 2013.

[97] In the original German: 'Das war ein Vorspiel nur, dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen': Heinrich Heine, *Almansor: eine Tragödie* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1821), http://www.heinrich-heine-denkmal.de/heine-texte/almansor01.shtml, accessed 14 May 2013.

the veracity of his statement. In fact, among the 25,000 'un-German' books that were burned in central Berlin on 8 May 1933 were Heine's works, including the play *Almansor* that contained this very warning.[98]

Heine, of course, was no social scientist, nor did he attempt to formulate a theory about human behaviour. But he instinctively understood the relationship between political ideas and their real-life consequences. Had someone tried to convince him that political motivation was 'irrelevant' to politically motivated violence, he likely would have shaken his head in disbelief. Yet, as this article has shown, there are academics and policy-makers nowadays who believe that the preoccupation with extremist ideas and belief systems is a misguided 'obsession', and that radicalization into politically motivated violence should be looked at separately from the process of cognitive radicalization.

In reality, of course, it is not about 'either or'. No one disputes the importance of factors *other* than ideology in the process of radicalization. But, whatever the importance of political beliefs *vis-à-vis* group dynamics, social networks, grievances, personal crises and other influences in each case, beliefs and political ideas—however simplistically expressed—are usually part of the mix. Rather than calling for political beliefs to be separated out, the academic critics of cognitive radicalization could have made a powerful case for a better, more holistic understanding of radicalization, which aims to find out how all the different pieces of the puzzle fit together. But they did not. Their idea that 'why' and 'how' people become terrorists are separate and largely unrelated questions, and that the study of one is pursued at the expense of understanding the other, is a fallacy, which prevents researchers from grasping the complex dynamics that are involved in radicalization processes.

Equally problematic is the emphasis on individual 'action pathways' into terrorism. For years, terrorism studies has been condemned—often rightly— for its lack of attention to the political and social circumstances out of which terrorism arises. Yet, instead of broadening the picture, the academic critics of cognitive radicalization want scholars to focus even more narrowly, ignoring the 'deep pie' of context and studying individual terrorists in isolation from the social movements and countercultures that have produced them. Doing so would make sense if terrorism were like 'ordinary' crime and terrorists were like 'ordinary' murderers. But, regardless of the useful parallels that can be drawn between political and other kinds of violence,[99] terrorism remains a deeply political enterprise which cannot be understood by looking at individuals and their 'action pathways' alone.

Policy-makers have struggled with similar questions. Stressing behaviour, legality and violence, the Anglo-Saxon approach towards counter-radicalization is cleaner, clearer and less politically controversial than the European approach. It does not raise complicated questions about freedom of speech, nor does it blur the

[98] A full list of the books that were burned by the Nazis, or subsequently banned, can be found at 'Verbannte Bücher', http://www.berlin.de/rubrik/hauptstadt/verbannte_buecher/, accessed 14 May 2013.
[99] See e.g. Scott H. Decker and David Pyrooz, 'Gangs, terrorism, and radicalization', *Journal of Strategic Security* 4: 4, 2011, pp. 151–66.

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line between law enforcement and politics. But this clarity is gained at the price of turning a blind eye to non-violent extremists and their efforts to undermine and threaten democracy and societal cohesion. While it may be effective at stopping violence in the short term, the Anglo-Saxon approach is difficult to reconcile with the vision of a robust democracy that stands up for its values. The European approach, however, also has its weaknesses. It can be overly vague and distract governments' attention from the prevention of violence as their top priority. Most worryingly, it lends itself to overreach, and—in the wrong hands—may be a licence for oppressing dissent.

There are no simple answers, therefore; no silver bullets. Radicalization, extremism and political violence in their various forms and guises will not go away. In fact, there are good reasons to believe that extremism—violent and non-violent—will be a more or less permanent feature of western societies that are undergoing profound social, political and economic transformations.[100] As this article has shown, the process of dealing with this challenge will be difficult and, at times, controversial. If anything, the trouble with radicalization has only just begun.

[100] See Peter R. Neumann, *Old and new terrorism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

Unite States Senate

Committee on

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

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Radicalization of Global Islamist Terrorists

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to present my views on the threat of violent Islamist extremists in Europe and the United States. There is a great disparity in the threat faced in these two continents. Data on arrests for Islamist terrorism related charges indicate that the rate of arrest per Muslim capita in Europe is about five times that of the United States. In order to understand this discrepancy, we must analyze the process transforming normal young Muslims into people willing to use violence for political ends. The understanding of this process of "radicalization" is critical to assessing the threat facing the West and should be the basis guiding our interventions to counter it. This is a complicated issue, and given the time constraints of this hearing, my remarks will necessarily sound too simplistic. I apologize for this, but I would like to suggest the outline of a framework that might organize our thinking about how us to tackle this problem. These ideas are more fully developed in my new book[1], which I will gladly provide to the committee as soon as it is available.

My continuing research into Islamist extremism[2] shows that the terrorists are idealistic young people, who seek glory and thrills by trying to build a utopia. Contrary to popular belief, radicalization is not the product of poverty, various forms of brainwashing, youth, ignorance or lack of education, lack of job, lack of social responsibility, criminality or mental illness. Their mobilization into this violent Islamist born-again social movement is based on friendship and kinship. Lately, over 80% of arrested terrorists in Europe and the United States are part of the Muslim Diaspora, mostly second and now third generation of immigrants. They are radicalized in the West, and not in the Middle East. Usually, they are small groups of friends and relatives, who spontaneously self organize into groups that later turn to terrorism.   Before 9/11, they were able to travel freely and to connect with al Qaeda central, giving the movement a greater appearance of unity than it ever had. At this point, only some British Islamist radicals with family connections in Pakistan can physically connect with fellow travelers of the al Qaeda terrorist organization. Otherwise, these new groups are physically isolated but connected through Internet forums, inspired by the extremist ideology and hoping that they will be accepted as members of al Qaeda through their terrorist operations.

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[1] Marc Sageman, in press, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
[2] See also Marc Sageman, 2004, *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

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From my review of the literature and my field research both in Europe and in the United States, I have come to think about the process of radicalization as consisting of four prongs: a sense of moral outrage; a specific interpretation of the world; resonance with personal experiences; and mobilization through networks. These four factors are not stages in a process, nor do they occur sequentially. They are simply four recurrent phases in this process. As mentioned earlier, this process is driven by young Muslims chasing dreams of glory by fighting for justice and fairness as they define it. They are enthusiastic volunteers, trying to impress their friends with their heroism and sacrifice. Suicide bombers, or *shahids* as they call themselves, have become the rock stars of young Muslim militants.

1. **Moral Outrage.** One of the major utterances from Islamist radicals is a sense of moral outrage, a reaction to perceived major moral violations, like killings, rapes or local police actions. Before 2003, the major source of such outrage was the killings of Muslims in Bosnia, Chechnya, the second Palestinian intifada and Kashmir. Since 2003, the war in Iraq is definitely fueling this process of radicalization. Although the war in Iraq did not cause this social movement – after all, 9/11 occurred before the invasion of Iraq –, it has since captured all the sense of moral outrage in Muslims all over the world. In all my talks with Muslims, Iraq is monopolizing the theme of any conversation about Islam and the West. The humiliations of Abu Ghraib and GITMO as well as multiple statements from Western leaders surface in such conversations. More locally, many Muslims also cite local law enforcement actions against Muslims, bridging the local and global in their worldview.

2. **Interpretation.** This sense of moral outrage must be interpreted in a certain way to foster radicalization. The common interpretation is that all these global and local moral violations are examples of a unified Western global strategy, namely a "War against Islam." Having said this, it is important to realize that this worldview is deliberately vague and that there has been far too much focus on ideology in trying to understand radicalization. In my observations of Islamist terrorists, I came to the conclusion that there were <u>not</u> Islamic scholars. The defendants at the Madrid bombing trial, at the Operation Crevice trial in London, at the Operation Pendennis litigation in Australia or at the various Hofstad Group trials in Holland are far from being Islamic scholars. The same is true for the perpetrators of 9/11 and those indicted in Miami, New York, New Jersey and Toronto for attempted terrorist operations. These people are definitely not intellectuals who decide what to do after careful deliberation. I believe that the explanation for their behavior is not found in how they think, but rather in how they feel. All these perpetrators dream about becoming Islamic heroes in this "War against Islam," modeling themselves on the seventh century warriors that conquered half the world and the Mujahedin who defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Many hope to emulate their predecessors by now fighting in Iraq against coalition forces. Their interpretation, a "War against Islam," occurs within a cultural tradition, and this is where Europe and the United States differ. First, in Europe, nations are founded on the basis of the myth of a certain essence, namely Frenchness, Englishness, Germanness… In the United States and other countries built on successive modern waves of immigration, the founding myth is that of a "melting pot." The point is that the myth of a national essence excludes non-European immigrants, while that of a melting pot facilitates their inclusion into the host society. Second, the notion of the American Dream, the land of

opportunity, partially protects the United States from this form of terrorism. Whether it is true or not, the important point is that people believe it. A recent poll found that 71% of Muslim Americans believe in the American Dream[3]. This is not the case in Europe, where Muslims complain about discrimination in the labor market. Third, American Individualism partially prevents the generation of a collective explanation for any personal adversity. For instance, if a Muslim American is asked why he did not succeed at work, he or she will usually answer, "I did not try hard enough." This individualistic answer also combines the core of the American Dream, namely equal opportunity. On the other hand, when I ask Muslim Europeans the same question, they usually answer with a shrug, "I'm Muslim." This is a collective explanation, which may eventually give rise to anger against the host society. Other polls demonstrate that Muslim Europeans answer that they feel Muslim first rather than a member of their host nation. This does not bode well for the future of European Muslim relations. Finally, U.S. tradition of local grass root voluntarism allows Muslim Americans to channel some of their discontent in local politics. This is less likely in Europe. A sense of local empowerment might be protective against a larger strike against the society in general.

3. **Resonance with Personal Experience.** The interpretation that the West is engaged in a War against Islam sticks more to Muslim Europeans than Americans because it resonates with their everyday personal experience. This notion of resonance brings in the social, economic, political and religious factors that constitute the infrastructure of their everyday life. This factor is what scholars traditionally define as the "root causes" of terrorism. First, from a historical perspective, we are dealing with very different communities. The United States was able to cherry pick immigrants and allowed Muslim engineers, physicians, university professors and businessmen to immigrate. The result is that the Muslim American community is solidly middle class, with a higher average income than the rest of society. This is not true of Europe, which imported unskilled labor to reconstruct the continent that had been devastated by World War II. So, on a socio-economic scale, we are dealing with very different communities: middle class in the United States and an unskilled labor pool in Europe. In terms of the labor market, Muslim Americans believe that they are facing equal opportunity. Europeans know that this is not the case, as the male Muslim unemployment rate is much higher than the average rate in the rest of society. Muslim Europeans strongly believe they are facing discrimination because they are Muslim. Welfare policy also distinguishes Europe from the United States, and allows Europe to tolerate a high unemployment rate. Many Muslim Europeans, because they are unemployed, are on the welfare payroll. Many do not feel the urgency to get a job and a few spend their idle moments talking about jihad. In essence, European nations are funding some young people to be full time jihadi pretenders. As terrorist operations do not cost much, much of the funding for attempted operations come from European states, from their welfare payments. One cannot underestimate the importance of boredom in an idle population, which drives young people to seek the thrill of participating into a clandestine operation.

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[3] Pew Research Center, 2007, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, at http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/muslim-americans.pdf

4. **Mobilization through networks.** The factors described above influence some young Muslims to become angry, and vent their frustration on the Internet. What transforms very few to become terrorists is mobilization by networks. Up to a few years ago, these networks were face-to-face networks. They were local gangs of young immigrants, members of student associations and study groups at some radical mosques. These cliques of friends became radicalized together. The group acted as an echo chamber, which amplified their grievances, intensified the members' bonds to each other, generated local values rejecting those of society and facilitated a gradual separation from their host society. These natural group dynamics resulted in a spiral of mutual encouragement and escalation, transforming a few young Muslims into dedicated terrorists, willing to follow the model of their heroes and sacrifice themselves for comrades and the cause. Their turn to violence and the terrorist movement was a collective decision, rather than an individual one. Over the past two or three years, face-to-face radicalization is being replaced by online radicalization. It is the interactivity of the group that changes people's beliefs, and such interaction is found in islamist extremist forums on the Internet. The same support and validation that young people used to derive from their offline peer groups are now found in these forums, which promote the image of terrorist heroes, link them to the virtual social movement, give them guidance and instruct them in tactics. These forums, virtual marketplaces for extremist ideas, have become the virtual "invisible hand" organizing terrorist activities worldwide. The true leader of this violent social movement is the collective discourse on half a dozen influential forums. They are transforming the terrorist movement, recruiting ever younger members and now more prominently women, who can participate in the discussions.

Now that I have outlined my analysis of the threat, and commented on the cultural and structural differences between Europe and the United States, what can we do about it? From the driver of the process – a search for glory – it becomes obvious that we need to eliminate the glory from this activity and reduce it to common criminality. There is nothing more glorious than to go against men and women in uniform from the only remaining superpower. We need to demilitarize this fight against terrorists and turn it over to law enforcement. It is also important not to give too much importance to the terrorists who are arrested or killed. We should resist the temptation to hold press conferences to publicize another "major victory" in the war on terror. These have the undesired effect of elevating the status of these criminals to that of heroes.

On the first prong, it is important to remove as soon as possible U.S. troops from Iraq, which has become the main source of inspiration of the new generation of Islamist terrorists. In the West, the Muslim community is very sensitive to the action of local law enforcement agencies. If it perceives them to act against its members, it will assume that the state is also against it. In a sense, this is what happened in many European countries, where Caucasian policemen patrol immigrant neighborhoods. Local police forces need to be seen as part of the community at large and their recruitment need to reflect the composition of their communities. It is not enough to have regular meetings with Muslim community leaders, whom the younger generation does not respect. Through the recruitment of young Muslims, police forces would have an ongoing everyday relationship with young people in the

community. Furthermore, it is important to win the Muslim community over and explain police actions to them. This has become a problem in England because of the legal ban on commenting on criminal cases in litigation. However, the opposite – making exaggerated claims of threat for short term political benefits – will also alienate the Muslim community. So far, Muslim Americans have shown themselves to be very patriotic, but this has not been well recognized either by the press or by our government. It is important to trust them to continue in this path and not to alienate them.

On the second prong, it is important to show that our counterterrorism efforts are not part of a war on Islam. We have made many mistakes in this arena. Most Muslim Americans do not believe that the U.S. led war on terrorism is a sincere effort to reduce terrorism. Here, it seems that actions speak louder than words. The government should actively challenge those who question the loyalty of Muslim Americans. The American Dream is alive and well among Muslim Americans. It should be further confirmed through the continued publications of some of their success stories. These stories should become sources of inspiration and hopes for young Muslims, who should be encouraged to emulate these positive role models rather than those of Islamist terrorists. To become successful for a young Muslim American should be viewed as "cool." I see the "war of ideas" or the search for a "counter-narrative" as generally misguided: terrorists are not intellectuals. They do what they do because of vague images of glory, not out of well thought out positions derived from any scripture. The "war of ideas" should be replaced by the inspiration of new dreams and hopes for young Muslims. We should learn our lessons from our own experience with the Civil Rights movement, when Reverent Martin Luther King inspired a generation with his speech "I Have a Dream!"

On the third prong, the United States is doing much better than Europe. We should continue to be fair and fight any discrimination in the labor market, at airports, and law enforcement. Our social internal successes should be internationally advertised through programs sending abroad successful Muslim Americans to talk about their life in our country. Muslims should also be encouraged to enter into the realm of politics and show that they can peacefully influence their environment.

On the fourth prong, it is of course important to disrupt the networks that threaten the United States, Europe or any population. We must eliminate terrorists and bring them to justice. However, this should be done quietly, so as not to elevate common criminals to the status of heroes. Now, many such networks are virtual, centered in Internet forums, where young Muslims share their dreams, hopes and grievances. This is an internal Muslim discussion. However, we can encourage some young Muslims, who reject violence, to actively participate in these discussions in order to actively challenge the various calls to violence emerging from them.

The American Muslim community is relatively young, having mostly immigrated in the last half century. Its young generation is searching for its identity and trying to define its role with respect to the rest of American society. It is important for the rest of American society to welcome Muslim Americans and help them integrate better within the fabric of our nation. We are doing better than our European counterparts in this regard, but we must continue to promote core American values of justice and fairness and fight those elements in our society that try to single out and antagonize part of our nation.

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From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism
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From Profiles to *Pathways* and Roots to *Routes*: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism

By
JOHN HORGAN

Attempts to profile terrorists have failed resoundingly, leaving behind a poor (and unfair) impression of the potential for a sound psychological contribution to understanding the terrorist. However, recent work in the area has delivered promising and exciting starting points for a conceptual development in understanding the psychological process across all levels of terrorist involvement. Involvement in terrorism is a complex psychosocial process that comprises at least three seemingly distinct phases: becoming involved, being involved—synonymous with engaging in unambiguous terrorist activity—and disengaging (which may or may not result in subsequent de-radicalization). A critical implication of these distinctions is the recognition that each of them may contain unique, or phase-specific, implications for counterterrorism. An argument is made for greater consideration of the disengagement phase with a clearer role for psychological research to inform and enhance practical counterterrorism operations.

Keywords: psychology; terrorism; radicalization; process; disengagement

A legacy of the reductionist approaches to understanding terrorist behavior (cf. discussions in Victoroff 2006; Silke 1998) is not only confusion about what a psychology of terrorism

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implies, but also the realization that even some of the simplest analyses of terrorists produce inconsistent and confusing uses of psychological findings. Although psychology has relatively failed to assert explicit relevance for counterterrorism initiatives, knowledge of psychological processes can inform and improve our understanding of terrorism (and all that that implies) within an interdisciplinary framework. At the very least, we need to develop a more sophisticated way of understanding involvement in terrorism.

A number of authors have engaged in the conceptual development of psychological approaches to understanding the terrorist (e.g., Taylor 1988; Horgan 2005; Taylor and Horgan 2006); these studies have sought to redress some of the misunderstandings of what a psychology of terrorism implies by developing the issues of involvement and engagement in (and disengagement from) terrorism as a complex psychosocial process. My three-stage process model (Horgan 2005) and the conceptual framework developed by Taylor and Horgan (2006) captured a meaning for psychological approaches that do not depend upon narrow definitions derived from elsewhere or from definitions that have to be so general as to be meaningless and useless.

This article summarizes some of the issues from those discussions and extends some of the themes, making several critical distinctions to approach the reality of involvement in terrorism. Such distinctions offer the opportunity to identify points of intervention for counterterrorist and antiterrorist efforts. One of the advantages of viewing terrorism in this way is that we move psychological perspectives away from complex but essentially sterile discussions about definitions of terrorism as an abstract event to identifiable behaviors and their antecedents, expected consequences, and outcomes that are associated with terrorism. It is only at this point that psychologically informed counterterrorism operations can aspire to be practically useful.

One of the most potent traps stemming from the lack of conceptual clarity is the tendency, when examining why someone becomes a terrorist, to consider involvement as indicative of some state or condition. An alternative view of such involvement would be of something (e.g., being involved and doing things) that someone seeks out (initially for reasons that differ from the subsequent reality of what being involved actually delivers) and strives to sustain while moving from some unfocused peripheral state to something more focused, narrow, and unambiguously terrorism related. Paradoxically, thinking about individual involvement in terrorism in this way can not only point out how individual personality factors in themselves are neither useful nor predictive but also establish a clear need to identify the significance of the group and organizational context that maintains involvement and sustains behavior and eventually contributes to the commission of acts of terrorism. A critical conceptual point that may be important in informing response strategies is that answering questions about why people may wish to initially become involved in terrorism may have little bearing on what they do (or are permitted to do) as terrorists or how they actually become engaged in specific terrorist operations.

Unless we make these distinctions explicit, it is possible that when we ask questions such as "What causes terrorism?" or "What causes someone to join a jihadist movement?" we may be trying to force a simple answer to questions about routes to, through, and away from terrorism. Additionally, we may need to distinguish between how and why an individual becomes part of an *existing* terrorist movement from how that person becomes part of an effort aimed at creating a *new* terrorist cell or movement altogether, or to embrace terrorism as a tactic within a group's broader strategy. The issue of posing the correct questions is not simply a pedantic exercise but carries extraordinary practical significance. The answer to the question, "How do we prevent terrorism?" may be as complex as trying to answer "What causes it?" Clearer conceptual thinking can also help us to prioritize the questions we need to answer and better focus policy decisions and resource allocation. It may ultimately be more useful for us to trace not roots (either in terms of personality factors or root causes) but *routes*. In this context, empirical analyses by Sageman (2004) and Post, Sprinzak, and Denny (2003) have demonstrated the usefulness of developing what might begin as individual case histories from which more generalizable patterns of individual involvement may emerge.

