Psychological Factors in Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Individual, Group, and Organizational Levels of Analysis

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This article explores psychological factors involved in terrorism and counterterrorism on individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis. On the individual level, we describe attempts to understand terrorist behavior as a form of psychopathology and/or as reflecting a unique constellation of personality traits. We also consider whether there exists a general motivational basis for participating in terrorism. On the group level of analysis, we address the process of shared reality construction, social influence involved in recruitment of new members to terrorist organization, their indoctrination into terrorist ideology, and the use of language in creating terrorism warranting norms. On the organizational level, we consider issues of training, logistics, and cost effectiveness as they apply to the decisions to launch or abstain from terrorist activities. We conclude by considering the implications of our analysis for possible ways and means for countering terrorism.

The phenomenon of terrorism is hardly unique to the present times. Terrorism appeared at various points in human history, assuming diverse forms exemplified by the Jewish Zealots (Sicari) of 1st century A.D., the Muslim Assassins of 12th century A.D., and the Indian Thugs that spread terror in that country for twelve centuries (specifically, from the 7th to the 19th centuries) (for a review see Hoffman, 2006). Nonetheless, in its contemporary manifestations, terrorism constitutes a particularly acute threat to orderly societies. Its appeal to millions of adherents, its ability to propagate its message globally, the specter of its unflinching use of weapons of mass destruction (Ackerman, Bale, & Moran, 2006), and the bold attacks it managed to launch at the heart of major population centers (like

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New York City, Madrid, or London) render its defeat a major challenge for the international community worldwide.

University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA) political scientist David Rapoport (2004) identified four waves of *modern terrorism*, each with its unique characteristics: the Anarchist Wave that started around 1879; the Anti-Colonial Wave that began around 1920; the New Left Wave that emerged in the 1960s; and the Religious Wave—the major menace these days—that commenced in 1979.

The essential terrorist vehicle of the Anarchist Wave involved the assassinations of political leaders designed to create chaos and stimulate the emergence of anarchist societies. The Anti-Colonial Wave largely focused its attacks on colonial police forces to further its agenda of independent statehood. The New Left Wave "specialized" in hostage and barricade tactics to pave the way to "the revolution." And, the current Religious Wave is known by its indiscriminate attacks against civilians and the employment of suicide attacks (see Rapoport, 2004).[1] In brief, terrorism transcends historical periods, cultures, geographic regions, or levels of social structure (being perpetrated by lone individuals (e.g., the ill-famed *Unabomber*), small social networks, medium size groupings, and large organizations).

Defining Terrorism

The term terrorism has proven refractory to an agreed upon definition. Schmid and Jongman (1988) in their comprehensive volume on "Political Terrorism" list no less than 109 definitions of terrorism, and they do not even pretend to be exhaustive. Such definitional diversity likely has to do with the fact that the terrorism epithet has highly pejorative connotations these days,[2] prompting definitional attempts that exclude aggression committed by one's own group or its allies. For instance, the seemingly straightforward definition of "terrorism" as the use of intimidation or fear for the advancement of political objectives implies the inclusion of "state terrorism" as an instance of the concept (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006). In this vein, the bombing of European and Asian cities by the warring states during the Second World War would fall under the definition of terrorism, creating an

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[1] The distinction between terrorism waves is best considered as approximate and heuristic rather than linear and strict; there has been overlap in the favored tools and tactics between the various "waves." For instance, suicide terrorism has been used by a religious organization like Al Qaeda but also by an ethnonationalist organization like the LTTE. Leftist organizations like the Columbian FARC or the Peruvian Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) continue their activity even though the primary the present period "wave" is avowedly one of religious terrorism. So do ethno nationalist organizations like the currently active Kurdish Workers Party (The PKK), the Palestinian Fatah, and to some extent still the Basque ETA.

[2] Historically, this has not been always the case. For instance, in 1878, Vera Zasulich, upon wounding a Russian police commander, threw her weapon to the floor, proclaiming, "I am a terrorist not a killer" (Rapoport, 2004, p. 52).

embarrassment for governments who champion a global war against all terrorism (Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post, & Victoroff, 2008).[3]

Possibly for these reasons, the contemporary usage of the term "terrorism" in the relevant research literature has typically referred to violence against non-combatants *perpetrated by nonstate actors*. Our present discussion too adopts this common usage. As a working definition, we characterize terrorism as the *symbolic use of violence by nonstate actors with social and political (hence not purely criminal) objectives intended to intimidate, frighten, or coerce a wider audience than the direct (instrumental) targets of the attack.*

Though terrorism has manifold aspects addressable by numerous scientific disciplines, it can be viewed as essentially rooted in human psychology. Truly fundamental questions about terrorism are psychological and sociopsychological in nature. They have to do with individuals' motivations for joining a terrorist organization, with recruitment modes and means of persuasion, with the inculcation of belief systems (i.e., ideologies) that justify terrorism and portray it as efficient and honorable, and with organizational decision making that results in its employment as a tactical tool.

These and other common features are shared by diverse terrorist groups and organizations. For instance, consider that murder and kidnapping of noncombatants are prohibited in most cultures and societies. It follows that their commission requires a particularly potent justification (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006). Across terrorism's varied instances, such justification typically assumed two nonexclusive forms, including (a) the claim that the otherwise unacceptable mayhem is in the service of a superordinate cause anchored in sacred moral values (e.g., defense of the ingroup against its enemies, promotion of social justice, service to God (Haidt & Graham, 2007) and (b) the suggestion that the targets of one's aggression are subhuman and evil, hence unworthy of protection by norms governing the treatment of persons (Bandura, 1990/1998; Greenberg & Dratel, 2005; Zimbardo, 2008). Because of the morality imputed to terrorist activity on behalf of some collective cause, and the self-sacrifice that terrorism typically entails, the terrorist groups typically reward their operatives with considerable veneration and accord them the status of martyrs and heroes (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009a,b). These general aspects of terrorism will be highlighted in the pages that follow.

In the present article, we examine terrorism on three psychological levels of analysis, having to do with the individual, the group, and the (terrorist) organization. On the individual level of analysis, we address attempts to understand terrorist behavior as a form of psychopathology and/or as reflecting a unique constellation

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[3] Limiting the definition of terrorism to nonstate actors is congruent with the notions that only states can legitimately use force, in acting on behalf of their perceived interests and in protection of their laws.

of personality traits. We also consider whether at the individual level there exists a uniform motivational basis for terrorist missions.

On the group level of analysis, we discuss the process of shared reality construction, social influence dynamics in recruitment and indoctrination, and the role of language in forging terrorism warranting norms. On the organizational level, we consider issues of training, logistics, and cost effectiveness as they apply to the decisions to launch terrorist activities or desist (even if temporarily) from their use. Finally, in the concluding section, we discuss the implications of our analysis for possible ways and means for countering terrorism. Though our analysis is meant to apply to all kinds and varieties of modern terrorism (Rapoport, 2004), many of our subsequent examples pertain to contemporary jihadist terrorism. This is not meant to suggest a unique link between Islam and terrorism. In fact, in a recent survey carried out by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (see www.worldpublicopion.org) in Washington, DC, and the START center at the University of Maryland (National Institute for the Study of Terrorism and the Responses to Terrorism), we found that large majorities of respondents in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Morocco were against attacks on civilians (see Figure 1). In addition, as discussed later, moderate Muslim communities are beginning to mobilize against Islamist extremism, and extensive deradicalization programs aimed at terrorism suspects at detention centers are commencing in
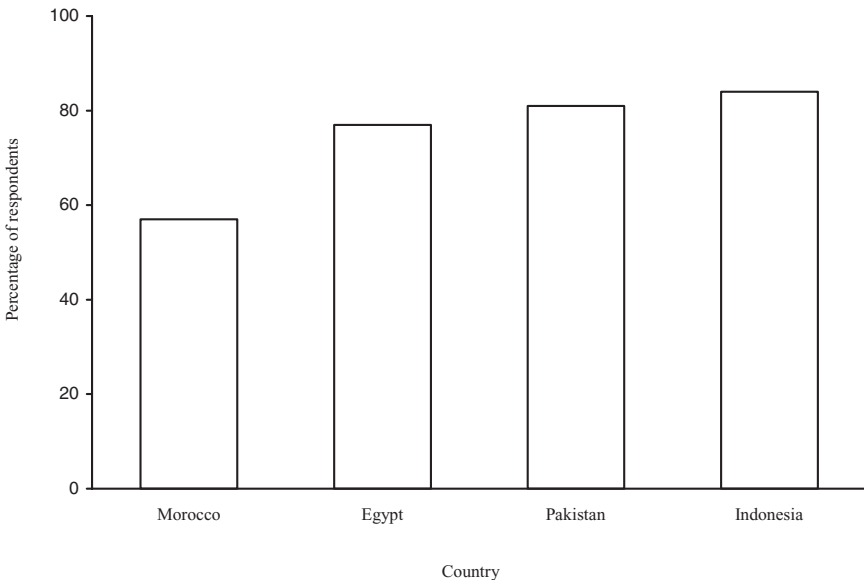

Fig. 1. Percentage of respondents against attacks on U.S. civilians.

various Muslim countries (Gunaratna, 2007; Horgan, 2009). Yet, current jihadist terrorism is of major contemporary interest because of its global scope and the clear and present danger it poses to the international community. Hence, we too accord it appropriate attention.

The individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. To pursue its objectives, the organization relies on group-level processes, which in turn operate on individual psychologies. Organizational functioning presupposes individuals' readiness to participate and contribute to tasks defined by the organization; such readiness derives from potential members' individual propensities and inclinations, and the amplification of these via group-level processes of socialization and indoctrination. In other words, individuals contribute their *motivation and dedication* to the advancement of terrorist causes, groups affect the *socialization into terrorist ideologies*, and organizations determine the *structure, mechanisms, and rewards* needed for group survival. Together, these three levels of psychological process operate in concert to further the culture of terrorism. We draw on the attraction-selection-attrition framework from organizational psychology (Schneider, 1987; see Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003 for a review) to further illustrate the dynamics across levels of analysis. According to this framework, people are *attracted* to particular organizations as a function of their own values, attitudes, and personality characteristics. They seek out the organization, and volunteer for its missions, representing a *bottom-up process* that bridges between the individual and the organization. In the case of typically clandestine terrorist organizations, the seeking out effort is often facilitated via a *group-level* process of networking with friends and acquaintances with ties to the organization. The organization then *selects* members into an organization based on the fit between their characteristics and the characteristics of the organization, and further *socializes* them to enhance their fit to the organization's mission, representing *a top-down* linkage between the organization and the individual (Chatman, 1991). The reciprocal relations between the individual, the group, and the organizational levels of analysis are represented graphically in Figure 2, wherein these levels are depicted as bidirectionally linked apexes of a triangle. We first consider psychological factors in terrorism at each of these "apexes," and subsequently examine the psychological implications of our analysis for processes of counterterrorism.

