'Radicalisation':

The Transformation of Modern Understanding of Terrorist Origins, Psychology and Motivation

Andrew Silke and Katherine Brown[1]

Post 9/11, understanding how people become terrorists has come to be discussed in terms of "radicalisation". Today, radicalisation is typically seen to refer to a complex and dynamic process which results in individuals coming to embrace a violent ideology in support of a political or religious cause. Without doubt, the issue of radicalisation has become a core fixture of contemporary efforts to understand and combat terrorism. Yet, clearly, terrorism has an extraordinarily long history and what is called radicalisation today, in the past was referred to do much more mundanely as "becoming" a terrorist, "joining" a terrorist group, or of being "recruited".[1] No one talked of the IRA being radicalised, or Shining Path, or Black September or the Red Brigades. Though all of these older groups certainly were by our modern understanding.

Ultimately, the emergence of the term "radicalisation" to describe this process of deepening involvement in radical violent causes and activism, is a very recent phenomenon. It effectively began in the aftermath of 9/11, when a shift started to move away from talking about people "becoming" terrorists, "joining" terrorist groups, or being "recruited". As an alternative, the term "radicalisation" first started to appear in documents discussing how people became involved with terrorist causes or movements in 2002, but by 2007 it had effectively taken over policy and research discourse on this subject. Exactly what "radicalisation" meant, however, was open to some interpretation.[2] Compared to the previous terminology, it was certainly a more exotic term which presumably described a more exotic process.

It did not help that, like terrorism itself, radicalisation as a term arrived already mired with some political baggage, and was quickly shackled with even more, all of which has hindered, rather than helped its scientific development. One of the most straightforward of the recent scientific definitions of radicalisation, for example, comes from Horgan and Braddock, who defined it as: "the social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political or religious ideology".[3] Taken at face value, such a perspective offers plenty of scope to develop our understanding, but as Peter Neumann highlighted, the politicisation of the term created a multitude of obstacles:

> Unfortunately the concept of radicalisation, as used in many government-linked quarters, suffers from politicisation, is fuzzy, applied one-sidedly (only non-state actors are assumed to radicalise, not governments), often lacks a clear benchmark (adherence to democratic principles and the rule of law, abstaining from the use of violence for political ends), and is linked too readily with terrorism (broadly defined) as outcome. Its broader application to political activism of individuals and movements in societies where social development is blocked by non-democratic extremist regimes is problematical.[4]

