The Lone Wolf Terrorist: Mechanisms and Triggers of a Process-Driven Radicalization

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Introduction

The Boston Marathon bombers and US Army Psychiatrist Dr. Hasan were examples of individuals who shined a light on the dangerous implications of what many call "lone wolf" terrorism. Individuals taking up a cause in homicidal (as well as suicidal) manners is a very terrifying and often illusive concept. These lone acts of terror seem to be random and unexplainable, as it is difficult to account for the various differences of each respective attack by lone wolves. However, a deeper look into the anatomy of a lone wolf terrorist and the factors surrounding the phenomenon can illustrate common patterns to help clarify its mysticism.

The first logical questions is, what exactly constitutes a lone wolf terrorist? To answer this, it is imperative to establish what a terrorist is and terrorist actions are. Terrorism is a politically-motivated entity. Politics, as it should be known, refers to the distribution of power. Terrorist actions are carried out in the hopes of some sort of power re-distribution in society.[1] Whether that resource be in the form of moral, cultural, human, or material capital, terrorism always strives to induce fear into a population to redistribute some variation of a resource in the favor of a specific group or individual. Next, it is necessary to distinguish lone wolf terrorism from other forms of terrorism. Ramon Spaaij differentiates lone wolf terrorists from other types of terrorists by looking at three key factors: operating individually, not belonging to a formal terrorist group or organization, and having a modus operandi (MO) that is not subject to external influence.[2] Thus, a lone wolf terrorist operates autonomously from a formal terrorist entity and is self-sustaining in his or her endeavors. This does not mean that lone wolf terrorists (LWTs) are not under the ideological influence of a specific movement or organization but rather that their actions are self-initiated, self-directed, and self-sustaining. At this point, it is hopefully clear as to what a lone wolf terrorist is. However, what drives an individual to autonomously carry out an act of terror is still unclear. To attempt and assert what drives lone wolves to operate in a terrorist capacity, Meloy and Yakeley believe it necessary to look at one issue in specific: how the lone wolf terrorist morally sanctions his or her actions.[3] This process of an individual morally sanctioning terrorist actions is known as radicalization. It must be noted that radicalization is not a static concept. Rather, it is a dynamic, fluid path that prompts individuals to commit violence on behalf of a certain political goal. Radicalization entails a certain "growth" within individuals that builds up over time and is eventually manifested in the form of political violence.

It is helpful to compare the radicalization of terrorists to the construction of a house. Underlying all lone wolf terrorist actions is isolation. The basis of the lone wolf terrorist is isolation from other terrorist entities and people in general. It can thus be seen as the foundation on which house is eventually built. The house itself is ultimately made out of a variety of intertwined materials that build off of that foundation. Built on this base of isolation are the forces of identification and externalization. Identification can be seen as the structure of the house that is built on top of the land. LWTs encounter social and political forces that form new (and in this case, radicalized) identifications just as materials such as concrete, sheet rock, wood, and shingles may form the actual structure of the house; further defining it and giving it an identity. Externalization forces refer to the process by which LWTs physically manifest and carry out an attack. Externalization is ultimately formed by structural elements and their entailing effects on individual psychologies such as forming strong reciprocity and a subsequent moral obligation. These agents function as the contractors that build the house. They (externalization forces) take the materials (identification forces) and actually construct the house on the land (individual isolation). In this way, each force is able to alter the land by dictating construction upon it and permanently altering its natural physical state. Thus, the land is led down a path of construction on which a house is built and develops a new purpose. In the same way, an individual's isolation forms the basis of lone wolf radicalization and is altered

1. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frame on Pathways to Violent Radicalization: Understanding the Ideas and Behaviors, How They Interact and How They Describe Pathways to Violence in Marginalized Diaspora," Artis Research (August 2009): 15. Accessed November 2, 2014.
2. Ramon Spaaij, "The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment," Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 33 (2010): 856. Accessed November 2, 2014.
3. Meloy, Reid J. and Jessica Yakeley, "The Violent True Believer as a "Lone Wolf"- Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Terrorism," Behavioral Sciences and the Law 32 (2014): 358. Accessed November 4, 2014.

by identification forces which are molded and constructed by externalizing agents of influence that are able to resonate their cause with the individual's accumulated pre-conditions.