Individual Level of Analysis

In this section, we consider factors relevant to individuals' propensity to join a terrorist organization and/or to launch terrorist attacks. First, we discuss the early hypothesis that terrorism is rooted in psychopathology or that terrorists possess a specific "problematic" *personality* profile. We also consider the hypothesis that individuals' decision to embark on terrorism is prompted by the *situation* and that
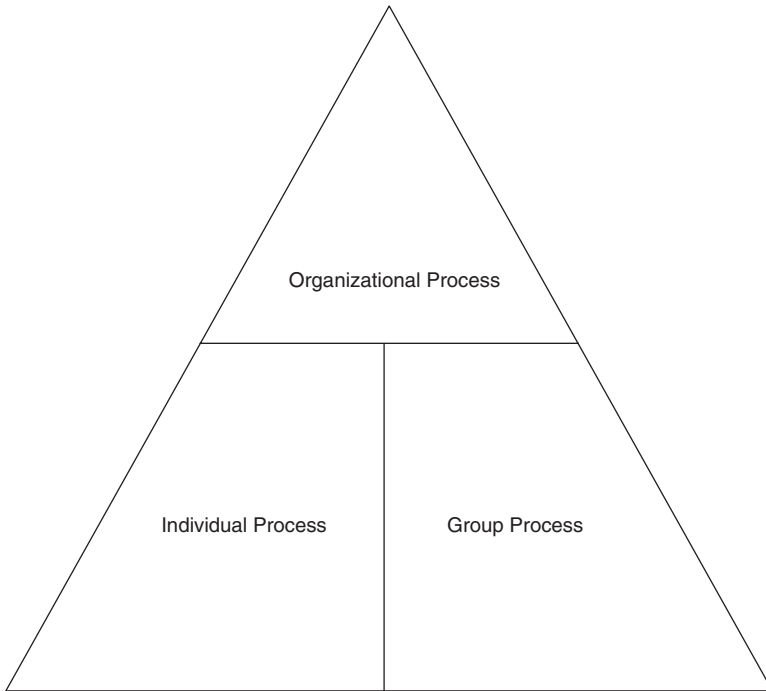
Fig. 2. Interdependence of individual, group, and organizational processes in terrorism.

there exist general "root causes" (economic, political, or educational) that propel numerous persons toward terrorism. We then elaborate on the distinction between "root causes" and "contributing factors" as these may impact individuals' readiness to engage in terrorism, and we address the notion that much of terrorism is in the service of a broad motivational force, the *quest for personal significance,* anchored in a collectivistic ideology (whether political, ethnonationalist, or religious) that informs individuals how they may enhance their societal worth by committing terrorism (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009a,b).

Terrorist Psychopathology/Personality Hypothesis

The hypothesis that terrorism represents a form of psychopathology suggests itself naturally by atrocities that terrorists have been known to perpetrate, and which vitiate fundamental norms of human conduct (the kidnapping and beheading of civilians, seemingly callous perpetration of massive casualties, etc.). In this vein, Silke (2003) commented that "in the early 1970s . . . it was widely believed

that terrorists suffered from personality disorders and that there would be an exceptionally high number of clinical psychopaths, narcissists and paranoids in the ranks of the average terrorist group" (p. 30). Even as recently as September 11, 2002, Walter Laqueur wrote that "all terrorists believe in conspiracies by the powerful, hostile forces and suffer from some form of delusion and persecution mania . . . . The element of . . . madness plays an important role in terrorism" (as quoted in Silke, 2003, p. 30).

Nonetheless, the systematic quest for a terrorist psychopathology or for a unique terrorist personality profile has yielded disappointing results. Painstaking empirical studies of the German Red Army Faction (the Bader Meinhoff Gang), the Italian Red Army Brigades, the Basque ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna or "Basque Homeland and Freedom"), and various Palestinian groups found nothing particularly unique about the psychological makeup of members of terrorist organizations (for a review, see Victoroff, 2005). To the contrary, the majority of such research points to the normality of individuals involved in terrorist organizations. In this vein, Horgan (2003) commented that "despite their attractiveness (via the simplicity any potential results would imply), personality traits are useless as predictors for understanding why people become terrorists" (p. 114).

Other Individual-Level Causes of Terrorism

If not individual psychopathology or personality profile, perhaps an aspect of the overall *social situation* prompts the emergence of terrorism. Such search for social context-based determinants of terrorism, including socioeconomic status, age, education, relative deprivation, religion, foreign occupation, or poverty has suffered from two fundamental problems: one conceptual and the other empirical. The conceptual problem was one of *specificity* (Sageman, 2004, 2008). That is, while many people share the same oppressive environments, only a small number ever considers joining a terrorist organization. Thus, none of the environmental factors may "automatically" produce terrorism or constitute the necessary and sufficient cause of terrorism (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006).

Furthermore, empirical research thus far has failed to uncover a "root cause" of terrorism. For instance, work carried out in diverse contexts of terrorism has failed to discern a relationship between terrorism and poverty at either the individual or aggregate level (Krueger & Maleckova, 2002; Atran, 2003; Stern, 2003). Sageman's (2004) data on Al Qaeda show that the leadership and the majority of members of the Salafi jihad movement had come from mostly the middle and upper classes. Similarly, Pape (2005) showed that of the suicide bombers in his sample, only 17% were unemployed or part of the lower socioeconomic strata. On the aggregate level, Berrebi (2003) found no relationship between economic conditions in the West Bank and number of terrorist incidents carried out by Palestinian militants. Experts agree these days that neither education nor poverty

nor political oppression can been seen as necessary and sufficient conditions for terrorism (for review see Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006).

   Root causes or contributing factors? The foregoing arguments should not be taken to imply that personality traits or environmental conditions are *irrelevant* to terrorism. Instead, they may be considered as *contributing factors* to terrorism. In contrast to "root causes," assumed to constitute sufficient conditions for terrorism, contributing factors may relate to terrorism *under specific circumstances*. In other words, each one of these factors alone is neither necessary nor sufficient for terrorism, but under certain circumstances, and in the right combination, they may help contribute to an individual's support for (or involvement in) a terrorist organization. In this vein, Silke (2003) described how the vast majority of terrorists neither suffer from mental disorders nor can be classified by a certain personality characteristic; instead, "their involvement in political violence is a result of a series of understandable factors which combined result in a process of deepening involvement in violent extremism" (p. 31).

   Relative deprivation as a contributing factor. Sageman (2004) describes how wealthy Core Arabs (those from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, and Kuwait) sent by their families abroad to acquire Western education were alienated, underemployed, and discriminated against in the European diasporas, thus experiencing deprivation relative to the native citizens of their host countries. Such circumstances may have produced a sense of unhappiness and humiliation felt also by the Maghreb Arabs living or born in an unfriendly French society. In both cases, individuals' sense of relative deprivation may have been alleviated by an embracement of radical Islam as "a way to restore their dignity, gain a sense of spiritual calling, and promote their values" (Sageman, 2004, p. 93). In this sense, relative deprivation may be considered a contributing factor to terrorism-breeding radicalization under specific circumstances.

   It is doubtful, however, that relative deprivation underlies all instances of terrorism or that it constitutes the necessary condition for terrorism. For instance, there is little evidence that the Weathermen underground in the United States, the Bader Meinhoff group in Germany, or the anti-colonialist movements in mid-20th century were concerned specifically about relative deprivation. Admittedly, they all wanted *something* (e.g., social justice, sovereignty, and independence) and they viewed terrorism as a means to attain it. But, it would seem imprecise to label their state as *relative deprivation*, unless one stretched the meaning of this term to all instances of discrepancy from desired states, which would render it overinclusive, and of limited explanatory utility.

   In short, we have argued that psychopathological states, personality profiles, and social context-based conditions, though unlikely to represent the direct causes (sufficient and/or necessary conditions) of terrorism, could well contribute to

engendering the motivation for terrorism under the right conditions. The crucial topic of terrorists' motivation is considered next.

Terrorists' Motivations

Beyond numerous surface differences terrorists' motivation may exhibit a deep underlying theme: the quest for personal meaning and significance. In what follows, we analyze in these terms diverse suggested motives for terrorist activities. Several analyses of such motives have appeared in recent years[4] (e.g., by Bloom, 2005; Pedahzur, 2005; Sageman, 2004; Stern, 2003). These analyses differed in the kind and variety of motivational factors identified as critical to terrorism. Some authors identified a *singular* motivation as crucial; others listed a "cocktail" of motives that could propel individuals toward terrorism.

Sageman's (2004) seminal work on terrorist networks highlighted the *quest for emotional and social support* by alienated Muslims in European diasporas as a major motivation for creating terrorist cells. In contrast, Pape (2005) highlighted *resistance to foreign occupation* as a main motivating force. Spekhard and Akhmedova (2005) assigned this role to *personal loss and trauma*. And, Hassan (2001) concluded that Hamas operatives' main motivation was religious.

In contrast to an emphasis on a single crucial motivation, Bloom (2005) listed a broad band of motivations for terrorism, including honor, dedication to the leader, social status, personal significance, pain and personal loss, group pressure, humiliation and injustice, vengeance, or feminism (i.e., convincing society of women's contribution). Stern (2003) mentioned as possible motives humiliation, exposure to violence, occupation, lack of alternative prospects, modernization, displacement, restoration of the glory of Islam, poverty, moral obligation, need to belong, desire to enter heaven, simplification of life, inspirational leadership, friendship, status, glamour, money, and support for one's family; and Ricolfi (2005) suggested that "the motivational drive to engage in suicide missions is likely to be found in a *cocktail of feelings*, which include desire for revenge, resentment, and a sense of obligation towards the victims, as revealed in the . . . video recorded pronouncements" (p. 106, emphasis added).

A reasonable step in dealing with such a heterogeneity is to reduce it by aggregating the diverse motives into more general categories. Several authors have hinted at such a classification typically distinguishing between *ideological reasons* and *personal causes* for becoming a terrorist (Pedahzur, 2005; Taarnby, 2005). For instance, alienated individuals' quest for social and emotional support (Sageman, 2004) that stems from their *personal* experience. So do pain, trauma, and redemption of lost honor, often listed as motives. In contrast, liberation of

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[4] In particular reference to the seemingly incomprehensible phenomenon of motivations for suicidal terrorism (for discussion see Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009a,b).

one's land, or carrying out God's will, pertain to *ideological* factors (Atran, 2004, 2006) that transcend individual actors' life circumstances. A *terrorism-justifying ideology* identifies a *culprit* (e.g., the West, Israel, infidels) presumed responsible for the *discrepancy* between an actual and an ideal state (defining a grievance) and portrays violence against that culprit (e.g., jihad) as an effective *means* or *method* for moving toward the ideal state.

Beyond personal causes and ideological reasons, a third motivational category pertinent to suicidal attacks involves a sense of social *duty and obligation* whether internalized or induced by social pressure. This is highlighted in data on the Japanese Kamikaze pilots (e.g., Ohnuki-Tierney, 2006), but it is highly relevant to present day terrorism as well (Gambetta, 2005; Merari, 2002; Stern, 2003).

Quest for Significance as an Overarching Motivational Category

In recent articles on terrorists' motivation (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009a,b), we proposed that underlying most terrorist attacks is the quest for personal significance. Such a quest has been identified by psychological theorists as a pervasive motivational force in human behavior, assumed to be served best by transcendence of the self and an adoption of larger societal causes. In the words of Frankl (2000): "that fundamental characteristic of the human reality [which he called]...its *self transcendent* quality [denotes the fact that] being human always relates and points to something other than itself...[According to Frankl,] self-transcendence is the essence of human existence" (p. 138).

Maslow's (1943) well-known theory of motivation claims for self-esteem and self-actualization motives the role of fundamental human strivings related to Frankl's "search for meaning" notion. As Maslow's (1965, p. 78) put it, "the business of self actualization can best be carried out via commitment to an important job," that is, to a transcendental cause of recognized societal significance (Frankl, 2000, p. 84).