Terrorism as a term has also been mired with similar difficulties in how it has been defined, though this has not restricted the enormous growth in terrorism studies in recent years, or research on a bewildering range of topics linked to the area.[5] Similarly, the development of theoretical models and research on radicalisation has been enormous in recent years, and the focus of this chapter is to attempt to review some of the major developments in our understanding of radicalisation and the significant issues connected to the phenomenon.
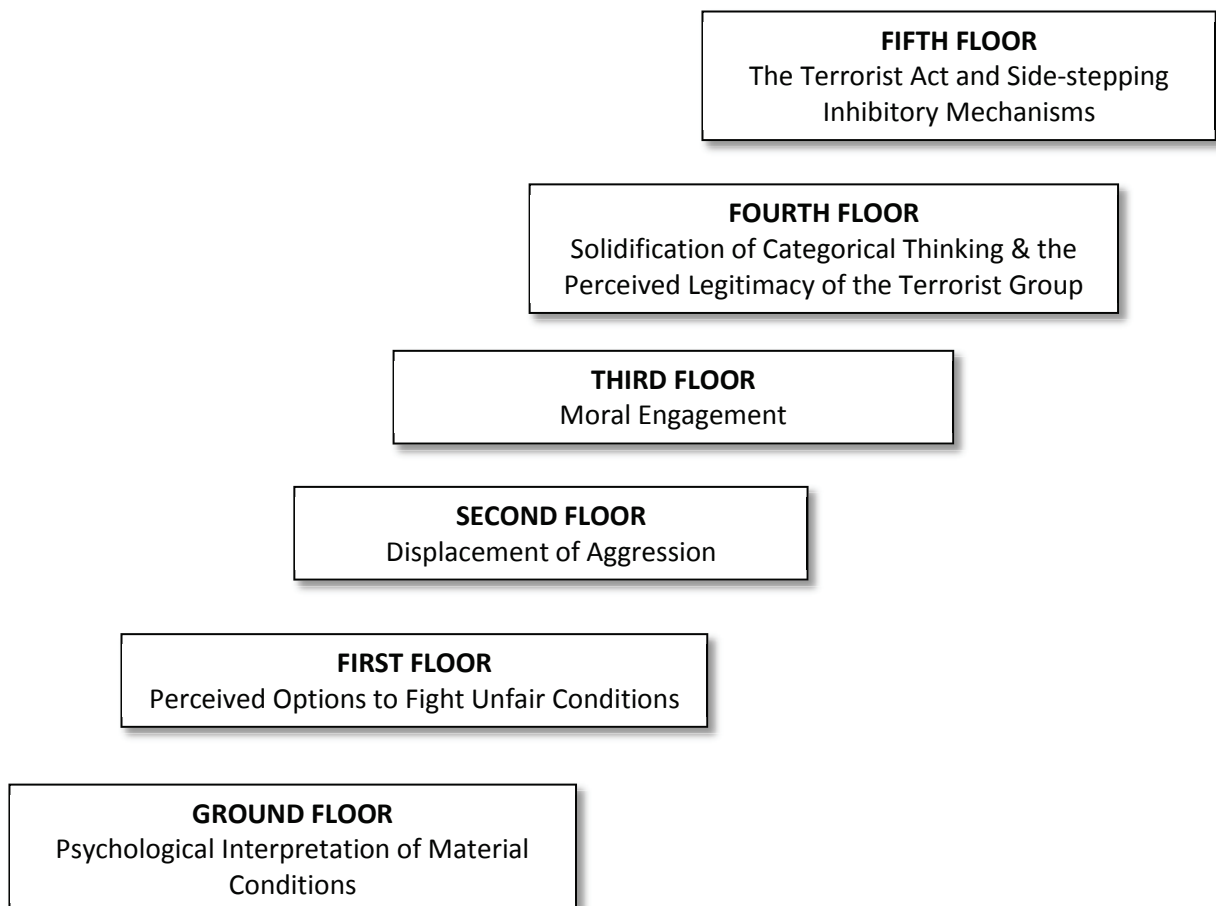

Theoretical Models of Radicalisation

The past decade has been an exceptionally vibrant period for the development of models of radicalisation.[6] New research has fuelled a plethora of theories around what factors and processes drive radicalisation, and provided a range of sometimes very different

perspectives on the issue. There is not enough space in this chapter to review all of these models, but we can focus attention on some of the major ones, bearing in mind that it is likely that new models will continue to emerge and many of the current ones will be refined further.

Moghaddam's Staircase Model of Radicalisation

Fathali Moghaddam's staircase model was one of the first detailed models and since its publication in 2005 it has become one of the most influential of the theoretical models.[7] In a recent review it was identified as among the 100 most cited articles on terrorism.[8] The model presents radicalisation as a phased process, involving six stages in total. Figure 1 provides an outline of the model.

Figure 1: Moghaddam's Staircase Model of Radicalisation

FIFTH FLOOR
The Terrorist Act and Side-stepping Inhibitory Mechanisms

FOURTH FLOOR
Solidification of Categorical Thinking & the Perceived Legitimacy of the Terrorist Group

THIRD FLOOR
Moral Engagement

SECOND FLOOR
Displacement of Aggression

FIRST FLOOR
Perceived Options to Fight Unfair Conditions

GROUND FLOOR
Psychological Interpretation of Material Conditions

There are six stages in total and each stage is represented by a different step in the staircase. The higher you progress in the model, the fewer the number of people who reach each level, and the step metaphor is designed to reflect that progress through the different phases is not automatic or inevitable. The ground level of the model starts with perceptions of discontent and a desire by individuals to improve their situation. If they are unsuccessful in doing this, feelings of frustration and anger develop towards any entity individuals believe are responsible for these setbacks. Moral disengagement from standard social norms occurs as the individual increasingly begins to adopt the moral framework of the terrorist group or cause. This deepens as the individual progresses up the staircase, to the point where in the final stage they are incorporated within the terrorist movement and are willing to carry out acts of violence on behalf of the cause.

McCauley and Moskalenko's 12 mechanism model

Published in 2008, the McCauley and Moskalenko model argues that radicalisation can happen at three different levels: individual, group and mass.[9] Within this framework, each level might best be considered as comprising a set of different pathways leading to radicalisation, and 12 different mechanisms as to how this can happen are described. Table 1 below outlines the model and the mechanisms.

