What is the Enemy?

George Joffé
University of Cambridge. Research Fellow and Visiting Professor of Geography at Kings College, London University. Specialist in the Middle East and North Africa. Currently engaged in a project studying connections between migrant communities and trans/national violence in Europe.

Abstract

Despite the fact that the organisations involved in extremism and violence are well-known, as are their ideological justifications for the actions they undertake, much less is understood by most observers about the individual rationales of their members for the activities that they support. A common conventional assumption is that the rationale for extremist behaviour is rooted in doctrines derived from the Islamic *corpus* and its alleged propensity for violence.

This analysis, however, seeks to demonstrate that a more comprehensive and satisfying explanation is related to historical, social and psychological factors and that, furthermore, the current wave of "Islamic terrorism" differs little from preceding waves of extremist violence that seek to confront and replace the state.

Resumo
O que é o Inimigo?

Apesar do facto de as organizações envolvidas no extremismo e na violência serem bem conhecidas, tal como as justificações ideológicas relativas às ações que realizam, muito menos entendida pela maioria dos observadores são os fundamentos individuais dos membros que as apoiam e executam. A suposição convencional comum assenta no argumento de que o comportamento extremista está enraizado em doutrinas derivadas do corpus islâmico e da sua suposta propensão para a violência.

Esta análise procura demonstrar que uma explicação mais abrangente e satisfatória pode estar relacionada com fatores históricos, sociais e psicológicos e que, além disso, a atual onda de "terrorismo islâmico" difere pouco das ondas precedentes de violência extremista que enfrentaram e tentaram substituir o Estado.

The typical contemporary mainstream explanation for an act of terrorism, particularly in Europe, is that the perpetrator has become "radicalised" in some way, where the term "radicalisation" expressly means that the person concerned has usually adopted an interpretation of Islam that legitimises such extreme behaviour and that such interpretations are innate to Islamic doctrine and precept. Such assumptions seem to inform major official initiatives such as the British government's "Prevent" strategy, designed to ensure that young Muslims in Britain should not join extremist Islamist organisations such as *Da'ish* (ISIS) or *al-Qa'ida* and similar programmes are in operation in most Western countries and in the Arab world[1]. Now, as the caliphate of Da'ish is bombed into oblivion, we need to ask what will succeed it and what success will *Da'ish V.2* actually enjoy and why?

It is the contention of this comment that such a view is fundamentally misplaced; not because there is not an elaborate theological justification for such attitudes but because it does not reflect the fundamental reasons why most of the recruits to extremist movements join them and what, therefore, the dispersion and destruction of Da'ish might really mean. Furthermore, there appears to be a popular and official consensus, in Europe and America at least, that such a form of extremist violence is novel, really developing only at the start of the twenty-first century, whereas in the Middle East and North Africa it has long been present, indeed has been an intrinsic feature of social and political order, buried in the social fabric but now overt and, therefore, threatening. This analysis seeks to demonstrate that both these views need to be challenged if we are to really understand the nature of the threats that we face and respond appropriately to them.

Middle Eastern Precursors

Terrorism, in short, even in the Muslim world, is not an ideology but a technique of resistance and reaction, designed to achieve its objectives through the inculcation of mass fear and, as such, has long been a concomitant of the historical European experience as well (Joffé, 2004). As David Rapaport has pointed out, Europe has experienced four separate waves of terrorism over the last one hundred years, all of them with very different ideological justifications but, nevertheless, all using very similar techniques of operation (Rapoport, 2002). He suggests that there was, first, an anarchist wave of violence, followed by an anti-colonial wave, itself succeeded by what he calls a "New Left" wave and now replaced by a wave of religious terrorism, with each of these waves lasting for 40-to-45 years. Jeffrey Kaplan, writing

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1   "We judge that radicalisation is driven by an ideology which sanctions the use of violence; by propagandists for that ideology here and overseas; and by personal vulnerabilities and specific local factors which, for a range of reasons, make that ideology seem both attractive and compelling" (HM Government, 2011, *Prevent Strategy,* paragraph 3.5; p. 5).

at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, has suggested a fifth wave which seeks to recreate a lost golden millennium and is characterised, *inter alia*, by being, "Chiliastic in nature, deeply religious with eclectic or syncretic religious tropes assembled and interpreted by the leaders in support of a millenarian dream to be realized through a campaign of apocalyptic violence" (Kaplan, 2008).