Recent analysis of human motivations has linked the fear of death with the quest for personal meaning and significance (Greenberg, Koole, & Pyszczynski, 2004). From this perspective, it is the awareness of our own mortality, the fear of living a life that is insignificant, that motivates people to be "good" members of society. The ultimate in "goodness" is the sacrifice of one's self for the sake of the larger group, usually when the group faces a severe perceived threat to its existence. Putting the group first is highly valued and it brings the promise of immortality by becoming a hero or martyr engraved forever in the group's collective memory. As William James eloquently put it, "no matter what a man's frailties otherwise may be, if he be willing to risk death, and still more if he suffer it heroically, in the service he has chosen, the fact consecrates him forever" (James, 1890/1983, p. 330). Ironically then, the willingness to die in an act of suicidal terrorism may be motivated by the *desire to live forever*.

Implications of the Significance Quest Theory

Our theory of *significance quest* has a number of testable implications. First, experimental inductions of (significance questioning) mortality salience should lead to adoption of (significance affording) cultural causes. Second, real-life reminders of mortality should increase the appeal to oneself of cultural values and ideologies that profess to embody those values. Third, commitment to collectivistic ideologies based in shared values should reduce one's fear of death. Fourth, alternative sources of significance loss beyond mortality salience should increase one's tendency to embrace collectivistic ideologies. Finally, an opportunity for an immense significance gain should increase the appeal of ideologies that promise such a gain. Different types of evidence relevant to these implications are reviewed below.

Experimental inductions of mortality salience. In the terror management literature, numerous empirical studies show that reminders of mortality lead to heightened embracement of one's group culture and its ideology. For example, in one well-known study, it was found that research participants reminded of their mortality recommended a more severe sentence for a prostitute, who represented a deviant from cultural norms (Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989). Other work has shown that exposing Italians to death reminders leads to increases in pro-Italian biases as well as to the perception that Italians are cohesive and united (Castano & Dechesne, 2005). Further work has shown that mortality salience increases the accessibility of death thoughts but an opportunity to defend one's own culture by derogating its critics effects a reduction in their accessibility (Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Simon, 1997). In the words of Castano and Dechesne (2005), "Becoming part of collective entities [allows] individuals to extend their selves in space and time [and hence] to overcome the inherent limitations of their individual identity inextricably linked to a perishable body" (p. 233).

Pyszczynski et al. (2006) examined the effect of mortality salience on support for terrorism among Iranian students. When these participants answered questions about an aversive topic (unrelated to death), they evaluated a fellow student who opposed martyrdom attacks more favorably then a student who supported martyrdom attacks. The reverse was found, however, when the students answered questions about their own death. In this instance, they rated more highly the student who supported martyrdom than one who opposed it. Thus, the fear of death appears to increase commitment to collectivistic causes couched in ideological terms.

Real-life mortality reminders. Death reminders may come in forms other than through experimental manipulations. Often, they can be embodied in a personal trauma occasioned by the loss of a loved one. Spekhard and Akhmedova (2005)

carried out an extensive study of Chechen suicide terrorists via interviews with their family members and close associates and with hostages who spoke with the terrorists during the three day siege in Moscow's Dubrovka theater. According to the authors, all of the interviewees mentioned traumatic events that appeared to alter the course of the terrorists' lives. In their own words: "when we looked for the primary motivation in our sample of terrorists we would have to say that it was *trauma* in every case" (Spekhard & Akhmedova, 2005, pp. 25–26). Of particular interest, Spekhard and Akhmedova (2005, p. 22) observed that the terrorists they studied sought out ideological inspiration in response to their personal trauma. It appears then that personal trauma, feelings of alienation, and disenfranchisement may spur a quest for meaning that in cases of a severe intergroup conflict may be guided by a terrorism-justifying ideology.

The role of ideology in providing the warrant for suicidal terrorism appears to be general across terrorist organizations. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who until the 2003 Iraq invasion held the world record in suicidal attacks (that they committed against Sinhalese targets) also viewed such attacks as acts of martyrdom. As Schalk (1997) put it "In English texts distributed by the LTTE one can find the word martyr rather frequently." The first LTTE proclamation of the Heroes Day in 1989 states: "Every freedom fighter who sacrifices his or her life is a martyr" (Schalk, 1997).

Just as does the Islamist concept of jihad, the LTTE concept of martyrdom is rooted in specific cultural elements, based this time on aspects of Hindu theology. Specifically, the notion of *tiyakam,* abandonment of life, is a specific Indian form of martyrdom, cultivated by both male and female fighters. Its roots lie in the last section of the Bhagavadagita. "The ideal tiyagi (suicidal martyr in the Sanskrit) is Arjuna who kills even his kin and teachers in dedication to Visnu. [Thus], the LTTE tiyāki (suicidal martyr in the Tamil) . . . stands in the tradition of the revivalist martial concepts that were emphasised during the Indian struggle for independence in the 20th century, especially in the sacrificial ideology of the Subhasists" (Schalk, 1997).

Ideological commitment and fear of death. There are also data that commitment to ideologically touted causes reduces death anxiety. Specifically, Durlak (1972) found a significant negative correlation ($r = -.68$; $p < .001$) between purpose in life (PIL) defined in terms of commitment to cultural objectives and measured by Crumbaugh (1973) PIL scale and fear of death. Illustrating the reverse effect, Mikulincer, Florian, Birnbaum, and Malishkevich (2002) showed that depriving people of a sense of belonging increases death-related cognitions. Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Simon (1997) first reminded half of their American participants about death and assessed their reactions to pro- and anti-U.S. essays. Accessibility of death thoughts increased after the reminder of death was introduced and declined after participants were
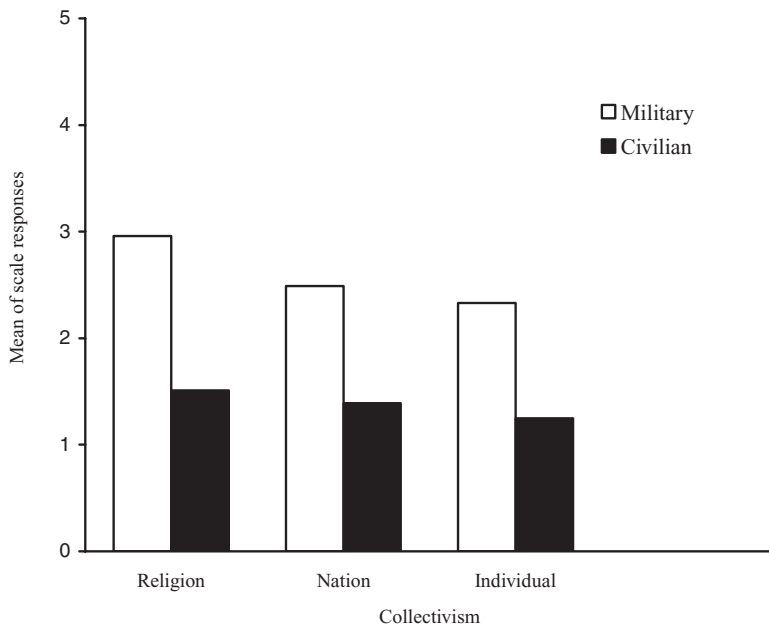
Fig. 3. Support for attacks against the U.S. military and civilians according to collectivistic and individualistic outlooks.

given the opportunity to derogate the anti-U.S. writer, thus defending the cultural norm.

If commitment to collectivistic causes reduces death anxiety, and if participation in terrorism involves the risk of death, then commitment to collectivistic causes may enhance the support for terrorism. A recent study by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) found that among a sample of Internet users in 12 Arab countries, Pakistan, and Indonesia, collectivistic goals were associated with greater support for terrorism against the West (Fishman, Orehek, Chen, Dechesne, & Kruglanski, 2007) (see Figure 3).

Alternative sources of significance loss. While mortality salience may lead to perceived loss of one's personal significance, it is by no means the sole route to such a loss. For instance, feelings of social isolation or disenfranchisement by Muslim youths in the diaspora (Sageman, 2004, 2008) can create a loss of significance. So can humiliation and ostracism by members of one's own group. Indeed, there are cases of suicidal terrorism in which the perpetrators appeared to be motivated by the need to compensate for their deviant status in the community.

Wafa Idris, the first female suicide bomber in Israel, was infertile (Pedahzur, 2005, pp. 138–139). Other bombers, women in particular, have often been reported to be on a mission to redeem themselves in the eyes of the community for such shame bestowing occurrences as divorce, extramarital sex, or rape (Bloom, 2005; Pedahzur, 2005). Personal loss of significance as a consequence of deviating from normative injunctions may well introduce a strong quest for *significance restoration* believed to be served by sacrificing oneself for a cause.

Opportunity for significance gain. Acting on behalf of one's group perceived to be wronged by its nemeses creates an opportunity for significance gain in the eyes of one's fellow members. Sprinzak (2001) wrote in these terms about mega-lomaniacal hyper terrorists, like Osama bin Laden; Ramzi Youseff, perpetrator of the 1993 attack on the Twin Towers; or Igal Amir, the assassin of Izhak Rabin, all of whom sought an exalted place in history by committing or planning to commit spectacular acts of terrorism. In this vein too, Elkins (1971) and Bar-Zohar (1967) describe *the Avengers*, a group of 150 Jewish partisans from Poland who after the Second World War ended sought to avenge the Holocaust (that brought both tragedy and humiliation to their group) by poisoning the water supplies in four German cities, a plan that was thwarted by the British. The Avengers then attempted to poison detained SS personnel, again to no lethal effect.

The opportunity for significance gain may be presented to children as part of their socialization into their group's culture. Hezbollah's Imam al Mahdi Scouts, 8–16 years old and numbering in the tens of thousands are "bred in the bone" (Post, 2006) to view martyrdom as their way of gaining vast societal significance by becoming venerated martyrs and heroes worshiped in their society, as are children in Hamas kindergartens (Kruglanski, Chen, Fishman, Orehek, & Dechesne, 2009).

An opportunity for significance gain may arise where one's group suffers defeat or humiliation at the hands of an enemy. We looked in those terms at Israel's policy of targeted assassinations of six major Hamas leaders (likely humiliating events for the organization) between October 2000 and April 2005, and their impact on subsequent terrorist activity on the part of Hamas operatives. Using Cox Hazard modeling, we found that 2 weeks following the assassination of a leading figure there was a statistically significant spike in suicidal terrorism on the part of Hamas members, potentially signifying an effort at significance restoration by inflicting a painful punishment on the enemy (see Figure 4).

Summary

The notion of significance quest affords an integration of heterogeneous specific motives underlying suicidal terrorism, including personal traumas, ideological reasons, and social pressures. In different ways, these refer to the constant human yearning for significance (Frankl, 2000) arguably stemming from
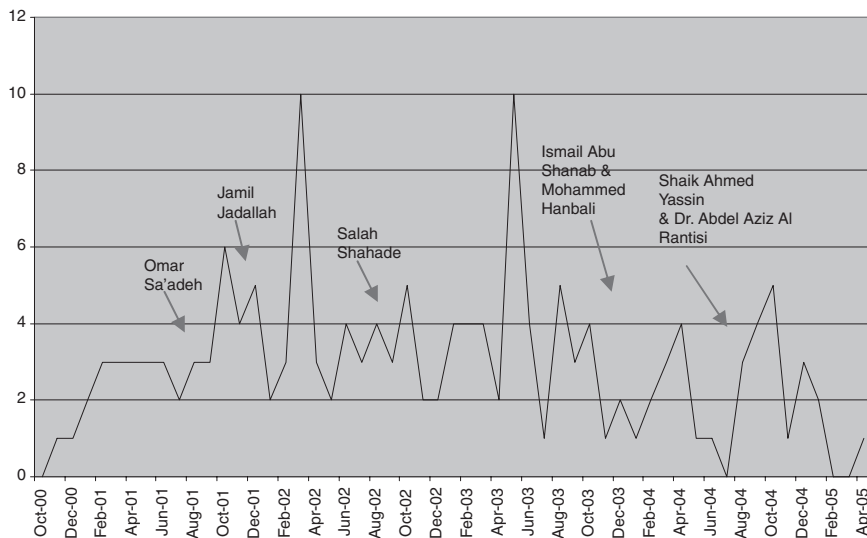
Fig. 4. Number of suicide attacks carried out by Hamas from October 2000 through April 2005.

the awareness of the finality of life (Becker, 1962; Greenberg et al., 2004). Our significance quest theory is schematically summarized in Figure 5.