At the level of the individual, radicalisation is caused primarily by grievances, either experienced directly or else experienced by the group the individual identifies with. Group and mass radicalisation can be the result of competition and conflict with other groups or states. With the model, radicalisation is defined as a "change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the ingroup."[10]

Table 1: McCauley and Moskalenko's 12 mechanism model

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

Importantly the model stresses the reactive nature of radicalisation. For ten out of the twelve mechanisms, radicalisation is occurring in response to events and forces in the environment, and particularly to threats to the individual and to the group. The model overall stresses the importance of environmental context in understanding how and why radicalisation happens. A further important element is that ideology is not a key causal factor of radicalisation in this model. Indeed, in the original article describing the model, ideology is not mentioned at all. It does receive attention in later accounts, but overall within this framework, ideology is not the key driving force. As McCauley and Moskalenko noted in 2010, radicalisation can occur without an ideology:

> "there are many paths to radicalisation that do not involve ideology. Some join a radical group for thrills and status, some for love, some for connection and comradeship. Personal and group grievances can move individuals toward violence, with ideology serving only to rationalise the violence."[11]

A final noteworthy element of the model is McCauley and Moskalenko's conclusion that "Radicalization emerges in a relationship of intergroup competition and conflict in which

both sides are radicalized" [emphasis added]. Thus, it is not just terrorists who are radicalised, but also those who are fighting against them. Radicalisation, then, is not a process that only produces terrorists, but rather affects all sides in violent conflicts.

Kruglanski et al.'s Quest for Significance Model of Radicalisation

A more recent model on radicalisation has been offered by Kruglanski et al., and this looks as if it will become a quite influential theory.[12] The model effectively emerged from research studies exploring the role of significance quest in terrorist motivation. Studies in the area suggest that the move towards an extremist ideology is for many a way of dealing with perceived inadequacy and failure in their own lives, and of attempting to increase their own self-esteem and sense of significance.[13] How the model works is outlined in figure 2.

Figure 2: Kruglanski et al.'s Quest for Significance Model of Radicalisation
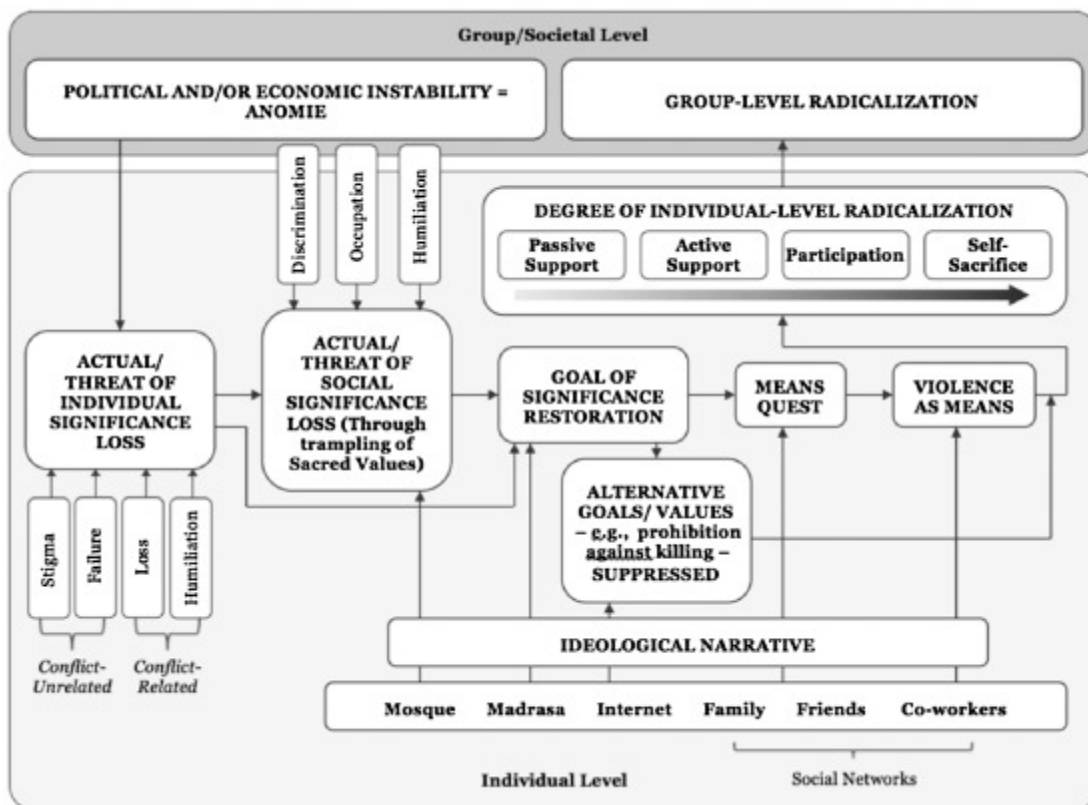
Unlike McCauley and Moskalenko's model, ideology plays a much more central role in this framework. For Kruglanski et al. there are three major elements in the radicalisation process: (1) an individual motivation for personal significance (often a reaction to perceived failures, threats and setbacks in life); (2) an ideology which identifies appropriate ways to achieve personal significance; and then (3) social processes which bring the individual into contact with this ideology.

