

Terrorism's Unanswered Questions

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**PRAEGER SECURITY INTERNATIONAL
Westport, Connecticut • London**

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Terrorism's unanswered questions / edited by Adam B. Lowther and Beverly Lindsay;

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-313-35322-2 (alk. paper)

1. Terrorism. 2. World politics—21st century. I. Lowther, Adam. II. Lindsay, Beverly.

HV6431.T45695 2009

363.325—dc22 2008023725

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2008023725

ISBN: 978-0-313-35322-2

First published in 2009

Praeger Security International, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

www.praeger.com

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A Social Psychological Perspective on Terrorist Behavior

Daniel B. Kennedy and Robert J. Homant

One of the predictable consequences of 9/11 was an intensified academic interest in terrorism. Academic researchers from the various social sciences have focused on understanding terrorist individuals and organizations, identifying terrorists and potential terrorists, and anticipating, preventing, and recovering from terrorist activities.¹ A major theoretical issue that ties these concerns together is the motivation of the individual terrorist. Who is a terrorist? What sort of background does he (or she) come from? What accounts for the intensity of his commitment and the extremes of his behavior, even to the point of suicidal attacks?

Three types of answers have been offered to these questions. One possibility is that terrorism is a rational response to a real injury or problem; the asymmetrical nature of the conflict between radical Islamists and “Westernized” governments requires drastic measures by individuals devoted to a just or at least a reasonable cause. A second type of answer suggests that individuals with unrealistic worldviews, developmental pathologies, and various emotional conflicts involving intense anger, identity confusion, and suicidal motivation are displaced to a political arena where the acting out of their individual pathologies can at least earn them some praise and satisfaction (even to the point of material rewards for their families in the case of many suicide bombers).² A third type of answer points to the ability of common social psychological processes, especially those involving group dynamics, to produce extreme behavior that would typically be thought to stem from personal pathology. It is this third type of answer that we will explore in this chapter: what are those processes that have been found to produce extreme behaviors in otherwise rational, healthy people, and how might these processes function in the context of a terrorist organization?

“ONE MAN’S TERRORIST . . .”

It has become a cliché to say that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” The point of this statement is that definitions of and judgments about terrorism are problematic.³ The perceived reasonableness of the cause and suitability of the tactics greatly impact our judgment of the mental health of the participants. One example that comes to mind is the French Resistance of World War II, which is seldom considered to have been a form of terrorism, yet which might fit certain definitions thereof. We certainly do not claim moral equivalence between La Résistance and al Qaeda; “moral equivalence” is hardly a question for social science. However, because of the support that the French Resistance had (both then and now), we do not search for character flaws that distinguish the joiners from the nonjoiners.

The PIRA (Provisional Irish Republican Army) represents a more ambiguous case with regard to the reasonableness of its cause and the psychological health of its members. Some historical justification for its cause can be provided. Also, its tactics, though brutal, are typically designed not to alienate world opinion, and especially not to alienate its own domestic support.⁴ Given widespread support for the PIRA in some communities and families, it is not so unimaginable that a Belfast Catholic youth might be eager to join.

However, when nineteen people engage in and carry out a plot to kill themselves along with countless anonymous others in a distant land, using a tactic in which their own death is crucial to the desired outcome, an outcome that is difficult to see as rationally desired, then the question of individual motivation quickly arises.

TERRORISM AS A “RATIONAL” RESPONSE

Islamist terrorism is rooted in a number of religious beliefs.⁵ Some of these are of a historical or factual nature, and thus can at least be subjected to some verification. But many of the core beliefs involve religious ideology. Consider three of them: Islam is the one true religion; Muslims have certain moral obligations, including maintaining Islam in any area that was ever Muslim ruled and imposing Muslim law (*shari’a*) in Muslim areas; and dying in battle for one’s faith is a guarantee of immediate entry into paradise. One might add to these a few further ideas that would be difficult to assess empirically: bombing a busload of noncombatants is a reasonable means of influencing people’s decisions, and “sacrificing oneself” is either a more effective way of carrying out the bombing or at least makes the bombing more politically effective. If one grants all of the preceding ideas, then one explanation of terrorism and terrorist behavior is simply that it is a rational approach to asymmetrical warfare.⁶ While it might seem strange (within a moderate Muslim worldview as well) to think that blowing oneself up is a sure route to paradise, we know of no objective way of disproving it. We would also add that such a route to paradise is no less extreme than the stories of many early Christians, such as Saint Polycarp (d. 155), or more recent Christians, such as Rose of Lima (d. 1617) or Anthony Bobula (d. 1657), who prayed to be granted the privilege of martyrdom. Distinctions must be made, however, between the traditional Christian

martyrs who die for their faith and the radical *jihadist* martyrs who see to it that others die along with them. The latter has been referred to as “predatory martyrdom.”⁷

While suicidal behavior in the service of entering paradise is arguably rational to some, given the premises, we should not leave the impression that such a belief system is a precondition for the commission of suicide terrorism. In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers were very “successful” at motivating their followers to engage in suicidal attacks even without any promises of eternal reward.⁸ In the 1980s and 1990s, the Tamil rebels employed hundreds of suicide bombers against the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan army, all acting without any apparent belief in their personal immortality.

In concluding this section, one further point needs to be made. Even if terrorist behavior, whether suicidal or not, can be considered a rational response, it remains true that some members of a group or culture engage in it and some do not. It should also be stressed that to deem behavior as rational is not the same as to deem it moral.

THE TERRORIST AS ACTING OUT PSYCHOPATHOLOGY⁹

Some authors, such as Post and Lester, Yang, and Lindsay, have located the origin of terrorist behavior primarily in the pathological make-up of the individual, typically in a personality disorder such as “authoritarian personality,” “paranoid personality,” or “borderline personality,” although a full-blown psychotic diagnosis, such as paranoid schizophrenia may also be implicated.¹⁰ More commonly, however, authors citing psychological causes point to character traits that fall short of a diagnosable mental illness.¹¹

Grimland et al. review a number of theorists who link terrorist acts to a narcissistic rage that may arise from a variety of threats to the self-esteem of the individual.¹² A person may be vulnerable to such threats because of loss or conflict within one’s own family or because of humiliation of the national or ethnic group with which one has overidentified. These individuals are then seen as seeking out the terrorist group as a vehicle for committing the acts of violence that they are motivated to commit because of their own rage.¹³ While agreeing with this basic formulation, Pearlstein believes that it applied more to terrorists of the 1970s and early 1980s, rather than to the religion-based terrorism that arose in the late 1980s.¹⁴

Miller offers a typology of terrorist roles that one may play, based on eight different types of personality disorder.¹⁵ Miller is careful to state that these personality types might not rise to the level of a diagnosable mental illness (i.e., they may be “subclinical”), and that some individuals without any mental disorder may also participate in violent political acts. The clear implication, though, is that a person’s underlying personality disorder draws him to terrorism and shapes his involvement in it.