As can be seen, the quest for significance is activated or magnified by one or more of three sources, (a) actual significance loss (occasioned by mortality salience, humiliation, and ostracism among others), (b) threat of potential loss (should one fail to act in accordance with normative requirements), and (c) opportunity for significance gain (via significance bestowing activities). The quest for significance thus motivated is assumed to foster an embracement of a *significance affording ideology*, and the commission of *significance bestowing activities* implied by the ideology.

The theory of significance quest is supported by a variety of data including the prevalence of ideological narratives in suicide bombers' farewell video clips, audio recordings, interviews and other materials (Hafez, 2007), by findings that personal traumas seemed to prompt an embracement of such narratives (Spekhard & Akhmedova, 2005), and by a psychological analysis and supportive research findings identifying the quest for personal meaning and significance as a major motivating force in human affairs (Becker, 1962; Frankl, 2000; Greenberg et al., 2004).

Group Level of Analysis

In the following sections, we discuss several sociopsychological processes involved in terrorism considered at the group level of analysis. These include
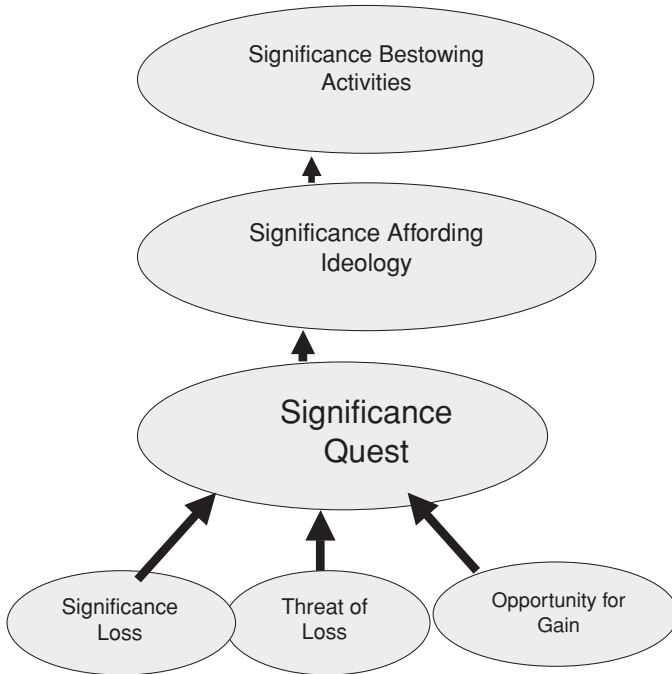
Fig. 5. Sources and consequences of significance quest.

recruitment to terrorist groups, construction of unique shared reality in such groups, and the creation of public commitment to the groups' goals and their means of attainment.

Recruitment

Individuals' quest for significance may increase their readiness to be recruited to terrorist organizations. In parallel, terrorism using organizations may (a) seek out individuals who are particularly bent on boosting their social significance and (b) highlight how group membership may facilitate the attainment of supreme significance (as shown in Figure 5). Membership in a terrorist group may expose individuals to a unique *social reality* that condones violence, remove the anticipatory anxiety and guilt restraining one from harming innocents (Bandura, 1990/1998), and stemming from societal norms that prohibit such behaviors. Social psychological research suggests that it is highly difficult to sustain deviance on one's own. Asch (1954) in his seminal work on the conformity phenomenon observed that when individuals' perceptual judgments deviated uniquely from

the majority's judgments, these persons typically succumbed to the majority's influence and conformed to the majority opinions. However, when the deviating individual was joined by even one other person who shared her or his opinion (an "ally"), conformity was considerably reduced. These findings imply that sharing reality with others (even a minimal number of such others) seems to have an empowering effect and encourages individuals to stick to their opinions even if these are at odds with the general consensus. It is understandable, therefore, that terrorism, as a form of deviant behavior, is typically carried out in the context of groups. Groups provide social support for members' pursuits and ground them in shared (ideological) construals of reality (Festinger, 1950; Hardin & Higgins, 1996).

In what follows, we discuss several sociopsychological aspects of the relations between individual terrorists and their groups. These include recruitment to the group, construction and maintenance of the group's shared beliefs (Bar-Tal, 1990), the use of language, and the mechanism of public commitment.

Networking. A frequent mode of joining a terrorist group is via the mechanism of *introduction*. Whether one looks at members of the Italian Red Brigades (Weinberg & Eubank, 1987) of the Basque ETA (Reinares, 2001), of the PIRA (Horgan, 2005), or of the Muslim Al Qaeda (Sageman, 2004), the story is remarkably similar. An individual has a relationship with a family member, a friend, or a romantic partner, for whom belonging to a terrorist group constitutes a central part of social identity. It may be difficult to maintain closeness with such persons without coming to share their important values and concerns. According to Heider's (1958) influential balance theory, people strive for harmony in their interpersonal relations; such harmony requires that they agree with those they like and disagree with those they dislike.

Thus, individuals with friends and significant others tied to terrorism experience a motivational push to also buy into the terrorism-justifying ideology and to get involved with the terrorist group. A group socialization process may then ensue (Moreland & Levine, 1982) in which the initially peripheral newcomers to terrorism acquire increasingly greater centrality in the group and in which, correspondingly, the group membership becomes an increasingly central part of these persons' social identity.

Terrorism promoting institutions. Whereas recruitment through networking can be thought of as tilted toward a "bottom-up" process, commencing as it does with individuals' social relationships, a "top-down" recruitment may also take place at institutions whose climate and/or explicit objectives concern the infusion of an ideology. In what follows, we discuss briefly a number of such major institutions at which Islamic radicalization, of major contemporary importance as a source of worldwide terrorism, might be taking place.

The mosque. Post, Sprinzak, and Denny (2003) carried out extensive interviews with 35 Middle Eastern terrorists incarcerated in Israeli and Palestinian prisons. These authors report that the mosque was consistently cited as the place where most members were initially introduced to the Palestinian cause. Authority figures from the mosque were prominent in all conversations with group members and most dramatically so for members of the Islamist organizations. One interviewee stated:

> My initial political awareness came during the prayers at the mosque. That's where I was also asked to join religious classes . . . . The Koran and my religious studies were the tools that shaped my political consciousness. The mosque and the religious clerics in my village provided the focal point of my social life. (Post et al., 2003, p. 177)

The madrassa. Do the madrassas, Muslim religious schools (e.g., in Pakistan, Indonesia, or Saudi Arabia), constitute breeding grounds for terrorism? Different views have been expressed on this topic with little hard evidence brought in their support. The emerging consensus seems to be that (a) there do exist some radical madrassas that preach extremist views and encourage jihadism, though many madrassas focus squarely on religious teachings and eschew politics, (b) if anything, the radical madrassas impart the ideology and foment a positive attitude toward jihad rather then providing actual training in the tactics of terrorism and insurgency, and (c) attending the madrassas is not a necessary condition for recruitment to or embarkation upon terrorism.

Bergen and Pandey (2005) in a New York Times article titled "The Madrassa Myth" questioned the view that madrassas are an important source of recruits to terrorism. In their words, "While madrassas may breed fundamentalists . . . such schools do not teach the technical or linguistic skills to be an effective terrorist. Indeed, there is little or no evidence that madrassas produce terrorists capable of attacking the West."

Bergen and Pandey (2005) examined the educational backgrounds of "75 terrorists behind some of the most significant terrorist attacks against Westerners" and found that "a majority had college education often in technical subjects like engineering . . . . Of the 75 terrorists . . . only nine attended madrassas, and all of those played a role in one attack—the Bali bombing. Even in this instance, however, five college educated 'masterminds'—including two university lecturers—helped to shape the Bali plot" (p. A23).

Self-recruitment. An important source of "top-down" recruitment to contemporary Islamic terrorism is self-recruitment via the Internet. Coolsaet (2005) characterized self-recruitment as:

> the result of an individual track of self-radicalization outside usual meeting places such as mosques. It more often than not involves individuals with college education (Bergen & Pandey, 2005) . . . . It mixes a psychological process of personal *reidentification* . . . implying

searching (through chat rooms, prisons, backroom meetings) for others with a similar world view . . . . In this process groupthink gradually eliminates alternative views, simplifies reality and dehumanizes all who are not subscribing to their extreme views (p. 6–7).

Experts agree that the *Internet* plays an important role in the radicalization and self-recruitment process into terrorist groups. Messages and videos on jihadi websites target potential recruits' "soft spots" and inflame their imagination. CBS news of March 4, 2007, recently quoted Army Brigadier General John Custer, head of intelligence at central command, responsible for Iraq and Afghanistan, who stated, "Without doubt, the Internet is the single most important venue for the radicalization of Islamic youth. It is estimated that over 5,000 jihadi sites are currently in operation. In acute awareness of various governments' efforts to counter the spread of jihadi propaganda on the Internet, Al Qaeda has provided the following counsel to Muslim Internet experts:

> Due to the advances of modern technology, it is easy to spread news, information, articles and other information over the Internet. We strongly urge Muslim internet professionals to spread and disseminate news and information about the Jihad through e-mail lists, discussion groups, and their own websites. If you fail to do this, and our site closes down before you have done this, you may hold you to account before Allah on the Day of Judgment . . . . This way, even if our sites are closed down, the material will live on with the Grace of Allah. (Azzam Publications, 2001)

Intertwined "top-down" and "bottom-up" recruitment processes. Bottom-up and top-down recruitment processes are inextricably intertwined. Personal relations provide the motivational impetus for adopting the ideology as well as their social validation, whereas Internet messages furnish the ideological arguments themselves. In this vein, Taarnby (2005) commented that "While many European Muslims were sensitized to current issues on the Internet and developed a sense of collective social identity through it, none went straight from interacting on the Internet to Jihad. Personal acquaintances are still required" (p. 50).

In other words, personal acquaintanceships may fulfill two functions as far as recruitment to a terrorism organization is concerned: (a) *access* to terrorist worldviews and ideologies and (b) social *motivation* (born of attraction to terrorist friends) to buy into the ideology. Ideological access may be afforded in other ways as well such as via the various forums available on the Internet. However, the personal relations remain as an important (though not an exclusive) source of motivation to seek exposure to terrorist materials in their various forms.