There is empirical support for some elements of the model. For example, a loss or drop in personal significance is likely to cause a "collectivistic shift" in an individual's sense of identity.[14] This effectively means that the individual's identity shifts towards a more group-based identity, with greater priority and meaning given to the group's norms and values. Studies suggest that this is further linked with both a greater willingness to sacrifice and to support violence on behalf of the group and its values.[15]

Key Factors Associated With the Radicalisation Process

While there may be considerable variation in emphases, inevitably the various models of radicalisation also have significant overlaps. Where there is general agreement between them is usually around the view that radicalisation is a complex and dynamic process which results in individuals coming to embrace a violent ideology in support of a political or religious cause. The process is not inevitable nor does it follow a single route. Instead, most of the models highlight that there are multiple pathways to violent extremism and that the process of getting there can often be an often erratic experience capable of going in a variety of directions.

As even the brief review of theoretical models in the previous section illustrates, there is no single root cause of radicalisation. Indeed, more than 200 different factors have been identified by research which could play a role in the radicalisation process.[16] Not all of these factors feature in every case, and there is often very considerable variation. Ultimately, radicalisation is not simply the sum of different factors, but rather that the different factors seem to play a role at different stages in the process.[17] Key events can motivate individuals

to radicalise further or to de-radicalise, and overall radicalisation is best seen as a complex, non-linear and dynamic process.

The general trend in research findings though is that radicalisation is the result of the interaction of both personal factors (e.g. individual susceptibility) and environmental factors (e.g. social relationships, community attitudes).[18] Studies have also highlighted that static and dynamic factors both play significant roles in radicalisation. Static elements include, for example, demographic factors such that young people aged 15-24 are most at risk, and males are usually more affected than females.[19] Dynamic factors can include social relationships, which in most cases are probably one of key elements in the radicalisation process. Camaraderie, social support and a sense of belonging can all be powerful incentives for becoming and staying involved with a radical group.[20]

In his analysis of the life histories of hundreds of jihadi terrorists, Edwin Bakker for example found that these individuals tended to become involved in terrorism through networks of friends or relatives and that generally there were no formal ties with terrorist networks.[21] More recent research suggests that in up to 20% of cases family members played a key role in introducing and initiating to an extremist movement. In contrast, friends played the key role in almost 50% of cases.[22]

Psychological vulnerability can also play a significant role, though this should not be confused with mental illness or serious psychological problems, which overall are present in relatively few cases of serious radicalisation.[23] The presence of an extremist ideology is a further factor, though the key element here is probably around how an individual latches onto the ideology and incorporates elements of it within their own identity. The transformation of the individual's identity is an important dimension, rather than, for example, nuances within the ideology. Indeed, radicalised individuals can often have a surprisingly simplistic and shallow understanding of the ideology.[24]

In the following section we will explore in more detail a selection of these different factors which have been linked with the radicalisation process.

Psychological Vulnerability to Radicalisation

The issue of psychological vulnerability to radicalisation has attracted growing attention, though there is variation in how this is interpreted and assessed.[25] A range of psychological factors have been identified as important to radicalisation including: issues of grievance, perceived injustice, identity, anger, revenge and a quest for significance. Certainly, most extremists believe at the time of their offending that their actions are morally justified, and various psychological processes (such as deindividuation, mortality salience, moral disengagement and risky shift) appear to play an important role in facilitating their involvement.[26] We can now consider some of these issues in more detail.