From Profiles to *Pathways* and Roots to *Routes*

One of the major challenges is answering the question, How and why does someone become a terrorist? Terrorism researchers have approached these questions through a wide range of individual psychological models (Taylor 1988; Taylor and Quayle 1994), organizational structures (Bloom 2005), and, more recently, indirect discussions of the root causes of terrorism. Such discussions tend to be rooted in notions about terrorist profiling and in the past through various degrees of subtle (and not so subtle) pathologizing of terrorists. While lacking in the necessary empirical support, such profiling remains plausible given the violence, brutality, and general callousness associated with terrorism and the fact that, despite the broad sociopolitical conditions that are thought to give rise to terrorism (Bjørgo 2005), it is still the case that extremely few people engage in terrorism altogether. It may thus seem warranted to consider actual terrorists as different or special in some way.

For example, consider the case of al Qaeda members in the United Kingdom. A year after four coordinated suicide bombings ripped through London on July 7, 2005, a *House of Commons Report* (2006) into the events of that day asserted,

> What we know of previous extremists in the UK shows that there is not a consistent profile to help identify who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Of the 4 individuals here, 3 were second generation British citizens whose parents were of Pakistani origin and one whose parents were of Jamaican origin; Kamel Bourgass, convicted of the Ricin plot, was an Algerian failed asylum seeker; Richard Reid, the failed shoe bomber, had an English mother and Jamaican father. Others of interest have been white converts. Some have been well-educated, some less so. Some genuinely poor, some less so. Some apparently

well integrated in the UK, others not. Most single, but some family men with children. Some previously law-abiding, others with a history of petty crime. In a few cases there is evidence of abuse or other trauma in early life, but in others their upbringing has been stable and loving. (P. 31)

The significance of these comments should not be underestimated. They reveal that much of the thinking about the terrorist is still rooted in assumptions about profiling, while simultaneously hinting at the sense of frustration that no terrorist profile has yet been found—not only between members of different terrorist movements but also among members of the same particular movement. As argued elsewhere (Horgan 2007), in spite of the evidence that, logically, terrorist profiles are unlikely to appear at all—at least at a level meaningful or practical to those who call for their identification—the search for the terrorist profile continues on a number of fronts, for two reasons.

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First, the dramatic consequences of successful terrorist activity force us to confront the effects of behavior that would, to most normal people, suggest incomprehensible fanaticism, bordering on abnormality or even some sort of sickness—"How could anyone do this?" being a typical response to the shocking behavior associated with terrorist attacks. The second, more difficult question is, given that so many people are exposed to the presumed generating conditions for terrorism (or root causes), the triggering factors and catalysts both for religious and political mobilization, why is it that so relatively few people actually do this (even within conflict zones, let alone outside of them)? For example, more than 2 million Muslims live in Britain, many of whom are exposed to the same social conditions, backgrounds, and origins. Yet, so very few become radicalized to the point that they engage in terrorism. So how do we account for this?

A temptation has been to assume that some qualities of specialness exist within a specific group of terrorists, in terms of both what makes them alike as well as

what presumably makes them different from the rest of us (or at least from those who do not engage in terrorism).

Ariel Merari (personal correspondence 2006) has correctly argued that it is more precise to state that "no terrorist profile has been found" rather than "there is no terrorist profile." However, several real dangers are associated with the continued effort to construct such profiles, particularly as far as understanding recruitment to terrorism is concerned. In assuming the existence of a profile, we tend to miss several critical features associated with the development of the terrorist. These would include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the gradual nature of the relevant socialization processes into terrorism;
- a sense of the supportive qualities associated with that recruitment (e.g., the "pull" factors, or lures, that attract people to either involvement in terrorism in a broad sense or that are used to groom potential recruits);
- the sense of migration between roles (e.g., moving from fringe activity such as public protest to illegal, focused behavior); and
- a sense of the importance of role qualities (e.g., what attractions does being a sniper hold as opposed to becoming a suicide bomber, and how do these qualities become apparent to the onlooker or potential recruit?).

When we assume static qualities of the terrorist (a feature of profiles), we become blind to the qualities of the dynamics that shape and support the development of the terrorist. We also obscure the basis from which a more practical counterterrorism strategy might develop to prevent or control the extent of those who initially become involved in terrorism.

Counterterrorism efforts still frequently rely on profiles. While delivering a presentation on terrorist profiling at a workshop for counterterrorism officials in 2006, a senior official protested to me, "Profiles *are* useful. Of course they are. The reason . . . is that your average suicide bomber is not going to be the middle-aged, white, father of three kids." The context of this comment, made in the United Kingdom, is that such a suicide bomber had not been encountered there *yet*. But this example serves as a reminder that the assumptions that feed into how we think about the terrorist (who he or she is, and what population or demographic he or she is likely to come from) are often based on the actuarial projections from a small, and statistically insignificant, sample of individuals. The dangers of overgeneralization should be obvious.

But highlighting these limitations still does not answer the critical question: why does one person become involved in terrorism and the other does not? It is impossible to give an answer to this question that will allow us to predict with certainty who is likely to become a terrorist (and conversely, who is not). However, it might be useful to identify predisposing risk factors for involvement in terrorism (Horgan 2005) as a prelude to some form of risk assessment for prediction of involvement. These factors may include the following:

1. The presence of some emotional vulnerability, in terms of feelings of anger, alienation (often synonymous with feelings of being culturally uprooted or displaced and a longing for a sense of community), and disenfranchisement. For example, some alienated young British Muslims, looking for guidance and leadership that they do not get from mosque

leaders because of a perception that the leaders are too old, too conservative, and out of touch with their world, may turn elsewhere for guidance and clarity.

2. Dissatisfaction with their current activity, whether it be political or social protest, and the perception that conventional political activity just does not work or produce results. A related issue here is that violent radicals view terrorism as absolutely *necessary*. For example, in a video message before blowing up himself and six others in London, Mohammad Sidique Khan employed the language of "war" in urging British Muslims to oppose the British government. The view is that terrorism is a necessary, defensive, and, above all, urgent activity against an offensive enemy perceived as bent on humiliating and subjugating its victims.

3. Identification with victims—either real, in terms of personal victimization (e.g., by the military or police) or less tangible. For European Muslims who become involved in violent jihad, this identification is with Palestinian victims of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, victims in Iraq, or the conflict in Kashmir. In Khan's video testimony, he blamed his behavior on the actions of the United States and United Kingdom: "bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of *my* people," identifying with the suffering of Muslims around the world even though he came from Yorkshire, in northern England.

4. Crucially, the person has to believe that engaging in violence against the state or its symbols is not inherently immoral. This belief, while it may be fine-tuned by a religious figure, is usually held by the time the person has decided to become involved to the point of engaging in terrorism.

5. Also important is a sense of reward that the recruit has about what "being in this movement" represents. All suicide bombers, across the world, have *one* thing in common. They come to believe that they will achieve more in death than they ever could in life, a very powerful motivating factor not only in initial recruitment but also in terms of sustaining that person's commitment to the movement once a member. In practical terms, involvement might result in heightened status, respect, or authority within the immediate peer group, the broader radical movement, and (at least as imagined by the recruit) the wider Muslim community. The clearest answer to why someone wants to become involved in a suicidal mission is that the person seeks the kind of martyrdom and accompanying rewards on display as when violent radical Web sites hailed the 7/7 bombers as heroic martyrs and exalted them as almost pop stars.

6. Finally, kinship or other social ties to those experiencing similar issues, or already involved, are crucial (see Sageman 2004).

While more influences could probably be identified, these factors, when combined, provide a powerful framework for what could be termed "openness to socialization" into terrorism. They highlight why, given two people who are exposed to the same conditions (and even come from the same family), one may step toward involvement in terrorism and the other may not.

We should note that these factors are only potent at one very specific juncture: the phase of initially becoming involved. Once the potential recruit begins to move toward the potential of belonging to a group (before engaging in terrorist events), a different set of factors begin to exert unique influence. These include the power of the group, the content and process of ideology (or ideological control), the influence of a particular leader, and so on. Additionally, individuals will experience the steps toward increased involvement in different ways. Overall, for any given individual, becoming involved in terrorism will reflect a dynamic, though highly personalized, process of incremental assimilation and accommodation.

Terrorist Pathways

To move toward fruitful avenues for psychologically informed counterterrorism initiatives, it is useful to consider what involvement in terrorism implies. The reality of involvement in terrorism today is typified by its complexity: involvement in terrorism seems to imply—and result in—different things to different people, as well as different things to the same person over time and experience. Far from the simplistic distinctions between leaders and followers, even the smallest of terrorist movements comprise a variety of roles and functions into which recruits are assigned or encouraged to move. Additionally, adoption and retention of those roles is neither discrete nor static. As outlined earlier (Horgan 2007), there is very often migration both between and within roles, from illegal (e.g., engaging in violent activity) to gray areas (supporting the engagement in violent activity) to legal (e.g., peaceful protest, visiting relevant Web sites to learn). While many of the activities that members of terrorist movements engage in are not actually illegal per se (and cannot be meaningfully encompassed under the label *terrorism* but instead *subversion*), without these activities, actual terrorist operations could not develop, evolve, or be sustained over time and place. Engagement in violent activity is what we most commonly associate with terrorism. The reality of terrorist movements today, however, is that this most public of roles and functions tends to merely represent the tip of an iceberg of activity. Supporting the execution of a violent attack are those directly aiding and abetting the event, those who house the terrorist or provide other kinds of support, raise funds, generate publicity, provide intelligence, and so forth. The person we think of as "the terrorist" is therefore fulfilling only one of multiple functions in the movement, albeit the most dramatic in terms of direct consequences.

Qualities of Continued Involvement

Cordes (1987) and Taylor and Quayle (2004) identified common themes in terrorists' self-perception that have relevance to understanding the development of involvement in terrorism, reflecting the importance of both the language terrorists use as well as how they use it. Taylor and Quayle reported that terrorists, whatever the exact nature of their groups, unanimously view their involvement in violence as a provoked reaction requiring defense against an enemy. It is difficult to ascertain the effect these types of verbal explanations would have in the absence of exposure to some of the effects and qualities of membership, and life as part of a terrorist movement more generally. In other words, the reason given for involvement may be a direct reflection of an ideological learning process that comes from being part of the group. We may essentially be discovering potent qualities of what Hundeide (2003) termed the "community of practice" associated with counterculture groups of committed insiders. The recruit may have

learned to interpret his initial movement into the group to heighten the positive image of the group as well as to confirm the ideological commitment that the group has now solidified over this recruit.

For this reason, we may need to be mindful of a particular distinction for asking questions of former terrorists. Asking someone, "Why did you become involved?" as opposed to "*How* did you become involved?" may reveal a very different kind of answer. Often when asking the *why* question, a terrorist's stated motivation for involvement and justification for violence, Cordes (1987) suggested, may reveal more about the organization's internal use of propaganda and ideological control than anything conclusive about the personal account. That is, self-accounts of involvement in terrorism may derive from the individual's own sense of truth *or* some sort of commonly shared or acquired truth that is ritualistically enshrined through the community of practice. While it may be plausible to assume that "fraternalistic over egoistic" (Burgess, Ferguson, and Hollywood forthcoming) goals are genuine features of individual accounts, it is more likely that they reflect a learning quality incurred from continued involvement and increasing commitment.

Accounts that convey a sense of the external forces that provide the push into terrorism tend to ignore the supportive qualities (or "pull" factors) that influence individuals. The terrorist may be either reluctant or unintentionally forgetful to mention such lures in an interview situation or autobiographical account. The significance of each particular kind of lure will vary for the individual. The degree of acquired ideological control and "self"-propaganda that might exist for a person could be measured as a function of how little that terrorist acknowledges the existence of real and imagined rewards for joining the terrorist group. The true significance of particular assumed or self-identified catalyst events must thus be considered with caution, particularly in the absence of any acknowledgement of the supposed positive qualities of involvement gained (or expected via continued commitment) by the individual. Their true significance is likely to be more potent to those already participating in a peripheral activity, such as a peaceful protest. In fact, the overall significance of pushing catalyst events as triggering factors (as former terrorists often do, especially in autobiographies) can only be appreciated in the context of other qualities of the descriptions given by activists. Particularly in those terrorists interviewed by Taylor and Quayle (1994), the notion that there was simply "no other choice" was a commonly offered explanation of initial involvement in a terrorist movement. Frequent references to violence being an inevitable response, a form of self-defense in fact, to broader conditions are common in all terrorist groups, and such explanations reflect heavily conspiratorial dimensions (legitimized usually with clear references to the victimized group or community) in jihadist groups in particular.

Closely related to the notion of positive qualities (or expected positive qualities) of continued involvement is an appreciation of the community context. Hassan (2001), who interviewed many militants in the region, described how, in Palestinian neighborhoods,

the suicide bombers' green birds appear on posters, and in graffiti—the language of the street. Calendars are illustrated with the "martyr of the month." Paintings glorify the dead bombers in Paradise, triumphant beneath a flock of green birds. This symbol is based on a saying of the Prophet Muhammad that the soul of a martyr is carried to Allah in the bosom of the green birds of Paradise. (P. 3)

Post, Sprinzak, and Denny (2003) interviewed incarcerated members of Hamas and its armed wing Izz ad-Din al Qassam, Hezbollah, the Islamic Jihad, and others from secular movements and discovered similarities between the supportive qualities that shaped individual pathways into terrorism, despite the wide variety in participants' backgrounds and histories:

> The boyhood heroes for the Islamist terrorists were religious figures, such as the Prophet, or the radical Wahabi Islamist, Abdullah Azzam; for the secular terrorists, revolutionary heroes such as Che Guevara or Fidel Castro were identified. Most had some high school, and some had education beyond high school. The majority of the subjects reported that their families were respected in the community. The families were experienced as being uniformly supportive of their commitment to the cause. (P. 172)

Role models serve as a source of authoritative legitimacy for the justification of violent reaction, sustaining the individual's commitment to the group to the point of actually engaging in violent acts. In Post, Sprinzak, and Denny's (2003) analysis, the social setting (implicit or explicit approval from peers and family) appeared to be the source of the greatest apparent positive quality for joining. However, the researchers' interviews with imprisoned activists revealed other supportive qualities of involvement:

> Perpetrators of armed attacks were seen as heroes, their families got a great deal of material assistance including the construction of new homes to replace those destroyed by the Israeli authorities as punishment for terrorist acts . . .
>   The entire family did all it could for the Palestinian people, and won great respect for doing so. All my brothers are in jail. One is serving a life sentence for his activities in the Izz ad-Din Al Qassam battalions. (P. 177)

Similar themes emerge from interviewees in Northern Ireland:

> The idols among our community shot up because they stood for something. . . . As soon as your parents, and the priest at the altar, and your teacher are saying, "These men are good men. They are fighting a just thing here," it filters down quickly that these people are important and whatever they say must be right. So all of a sudden, you are bordering on supporting something that is against the government. (Burgess, Ferguson, and Hollywood forthcoming, n.p.)

An additional expected benefit associated with attaining and sustaining commitment is the status it carries within an immediate circle of activists as well as within a broader supportive community. Such status can be powerful not only for sustaining commitment but also as a lure for peripheral onlookers not engaged in any focused activity but with the future opportunity to do so. A sense of approval

from a significant other person can also catalyze socialization into more extreme behavior. Atran (2003) illustrated that Palestinians regularly "invoke religion to invest personal trauma with proactive social meaning," with injury seen not as burden but as a badge of honor.

An inescapable social quality of increased involvement in a terrorist movement is a sense of gradual progression. From examining accounts closely, increased commitment to the movement appears to be characterized by a slow marginalization away from conventional society and toward a much narrower society where extremism becomes all-encompassing. It is also characterized by a sense of increasing disillusionment with alternative avenues developing in conjunction with increasing involvement in peripheral activities. What constitutes an alternative avenue likely reflects a "community of practice" dimension identified by Hundeide (2003) as a necessary quality that the movement must put in place to solidify commitment by the individual member. Increased commitment and ever-greater and ever-focused involvement will carry with it the realization that in difficult or challenging times, the need to "stick it out" is paramount (e.g., Sherman 2005).

Involvement in terrorism encompasses constant change and vastly differing levels of activity, commitment, and overall involvement—all of which might be present in one small terrorist grouping. As McCauley and Segal (1989, p. 55) memorably put it, at any one time, some members are "beginning to find out . . . others are becoming committed, others are firmly committed, others becoming less committed, and still others are in the process of leaving entirely." We can see how the profiling of terrorists (based on conceptually dubious attempts to identify individual qualities of those filling certain specific roles) will be quite limited without a sense of the varied factors influencing how and why that role became attractive, open, and attainable for a specific individual moving through the terrorist group. What might determine the total extent of active terrorists at any one time might relate to a whole host of local internal and external group, organizational, leadership, and other management or response issues. What is necessary from a counterterrorism perspective is a way of assessing capacity and threat or risk without having to revert to limited notions of counting membership based on restrictive and unrelated criteria.

A final feature of increased involvement for the individual is the realization that the associated steps can carry different levels of currency. With the impressive variety in roles and functions found within even small terrorist groups comes also different psychological baggage. While active service roles (for example, directly planting bombs or engaging in a shooting within the Provisional IRA or the role of martyr in a four-man al Qaeda cell) may be limited to minimize the risk of security breaches, leaders can also attach a psychological value to the restriction of such opportunities. Hassan's (2001) interviews revealed that by limiting those accepted for martyrdom operations, "others are disappointed. They must learn patience and wait until Allah calls them." The limitation thus performs the important function of sustaining the perceived attractiveness of attaining and fulfilling such a role.

Implications for Counterterrorism

As Taylor and Horgan (2006) have argued, a clear implication of thinking about initial involvement as part of a *process* is that it provides a clear agenda for psychological research on terrorist behavior: an attempt to understand the decisions made by the individual at particular times within a particular social and organizational context. When we frame initial involvement in terrorism within a broader process of involvement and engagement, we can identify a shared characteristic: that a powerful incentive is the sense of reward, however distant to the believer or seemingly intangible to the onlooker.

Given this common denominator, what tangible operational strategies can be offered to counterterrorism initiatives? Despite the increased discussions of root causes of terrorism, we can do little in a practical sense to change the "push" factors (i.e., the broad sociopolitical conditions) that give rise to the increased likelihood of the emergence of terrorism. In contrast, counterterrorism programs may be more effective in concentrating on the "pull" factors (or "lures"), since they tend to be narrower, more easily identifiable, and specific to particular groups and contexts.

Two examples from Northern Ireland illustrate this point. The first dates from 1987, when British investigative journalist Roger Cook conducted an undercover expose of the racketeering activities of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), the largest Loyalist terrorist organization in Northern Ireland. Cook's coinvestigators set up a meeting between one of their team (who posed as a businessman) and a local UDA brigadier, Eddie Sayers. Sayers represented one of the UDA's many "front" security companies. The meeting was covertly filmed, and Sayers was shown attempting to extort money from the supposed businessman. When the program aired, it became a sustained source of extreme embarrassment to the UDA leadership and to Sayers, in particular, who was shown having difficulty with simple arithmetic during his calculation of the extortion demand. As described in Cusack and Taylor's (1993) case study, the documentary proved to be a powerful catalyst (among other factors) that led to massive internal upheaval within the UDA, particularly between those within the UDA who had made concerted efforts to clean up the movement and those heavily engaged in criminality. The internecine feuding that followed led to bitter recriminations and even assassinations, but more damaging in the long term, the UDA's reputation never fully recovered.

The second example comes from a series of wide-ranging interviews this author conducted between 2006 and late 2007 with former members of more than a dozen terrorist groups around the world, ranging from nationalist or ideological to jihadist movements. The interviews focused on the relationship between reasons for becoming involved and the ways in which people disengage from, and ultimately end, their involvement. One interview, with a former high-ranking member of the Provisional IRA, revealed a particular moment when the reality of involvement was brought home.

The IRA member, who was responsible for the largest Republican area in Northern Ireland, was under competing pressures within the organization to step up attacks as the ceasefire unraveled and, on the other hand, to scale down attacks in an effort to keep the ceasefire in place. During this tumultuous time, he found himself having tea with Kevin McKenna, later the "chief of staff" of the Provisional IRA. When McKenna commented on the recent bombing death of a pregnant policewoman—"we might get two for the price of one"—the IRA member began to gain perspective, asking himself questions about the situation he found himself in. He realized he had been locked in "a very localized, kind of almost a defender situation." Whereas his own goal had been to attack the British Army, his colleagues "wanted to shoot the local [Ulster Defence Regiment] down the road." The interviewee explained how this was one of the defining moments that brought him not only to question his own involvement in the movement but also, subsequently, to inflict damage on the movement by becoming an informer.