Schbley distributed 405 questionnaires to participants in a military exhibition parade for Hezbollah in Beirut, Lebanon.¹⁶ From this group of Shia militants, 341 responded. Several of the items on the questionnaire were designed to measure various DSM-IV-R diagnostic categories. In addition to the 341 questionnaire respondents, Schbley qualitatively analyzed the audio (and occasionally video) declarations of some 933 “zealots about to commit self-immolation” (p. 110) by engaging

in a suicide bombing. Based on his analysis, Schbley concluded that Hezbollah religious terrorists often suffer from oppositional defiant disorder, impulse control disorder, or antisocial personality disorder. More importantly, these personality disorders are then “aggravated by dogma-induced critical/psychotic depression” (p. 120), which leads in turn to the suicide terrorism.

Hypothesizing various forms of psychopathology as being behind the behavior of the typical terrorist may have a certain heuristic value. However, if one wishes to be at all parsimonious, then there must be some evidence beyond the terrorist act itself to confirm the diagnosis. Given that the terrorists themselves are seldom available for clinical interviews, one would need to find preexisting data sources documenting relevant symptoms. For example, writings by the individual himself might show paranoid ideas, loss of reality contact, or emotional conflicts. Others—family members, coworkers, classmates—may have observed disturbed or at least eccentric behavior.¹⁷ The individual may have sought mental health intervention or expressed concern about his own stability. There could be documented suicide attempts, or a history of criminal activity (for diagnosing antisocial personality, for example). At the very least, there could be a history of inadequate or self-defeating behavior leading to a series of social failures—in vocational life, in relationships, in achieving other goals—in situations where similarly situated persons are readily able to achieve success.

Thus, the task of documenting psychopathology, while challenging, is not insurmountable. For example, journalistic accounts and FBI profilers seem to have no difficulty uncovering evidence of significant psychopathology on the part of serial sexual killers.¹⁸ Attempts, however, to uncover convincing evidence of pathological motivation in Islamist terrorists as a group have so far been largely unsuccessful.¹⁹ The common complaint of critics is that no particular symptom or cluster of symptoms is objectively noted across a terrorist sample, nor is any attempt made to determine if such symptoms are more prevalent among terrorists than among the populations from which they are drawn. In any large sample of individuals, one would expect to find evidence of mental illness: 26.2 percent of a random cross-section of American society show enough symptoms to qualify for a diagnosable mental illness *in any given year*.²⁰

One further issue should be highlighted with respect to psychological explanations. Many writers, including those who claim to reject a psychopathological explanation of terrorism, point to identity or self-esteem problems as playing a key role in motivating someone to join a terrorist organization.²¹ Basically, circumstances conspire to undermine the person's sense of self. He or she is unable to actualize core values, feels humiliated or unaccepted (perhaps in a new country), or lacks opportunity in an impoverished country. The rejection or at least lack of acceptance of his core Islamic faith by the dominant majority may further exacerbate a sense of humiliation. Such a person is naturally drawn to a group of like-minded people who place the blame for their humiliation on a decadent Western society and a degraded Islam that they believe has largely sold out to Western governments and values. This description echoes the writings of many terrorists themselves, and thus has some empirical support. But is such an explanation “psychological”? That is does it identify significant psychopathology on the part of the budding terrorist?

Those writers who reject psychological explanations as unfounded generally portray these identity and self-esteem problems as being of the normal, developmental variety.²² They imply that a richer environment would provide such individuals with healthier outlets for dealing with these normal developmental issues. Often a “marginal man” problem is identified.²³ That is, a Muslim immigrant to a Western country may in fact be more Westernized than others in his family, but because he has adopted Western goals he finds the subtle prejudice against him and his lack of complete social acceptance to be much more galling than would a more traditional Muslim. This lack of acceptance, in turn, is seen as a failure on his part and drives him to accept a worldview that rejects the rejecters. Although such a scenario would not account for a majority of terrorists, it does seem to be a common theme to account for “home-grown” Islamist terrorists in Western lands. While one could easily see this as a manifestation of psychopathology (because of the underlying feelings of inadequacy), it probably does not indicate a level of pathology that is significantly out of the ordinary. Some individuals just happen to be situated in environments where involvement with extremist groups provides the initial solution to their identity problem. An analysis of group processes, to which we turn next, then provides an explanation for how this initial group involvement may evolve into a willingness or even an eagerness to blow oneself up in a blaze of glory.

Finally, it should be pointed out that some writers who have put forth a psychological approach to understanding terrorism specifically reject “psychopathology” as playing a significant role.²⁴ Their approach is “psychological” in the sense that it examines the motivation and worldview of the terrorist, but not in the sense that something psychologically amiss is the cause of the terrorism. A passage from Horgan’s *The Psychology of Terrorism* captures this well:

We might consider what the group dynamics were that bonded the 9/11 hijackers together. . . . It has been widely suggested, and seemingly corroborated by Osama Bin Laden himself, that not all of the hijackers were aware of their impending deaths. . . . [W]hat group dynamics would have been important or necessary for the cell leader to maximize psychological cohesion and mutual solidarity in the face of self-doubt, wavering commitment or a partial lack of focus during the stressful events on the aircraft? It has been suggested that shared rituals. . . may have been. . . important. . . before and during the attacks. . . . [S]uch activity can enhance group solidarity and shield individual members from considering alternative courses of action.²⁵

In other words, Horgan’s “psychology of terrorism” relies on basic social psychological processes to account for the behavior, and it is the exposition of this perspective that constitutes the balance of this chapter.

THE TERRORIST AS A PRODUCT OF NORMAL SOCIAL PROCESSES

In his compelling history of the events leading up to 9/11, Lawrence Wright concluded that there is no evidence that psychopathology played a significant role in

motivating the initial wave of organizers and recruits that formed al Qaeda.²⁶ Wright believed, however, that once it was established, some individuals with various emotional problems were drawn to al Qaeda, as happens with any political movement, however positive or negative the movement's original goals and methods. The issue for us here, then, is neither whether some mentally ill individuals become terrorists, nor even whether some nondiagnosable (i.e., subclinical) forms of psychopathology may play a role in terrorists' career paths. Rather, the issue here is how psychologically healthy one can be and yet become a terrorist, and even more particularly, a suicide terrorist. Further clarification is in order on what it means to be a "suicide terrorist." While acknowledging some connection to suicide missions in a military context, such as Japanese Kamikaze pilots in World War II, Grimland et al. maintain that the suicide bombing tactics of current terrorist groups trace back to Hezbollah in Lebanon in the 1970s.²⁷ Regardless of its roots, suicide terrorism as a major tactic of terrorist organizations is a relatively modern phenomenon. The reason we focus on suicide terrorism is that this behavior is in many ways the most frightening and disturbing. The willingness or even eagerness to die shows the depth of commitment of the foe and, as a tactic, suicide terrorism claims a significant number of lives per attack. If the *suicide* terrorist is not necessarily mentally ill, then the notion of mental illness need not be invoked to account for the behavior of others in the terrorist organization.