Quest for Significance

Quest for significance has already been discussed in relation to Kruglanski et al.'s model of radicalisation.[27] One of the key findings in this regard is that perceived success in life appears to be a factor in radicalisation. Individuals who perceive themselves as less successful identify more with their religion or nationality. Kruglanski et al. explained this in terms of a collectivistic shift. Of concern here are studies that show that people who see their identity primarily in these terms are more likely to express support for extremist violence. Other research shows that feelings of shame or insignificance correlate with support for extremism and political violence. [28] Linked to this, recent research in the UK has found that Muslim individuals with symptoms of mild depression were more likely to express support for terrorism and political protest.[29]

Thus, the gravitation towards an extremist ideology is for many a way of dealing with perceived inadequacy and failure in their own lives, and of attempting to increase their own self-esteem and sense of significance.

Identity

How someone sees their identity appears to be an important factor.[30] People who see their identity as individuals first, are less likely to support or feel positive about an extremist ideology. In contrast, people who have a collectivistic identity (i.e. they see their identity first in terms of their religion or nation) are more supportive of extremist violence. Past life events can play an important role in an individual's sense of identity. Studies show that there is a strong relationship between self-reported life failure (or lack of success), and greater identification as a member of a collective (nation or religion). Those who experience a loss of significance are more likely to then adopt collective ideologies that will provide them with significance. Once someone has adopted a group-centred identity, studies show they are more likely to engage in activity in support of that group.

Self-Esteem

Linked with the quest for significance, many theories have assumed that individuals with lower levels of self-esteem can be more vulnerable to radicalisation. [31] In this framework, the extremist ideology can offer people a way to enhance their self-esteem. Recent research results, however, suggest a more complex picture with self-esteem effects. Low self-esteem is associated with increased vulnerability to radicalisation, but so too, is high self-esteem. Found that individuals with moderate levels of self-esteem seemed to be the most resilient to violent radicalisation.[32]

Added to this, is the related finding from other research studies that people at early stages of radicalisation can show low self-esteem, but individuals at later stages (who have been heavily radicalised) actually report high self-esteem (a result of embracing the ideology and the message that the individual is an active member of a valued in-group).[33]

Mortality Salience

When people are exposed to death-related thoughts or imagery this results in what psychologists refer to as a 'mortality salience' effect. Psychological research has shown that even very subtle cues relating to death can create mortality salience effect – even when the cues are not consciously recognised by the person involved.[34]

Mortality salience has a number of psychological effects. After exposure to such images people will usually feel an increasing pride in and identification with their country, religion, gender, race, etc. They experience exaggerated tendencies to stereotype and reject those who are different from themselves. The group you belong to is even better than it was before, even more worthy of your support. Your rivals though are diminished, less deserving of sympathy or compassion. People feel greater hostility toward those who are perceived as different others or as a threat.

These changes in attitude and perceptions are also linked to changes in behaviour. Some of these are relatively subtle, such as sitting closer to a person who shares your own culture, while moving further away from foreigners. Others are starker, including increased physical aggression toward anyone critical of cherished beliefs.

Crucially, mortality salience has also been found to lead to an increase in support for extremism when it is linked to group identity. For example, one study found that under mortality salience conditions white Americans expressed more sympathy and support for other Whites who expressed racist views. In the Middle East, researchers found that Muslim students under mortality salience conditions expressed more support and sympathy for suicide bombers, and also expressed a greater willingness to carry out suicide attacks themselves.[35]

The more that important cultural icons and beliefs (e.g. in the context of militant jihadi terrorism, reference to the Quran, the Prophet Mohammed, and other vital aspects of Islam) are involved, then the more pronounced that the effect is likely to be. Mortality salience leads to an increased attachment and protectiveness towards such beliefs and also produces increased hostility and aggression to others who appear to be denigrating or insulting such icons and beliefs.

Altruism and Self-Sacrifice

Perhaps strangely, many people see their involvement with an extremist movement as a pro-social activity, and altruism has been identified as a potential factor in radicalisation.[36] Altruistic tendencies can be increased by stressing similarities with others. The stronger a person can identify with others the more they care about what happens to them. In contrast, stressing the differences weakens such bonds and interest and concern declines.