What the Loyalist and Republican examples have in common is the significant difference between the perceptions and the day-to-day reality associated with terrorism. The significance of this divide is of enormous value and may come to play a potentially critical role for psychological research in counterterrorism operations. Even on a basic level, it can be difficult to overestimate the significance of the media in undermining the positive attractions (particularly the sense of nobility) that involvement in terrorism is deemed to hold for potential recruits. By making the realities of terrorism known, it may be possible to undermine terrorism in ways not considered viable or potentially effective in the past.

Unfortunately, little systematic attention has been paid to the potential role that counterpropaganda may have in redirecting or displacing cognitions and behaviors that may otherwise catalyze initial involvement in political violence. The mass media, both journalistic and popular, has an underdeveloped but potentially significant role to play in contributing to the environment in which terrorism thrives and simultaneously in which the attraction to involvement in terrorism may be undermined. Challenges to the myths and lures of terrorism probably can be an effective counterterrorist strategy for both the group and the individual, but they can only be realistic and meaningful if they are directed at specific populations.

The effectiveness of any form of counterpropaganda on individuals *already involved* in clear and unambiguous terrorist activity will necessarily be limited at the outset, primarily when alternate views are identified as belonging to the "enemy" and thus are frequently interpreted as part of a conspiracy. The effectiveness of any propaganda, regardless of context, will rely heavily on the credibility and relevant expertise of the communicator and in particular on perceptions of the communicator's *intention*. (People generally tend to be more trusting of the communicator if they do not perceive that he or she has something to gain or explicitly intends to persuade.) The perception of expertise on the part of the communicator can be based on factors such as similarity in social background (e.g., similar views, values, and status), although differences in age or leadership may promote the communicator to "expert" status.

Thus, counterterrorism (or counterpropaganda) initiatives must identify sources that will be more credible for communicating countermessages. For example, it would be beneficial to encourage those who have disengaged from terrorist activity to become more vocal in dispelling the attractions and lures of involvement in movements. Although it might seem that such counterpropaganda would be ignored by the deeply committed (to paraphrase Hundeide's [2003] term), the messages may have a real impact on those at the initial stages of involvement. There are already some positive developments on this front. Taarnby's (2005) examination of activities in Yemen using moderate Muslim clerics and Boucek's (2007) examination of the "rehabilitation" program in Saudi Arabia suggest that counterpropaganda may effectively challenge the extremist beliefs of imprisoned jihadists and their sympathizers. Although researchers have yet to examine systematically the "de-radicalization" programs developing in a variety of countries, the groundwork for comparative work has already begun (e.g., Bjørgo and Horgan forthcoming).

Conclusions

We may yet discover that even the beliefs of deeply committed extremists may be more subject to change than we previously expected. It is worth exploring the role of the individual as a consumer of propaganda, particularly in the context of a conflict. We need to understand the major function of terrorist leaders to encourage changes in political and religious beliefs—even minute changes for those already deemed to be more or less converted while at the peripheral stages of involvement—and a sense of accommodation in the involvement in terrorism as not only *legitimate* but also attractive and important. The objective should be to publicize the negative consequences of terrorism, challenge its legitimacy through the appropriate channels, and encourage a displacement of activity that would otherwise result in greater involvement in a terrorist movement. In addition, such a strategy could prove immensely valuable in reducing the perceived sense of effectiveness of terrorism for already involved members.

To succeed, we need to face some facts. The assumption of a moment of epiphany that explains some assumedly conscious decision to become a terrorist is naïve, misleading, and, crucially, unsupported by empirical evidence. Involvement in terrorism is a complex process of accommodation and assimilation across incrementally experienced stages. Potential and actual terrorists move between and within roles, although these migration and promotion processes remain poorly understood. Some individuals become involved more quickly than others, but a consistent quality across all terrorist movements is the gradual sense of progression.

Furthermore, this movement process is based on initially supportive qualities. The most obvious common denominator influencing individuals' embracement of their own radicalization—at any level—is a sense of positive expectation. As

long as commitment and dedication to one's socialization further and further into the movement remains positive for the follower, the process eventually results in the formation of a new—or at least effectively consolidated—identity.

Profiling the individual and his or her presumed associated qualities has no future in serious analyses of either the terrorist or the pathways to radicalization in which he or she engages. We ought to consider instead profiling (1) the process of violent radicalization and (2) the meaning of engagement with that process to the individual terrorist. In considering the nature of involvement in terrorism, we might begin to develop phase-specific counterterrorism initiatives, depending on what we can ascertain is the most effective intervention point: whether it be initial prevention of involvement, subsequent disruption of engagement, or eventual promotion of disengagement. Acknowledging these distinctions will allow for the development of unique kinds of interventions, depending on where we eventually decide they may be best focused. The disengagement phase remains the most poorly understood and least researched, but ironically, it is in this phase that practical counterterrorism initiatives—aimed not only at facilitation of disengagement but also at prevention of initial involvement—might actually become very effective.

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The Terrorism to Come

By WALTER LAQUEUR

ERRORISM HAS BECOME over a number of years the topic of ceaseless comment, debate, controversy, and search for roots and motives, and it figures on top of the national and international agenda. It is also at present one of the most highly emotionally charged topics of public debate, though quite why this should be the case is not entirely clear, because the overwhelming majority of participants do not sympathize with terrorism.

Confusion prevails, but confusion alone does not explain the emotions. There is always confusion when a new international phenomenon appears on the scene. This was the case, for instance, when communism first appeared (it was thought to be aiming largely at the nationalization of women and the burning of priests) and also fascism. But terrorism is not an unprecedented phenomenon; it is as old as the hills.

Thirty years ago, when the terrorism debate got underway, it was widely asserted that terrorism was basically a left-wing revolutionary movement

caused by oppression and exploitation. Hence the conclusion: Find a political and social solution, remedy the underlying evil — no oppression, no terrorism. The argument about the left-wing character of terrorism is no longer frequently heard, but the belief in a fatal link between poverty and violence has persisted. Whenever a major terrorist attack has taken place, one has heard appeals from high and low to provide credits and loans, to deal at long last with the deeper, true causes of terrorism, the roots rather than the symptoms and outward manifestations. And these roots are believed to be poverty, unemployment, backwardness, and inequality.

It is not too difficult to examine whether there is such a correlation between poverty and terrorism, and all the investigations have shown that this is not the case. The experts have maintained for a long time that poverty does not cause terrorism and prosperity does not cure it. In the world's 50 poorest countries there is little or no terrorism. A study by scholars Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova reached the conclusion that the terrorists are not poor people and do not come from poor societies. A Harvard economist has shown that economic growth is closely related to a society's ability to manage conflicts. More recently, a study of India has demonstrated that terrorism in the subcontinent has occurred in the most prosperous (Punjab) and most egalitarian (Kashmir, with a poverty ratio of 3.5 compared with the national average of 26 percent) regions and that, on the other hand, the poorest regions such as North Bihar have been free of terrorism. In the Arab countries (such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but also in North Africa), the terrorists originated not in the poorest and most neglected districts but hailed from places with concentrations of radical preachers. The backwardness, if any, was intellectual and cultural — not economic and social.

> *It is no secret that terrorists operating in Europe and America are usually of middle-class origin.*

These findings, however, have had little impact on public opinion (or on many politicians), and it is not difficult to see why. There is the general feeling that poverty and backwardness with all their concomitants are bad — and that there is an urgent need to do much more about these problems. Hence the inclination to couple the two issues and the belief that if the (comparatively) wealthy Western nations would contribute much more to the development and welfare of the less fortunate, in cooperation with their governments, this would be in a long-term perspective the best, perhaps the only, effective way to solve the terrorist problem.

Reducing poverty in the Third World is a moral as well as a political and economic imperative, but to expect from it a decisive change in the foreseeable future as far as terrorism is concerned is unrealistic, to say the least. It ignores both the causes of backwardness and poverty and the motives for terrorism.

Poverty combined with youth unemployment does create a social and psychological climate in which Islamism and various populist and religious sects flourish, which in turn provide some of the footfolk for violent groups in internal conflicts. According to some projections, the number of young unemployed in the Arab world and North Africa could reach 50 million in two decades. Such a situation will not be conducive to political stability; it will increase the demographic pressure on Europe, since according to polls a majority of these young people want to emigrate. Politically, the populist discontent will be directed against the rulers — Islamist in Iran, moderate in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, or Morocco. But how to help the failed economies of the Middle East and North Africa? What are the reasons for backwardness and stagnation in this part of the world? The countries that have made economic progress — such as China and India, Korea and Taiwan, Malaysia and Turkey — did so without massive foreign help.

All this points to a deep malaise and impending danger, but not to a direct link between the economic situation and international terrorism. There is of course a negative link: Terrorists will not hesitate to bring about a further aggravation in the situation; they certainly did great harm to the tourist industries in Bali and Egypt, in Palestine, Jordan, and Morocco. One of the main targets of terrorism in Iraq was the oil industry. It is no longer a secret that the carriers of international terrorism operating in Europe and America hail not from the poor, downtrodden, and unemployed but are usually of middle-class origin.

The local element

*T*HE LINK BETWEEN terrorism and nationalist, ethnic, religious, and tribal conflict is far more tangible. These instances of terrorism are many and need not be enumerated in detail. Solving these conflicts would probably bring about a certain reduction in the incidence of terrorism. But the conflicts are many, and if some of them have been defused in recent years, other, new ones have emerged. Nor are the issues usually clear-cut or the bones of contention easy to define — let alone to solve.

If the issue at stake is a certain territory or the demand for autonomy, a compromise through negotiations might be achieved. But it ought to be recalled that al Qaeda was founded and September 11 occurred not because of a territorial dispute or the feeling of national oppression but because of a religious commandment — jihad and the establishment of *shari'ah*. Terrorist attacks in Central Asia and Morocco, in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and partly in Iraq were directed against fellow Muslims, not against infidels. Appeasement may work in individual cases, but terrorist groups with global ambitions cannot be appeased by territorial concessions.

As in the war against poverty, the initiatives to solve local conflicts are overdue and should be welcomed. In an ideal world, the United Nations

would be the main conflict resolver, but so far the record of the U.N. has been more than modest, and it is unlikely that this will change in the foreseeable future. Making peace is not an easy option; it involves funds and in some cases the stationing of armed forces. There is no great international crush to join the ranks of the volunteers: China, Russia, and Europe do not want to be bothered, and the United States is overstretched. In brief, as is so often the case, a fresh impetus is likely to occur only if the situation gets considerably worse and if the interests of some of the powers in restoring order happen to coincide.

Lastly, there should be no illusions with regard to the wider effect of a peaceful solution of one conflict or another. To give but one obvious example: Peace (or at least the absence of war) between Israel and the Palestinians would be a blessing for those concerned. It may be necessary to impose a solution since the chances of making any progress in this direction are nil but for some outside intervention. However, the assumption that a solution of a local conflict (even one of great symbolic importance) would have a dramatic effect in other parts of the world is unfounded. Osama bin Laden did not go to war because of Gaza and Nablus; he did not send his warriors to fight in Palestine. Even the disappearance of the "Zionist entity" would not have a significant impact on his supporters, except perhaps to provide encouragement for further action.

> *Osama bin Laden did not go to war because of Gaza and Nablus.*

Such a warning against illusions is called for because there is a great deal of wishful thinking and naïveté in this respect — a belief in quick fixes and miracle solutions: If only there would be peace between Israelis and Palestinians, all the other conflicts would become manageable. But the problems are as much in Europe, Asia, and Africa as in the Middle East; there is a great deal of free-floating aggression which could (and probably would) easily turn in other directions once one conflict has been defused.

It seems likely, for instance, that in the years to come the struggle against the "near enemy" (the governments of the Arab and some non-Arab Muslim countries) will again feature prominently. There has been for some time a truce on the part of al Qaeda and related groups, partly for strategic reasons (to concentrate on the fight against America and the West) and partly because attacks against fellow Muslims, even if they are considered apostates, are bound to be less popular than fighting the infidels. But this truce, as events in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere show, may be coming to an end.

Tackling these supposed sources of terrorism, even for the wrong reasons, will do no harm and may bring some good. But it does not bring us any nearer to an understanding of the real sources of terrorism, a field that has become something akin to a circus ground for riding hobbyhorses and peddling preconceived notions.

How to explain the fact that in an inordinate number of instances where there has been a great deal of explosive material, there has been no terrorism? The gypsies of Europe certainly had many grievances and the Dalets (untouchables) of India and other Asian countries even more. But there has been no terrorism on their part — just as the Chechens have been up in arms but not the Tartars of Russia, the Basque but not the Catalans of Spain. The list could easily be lengthened.

Accident may play a role (the absence or presence of a militant leadership), but there could also be a cultural-psychological predisposition. How to explain that out of 100 militants believing with equal intensity in the justice of their cause, only a very few will actually engage in terrorist actions? And out of this small minority even fewer will be willing to sacrifice their lives as suicide bombers? Imponderable factors might be involved: indoctrination but also psychological motives. Neither economic nor political analysis will be of much help in gaining an understanding, and it may not be sheer accident that there has been great reluctance to explore this political-intellectual minefield.

The focus on Islamist terrorism

*T*O MAKE PREDICTIONS about the future course of terrorism is even more risky than political predictions in general. We are dealing here not with mass movements but small — sometimes very small — groups of people, and there is no known way at present to account for the movement of small particles either in the physical world or in human societies.

It is certain that terrorism will continue to operate. At the present time almost all attention is focused on Islamist terrorism, but it is useful to remember from time to time that this was not always the case — even less than 30 years ago — and that there are a great many conflicts, perceived oppressions, and other causes calling for radical action in the world which may come to the fore in the years to come. These need not even be major conflicts in an age in which small groups will have access to weapons of mass destruction.

At present, Islamist terrorism all but monopolizes our attention, and it certainly has not yet run its course. But it is unlikely that its present fanaticism will last forever; religious-nationalist fervor does not constantly burn with the same intensity. There is a phenomenon known in Egypt as "Salafi burnout," the mellowing of radical young people, the weakening of the original fanatical impetus. Like all other movements in history, messianic groups are subject to routinization, to the circulation of generations, to changing political circumstances, and to sudden or gradual changes in the intensity of religious belief. This could happen as a result of either victories or defeats. One day, it might be possible to appease militant Islamism — though hardly

in a period of burning aggression when confidence and faith in global victory have not yet been broken.

More likely the terrorist impetus will decline as a result of setbacks. Fanaticism, as history shows, is not easy to transfer from one generation to the next; attacks will continue, and some will be crowned with success (perhaps spectacular success), but many will not. When Alfred Nobel invented dynamite, many terrorists thought that this was the answer to their prayers, but theirs was a false hope. The trust put today in that new invincible weapon, namely suicide terrorism, may in the end be equally misplaced. Even the use of weapons of mass destruction might not be the terrorist panacea some believe it will be. Perhaps their effect will be less deadly than anticipated; perhaps it will be so destructive as to be considered counterproductive. Statistics show that in the terrorist attacks over the past decade, considerably more Muslims were killed than infidels. Since terrorists do not operate in a vacuum, this is bound to lead to dissent among their followers and even among the fanatical preachers.

Over the past decade, more Muslims were killed in terrorist attacks than infidels.

There are likely to be splits among the terrorist groups even though their structure is not highly centralized. In brief, there is a probability that a united terrorist front will not last. It is unlikely that Osama and his close followers will be challenged on theological grounds, but there has been criticism for tactical reasons: Assuming that America and the West in general are in a state of decline, why did he not have more patience? Why did he have to launch a big attack while the infidels were still in a position to retaliate massively?

Some leading students of Islam have argued for a long time that radical Islamism passed its peak years ago and that its downfall and disappearance are only a question of time, perhaps not much time. It is true that societies that were exposed to the rule of fundamentalist fanatics (such as Iran) or to radical Islamist attack (such as Algeria) have been immunized to a certain extent. However, in a country of 60 million, some fanatics can always be found; as these lines are written, volunteers for suicide missions are being enlisted in Teheran and other cities of Iran. In any case, many countries have not yet undergone such first-hand experience; for them the rule of the *shari'ah* and the restoration of the caliphate are still brilliant dreams. By and large, therefore, the predictions about the impending demise of Islamism have been premature, while no doubt correct in the long run. Nor do we know what will follow. An interesting study on what happens "when prophecy fails" (by Leon Festinger) was published not long after World War II. We now need a similar study on the likely circumstances and consequences of the failure of fanaticism. The history of religions (and political religions) offers some clues, as does the history of terrorism.

These, then, are the likely perspectives for the more distant future. But in a shorter-term perspective the danger remains acute and may, in fact, grow. Where and when are terrorist attacks most likely to occur? They will not necessarily be directed against the greatest and most dangerous enemy as perceived by the terrorist gurus. Much depends on where terrorists are strong and believe the enemy to be weak. That terrorist attacks are likely to continue in the Middle East goes without saying; other main danger zones are Central Asia and, above all, Pakistan.

The founders of Pakistan were secular politicians. The religious establishment and in particular the extremists among the Indian Muslims had opposed the emergence of the state. But once Pakistan came into being, they began to try with considerable success to dominate it. Their alternative educational system, the many thousand madrassas, became the breeding ground for jihad fighters. Ayub Khan, the first military ruler, tried to break their stranglehold but failed. Subsequent rulers, military and civilian, have not even tried. It is more than doubtful whether Pervez Musharraf will have any success in limiting their power. The tens of thousands of graduates they annually produce formed the backbone of the Taliban. Their leaders will find employment for them at home and in Central Asia, even if there is a de-escalation in tensions with India over Kashmir. Their most radical leaders aim at the destruction of India. Given Pakistan's internal weakness this may appear more than a little fanciful, but their destructive power is still considerable, and they can count on certain sympathies in the army and the intelligence service. A failed Pakistan with nuclear weapons at its disposal would be a major nightmare. Still, Pakistani terrorism — like Palestinian and Middle Eastern in general — remains territorial, likely to be limited to the subcontinent and Central Asia.

Battlefield Europe

*E*UROPE IS PROBABLY the most vulnerable battlefield. To carry out operations in Europe and America, talents are needed that are not normally found among those who have no direct personal experience of life in the West. The Pakistani diaspora has not been very active in the terrorist field, except for a few militants in the United Kingdom.

Western Europe has become over a number of years the main base of terrorist support groups. This process has been facilitated by the growth of Muslim communities, the growing tensions with the native population, and the relative freedom with which radicals could organize in certain mosques and cultural organizations. Indoctrination was provided by militants who came to these countries as religious dignitaries. This freedom of action was considerably greater than that enjoyed in the Arab and Muslim world; not a few terrorists convicted of capital crimes in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria were given political asylum in Europe. True, there

were some arrests and closer controls after September 11, but given the legal and political restrictions under which the European security services were laboring, effective counteraction was still exceedingly difficult.

West European governments have been frequently criticized for not having done enough to integrate Muslim newcomers into their societies, but cultural and social integration was certainly not what the newcomers wanted. They wanted to preserve their religious and ethnic identity and their way of life, and they resented intervention by secular authorities. In its great majority, the first generation of immigrants wanted to live in peace and quiet and to make a living for their families. But today they no longer have much control over their offspring.

Non-Muslims began to feel threatened in streets they could once walk without fear.

This is a common phenomenon all over the world: the radicalization of the second generation of immigrants. This generation has been superficially acculturated (speaking fluently the language of the host country) yet at the same time feels resentment and hostility more acutely. It is not necessarily the power of the fundamentalist message (the young are not the most pious believers when it comes to carrying out all the religious commandments) which inspires many of the younger radical activists or sympathizers. It is the feeling of deep resentment because, unlike immigrants from other parts of the world, they could not successfully compete in the educational field, nor quite often make it at the work place. Feelings of being excluded, sexual repression (a taboo subject in this context), and other factors led to free-floating aggression and crime directed against the authorities and their neighbors.

As a result, non-Muslims began to feel threatened in streets they could once walk without fear. They came to regard the new immigrants as antisocial elements who wanted to change the traditional character of their homeland and their way of life, and consequently tensions continued to increase. Pressure on European governments is growing from all sides, right and left, to stop immigration and to restore law and order.

This, in briefest outline, is the milieu in which Islamist terrorism and terrorist support groups in Western Europe developed. There is little reason to assume that this trend will fundamentally change in the near future. On the contrary, the more the young generation of immigrants asserts itself, the more violence occurs in the streets, and the more terrorist attacks take place, the greater the anti-Muslim resentment on the part of the rest of the population. The rapid demographic growth of the Muslim communities further strengthens the impression among the old residents that they are swamped and deprived of their rights in their own homeland, not even entitled to speak the truth about the prevailing situation (such as, for instance, to reveal

the statistics of prison inmates with Muslim backgrounds). Hence the violent reaction in even the most liberal European countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark. The fear of the veil turns into the fear that in the foreseeable future they too, having become a minority, will be compelled to conform to the commandments of another religion and culture.