Furthermore, throughout its history, the use of terrorism inside the Middle East has been far more restricted than conventional attitudes in the West would have led observers to expect. Although the Islamic world has experienced considerable violence throughout its history, violent extremism to achieve political purposes and legitimised through reference to Islamic doctrine typical of the contemporary era has, in the past, been extremely rare. Indeed until the epoch of anti-colonial liberation, it virtually never informed conflict in the Arab Islamic world. The most obvious example would apparently be the Assassins, notorious in the twelfth century for the murder of leading figures in the Islamic world, including two caliphs. Yet, in reality, the sect did not engage in the politics of fear in the sense of superficially indiscriminate violence against the population-at-large. Instead, its targets were prominent individuals, Muslim or Christian as it was active during the Crusades, who were murdered for specific political reasons. Nor did it engage in the indiscriminate use of hashish to predispose its assassins to fulfil their tasks, as is conventionally alleged. In reality, the sect was a branch of Nizari Isma'ilism in which its adherents were called the *al-asasyun* (the faithful) whose *fida'i* (fighters) were prepared to kill according to the instructions of the head of the order until they were dispersed by the Mongols in the thirteenth century[2].

The other obvious, albeit not exact, example would be the *kharajites*, the group of early Muslims who rejected both the idea of the transfer of caliphal authority by direct genealogical descent from the Prophet Muhammed through the line of Ali, as was claimed by the supporters of Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and that of the right of the Bani Hashim in Mecca – the Prophet's own clan – to maintain control of the caliphate in their own hands – the position adopted by Mu'awiya, the governor of Damascus, after the death of 'Uthman. They particularly objected to Ali's acceptance of Mu'awiya's proposal for an arbitration of the competing claims, arguing instead that the position of caliph could be filled through election by any true Muslim who was irreproachably moral and faithful to Islamic doctrine, irrespective of agnatic descent (Lambton, 1981). Those who disagreed, they simply regarded as *takfir* (apostate), to be punished by death, as occurred to Ali himself who was subsequently killed by one of their members (Kennedy, 2016). An even earlier example would have been the rebellion between 132 and 136 AD, led by

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2   See Lewis (1967).

Shimon Bar Kokhba, against the Roman presence in Palestine which used guerrilla tactics akin to terrorism as part of the struggle.

It is only when we come to the modern epoch that this picture changes significantly with the advent of colonialism. Even then, the phenomenon that we recognise today as "terrorism' did not initially emerge from within the Islamic corpus. Perhaps the first example of its sustained use to influence political outcomes comprised the activities of the Revisionist movement, together with the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *LEHI*, in British Mandate Palestine. As Simha Flapan relates:

> "(…) the violation of the Haganah line of self-restraint (*havlaga*), and indiscriminate attacks of the civilian Arab population in 1937 led to a vicious circle of terror and reprisals; the attack on Deir Yassin in 1948; the ruthlessness of which shocked Jewish and world public opinion alike and drove fear and panic into the Arab population, precipitated the flight of Arab masses from their homes and villages; and so on" (Flapan, 1979, pp. 96-97).

He goes on to remark, "(…) members of the Irgun launched terrorist attacks on civilians causing an escalation of violence on an unprecedented scale. It can be said that the Irgun established the pattern of terrorism adopted 30 years later by Al-Fatah" (Flapan, 1979, p. 116).

None of this is to suggest that Revisionist Zionism was the sole progenitor of terrorist violence in the Middle East; there had been twenty years of violence there, including the Arab revolt that had preceded Revisionist attacks on British forces and the Arab population there. After all, too, the Algerian war of independence which was to erupt six years later was profoundly marked by the use of terrorist violence, particularly in the capital, Algiers, where indiscriminate violence, as the weapon of the weak, was initially highly effective at redressing the imbalance of power between the revolution and its French antagonists, although it eventually and unintentionally also legitimised the indiscriminate violence of the French state against it itself. Franz Fanon, a psychiatrist from Martinique who became a leading theoretician of the Algerian struggle, even justified the violence involved as a means of cleansing people subjugated by colonialism of their subjugation (Fanon, 1963, pp. 68-74). The Palestinian movements, too, as mentioned above, also used terrorism in the last thirty years of the twentieth century to facilitate, unsuccessfully, the realisation of their political objectives.

Motivation

The underlying issue here is that a vast array of different movements in the Middle East have increasingly used methods of struggle in recent times that are conventionally described as "terrorist". Some were secular in terms of the theoretical justification of their actions, others were ostensibly religious, but the techniques of struggle adopted – "coercive intimidation" or the use of "indiscriminate" violence

to attain political ends (Wilkinson, 1986, p. 51) – was common to them all. The adoption of such techniques arises from the asymmetry of the conflicts in which the protagonists were engaged, in which they perceive of themselves as weak in comparison with their opponents. The apparently indiscriminate use of such violence is really a statement that individuals associated with a particular group held culpable for a collective offence are, thereby, considered legitimate targets, whatever their individual responsibilities for the actual offence may have been. Thus, when Émile Henry, a French anarchist, bombed the Café Terminus in Paris in February 1894, killing one person and injuring twenty others, and was arrested immediately afterwards, he told the court at his subsequent trial, "There are no innocent bourgeois!" for the café was a well-known haunt of the Parisian bourgeoisie whom he held responsible for the fearful exploitation of the French working class[3].