Altruism is likely to have an impact on support for extremism when it is considered within the context of identity. Individuals who feel their identity is closer to the militant group, and who score higher on altruistic measures, are arguably the ones who will express and feel the strongest support for the group including the group's use of extreme measures. Potentially, they will also be more likely to act on these sentiments.

Importantly, studies show that measures of altruism correlate closely with measures of the psychological willingness to self-sacrifice.[37] Both of these factors also match closely measures of having a commitment to higher causes - causes which provide meaning in people's lives. Self-sacrifice is also linked to an increased willingness to engage in extreme actions, to endure personal suffering and hardship on behalf of a cause, and feeling angry towards people who do not respect that cause.

Radicalisation and Children and Teenagers

Many individuals can become engaged with violent extremist movements at very young age and adolescence, in particular, seems to be a critical period. Why adolescence is so important appears to relate to issues around identity and negative emotions. Establishing a clear sense of identity is a normal part of adolescence. The concern with radicalisation is when identity gravitates towards an ideology-based violence and is shaped by this.

This is more likely to happen in cases where the young person has a strong identification with an (ethnic and religious) in-group; where they perceive this in-group as superior; yet, where they also perceive that this in-group has been humiliated by others.[38] The psychological background can be marked by negative emotions and a quest for significance. Self-esteem may be low at the start of the process, but can rise as the individual embrace's the radical ideology and incorporates this more and more into their own sense of identity.

Young people with high personal uncertainty (e.g. who experience higher levels of anxiety and confusion) can be more inclined to support ideology-based violence. Researchers argue that uncertainty is a distressing feeling, and that people are fundamentally motivated to achieve a sense of certainty about themselves and their social worth. This can make extremist ideologies which provide a clear "black and white" worldview that minimizes ambiguity and uncertainty very attractive, and indeed, studies show that people gravitate towards radical beliefs when they experience high levels of uncertainty. Also, young people who have a higher sense of agency (i.e. feel that they understand themselves and their roles) appear more willing to actually act on violent intentions. Important background environmental factors which contribute to all this, can be negative situations at home, the presence and endorsement of the ideology among their peers and family, and negative key events in their personal lives.[39]

Gender and Radicalization

Recent research shows that the recruitment of young men and women to terrorist causes can be highly gendered and operates on two levels.[40] How this happens can be well illustrated by examining recent developments with regard to militant jihadist radicalization, particularly with regard to Islamic State (IS). At the first level, recruitment focuses on critiquing gendered globalized societal patterns and norms, and second, targeting individual lives. These two layers of propaganda and recruitment reinforce each other, and provide a broad alignment of public values with private aspirations.

The first globalized narratives are produced on a mass scale and distributed via a range of media and platforms, from ask.fm, Instagram, Facebook, and twitter, to online video channels and dedicated websites. Klaussen's in-depth analysis of IS online material reveals that less than 10% of material is concerned with violence.[41] Although different communities are targeted in unique ways there are common trends. Generally, the material focuses on the failings of western states to allow Muslims to live according to their faith, points to the violence of Western governments and state agencies against Muslims, and emphasizes the faults of Muslims who adopt alternative understandings of an Islamic way of life and - particularly targeting Shia and Sufis. These claims are highly gendered and declare it an obligation on Muslim men to defend 'rightly believing' women from such attacks. Reinforcing this perception of threat, they allege that European men are emasculated by European state agencies, and are not 'real men' because of their failures to defend the 'appropriate' gender order. For example, the French language magazine, Dar Al-Islam, which supports ISIS, in the edition entitled "Qu'Allah Maudisse La France", argued that:

> "the laws banning the hijab, [and] the anti-terrorist laws which allow the imprisonment of any Muslim without any serious evidence are all slapping the face of every Muslim who still believes that it is possible to live with the disbelievers or worse to live Islam under the authority of the disbelievers …"

They highlight perceived discrimination in stop and searches by police that appear to disproportionately target Asian/Muslim men, as well as different sentencing and prosecution outcomes for Muslims compared to Caucasians.[42] Female supporters of ISIS talk about 'jihadi-hotties', or 'hipster jihadis', that fighters are more manly, and therefore better Muslims, and more attractive than Western Muslim men.[43] Correspondingly, they contend that women in the west are not respected, and the roles of wife and mother are not valued[44]. They present Islamic State as an opportunity for young men to demonstrate their 'manhood', by becoming a fighter/hero, by supporting and defending women, and by following God's requirement that they live under Islamic law. Avatars of ISIS men and their online personas emphasize their commitment to fitness, to guns, and to having sufficient income to provide for a family as the primary breadwinner. Fatherhood is also emphasized; for example, there is an online video from ISIS made in summer of 2015 showing men

playing with children in a well-equipped playground, and fathers training young boys in combat and shooting[45]. The young boys are called 'Little cubs'' or 'little bears'.[46]