Isolation

Psychological Precursors - The Road to Isolation

There is not a common psychological profile for all lone wolf terrorists (LWTs) as they operate (and have operated) across time, area, and culture. According to a United States Naval Post-Graduate assessment of LWTs in American from 1968-2011, a statistically insignificant amount had been diagnosed psychological disturbances.[4] Thus, psychological profiles can vary greatly as it is incorrect to psychologically categorize all LWTs as mentally disturbed for analysis. However, psychological factors undoubtedly play a role in helping an autonomous actor morally sanction politically-motivated violence. As Mark Sageman, CIA Operations Officer and counter-terrorism consultant, points out; terrorism "does not take place in a vacuum."[5] Here, Sageman is referring to the broader social contexts that explain how terrorism develops. However, in the case of LWTs, empirical research on autonomous terrorist actors highlights the fact that certain psychological contexts are common across time, area, and cultures. Existing psychological mechanisms and the development of certain mental processes provide an underlying basis of understanding the lone wolf.

Generally, in the context of psychological development, LWTs (although not all) suffer from the limited development of the prefrontal cortex region of the brain. As a result, they may display traits of impulsivity, grandiosity, and vulnerability.[6] Neglecting the consequences of actions, needing to make actions "spectacular" to compensate for a lack of self-identification, and being psychologically prone to coming under the influence of dedicated influences result in a potentially hazardous psychological base. The need to identify with an overarching cause or movement has a large influence on a malleable moral compass. Avoiding rejection also comes high on the psychological priority list with this type of mindset

because coping mechanisms are not fully developed. Rejection serves as a primary trigger of isolationist behavior and often results in such individuals impulsively turning to anger instead of rational thought processing. Thoughts and feelings are constructed only in the context of how the rejection affects self-image. Anger is indicative of narcissism and the inability to see beyond one's own thoughts and feelings. The reliance on one's own rational thought processes further solidifies an isolationist attitude.

Psychological vulnerability via mental illness or the lack of prefrontal cortex maturation may result in the radicalization of LWTs but it is by no means the only variable that produces them. For example, a United States Naval Postgraduate statistical analysis of fifty-three American LWTs reveals that there is no significant correlation between psychological disorders and the formation of a LWT.[7] Thus, psychological underpinnings can be seen as a necessary explanation for the formation of an LWT but not always a sufficient one. A driving force usually exists that exploits individual psychologies; those both sound and vulnerable. For example, Vera Zazulich, a Russian student activist in the late 1800s, shot the then General-Governor Trepov in the stomach and patiently waited to be arrested. Zazulich lacked any notable psychological problems. In fact, she held a degree in teaching and was even steadily employed as a secretary and bookbinder in St. Petersburg at the time of the incident. Her anger towards Trepov took root in his public flogging of an imprisoned student, Bogolubov, whom had forgotten to take off his hat in the presence of Trepov when he visited Bogolubov's prison. Zazulich had no direct connection to the incident and "was in no danger of being subjected to corporal punishment."[8] Even with no direct connection to Trepov's arbitrary policies, Zazulich still took it upon herself to shoot him in the name of opposing autocratic and unfair governance. Without a known personal association to the flogging incident or any documented mental illness, Zazulich exemplifies the fact that mental illness is not always a pre-cursor of lone-wolf terrorism. Psychological factors are not

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4. Charles A. Eby," The Nation that Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-Driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States since 9/11" (Masters diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2008): 61. Accessed November 11, 2014.

5. Atran, Scott and March Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on Pathways," 16.

6. Meloy, Reid J. and Jessica Yakeley, "The Violent True Believ-

er," 351.

7. Charles Eby, "The Nation that Cried Lone Wolf," 61.

8. McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko, "The Psychology of Lone Wolf Terrorism," Counseling Psychology Quarterly 24, no. 2 (2011): 117. Accessed November 13, 2014.

always a sufficient means of radicalization because their ultimate cause, isolation, isn't sufficient in producing radicalization either.