I postulate that the motivation of the perpetrators of such actions is based on a shared awareness of political marginalisation, reflecting sentiments of resentment, exclusion or isolation. Furthermore, if all perpetrators of such actions do share common motivations and use common techniques by which to express them, their sense of marginalisation is so great that none of the ordinary mechanisms by which individuals can seek recompense from the community-at-large, or from the state, appears to be effective for their purposes. In adopting such extreme positions, furthermore, they also embrace violence to confront the state and the society that they perceive as responsible for their marginalisation. Such a stance, which restores agency to them, they regard as essentially moral, so that their actions delegitimize the state and the society that would normally be seen as legitimising it. In short, their own violent struggle against the state is innately moral and those who oppose it, whatever their reasons, are inherently immoral and thus become legitimate targets of their violence.

Of course, those who feel so rejected by the state and society-at-large usually form a small minority and take such extreme positions of contention of the narrative of the state because of their isolation and as a means of legitimising their positions. Those who endorse violence form a far smaller minority, a position which also reinforces their sense of marginalisation and weakness which, conversely, encourages them in constructing a perceptual cultural frame to legitimise their actions (Wictorowicz, 2008, p. 8). They also develop justifications for their actions in order to give coherence to what they do but it is open to question whether such justifications provide the real explanations for both their sense of marginalisation and the violence that they practise. An example of the confusion that can be generated between real motivations and the coherent justifications in which they are con-

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3   The usual (erroneous) claim is that he said, "Nobody is innocent!". See *Emile Henry's Defense*, available at https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emile-henry-emile-henry-s-defense.

cealed is provided by a comment made by Malise Ruthven with regard to al-Qa'ida's stupendous attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001:

> "Their final act was not a gesture of Islamic heroism, but of Nietzschean despair. Their Islamic lineage is not in doubt. Like the Military Academy group they conceived the deed they committed on September 11th as an Outrage, a Fury for God. The Baader-Meinhof slogan – *Don't argue, destroy!* – could well have been their own" (Ruthven, 2002, p. 133).

Yet, of course, the attack was justified by a carefully-argued statement of salafi-jihadi extremist doctrine concerning the need to attack the "far enemy" – those non-Muslim states that supported the allegedly corrupt Muslim regimes of the Middle East, thus blocking the successful construction there of the normatively ideal society sought by militant Salafism (Gerges, 2005, pp. 119-150).

Justification

The formal justification for the contemporary wave of terrorist violence is well-known; it consists of a specific justification of *jihad*, which is usually translated as "holy war" (Cowan, 1976, p. 142). This is, however, to misconstrue the original meaning of the root term, *jahada*, which means to endeavour or strive, as well as to fight and which in one derivative (*ijtihada*) also means to develop an independent judgement over a legal or theological question. Indeed, historically jihad itself has also been construed as an intellectual struggle to improve an individual's moral status, the so-called "greater jihad", with the act of fighting in a holy war being seen as its subordinate cousin. The prioritisation of jihad as a violent act, admittedly in an allegedly moral cause, is therefore a relatively recent development, really emerging in response to widespread perceptions in the Muslim world, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, of Western interference in the region and of the widespread defective and corrupt indigenous governance practices there which leading Western states allegedly support.

Conventionally, this process is dated as beginning from the advent of the Islamic revolution in Iran and the coterminal Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The Islamic revolution, even though it involved Shi'ism in Iran, was seen throughout the Muslim world as dramatic proof of the relevance, vitality and authenticity of Islam in the contemporary world as the driver for the realisation of the (Islamic) ideal of good governance and social order. The response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, both within the country and in the wider Middle East, was a further practical demonstration of this new self-confidence, this time within a Sunni, rather than a Shi'a context. Coincidentally, of course, it was also the opportunity for a covert Saudi and American engagement in a Cold War confrontation through their actions in providing logistical and financial support to the consequent uprising

against the Soviet move there. In parallel with this support, Saudi Arabia also organised the recruiting of Muslims throughout the Middle Eastern and North African region to physically support the Afghan rebellion[4].