Is it appropriate, however, to call bin Laden, Ayman Al Zawahiri, and other leaders of al Qaeda or Hamas suicide terrorists? It would seem that there are two ways to look at this question. If the leaders of a terrorist group sincerely believe that a suicidal action is the best route to paradise but they postpone their own immolations because the cause has a need for them alive, then their worldview is that of a suicide terrorist and their behavior and cognitions need to be evaluated as such. If, however, they are merely playing on the gullibility of some of their adherents in order to manipulate them into a useful role, then their personalities become nothing but Machiavellian. This might make them more rational but less "admirable." Given what these and other leaders have sacrificed and endured for their cause, there is little doubt that they are "true believers."²⁸ We raise here only the issue of whether they would be eager suicides should they believe it would help their cause.

The comparison of the leaders of terrorist organizations with their foot soldiers provides a glimpse of the complexity of the terrorist organization. Victoroff has provided a heuristic model of all of the roles involved in a terrorist organization.²⁹ Victoroff presents a typology of some six different types, within which there are eighteen different roles. Each of the roles calls for different characteristics. Thus, under the "middle management" type, social and psychological processes that produce an effective "strategist/technocrat" might not be relevant for someone fulfilling the role of "trainer/dispatcher." Regardless of this complexity, our focus here remains the extent to which normal group processes can lead reasonably psychologically healthy individuals to engage in the extreme, self-destructive, and murderous actions of the suicide terrorist as well as the other roles to be played in such organizations.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR

How, then, should the behavior of the suicide terrorist be viewed? This is essentially a question of attribution, a conclusion about the causes of others' (and our own) behavior. Attribution theory, in turn, is an area of research in social psychology that examines how people make attributions, or judgments, about the causes of behavior.³⁰ If we conclude that terrorists' behavior reflects their own inner motives and dynamics, then we are said to make an "internal attribution." Conversely, seeing terrorists' behavior as reflecting the complex social situation that they are in would constitute an "external attribution." It has become axiomatic in social psychology that the "fundamental attribution error" is the tendency to make external attributions of others' behavior in general, but especially when the behavior seems contrary to how we believe people ought to behave.³¹ Applied to terrorism, the fundamental attribution error is not so much an explanation as a caution that we should try to avoid the natural tendency to view terrorists as acting out inner psychopathology rather than responding to situational, especially group, phenomena.

The observation that people tend to overestimate others' internal motives as the explanation for their behavior can be traced to seminal work by Fritz Heider.³² However, the real impetus for exploring the power of the situation to override personal motivation came from Stanley Milgram's studies of obedience, to which we now turn.

SITUATIONAL VERSUS DISPOSITIONAL DETERMINATION: MILGRAM'S STUDIES IN OBEDIENCE

Milgram's studies in obedience are one of the most widely cited and described research programs in the history of social science.³³ Briefly, the research put unwitting subjects in situations where they were ordered by an experimenter, a stranger in a white lab coat, to deliver an escalating series of extremely painful and seemingly life-threatening shocks to a fellow subject (actually a confederate of Milgram's). Although the shocks were phony, it is clear that subjects believed that they were delivering real shocks.

Originally, the purpose of the procedure was to identify a very small group of people who exhibited an "authoritarian personality," a character structure thought to underlie attraction to fascism.³⁴ The ex-Nazi Adolph Eichmann, once head of Hitler's concentration camps, had recently (i.e., in May, 1960) been seized in Argentina by Israeli agents and transported to Israel for a war crimes trial. This trial renewed interest in the "Nuremberg Defense," the claim by several top Nazis during the Nuremberg (Nürnberg) war crimes trial that they had only been following the legal orders of a legitimate state and should not be held legally accountable for their behavior. In Eichmann's case, some fifteen years later, defense attorneys could also add the observation that the defendant had led a blame-free life since the end of the war, an observation that would become increasingly common as an assortment of lesser Nazis were found living peaceful lives in various American suburbs in the

1970s and 1980s. At least initially, Milgram did not “buy” the Nuremberg defense. He believed that there was some special character flaw—Adorno et al.’s Authoritarian Personality—that rendered some individuals so susceptible to authority that they willingly suspended their own moral values and became capable of anything. By identifying a few such people—those who would deliver deadly shocks—Milgram hoped to study their background and personality in order to discover the ingredients of this syndrome.

Much to Milgram’s surprise, twenty-six of his initial forty subjects went all the way to the highest level of shock, a potentially deadly 450 volts. In following up on this finding, Milgram found that no one came close to predicting (i.e., postdicting) the outcome of his experiment.³⁵ Most famously, when the experimental procedure was described in detail to a group of psychiatrists—who were not told that the procedure had already been carried out—they estimated that virtually none of the subjects would proceed to the final shock level. Likewise, virtually all potential subjects claimed that they would quit such an experiment early on.

Milgram and others followed up this research by trying several variations on the conditions of the experiment. The degree of subjects’ compliance was eventually found to range from a low of 10 percent to a high of 91 percent.³⁶ The lowest degree of compliance occurred in a design where subjects observed two confederates refusing to continue with the shock series; the highest rate occurred in a design where subjects were specifically ordered to press a special red button at the end of the sequence. These variations in compliance have generally been taken to support the conclusion that variations in the situation—rather than the personality of the subjects—are the main factor in determining subjects’ behavior. After Milgram’s research, it became axiomatic in social psychology that normal people, the average members of a society, could be placed in situations where they would engage in extreme behavior, not only contrary to their own values, but contrary to their own expectations about how they would behave.

In his review of the Milgram research, Blass made an important point that should be mentioned here.³⁷ Although the research clearly supported the power of the situation to determine behavior, in most of the outcomes there remained a good deal of variation within each group of subjects (i.e., some complied and some did not). This variation within subjects is likely attributable to personality (i.e., dispositional) differences that subjects bring to the situation. Several variables have been implicated in various studies as leading to more conformity to the experimenter: authoritarianism, lower moral development, high interpersonal trust, external locus of control, lower social intelligence, and higher hostility. Blass hypothesized that some types of situations are more likely than others to allow a role for these individual dispositions: a situation that is “strong,” in the sense of requiring the attention of the subject to a narrow range of choices, should limit the role of personality. Likewise, personality should play more of a role in situations that are chosen by, rather than imposed on, the subject. Applying the implications of the Milgram research to terrorism, we believe that it clearly establishes the power of the interpersonal situation to compel the average individual to engage in extreme behavior that is contrary to the person’s basic values.³⁸ At the same time, there is clearly room for the individual to affect the

initial decision to join a particular group, and a variety of more or less normal level personality traits may affect the amount of power the group has over the individual.