The narcissistic reliance on anger to avoid the actual rationalization of rejection can produce self-isolation in an attempt to avoid future exposure to said rejection. Herein lies the first necessary facet of LWT psychological radicalization; isolation. Other terrorists may experience ill-directed anger but find solace in a group of people that share similar frustrations. LWTs, however, avoid potential rejection by such groups and find solace amongst their own company. Nonetheless, it is difficult to pinpoint what variables make psychological underpinnings manifest themselves in LWTs who usually have a "limited amount of exposure…with extremists."[9] It is necessary to look at how vulnerable (although psychological vulnerability isn't always present) individual psychologies are exploited and manipulated to commit autonomous terrorist acts. Although individual psychologies can, and have, led to the formation of fully radicalized LWTs, it is indisputable that other factors play a role in the process. LWTs are supposedly autonomous actors, but how can this be if other factors are necessary in catalyzing their violent actions? The answer lies in the fact that acting autonomously isn't necessarily the same as thinking autonomously.

> **US Army major Hassan believed that Muslims were being exploited as a result of the US's wars in the Middle East; a belief held by many radical jihadi groups of which Hassan was exposed to.**

The A-Priori of Beliefs - Influence in Isolation

LWTs are differentiated from their organization-affiliated terrorist counterparts because they act autonomously. As previously mentioned, Spaaij points out that LWTs operate individually, do not formally belong to a terrorist entity, and have a modus operandi that is free from external influence. From the Spaaij definition, it is clear that terrorists obtain the label "lone wolf" based off of their actions, not their beliefs. Coming under the ideological influence of a

certain group doesn't necessarily nullify the LWT label of a terrorist because beliefs can be separated from actions. When being a relatively isolated individual, radical influences can form a stronghold in thought processing. For example, United States Army major Hassan believed that Muslims were being exploited as a result of the US's wars in the Middle East; a belief held by many radical jihadi groups of which Hassan was exposed to. His perspectives on Islam and the plight of modern Muslims were formed in isolation but not constructed completely autonomously, leading to radical influences on his belief construction. However, he executed the Fort Hood massacre completely autonomously from resource and tactical standpoints. By acting in an autonomous manner, Hassan fills all the criteria of a LWT even though his beliefs were influenced by a broader social movement. Hassan's isolation was exploited by radicalized ideas that manipulated his belief system, resulting in the combination of his beliefs with his own isolationist tendencies and producing an autonomously-constructed massacre. Therefore, the effect of beliefs in isolation can be seen as a crucial pre-cursor to action.

Marc Sageman, among others, claims "the notion that beliefs and attitudes cause behavior is incorrect."[10] He asserts that there is no a-priori in beliefs relative to actions. Instead, it is more accurate to say the performance of certain actions forces people to subsequently change their beliefs in an attempt to align such beliefs with said actions. According to Sageman, this is the process of cognitive dissonance. In cognitive dissonance, actions are derived from morally ambiguous decisions which end up creating distress, or dissonance, between the conscious and rational facets of the human mind. In order to dispel this uncomfortable dissonance, beliefs are derived from actions so that the two can be aligned and mental harmony can be relatively revived. If this were true, the notion that LWTs act autonomously would be nullified because beliefs would be autonomously constructed from group-inspired and group-initiated actions but actions would be produced by external influences.

Sageman's claim that beliefs are not a-priori to actions isn't inaccurate but rather ill-formulated contextually

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9. Charles A. Eby, "The Nation that Cried Wolf," 71.

10. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on Pathways," 78.

Authorities search for the suspects following a shooting that killed 14 people at a social services facility on Dec. 2, 2015, in San Bernardino, California.

in explaining the radicalization process of LWTs. His study primarily involves the analysis of group dynamics in terrorism and delves into case studies such as the Madrid and Hebron bombings that highlight the importance of "group bonding activities."[11] Thus, cognitive dissonance isn't applicable to the case of LWTs because of their relative physical isolation from the influence of group actions. Instead, LWTs may come under more influence from what Sageman refers to as vicarious cognitive dissonance. During vicarious cognitive dissonance, individuals form a strong identification with a certain group or movement and their moral principles may be altered to fit the actions of others they believe to be a representation of the aforementioned group or movement. Although Sageman posits vicarious cognitive dissonance is a result of the a-priori of actions, the manipulation of beliefs isn't derived from the observer's actions but, rather, the actions of a group or movement member. The observer alters beliefs from his or her interpretation of another's actions. This interpretation of the observer in itself is an individually-constructed belief, not an action. In the case of LWTs and their isolation (and subsequent reliance on vicarious cognitive dissonance), beliefs are constructed before actions. It is this accumulation of beliefs which aligns potential LWTs with a certain identity; an identity that forms another necessary facet of the radicalization process.