Those who were recruited – an estimated 40,000 by the end of the decade of the 1980s – found an ideology justifying and legitimating their engagement already at hand. It combined the ideas of Sayed Qutb, the Egyptian Islamist thinker who had been executed under the Nasser regime[5], and Maulana Mawdudi, his Pakistani predecessor[6], together with the vision of jihad of another Egyptian activist who was to be executed for his role in the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Muhammad Faraj[7], as theoretised by a Palestinian Islamist academic based in Peshawar in Pakistan, Abdullah Azzam[8]. Their ideas were set within a coherent framework provided by *Salafi-Jihadism*, a literalist evocation of the Islamist ideal society derived from the experiences and practices of the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the first four rightly-guided caliphs of the Rashidun epoch which, furthermore, required the active defence of the Muslim world against the corrupting influence of and direct interference by Western powers and their local surrogates, autocratic Arab regimes.

It was out of this environment that the modern Islamist violent extremist movements have evolved up to the present day. They have derived from their theoretical principles a praxis of action that has evolved over the past thirty-eight years and which has reproduced itself five times. Thus the obligation of the "defence of Muslim lands" first distinguished between the so-called "near" and "far" enemy – the western supporters of illegitimate Arab regimes and the Arab regimes themselves – as the legitimate and priority targets of Islamist hostility. It then prioritised pre-emption as a legitimate and viable procedure in large part justified by Western predilection for the same tactic, as subsequently made evident by the American-led attack on Iraq in 2003. These iterations were further elaborated into a kind of "nomadic" jihad in which any situation on the Muslim periphery that seemed to

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4   See Coll (2005).

5   Sayed Qutb identified governance in the Muslim world as culpably defective because of its ignorance of Islamic archetypes and proposed a new vision of *hukumiyya* (good Islamic governance) instead, to be imposed by force if need be.

6   Maulana Mawdudi, who founded the Jama'at-e Islami in Pakistan, considered the modern state valid only if based on Islamic precept as elaborated by the Salafiyya movement at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries.

7   Muhammad Faraj regarded jihad as the sixth pillar of Islam and a personal obligation which had been neglected by Muslims.

8   Abdullah Azzam defined the parameters of jihad in his two famous *fatwas*: "In defence of Muslim lands" and "Join the caravan", regarding jihad as an individual obligation (*ayn fardh*) on every Muslim whenever the Muslim world was threatened.

threaten its integrity could be confronted, as in Bosnia in the 1990s or in Chechnya. The next two stages of evolution involved new theoretical developments; Al-Suri's vision of leaderless jihad in which individuals could make their own decisions as to where action should occur without referring to a hierarchical chain-of-command[9] and Naji's argument about the need to eliminate through exemplary violence what he called the "grey zone" – those areas in which Muslims and non-Muslims co-existed in situations of relative mutual tolerance (Naji, 2004).

It was from this intellectual environment that the vision of the *Islamic State* (ISIS or *Da'ish*) has evolved. It has added the concept of the revival of the caliphate as a territorial reality to the arguments of As-Suri and Naji, thus giving Muslims in theory an alternative to the "gray zone" and challenging the intellectual hegemony enjoyed by al-Qa'ida over the Salafi-Jihadi movement since 2001[10]. Al-Qa'ida itself has also mutated, becoming a brand rather than a network active in physical space and, as *Ansar al-Shari'a*, replacing the concept of eliminating *jahili* and *takfiri* regimes,[11] whether in the Middle East or in the West, by the concept of "good governance" in those areas, such as South Yemen or Libya, where it controls territory. Yet, even though it may now have lost its territorial base, Da'ish is far from finished for now it can invoke the concept of the "virtual caliphate" to replace the physical reality it has lost and to sustain the memory of what it had once achieved and will seek to achieve again within the ungoverned spaces of the region. It will thus remain as an intensely powerful rallying-point for the deracinated and disaffected of the Middle East and North Africa, emitting the same kind of spiritual magnetism as al-Qa'ida used to generate in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001.

Underlying Realities

However, if such a movement can maintain the same kind of power of attraction despite its political and practical failure, the question then arises as to precisely what that power of attraction really represents. Of course, it could be argued that the power of its ideology is the only attractor it requires but that also requires that adherents have sufficient knowledge of Islamic doctrine to be able to appreciate its significance, a requirement that is not generally fulfilled by a majority of those that do adhere to the movement. Indeed, when the phenomenon of extremism first became a matter of general official concern in the Middle East and North Africa – in the 1980s – sociologists began to consider the makeup of those who became engaged in the phenomenon.

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9   See Lia (2009). For a discussion of his book see *The Global Islamic Resistance Call.*

10   See Joffé (2016a, 2016b and 2017).

11   *Jahili*, culpable and wilful rejection of Islamic praxis and dogma (regimes of the Middle East and North Africa); *takfiri*, apostate (Western states which support them).