One other classic research study that strongly reinforced the power of situational over dispositional explanations of extreme behavior is Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Study.³⁹ For this study, the researchers specifically screened potential subjects for any indicators of pathology and included in their study sample the twenty-four psychologically healthiest subjects drawn from an original pool of seventy. A random drawing led to half of the group being assigned to play the role of prisoners and half to be guards. Zimbardo was hoping that over a two-week period he would eventually learn something about how the prisoner and guard roles affected the subjects. Zimbardo built several features into his research design to try to heighten the reality of the situation, for fear that otherwise he would find nothing of interest. He was amazed to find that after only a single day one subject was so into his character that he had to be released from the study. After six days the entire study had to be ended because of the emotional strain on the subjects. While many commentators have put their own spin on the meaning of this research, it strongly reinforced the key finding of Milgram's research: an unusual situation, even an artificial one, can produce extreme, value-conflicting behavior in psychologically normal subjects.

THE POWER OF THE GROUP: THE ASCH CONFORMITY STUDIES

Well before the Milgram studies, Solomon Asch had explored the power of group pressure to induce conformity.⁴⁰ Virtually every social psychology text for the past fifty years has had a picture of a befuddled subject puzzled by the strange choices of his fellow group members. The basic task was for the subject to identify which of three lines matched the length of a target line. On certain preselected trials, all of the other group members made an obviously wrong choice. Subjects were clearly stressed and confused by this. Over the course of the experiment, about 75 percent of subjects conformed to an obviously wrong answer at least once.

Although many of Asch's subjects showed clear doubts about their own ability to judge lines, their conformity did not extend beyond the immediate group situation. That is, they did not internalize the group norm that led to their false judgments. When repeating the task in isolation, they had no trouble giving correct judgments. An even earlier study by Muzafer Sherif, however, showed that sometimes group pressure can lead to a subject internalizing the group norm.⁴¹ In Sherif's experiment, the judgmental task was much more difficult: estimating the amount of movement by a small, distant light in an otherwise dark room. The light, in fact, did not move, but to perceive some movement is normal (the "autokinetic effect"). Sherif found that after a few trials in a group setting, subjects in the group adopted a group norm for estimating the distance the light moved. Later, when subjects were tested individually, they tended to give estimates close to what their group had done, rather than to revert to the estimates that they had made individually, prior to their group experience.

More recently, Baron, Vandello, and Brunsman integrated some of the results of conformity research into a pair of studies in which they varied both task difficulty

and task importance.⁴² The task was to identify a drawing from a lineup. Task difficulty was manipulated by varying the exposure to the stimulus material; task importance was varied by giving subjects a \$20 incentive for a high score. The group consisted of the subject and two confederates who gave wrong answers according to a schedule. Although there was no group pressure to conform, subjects frequently did so. Conformity was highest when the task was difficult and when the incentive was high. It should be noted that “common sense” would call for less conformity with high incentive—there was more reason to go against the group if an individual reward was at stake. But when “truth” is a bit ambiguous, the more motivated subjects became more unsure of their perceptions and increased their reliance on the group, even though there was no reason to think the others were giving correct answers. Because subjects were motivated to be correct, we can conclude that this condition produced internalization rather than mere compliance.⁴³

Emergent Norms

A key example of the power of the group to produce conformity comes from the study of “emergent norms.”⁴⁴ This concept applies to unusual or unanticipated situations. For example, one of the authors of this chapter worked at a prison where the guards abruptly went on strike. There had been some warning this could happen, and most of us expected a large increase in inmate misconduct. Instead, the prison experienced one of the safer, more orderly periods in its recent history. According to emergent norm theory, early in the situation the inmates did not know how to behave—there were no established norms for behavior during a guard strike. More or less by chance, the situation started off in a cooperative fashion and the idea quickly spread that being orderly was the thing to do. There were, to be sure, some incentives to behave in an orderly way: it would avoid the threat of a lockdown, and it would make the striking guards look bad, or at least unnecessary. But had some significant act of disorder occurred early on, the same situation could just as easily have produced a wave of disorder and rioting—as happened a year later during a guard strike at a similar prison. Terrorist groups, of course, do not typically come together spontaneously. They must, however, begin by constructing a set of norms that provide themselves and eventual new members with a way of looking at reality and responding to it. As with our inmates, the same personality can be found in either a rioter or a “good inmate,” depending on the tone the group takes.

Diffusion of Responsibility

Besides providing the individual with a way of interpreting reality, there are other social psychological features of groups that encourage more extreme and risky behavior. These related features include diffusion of responsibility, “risky shift,” deindividuation, and “groupthink.” The concept of diffusion of responsibility first arose as an explanation of “mob psychology.”⁴⁵ It has long been observed that people do things in certain types of unruly crowd situations that they would not otherwise do. This has been

attributed to the idea that the crowd is a disinhibiter; by egging each other on, we can all give in to impulses we would typically suppress. Then, the fact that “everyone else is doing it” is taken to mean that the behavior must be acceptable.

Diffusion of responsibility is the general tendency of group members to feel less obligated to conform to general social norms or values. In effect, any potential disapproval would be distributed across all members of the group, thus negating the impact on any one individual. In “bystander intervention” research, for example, a person is more likely to intervene to help an injured or distressed stranger if the person is alone than if there are others present.⁴⁶ Note that this is a bit counterintuitive: if it is compliance to social norms that compels me to help the stranger, then having people around to observe should increase my helping behavior. Instead, their presence means that I do not need to help, either because others are equally able to or because I follow their example of not helping. Thus, the group provides both normative guidance, or modeling (help/do not help), and also an excuse to indulge my preference: if they do not see a need to help, then I do not feel so bad about not helping; the moral responsibility is diffused.

Risky Shifts

The risky shift phenomenon shows that the group may do more than merely diffuse responsibility; it may encourage irresponsibility. Risky shift refers to the frequent—though not universal—finding that a group’s decision making reflects willingness to take a greater risk than one would expect from the original preferences of all of the group members taken singly. It is not simply a matter of the risk takers in the group being more persuasive, since the risky position advocated by the group is sometimes more extreme than the original position of *any* of the group members.⁴⁷

Nor is the risky shift simply another aspect of diffusion of responsibility, because the group sometimes shifts to a position that is more extreme on the conservative side. If the group members originally favor a somewhat cautious approach to some task, then the group process may lead to an even greater level of caution. This is explained as a “polarization effect,” usually seen as the result of higher prestige flowing toward those who are closer to the group’s ideal.⁴⁸ In the context of Islamist terrorism, a person more willing to take an extreme, risky action would likely be seen as more devoted, and this would encourage the group as a whole to move to a more daring position, thus offering encouragement to the original high risk taker to move to a still riskier stance. Suicide terrorism is one instance where religiosity is a risk factor rather than a protective factor against destruction of self and others.⁴⁹

A classic finding in the psychology of groups that combines elements of risky shift and emergent norms involved World War II research by Kurt Lewin, the “father of group dynamics.” The U.S. government was having little luck in persuading housewives to use various “organ meats” (spleen, kidney, etc.) in the family diet to help deal with a meat shortage. Called upon to help with needed attitude change, Lewin reasoned that social norms were interfering with the desired attitude change, and he experimented with various persuasive communications aimed at the individual and

stressing patriotism.⁵⁰ When this general approach did not work, he tried an early version of a focus group to see what he could learn about the source of the resistance. To his surprise, he found that most housewives were perfectly willing to try organ meats, but had been resisting in doing so because they did not want to be thought poor homemakers by their families and friends. As soon as they became aware that most other women were willing to give organ meats a try, a new norm was established and consumption of organ meats increased. This early, real-world study showed the power of the group to overcome individual resistance and establish new norms.