True, the number of extremists is still very small. Among British Muslims, for instance, only 13 percent have expressed sympathy and support for terrorist attacks. But this still amounts to several hundred thousands, far more than needed for staging a terrorist campaign. The figure is suspect in any case because not all of those sharing radical views will openly express them to strangers, for reasons that hardly need be elaborated. Lastly, such a minority will not feel isolated in their own community as long as the majority remains silent — which has been the case in France and most other European countries.

Extremists may be repelled by the decadence of the society facing them, but they are also attracted by it.

The prospects for terrorism based on a substantial Islamist periphery could hardly appear to be more promising, but there are certain circumstances that make the picture appear somewhat less threatening. The tensions are not equally strong in all countries. They are less palpably felt in Germany and Britain than in France and the Netherlands. Muslims in Germany are predominantly of Turkish origin and have (always with some exceptions) shown less inclination to take violent action than communities mainly composed of Arab and North African immigrants.

If acculturation and integration has been a failure in the short run, prospects are less hopeless in a longer perspective. The temptations of Western civilization are corrosive; young Muslims cannot be kept in a hermetically sealed ghetto (even though a strong attempt is made). They are disgusted and repelled by alcohol, loose morals, general decadence, and all the other wickedness of the society facing them, but they are at the same time fascinated and attracted by them. This is bound to affect their activist fervor, and they will be exposed not only to the negative aspects of the world surrounding them but also its values. Other religions had to face these temptations over the ages and by and large have been fighting a losing battle.

It is often forgotten that only a relatively short period passed from the primitive beginnings of Islam in the Arabian desert to the splendor and luxury (and learning and poetry) of Harun al Rashid's Baghdad — from the austerity of the Koran to the not-so-austere Arabian Nights. The pulse of contemporary history is beating much faster, but is it beating fast enough? For it is a race against time. The advent of megaterrorism and the access to

weapons of mass destruction is dangerous enough, but coupled with fanaticism it generates scenarios too unpleasant even to contemplate.

Enduring asymmetry

*T*HERE CAN BE no final victory in the fight against terrorism, for terrorism (rather than full-scale war) is the contemporary manifestation of conflict, and conflict will not disappear from earth as far as one can look ahead and human nature has not undergone a basic change. But it will be in our power to make life for terrorists and potential terrorists much more difficult.

Who ought to conduct the struggle against terrorism? Obviously, the military should play only a limited role in this context, and not only because it has not been trained for this purpose. The military may have to be called in for restoring order in countries that have failed to function and have become terrorist havens. It may have to intervene to prevent or stop massacres. It may be needed to deliver blows against terrorist concentrations. But these are not the most typical or frequent terrorist situations.

The key role in asymmetric warfare (a redundant new term for something that has been known for many centuries) should be played by intelligence and security services that may need a military arm.

As far as terrorism and also guerrilla warfare are concerned, there can be no general, overall doctrine in the way that Clausewitz or Jomini and others developed a regular warfare philosophy. An airplane or a battleship do not change their character wherever they operate, but the character of terrorism and guerrilla warfare depends largely on the motivations of those engaging in it and the conditions under which it takes place. Over the past centuries rules and laws of war have developed, and even earlier on there were certain rules that were by and large adhered to.

But terrorists cannot possibly accept these rules. It would be suicidal from their point of view if, to give but one example, they were to wear uniforms or other distinguishing marks. The essence of their operations rests on hiding their identities. On the other hand, they and their well-wishers insist that when captured, they should enjoy all the rights and benefits accorded to belligerents, that they be humanely treated, even paid some money and released after the end of hostilities. When regular soldiers do not stick to the rules of warfare, killing or maiming prisoners, carrying out massacres, taking hostages or committing crimes against the civilian population, they will be treated as war criminals.

If terrorists behaved according to these norms they would have little if any chance of success; the essence of terrorist operations now is indiscriminate attacks against civilians. But governments defending themselves against terrorism are widely expected not to behave in a similar way but to adhere to international law as it developed in conditions quite different from those

prevailing today.

Terrorism does not accept laws and rules, whereas governments are bound by them; this, in briefest outline, is asymmetric warfare. If governments were to behave in a similar way, not feeling bound by existing rules and laws such as those against the killing of prisoners, this would be bitterly denounced. When the late Syrian President Hafez Assad faced an insurgency (and an attempted assassination) on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood in the city of Hama in 1980, his soldiers massacred some 20,000 inhabitants. This put an end to all ideas of terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

Such behavior on the part of democratic governments would be denounced as barbaric, a relapse into the practices of long-gone pre-civilized days. But if governments accept the principle of asymmetric warfare they will be severely, possibly fatally, handicapped. They cannot accept that terrorists are protected by the Geneva Conventions, which would mean, among other things, that they should be paid a salary while in captivity. Should they be regarded like the pirates of a bygone age as *hostes generis humani*, enemies of humankind, and be treated according to the principle of *a un corsaire, un corsaire et demi* — "to catch a thief, it takes a thief," to quote one of Karl Marx's favorite sayings?

Should terrorists be regarded, like pirates of a bygone age, as enemies of humankind?

The problem will not arise if the terrorist group is small and not very dangerous. In this case normal legal procedures will be sufficient to deal with the problem (but even this is not quite certain once weapons of mass destruction become more readily accessible). Nor will the issue of shedding legal restraint arise if the issues at stake are of marginal importance, if in other words no core interests of the governments involved are concerned. If, on the other hand, the very survival of a society is at stake, it is most unlikely that governments will be impeded in their defense by laws and norms belonging to a bygone (and more humane) age.

It is often argued that such action is counterproductive because terrorism cannot be defeated by weapons alone, but is a struggle for the hearts and minds of people, a confrontation of ideas (or ideologies). If it were only that easy. It is not the terrorist ideas which cause the damage, but their weapons. Each case is different, but many terrorist groups do not have any specific idea or ideology, but a fervent belief, be it of a religious character or of a political religion. They fight for demands, territorial or otherwise, that seem to them self-evident, and they want to defeat their enemies. They are not open to dialogue or rational debate. When Mussolini was asked about his program by the socialists during the early days of fascism, he said that his program was to smash the skulls of the socialists.

Experience teaches that a little force is indeed counterproductive except in instances where small groups are involved. The use of massive, overwhelm-

ing force, on the other hand, is usually effective. But the use of massive force is almost always unpopular at home and abroad, and it will be applied only if core interests of the state are involved. To give but one example: The Russian government could deport the Chechens (or a significant portion), thus solving the problem according to the Stalinist pattern. If the Chechens were to threaten Moscow or St. Petersburg or the functioning of the Russian state or its fuel supply, there is but little doubt that such measures would be taken by the Russian or indeed any other government. But as long as the threat is only a marginal and peripheral one, the price to be paid for the application of massive force will be considered too high.

Two lessons follow: First, governments should launch an anti-terrorist campaign only if they are able and willing to apply massive force if need be. Second, terrorists have to ask themselves whether it is in their own best interest to cross the line between nuisance operations and attacks that threaten the vital interests of their enemies and will inevitably lead to massive counterblows.

Terrorists want total war — not in the sense that they will (or could) mobilize unlimited resources; in this respect their possibilities are limited. But they want their attacks to be unfettered by laws, norms, regulations, and conventions. In the terrorist conception of warfare there is no room for the Red Cross.

Love or respect?

*T*HE WHY-DO-THEY-HATE-US question is raised in this context, along with the question of what could be done about it — that is, the use of soft power in combating terrorism. Disturbing figures have been published about the low (and decreasing) popularity of America in foreign parts. Yet it is too often forgotten that international relations is not a popularity contest and that big and powerful countries have always been feared, resented, and envied; in short, they have not been loved. This has been the case since the days of the Assyrians and the Roman Empire. Neither the Ottoman nor the Spanish Empire, the Chinese, the Russian, nor the Japanese was ever popular. British sports were emulated in the colonies and French culture impressed the local elites in North Africa and Indochina, but this did not lead to political support, let alone identification with the rulers. Had there been public opinion polls in the days of Alexander the Great (let alone Ghengis Khan), the results, one suspects, would have been quite negative.

Big powers have been respected and feared but not loved for good reasons — even if benevolent, tactful, and on their best behavior, they were threatening simply because of their very existence. Smaller nations could not feel comfortable, especially if they were located close to them. This was the case even in times when there was more than one big power (which allowed for

the possibility of playing one against the other). It is all the more so at a time when only one superpower is left and the perceived threat looms even larger.

There is no known way for a big power to reduce this feeling on the part of other, smaller countries — short of committing suicide or, at the very least, by somehow becoming weaker and less threatening. A moderate and intelligent policy on the part of the great power, concessions, and good deeds may mitigate somewhat the perceived threat, but it cannot remove it, because potentially the big power remains dangerous. It could always change its policy and become nasty, arrogant, and aggressive. These are the unfortunate facts of international life.

Soft power is important but has its limitations. Joseph S. Nye has described it as based on culture and political ideas, as influenced by the seductiveness of democracy, human rights, and individual opportunity. This is a powerful argument, and it is true that Washington has seldom used all its opportunities, the public diplomacy budget being about one-quarter of one percentage point of the defense budget. But the question is always to be asked: Who is to be influenced by our values and ideas? They could be quite effective in Europe, less so in a country like Russia, and not at all among the radical Islamists who abhor democracy (for all sovereignty rests with Allah rather than the people), who believe that human rights and tolerance are imperialist inventions, and who want to have nothing to do with deeper Western values which are not those of the Koran as they interpret it.

> *Big, powerful countries have always been feared, resented, and envied.*

The work of the American radio stations during the Cold War ought to be recalled. They operated against much resistance at home but certainly had an impact on public opinion in Eastern Europe; according to evidence later received, even the Beatles had an influence on the younger generation in the Soviet Union. But, at present, radio and television has to be beamed to an audience 70 percent of which firmly believes that the operations of September 11 were staged by the Mossad. Such an audience will not be impressed by exposure to Western pop culture or a truthful, matter-of-fact coverage of the news. These societies may be vulnerable to covert manipulation of the kind conducted by the British government during World War 11: black (or at least gray) propaganda, rumors, half-truths, and outright lies. Societies steeped in belief in conspiracy theories will give credence to even the wildest rumors. But it is easy to imagine how an attempt to generate such propaganda would be received at home: It would be utterly rejected. Democratic countries are not able to engage in such practices except in a case of a major emergency, which at the present time has not yet arisen.

Big powers will never be loved, but in the terrorist context it is essential that they should be respected. As bin Laden's declarations prior to

September 11 show, it was lack of respect for America that made him launch his attacks; he felt certain that the risk he was running was small, for the United States was a paper tiger, lacking both the will and the capability to strike back. After all, the Americans ran from Beirut in the 1980s and from Mogadishu in 1993 after only a few attacks, and there was every reason to believe that they would do so again.

Response in proportion to threat

*L*IFE COULD BE made more difficult for terrorists by imposing more controls and restrictions wherever useful. But neither the rules of national nor those of international law are adequate to deal with terrorism. Many terrorists or suspected terrorists have been detained in America and in Europe, but only a handful have been put on trial and convicted, because inadmissible evidence was submitted or the authorities were reluctant to reveal the sources of their information — and thus lose those sources. As a result, many who were almost certainly involved in terrorist operations were never arrested, while others were acquitted or released from detention.

As for those who are still detained, there have been loud protests against a violation of elementary human rights. Activists have argued that the real danger is not terrorism (the extent and the consequences of which have been greatly exaggerated) but the war against terrorism. Is it not true that American society could survive a disaster on the scale of September 11 even if it occurred once a year? Should free societies so easily give up their freedoms, which have been fought for and achieved over many centuries?

Some have foretold the coming of fascism in America (and to a lesser extent in Europe); others have predicted an authoritarian regime gradually introduced by governments cleverly exploiting the present situation for their own anti-democratic purposes. And it is quite likely indeed that among those detained there have been and are innocent people and that some of the controls introduced have interfered with human rights. However, there is much reason to think that to combat terrorism effectively, considerably more stringent measures will be needed than those presently in force.

But these measures can be adopted only if there is overwhelming public support, and it would be unwise even to try to push them through until the learning process about the danger of terrorism in an age of weapons of mass destruction has made further progress. Time will tell. If devastating attacks do not occur, stringent anti-terrorist measures will not be necessary. But if they do happen, the demand for effective countermeasures will be overwhelming. One could perhaps argue that further limitations of freedom are bound to be ineffective because terrorist groups are likely to be small or very small in the future and therefore likely to slip through safety nets. This is indeed a danger — but the advice to abstain from safety measures is a coun-

sel of despair unlikely to be accepted.

There are political reasons to use these restrictions with caution, because Muslim groups are bound to be under special scrutiny and every precaution should be taken not to antagonize moderate elements in this community. Muslim organizations in Britain have complained that a young Pakistani or Arab is 10 times more likely to be stopped and interrogated by the police than other youths. The same is true for France and other countries. But the police, after all, have some reasons to be particularly interested in these young people rather than those from other groups. It will not be easy to find a just and easy way out of the dilemma, and those who have to deal with it are not to be envied.

It could well be that, as far as the recent past is concerned, the danger of terrorism has been over-stated. In the two world wars, more people were sometimes killed and more material damage caused in a few hours than through all the terrorist attacks in a recent year. True, our societies have since become more vulnerable and also far more sensitive regarding the loss of life, but the real issue at stake is not the attacks of the past few years but the coming dangers. Megaterrorism has not yet arrived; even 9-11 was a stage in between old-fashioned terrorism and the shape of things to come: the use of weapons of mass destruction.

> *The real issue at stake is not the attacks of the past few years but the coming dangers.*

The idea that such weapons should be used goes back at least 150 years. It was first enunciated by Karl Heinzen, a German radical — later a resident of Louisville, Kentucky and Boston, Massachusetts — soon after some Irish militants considered the use of poison gas in the British Parliament. But these were fantasies by a few eccentrics, too farfetched even for the science fiction writers of the day.

Today these have become real possibilities. For the first time in human history very small groups have, or will have, the potential to cause immense destruction. In a situation such as the present one there is always the danger of focusing entirely on the situation at hand — radical nationalist or religious groups with whom political solutions may be found. There is a danger of concentrating on Islamism and forgetting that the problem is a far wider one. Political solutions to deal with their grievances may sometimes be possible, but frequently they are not. Today's terrorists, in their majority, are not diplomats eager to negotiate or to find compromises. And even if some of them would be satisfied with less than total victory and the annihilation of the enemy, there will always be a more radical group eager to continue the struggle.

This was always the case, but in the past it mattered little: If some Irish radicals wanted to continue the struggle against the British in 1921-22, even after the mainstream rebels had signed a treaty with the British govern-

ment which gave them a free state, they were quickly defeated. Today even small groups matter a great deal precisely because of their enormous potential destructive power, their relative independence, the fact that they are not rational actors, and the possibility that their motivation may not be political in the first place.

Perhaps the scenario is too pessimistic; perhaps the weapons of mass destruction, for whatever reason, will never be used. But it would be the first time in human history that such arms, once invented, had not been used. In the last resort, the problem is, of course, the human condition.

In 1932, when Einstein attempted to induce Freud to support pacifism, Freud replied that there was no likelihood of suppressing humanity's aggressive tendencies. If there was any reason for hope, it was that people would turn away on rational grounds — that war had become too destructive, that there was no scope anymore in war for acts of heroism according to the old ideals.

Freud was partly correct: War (at least between great powers) has become far less likely for rational reasons. But his argument does not apply to terrorism motivated mainly not by political or economic interests, based not just on aggression but also on fanaticism with an admixture of madness.

Terrorism, therefore, will continue — not perhaps with the same intensity at all times, and some parts of the globe may be spared altogether. But there can be no victory, only an uphill struggle, at times successful, at others not.
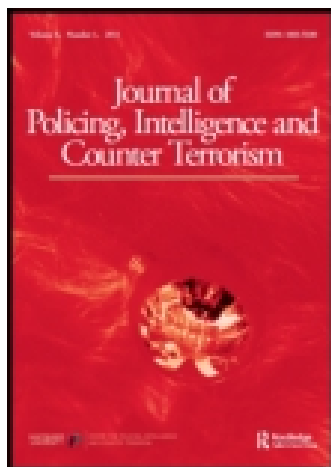
Containing the Narrative: Strategy and Tactics in Countering the Storyline of Global Jihad

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Containing the Narrative: Strategy and Tactics in Countering the Storyline of Global Jihad[1]

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ABSTRACT

It has long been recognised that telling a better story is an important part of countering the appeal of Global Jihad. The 'War on Terror' will be difficult to win if the 'War on Ideas' is lost. The mushrooming literature on terrorism notwithstanding, the counter-narrative issue has been the subject of surprisingly scant academic attention. Part of the problem is that this is an issue with relatively little empirical work. Still, significant inferences for a counter-narrative strategy can be drawn from existing research. Here we argue that counter-narratives must be tailored to different audiences and must be designed to attack particular mechanisms of radicalisation. In contrast to the top-down approach that has thus far been advocated to confront the claims of Global Jihad 'head on', what is actually needed is a bottom-up approach that reaches

vulnerable individuals early on by means of a nuanced approach that is sensitive to the multiple logics of radicalisation.

Global Jihad narrative in the pyramid model

The meta-narrative of Global Jihad can be broken down into four separate narratives. The *political narrative* is concerned with the evils of the West, including a neo-Marxist take on global inequities and distributive effects arising from Western hegemony and exploitation whose roots can be traced to Islam's best-known cultural historian, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). The *moral narrative* focuses on the internal contradictions of liberal democracies, which profess freedom as their core value and equality and justice as their subsidiary values, although these values are unrealisable ideals and indeed drivers of a society's moral decay. The *religious narrative* legitimises violent struggle to defend Islam against the crusader West. The *social-psychological narrative*, finally, employs a classic in-group/out-group strategy to brand as infidels those who do not buy into this syllogism, while promoting the brotherhood of arms as a means of countering social exclusion and of fulfilling a yearning for adventure and sacrifice that compels the 'true believer'.

This sounds all too familiar to the astute historical observer. The parallels in the meta-narratives that accompany Global Jihad on the one hand, and Germany's Red Army Faction and Italy's Red and ETA on the other hand, are striking, notably where the political, moral and social-psychological narratives are concerned. A key difference is the religious component that sets Islamic jihad against Western crusaders.

We have here historical echoes of the religiously-motivated civil wars that ravaged Europe throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; much of this is old wine in new bottles. The difference now is both the global scale of the struggle and the destructiveness of modern weaponry at the disposal of those intent on doing harm. We know how the story of Europe's religious strife ends, which makes it tempting to dismiss the meta-narrative of Global Jihad as an atavistic reaction that will be eviscerated by modernisation, analogous to what Karl Deutsch had famously postulated about nationalism. Modernisation, however, did not eradicate nationalism – it actually fostered its proliferation. Similarly, the diffusion of the Global Jihad narrative must be taken seriously. Understanding this narrative, who it is that joins in what parts of the narrative, and why, is necessary to begin constructing and targeting effective counter-narratives.

The Global Jihad narrative is conveniently analysed in terms of a pyramid of radicalisation in which the base includes Muslims who currently do not accept any of the Global Jihad narrative (Figure 1). A layer above the base represents those who sympathise with the first step of the jihadist frame: that the West is waging a war on Islam (Global Jihad level 1, pyramid second level). Next higher in the pyramid are Muslims who believe that jihadis are acting in defense of Islam and that their actions are morally and religiously justified (Global Jihad levels 2 and 3, pyramid

third level). Higher yet in the pyramid are Muslims who believe there is an individual duty to support and participate in the defence of Islam (Global Jihad level 4, pyramid fourth level).

There is some complexity here: Islam distinguishes between defence that must be mandated by legitimate authority, a group responsibility, and defence that is an individual obligation of every good Muslim. Osama bin Laden has argued that the current threat to Islam justifies an individual obligation not dependent on having state or religious authority behind it, and we here identify belief in the individual obligation as the highest, most radicalised level of the narrative pyramid.
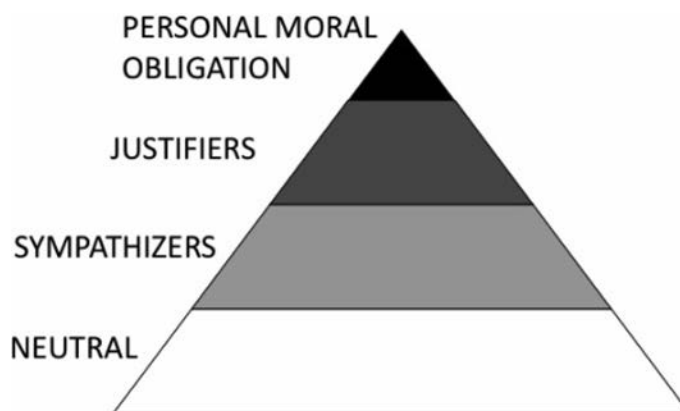

Figure 1 - The narrative pyramid

The implication of a pyramid model of the Global Jihad narrative is that the lower levels represent more people, with lower levels of radicalisation. Polling data offer some support for this implication.