Interestingly enough, the main support base for radical and violent movements tended to be drawn from those social strata which had been the most profoundly affected by the process of modernisation. These transitional groups had often come from relatively disadvantaged, traditional backgrounds but had been able to obtain access to education – in many cases including higher education and vocational education. A surprisingly high proportion of those involved had had scientific training or education and many had also been junior-level officers in the armed forces. Often such persons have subsequently had difficulty in finding employment or have been forced to take employment perceived as requiring education levels below those that they possess.

Another surprising fact that has been identified more recently is that an equally significant proportion of recruits tend to have been educated in the so-called STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – who should thereby have been inoculated against ideas that appear to run counter to the sceptical pragmatism that such subjects intellectually inculcate (Rose, 2015). Instead, when confronted with the innate cultures of their societies in which personal and communal piety continued to play a meaningful role, they found a profound conflict between the requirements of belief and piety as opposed to the secular pragmatism of scientific analysis that they had been taught to endorse. The contradiction was resolved by adopting a religious vision that provided certainty and personal salvation. The other characteristic that these groups shared was their belief in their exclusion from the political institutions and processes of the state, particularly if it was corrupt and autocratic, for they could not affect its operations through established and recognised systems of participation. In addition, exclusion was not necessarily limited to political perception, as there was also a very real awareness of actual economic exclusion, given the defective economic systems of the Middle East and North Africa. Furthermore, they often seem to have experienced a discordance between their formal education and aspects of their innate culture. This heightened their sense of exclusion, since it now applied on both the social and the political spheres. In part this was a consequence of the secularisation of knowledge attendant on the process of modernisation that ran at odds with the often very intense piety of traditional backgrounds. Not surprisingly, therefore, such groups, if unable or unwilling to integrate into the transitional societies that form the majority of regional states, tended to retreat into ideologies which are culturally appropriate and which explain their exclusion. In addition, such ideologies, if they were activist in nature, offer an alternative strategy for inclusion in or replacement of the discourses from which they feel excluded.

Furthermore, over time and as the confrontation between state and non-state groups intensifies, the social origins of those engaged in coercive violence change. Genuinely disenfranchised social strata are drawn into the non-state groups, so that the education level of participants declines. Similarly, in the past it has been notable that the

average ages of participants also declined. In Egypt, in the 1970s for example, the age of 61 per cent of Islamist members was between 25 and 30 years, 79 per cent of them had higher education and 51 per cent were members of a major profession, whilst 55 per cent of them lived in large cities. By the 1990s, 71 per cent were below the age of 25 and only had secondary or intermediate education, and 85 per cent lived in small towns, shanty-towns or villages (Ibrahim, 1982 and 2002). In Algeria, it was notable that the *hittistes* – unemployed youth – or those involved in *trabando* – the informal trading sector linked to smuggling (contraband; hence the name) – increasingly supplied recruits to the more extreme and often criminalized Islamist groups.

In short, the support enjoyed by Salafi-Jihadi extremism is a reflection not of an acceptance of the coherence of extremist Islamist doctrine but of the reification of Adorno's "theodicity of conflict" by those who implicitly accept that the world in which they live is inherently agonistic[12] because of their sense of exclusion, marginalisation and isolation (Adorno, 1951). If this is the case, then we can begin to investigate how extremist Salafi-Jihadism can be investigated in sociological, rather than ideological and religious terms in order to obtain an understanding as to why it has received so much support and what this may mean for its future. One Lebanese-based research project in 2015 identified nine different categories of person amongst recruits to Da'ish, based on status, identity, revenge, redemption, material benefit, excitement, ideology, justice and martyrdom. These categories give an idea of the wide range of motivations that exist amongst supporters of the movement and it is notable that only a minority were concerned with ideological justification (Tucker, 2015). Yet they still leave two key questions unanswered; why are individuals attracted to a movement that espouses values so at odds with those normally endorsed by most people and why are they so often attracted by its extreme and exemplary violence?