Terrorist Group's Shared Reality

Typically, the terrorist group exists within a larger society with whom it may have varying degrees of world-view overlap. In some cases, for example with

the "urban" terrorists of the 1970s like the Bader Meinhoff group, the Italian Red Brigades, the Weathermen underground in the United States, or the Aum Shinrikyo group of Japan, such overlap is minimal. In those instances, the perspectives, values, and objectives held by the terrorist group bore very little commonality with those characterizing the larger society wherein the group was embedded. In other cases, the overlap could be more substantial, and the terrorist group could be seen as acting on behalf of the larger society. For instance, in Palestine during the second Intifada (of the year 2000) official polls have reported that 80% of the Palestinian respondents have supported the suicidal attacks against the Israelis. Prior to the NATO led invasion of Afghanistan, the Al Qaeda enjoyed the support of the ruling Taliban regime, and for a period of time activities of the Weather Underground in the United States enjoyed the support of the American New Left (Sprinzak, 1990/1998).

Creation of an ensconced culture. Because of the almost inevitable exposure of the embedded terrorist group to views emanating from the larger society, to the extent that the terrorists' and the societal views differed, the latter may impact the terrorists and instill doubt in their minds concerning the justness of their ways. In such cases, the terrorist group needs to protect its ideological premises from those external influences. This is often accomplished via reduction of members' contact with outside sources, and the creation of a unique culture wherein the terrorism-justifying ideology is repeatedly highlighted.

Indoctrination into suicide attacks. A number of social psychological processes are set in motion once an individual has joined a militant organization committed to suicide attacks and has declared (or intimated) a readiness to carry out such an attack him or herself. First, she or he is cast into a *social reality* that forcefully affirms his "newborn" identity of a future "martyr." "We were in a constant state of worship," one suicide bomber, who failed his mission, told Hassan (2001), the Pakistani journalist who interviewed almost 250 Palestinian would-be suicide terrorists and their handlers. "We told each other that if the Israelis only knew how joyful we were they would whip us to death! These were the happiest days of my life."

Hafez (2006) stressed the role of culture in establishing the social reality of "martyrdom." In his words "[violence] must also be legitimated as fulfilling a duty to one's own values, family, friends, community, or religion. Failure to act, consequently, is perceived as a betrayal of one's ideals, friends, country, or God ... Ritual and ceremony are cultural performances, symbolic behaviors, or proscribed procedures that are dramatic, socially standardized, and repetitive. Their aim is to communicate and declare identity, arouse emotions, deepen commitments, and inculcate the values of collective etho" (p. 169). In this sense, the

terrorist acts become "obligatory *altruistic* suicides"[5] (as opposed to *egoistic* or *anomic* ones in Durkheim's terminology, see Jones, 1986).

The use of language. "Living martyrs" are subject to indoctrination containing elements of glorification of their own group, religion, and their special saintly status as well as being fed extensive antienemy propaganda (Moghadam, 2003). An important element in creating the appropriate "social reality" involves the use of language. The would-be suicide bomber is not referred to as such. Nor is he referred to as a terrorist or even as a freedom fighter. Instead, he or she is depicted as a "martyr" even before he or she carries out the attack, namely as a "living martyr" (*al Shahid al hai*). The attack is seen as a tremendous act of self-sacrifice. And after the attack, "weddings" between the martyr and the pure virgins of paradise, signifying his ascendance to the exalted status of a mythical hero, are advertised in the local press.

The enemy, in turn, is referred to in subhuman terms as the "sons of dogs and monkeys" or in terms related to supernatural but evil beings namely "devils" or "demons" (Bandura, 1990/1998). Such language removes the moral impediments on the road to the annihilation of civilians. In this vein, religious terrorist organizations (Iannaccone, in press), often refer to the adversary as the "enemy of God" or "the evil of the infidels" in cases where the targets of suicide attacks belong to different religions than the attackers. As Pape (2005) put it, "Religious difference can enable extreme demonization—the belief that the enemy is morally inferior as well as militarily dangerous, and so must be dealt with harshly" (p. 90). Bin Laden had the following to say during his Sermon for the Feast of the Sacrifice (March 5, 2003)—"The Jews have lied about the Creator, and even more so about His creations. The Jews are the murderers of the prophets, the violators of agreements, ... These are the Jews: usurers and whoremongers. They will leave you nothing, neither this world nor religion. . . .They deliberately attributed falsehood to Allah."

Enemies are also analogized to groups known for their inhumanity (Nazis), or destructiveness (barbarians, Vandals), or are referred to as despicable "gang of black-hearted criminals" (murderers, rapists) (Bin Laden, 2003). These linguistic tactics aim at derogating and diminishing the targets of one's aggression depicted as subhuman creatures who do not deserve the basic consideration accorded other human beings, including the basic right to live (Bandura, 1990/1998; Bar-Tal, 1998; Pape, 2005).

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[5] In his influential volume on suicide, the French sociologist Durkheim ([1897] 1997) distinguished between egoistic, anomic, and altruistic types of suicide. According to Durkheim ([1897] 1997) egoistic and anomic suicides may occur when the individual has only weak ties to society (egoistic suicide) or when the society does not afford the means for the individual's objectives. In contrast, altruistic suicide occurs when the individual is highly integrated into society and believes that her or his death will benefit the society.

To be sure, strategies of delegitimation and dehumanization are not unique to suicide terrorism and may be often part and parcel of any punitive and aggressive behavior toward fellow human beings including conventional warfare. However, in the instance of suicide terrorism, involving an act as extreme as the sacrifice of one's own life, the derogation of the victims may be particularly extreme and vituperative.

Epistemic authority. To say that ideological commitment is critical for the terrorist group hardly means that every terrorist "foot soldier" has broad expertise and deep understanding of ideological arguments (whether political or religious). More likely, the "rank and file" bomber puts his or her trust in specific "epistemic authorities" who tell him or her what the ideology requires at any given time. Two types of "epistemic authority" have received particular attention in the social psychological literature (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Chaiken, Lieberman, & Eagly, 1989): the *expert* and the *group*. With regards to expert authority, consider, for example, the focal role played by Sayid Muhammad Husayn Fadlalla in the suicide bombings of Hezbollah, the organization that was first to employ that practice in 1983. Fadlalla has been the informal leader of the Shi'ite clerics associated with the Hezbollah, and hence its supreme spiritual leader to whom the operational commanders looked up for moral approval.

Early in 1983 Fadlalla voiced his moral reservations about suicidal tactics, but subsequently gave them his fullest possible endorsement short of an explicit *fatwa*. This provided the needed spiritual "seal of approval" for unleashing a wave of suicide attacks that has been widely emulated since by other terrorist groups (e.g., the LTTE, Al Qaeda). The justification of suicide attacks as "martyrdom operations" has been depicted by religious authorities inside and outside Palestine (Hafez, 2006) as "the highest and noblest form of resistance and one that is most effective" (p. 179).

The group or the community may also represent a trusted "epistemic authority" whose consensus determines for the individual whether the commission of a terrorist act is legitimate and desirable. For instance, the Palestinian public support for suicide bombing has increased steadily over the last years. Whereas in March of 1996, it amounted to 20%; it has risen to 70–80% in June of 2002. Correspondingly, from September 1993 to September 2000, there was an average of four suicide bombings per year whereas from October 2000 to December 2003 the rate amounted to more than 36 per year. Community consensus that justifies terrorism and violence provides a broad basis for individuals' beliefs and removes the need on their part to examine these matters in depth on their own. Accordingly, as far as the suicidal "foot soldiers" are concerned, "theirs is not to reason why." Their own, self-ascribed, epistemic authority in ideological matters may be low and they may rely, therefore, on expert and group authorities for instructions and

interpretations, even when it comes to such a critical personal decision as taking one's own life.

According to Friedkin (2005), it is in the vital interest of the terrorist organization to keep the epistemic authorities of the members low, augmenting their susceptibility to the group's influence. Accordingly, terrorist organizations may purposely aim at diminishing the self-ascribed authority of their members. They may cut off sources of external social support to the members, for example, by training future martyrs at an isolated place, separated from family and friends, and diminishing their individuality and personal needs, allowing the ideological goal of sacrificial suicide to dominate these individuals' awareness (Friedkin, 2005). Notably, these techniques and their underlying rationale are not novel or unique to terrorist organizations. Indeed, they have been exploited in various persuasive contexts including the brainwashing of war prisoners (Schein, 1961), indoctrination to the belief systems of religious cults (Amitrani & DiMarzio, 2001; Friedkin, 2005), or the socialization into military worldviews of army recruits at boot camps (DeRosa, 2006).

Public commitment. Because defection from the terrorist group may be demoralizing to remaining members as well as dangerous to the group (potentially involving the provision of important intelligence to the group's enemies), terrorist organizations induce public commitment and apply social pressure to create martyrs who are "reliable" (Berman & Laitin, 2008) and who will not change their minds, putting the group at risk and wasting weeks or months of costly preparations. Accordingly, an important element of the group process brought to bear on the suicidal "bomber" in training is the creation of a psychological "point of no return," as Merari (2002) put it, that few individuals can overcome. The candidate is made to prepare his or her will and write last letters to family and friends. He/she is then videotaped bidding everybody farewell and encouraging others to follow this example. One can only imagine the amount of pressure this puts on the individual to carry out the deed as planned.

According to Merari (2002), there have been practically no cases of mind changing by suicide candidates in the case of the Palestinians, very few in the case of the Tamils, and very few in the case of the Lebanese organizations, the Hezbollah and Amal. Nonetheless, a more recent review by Berman and Laitin (2008) notes cases of defection among Palestinian suicide bombers between the years 2000 and 2003. Thus, a change of mind, presumably stemming from the primitive fear of death, constitutes a problem that the terrorist organizations perennially guard against via various tactics of social pressure.

The Organizational Level

The following sections address psychological factors in terrorism at the organizational level of analysis. These include discussions of strategic and tactical

decision making in terrorism using groups, the *rationality* of terrorism, its suscep-
tibility to *deterrence*, and the *production process* of terrorist operatives.

The organizational level of analysis is of considerable importance for under-
standing terrorism. In a sense, the organization is the "dog" that wags the "tail" of
terrorism. In this sense, terrorism may be thought of as a tactic, a means of war-
fare utilized where the circumstances imply its efficacy (Kruglanski & Fishman,
2006). To reiterate an earlier point, terrorist strikes are not random acts of vi-
olence or the impulsive products of a pathological personality. Many terrorist
undertakings require painstaking planning, detailed coordination, communication
among participating operatives, and considerable financing. These require at least
a modicum, and often a great deal, of organization. Typically, it is terrorist orga-
nizations, therefore, that set in motion group and individual-level processes (as
depicted earlier in Figure 2) that eventuate in concrete acts of terrorism.

Decision Making

To begin with, terrorist groups vary immensely in degree and type of orga-
nization. Some organizations are organized around a single leader (e.g., the PKK
around the person of Abdullah Ocalan and the Peruvian Shining Path around
the person of Abimail Guzman). Other organizations are less autocratic in their
decision-making structure and less leader centered (e.g., the Palestinian Islamic
Jihad or the Hamas). Indeed, the arrest of Guzman in 1992 brought the Shining
Path operations to a standstill, and its membership to fall precipitously from a one-
time high of 10,000 to around 500, even though the organization has regrouped
since and has been launching attacks in recent years albeit on a smaller scale.
Similarly, the arrest of Ocalan in 1999 has halted for several years the PKK's
terrorist activities, which have nonetheless resumed in 2004, based on Ocalan's
order issued from his prison cell (Jenkins, 2008).

The Rationality of Terrorism

As already noted, on the organization level at least terrorism may be thought
of as means to an end, a tool employed for a specific purpose (Kruglanski &
Fishman, 2006). Psychological analyses of goal pursuit (e.g., Kruglanski et al.,
2002) suggest that terrorism may be relinquished or suspended when alternative
means to the organization's goal became apparent. For instance, in 2002, the Tamil
Tigers of Eelam reached a ceasefire agreement with the Sri Lankan government
when it appeared that progress toward a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict
may be reached via negotiations.