ICM telephone polls of U.K. Muslims have asked the following question: "President Bush and Tony Blair have said the war against terrorism is not a war against Islam. Do you agree or disagree?" In November 2004, 80% of a national sample of 500 Muslims disagreed, that is, endorsed the idea that the war on terrorism is a war against Islam. In other words, about 80% of U.K. Muslims agreed with level (1) of the Global Jihad narrative.

A July 2005 ICM poll of U.K. Muslims asked a more extreme question: "Do you think any further attacks by British suicide bombers in the UK are justified or unjustified?" This poll was conducted after the July 7, 2005 bombings in the London underground, and 5% of a national sample of 500 Muslims said that further attacks were justified. In other words, about 5% of U.K. Muslims agreed with levels (2) and (3) of the Global Jihad narrative.

Unfortunately, we have not found any polling data asking about the individual obligation for jihad, level (4), but we speculate that the number agreeing would be less than 5%.

It is worth noting that in the case of U.K. Muslims in 2004-2005, the pyramid model is misshapen insofar as the neutral base of the pyramid, those who do not accept even the first level of the Global Jihad, that the West is engaged in war against Islam, is smaller than the next level. Only 20% of U.K. Muslims do not see a war on Islam, whereas 80% do see a war on Islam. Descriptively, then, the base of the pyramid is smaller than the first level of opinion.

An important implication of the pyramid model of radicalisation is that different parts or combinations of the Global Jihad narrative are held by Muslims in different layers of the pyramid. Here we do not suggest that all who justify suicide bombing also see a war on Islam, but we expect that most do. Similarly, not all who feel a personal moral obligation for jihad also defend suicide bombing, but we expect that many do. In short, those who accept more radical elements of the Global Jihad narrative are more likely (but not 100% certain) to accept less radical elements. Given that different subsets of Muslims accept different elements of the Global Jihad narrative, it seems likely that the origins, or sources or predictors of acceptance differ for different elements.

Again, polling data offers some support for this implication. The 2007 Pew poll of U.S. Muslims included two items similar to the items already cited from two different ICM polls of U.K. Muslims. Doubts about the war on terrorism are represented by this item: "Do you think that the U.S.-led war on terrorism is a sincere effort to reduce international terrorism or don't you believe that?" Justification of suicide bombing is represented by the following item: "Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do you personally feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?"

Seeing the war on terrorism as insincere and seeing suicide attacks in defence of Islam as justified are only weakly correlated ($r = .05$; 74% of respondents who say suicide attacks are often or sometimes justified also say the war on terrorism is insincere, whereas 63% of respondents who say suicide attacks are rarely or never justified also say the war on terrorism is insincere). In other words, there is little association between these two aspects of the Global Jihad narrative: knowing who believes one aspect seems to say little about who believes the other aspect.

Given this weak correlation, it is not surprising that the predictors of the two beliefs are different. By our calculation from Pew data, the best predictor of seeing the war on terrorism as insincere is belief that the U.S. made the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq ($r = .38$). But believing the U.S. made the wrong decision in Iraq does not predict justifying suicide attacks in defence of Islam ($r = .00$). In fact, the Pew poll does not include any strong predictor of justifying suicide attacks; the best of the weak predictors is age, with younger respondents justifying suicide attacks more than older ($r = .16$).

The opinions correlated here are from the lower layers of the opinion pyramid (Figure 1), the levels of neutrals, sympathisers, and justifiers of terrorism. The data come from a poll in which very few respondents can be expected to come from the apex of the opinion pyramid, where individuals feel a personal moral obligation to act in defence of Islam.

No question about personal moral obligation was included in the poll. Still one might wonder what the correlation would be among individuals at the apex. That is, what would the correlation be among apex individuals between seeing a war on Islam and justifying jihadist violence? As we would expect all at the apex to agree with both items, both seeing a war on Islam and justifying violence, the correlation would be approximately zero. Without variation there can be no co-variation, and it is co-variation that is measured in a correlation coefficient.

In short, polling data for U.K. and U.S. Muslims suggest that different aspects of the Global Jihad narrative are held by different subsets of U.S. and U.K. Muslims, and that the predictors of different aspects of the narrative also differ. But although we have sufficient data to parse this phenomenon, we do not have enough empirical evidence to gauge its micro-causal mechanisms: we know very little about the distal and proximate conditions that explain why any given individual happens to be more receptive to any one element of the narrative than another. In short, we have some idea who is likely to be more (or less) prone to the narrative; but not knowing why the narrative has traction with any given individual makes it difficult to devise an effective counter-narrative strategy. Nevertheless, the empirical evidence cited here is sufficient to conclude that when it comes to counter-narratives, one size does not fit all.

Global Jihad action in the pyramid model

For decades psychologists have studied the relation between beliefs and feelings (cognition and attitude) and action (behaviour). There is no simple generalisation to be made about this relation. Under some circumstances, beliefs and feelings are good predictors of action (in a voting booth, for instance). In most circumstances, however, beliefs and feelings are weak predictors of action (when strong social norms run counter to an individual's attitude, for instance). Cognitive science has consistently argued that most behaviour is not well explained by attitudes. This obtains for violence commitment by extremists: belief in and of itself is an unreliable predictor of an individual's predisposition towards committing acts of terrorism (Taylor, 2010). One reason is that when action consistent with beliefs and feelings is costly (such as committing oneself to a suicide bombing), the gap between belief and behaviour is likely to be large. Thus is the situation for the Global Jihad narrative: the opportunity cost of believing in a war on Islam and feeling that suicide attacks are justified in defence of Islam is relatively low; action in defence of Islam is disproportionately

costly in time, energy, and, at least in Western countries, risk of incarceration or death.

The gap between belief and action is evident in the contrast between polling data and security reports in the U.K., where 5% of adult Muslims saw reported suicide attacks as justified but only several hundred terrorism-related arrests have been made since 9/11. The 5% of Muslims projects to about 50,000 of the roughly one million adult Muslims in the U.K., indicating that only about 200 of the 50,000 U.K. Muslims have acted on their beliefs in the Global Jihad narrative. The difficulty for security forces is finding this needle in the haystack: the one among hundreds who will act on belief in even the most extreme aspects of the Global Jihad narrative.

A similar situation exists in the U.S. According to the 2007 Pew poll of an estimated 2.3 million U.S. Muslims, 8% find suicide attacks justified *often* or *sometimes*, but fewer than a hundred terrorism-related arrests have been made since 9/11.

The gap between the Global Jihad narrative and Global Jihad violence, at least in Western countries, indicates the need for another pyramid model, the pyramid of action (Figure 2). Here the base includes all Muslims who are politically inert, whatever their beliefs or feelings. The next higher level represents activists, engaged in legal and nonviolent political action, although some may join in one or another part of the Global Jihad narrative. Hizb ut-Tahrir members, for instance, are legal activists in both the U.K. and in the U.S. (Hizb had its first national meeting in the U.S. in Chicago in July 2009), even though Hizb, like Osama, is striving to re-establish a supra-national Caliphate.

Higher yet are radicals, engaged in illegal political action that may include violence. Finally, at the apex of the action pyramid are the terrorists – radicals who target lethal violence at civilians.

It is important to distinguish between non-violent and violent political behaviour, because, ultimately, it is the latter that is of primary concern for the purposes of public security. The former is of interest only if there is evidence that it presages the latter. For example, the movement for voting rights for women, and the civil-rights movement militating for racial equality, were both considered radical and engaged in some illegal political action. With the benefit of hindsight, however, would we judge them as a liability or as an asset to the body politic?

We believe that the borders between the levels of the action pyramid represent the most important transition points of radicalisation in action: from doing nothing to doing something; from legal political action to illegal political action; and from illegal political action to killing civilians. It is important to be clear, however, that the action pyramid is neither a conveyor belt nor a stage theory in which an individual must progress through each succeeding level in a linear fashion to become a terrorist. It is not necessary to be an activist to become a radical, nor is it necessary to be involved in nonviolent radical action to move to violent radical action.
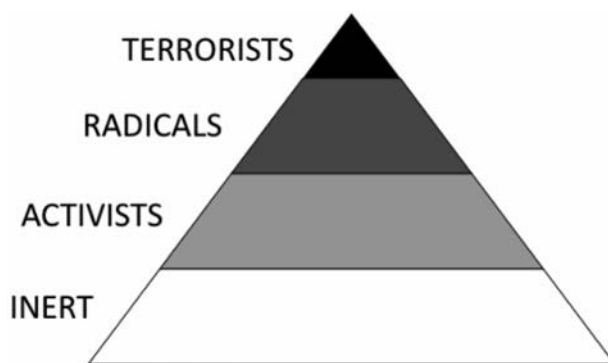
Figure 2 – The action pyramid

Mechanisms of radicalisation

Any attempt at formulating a stage theory of radicalisation in action is contradicted by the multiple mechanisms of radicalisation identified at individual, group, and mass levels. The following mechanisms of radicalisation have been identified, mostly from case materials about terrorist groups and terrorist individuals. No claim is made that this is an exhaustive list; indeed, additional mechanisms have been identified since the first publication of this approach by McCauley and Moskalenko (2008).

Nor is there any claim that each mechanism is sufficient for radicalisation to illegal political action and protest. Rather multiple mechanisms are usually seen at work on the same individual, and the combination of mechanisms may be synergistic rather than simply adding independent pushes toward radicalisation. Personal and group grievance, for instance, probably tend to induce one another. Personal grievance will lead an individual to interact with others sharing the same grievance, and the personal becomes political. Similarly group grievance that moves an individual to political action will often lead to experiences of police repression, and the political becomes personal.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

1. *Personal grievance.* An individual is angry and seeks revenge for government action that harms self or loved ones. Personal grievance usually does not lead to action unless interpreted as part of some larger group grievance. Chechen Black Widows revenging brothers and husbands killed by Russians are a commonly cited example.

2. *Group grievance.* Identification with a group perceived as victims can radicalise an individual who has not personally experienced any grievance. This includes 'lone-wolf terrorism' and 'sudden jihad syndrome', with such examples as the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, as well as Mohammed Rea Taheri-azar, and Momin Khawaja.

3. *Self-persuasion in action – the slippery slope.* This mechanism is rooted in the famous Milgram experiment and is consistent with the image of a 'conveyor belt', where people are gradually radicalised in a step-by-step process.

4. *Love*. Individuals can join an existing radical group because someone they love – friend, romantic partner, family member – asks them, or because they want to aid and protect a loved one. Sometimes a member of a radical group may cultivate a personal connection with a potential recruit.

5. *Fear*. In a failed state, individuals can join a militant group because they feel safer with friends with guns than on the street alone. Examples are found among militants of the FARQ in Colombia and sectarian groups in Iraq.

6. *Thrill, Status, Money*. This mechanism depends on individual preferences, usually those of young males. Examples include joining the US Marine Corps, setting Improvised Explosive Devices in Iraq or Afghanistan, or joining a street gang.

SMALL GROUP LEVEL

7. *Group polarisation*. Discussion among members of a like-minded group moves members further in the initially agree-upon direction. Two tendencies contribute: individuals not wanting to fall behind in representing group-favoured values, and hearing a preponderance of arguments in the group-favoured direction.

8. *Group competition*. Radicalisation can occur when non-state actors compete with a state, compete against non-state groups (often in the form of 'outbidding' other groups), and when factions of the same group compete with one another (such as multiple fissions within the IRA).

9. *Extreme cohesion under isolation/threat*. This multiplier of group dynamics (mechanisms 7 and 8) occurs for underground groups, cults, and small groups in combat.

MASS LEVEL

10. *External threat*. This mechanism is at work at both the group level (mechanism 8) and the mass level. External threats lead to increased group identification, magnified ethnic entrepreneurship and the power of leaders, sanctions for in-group deviates, and idealised in-group values. An example is the U.S. reaction to 9/11 and the Somali diaspora's reaction to Ethiopian (Christian) troops entering Somalia in 2006.

11. *Hate*. An essentialised and dehumanised view of the enemy facilitates killing by ethnic or religious category, including civilians as well as militants and the military.

12. *Martyrdom*. Martyrs can radicalise a mass audience by their example of sacrifice. A classic example is the 1981 hunger strike in which 10 IRA/INLA prisoners perished but the Republican cause was resuscitated.

For the purpose of understanding the radicalisation pyramid, it is important to notice that five of the six individual-level mechanisms do not depend on accepting new ideas from a radical ideology or narrative. Personal grievance, slippery slope, love, fear, and thrill-seeking can move individuals to radical action, including joining an existing radical group. In particular, these five mechanisms do not depend on the existence or acceptance of the narrative of Global Jihad.

In many cases, a radical narrative or ideology is learned *after* an individual joins a radical group. In these cases the narrative is less a cause than a rationalisation of commitment to radical action. In rational-choice terms, we might say that the purpose of the narrative is to reduce transaction costs of group interaction by building and reinforcing group cohesion and group consensus about action. Narratives may thus be better conceived of as enablers rather than as drivers of radicalisation. Here it is important to notice that, to the extent that narratives are developed out of action and small group commitments, the potential for blocking radicalisation by counter-narratives is limited.

Relating the two pyramids

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that relating the two pyramids, the narrative pyramid and the action pyramid, is anything but straightforward. Figure 3 represents, for each action level, a possible distribution of acceptance of the four aspects of the Global Jihad narrative.

In this representation, acceptance of narrative elements is correlated with levels of action, such that accepting a personal moral obligation for jihad – relative thickness of the black band within each action level – is most likely among the terrorists and least likely among the inert. Similarly, belief in none of the aspects of the Global Jihad narrative – relative thickness of the white band within each action level – is most likely among the inert and least likely among the terrorists.

But the correlation is only probabilistic, not deterministic. A few individual jihadist terrorists may accept no part of the Global Jihad narrative – for instance an individual who joined a terrorist group for the thrill of guns and fighting. And there may be a few politically inert individuals who feel a personal moral obligation for jihad – for instance an individual who does not want to hurt his parents by leaving for jihad.
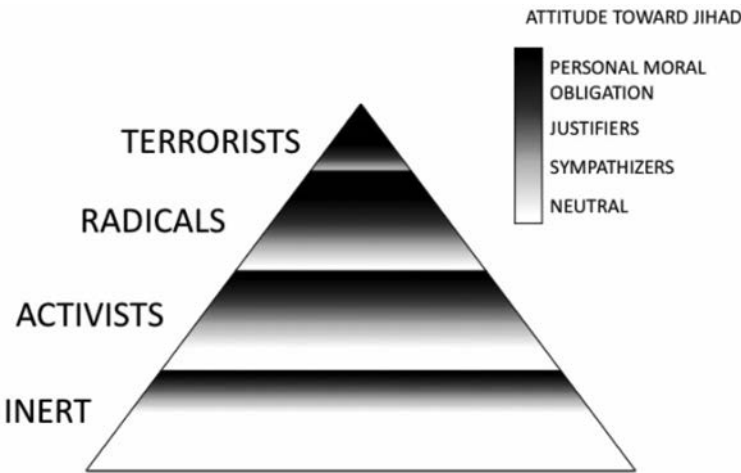

Figure 3 - Possible distribution of acceptance

As already described, it is neither obvious nor known what parts of the Global Jihad narrative appear with what frequency in different levels of the action pyramid. Mechanisms of radicalisation that do not depend on ideology or narrative imply that the Global Jihad narrative is not necessary for radicalisation in action. It seems likely that participation in a radical jihadist group soon teaches most or all of the Global Jihad narrative, but the narrative is not necessary to initiate radical action.

Particularly needed is a better understanding of how individuals and groups shift between sympathy, justification, and support for illegal political activity (Sageman, 2007) and the way this shift relates to the "multiple economic, social, political, and organizational relations that span borders" (Schiller *et al*, 1992, p. 1; see also Bobbitt, 2002). Are there tipping points that put individuals 'over the edge' into action? Does a critical mass of drivers need to be accumulated for individuals to cross thresholds? Are there quantum leaps from illegal political action such as banned marches and property damage to lethal violence against human targets? What precipitates such leaps?

We turn now to consider briefly issues of efficacy and human rights that are raised by recognising the weak relation between narrative and action.

Efficacy and efficiency issues

Security and intelligence agencies' mandate is not to control radicalisation but to protect against violent threats. A common presumption is that radical ideas can translate into a violent threat, and not just any type of violence but politically-motivated violence that is directed at general populations, less for the purpose of inflicting physical harm as for maximising psychological impact in order to disrupt legitimate authority and the capacity to govern.

Whereas bravado about violence proliferates among radicals, not only are they unlikely to act on it, but those most likely to act also do not come from the circle of radicals engaged in bravado. To the contrary, those prone to violence are fully aware of the costs associated with their activity and, as rational actors, will thus be intent not to draw attention to themselves. In other words, zeroing in on 'narrative radicals' is likely to generate an ineffective diversion of resources from 'action radicals', as false positives proliferate.

Taken together, the three pyramids indicate that the relationship between radical ideas and radical violence is problematic. It is akin to claiming that people who are attracted by child pornography are necessarily paedophiles: only a fraction of people who look at child pornography actually act out as paedophiles and paedophiles are not necessarily attracted to child pornography. Taylor (2010) has also highlighted similarly problematic causal inferences that are commonly drawn with respect to gambling, hate activities, and the relationship between new media, especially radical content posted on the Internet, and political violence.

Another parallel to the problem of focusing on 'narrative radicals' is the search for suspicious financial transactions. In accordance with the United Nation's Counter-Terrorism Initiative, many countries have now enacted legislation that requires

banks to flag suspicious transactions, usually defined by an arbitrarily low threshold (usually about \$10,000). As a result, the number of suspect transactions has grown exponentially. Yet, the resources devoted to acting on those flagged transactions have grown arithmetically (at best). As a result, the number of false positives has escalated while detection of genuinely illicit transactions has actually declined (Takáts, 2009).

Instead of conceiving the process of radicalisation as a pathway (Bux, 2007; see also Hegghammer, 2006; Horgan, 2008; Kirby, 2007; Kohlmann, 2008; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2009), a conveyor belt of sorts with a mechanistic understanding of individuals set on a quasi-determinist trajectory, the evidence points, instead, to plural pathways with no profile trajectory (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2009). Models that treat radicalisation as a single pathway that starts at political sympathy and ends in political violence, run the risk of oversimplifying what is actually quite a heterogeneous process by making many of the variables that matter exogenous to the model (Magouirk *et al*, 2008; see also Smith *et al*, 2002: Hamm, 2007). Examples exist of individuals who "self-radicalise" (Kirby, 2007, pp. 415-28), individuals who are specifically targeted by recruiters (Hegghammer, 2006, pp. 39-60; see also O'Neil & McGrory, 2006), individuals recruited by family or friendship groups (Magouirk *et al*, 2009), and more recently individuals who are radicalised through media, largely the Internet (Kohlmann, pp. 95-109; see also Sternersen, 2008; Lia, 2006).

Human rights issues

Arguments of efficacy aside, there is the human rights perspective to be considered. Democracies have an unfortunate history of labelling any serious challenge to the status quo as radicalism. While the history of the rise of the modern security and police state throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries need not detain us here (Emerson, 1968), states cannot be careful enough when endeavouring to control or censor thought and beliefs. Indeed, the rise of democratic pluralism can be read as the struggle against state control and censorship of views from the margins. Some secularists today would like to attribute many of the world's ills to religion (Dawkins, 2006). Their inference is that any type of extremist religion ought to be marginalised or banned. The problem with this approach is that it misses the crux of the problem: only actual violence is the responsibility of security forces.

Democracies are premised on the assumption that freedom of speech and thought should prevail, which is why free speech is protected from arbitrary government interference. Only under very specific circumstances is an utterance in and of itself a crime. Rather, the criminal justice system in a democracy is generally structured to deal with acts of crime *ex post facto*. Intent and motivation are not normally punishable; they only factor into the degree of punishment.

Nor is it defensible in a liberal democracy to use ethnic origin or broad religious affiliation alone as grounds to justify closer scrutiny. To be sure, profiling has long been an important part of law enforcement (del Carmen, 2008). However, the effectiveness of profiling as a counter-terrorism tactic remains under-evaluated (Gabbidon *et al*, 2009). Not knowing its effectiveness makes the practice all the more controversial. When employed security officials who have been adequately trained in

the tactic, profiling has proven to be an effective and efficient instrument (Blumkin & Margalioth, 2008).