The first question then is why would individuals rally to an organisation whose values and objectives appear to be so far removed from the objectives of states and societies that reflect the essentially normative and moral values of the Enlightenment, whether in Europe or the Middle East and North Africa. One obvious reason lies in the fact that many regional states do not, in practice, reflect those values and another reflects the way in which that question has been posed. Enlightenment values may seem very different, depending on where the observer is situated, for

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12 In the critical sense that it is irreconcilable with majority sentiment and society which it must, therefore, seek to destroy. As such it is opposed to Chantal Mouffe's view of "agonistic pluralism". See Mouffe (2000, p. 15): "Envisioned from the point of view of "agonistic pluralism", the aim of democratic politics is to construct the 'them' in such a way that it is no longer perceived as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an 'adversary', i.e. somebody whose ideas we combat but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put in question."

what may appear to Westerners to be humane reflections of universal principles may appear to be the coercive consequences of repeated interventions in Middle Eastern and North African affairs stretching back over two hundred years, back indeed to Napoleon's invasion of the region in 1798, if not earlier. Quite apart from the colonial experience, this has been particularly true over two instances of Western interference; the abject failure of Western powers to resolve the Palestinian issue since at least 1993, if not far longer, and the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 which basically destroyed the Iraqi state and failed to institute a viable alternative. Allied to that is the question of Sunni attitudes towards Iran and the way in which Iran has been the major, if unintended, beneficiary from Western attempts to regulate regional problems over the past two decades.

The anger felt over what is seen in the region as double standards and casual and brutal interference in regional affairs is today vast and, therefore, any organisation that highlights and targets Western intervention is likely to attract considerable support. The problem, though, is far wider than that; the outcomes of the Arab Spring have been, in large part, a huge disappointment for regional populations; economic circumstances have worsened and the parallel crises in Europe and the United States have meant that little attention beyond rhetorical support has been voiced by Western powers for the consequences inside the region itself (Joffé, 2015). There is thus a profound distrust of Western imperatives and concerns and a corresponding willingness to embrace radical alternatives, even if the concomitant violence might be a significant disincentive.

Then there is the enormous resentment felt by youth over the way in which it has collectively been the primary victim of the economic collapse throughout the region. Since it is increasingly denied access to an alternative in Europe for example, its resentments turn inwards and become directed towards regional government for its evident failure to offer employment and fulfilment. Da'ish at least offers employment and other benefits, too, some of which, like marriage and family life, however debased in practice, are increasingly important to a youthful population deprived of opportunities for independent life outside the confines of the family (Schmidt, Joffé and Davar, 2005, pp. 151-172). Allied to this is the natural exuberance of youth seeking to remake the world in a better image, even if – to outside observers – the model to be achieved is palpably worse than its precursors! After all, it worked very effectively to dynamise international support for the Spanish Republic during the Spanish civil war and achieved a similar outcome within North Africa during the Algerian war for independence[13].

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13 Indeed, the Algerian struggle had a much wider mobilising effect, offering a model for national liberation movements throughout the French colonial empire and inspiring Franz Fanon's vision of the purifying effects of violence. See Fanon (1963, p. 28).

Quite apart from these factors, however, there are some factors that are unique to the situation of Muslim minority communities, particularly in Europe, the United States and the Dominions. First of all, there is a profound sense of anomie and alienation which is a consequence of the relative failure of initiatives designed to integrate minority communities within the host communities inside which they live, whether through the French model of *laicité* or the British vision of multiculturalism. This is, in part, a European failure to realise Jacques Derrida's vision of "hospitality" (Derrida, 2006). It is, in part, too, an attempt to share in a lost identity, that of parents frozen in an interstitial location between an identity of origin and an identity of displacement. The result is a search for authenticity in which the rejection of Western paradigms plays a major role, a sentiment which seems to be fully satisfied by the salafi-jihadi vision.

Yet ideological or religious knowledge or commitment do not seem to play a major role in recruitment, even if they become the rhetoric through which commitment is expressed; instead active grooming, social media and, as Sageman has shown, peer pressure seem to have been key (Sageman, 2004, pp. 107-134). It can be reinforced, strangely enough, by generational tensions, themselves the reflection of contradictions between the paradigms of the host society and the country of origin (Schmidt, Joffé and Davar, 2005, pp. 165-172). Then, finally, there is the sense of the purity of commitment to an ideal which transcends the commonplace, the day-to-day, and offers a vision of personal sacrifice – however perverted the ideal may be – that ordinary life can never offer. It is an ideal that Mohamed Tozy has captured in his description of Abdullah Azzam's account of his meeting with Ahmed Shah Massoud in the Panshir Valley in Afghanistan, with its evocation of homoerotic idealism in the purity of such commitment (Tozy, 2008, pp. 22-30; Chafiq, 2015).