The means-ends analysis (Kruglanski et al., 2002) suggests that organizations
may have different goals that may be activated at different times and appropri-
ately affect organizational decisions concerning the use of terror. For instance,

terrorism-using organizations like Hamas or Hezbollah may have goals related to internal politics that at times could be inconsistent with the dispatch of terrorist operatives against an external enemy. The Hezbollah markedly reduced its rocket attacks against Israel following the 2000 Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. A possible reason is that the Shia population of Southern Lebanon, Hezbollah's main base of political support, did not want to risk a reoccupation of their territory by the Israeli Defense Forces. Nonetheless, Hezbollah's goal of struggle against Israel, anchored in an Iranian brand of Shia radicalism, was not relinquished and while being kept at a low level for a number of years (between 2000 and 2006), it was capable of being refueled by events in the area (e.g., flaring up of tensions between Hamas and Israel and external pressures emanating from Iran and Syria) (e.g., see Priest, 2006), activating other goals (e.g., solidarity with the Palestinian or the Shia cause).

Susceptibility to Deterrence

The organizational rationality of terrorist activities has implications for the concept of deterrence as a strategy in counterterrorism. The concept of deterrence denotes the threat of an aggressive strike against a political actor should the latter carry out some undesirable activity (Schelling, 1960/2007). The feasibility of deterrence as a counterterrorist strategy is a positive function of the size of the terrorist organization. The larger the organization, the greater its needs, for example, in terms of territorial niche, training grounds, and infrastructures. These can be threatened and targeted, thus making continued terrorist activities potentially costly for the organization. Beyond exposing material vulnerabilities that can be targeted, extensive bases of operation typically require sponsorship by organized states that serve as hosts to the terrorist organizations. Different states vary in the tightness of control they exercise over their territory,[6] but to the extent they are capable, states typically resist armed terrorist organizations' semiautonomous presence within their borders. As an example, King Hussein of Jordan ordered his forces to attack PLO fighters in 1969, killing thousands of them in an operation known as the Black September because he considered the PLO presence in Jordan a threat to the Hashemite regime.

Furthermore, states that harbor or support terrorist activities can themselves become the targets of attack, as in the case of the Taliban who have paid a dear price in 2001 for hosting Al Qaeda, or of Lebanon in 2006 that paid such a price for allowing Hezbollah to launch attacks against Israel. Likely, because of such considerations, Muamar Gadaffi, despite his early enthusiasm for terrorism, has essentially gotten out of the terrorist business. Libya "has broken completely with

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[6] The term "failed states" has been coined to denote states whose central government is weak and incapable of exercising much control over their territory.

its former client Abu Nidal, implemented procedures to prevent terrorists from entering its territory, cooperated on counterterrorism with moderate Arab states, and acted in accordance with an Arab League agreement to extradite suspected terrorists" (Pillar, 2001, p. 160).

The concept of deterrence depends on its credibility as inferred from the relevant actor's perceived constraints and general proclivities. The Israeli campaign against the Hezbollah in the summer of 2006 was in part meant to reassert the credibility of its deterrence, based on the notion that fighting on the Palestinian front will prevent Israel from responding to Hezbollah's provocations. Deterrence, at least in its conventionally understood form of a punitive strike, is less likely to be effective in regard to smaller terrorist organizations with less conspicuous and exposed vulnerabilities. Crooke and Perry (2006) in their analysis of Israel's campaign against the Hezbollah conclude that it has failed to achieve its aims partly because the Hezbollah's bunkers and arsenals have been well hidden or camouflaged, hence relatively inaccessible to Israeli air strikes. Conventional deterrence logic is even less applicable to individual suicide bombers who are willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause.[7]

Production of Terrorist Operatives

Based on considerable intuitive appreciation of various psychological principles (of recruitment, indoctrination and training), the militant organizations have been able to create a veritable assembly line for the production of devoted foot soldiers ready to spring to terrorist action for the cause. The organizations then decide when and where to deploy the operatives in ways that best serve the organizations' political agenda. For instance, Hamas refrained from carrying out spectacular suicide attacks early on in the Oslo peace process (between the Palestinians and the Israelis) presumably because of their concern that the Palestinian public would not support it (Merari, 2002). We also have data that the incidence of suicide attacks by Hamas operatives significantly increased in response to the Taba peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian authority (January 2001) to which Hamas objected, representing a kind of "spoiler effect" (Chen, Fishman, Minacapelli, & Kruglanski, 2008). Thus, organizations can turn terrorism on and off in accordance with their tactical assessment of what works under given political, social, and economic conditions (see Berman & Laitin, 2008; Hafez, 2006; Krueger & Laitin, 2008).

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[7] In a broader interpretation, even determined would-be suicide attackers could be deterred from their pursuits. Admittedly, this requires a broader conception of deterrence as demotivating violence by threats to the adversary's important objectives. For instance, if as we have argued, acts of suicidal terrorism are motivated by the *quest for significance* (attainment of martyrdom status) (Kruglanski et al., 2009a,b) then deterrence could be effectuated by persuading the potential perpetrators that an act of suicidal terrorism is antithetical to that objective.

Several authors (e.g., Atran, 2006) have commented on the cost effectiveness of terrorist attacks as a tactic in *asymmetric warfare* (Berman & Laitin, 2008; Bloom, 2005; Hafez, 2006; Jasso & Meyersson-Milgrom, in press; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006; Moghadam, 2003; Pape, 2003, 2005). As asserted by the Tamil Tigers' political spokesman, S. Thamilchelvan (cited in Pape, 2005, p. 32), the goal of suicidal attacks was "to ensure maximum damage . . . with minimum loss of life." According to the database on global suicide terrorist attacks, created by Pape, "Suicide attacks amount to just 3 percent of all terrorist incidents from 1980 through 2003, but account for 48 percent of all fatalities, making the average suicide terrorist attack twelve times deadlier than other forms of terrorism" (Pape, 2005, p. 6). It is relatively cheap—the 9/11 attack, for example, cost less than $100,000, whereas the damage it inflicted was in the billions of dollars. There is no concern that the operatives will divulge information when they are caught, according to the incontrovertible truth whereby "dead people do not talk." There is no need to provide for complex and costly escape routes or safe houses. These advantages notwithstanding, however, the *organizational aspect* of suicide bombing or of terrorism in general remains a major point of vulnerability for the terrorist organizations. Organization requires planning, space, time, and financing. All these can be interfered with, thus opening an opportunity for launching counterterrorism.

Counterterrorism

What implications does our analysis have for possibilities of countering terrorism? Each of the levels of analysis we have considered offers suggestions in this regard. We now consider these in turn. Specifically, at the individual level of analysis we consider the processes of deradicalization and review several deradicalization programs presently in place. At the group level of analysis, we discuss the undermining of shared reality unique to terrorist collectivities, and at the organizational level of analysis, we consider counterterrorism implications of the structural element of terrorist organizations and possibilities entailed in the means ends analysis of such organizations' decision making.

The Individual Level of Analysis

On the individual level, dealing with terrorists' *motivation* appears of key importance. Without undermining motivation, reducing terrorists' *ability* to launch a given terrorist tactic may often have but a temporary effect, lasting until the terrorists discover a way to restore their hurt capability, or until they find a new tactic free from prior limitations. For instance, building a fence to prevent infiltrations of a territory by terrorist operatives may prompt them to use rocket technology that circumvents that particular obstacle (as in the example of Hezbollah and Hamas' recent missile attacks on Israeli targets). In empirical work relevant to

these notions, Brophy-Baerman and Conybeare (1994) used quarterly data on terrorist attacks on Israel during the period January 1968 to December 1989 (selected from the data bases ITERATE 2 and ITERATE 3) to look at the effects of Israeli retaliations policy on the incidence of subsequent terrorist attacks. Based on a time-series intervention model, the authors concluded that a retaliation of an unexpectedly large magnitude, disrupting and hence reducing the terrorists' ability to operate, may cause a temporary dip in terrorist activity. Yet, the terrorists may adjust their expectations and prepare for the retaliatory actions. In short, if the terrorists' motivation persists, "Retaliation has no long term deterrent . . . effect" (Brophy-Baerman & Conybeare, 1994, p. 196).

Deradicalization Efforts in the Realm of Islam

Granting its pivotal importance, how may the terrorists' motivation be addressed in counterterrorism campaigns? The present emphasis on the ideological warrants for suicidal terrorism suggests the possibility of undermining them through credible communication efforts. As Post (2006, p. 15) put it in reference to Islamist terrorism, "This will require active leadership by moderate Muslim clerics and . . . political leaders countering the extremists in their midst." Recently, major deradicalization efforts have been launched in several countries with sizable Muslim populations, including Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, Malaysia, Indonesia, among others. Such efforts include two major components (given different relative emphasis in the different programs): (a) the intellectual/cognitive component including exposure to counterarguments to the terrorism-justifying ideology delivered by credible "epistemic authorities" and (b) a motivational component based on material support, job training, and assistance to families of detained militants, all offering an alternative opportunity for honorable existence and a sense of personal significance. In what follows, we briefly describe the essential components of major recent deradicalization programs in Muslim states or states with significant Muslim populations.

Egypt. Egypt's deradicalization program began in 1997 when the imprisoned terrorist leaders of the Islamic Group (IG) renounced the use of terrorism (Black, 2007; Stracke, 2007). The IG deradicalization program used arguments based on Q'uranic scholarship to undermine ideological extremism. At present, the program seems to have been highly successful. Terrorist attacks attributed to IG have stopped (Ashour, 2008). Since the initiation of the deradicalization program, IG leaders have produced around 25 volumes containing rational and theological arguments to support a moderate Islamic interpretation. The 25-volume series called Tashih al-Mafahim (Corrections of Concepts) denounces the use of violence against civilians, foreigners, and moderate Muslims and is critical of ideological extremism and the violence it condones (Black, 2007).

Of particular interest, in 2007, the al-Jihad Organization, second only to the IG as an armed Islamist group in Egypt with strong ties with al-Qaeda, deradicalized as well under the leadership of Dr. Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (alias 'Abd al-Qadir Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz as well as Dr. Fadl), al jihad's former commander (1987–1993) venerated Islamic authority. To explain his change of heart, al-Sharif authored a new book titled *Document for Guiding Jihad in Egypt and the World*. In addition, al-Sharif and other Jihad commanders had been touring Egyptian prisons to enter into dialogue with their followers and encourage them to abandon their extremist views. IG leaders were included in al-Jihad's meetings to share their experiences and augment the case for deradicalization. Karam Zuuhdi, the head of IG's *Shura* (Consultative) Council, and Dr. Nagih Ibrahim, his deputy and the main ideologue of the IG, were present with al-Sharif in several internal al-Jihad meetings to encourage the process and answer questions.

Yemen. Yemen's deradicalization program began in 2002 with the establishment of the "Committee for Dialogue." Suspected members of al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda sympathizers engaged in regular religious dialogue with Muslim scholars to discuss detainees' apparent misinterpretations of the Q'uran, primarily pertaining to the topic of armed jihad. Upon completion of these dialogues, additional efforts were undertaken (e.g., help in finding employment) to facilitate the reintegration of prisoners back into society. Three hundred sixty-four prisoners were released before the program's effectiveness was questioned (Hannah, Clutterbuck, & Rubin, 2007; Whitlock, 2008).