The Groupthink Phenomenon

Besides taking riskier positions and establishing new norms, groups have also been found at times to isolate themselves from reality and to make poorer decisions than one would expect, given the makeup or expertise of the group. Irvin Janis coined the term "groupthink" to describe a certain type of group process in which a group's sincere attempt to come up with a realistic solution to a problem is thwarted by perceived pressure for unanimity and consensus.⁵¹ The result is that the group establishes its own version of reality and acts accordingly. One of Janis' key examples is the functioning of the Kennedy administration leading up to the failed invasion of Cuba, known as the Bay of Pigs; this is contrasted with that same group confronting the Cuban Missile Crisis, where groupthink was avoided. While there is certainly a danger in judging group process by its results, no doubt most historians would concur with Janis' analysis of the two occasions. Using this and numerous other examples, Janis proceeds to list some fourteen structural, situational, and group process conditions that contribute to groupthink. It would be instructive to study terrorist organizations in depth to see how many of the groupthink characteristics apply; for our purposes, however, we will focus on a few selective examples.

Under "structural faults," Janis lists "insulation of the group" and "homogeneity of members' social backgrounds and ideology."⁵² Homogeneity of background is virtually assured in most terrorist groups, since their personal and ethnic backgrounds typically provide the common cause that brings them together. While such groups might not have an intrinsic desire for insulation, as soon as they become identified by authorities, such insulation becomes *de rigueur* as a result of the external threat.

Under the heading of "situational context," Janis lists "high stress from external threats" and "low self-esteem temporarily induced by . . . moral dilemmas: apparent lack of feasible alternatives except ones that violate ethical standards."⁵³ In the case of al Qaeda, the inability to have any impact on various Muslim governments, especially in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, created a great deal of angst for its founding members. Given the sacredness of the cause and the lack of viable alternatives, resort to terrorism became quite easy to rationalize. Suicide terrorism, for which there was abundant precedence in Lebanon, Iran, the West Bank, and the Tamils of Sri Lanka, then became rather easy to rationalize.⁵⁴

Under "symptoms of groupthink," Janis lists eight specific group process variables that facilitate groupthink. Some of the more telling ones here are: "illusion of

invulnerability," "belief in the inherent morality of the group," "stereotypes of out-groups," and "self-appointed mindguards."⁵⁵ A sincere belief that God/Allah is on one's side, a belief in one's own good faith, and the disparagement of the other as pagan, infidel, or kafir (unbeliever) pretty much cover the first three on Janis' list. The mindguard concept refers to the self-censorship of the group as reinforced by a strong leader (or at times by someone specifically responsible for maintaining "correct" thinking) who serves to prevent any serious challenge to the goals and means of the group. In the Soviet military, for example, the *zampolit* (political commissar) had the power to induce compliance (but not "identification") with the party line. In the Islamist terrorist group, internalization of the group beliefs is facilitated by the leader being imbued with a special sanctity.

What makes Janis' analysis more compelling, we believe, is that the model was developed to account for group decision making in more or less normal political and wartime situations. There is no reference to terrorism or terrorist groups anywhere in Janis' book. We apply the theory here more with a view toward understanding the "normalcy" of the individuals involved, not to suggest that various terrorist groups will necessarily exhibit the poor tactical decision making that Janis found to flow from groupthink. Even if groupthink proves to be useful for understanding why a terrorist would engage in objectively irrational behavior (killing oneself and others in a doubtful cause), it would be premature to take comfort from this by expecting terrorist groups to self-destruct in tactically irrational decision making.

Balancing Processes: Cognitive Dissonance

Although not a group process, per se, cognitive dissonance plays a critical role in the relationship between the individual and the group. Cognitive dissonance refers to the motivational state that arises in the individual when one is aware of some lack of balance or fit in one's makeup.⁵⁶ To simplify slightly, an individual can be seen as possessing a set of attitudes and values and also a repertoire of behaviors. One can have inconsistency within one's value-attitude system, within the various behaviors one exhibits, or, most commonly, between an attitude and a behavior. Much of the original cognitive dissonance research involved devising various clever ways to induce introductory psychology students to behave in "attitude discrepant behavior," such as writing an essay defending a position one did not agree with. Even though the subject could easily rationalize such behavior ("it was only an exercise"), there was still presumably some dissonance experienced. Since one cannot change one's past behavior, consistency could be obtained only by changing one's attitude.

There is a counterintuitive aspect to cognitive dissonance theory that made it a highly popular research area. A simple Pavlovian analysis, based on association with reward, would predict that the more reward someone received for (say) writing an essay one did not agree with, the more one would have positive feelings about the ideas in question. Contrary to reinforcement theory, however, cognitive dissonance theory holds that the *less* incentive one has for engaging in attitude discrepant behavior, the *greater* the dissonance and hence the greater the change.⁵⁷ Thus, according to

cognitive dissonance theory, a person with less rationale for attending a group meeting has more need to justify his behavior and will change more.

This idea was tested directly by Aronson and Mills, who manipulated the amount of stress and embarrassment female subjects experienced prior to joining in a group discussion.⁵⁸ The more stressful the entrance to the group, the more positively the subjects rated their group experience, even to the point of characterizing a (deliberately) boring discussion as interesting. In a similar vein, fraternities with the toughest initiation rites have been found to have the highest level of group cohesion.⁵⁹

The above research would seem to have direct application to membership in a terrorist group. One pays a tremendous price for joining such a group. For example, the leaders of al Qaeda often had their commitment deepened by a torture experience at the hands of Egyptian security forces.⁶⁰ The fear that one is throwing one's life away on a lost cause would be frightening indeed. The way to resolve dissonance is to be fully committed, to allow no doubts to one's religious beliefs, and to idealize the other group members. The privilege of being selected for a suicide mission then becomes the confirmation of the rightness of one's behavior leading up to this point. Moghaddam uses a "stage" model to describe the deepening commitment and involvement that take place within Islamist terrorist groups; while such deepening does not appear to be inevitable (most supporters do not actually become terrorists), the need to resolve doubts and see oneself as consistent provides a reasonable theoretical explanation for why such deepening of commitment occurs for many.⁶¹ The more risks one has taken and the more one has sacrificed, the greater the need to deepen the commitment in order to avoid an intolerable price-value discrepancy.