Operation Jetway and Operation Pipeline, both of which employ behaviour-recognition patterns have been used effectively by law enforcement agencies, particularly drug enforcement units, in North America for over a decade. Similar training has been used for many years by the Israeli security forces as a tool for combating terrorism, in particular to prevent suicide bombings. Behaviour pattern recognition training, however, is very different than racial profiling. The former has been established in case law as an acceptable law enforcement practice (Kerr & McGill, 2007), while the latter has only served to alienate entire communities. Such alienation is counter-productive in that it reifies collective identity and congeals a captive audience which hitherto had been much more multipolar and thus less receptive to the Jihadi narrative.

With courts as reticent to convict based on terrorist motivation and intent as on creed or belonging, and with political opinion not necessarily translating into actual illegal action, focus on the Global Jihad narrative is not a fruitful domain for intelligence and law enforcement. Rather, the war of ideas that can be tracked in polls, focus groups, web sites and video releases must be separated from the war on terrorists. The pyramid of narrative and the pyramid of action can together contribute to this kind of understanding and this kind of action.

Another way to tackle the aim of counter-narratives is to invert the problem. The evidence in this article suggests that one way to think about Global Jihad is as a massive 'free-rider' problem: grievances may be shared widely, but the call to arms is not. Moreover, those who share the call to arms may have motives other than grievances to join the fight. For a counter-narrative strategy to be strategic, then, it should (1) frustrate the violent extremists by exacerbating their free-rider problem and (2) capture those individuals who join in the meta-narrative without the meta-narrative driving their behaviour.

The evidence in this article suggests that the way to aggravate the free-rider problem is to widen the gap between narrative and behaviour. That is best done by (1) raising the costs associated with acting on violent beliefs (which liberal democracies' legislators and security forces appear to have done quite successfully in recent years), and (2) mitigating the mechanisms of radicalisation that can push some individuals to bear such costs nonetheless. On both points, the findings of research on counter-narratives corroborate findings from work on opposing terrorist organisations (e.g. Berman, 2009, Sageman, 2004).

Operationalising counter-narratives: Top down or bottom up?

One approach to the war of ideas would give priority to top-down counter-narratives that target (1) individuals who are higher up in the pyramid and (2) individuals who are particularly prone to an upward trajectory in the pyramidal model. The more radicalised individuals higher up the pyramid are in one sense an easier target because there are fewer of them. This makes the counter-narrative easier

to tailor but also makes it more difficult to communicate the message to the target audience. In addition, those individuals who are already more radicalised are likely to be more resistant to counter-narratives.

The second set of individuals is even more complicated to address because, in each level of the pyramid – in both the narrative pyramid or the action pyramid – only a few will move toward greater radicalisation in any given period of time. And, as we shown, there are many mechanisms of radicalisation and thus many different paths to radicalisation. The number of paths is calculated by counting up all possible combinations of the twelve mechanisms identified. A 'profile' of individuals likely to show increased radicalisation is thus unlikely to be helpful.

Tentatively, then, we conclude that the 'top-down' approach is not promising. Radicals and terrorists are difficult to reach and difficult to move, and no profile exists for predicting those most susceptible to radicalisation. A lesser but still significant problem is that focusing on the more radicalised presents a real predicament for research. The higher up in the radicalisation pyramid people are – whether narrative or action pyramid – the less likely they are to collaborate with researchers for fear of risking the attention of security forces.

Thus, we lean toward the view that the war of ideas should give priority to a 'bottom-up' focus on the lower levels of the two pyramids. The public-opinion evidence cited in this article has already suggested how we can make some inroads into understanding what are sometimes referred to as 'at-risk' or 'vulnerable' communities. Polling data can assess the percentages of Muslims who accept either none of the Global Jihad narratives; level one of the narrative, the 'war on Islam'; and levels two and three of the narrative, the justification of suicide bombing in defence of Islam. Polling data could track changes in these percentages as evidence of success of counter-narratives, and in the long run provide an evidence-based science of counter-narratives against the Global Jihad narrative.

A poll along these lines surveying Ottawa Muslims as conducted by the authors provides another kind of evidence relating to counter-narratives (McCauley *et al*, 2010). Results of the poll indicated, not surprisingly, that respondents approving one militant group (e.g. Hamas) were likely to approve of others (e.g. Hezbollah, Al Qaeda). Similarly, results indicated that respondents approving one Western country (e.g. Canada) were likely to approve others (e.g. U.S., Israel). More surprising was the fact that approval of militant groups was unrelated to approval of Western countries. Approval of Hamas was not related to disapproval of Israel, for instance.

If replicated for other Muslim populations, these results would have significant implications for countering the Global Jihad narrative. It seems that we cannot count on turning Muslims against Islamic militants via counter-narratives that help Muslims feel more positive toward the West. Similarly, perhaps we cannot count on making Muslims more positive toward the West by turning them against Islamic militants. Although it is easy to assume that Muslims must choose between Islamic militants and the West (e.g. Rosenau, 2006), our results suggest that the war of ideas against the Global Jihad narrative must have two separate and independent targets: moving Muslims against militants and moving Muslims toward the West.

Finally, it is important to raise another kind of difficulty with counter-narratives, no matter whether the target is top-down or bottom-up. The danger is that a message

may be effective with the target audience but have unintended consequences for those not immediately targeted. In this, counter-narratives are similar to more kinetic forms of counterinsurgency: both can have collateral damage that undermines political goals. For instance, a message arguing that Islam does not approve killing enemy civilians might combat acceptance of suicide bombing in defence of Islam, but might at the same time reinforce, at least implicitly, that Western countries are enemies engaged in war against Islam.

Conclusion

We have argued that the war of ideas against the Global Jihadist narrative must be distinguished from the war against active terrorists. The 9/11 Commission (2004, p. 363) concluded in its final report that eliminating al-Qaida as a formidable danger ultimately requires "prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism". However, from the analysis in this article it follows that violent political action must be the focus of security forces, whereas the war of ideas is in the political realm of choosing and promoting political policies.

In combating terrorism, it is always tempting to focus on the apex of the pyramid that represents the most immediate threat. We suggest instead that counter-narratives should take a bottom-up approach. Their payoff is likely to be greatest among sympathisers and those at-risk of becoming sympathisers as it will be more difficult to persuade already committed supporters: the higher in the pyramid an individual is located, the less traction counter-narratives are likely to have. Rather than positing a stark division between the West and Islam that insists on the superiority of Western values, counter-narratives should focus instead on mitigating mechanisms of radicalisation to make extremism and associated violence as unattractive and costly as possible. Ideology is a poor predictor of behaviour; counter-narratives need to target actual mechanism of radicalisation instead.

Counter-narratives run the risk of what the military refers to as the 'ready-fire-aim' problem: we think we know the source of the problem when, in fact, the issue is more complex and nuanced than it initially appears. No matter how well-intentioned, a counter-narrative strategy is prone to diffusing scarce resources without a measurable effect or spawning unintended consequences if not carefully conceptualised and operationalised. In this regard, we contend that different parts of the Global Jihad narrative are held by different audiences, and that each part, its prospective audience, and the enabling mechanism(s) of radicalisation must be targeted separately for counter-narratives to be effective.

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Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism

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This article conceptualizes political radicalization as a dimension of increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in support of intergroup conflict and violence. Across individuals, groups, and mass publics, twelve mechanisms of radicalization are distinguished. For ten of these mechanisms, radicalization occurs in a context of group identification and reaction to perceived threat to the ingroup. The variety and strength of reactive mechanisms point to the need to understand radicalization—including the extremes of terrorism—as emerging more from the dynamics of intergroup conflict than from the vicissitudes of individual psychology.

Keywords pyramid model, radicalization, terrorism

In this article we describe mechanisms of radicalization relevant to understanding the origins of terrorism. We must immediately acknowledge that the idea of *mechanism* is somewhat different in different domains of social science, sometimes with conflicting definitions used within a single discipline.[1,2] Here we use *mechanism* in the general sense traditionally employed in Psychology: "the means or manner in which something is accomplished. Thus, the mechanism of vision includes the physical stimulus and the physiological and neural processes involved."[3]

Functionally, political radicalization is increased preparation for and commitment to intergroup conflict. Descriptively, radicalization means change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the ingroup. How does this happen? How do individuals, groups, and mass publics move toward conflict and violence?

This question applies as well to state preparation for conflict as to non-state preparation for conflict. A state and its citizens are radicalized in the run-up to interstate conflicts and war, and, as evident in the U.S. after the attacks of September 11, 2001, in state response to terrorism as well. But common discourse about radicalization focuses on non-state groups that represent a challenge or threat to the state. Similarly, terrorism as a means of political control is predominantly government work,[4] but common discourse associates terrorism with the actions of non-state groups. In this paper, we focus on the common usage in which radicalization refers to increasing extremity of non-state challenges to state authority. We aim to show, however, how state action can contribute to radicalization of non-state groups.

Radicalization in the Pyramid Model

Individual and Mass Radicalization

There are many possible meanings of radicalization, but most of the relevant distinctions can be represented with the usual social psychological distinctions among belief, feeling, and behavior. Of course it is radicalization of behavior that is of greatest practical concern. In a political context this means increasing time, money, risk-taking, and violence in support of a political cause. As every political cause is associated with a particular group that cares about this cause, we may equally say that behavioral radicalization means increasing time, money, risk-taking, and violence in support of a political group.

If at a given point in time we compare those who are more and less behaviorally committed, we are likely to find differences in both beliefs and feelings. Social movement activists are likely to share more than non-activists the beliefs or "frames" that the movement uses to summarize and convey its mission.[5] Anti-poverty activists, for instance, tend to see different causes of poverty than non-activists.[6] Radicalization of many kinds may be associated with a syndrome of beliefs about the current situation and its history:[7] 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).

Similarly those who do more are likely to have different and stronger feelings about the conflict than those who do less.[8,9] Activists are likely to feel more sadness and humiliation with group failures, more joy and pride with group success, more anger and fear at the perfidy or violence of the enemies of their cause.

These feelings are the expression of group identification: caring about what happens to the group, especially in relations with other groups.[10] Group identification can even lead to feelings of guilt about wrongdoing perpetrated by others, if the others are members of the group identified with.[11] The human capacity to care about large and impersonal collectivities as if they were an extended family is the foundation of mass politics, and the pre-requisite for national, ethnic, and religious group conflict.[12,13]

Because terrorists are few in relation to all those who share their beliefs and feelings, the terrorists may be thought of as the apex of a pyramid.[14] The base of the pyramid is composed of all who sympathize with the goals the terrorists say they are fighting for. In Northern Ireland, for instance, the base of the pyramid of support for the IRA was all those who agreed "Brits out." In the U.S., the base of the pyramid of support for anti-government action is the forty percent of Americans who agree that "The federal government has become so large and powerful that it poses an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens."[15]

From base to apex, higher levels of the pyramid are associated with decreased numbers but increased radicalization of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors. Thus one way of thinking about radicalization is that it is the gradient that distinguishes terrorists from their base of sympathizers. How do individuals move from the base to the extremes of terrorist violence at the apex?

Radicalization in Groups

Economists and political scientists using a rational-choice framework are fond of pointing out that individuals should be reluctant to commit real resources of time, money, and risk-taking to advance the cause of a large group. The benefits of advancing the group are available to all group members, whereas the costs are borne by the activists. Thus the rational choice for an individual who cares about a group cause is to do nothing, let other individuals pay the costs, and benefit from any advance for the group as a free-rider.[16]

The classic answer to the problem of mobilizing individuals for social action is some kind of coercion, that is, punishment for free-riding. Coercion may come from law or government regulation (if free-riders can be accurately identified), from individual morality (internal norms), or from informal face-to-face sanctions (small group norms). Particularly in a small group, personal morality and group norms can be difficult to separate, because individual morality is usually anchored in some kind of group consensus. And in a small face-to-face group where each member and each member's behavior is known to others, social rewards for participation and social punishments for free-riding can make behavioral commitment rational after all. When groups can be linked through common members or common leaders into a larger multi-group organization, social action becomes possible on a larger scale.

Thus radicalization and terrorism are made possible by bringing individuals into small groups. Sometimes these groups are linked into a larger organization, but not always. The small group is necessary for action, but the organization is not. The original Al Qaeda was an organization of groups or cells, but today the groups are mostly on their own and disconnected from any larger organization. The Madrid bombers were apparently more a self-organizing small group than a cell embedded in Al Qaeda.

Radicalization of Individuals, Groups, and Masses

As indicated in the preceding discussion, radicalization can occur at different levels. Individuals are radicalized by personal grievances and by identity-group grievances as conveyed by mass media, rumor, or the testimony of others. Individuals are also

Table 1. Pathways to violence: Mechanisms of political radicalization at individual, group, and mass-public levels

Level of radicalization	Mechanism
	1. Personal victimization
Individual	2. Political grievance
	3. Joining a radical group—the slippery slope
	4. Joining a radical group—the power of love
	5. Extremity shift in like-minded groups
Group	6. Extreme cohesion under isolation and threat
	7. Competition for the same base of support
	8. Competition with state power—condensation
	9. Within-group competition—fissioning
Mass	10. Jujitsu politics
	11. Hate
	12. Martyrdom

radicalized as members of small face-to-face groups. Political groups and mass publics are radicalized in conflict with states and with other political groups. Each of these levels requires separate attention. Table 1 identifies the twelve mechanisms at three levels that we will now describe.

1. Individual Radicalization by Personal Victimization

This is a path much cited in explanations of suicide terrorists. Chechen Black Widows are described as seeking revenge against Russians for their own experience of rape or for the deaths of their menfolk.[17] Tamil Tigers of the suicide brigades called ''Black Tigers'' are often described as survivors of Sinhalese atrocities. Accounts of Palestinian suicide terrorists often cite revenge for IDF attacks on neighbors or loved ones as a motive for self-sacrifice.

The importance of personal grievance as a motive for terrorism goes back at least as far as Russian terrorists of the late 1800s. Thus Andrei Zhelyabov, a leader of terrorist organization People's Will and a mastermind of a number of political assassinations, including the coordinated bombs that killed Czar Alexander II, sought out terrorist activity in a pledge to revenge the many wrongs by the monarchist regime he experienced firsthand.[18] The rape of his favorite aunt by their landmaster, ignored by local police; his dismissal from university without right to reapply for participating in an innocent protest against arbitrary grading practices; and finally, a four-month jail sentence for sending a friendly note to an imprisoned friend—these grievances shaped and hardened Zhelyabov's resolve to use violence against the ruling elite.

Data are hard to come by on how many terrorists, or how many suicide terrorists, have a personal history of victimization that might explain their sacrifice. Of course there may be individuals with such a history who nevertheless would not have moved to violence without seeing their victimization joined to the victimization of their ethnic or national group. That is, the percentage with a history of personal victimization is an upper bound of the power of a personal-revenge explanation, rather than a reliable estimate of this power. A social psychological view would be

that personal grievance is unlikely to account for group sacrifice unless the personal is framed and interpreted as representative of group grievance.

2. Individual Radicalization by Political Grievance

Sometimes an individual is moved to individual radical action and violence in response to political trends or events. Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, is one example. Over eighteen years, Kaczynski emerged occasionally from his wilderness cabin to send letter bombs to people representing the technological progress he feared and detested.

Another example is Buford Furrow, who turned himself in to police in August 1999 after wounding five at a Jewish Community Center and later killing a Filipino postman. He seems to have been a devotee of white supremacist groups but acted alone in planning and carrying out these attacks.

Similarly, John Allen Muhammad, with his protégé Lee Boyd Malvo, killed ten people in the Washington area in 47 days of sniper attacks in September and October 2002. Muhammad, a convert to Islam and black separatism, was attempting to extort ten million dollars with which to found a pure black community in Canada.[19] Muhammad has not been forthcoming about his motivation, but it appears he identified with what he perceived to be the victimization of black people in the U.S.

Cases of individual radicalization to political violence, that is, cases in which the individual acts alone rather than as part of a group, are relatively rare. In such cases, the individual is likely to have some association with a larger intellectual movement—as Kaczynski related to a larger movement of survivalists, as Furrow associated with white supremacists, and as Muhammad participated for a period in the Nation of Islam.

More than in any other category of radicalization, there is a probability of some degree of psychopathology. Psychiatric testimony at his trial indicted that Kaczynski suffered from paranoid schizophrenia. The prosecution did not seek the death penalty for Furrow because he had a history of inpatient hospital treatment for mental disorder. Groups of radicals, especially those who get as far as terrorism, are unlikely to recruit or tolerate the unreliability that goes with psychopathology. Individualist radicals can be responding, at least in part, to their private demons.

An interesting example of the difficulty of separating personal and group grievance is Matt Hale, who in 1998 was the leader of a white supremacist group. Hale graduated from law school, passed the bar exam, was hired by a law firm, but lost his job when the Illinois Bar denied his law license on the basis of racism. In 2005, Hale was sentenced to prison for soliciting the murder of federal judge Joan Lefkow. The personal and political are so closely intertwined in this case that it is impossible to say what Hale would have done had he been granted his law license.

3. Individual Radicalization in Joining a Radical Group—The Slippery Slope

As just noted, it is rare that an individual moves from sympathizer to activist by suddenly undertaking some major risk or sacrifice. Typically an individual's progress into a terrorist group is slow and gradual, with many smaller tests before being trusted in more important missions, and with many non-violent tasks before being asked to use gun or bomb (for Red Army Faction and Basque ETA recruits, see note 20, p. 237; for IRA recruits see note 21).

Of course there are occasional examples of an individual moving from sympathy to extreme violence in a single giant step. Wafa Idriss, the first female Palestinian suicide bomber, seems to have carried out her mission within two weeks of deciding to become a suicide bomber. Although it is beyond the scope of the present paper to examine this question systematically, we believe that examples of giant-step transition to violence are notable precisely because they are relatively uncommon.

A vivid example of gradual radicalization comes from Della Porta,[22] who quotes an Italian militant as follows: "A choice [made] in cold blood, such as 'now I will become a terrorist,' [did] not exist. It was a step-by-step evolution, which passed through a kind of human relation that I had with Guido, and with the people I worked with."

The power of step-by-step self-persuasion through one's own behavior is well studied in social psychology. Hundreds of experiments have shown a strong tendency for self-justification after an individual does something stupid or sleazy. An individual who is sucked into saying a dull experiment is fun, or into writing an essay in favor of a cause the individual disagrees with, is likely to find reasons to justify the behavior: the experiment wasn't half bad, keeping Communists from speaking on campus is a good idea. Dissonance theory[23] understands this tendency as an effort to reduce the inconsistency between positive self-image and bad behavior. In other words, it is easier to find reasons for what we do than to do what we find reason for.

Perhaps the most striking example of the power of self-radicalization is found in one of the experimental variations introduced by Milgram[24] in his famous studies of obedience. In the basic paradigm, normal individuals who draw the role of teacher in a psychology experiment will give high levels of shock to a protesting "victim" (actually an accomplice of the experimenter) who drew the role of learner. Complete obedience requires the teacher to raise the shock administered for mistakes from 15 to 450 volts in 15-volt increments. About 60% of teachers are completely obedient.

Less well known is the variation in which it is not the experimenter who comes up with the idea of raising the shock level with each mistake. In this variation, a "co-teacher" (another accomplice of the experimenter) asks and grades the questions, while the naïve teacher gives the shocks. The experimenter, summoned away for a "phone call," is no longer in the room when the "co-teacher" comes up with the idea of raising the shock level with each mistake. Despite the absence of the experimenter and his authority, 20% of teachers progress to administering 450 volts.

The dissonance explanation of the 20% who go all the way is that each shock becomes a reason to give the next shock. The closely graded shock levels represent a kind of slippery slope in which refusing to give the next shock requires recognizing that there was something wrong with giving the last shock. If 300 volts was ok, how can 315 volts be wrong? But if 315 volts is wrong, how can 300 volts be right?

In Milgram's studies, the dependent variable is radicalization in behavior, not in thoughts or feelings. The latter were not measured, and there is no way of knowing whether increasing shock levels were associated with changes in perception of and attitude toward the victim.

In another famous study, Zimbardo[25] was able to demonstrate radicalization in behavior of one group of participants (playing roles of prison guards) toward another group (playing the role of prisoners). Psychologically stable male student volunteers were randomly assigned to act as either a guard or a prisoner in a simulated prison environment. Left to their own devices, over the course of just a few days, the guards gradually escalated their abuse (in the form of humiliation and

arbitrary punishment) toward the prisoners to the degree that Zimbardo was forced to terminate the experiment.