Saudi Arabia. Following the Riyadh compound bombings in May 2003, the Saudi government began intensive deradicalization efforts (Boucek, 2007). The Saudi deradicalization program aimed to rehabilitate and reeducate individuals who have committed relatively minor terrorism-related offenses. Unlike the programs in Egypt and Yemen that were all-inclusive, individuals who committed actual acts of terrorism were prohibited from entering the program. As tools of deradicalization, the Saudi program employed religious debate, reeducation, and psychological counseling.

When detainees complete the reeducation aspect of the deradicalization program, additional aid is provided to them in locating jobs, housing, and a car. The government also encourages rehabilitated prisoners who are single to marry and have children. Presumably, family obligations will make it less likely for rehabilitated prisoners to slide back into a pursuit of violence (Boucek, 2007). Released prisoners remain in contact with Saudi authorities and return for follow-up psychological examinations (Boucek, 2007; Stracke, 2007). The Saudi program also attempts to take care of detainees' families, by providing financial assistance to

the families, health care, and/or schooling for the children. Since 2004, 700 out of 2,000 prisoners who have participated in the Saudi deradicalization program have been released (Hannah et al., 2007).

Iraq. The Iraqi government assisted by U.S. forces has launched a deradicalization program fashioned after the Saudi one and focused on minor terrorism offenders (among the approximately 24,000 detained as terrorism suspects). Since the start of the Iraq deradicalization program in the fall of 2007, more than 6,000 detainees have been released. Significantly, only 12 of those released have been rearrested (Bennett, 2008).

Indonesia. Indonesia's deradicalization program enlists former militants to persuade detained terrorism suspects and potential converts to terrorism to renounce ideological extremism and cooperate with Indonesian authorities (Sheridan, 2008). To entice former militants to serve in the deradicalization program concrete incentives are offered like reduced sentences and money (Bennett, 2008; Kurlantzick, 2008). The Indonesian program also provides financial assistance to families of detained terrorists to cover housing and costs associated with the education of the children (Sheridan, 2008).

Ex-militants try to convey three main points to the prisoners: First, acts of violence are unacceptable because they stain Islam and elicit contempt from moderate Muslims and non-Muslims. Second, according to the proper interpretation of the Q'uran killing civilians is unjustifiable. Third, Indonesian authorities are not anti-Islam. Successfully conveying these points to the prisoners can last months. According to the independent, nonprofit International Crisis Group, the Indonesian program helped convince about two dozens members of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) to cooperate with Indonesian authorities (Kurlantzick, 2008).

Singapore. In December 2001, Singapore's Internal Security Department (ISD) arrested 13 JI members, a South Asian terrorist organization with ties to Al Qaeda and responsible for the simultaneous suicide bombing attacks in a Bali nightclub on October 12, 2002 in which approximately 202 persons were killed. In August 2002, the ISD arrested 18 terrorists, 17 JI members, and one member from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. At the time of the arrests, JI was planning a series of bomb attacks in Singapore.

Singapore's deradicalization efforts began after discovering the JI plot against Singapore. At that time, the Singaporean government contacted local Muslim scholars to help counteract these views. This contact eventually led to the establishment of a Muslim NGO called the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in April 2003 (Bin Hassan & Pereire, 2006). The goals of RRG are to rehabilitate the JI detainees and provide education to the Muslim community about the dangers of ideological extremism. The RRG also tries to persuade the detainees to accept

a moderate interpretation of Islam that emphasizes tolerance and condemns violence. The religious rehabilitation and counseling sessions were initially only for detainees but were expanded to include immediate family members.

The Singapore program also provides support for the families of JI detainees when necessary. Muslim organizations (specifically, the "Care After" group) provide financial assistance to families who lost income due to imprisonment of the breadwinner. Professional counseling and psychological assistance are also offered.

Deradicalization Efforts Outside Islam

To be sure, problems of radicalization and the dangers of extremism are not unique to the realm of Islam. Indeed, significant deradicalization programs have been launched in Europe and South America to dissuade members of local militant groups from their violence promoting viewpoints. In Northern Europe, the *Exit* programs in Norway, Sweden, and Germany aim at the deradicalization and disengagement of members of neo-Nazi groups. According to Fink and Hearne (2008, p. 5), "The projects, which borrowed heavily from one another in terms of structure and aims, sought to: (1) aid and support those young people who wanted to disengage from extremist groups; (2) provide help and support to families of activists; and (3) disseminate knowledge to those in professions that could be of help in curbing the problem."

Exit Norway. In Norway, the Exit program is carried out by local agencies, for instance municipal agencies and other NGOs. Furthermore, the program significantly relies on the mobilization of parents in efforts to deliver the extremist youths from the militant organizations' sphere of influence. According to some reports (namely Bjorgo cited in Fink & Hearne, 2008), the parents' networks in conjunction with the agencies' support were quite successful in dissuading large numbers of extremist youths (as much as 90%) to leave their militant groups and relinquish violence and attitudes that encourage it.

Exit Sweden. Unlike the Norwegian program that actively sought out extremist youths and their parents, the Exit Sweden program worked exclusively in response to direct requests by members of the extremist movements seeking disengagement. The Swedish program also provided safety houses for "defectors" from the neo-Nazi groups fearing for their lives and assisted them in establishing or rebuilding alternative friendship networks not connected to extremist perspectives.

Germany. The deradicalization program in Germany involves civil society groups, NGOs, and the government, especially the *Office for the Protection of the Constitution*. Fink and Hearne (2008) comment on the advantage of the German

program stemming from its ability to screen and monitor the participants. As the authors note: "This may also explain the higher failure rate recorded in Germany, as the government has a greater capacity to monitor participants and follow their activities after the program's completion." In other words, the government's sensitive tools for detecting failures of deradicalization may have resulted in a greater recorded number of such failures.

Colombia. Marcella Ribetti (cited in Fink & Hearne, 2008) described government-assisted efforts to disengage members of militant Columbian groups from their violent activities and to help them to reintegrate into society. Members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revoluzionarias de Colombia (FARC) have tended to deradicalize individually, based on their disillusionment with their leadership and/or their cause and the hardships of perennial persecution by the authorities. The government's role "entailed the relocation of participants to cities distant from their hometowns and the provisions of social and economic incentives to provide alternative occupations and reintegrate them into "civilian" social networks—so, in essence their lives could start anew" (Fink & Hearne, 2008).

In contrast to FARC members whose decision to abandon their movement was individual, members of the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) disengaged collectively based on the leaders' decision. As cited in Fink and Hearne (2008), this collective instance of disengagement was less successful possibly because of practical difficulties associated with relocating large number of ex-militants to new locations. As a consequence, the AUC members remained in close contact with each other reinforcing their prior shared reality that condoned violence.

Deradicalization processes: A summary. On April 22, 2008, the International Peace Institute and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a conference in New York City entitled "Leaving terrorism behind: Individual and collective disengagement from violent extremism." In summarizing the presentations at that conference, Fink and Hearne (2008, p. 16) noted, "The case studies presented highlighted numerous common elements within the process of deradicalization and disengagement found in individuals and groups seeking to withdraw from violent extremism, whether racist groups in Northern Europe, or militant jihadist in Southeast Asia." We further observe that the deradicalization processes have important commonalities with those of radicalization and in effect they constitute a "mirror image" of radicalization.

Thus, in the same way that radicalization may involve the motivated embracement of a violence-justifying ideology that endows one with a sense of personal significance through violence committed for a cause, deradicalization may entail the motivated abandonment of such an ideology and the pursuit of alternative routes to significance. According to this analysis, both radicalization and deradicalization involve two essential elements: (a) the intellectual or cognitive element residing

in ideological contents and (b) the motivational element prompting individuals to accept the violent ideology or to reject it. Indeed, the various deradicalization programs incorporated either one or both of these elements in trying to dissuade individuals from persisting on the path to violence. Thus, the various Muslim programs addressed the intellectual elements through the enlistment of religious authorities to counterargue the jihadist interpretations of the Q'uran. And, they addressed the motivational component by providing terrorism suspects with ways and means of forging a significance-bestowing integration into the society, thus partially undermining the motivational basis for finding the violent ideology appealing. By contrast to programs that targeted militants with extant ideological commitments, some programs (e.g., Exit Sweden or the Colombian programs) were designed for militants who became disenchanted with the ideological contents on their own, as it were, and merely addressed the motivational component by extending relocation and reintegration assistance offering these individuals the opportunity to "turn the page."

At this juncture, our understanding of factors that promote or hinder successful deradicalization is partial and limited. As Fink and Hearne (2008, p. 17) stated, the "Leaving Terrorism Behind' . . . conference in April 2008 indicate[s] the beginning rather than an end of the discussion." Numerous questions must await systematic psychological and social psychological study that is yet to be undertaken. For instance, under what conditions is convincing the group versus the individual to relinquish a violent ideology more effective in preventing recidivism? Do persons' individualist versus collectivist orientations moderate such effects? What is the optimal level of discrepancy between the deradicalizing message and the individuals' extremist beliefs for them to be ready to seriously consider it? How best to effect a balance between society's need to punish the perpetrators of violence and the need to eliminate extremism by reintegrating its proponents into society? Responding to such issues via rigorous scientific analysis and research will pose an exciting challenge for terrorism researchers in years to come.

Beyond Deradicalization: On the Importance of Preventive Policies

Whereas deradicalization processes are *reactive* by definition, it is important to initiate preventive processes to *immunize* individuals against radicalization. Community programs including workshops, summer camps, lectures, and seminars in which radical notions are exposed and discredited could be of considerable value. Beyond the intellectual process of counterarguing radical ideas, reduction of potential recruits' motivation to embrace such ideas may be critical. This may require an alleviation of significance loss prompting circumstances that instill the motivation to accept terrorism as a means to desirable ends. Some such circumstances may be highly idiosyncratic and personal (e.g., infractions by an individual with respect to norms of her or his community). Yet other circumstances

may be widespread and amenable to general policy initiatives. From the military perspective, this may mean the minimization of violent responses to terrorist attacks, especially as regards the use of excessive (disproportionate) force likely to cause massive "collateral" damage, which may push over the brink those who may have suffered or witnessed the consequences of such violence. In a recent monograph on lessons of the Israel-Hezbollah war, Cordesman (2006, p. 15) stated that the "US . . . needs to give avoiding unnecessary civilian casualties and collateral damage the same priority as directly destroying the enemy."

From the political perspective, reduction in the motivational base for terrorism may require foreign policy undertakings, immigration programs, and educational campaigns aimed to reduce the alienation and embitterment of diaspora youths and to enhance their sense of acceptance by their host societies. Creation of positive intergroup contact (e.g., in the European diasporas) (Victoroff, in press), effective antidiscrimination policies (arguably including affirmative action programs), and strong antidiscrimination norms may reduce intergroup tensions and the readiness of disaffected youth to regain their lost sense of significance by making the leap to terrorism. As Kepel (2004, p. 9) remarked, "The most important battle in the war for Muslim minds during the next decade will be fought not in Palestine or Iraq but in these communities on the outskirts of London, Paris, and other European cities, where Islam is already a growing part of the West."