Even if these factors provide an explanation of what has emerged as an apparently predominant threat to the integrity of state and nation, both in Europe and in the Middle East and North Africa, they do not explain why often well-educated young men and women choose to endorse an obscurantist, literalist and brutal ideology to express their alienation. As noted above, it has been notable, for instance that a disproportionate number of individuals who have been educated in the STEM subjects (science-technology-engineering-mathematics) tend to adopt salafi-jihadi views, as compared with those who have been educated in the humanities. It has been suggested that the reason for this is that those educated in the natural and applied sciences have been accustomed to the simplicities of the certainties inherent in scientific truth and thus seek parallel certainties and simplicities within the politics of identity, whereas the humanities inculcate scepticism, complexity and uncertainty, sentiments which in themselves insulate the individual from the literalist determinism of the Salafi vision. It is certainly the case that many who adopt the literalist vision express their admiration and commitment to the ideological

certainties they espouse, whether they do so through education or through the actions of facilitators and it is equally clear that the nature of the education they have received can facilitate this process, not least because many converts have not been religiously active previously, nor do they necessarily have the basic knowledge to question the ideas they inculcate.

There remains one particular arena in which radicalisation takes place for quite specific reasons and that is amongst the minority communities inside Europe. It has been notable, for example, that virtually all the violent attacks that occur in Europe, particularly in France, Belgium and Germany, and that have been attributed to Da'ish or, before it, to al-Qa'ida, involved second or third generation European citizens of Maghribi origins, particularly from Morocco or Tunisia. In Britain persons from North Africa, except for Libyans, have not figured so highly, being replaced by Pakistanis instead for North African migrant minority communities there are relatively small when compared to those in continental Europe. They have often been joined by recent converts to Islam, often, too, from minority communities. It is also a pattern that is not of recent date for most of the violence in France in 1995 and 1996, itself a by-product of the Algerian civil war between 1993 and 1999, was carried out by young Frenchmen of Algerian origin, again often aided by recent converts to Islam and the attacks on Madrid in 2004 were the responsibility of young Moroccan migrants long resident in Spain.

The commitment of such groups to violent radicalism is the result of a combination of several factors, some innate to the minority communities themselves and some a product of cultural displacement and the legacies of the colonial past. First generation migrants tend, as they become part of a permanent minority community within European host societies, to reassert and consciously reproduce their cultures of origin as a means of establishing identity in a foreign setting. Typically, this means a reassertion of conservative Islamic values. However, their children who are, after all, second generation members of these minority communities, are trapped in an interstitial position between the traditional conservatism of their parents and the very different values of mainstream society in their countries of residence. Since they are also marginalised by their lack of equality of access to full participation in the social mainstream, they become alienated from it and turn back to the cultures of their countries-of-origin which they now idealise instead, holding the host country, the former colonial power, as responsible for the marginalisation they face. In such a situation, marked by alienation and anomie, they are particularly vulnerable to radicalisation *(Durkheim, 1897)*.

The Psychology of Violence

There remains one final issue; even if we can now establish the manifold reasons why individuals – the Middle East and North Africa or in Europe – might become

radicalised, we must still explain why some of them should endorse violence or even wish to practice it, including the desire for altruistic suicide[14]. Quite apart from the pragmatic reasons for involvement with violent organisations discussed above, we must still explain what motivates individuals to overcome their social inhibitions to the use of violence and to actively and willingly engage in such behaviour. Of course, they are engaged in conflict but the asymmetry of the conflict does not provide an adequate explanation, nor does the fact of conflict in itself legitimise violence because the violence involved is so gratuitously extreme.[15] Nor does the attractive power of the propagation of such gratuitous violence through social media provide us with an explanation in itself, although it does begin to hint at where an appropriate explanation might lie.

One explanation has been offered by Marc Sageman (2004), an American psychologist with long experience of extremist violence. He suggests that incorporation into an extremist organisation is a result of membership of a social network which is culturally isolated – as is often the case amongst minority communities in Europe. In such circumstances, individuals could easily be introduced to jihadist concepts and propaganda through social media or by a facilitator and some of them could be persuaded into accepting the extremism and violence that they offered. Some might well be persuaded by the ideology they were offered but the most important factor was that of peer emulation and peer pressure to join within the social network. His approach certainly helps us to understand the importance of such factors in Europe where such social networks act as a kind of surrogate family, given the tensions that exist between generations, in reinforcing cultural identity in what are, essentially, transitional generations trapped between their parents and the relatively inaccessible host society, and also in justifying and explaining the anomie and alienation felt by network members towards the host community. This explanation, however, does not explain the inculcation of a propensity to violence which has become the landmark of such incorporation into extremist groups.

To explain that aspect of the phenomenon, it is necessary to examine the ways in which individuals learn to relate to and cope with the realities of a complex world

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14 The practice of self-sacrifice on behalf of other persons or groups, whether as an act of heroism or ritual which is marked by social approval and benefits the social order. See Durkheim (1897, p. 44 and p. 228).