As in Milgram's experiment, feelings and beliefs were not measured during the Prison Experiment. But there is an obvious progression toward more dehumanizing treatment of the prisoners, starting from making them do push-ups, moving on to making them eat filthy food, and ending with forcing them to act out sexually suggestive plays. In post-experiment interviews, one of the ''guards'' suggested that his increasingly cruel treatment of the ''prisoners'' was the result of his curiosity as to how much the ''prisoners'' would let him get away with. For this guard, the fact that he went too far is the fault of the ''prisoners'' who did not stand up for themselves.

There is then a pattern of slowly increasing radical behavior—behavior that harms others—in both the Milgram experiments and Zimbardo's prison experiment. In dissonance experiments and in Zimbardo's post-experimental inquiry, we see the power of self-persuasion in justifying one's own behavior. Self-radicalization is a slippery slope of increasingly extreme behaviors, with increasingly extreme reasons and justifications icing the slope.

4. Individual Radicalization in Joining a Radical Group—The Power of Love

This is the path to radicalization that has received most attention in recent theorizing about terrorism.[26] Individuals are recruited to a terrorist group via personal connections with existing terrorists. No terrorist wants to try to recruit someone who might betray the terrorists to the authorities. In practice, this means recruiting from the network of friends, lovers, and family.

Trust may determine the network within which radicals and terrorists recruit, but love often determines who will join. The pull of romantic and comradely love can be as strong as politics in moving individuals into an underground group. Asked about his motivations for going underground, a member of the Italian Brigate Rosse (BR) made this reply: "There are many things I cannot explain by analyzing the political situation . . . as far as I am concerned it was up to emotional feelings, of passions for the people I shared my life with."[27]

German militants of the Red Army Fraction (RAF) were also drawn into the underground by devotion to friends. "There is widespread agreement among researchers that 'most terrorists . . . ultimately became members of [German] terrorist organizations through personal connections with people or relatives associated with appropriate political initiatives, communes, self-supporting organizations, or committees—the number of couples and brothers and sisters was astonishingly high.'"[28,29]

Devotion to comrades can lead a clique of friends to join a terrorist group together. According to della Porta,[30] "block recruitment" occurred both for the BR and the RAF. Sometimes a small political group would hold a meeting and if the vote favored joining the underground, all would join together.

After an individual joins a radical group, love for friends and comrades in the group is likely to increase further as common goals and common threats increase group cohesion[31] (see also Section 6 *Group Radicalization under Isolation and Threat*). Interviews with 30 long-term members of Sinn Fein led White to conclude[32] that group solidarity, along with hope of making a difference for the group and its cause, were the two strongest forces holding militants together in the face of arrests

and Loyalist attacks. Thus devotion to comrades is not only a force for joining a radical group, it is equally or more a barrier to leaving the group.

White[33] quotes one Republican as follows. "There's times I've said to myself, 'Why? You're mad in the head, like.' But . . . I just can't turn my back on it . . . there's too many of my friends in jail, there's too many of my mates given their lives, and I've walked behind—I've walked behind too many funerals to turn my back on it now."

5. *Group Radicalization in Like-Minded Groups*

There is an experimental model of group radicalization that has been referred to variously as "risky shift," "group extremity shift," or "group polarization." Groups of strangers brought together to discuss issues of risk taking or political opinion show consistently two kinds of change: increased agreement about the opinion at issue, and a shift in the average opinion of group members. The shift is toward increased extremity on whichever side of the opinion is favored by most individuals before discussion.[34] If most individuals favor risk before discussion, the shift is toward increased risk taking. If most individuals oppose American foreign aid before discussion, the shift is toward increased opposition to foreign aid.

The shift is not just a matter of go-along-to-get-along compliance; each group member gives both pre-discussion and post-discussion opinion on a questionnaire that only the researcher sees. Thus discussion among individuals with similar values produces internalized shift toward more extreme opinions.

There are currently two explanations of group extremity shift.[35] According to *relevant arguments theory*, a culturally determined pool of arguments favors one side of the issue more than the other side. An individual samples from this pool in assessing his or her individual opinion, then in discussion hears new arguments from others, which, coming from the same pool, are mostly in the same direction as the individual was leaning. The result is that individuals are rationally persuaded by the imbalance of new arguments heard in discussion.

According to *social comparison theory*, opinion positions have social values attached to them. All individuals feel pressure toward agreement, that is, pressure to move their opinions toward the mean opinion of the group. But the pressure is not uniform. Individuals more extreme than average in the group-favored direction—the direction favored by most individuals before discussion—are more admired.[36] They are seen as more devoted to the group, more able—in sum, as better people. This extra status translates into more influence and less change during group discussion, whereas individuals less extreme than average in the group-favored direction have less influence and change more. No one wants to be below-average in support of the group-favored opinion, and the result is that the average opinion becomes more extreme in the group-favored direction.

A vivid description of the power of social comparison in radicalizing the Weather Underground, a U.S. anti-war group of the 1970s, is provided by Collier & Horowitz.[37] Within-group competition for the status of being "most radical" moved the group to terrorism. The hallmark of this kind of radicalization is the extent to which the personal becomes politicized: every act is judged by political standards, including who sleeps with whom.

Both relevant arguments and social comparison explanations are necessary to explain the pattern of experimental results.[38] In support of relevant arguments, research shows that manipulating arguments without knowledge of positions can

change the size and direction of the group shift. In support of social comparison, research shows that knowledge of others' opinions without knowledge of others' arguments can yet produce group shift. The two explanations are complementary rather than redundant. Both conduce to increased similarity and increased extremity in a group of like-minded individuals.

6. Group Radicalization Under Isolation and Threat

The model for this kind of radicalization is the powerful cohesion that develops in small combat groups. Soldiers in combat are largely cut off from all but their buddies in the same platoon or squad. This isolation is characteristic also of terrorist cells, whose members can trust only one another. As both soldiers and terrorists depend on one another for their lives in fighting the enemy, extreme interdependence produces extreme group cohesion. This is a cohesion that can make group members closer than brothers. Recipients of the U.S. Medal of Honor include many who sacrificed themselves to save others; some literally threw themselves on top of a grenade to save their buddies.[39]

Very high levels of cohesion in a group mean very strong pressures for agreement of group members. Group dynamics theory distinguishes between two sources of attraction to a group: the value of material group goals and the value of the social reality created by the group. Material goals include the obvious rewards of group membership, such as progress toward common goals, congeniality, status, and security. Less obvious is the social reality value of the group: there are many questions of value for which the only source of certainty is group consensus. What is good and what is evil? What is worth working for, worth dying for? What does it mean that I am going to die? Certainty about these crucial human questions can only come from agreement with others.

Thus high cohesion brings high pressures for both behavioral compliance and for internalized value consensus. It is obvious to group members that they have to pull together in order to reach group goals, and the result in many cases is compliance—go-along-to-get-along agreement that does not bring interior certainty. But the social reality value of the group depends on internalizing group standards of value, including moral standards.

Groups differ in their power to set moral standards. The social reality value of a group is weak to the extent that members belong to other groups with competing standards of value. Conversely, the social reality value of a group is strong when members are cut off from other groups. This principle is the foundation of many powerful forms of group-focused persuasion, including cult recruiting and thought reform or brainwashing. When cohesion is very high, as when an individual's social world has contracted to just the few friends in his combat group or his terrorist cell, the social reality value of the group is maximized. The group's consensus about value and morality acquires enormous power, including the power to justify and even require violence against those who threaten the group.

This joining of cause and comrades in a high cohesion group is the goal of military training in every state, and is equally the foundation of terrorist violence against states. One practical implication is that something important happens when a radical group goes underground as a terrorist group. The combination of isolation and outside threat makes group dynamics immediately more powerful in the underground

cell than in the radical group that preceded it. The power of relevant arguments and social comparison is multiplied in an underground group.

7. Group Radicalization in Competition for the Same Base of Support

Groups in competition for the same base of sympathizers can, like individuals, gain status by more radical action in support of the cause.[40] Analysts have suggested that the 1979 assassination of Lord Mountbatten by the Irish Republican Army in 1979 was an effort to compete with escalated attacks by the Irish National Liberation Army, and that the 1985 hijacking of both a TWA plane and the luxury liner Achille Lauro were attempts by Palestinian terrorists to gain advantage over rival groups.[41] Today it is common to see more than one group claiming credit for a particular terrorist attack, even for a particular suicide terrorist attack.[42]

Radicalization by competition is particularly clear in the case of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia. ASALA first gained diaspora support by attacking Turks at a time when main-line Armenian organizations were only talking about retribution for the Turkish genocide of Armenians. One of the older organizations (Tashnaks) responded to the new competition by establishing its own anti-Turkish terrorist group, the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide.[43] Similarly, the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine was forced to take up suicide terrorism despite its materialist Marxist logic when PFLP began to seem irrelevant in the second intifada.[44]

It is possible for a group to become too radical and lose its base of support. The line between higher status from more radicalization and lower status from too much radicalization is fine and variable over time. That it is possible to go over the line is indicated by examples when the IRA expanded its targets beyond what its republican sympathizers would accept; on such occasions the IRA would apologize and narrow its target range, at least for a period of time.[45]

Similarly, Palestinian suicide terrorism attacks against Israel slowed dramatically in the period after the Oslo Accords. Hope of a peace agreement was associated with decreased support for terrorism, as reported in polling of Palestinians. When the promise of the Oslo Accords was lost and the second intifada began, polls showed support for terrorism rising to new highs even as the number of terrorist attacks rose to new highs. It appears that in many cases terrorism increases with popular support for terrorism, but can decline if popular support for terrorism declines. All too often, however, more radical action brings more status and more support to a group competing with other groups to represent the same cause.

An often-overlooked aspect of competition for a base of support is violence against competitors. About one quarter of the killing in Northern Ireland was Catholics killing Catholics and Protestants killing Protestants.[46] Both sides killed suspected informers or individuals resisting the discipline militants sought to impose. The IRA in particular attacked and killed those ignoring IRA strictures against selling drugs.

An extreme example of ingroup violence is the Tamil Tigers, who, in their rise to power, killed more Tamils than Sinhalese.[47] The LTTE early wiped out competing Tamil militant groups, and continued in 2006 killing individual Tamil critics and Tamil political opponents. An example that permeated the Western press was the

July 29, 1999, suicide-bomb killing of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam. As a leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front and a Member of the Sri Lankan Parliament, Dr. Tiruchelvam was a leading critic of human rights abuses by the LTTE.

From a group dynamics point of view, threat from ingroup competitors is like threat from an outgroup enemy in producing high cohesion, with resulting high pressures for conformity and strong sanctions against deviates. From an individual point of view, when my friends and I are risking all for the cause, and especially after some of our friends have died for this cause, no one can be allowed to betray our sacrifice. The competition for ingroup support is a competition for survival, in which violence against an outgroup enemy is often joined with violence against ingroup enemies.

8. Group Radicalization in Competition with State Power—Condensation

This form of radicalization has been a focus of research by social movement theorists.[48] A group with weak and diffuse popular support attains sufficient organization to make a public display: a rally, a protest march, a sit-in, or some other form of civil disobedience. The power of the state is exerted to quash the group, often in the form of police response that may include indiscriminate violence or some abrogation of civil or human rights. The result is an increase in sympathy for the victims of state repression and some mobilization of the group's sympathizers toward action. (This dynamic is considered later in relation to mass radicalization.) For social movement activists, however, there is another dynamic at work, a dynamic of *condensation*.

Of all those who take the first radical action—joining an illegal rally or march or sit-in—most are likely to respond to repression by giving up action. They see the costs as too high to continue. Others will not be deterred and will increase their commitment and escalate their action against the state. The determinants of this choice are not well studied, but probably those who bring a moral frame and personal grievance are less easily deterred. In any case, the result of the interaction between state and non-state group is often a mutual escalation of violence between group and police, with further peeling off of individuals whose radicalization is not sufficient to face increasing state pressure. The conclusion of this cycle of escalation and self-selection is likely to be that a tiny fraction of the original protest group has condensed into a highly radicalized group that goes underground as a terrorist cell.

This cycle of reaction and counter-reaction has been described by della Porta in her research on the origins of the Brigate Rossa in Italy and the Red Army Faction in Germany.[49] The Red Brigades condensed out of 1960s leftist student protest movements in Italy; the RAF condensed out of similar leftist student protest groups in Germany. Sprinzak[50] has described a similar trajectory by which a tiny fraction of the Students for a Democratic Society, who began with protest against the war in Vietnam, condensed into the Weather Underground.

Radicalization by condensation depends upon the strength of the affective ties between individuals, in particular ties to individuals who suffer from the state reaction to radical challenge. Comrades imprisoned cannot be abandoned; comrades killed in police shootouts or in prison are martyrs whose deaths demand a response. The reaction in many cases is increased commitment to violence to pay back state violence.

Della Porta[51] offers a number of examples of individuals for whom the death or imprisonment of a comrade was the instigation for joining a terrorist underground.

Anger and revenge are no doubt important in this kind of reaction, but a kind of "survival guilt" may also contribute. Those alive and free feel guilty that a better man or woman is dead or in prison. Research toward understanding survival guilt has only recently begun,[52] and may play a part in understanding the political power of martyrdom.

This power is evident in an example offered by della Porta:[53] "For example, Volker Speitel, one of the militants who worked in political groups that supported the RAF militants in prison, described how the death of Meins (by hunger strike) pushed him to the final step of joining the underground: 'Then the day came when Holger Meins died . . . For us this death was a key experience . . . The death of Holger Meins and the decision to take arms were one and the same thing. Reflection was not possible anymore.'"

9. Group Radicalization in Within-Group Competition—Fissioning

The within-group competition for status represented in social comparison theory can produce intense conflict. The downside of conflating the personal and the political is that differences of political opinion can lead to personal animosities—and vice versa.[54] Some observers have suggested that only common action against the state or another group can save a terrorist group from tearing itself apart.[55]

Systematic data are lacking, but examples suggest that intra-group conflict leads often to splitting or fissioning of a terrorist group into multiple groups. The IRA provides an obvious example, with many competing factions—Official IRA, Provisional IRA, Real IRA, Continuity IRA, INLA—who sometimes targeted one another. Similarly a split within ASALA was the occasion of killing between former comrades.[56]

Intra-group competition can go beyond killing. A threat from members of our own group is likely to produce a feeling of contamination that requires not just death but torture and obliteration. Such was the fate, evidently, of 14 members of the Japanese United Red Army who in 1972 were found dead and dismembered in a group hideout.[57]

From a group dynamics perspective, the tendency toward fissioning in radical groups should not be surprising. As already noted, cohesion leads to pressures for agreement within the group. When, as in an already radical group, perception of external threat produces very high cohesion, the pressure for agreement is very strong. An individual will seldom be able to resist the pressure of a unanimous majority, but a minority of two or more individuals may be able to resist.[58] When the pressure for agreement is very strong, the minority is likely to be expelled from the group—or obliterated.

10. Mass Radicalization in Conflict with an Outgroup—Jujitsu Politics

This form of radicalization can be understood as a generalization of the group dynamics theory already described. In small face-to-face groups, outgroup threat leads reliably to increased group cohesion, increased respect for ingroup leaders, increased sanctions for ingroup deviates, and idealization of ingroup norms.[59] In larger groups, reference to cohesion is often replaced with reference to ingroup identification, patriotism, or nationalism, but the pattern in response to outgroup threat is similar to that seen in small groups. Consider the results of the 9/11 attacks on U.S.

politics:[60] increased patriotism visible in rallies, flags, banners, and bumper stickers; increased support for the president and for every agent and agency of government; increased sanctions for Americans challenging the consensus (Bill Maher sacked for suggesting the 9/11 attackers were not cowards); and reification of American values ("they hate us for our values").

Mass radicalization by external attack is so reliable that it can be used as a strategy. Some terrorists have explicitly sought to elicit a state response that will carry far beyond the terrorists to strike terrorist sympathizers who have not yet been mobilized to action.[61] The predictable result is to mobilize terrorist sympathizers far beyond what the terrorists can accomplish alone. We call this strategy *jujitsu politics*: using the enemy's strength against him.[62]

Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri enunciated this strategy in his political memoir *Knights Under the Banner of the Prophet*.[63] If the shrapnel of war reach American homes, he opined, Americans will either give up their aims in Muslim countries or will come out from behind their Muslim stooges to seek revenge. If Americans move into Muslim countries, he predicted, the result will be jihad. Although the U.S. war against the Taliban was faster and cleaner of collateral damage to civilians than Al Qaeda had expected, the U.S. move into Iraq has indeed been associated with increasing support for radical Islam in Muslim countries.

11. Mass Radicalization in Conflict with an Outgroup—Hate

It is often observed that groups in conflict, especially if the conflict involves prolonged violence, become more extreme in their negative perceptions of one another. This tendency can become so extreme that the enemy is no longer seen as human.[64] Dehumanization is signaled by referring to targets as "pigs," "dogs," or, more abstractly, "wheels" in the enemy machine. Della Porta[65] quotes an Italian militant as follows: " . . . enemies are in a category, they are functions, they are symbols. They are not human beings."

Dehumanization can occur in interstate conflict as well. In WWII, for instance, about half of American soldiers favored wiping out the whole Japanese nation once the war was won. This radical opinion did not depend on membership in a high cohesion combat group, nor did it depend on experience of losses in combat against the Japanese. Indeed soldiers in training in the U.S., who had never been in combat, were even more likely than combat soldiers to favor exterminating the Japanese after the war was won.[66]

Similarly it has been observed that residents of English cities never bombed by the Germans during WWII were more bloody-minded and vengeful than residents of London and other cities of southern England that felt the full fury of the Blitz.[67] Apparently group identification in the context of group conflict can lead to radically punitive attitudes even in the absence of personal victimization by the enemy— perhaps especially in the absence of personal victimization.

A high level of categorical hostility toward another group is often described as hatred. Some theorists believe that hate is an emotion, perhaps a combination of anger, fear, and contempt.[68] A more recent view is that hate is an extreme form of negative identification that includes the idea that members of the enemy group share a bad essence.[69] In this view hate is not an emotion but the occasion of experiencing many emotions, depending on what happens to the hated target. As above, positive

emotions are occasioned when bad things happen to the hated group, and negative emotions are occasioned when good things happen to the hated group.

The idea that the enemy shares a bad essence can make sense of the impulse to attack all of them, without regard for age, gender, or civilian status. A group's essence is the hidden something shared by group members that gives them their tendency toward shared group characteristics.[70] A group's essence is understood to be stable over historical time and immutable for the individual group member. If the essence is bad, there is nothing to be done—negotiation and education can no more make a difference than negotiation or education can make a difference in the essence of a tiger. If tigers threaten us and hurt us, all tigers are targets—old, young, in uniform or out of uniform.

12. Mass Radicalization in Conflict with an Outgroup—Martyrdom

The root meaning of *martyr* is *witness*, and there is something particularly powerful about a form of witnessing that takes the life of the witness. One way to think about the issue is to consider the psychology of persuasion, in which a credible source combines expertise and trustworthiness.[71] A martyr is trustworthy insofar as it is difficult to see how an individual giving up life for a cause could be lying for some personal interest or advantage. This leaves the question of expertise, and the social construction of a martyrdom has to rule out the possibility that the martyr is "crazy" or otherwise unable to choose death freely.[72] It follows that higher status martyrs make better witnesses: better educated, more successful individuals, with more life choices available, are seen as knowing better what they are doing when they give their lives for a cause.

Radical groups try to keep salient the memory of their martyrs. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam yearly celebrate three days of Martyrs' Day activities, including honoring the parents of dead heroes. Palestinians killed by Israel are remembered with portraits, graffiti, shrines, and rallies such as are often held in Martyr's Square in Gaza. Palestinian web sites offer videos made by suicide terrorists before their attacks.

As noted earlier in relation to Holger Meins's death by hunger strike, there is reason to believe that the political impact of martyrdom can be significant. Mahatma Gandhi's hunger strike against British rule in India is probably the most famous example, although this was not a fast to the death. Perhaps the strongest example is recounted in *Ten Men Dead*,[73] the history of IRA and INLA prisoners who died on a hunger strike to protest British efforts to treat political prisoners as common criminals. The men died over a period of 73 days. Several hunger strikers were elected to the Irish or British parliaments, and many observers believe that the hunger strikes resuscitated a moribund Provisional IRA.

The social construction of martyrdom is under-theorized (but see note 74), and empirically under-developed, but the impact of martyrdom on mass audiences deserves close attention.

Radicalization as Opposition Politics

We began with a conceptualization of political radicalization as change in beliefs, feelings, and action toward support and sacrifice for intergroup conflict. We noted that these aspects of radicalization are only moderately correlated, and suggested

the value of differentiating these aspects both in conception and measurement. Then we undertook a review of mechanisms of radicalization at individual, group, and mass levels.