Correspondingly, they ask women to demonstrate their commitment to God and Islamic law by being a 'support' to their (future/current) husbands in Islamic State and by bringing up the next generation of Muslims in the 'correct' manner.[47] Women are told to expect a 'protected' but 'purposeful' life in Iraq and Syria under ISIS, and are encouraged to think about life as part of the 'sisterhood', facilitating belonging and commitment to the new cause. The interview with the girlfriend of one of the Charlie Hebdo attackers emphasized the need for women to be the 'base' and 'rocks' for men in ISIS.[48] Online material uses particular gendered motifs to exalt individual behaviours and traits. For women, modesty, piety and complementarity with men is emphasized through images of a lion and lioness, or a 'green bird'; images of romantic love do emerge, but these are presented as the 'beginning' of a new life rather than an end in itself. Notions of 'purity' therefore become important - purity meaning of femininity/masculinity tied to morality and of faith.

The Online Environment and Social Media

The past decade has seen enormous attention focused on questions around the role that the online environment and social media play in radicalization.[49] While the online environment is hugely diverse and public platforms are used for propagating messages, recruitment of members (rather than merely sympathizers) requires more personalized forms of communication. They often use closed forum and messaging platforms, such as Telegram and WhatsApp. Islamic state 'groups' is increasingly suspicious of unsolicited requests, and some reports suggest they require a 'recommendation' from a 'known'/'trusted' individual. This became evident in the Channel 4 Dispatches programmes aired in November 2015, where the undercover reporter had considerable difficulty accessing groups that 'met in real life' and she was finally ousted from a meeting because she couldn't allay the lead woman's fears that she wasn't carrying a camera in her bag[50]. Closest links seem to be with siblings[51]. Recruiters exploit their extensive knowledge of an individual by targeting any existing vulnerabilities in the young person's identity and life

experiences. Peer-to-Peer recruiters also encourage young women to distrust friends and family or 'traditional' authority figures, arguing 'they don't understand'. Moreover they argue that those in the West follow an Islam that has been 'perverted' by culture and traditions that are not Islamic, or that those in authority have become corrupted by working for European authorities. This process of isolating young people from those around them and generating thick bonds of trust between them is essential to convincing them to make the move from belief to action (moving to IS territories). NGOs working in de-radicalisation anticipate spikes in recruitment during summer holidays, winter and Easter breaks.[52] This is because the intensity and volume of interaction is higher, as young people have fewer 'distractions', but also because travel is less suspect. Further, we see a spike in travel over the summer as young women seek to avoid 'holidays' to Pakistan or India. There are reports of some young couples where families have denied their union as travelling to Islamic State together during this time.

They target individual lives in specific recruitment, and offer 'hope' through direct material reward, status and privilege[53]. Additionally they tap into disappointment with life in the West; women's experiences, opinions and lives are shown 'not to matter' to the 'outside world' (whether that is Western politicians, state agencies or Muslim communities) and recruiters point to the failure of others to take potential recruits actions or words seriously. At the individual level, they appear to focus on the lack of control and voice young women have in their lives - whether in the home, the community or at school. They then link these personal experiences of disappointment back to a worldwide phenomenon of victimisation and oppression, for their global narrative that Muslims can't live side by side with non-Muslims.

They offer a 'new life' belonging to IS young women, in which are given 'choices' (Islamic State allege) regarding marriage, work, and education - providing they abide by the strict rules of gender segregation. Recruiters emphasise how 'meaningful' life is, and that hardships (in terms of electrical or medical shortages) are the burden they must endure in order to become better Muslims. Importantly young women are presented with illusion of 'choice' in future husbands, providing their 'wali' (guardian) approves of the match. In marrying a fighter, women are given status and prestige, something recruiters allege they

will not get while living in the West.[54] Furthermore Western women are 'prized' potential wives (over local women) because they have shown their commitment to the cause by undertaking the journey, and because they have higher levels of education, and maybe linguistically closer to their future husbands. The material is replete with decontextualised verses from the Quran and the Hadith (stories of the Prophet Mohammed's life). They aim to show how men can emulate the life of the prophet if they live in their Caliphate.