The Social Level of Analysis

On the social level of analysis, a central counterterrorism endeavor could be the creation of a shared reality opposed to terrorism. As Lewin (1958) argued over a half century ago, persuasion attempts focused exclusively on the individual could be less effective and more susceptible to recidivism than ones directed at the individual's important reference group. For instance, the deradicalization effort aimed at terrorist detainees might not last if the detainees were released into their friendship networks committed to the old attitudes. Indeed, various deradicalization programs described earlier seemed acutely aware of the need to relocate individuals persuaded to leave terrorism behind and to place them in a social environment supportive of their new antiterrorist ways of thinking. Creating and supporting the rift between individual militants and their leaders and reducing their image as selfless and saintly should reduce their epistemic authority for the followers and create a cognitive opening in their minds to counterterrorist messages and arguments.

Commenting on the disillusionment and disengagement from terrorism of members of the Colombian FARC organization, Ribetti (cited in Fink & Hearne, 2008) noted that these group members resented the double standard of their leaders concerning romantic relationships that were forbidden for the members and yet allowed the leaders and demurred against the leaders' general punitive

attitude toward the members. Finally, creating the perception that other militants are "seeing the light" and abandoning extremist ideologies could undermine the sense of intellectual community and shared reality within the terrorist movement and contribute to the participants' readiness to consider alternative realities.

The Organizational Level of Analysis

Often, the decision to launch terrorism is undertaken by an organization with specific strategic objectives to which terrorism constitutes a tactical means. In the following section, we discuss several organizational aspects pertinent to the launching off terrorism.

Structural Considerations

At the organizational level, counterterrorist moves may take into account the structure of the organization and its objectives. A highly hierarchical structure with a clearly identified leader affords an opportunity to cripple the organization by arresting and putting pressure on the leader as illustrated by the examples of Ocalan, the leader of the PKK, and Guzman, the leader of the Shining Path. A tight organizational structure affords a clearer target for an attack and a better opportunity for instantaneous undermining of the organization's operational capability than a diffuse organization. Yet organizations can adapt to disruption of their structure by direct military initiatives. Al Qaeda's 2001 loss of its territorial base in Afghanistan produced a change in its organizational structure from a centralized to a diffuse one. It has been argued that this shift allowed the organization to expand its reach beyond the Middle East and South East Asia to Europe (especially the United Kingdom) and Africa (Riedel, 2007). It also occasioned a considerable expansion of Al Qaeda's propagandist efforts, which by some estimates quadrupled from 2005 to 2006, reaching the output of a new propaganda video by Al Qaeda being issued every 3 days (Gunaratna, 2007).

The shift toward a diffuse structure reduces the possibility of decisive military strikes against the organization and emphasizes the importance of counterpropaganda efforts aimed to dissuade potential recruits from joining. It also highlights the importance of hunting down the central propagandists of the organization (in particular Bin Laden and Al Zawahiri) whose "epistemic authority" lends considerable weight to Al Qaeda messages.

Terrorism as a Tactical Tool

As the political scientist James DeNardo (1985, Chapters 9–11) noted, small organizations may resort to violence to compensate for what they lack in numbers. Indeed, terrorism has been generally considered "the great equalizer," and a source

of considerable power. Precisely, such logic is articulated in a 1998 speech by the Tamil Tiger's leader, Prabhakaran. As he put it, "In terms of manpower, firepower and resources, the enemy was strong and the balance of military power was in his favor. Yet we had an extraordinary weapon which was not in the arsenal of the enemy. The courage and commitment of our fighters was our most powerful weapon in the battle" (International Secretariat of LTTE, 1998).

To be sure, technology considerably boosts the equalizing potential available to terrorists. Already, the invention of dynamite was thought by 19th-century revolutionaries and anarchists to equalize the relationship between them and the governments they were aiming to topple, a point explicitly argued in an 1885 pamphlet, authored by Johann Most and titled *Revolutionary War Science* (Goldman, 2003). Of course, the more advanced the technology the greater its "equalizing" potential. The specter of the weapons of mass destruction, of nuclear, biological, or chemical types falling into terrorist hands is the great incubus of our times with immense destructive potential. The events of 9/11 have demonstrated the considerable costs in life and property that determined terrorists can inflict with relatively conventional, albeit highly creative, means (flying aircraft into buildings). The acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction raises the stakes of the horror a thousandfold. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) defined social power as the ability of one party to move another party over a range of outcomes defined subjectively in terms of their "goodness" or "badness." In terms of this notion, the terrorists wield a considerable power indeed, because at one end of the range of outcomes that they can potentially effectuate is the horrific prospect of mass annihilation.

The conception of terrorism as a tool, or means to an end, has implications for strategies to discourage terrorism. This may require persuading the organization that (a) this particular means is ineffectual given the organization's objectives, (b) there exist alternative, more effective means to the organization's ends, and (c) terrorism constitutes a hindrance to the attainment of other important objectives. These different avenues are not necessarily independent of each other. Thus, if terrorism appears to constitute the sole means to the organization's end, it may be difficult to convince the organization to relinquish it, even if were contrary to other (less important) goals. Nonetheless, occasionally alternative avenues may appear feasible, and these could be played up and highlighted.

For instance, following the election of Mahmud Abbas to the presidency of the Palestinian authority in 2005, representing a renewed chance to revive the peace process (i.e., an alternative means to ending the Israeli occupation), support for suicide attacks among the Palestinians dipped to a 7-year low, a mere 29%, according to the Palestinian pollster Shikaki (2005). At that time, the attacks against Israel on the part of the Fatah organization all but ceased.

Nonetheless, 57% of the respondents opposed the steps taken by the Palestinian authority to punish the launchers of suicide attacks. As Shikaki summarized it: "Public opposition to a crackdown on those who commit violence

against Israelis might reflect the belief that the peace process has not yet been revived . . . . The public seeks to maintain the option of returning to violence if diplomacy fails" (Shikaki, 2005)

Multifinality. The means of terrorism might be difficult to give up because, beside its presumed advancement of the organization's *ideological* (political, religious, and ethnonationalistic) objectives, it affords members and supporters the *emotional* satisfaction of watching the enemy suffer, which boosts the organization's standing in the eyes of its supporters. In that sense, terrorism is "multifinal," compounding its appeal (Kruglanski et al., 2002). From this perspective, policies such as "ethnic profiling," "targeted assassinations," or the inadvertent "collateral damage" inflicted during antiterrorist campaigns might backfire by fueling the rage of the terrorists and their supporters, thus amplifying the emotional goal of vengeance against the enemy (Atran, 2003). A recent empirical analysis suggests that "targeted hits" by the Israeli forces boosted the estimated recruitment to the "terrorist stock," presumably due to the Palestinians' motivation to revenge the fallen comrades. Whereas "targeted hits" do hurt (a recurrent demand by Palestinian negotiators was that the Israelis desist from employing this particular strategy) and may arguably decrease the perception that terrorism is effective (due to the organizational disruptions that the elimination of leaders may create), they concomitantly increase the appeal of terrorism by inflating the intensity of the emotional goal terrorism may serve. In this regard, the research found that the arrests of terrorism suspects (i.e., a less inflammatory means) tended to reduce (rather than inflate) the "terrorist stock" and hence to lower the incidence of Palestinian terrorism (Kaplan, Mintz, Mishal, & Samban, 2005).

Alternative objectives. Dissuading organizations from the use of terrorism may involve a rekindling of alternative objectives incompatible with terrorism. Organizations like the Hezbollah, the Hamas, the PIRA, the ETA, the LTTE, or the PKK (among many others) have internal political objectives of power and influence within their respective communities beyond their goal of fighting an external adversary by terrorist means. For instance, the Hezbollah was subject to considerable criticism in Lebanon for having precipitated the 2006 encounter with Israel. Writing in the August 25, 2006, issue of the *Wall Street Journal,* Amir Taheri describes the upset with Hezbollah in various segments of the Lebanese society for having provoked the Israeli attack. Specifically,

> The leaders of the March 14 movement, which has a majority in the Lebanese Parliament and government, have demanded an investigation into the circumstances that led to the war, a roundabout way of accusing Hezbollah of having provoked the tragedy. Prime Minister Fuad Siniora has made it clear that he would not allow Hezbollah to continue as a state within the state . . . . Hezbollah (was) also criticized from within the Lebanese Shiite community, which accounts for some 40% of the population. Sayyed Ali al-Amin, the grand old man of Lebanese Shiism . . . rejected the claim that Hezbollah represented the whole of the Shiite community. The Shiite community never gave anyone the right to wage war in its name.

All of which suggests that the Hezbollah may have suffered at least some political setbacks in Lebanon for its militancy against Israel. More generally, the activation of alternative organizational goals (e.g., political goals) and stressing (e.g., via messages from credible authorities) their incompatibility with terrorism may constitute an important way of reducing (even if temporarily) the organization's tendency to employ the tool of terrorism.

A means ends classification of terrorism users. The "tool" view of terrorism affords a classification of terrorism using organizations in accordance with their commitment to the terrorism means as well as to the ends believed to be served by terrorism. Users can be strongly committed to terrorism because of its intrinsic properties, such as the sense of power it bestows or the appeal of violence. According to Gunaratna (2002), "*Utopian Islamist* groups exhibit an absolute commitment to the tool of terrorism. Specifically, they 'seek to destroy the existing order . . . . Their doctrinal principles include no negotiation, no dialogue and no peacemaking'. Similarly, *Apocalyptic Islamist* groups 'firmly believe that they have been divinely ordained to commit violent acts and are most likely to engage in mass-casualty, catastrophic terrorism" (p. 93). Given such depth of commitment to terrorism as a tool and to ends believed to be served by terrorism *uniquely*, it is unlikely that anything short of a total defeat will convince such groups to relinquish its use.

The situation is rather different for users of terrorism for whom it represents merely one among several available instruments to be launched or withheld in appropriate circumstances. As noted earlier, organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, or Sin Fein, for example, though hardly shy of using terrorism, have other means at their disposal (diplomacy, media campaigns) as well as other goals (of political or social variety). Hamas, for example, desisted from the use of terrorism in the immediate aftermath of the Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestinians and for a time following the Israeli disengagement from Gaza. Similarly, immediately following the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah has substantially reduced its direct belligerence against Israel.

In short, different organizations may differ in their potential for relinquishing its employment. Whereas (some form of) negotiating with terrorists, and effecting their shifts to alternative goals or means, is unlikely to work with perpetrators whose commitment to terrorism is total and unconditional; it might work with terrorist groups who may entertain alternative means and value alternative goals.

Concluding Comment

Psychological factors play an essential role in terrorism at all its relevant levels of analysis including its individual, group, and organizational levels. Though

in this article, we have treated these categories of factors separately, in reality they are all inextricably intertwined. Individual belief and attitude formation processes determine populations' degree of support for a terrorist cause, affecting the organization's political base and ultimately its potency. Recursively, an organization's potency may increase its status as a trusted "epistemic authority," and hence its ability to attract new recruits to its ranks.

The psychological essence of terrorism affords suggestions for effective counterterrorist strategies. Considerable caution is advised, however, because counterterrorist activities that may appear desirable at a given level of analysis may prove detrimental from the standpoint of another analytic level. For instance, the use of military force against vulnerable organizational targets may cripple a terrorist organization's ability to function. Yet, at the same time, it might fuel the outrage of the community affected by the military activity, and increase their individual-level motivation to support the terrorists, and buy into their ideology. Negotiating with a terrorist organization may communicate that there exist alternative means to its goals, other than terrorism, hence presumably reducing the organization's tendency to launch terrorism. Yet, negotiating with terrorists also conveys the notion that terrorism is an efficient tactic, encouraging its future use. In deploying psychology in aid of counterterrorism, it is important to be aware of these trade-offs and paradoxes and to appreciate how they may play out in a particular case of confrontation with the terrorist threat.

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