Identification
The Importance of External Factors
In order to commit terrorism, individuals must perform an action. It has been established that, in the context of LWTs, beliefs form the base off which actions are derived. Therefore, beliefs, being the base of actions, must be manipulated to a high extent in order to produce terrorist-like actions. Terrorism does not occur in a vacuum and the radicalization of LWTs doesn't either. As Katie Cohen of the Swedish Defense Research Agency articulates, there exists no LWT "gene."[12] Individuals are not born with an uncompromising impulse to autonomously carry out a terrorist-like attack. The lack of a LWT "gene" can be seen in the ideologies of LWTs. The belief systems of LWTs are normally "contorted" and comprised of a mixture of individually-inspired and group-inspired ideological microcosms. Inner individual beliefs of LWTs attach themselves to that of external entities and have the potential to be modified, which can result in the process of identification. In identification, the beliefs of an individual align with beliefs of a larger group. As previously shown, LWTs do not form their beliefs completely autonomously and, as a result, ideologically identify with that of certain group or movement. In this light, it can be seen that external mechanisms form the structure of the identification process.

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11. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on Pathways," 12.
12. Katie Cohen, "Who will be a Lone Wolf Terrorist? Mecha-

nisms of Self-Radicalization and the Possibility of Detecting Lone Offender Threats On the Internet," Swedish Defense Research Agency 3531 (December 2012): 12. Accessed November 6, 2014.

Identification Mechanisms

Certain mechanisms act as structural elements that "set the stage" for potential LWTs to embark on a dangerous process of identification. These mechanisms of identification come in the forms social movements, movement resources, and the isolation of potential LWTs. Social movements form the structure driving the radicalization process by advocating for a cause. The resources that social movements utilize also provide a conducive environment for LWT identification because they propel the message a certain movement is trying to project. The isolation of potential LWTs serves as a third mechanism of identification by providing an altering the way in which identification occurs. Although it is difficult to assert exactly which types of external factors help maleate LWT belief systems, most mechanisms that drive them come in the form of social movements.

The first mechanism of identification is that of the social movement. Social Movement Theory gives great insight into the diffusion of external influences that play a part in shaping and projecting individuals' ideas. According to Social Movement Theory, social movements consist of a "set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society."[13] The primary goal of a social movement (SM) is to induce the sympathy of a population so that its cause can gain societal traction. Gaining the sympathy of followers often entails the process of ideological alignment where people align their belief systems with the values and goals held by the social movement. In order to increase belief alignment potential, a social movement may have a relatively (compared to individual ideological preferences) broad platform of beliefs so it may appeal to a wide range of individuals. The broad spectrum of beliefs in SMs are represented via varying amounts of social movement industries (SMIs) and social movement organizations (SMOs). SMIs are the organizational facets of the broader SM and are comparable to the different industries present in the study of economics.[14] SMOs are actual organizations that formulate their operations based on the goals of a SM and try to implement them (goals).

They function more as a foot solider for the overall movement.

The facilitation of SM belief systems (via SMOs) formed to project societal frustrations serve as a fertile basis off which potential LWTs can align themselves. By providing this basis, SMs and their projections manipulate and fuse with the beliefs of potential LWTs. As has already been stated, it from these very manipulated beliefs from which action is later derived. In the case of LWTs, SMs represent a broader movement of violently radical rhetoric such as global jihadism or white supremacy. In order to adequately project the frustrations that serve as the basis of a social movement entity, it must have followers to support its cause. SMOs, as described earlier, are the SM entities that attempt and physically manifest the goals of the larger SM and are thus extremely active in promoting support for their cause. Groups such as al-Qaeda and the Klu Klux Klan operate as SMOs dedicated to a larger, over-arching cause. SMO operations revolve around maintaining group survival and ensuring a favorable cost/reward relationship for individuals that participate in their activities.[15] In short, SMOs need dedicated followers to advance their goals. Social movements (and SMOs) themselves are not enough to serve as the sole mechanism of identification, however.