However in contrast to carrying out these domestic roles in the UK, in Islamic State it is alleged women can unite their private faith and life with their public/political goals. Islamic State make it clear they do not anticipate women contributing to the 'battlefield', rather they are to provide supporting and domestic roles but this is a 'political choice' as much as a personal one.[55] Images of women with weapons or dressed as a suicide bomber are signaled as a sign of defence but also to signify their support of violent 'jihad' and to show off the capability and weaponry available to fighters of Islamic state. Women are 'trained' in the use of light weaponry but only to defend themselves or their children, or to serve in two female-only moral police forces in IS territory – such as the Al-Khansaa Brigade[56].

As the discussions show, the material offers a utopian vision[57] of itself - it identifies a problem with the world and living in the West, it presents an awe-inspiring and grand solution (itself), argues that young Muslims are responsible for its realization, and offers 'hope' for a future. There is an underlying tension with this approach where it emphasises a new 'good life' for potential recruits while simultaneously highlighting their belief in an imminent apocalypse. However this does not render IS a 'death cult': rather, death and violence is for a purpose - the protection of the new proto-state, and its 'citizens'. They link these global narratives of masculinity, politics and femininity to ideas about individuals' behaviours, by bridging the individual, or private world, with public global narratives. Islamic State has been more successful in that than other groups.

Conclusions

Our understanding of how people become involved in terrorism and violent extremism has transformed since the turn of the century. That transformation occurred at the same time that 'radicalisation' took over as the dominant framework for considering questions around terrorist psychology, motivation and recruitment. Yet, is it a case that the major breakthroughs in understanding have happened because 'radicalisation' is a genuinely useful concept that has facilitated this progress? Or is it simply the inevitable result of the massive amount of research which has been focused on terrorism and terrorists in the wake of 9/11?

While radicalisation as a concept has troublesome baggage, it has nevertheless worked as an overarching theme for research on questions looking at support for and involvement in violent extremism. In this regard, it has arguably proven both more flexible and more cohesive than the previous frameworks. It has almost certainly made it easier to connect together disparate research findings across a range of academic disciplines. Combined then with the huge and sustained increase in scientific research across the area, significant progress seems almost inevitable.

Yet, while progress has been made, there are still very significant gaps in our understanding. Much of the evidence base remains seriously weak. Good quality studies have trickled in, but more are still needed. At this stage, it is clearly critical to remember that radicalisation is the result of many factors, some of which are about the individual involved, and some of which relate to their environment (including family and community). The range of factors involved is extensive, and the result is that radicalisation processes are complex and varied. Radicalisation itself is not a fixed state, but is dynamic, and changing events and factors can either deepen radicalisation or bring about de-radicalisation.

We also need to be careful in terms of how we think about the broader role of radicalisation. A subtle assumption has spread that 'radicalisation' as a phenomenon is the major root cause of terrorism. Yet, it is surely more accurate to see radicalisation as the recruitment processes. Other causes drive these processes, and it is these causes which merit attention and intervention. Added to this, many models of radicalisation seem weakly linked to the evidence we have regarding the structural causes of terrorism.[58] When

different models are used to design or justify a variety of counter-terrorism policies and programmes, care is needed to look beyond the headline banner of radicalisation and pay attention to the causes identified *within* that model as key factors. Failing to do that, risks leading counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism down false roads.

[1] See for example A. Silke, 'Becoming a Terrorist', in A. Silke, (ed.), *Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and Its Consequences* (Chichester: Wiley, 2003), pp.29-53.

[2] M. Sedgwick, "The concept of radicalization as a source of confusion", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.22, No.4, (2010), pp.479-494.

[3] J. Horgan and K. Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists? Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-radicalization programs", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (2010), pp.267-291.

[4] A. Schmid, "Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation: A conceptual discussion and literature review", *ICCT Research Paper* 97 (2013), p.22.

[5] See, for example, A. Richards, *Conceptualizing Terrorism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[6] For some good reviews of some of the most relevant models see: R. Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research", *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (2011), pp.7-62; M. King and D. Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 23, No. 4, (2011), pp.602-622; and, H. Allan, A. Glazzard, S. Jesperson, S. Reddy-Tumu and E. Winterbotham, *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2015).

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