We do not suppose that the twelve mechanisms identified are the only important ones. No doubt more will be uncovered. But we do expect that the more powerful the radicalization, the more mechanisms will be implicated and the more artful their mutual relation and reinforcement. Thus we suspect that the mechanisms considered here in relation to political radicalization and terrorism may also be important in understanding thought reform, cult recruiting, military training, and state preparations for interstate war.

Nor do we propose a single underlying theory uniting the twelve mechanisms discussed here. Indeed it seems unlikely that any single theory can integrate all the influences that bring individuals to radical political action, although a conceptual framework in which to view these influences may be possible.[75] It is unlikely that any one of these mechanisms is sufficient to explain political radicalization, even for a single individual. In every individual trajectory to terrorism of which we are aware, multiple mechanisms can be identified. Thus the twelve mechanisms are neither sufficient causes one by one nor instantiations of some larger theory. Rather we suggest that there are multiple and diverse pathways leading individuals and groups to radicalization and terrorism.

This view is consistent with previous research on psychology of terrorism and social mobilization. For instance, Linden and Klandermans[76] distinguish three pathways to extreme-right political activism: *continuity*, *conversion*, and *compliance*. Some individuals show continuity in a lifetime of consistent political interest and involvement. Of these, some are consistently involved in the same cause (*revolutionaries*) and some are consistent only in their involvement in one extreme group after another (*wanderers*). Other individuals show a trajectory of sudden break with their past in joining an extreme movement (*converts*), often following a dramatic personal experience such as auto accident or rape. Finally there are individuals whose involvement in an extreme movement occurred through friends or relatives who persuaded them to join (*compliants*), although they had not previously had much interest in politics.

Similarly, Kimhi and Even[77] argue that "... not only is suicide terror a complex multi-factorial phenomenon, but also seems to be a phenomenon of multiple trajectories." Kimhi and Even identify four motive-trajectories among Palestinian suicide terrorists. *Religious* motives for jihad and martyrdom, *nationalist* motives for liberation and independence of the Palestinian people, motives of *retribution* or revenge for personal or group victimization by Israelis, and motives of *escape* from personal problems. These motives often overlap to considerable extent in particular individuals, and the degree of overlap gives again an indication of the multiplicity and complexity of pathways to terrorism.

This complexity is well summarized in the conclusion of Horgan's chapter, "Becoming a Terrorist:"[78] "The reality is that there are many factors (often so complex in their combination that it can be difficult to delineate them) that can come to bear on an individual's intentional or unintentional socialization into involvement with terrorism."

Still, it is worth noting that there is a reactive quality to most of the mechanisms identified. Of the twelve mechanisms, only two are more relatively autonomous. *Individual radicalization in joining a radical group—the slippery slope* is a mechanism of

self-radicalization via self-justification, in which new beliefs and values are adopted in order to make sense of past behaviors. These new reasons then support more extreme behavior in the same direction. *Group radicalization in like-minded groups* is also more an autonomous than a reactive mechanism: the events reacted to occur within a group as arguments and individuals compete for acceptance.

The other ten mechanisms reviewed are more clearly reactive. They begin from and depend on a dynamic of opposition in which the significant events are the actions of others. Individuals react to personal victimization, to group grievance, and to state action against friends and lovers. Non-state groups react to threat from the state, threat from other groups competing for the same base of sympathizers, and threat from internal dissension. Mass publics react to state action that injures indiscriminately, to martyrs, and, in long conflicts, to a perception of the enemy as less than human.

The reactive character of these mechanisms is important because, as noted in the introduction, efforts to understand radicalization usually focus on the non-state actors who are radicalized. Terrorism research, in particular, tends to focus on *them*—the terrorists—rather than on the situation they are in—or, more precisely, the situation they believe they are in. But these mechanisms do not operate only in non-state groups challenging the state. The same mechanisms moving people toward radicalization and terrorism will operate as well in those who react to radicals and terrorists.[79] Even a cursory look at the experience of the U.S., since the attacks of September 11, 2001, can suggest that those attacked have not escaped a radicalization of their own.

The degree to which radicalization of non-state groups occurs in response to the actions of others must be the starting point for understanding these groups. Political radicalization of individuals, groups, and mass publics occurs in a trajectory of action and reaction in which state action often plays a significant role. Radicalization emerges in a relationship of intergroup competition and conflict in which both sides are radicalized. It is this relationship that must be understood if radicalization is to be kept short of terrorism.

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4. ISLAMIC TERRORIST RADICALISATION IN EUROPE

OLIVIER ROY

4.1 The West European terrorist

Since 9/11, a great deal of data has been accumulated on the terrorists linked to al Qaeda.[1] The picture that emerges shows the growing role played by Western Muslims. They constitute the bulk of the terrorists involved in actions perpetrated here in Europe. But they are also involved in terrorist actions abroad and participate in the different international military jihad (from Faluja to Kashmir). These Western Muslims have varied personal histories and include different categories: the majority are second-generation Muslims who were either born in Europe or came as children; we also find people who came as students or as political refugees; thirdly, there has been a significant number of converts.

They all share common patterns. They speak European languages, are Western educated, and many have citizenship of a European country. They have had a 'normal' Western teenager's upbringing, with no conspicuous religious practices, often going to night clubs, 'womanising' and drinking alcohol. None have previous religious training. Most of them are born-again (or converts): they became religious-minded Muslims in Europe, even if a few of them, in the aftermath of (re)discovering Islam, went to Middle Eastern *madrasa* (school or college*)* to improve their

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[1] Marc Sageman (2004), "Understanding Terrorist Networks", Pennsylvania University Press; Robert Leiken (2006), "The Quantitative Analysis of Terrorism and Immigration: An Initial Exploration", *Terrorism and Political Violence,* December, Nixon Institute.

religious knowledge (this is mainly true of British Pakistanis and of converts). When they went to university, their curricula were modern and secular (computer science, engineering, etc.). In many ways they are modern.

They do not represent an Islamic tradition; on the contrary they break with the religion of their parents. When they convert or become born-again, they always adopt some sort of Salafism, which is a scripturalist version of Islam that discards traditional Muslim culture. They do not revert to traditions: for instance when they marry, it is with the sisters of their friends or with converts, and not with a bride from the country of origin chosen by their parents. There is also a growing number of female converts among the terrorists. The case of Muriel Degauque (a Belgian woman who killed herself in Iraq in 2005) is probably the harbinger of a new generation of al Qaeda activists recruiting far beyond the usual pool of second-generation Muslims and numbering people who, 40 years ago, would have joined ultra-leftist groups, like the Red Army Faction.

The groups are rarely homogeneous in ethnic terms: the Hofstad group of Holland includes second-generation Moroccans (Bouyeri himself), 'white' (the former policewoman Martine van der Oeven) and 'black' Dutch citizens (the brothers Jason and Jermaine Walters): the deeds of this group may have destroyed the concept of 'multiculturalism' in Holland, but it is typically 'post-culturalist'.

The radicalisation of Western Muslim youth is often considered a spill-over of the crisis in the Middle East (Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq). But in fact the chronology of events, the geographical origin of the radicals and their own claims most often contradict this assumption. No Palestinian, Afghan or Iraqi has been involved in terrorist actions in Europe. There are very few Arabs from the Middle East (some Egyptians and Syrians). People of Pakistani (in the UK) or Moroccan origin are overrepresented. We also find East African activists living in the UK. The perpetrators of the failed terrorist attack in London on 21 July 2005, were Ethiopian (Osman Hussain), Somalian, Eritrean and Ghanaian; another Ethiopian, Binyam Mohammed, had been arrested in connection with the José Padilla case. Converts make up 10% (according to the Nixon Institute) to 25% (the Beghal group) of the militants in Europe.[2] Many converts are Black

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[2] Leiken, ibid.

Caribbeans (Richard Reid, the Bonte brothers, Grandvisir, Willie Brigitte, Jermaine Lindsay), or 'white' people (Jérôme Courtailler, Lionel Dumont, Christian Ganczarski); an interesting case is that of Eisa al-Hindi (alias Dhiran Barot) a former Hindu, born in Kenya, a British citizen who went to Afghanistan and then Malaysia where he married, before being arrested in London for planning attacks in New York: all of al Qaeda is embodied in this trajectory.

In a word, there is no relation between the geographical map of the radicalisation and the map of existing conflicts. This geographical discrepancy can be pushed further: almost none of the 'born again' who became terrorists returned to the country of origin of his/her family to fight jihad: none of the French of Algerian descent went back to Algeria during the 1990s, despite the fact that there was some sort of a jihad there. The few exceptions are related to British Pakistanis, but they went back to Pakistan not to fight against the regime of President Musharraf, but to join the global terrorist hub which is nowadays centred in that country. Instead all the European radicals preferred to go to peripheral jihads (Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya); none went to Palestine (with the exception of two Britons). They did not target specific Jewish or Israeli objectives in Europe (contrary to their secular leftist Palestinian predecessors in the 1970s), but 'global' targets (namely transport systems).

Moreover, the terrorist actions perpetrated in Europe have rarely been expressed in direct connection with the events in the Middle East, (with the possible exception of the Madrid attack in 2004). 9/11 was expressed in terms of a global war between Islam and the West. When Mohamed Bouyeri killed Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam, he did not mention in his letter the presence of Dutch troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; he referred instead to the desecration of Islam in Holland.

It is also interesting to note that none of the Islamic terrorists killed or captured so far in the West had been active in any legitimate anti-war movements or even in organised political support for the people they claim to be fighting for. They don't distribute leaflets or collect money for hospitals and schools. They do not have a rational strategy to push for the interests of the Iraqi or Palestinian people. On the contrary, the few of them who have joined a militant group before turning radical, did so in joining global and supranational Islamic movements like Jama'at ut Tabligh or Hizb ut-Tahrir.

There is no clear-cut sociological profile of the radicals or anything that could link them to a given socio-economic situation. More precisely, the reasons that may push them towards violence are not specific enough, but are shared by a larger population that deals with such a situation in a very different way. Explanations based on poverty, exclusion, racism, acculturation, etc., are simply not specific enough. There is clearly a generational dimension: Islamic radicalism is a youth movement. Frustration is obviously a key element in their radicalisation, but has more to do with a psychological than a social or economic dimension. They tend to become radical within the framework of a small local group of friends, who either met on a destitute estate (as the Farid Benyettou group in France in 2006), a university campus, a gang of petty delinquents and drug addicts or … in jail. Jail is a favoured place for recruitment, especially as far as converts are concerned.

A common factor among known radicals is a concern for self-image and the endeavour to reconstruct the self through action. In this sense they are more in search of spectacular action where they will be personally and directly involved, than with the long-term and painstaking building of an anonymous and underground political organisation which could extend the social and political basis of their networks. They are more activists than constructivists. They are very different from the *komintern* agents of the 1920s and 1930s. This narcissistic dimension explains both the commitment to suicide actions and the difficulty of working underground without the perspective of action. Without terrorism, they cease to exist. This commitment to immediate or mid-term action as opposed to long-term political action is probably their greatest weakness.

Another significant element of radicalisation is the blending of 'Islamic' wording and phraseology with a typically Western anti-imperialism and third-world radicalism: their target is the same as the Western ultra-leftist movements of the 1970s, even if they proceed to mass terrorism (except that they do not target political or business personalities, as the European ultra-left used to do). But the paradigm of ultra-leftist terrorism from the 1970s might provide a bridge with non-Islamic radicals.

The Western-based Islamic terrorists are not the militant vanguard of the Muslim community; they are a lost generation, unmoored from traditional societies and cultures, frustrated by a Western society that does not meet their expectations. And their vision of a global umma is both a mirror of and a form of revenge against the globalisation that has made

them what they are. Al Qaeda and consorts offer a narrative of revolt and violence that appeals to an unmoored youth and gives a religious and political dimension to youth revolt that could have been expressed in other forms of violence (gangs, Columbine-style school-shootings, drugs, delinquency). It is not by chance that jails in the West seem to be as much recruiting grounds as mosques.

4.2 What can be done?

The picture is quite variable in Europe. There are countries where Muslims are mainly first-generation immigrants (Spain, Italy), while in France, Germany, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands, they are mainly made up of second and even third generations. Polls also show that there is an impact of the host country's political culture on the Muslims: the bulk of the French Muslims claim individual integration as full citizens and complain about discrimination on the job-market, while a majority of the British Muslims seem to be more in favour of living as a community with its own rules (see the polls carried out the Pew Institute).[3] But nowhere is there a real Muslim 'community' with legitimate leaders and institutions.

In Europe it is common to oppose two approaches: the British 'multi-culturalism' (where Muslims are defined by a distinct ethno-cultural identity) and the French *'assimilationnisme'* (where Muslims may become full citizens only by shedding their pristine identity). But paradoxically both approaches share the same premises: religion is embedded in a culture, so if one is a Muslim one belongs to a different culture. Interestingly enough, the level of radicalism has nothing to do with state policy: there have been as many terrorist threats in the UK, France, Spain, Belgium and Holland, although the policy toward Islam is very different in each country. Radicals do not answer to a specific national policy, but to a global perception of the state of the umma. In any event, both policies – multiculturalism and assimilation – have failed for the same reason: Muslims in the West, with the exception of many British Muslims, do not push for an ethno-cultural identity, but want to be recognised as a mere faith community. Religion is dissociated from culture: as we have seen

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[3] Pew Institute (2006), "The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other" (report available at
http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=253).

radicals don't express a traditional Islam, but try to recast Islam as a militant ideology. In the UK, the born-again Muslims don't care for traditional culture and thus do not answer to traditional community leaders. But secularist France was very surprised to see that the erosion of traditional Muslim culture has gone hand in hand with a strong religious assertiveness: the 'headscarf affair' in French schools is not the result of an imported culture but a consequence of the construction of a purely religious identity among educated and integrated school-girls. The idea was that cultural assimilation would take place alongside secularisation. The concept of a 'non-cultural' religious revival was seen as unthinkable, but it did happen. By creating a French Council of Muslim Faith, the government reluctantly acknowledged the existence of Islam as a 'mere' religion.

So what are the solutions to the current crisis? European countries should pursue a clear objective: isolating the Islamic radicals with the support of the Muslim population, or at least the neutrality of the non-violent conservative fundamentalists. The issue is not to solve the crisis in the Middle East (which nevertheless would be a good thing *per se*), but to accompany the process of de-culturation and the assertion of Islam as a 'mere' religion. It means making room for Islam in the West as a western religion among others, not as the expression of an ethno-cultural community. This is the real process of 'secularisation', which has nothing to do with theological reformation (are the two last Popes 'liberal', not to say Protestants?), but could of course entail a theological debate, as an almost forced secularisation did for the Catholic Church in continental Western Europe (the emergence of the Christian Democracy, that is the full acceptance by the Church of democracy, is a consequence and not a pre-requisite of the process of secularisation).

Calling on Muslims to adapt the basic tenets of their religion to the West is a mistake for several reasons. To sponsor officially 'good and liberal' Muslims would be a sort of kiss of death and would deprive them of any legitimacy. The main motivation for youth radicalisation is not theological: political radicalisation is the main driving force. Youth is not interested in a theological debate. In modern secular states, theology should not and could not be a matter of policy. Pluralism is the best way to avoid being confronted by a tight-knit Muslim community. Conservative and even fundamentalist views of religion are manageable, as shown by the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish cases.

Political authorities should not look for traditional 'moderate' religious thinkers from the Middle East to appease Western Muslims, nor should they expend state subsidies to promote 'civil' or 'liberal' Islam. They should not negotiate the management of Western Islam with conservative and authoritarian Arab regimes: these regimes are not interested in reforms, democracy or tolerance; they are using the Muslims in Europe as leverage for their own interests. And by the way most Muslims in Europe feel no sense of loyalty to the existing regimes. European authorities should simply make room for Islam without changing laws or principles. Genuine pluralism is the best way to avoid confrontation with a Muslim population, itself very diverse, but that could feel coerced into a ghettoised community. Conservative and even fundamentalist views of religion can be manageable in a plural environment, and a pluralistic approach allows civil society to reach the cadres of youth that could be prime targets for radicals and neo-fundamentalist groups. State policy should be based on integration and even 'empowerment'[4] of Muslims and community leaders on a pluralistic basis. The priority should be to weaken the links with foreign elements by pushing for the 'Europeanisation' of Islam and preventing the deepening of the ghetto syndrome. Transparency and democracy should be the aim.

The problem is that some governments (i.e. in France) and the bulk of public opinion equate European Islam with 'liberal' Islam. What can be done about this? Waging a 'global war on terrorism' is playing al Qaeda's game. The growing isolation of the radicals should allow the Europeans to continue with their 'soft' approach: police and intelligence services are efficient and sufficient tools of counter-terrorism.

But such a policy will never totally eradicate terrorism. The European tradition of terrorism and political violence may have forged the experience of the counter-terrorist institutions, but it also makes the entry into violence of young activists easier. It is impossible to prevent some young guys from becoming radical and looking for some sort of spectacular action. Concentrating on sociology and the motivations of the radicals is important in understanding their mode of recruitment, but will be of little use in drying up the ground on which they prosper. The aim is not total eradication, but to make terrorism a residual factor.

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[4] See the example of Lord Ahmed (Britain's first Muslim peer) in the Upper House of the UK Parliament.

Such a 'soft' approach is sustainable on one condition: that Islamic radicalism is kept as a fringe movement. The real danger would be to see Islamic radicalism enlarging its social basis or connecting with other potentially radical movements. The issue is not going to the roots of terrorism to eradicate it, but to prevent the radical fringe from finding a political basis among the Muslim population.

But this political and social analysis, while allowing us to take some distance from the usual clichés such as the roots of Muslim wrath and Islam's views on violence, jihad and suicide bombers? – not to mention the 'clash of civilisations' – does not answer the key question: What is going on with Islam?

4.3 Pushing for a Western Islam

The key issue is thus the attitude of the Muslim population in Europe. It has a far greater political stake and plays a far greater role than its counterpart in the US for three reasons: it is the main source of immigration, and has thus a demographic weight that bears no relation to the percentage of Muslims in the US. It originates from the closely neighbouring southern countries, bringing a risk of connection between radicalisation in the countries of origin and Europe. It is made up largely of the under-class and jobless youth; hence the social tensions tend to aggravate the feeling of discrimination and alienation. Social, geographic, political and strategic implications are thus intertwined.

We have seen that both the multi-culturalist and the integrationist approaches have failed. A more sound approach would be to acknowledge and encourage the disconnection between religion and culture. The second and third generations are no more the bearers of a traditional culture, even if they may reconstruct a tradition (by wearing the veil for instance). Such a disconnection is clearly demonstrated by the fact that a significant percentage (between 10- 20%) of al Qaeda recruits in Europe are converts.

But it should be clear that building a Western Islam does not mean interfering in theology. It will not work and will brand any reformer as a tool for manipulation. It will also unduly interfere in a debate that is taking place among Muslims. Another problem is that many 'Muslims' advocating reform in Islam are in fact avowed non-believers (Ayan Hirsi Ali for instance), which could accredit the idea that for the West a good Muslim is a non-Muslim. In fact the issue is to promote Western Muslims – not Western Islam.

A 'Western' Islam is not necessarily a 'liberal' Islam (for the same reason that a Western Christianity or Judaism is not necessarily liberal), but is an Islam that considers itself as a faith community, based on a voluntary adhesion. To stress the voluntary dimension of such a faith community, we should avoid considering as 'Muslim' anybody with a Muslim background. It also means that people could change their religion: apostasy will certainly become a more and more important issue, as well as intermarriages and endeavours to define a non-religious 'alien' identity (on racial or ethnic criteria). Defining Islam as a 'mere' religion also means encouraging the training of imams in Europe, in institutions that are linked with other European teaching institutions. It means also that Islam should be treated and recognised by the same laws and principles that deal with the other religions (Christianity in particular).

A consequence is that the issue of Islam should not be managed through the help of foreign governments or institutions, which have no interest in delinking Muslims in the West with their countries.

My argument translates into a number of concrete proposals:

- Establish a tighter control on fund-raising and subsidising from abroad, which means also a better access to open domestic fund-raising and subsidies (for building mosques).
- Build bridges and links between Islamic religious teaching institutions and the universities and academies.
- Let instances of religious representations emerge without monopoly.
- Enlist Muslim professionals in the mainstream political parties, not as 'community leaders' but as citizens.
- Avoid cornering Muslims by imposing a black-and-white choice (either you are with us or against us), and let them express a diversity of opinions in line with the spectrum of political diversity in the West.
- Stress above all the issue of citizenship above any communal affiliation.

Such a set of policies would meet the aspirations of mainstream Muslims in Europe: the recognition of Islam as a Western religion and Muslims as full citizens, while discouraging the creation of closed communities, ghettos and minority status. This would also isolate the terrorists and prevent them from building a political constituency.