The need for consistency does not always operate. "Compartmentalization" refers to the ability of the individual to ignore the types of contradictions that normally give rise to dissonance motivation. It is mainly when the inconsistency is brought to a person's attention and the person is made aware of the "salience" of the issue for his/her basic identity that value and attitude change begins to occur in order to increase the consistency in one's value-attitude-behavior system.⁶² Group membership increases the likelihood that one will *not* be able to compartmentalize, since group membership typically conveys certain limits on how one can behave and on the opinions one can express, whether it be a fraternity or a terrorist cell. This, then, raises the question of why individuals are drawn to terrorist cells in the first place. After all, the subjects in the classic experiments of Milgrim, Zimbardo, Asch, Festinger, and others mentioned above did not choose to be in the situations that shaped their behavior. For most group members, however, the conformity induced by their groups is experienced as a positive rather than a negative feature. To put it another way, it is precisely a group's function in shaping and maintaining its members' identity that gives a group its drawing power.

Groups and Identity Formation

In his classic treatment of the development of the individual, Erik Erikson defined a series of developmental tasks that the individual will face as she/he matures.⁶³

Each task is framed in terms of a specific crisis to be overcome. The crisis that is relevant to us here is that of adolescence: identity versus role confusion. In order to avoid role confusion, individuals need to be part of a group that will give them feedback as to how they fit into the group and the larger society. Frequent testing of each other's identity is the norm. As Erikson put it:

The readiness for such testing also explains the appeal which simple and cruel totalitarian doctrines have on the minds of the youth of such countries and classes as have lost or are losing their group identities (feudal, agrarian, tribal, national) and face worldwide industrialization, emancipation, and wider communication.⁶⁴

This description seems especially prescient of the types of stresses placed on the youth of countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the 1970s and 1980s, where globalization not only of the economy but of culture posed a threat to a traditional way of life anchored in Islamic beliefs. The need to define who I am and what I believe creates a natural attraction to those who have developed a strong, charismatic personality and seem to have removed any of their own doubts. Turning to Erikson once again:

It is the ideological outlook of a society that speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is eager to be affirmed by his peers, and is ready to be confirmed by rituals, creeds, and programs which at the same time define what is evil. . . .⁶⁵

The idea that the need for an identity is what draws new recruits to extremist, terrorist groups in the first place walks the line between "normal development" and a psychopathological explanation of terrorism. We would make two observations on this point. First, identity issues constitute a statistically normal part of adolescent development and it does not presume a foundation in an earlier emotional conflict or ego weakness. If the individual lives in a culture that is under stress and provides relatively few productive roles for its youth, such as the Palestinian culture, then the individual may actively seek out a terrorist group. If the individual is a "marginal man," for example living in an Islamic community in France, there may be a more gradual recruitment and deepening process that takes the person from role confusion to confirmed terrorist. But, in either case, the pathology is more so in the culture or situation than in the individual, *per se*. Should that same individual be transported to a healthier situation, then there may never be any evidence of social or psychological maladjustment.

A second—equally important—observation, however, is that identity confusion is more likely with someone who has not fully resolved the earlier stages of development. For example, unresolved anger would make any violence-oriented group (whether a youth gang involved in drug distribution or a right wing neo-Nazi group) more appealing. Low self-esteem and unresolved dependency needs would make a religious cult more appealing. Suicidal ideation might be channeled through a group that promotes suicide terrorism. Even normal attitudes and normal vocational choice

can be linked to underlying psychological needs or conflicts. In a classic formulation, Daniel Katz refers to the overdetermination of attitude formation.⁶⁶ Katz sees attitudes as satisfying four different functions: instrumental/utilitarian, ego-defensive, value-expressive, and knowledge/structure. While no attitude needs to satisfy all functions, the more functions that it satisfies the more central and powerful the attitude will be in the person's makeup.

If we apply these four functions to a terrorist group and its ideology, the group may appeal to a person because it provides rewards, such as education and training for its members, travel opportunities, and even cash payments to families of suicide bombers. For ego defense, the group assures the new member of his value, removes self-esteem doubts, and provides rationalizations for angry or even suicidal impulses. The value expressive function of the group is probably its most obvious. By confirming one's cherished values, whether nationalistic or religious, value expressive attitudes "not only give clarity to the self-image but also mold that self-image closer to the heart's desire."⁶⁷ This should be especially comforting when those basic beliefs are felt to be under siege from an alien culture. Finally, a group's ideology can be seen "to give meaning to what would otherwise be an unorganized chaotic universe. People need standards or frames of reference for understanding their world, and attitudes help to supply such standards."⁶⁸ While the ego-defensive function may suggest individual psychopathology, the other functions are a normal, healthy part of an identity development and are sufficient for explaining the terrorist's commitment to the group.⁶⁹ The group identity that results first shores up the individual identity and then becomes a part of or even replaces it.⁷⁰

THE FRUSTRATION-AGGRESSION HYPOTHESIS

It has long been noted that the blocking of any goal-directed activity, such as maintaining a positive identity, is a stimulus to aggressive behavior. The first formal statement of this relationship was the "frustration-aggression hypothesis" put forth by the "Yale Group" of social and clinical psychologists.⁷¹ Coincidentally, one of the first tests of this hypothesis involved a form of domestic terrorism, namely the lynching of Negroes mostly in the southern United States. Hypothesizing that this sort of scapegoating aggression was in response to general frustration, Hovland and Sears predicted that there would be a negative correlation between the price of cotton and the number of lynchings in any given year.⁷² Hovland and Sears looked at both total lynchings ($n=4,761$) and Negro ($n=3,386$) lynchings over a forty-nine-year period, 1882 through 1930. An index of overall economic conditions in the entire country proved to be an excellent predictor of total lynchings: -0.65 ; looking only at Negro lynchings, deviations in the price of cotton in Southern states proved to be an even stronger predictor: -0.72 .⁷³

Hovland and Sears did not claim that it was the *most* frustrated individuals who participated directly in the aggression against Negroes. But, if we adopt the reasonable assumption that lynching was a form of terrorism designed to "keep the Negro in his place," then a predisposition to act aggressively in response to frustration

would be one factor (out of many) that draws an individual to a terrorist group (in this case, the lynch mob).

The original frustration-aggression hypothesis has been adapted to a more modern cognitive-behavioral formulation.⁷⁴ In this updated version, frustration does not lead directly to aggression, but to an attribution process in which the frustrated individual first attempts to understand the cause of the frustration. Several attributional types or styles have been identified, four of which are especially relevant for our discussion.