15 The point here is that, in warfare, the state renders legal what it normally sanctions as illegal – the act of killing – on the grounds that it is a necessary act to ensure the security of the state itself. Violent non-state actors may well invoke the same justification but such arguments are rejected by their opponents – the state – and delegitimized if excessive, wilful violence is used contrary to The Hague Conventions of 1897 and 1907, the Nuremberg Principles or the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Such activities breach customary international law and invoke individual criminal responsibility.

as part of the process of evolving from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. A key explanation here, perhaps, is provided by the work of Melanie Klein (1975, pp. 1-25). It revolves around the way in which an infant learns, over time, to separate its psyche from the dominance of its mother, in order to become an autonomous adult. Melanie Klein identifies two stages in this process; the initial "paranoid-schizoid position" which eventually evolves into the more mature "depressive position". In the paranoid-schizoid position, the ego[16], essentially the infant personality, perceives itself to be threatened by its growing realisation of its mother's autonomy and by its own internal self-destructive instincts. It reacts to this sense of threat by projecting its anxieties outward onto an external object which, in turn, it perceives as a threat to its own integrity whilst at the same time seeking to strengthen its relationship with the mother as its guarantor of love. As the infant matures, it learns to internalise its anxieties and to perceive external objects as they are, not as embodiments of its fears. Adolescence is the period during which this transition is most likely to take place but both positions exist in an antiphonal and dialectic relationship with each other. Furthermore, both positions continue to exist inside the adult in a constant struggle for dominance of the one over the other, driven by the way in which the individual feels either threatened or in charge of its external social environment[17].

In the context of the Muslim world, however, where adolescence is not as prevalent a developmental state as in the West, this picture is complicated by the status and role of the infant's father. Conventionally, the father figure is dominant within the family and his authority is unquestioned and unquestionable. As a result, the inevitable Oedipal conflict between father and son, which would normally be resolved through adolescence as the evolving ego developed a depressive position, has to be repressed until the father dies, when his son can replace him and thus become a fully autonomous adult. However, in the reality of the Middle East and North Africa, the father is often rendered impotent in social and political situations, whilst in Europe, intergenerational tensions generate a similar awareness within children as they grow up. The result is that the paranoid-schizoid position becomes the dominant reaction within the young evolving adult who looks for an external object onto which to project his anger. It is at this point that he becomes susceptible

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16 "Ego": that part of the mind which has a sense of individuality and is most conscious of self; (in Freudian theory) the part that mediates between the id and the superego and deals with external reality. "Id": the inherited, instinctive impulses of the individual, forming part of the unconscious and, in Freudian theory, interacting in the psyche with the ego and the superego. "Superego": in Freudian theory, the part of the mind which internalises parental and social inhibitions or ideals early in life and imposes them as a censor on the wishes of the ego; the agent of self-criticism (Brown, 1993, p. 788, p. 1303, p. 3146).

17 This is discussed in greater detail in Schmidt, Joffé and Davar (2005, pp. 154-158).

to the pressure of social networks and facilitators as they define new external objects onto which anger and fear can be projected and dissipated (Schmidt, Joffé and Davar, 2005, pp. 169-170).

The Implications

In short, this analysis proposes that young Muslims (and Muslim converts) are trapped within a psychological paranoid-schizoid position by their own arrested psychological development and by the external political and social circumstances that they face. In such circumstances, they embrace the extraordinary violence that jihadist extremism encourages as a means of psychic release of these unresolved internal tensions. This is not, however, to place their victims in the position of being simply the innocent and tragic consequences of unresolved internal psychological conflict. The objective external factors – the history of colonialism, Western interference in regional politics and anomic isolation inside Western societies, for example – still exist and contribute to regional anger. It does, however, seek to explain the extraordinarily violent vehemence of the reaction that the current ideological and practical conflict has generated. It is an indication, too, that the destruction of Da'ish's caliphate will not be the last word in the matter and that *Da'ish v.2* will continue to attract widespread support to the virtual caliphate that will replace it.

This analysis also suggests that approaches to resolving or anticipating the problems that will emerge that rely only on addressing the explicit ideology are unlikely to succeed. In short far more inclusive strategies are needed to address the implications of jihadi extremism today that encompass the consequences of the failure of integration of Muslim communities in Europe and the implications of Western interference in the colonial and post-colonial worlds in the Middle East and North Africa as well. The difficulty is that such strategies need to be endorsed by European mainstream opinion as well and, in the current climate of European populism and antagonism to the consequences of Immigration, this may prove too difficult a task for democratic politicians with their limited five year purview to address. If that is the case, then this crisis will be with us for decades to come!

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