To acquire followers, SMOs need to deploy resources in order to make their cause attractive. Resources thus represent the second identification mechanism. Moral, cultural, human, material, and socio-organizational resources all aid in advancing the efforts of an SMO.[16] The most important moral resource is legitimacy. Legitimacy acts as a resource in an SMO by strengthening its image of societal support and credibility. Cultural resources give a movement "strategic know-how" that enables them to mobilize their efforts to sustain recruitment amongst a population such as the utilization of new social media and the knowledge of how to organize a specific type of protest.[17] Human resources solidify an organization's expertise, labor size, and leadership to give it credibility in numbers, charisma, and work

13. McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald,"Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," The American Journal of Sociology 82, no. 6 (1977): 1217-1218. Accessed November 4, 2014.
14. Ibid. 1219.
15. Ibid. 1226.
16. Edwards, Bob and Patrick F. Gillham, "Resource Mobilization Theory," The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements (2013). DOI: 10.1002/9780470674871. wbespm447. Accessed November 11, 2014.
17. Ibid.

capacity. Material resources include tangible assets of an organization such as monetary funds, property, and supplies that are available for the diffusion of the organization's goals. Socio-organizational assets constitute an organization's infrastructure, social network, and organizational capacities. These different types of resources function as a mechanism of the identification process of LWT radicalization because they structure the credibility and capacity of the SMs and SMOs. Resources are external factors that ultimately lay the foundation for the diffusion of an SM's or SMO's goals. Such diffusion structures the appeal of an SM or SMO to make its message more conducive to attracting potential LWTs.

> **..al-Qaeda targets potential lone wolf terrorists by using social media to facilitate the international popularity of its "Inspire Magazine" which diffuses its message and ideology across the globe.**

The extent to which these resources can be acquired and deployed thus dictate the success of an SMO. The notorious terrorist organization known as al-Qaeda (AQ) is an SMO that has been able to deploy its resources to help produce an image that individuals can align their belief systems with. In terms of moral resources, AQ has been able to expand and maintain its operations transnationally via franchising its ideology and membership around the world, giving it widespread legitimacy. It has also been supported by international "celebrities" such as Osama bin Laden and enjoys sympathy from national governments such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Culturally, AQ targets potential LWTs by using social media to facilitate the international popularity of its "Inspire Magazine" which diffuses its message and ideology across the globe. AQ's human assets include expertise in the art of terror tactics like the sustainment of terror financing networks and a wealth of battlefield experience. AQ's material resources entail the acquisition of safe-haven property and transnational funding. From a socio-organizational resource standpoint, AQ offers potential recruits access to digital support networks so that physical contact doesn't have to ever be made for

belief alignment to be diffused. By combining all these variations of resources, AQ has had the opportunity to diffuse its ideological base to potential LWTs. By transnationally diffusing its large amount of resources, AQ structures its message for maximum appeal to many potential recruits, including potential LWTs. These four types of resources, when deployed in concert, construct a product that is made available to potential consumers (potential LWTs). The act of making a certain product appealing to isolated individuals is known as "slick packing" in Social Movement Theory. Slick packaging is deployed to increase the overall appeal of a certain social movement product. The more appealing the product, the more likely an isolated individual will enter the process of lone wolf radicalization.[18]

The third structural mechanism in the identification process is the actual isolation of LWTs. Although isolation has already been established as the first step in the overall LWT radicalization process, it nonetheless transplants itself in identification as well. The way in which potential LWTs identify with a certain movement is partially constructed by their isolation. LWTs frequently "create their own ideologies."[19]

LWT ideologies many times consist of a combination of an externally-created ideology (or combination of external ideologies) and individually-experienced personal grievances. Isolation can be seen as a structural mechanism of such hybrid ideologies because of its effect on what Social Movement Theory deems isolated constituents (ICs). ICs represent the theory's LWT counterpart. ICs are comparable to LWTs in that they are isolated from the normal "consumer base" of social movements and are influenced via indirect means. In order to reach this isolated consumer base, one specific structural mechanism has increased its prominence; the internet. In the dotcom world, individuals with isolationist tendencies find solace in "the ease of accessibility and anonymity" that it offers.[20] The diffusion of radical ideas is able to enter a time-space compression via internet channels that can reach a larger amount of vulnerable, isolated individuals at a historically unprecedented level. For example, five-sixths of lone wolf terrorists studied in the US in the year 2011 came under some kind of radical influence from internet usage.[21] This increase in internet

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18. McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements," 1231.