Two of these attributional styles involve internal, self-blaming attributions.⁷⁵ In "characterological self-blame," one's inability to reach one's goals (i.e., the frustration) is seen as due to one's own personal shortcomings. This attribution leads naturally to depression and helplessness. "Behavioral self-blame," on the other hand, refers to a simple mistake that is not a part of one's character. Therefore, behavioral self-blame can still leave one with a sense of being in control, which leads to the motivation to change those aspects of behavior that are problematic.

The other two attributional styles of interest here are both external. Attributing frustration to chance, fate, an arbitrary God, or other forces generally beyond anyone's control leads to anxiety and withdrawal. However, attributing frustration to the unwarranted, unfair behavior of others leads to anger and aggression, both for retaliation and also instrumentally, to improve things.⁷⁶

This last type of attribution, a "hostile attribution," has been identified as a personality trait, though not necessarily one with high consistency across all situations.⁷⁷ Whether or not a tendency to make hostile attributions is a pathological trait depends on the reasonableness of the attribution. Thus, a victim of frequent discrimination or unfair treatment may have a realistic basis for a preference for hostile attributions. Besides its implications for behavior, a hostile attribution is to some extent ego defensive.⁷⁸ That is, it protects a person's self-esteem by locating the source of the frustration outside of the person and by implying that some sort of retaliation is appropriate.

We hypothesize, then, that low or vulnerable self-esteem, especially as found in someone undergoing an identity crisis, combined with a hostile attribution style, creates a predisposition to be attracted to a terrorist group. The prevalence of such predispositions in a population, interacting with opportunity and cultural support for joining a terrorist group, would then determine the percentage of people likely to enter the first stage of terrorist group involvement—after which the group's deepening processes would gradually convert the individual into a full-fledged terrorist, capable of both suicide and homicide.⁷⁹

UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

Townsend has recently reviewed the literature on suicide terrorists. Townsend found five studies that met her criteria of being empirical studies of individuals who had committed or attempted to commit an act of suicide terrorism.⁸⁰ For those who had actually completed their suicide mission, the data were based on psychological autopsies. These autopsies typically involve interviews with family members

and notes or videotapes left by the terrorist.⁸¹ In cases where the mission had been thwarted by arrest, the terrorists themselves were interviewed in Israeli prisons.⁸² In some cases, interviews were conducted with subjects who stated their willingness to undertake such a mission but had not yet been called upon to do so.⁸³

Townsend's focus in conducting her review of these studies was to look for any commonalities with what is known about other suicidal populations. Townsend found little evidence that suicide terrorists felt any of the negative emotions, such as anger, hopelessness, depression, or "the psychological features of entrapment, defeat, and unbearable mental pain" (p. 42) that are characteristic of most suicides. Some have suggested that suicide terrorists could be classified, following Durkheim, as altruistic suicides.⁸⁴ While not totally discounting this, Townsend⁸⁵ argues: "Most classic examples of altruistic suicide do not involve the death of others in the altruistic act." It is the linkage, then, of the suicidal act with homicidal intent that for Townsend at least separates the suicide terrorist from the classic idea of the altruistic suicide. Indeed, this is in keeping with the outlook of the terrorists themselves who typically insist that their behavior is not suicide—strictly forbidden by the Qur'an—but rather an act of martyrdom or "shahada."⁸⁶

Townsend's conclusion was that the various terrorists do not show any particular evidence, as a group, of psychological disorder, nor do they have any personality traits in common other than "enmeshment with religion."⁸⁷ Rather, "indoctrination and group processes [are] the commonly cited motivations."⁸⁸ A key point that Townsend stressed throughout is that a terrorist's suicidal behavior is instrumental rather than an end in itself. The individual is not so much trying to end his or her own life, or to avoid negative feelings, but is trying to accomplish a political goal and concurrently enter paradise. Group processes reinforce this belief and keep the individual committed to his or her path.

The belief that one is entering paradise appears to be sincerely held by Muslim terrorists.⁸⁹ If so, then judging their affect by how they appear at the time of the mission seems to us to be an invalid way of assessing possible underlying psychological motivation. Indeed, in his psychological autopsy of Mohammed Atta, one of the leading 9/11 terrorists, Meloy finds rather extensive symptomatology in Atta's background.⁹⁰ Atta's conflicted relationship with his father and his excessive dependency on his mother would provide any Freudian with ample evidence of an unresolved Oedipal complex. Meloy himself concludes that Atta's immersion in extremist religious doctrine and his decision to martyr himself were driven by repressed sexuality and displacement of intense anger toward his perfectionist father. The idea that deep religious involvement functions as an outlet for strong emotional conflict echoes Shibley's concept, referred to earlier, of "dogma-induced critical/psychotic depression."⁹¹

So, is the preterrorist personality of a Mohamed Atta the exception or the rule? It may well be that underlying psychopathology for suicide terrorists could be found if sufficient information is available for a meaningful psychological autopsy.⁹² We are not arguing here for the psychological normalcy or mental health of most suicide terrorists. We are stating and feel that we have established a much more modest

claim: a normal level of frustration and identity confusion, combined with a variety of situational/group processes, may be sufficient to produce a suicide terrorist.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have set forth the outline for a social psychology of terrorism. It is our contention that the routine processes present in social interaction, especially group dynamics, can be sufficient for converting an otherwise psychologically healthy person into a terrorist, including the 9/11 bombers as well as suicide terrorists in general, whether or not motivated by a religious ideology. It is not our contention that all or even most terrorists are psychologically healthy. Three other possibilities should be kept in mind. First, some may be attracted to terrorism as an outlet for inner conflict—the basic psychopathology model. Second, some may become unhealthy as a result of the group processes involved in terrorism.⁹³ Finally, in some cases the idea of a cultural neurosis might be relevant;⁹⁴ that is, the normal beliefs and practices of a culture, while producing someone who functions well in that culture, may at the same time produce an unhealthy person, psychologically speaking. Perhaps it is time to revisit this classic concept, delicate though it may be in an age of diversity, multiculturalism, and political correctness.⁹⁵ The concept of identity formation is especially useful because it can subsume all of the routes to terrorism that we outline above.

Are there any practical implications for determining the relative percentages of individuals in a particular terrorist movement or organization who arrive at their destinations by the various routes—even simplified to primarily social processes versus primarily psychopathological motivations? Is there any practical way of making such an assessment? Would assessing the determining motivation of a particular terrorist aid in predicting his general strategy and decision making? These are challenging questions that must remain beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

We do hope, however, to have provided herein a helpful social psychological platform from which to begin searching for the answers to these questions. Perhaps in these answers lie some suggestions that may be used by national policymakers as they attempt to vitiate the contemporary scourge of terrorism.

NOTES

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6. M. Hafez, *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006).
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9. Because some writers refer to terrorists as "psychopaths," it will be useful to distinguish the concepts of psychopathology and psychopathy. "Psychopathology" refers to symptoms of mental illness. Hallucinations would be an extreme example; unwarranted anxiety or depression would also constitute psychopathology. Psychopathology is a measure of the (poor) mental health of the person. "Psychopathy" refers to the traits or qualities thought to characterize the psychopath: a personality disorder that represents an extreme form of antisocial personality. The antisocial personality (and a fortiori the psychopath) is a type of "personality disorder," and in that sense a diagnosable mental illness. However, there is typically no loss of reality contact, nor is there any unpleasant emotional state (except when one is "caught"); and antisocial personality is usually specifically excluded as the basis for an insanity defense claim. Because the psychopath is said to lack any moral restraints and to engage in extremely destructive behavior, some writers have characterized the suicide terrorist as a psychopath. Most authors, however, argue that the psychopath is unlikely to fit into the discipline required in a terrorist organization, except possibly in a few specialized niches. J. Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 47-53; L. Miller, "The Terrorist Mind: II. Typologies, Psychopathologies, and Practical Guidelines for Investigation," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 50, (2006): 255-268; J. Victoroff, "The Mind of The Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, (2005): 3-42.
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21. F.M. Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View: What They Experience and Why They Come to Destroy* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006); M. R. Pynchon and R. Borum, "Assessing Threats of Targeted Group Violence: Contributions from Social Psychology," *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 17, (1999): 339–355.
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70. V. Taylor, "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance," *American Sociological Review* 54, (1989): 761–775; K. Deaux and D. Martin, "Interpersonal Networks and Social Categories: Specifying Levels of Context in Identity Processes," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66, (2003): 101–117; E. R. Smith and S. Henry, "An In-Group Becomes Part of the Self: Response Time Evidence," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 22, (1996): 635–642.
71. J. Dollard and others, *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1939).
72. C. I. Hovland and R. R. Sears, "Minor Studies of Aggression: VI. Correlation of Lynchings with Economic Indices," *The Journal of Psychology* 9, (1940): 301–310.
73. Technically, Hovland and Sears (1940) correlated the deviations in lynching and economic well being and only took into account whether the deviations were positive or negative, rather than the amount of deviation (a tetrachoric correlation). While this may have inflated their correlations somewhat, the data plot that they present leaves little doubt about the strength of the relationship.
74. R. W. Novaco, *Anger Control: The Development and Evaluation of an Experimental Treatment* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, Lexington Books, 1975); R. W. Novaco, "The Cognitive Regulation of Anger and Stress," in *Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions: Theory, Research, and Procedures*, ed. P. Kendall and S. Hollon (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 241–285.
75. R. Janoff-Bulman, "Characterological vs. Behavioral Self-blame: Inquiries into Depression and Rape," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37, (1979): 1798–1809.
76. L. Berkowitz, "On the Difference Between Internal and External Reactions to Legitimate and Illegitimate Frustrations: A Demonstration," *Aggressive Behavior* 7, (1981): 83–96.
77. R. J. Homant and D. B. Kennedy, "Hostile Attribution in Perceived Justification of Workplace Aggression," *Psychological Reports* 92, (2003): 185–2003.
78. Such a predisposition has also been termed a "diathesis": a vulnerability that may manifest itself if the "right" stresses and opportunities should happen to come along. M. Zuckerman, *Vulnerability to Psychopathology: A Biosocial Model* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1999). See Homant and Kennedy, "Serial Murder" For the Application of this Concept to Sexual Sadistic Killing. There is also some evidence for a culture pattern that emphasizes the role of evil conspiracies in explaining current events. See M. Dwairy, *Counseling and Psychotherapy with Arabs and Muslims* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006); D. Pipes, *Conspiracy: How the Paranoia Style Flourishes and Where it Comes From* (New York: The Free Press, 1997); P. Robins and J. Post, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).
79. Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View*.
80. Townsend, *Suicide Terrorists*.
81. R. M. Fields, S. Elbedour, and A. F. Hein, "The Palestinian Suicide Bomber," in *The Psychology of Terrorism: Clinical Aspects and Responses*, ed. C. E. Stout (Westport, CT: Praeger,

2002), 193–223; N. Hassan, “An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to the ‘Human Bombs,’” *New Yorker*, November 19, 2001, 36–41; Meloy, “Indirect Personality Assessment.” Schbley, “Defining Religious Terrorism.”

82. J.M. Post, E. Sprinzak, and L.M. Denny, “Terrorists in their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, (2003): 171–184.

83. Hassan, *An Arsenal of Believers*; Schbley, *Defining Religious Terrorism*.

84. D.B. Kennedy, “A Précis of Suicide Terrorism,” *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 3, no. 4/2, (June 2006), available at <http://www.bepress.com/jhsem/vol3/iss4/2> (accessed June 6, 2006); A. Leenaars and S. Wenckstern, “Altruistic Suicides: Are They the Same or Different from Other Suicides?” *Archives of Suicide Research* 8, (2004):131–136.

85. Townsend, *Suicide Terrorists*, 38.

86. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.

87. Townsend, *Suicide Terrorists*, 38.

88. *Ibid.*

89. Recall the discussion earlier in this chapter that a belief in a personal afterlife is not a necessary ingredient for creating a suicide bomber; strong nationalistic feelings were apparently sufficient for the Tamils. See Arena and Arrigo, *The Terrorist Identity*.

90. Meloy, *Indirect Personality Assessment*.

91. Schbley, *Defining Religious Terrorism*, 120.

92. Grimland, Apter, and Kerkhof, *Defining Terrorism*.

93. D. Weatherston and J. Moran, “Terrorism and Mental Illness: Is There a Relationship?” *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 47, (2003): 698–713.

94. E. Fromm, “Individual and Social Origins of Neurosis,” *American Sociological Review* 9, (1944): 380–384.

95. A related topic is the idea of national character. D. Martindale, “The Sociology of National Character,” *Annals* 370, (1967): 30–35. An early “orientalist,” R. Patai, purported to explain the “Arab mind.” R. Patai, *The Arab Mind* (New York: Charles Scribner’s, 1973); R. Patai, *The Arab Mind* (Long Island, NY: Hatherleigh Press, 2002). His efforts have certainly generated both criticism and praise. For criticism, see G. Gregg, *The Middle East: A Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Oxford University Press 2005) and E. Hagopian, “Review of the Arab Mind,” *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 6, (1977): 122–130. For praise of Patai’s Work, see C. Quigley, “The Arab Mind,” *American Anthropologist* 76, (1974): 396–397. Nevertheless, many people believe that certain personality configurations are modal for certain cultures, even though empirical validation is elusive. R. McCrae and A. Terracciano, “National Character and Personality,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 15, (2006): 156–161); I. Charny, *Fighting Suicide Bombing: A Worldwide Campaign for Life* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007).