19. Kate Cohen, "Who will be a Lone Wolf Terrorist?" 10.
20. Charles A. Eby, "The Nation that Cried Lone Wolf," 9.
21. Ibid. 39.

usage provides many channels of "direct access to a community of like-minded individuals…a community that can act as a replacement" for the lack of social interactions LWTs often experience.[22]

ISIS militant in Syria

The effects of the internet's anonymity also has important structural implications. It has been found that the "anonymity of the web…leads to an increased level of endorsement for violence."[23] It is sensible that individuals are more willing to express increasingly violent intentions under the mask of an unidentifiable internet profile. This willingness to express more honest emotions may also be enhanced by "small group" dynamics. LWTs operate individually but still sustain contacts with other like-minded individuals over the internet. These communities, as previously stated, compensate for lacking social interaction among potential LWTs and, as a result, have the ability to maleate their opinions by providing potential LWTs with an identity or purpose. Groupthink perpetuates the increased expression of radical ideas across radical internet communities. The internet can be seen as a mechanism that structures the identification process of potential LWTs. While still allowing autonomous action and thought, the internet is able to expose isolated individuals to a wide variety of information and unconventional communities that may help direct their patterns of thought and belief.

Identification Triggers

The mechanisms that may lead isolated individuals down the path of radicalization do not produce LWTs themselves. Plenty of people are exposed to radical movements daily, yet a seemingly negligible percentage of this vast population turn out to become LWTs. How does this happen? As previously established, there is not a single profile of LWTs. However, what every LWT does inhabit is a grievance.

In the case of LWTs, a grievance consists of an inner animosity aimed at an external source. The potential LWT formation of internal grievances are not too surprising given their tendencies to be narcissistic and isolated. Being narcissistic, potential LWTs often times perceive events only in the context of how they (potential LWTs) are effected and thus blame external sources when events do not produce favorable outcomes. In compliment, isolation has the potential to decrease accountability for individual mistakes as, normally, the potential LWT is the only entity holding him or her responsible for his or her action. This grievance can be derived from a variety of sources but nonetheless is individually constructed and serves as a trigger for identifying with a certain group or movement that seems to address the aforementioned grievance. At this point, the convergence of internal and external forces must be noted. The grievance identification trigger is an internal force that needs a scapegoat in order to be psychologically dealt with. At this point, the messages of SMs and SMOs and their slickly-packaged "products" exercise their resources, are diffused, and help construct the internal grievance accordingly. Just as a virus inserts its DNA into a vulnerable cell, a radical SM or SMO has the potential to insert its own belief system into that of a vulnerable individual. The "function" of the person's belief system is then altered just as the "function" of an infected cell changes within the body, disrupting its normal means of operation. The net appeal of the radical SM's or SMO's influence is catalyzed once it becomes attached to a vulnerable belief system.

Although grievances can catalyze the construction of beliefs systems by finding solace in the messages conveyed by SMs or SMOs, they are not the only trigger in the formation of LWT identification. Grievances help potential LWTs align their inner beliefs with of

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22. Kaite Cohen, "Who will be a Lone Wolf Terrorist?" 15.

23. Ibid.

external sources. They run individual beliefs parallel to that of a certain movement or group but have not been able to completely converge the two belief systems. In order for a potential LWT to completely identify with a specific movement or group, an individual must undergo vicarious cognitive dissonance. As previously explained, vicarious cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual's belief system is altered after a person of an in-group is observed committing a hypocritical act.[24] This hypocritical act creates dissonance in the observer. The observer wants to fully identify with a group or individual but has a difficult time doing so as a result of the hypocritical act that was witnessed, thus creating dissonance between the observer's pre-existing morals and urge to identify with an external source. To quell this dissonance, the attitudes towards the hypocritical act are altered to support it (the hypocritical act). By morally sanctioning the wrongful act of an outside source, attitude changes become solidified as both belief systems converge. In this case, the structured message of an external force solidifies identification by providing a product with such high appeal that individual, internal psychological impulses force the convergence of belief systems between the mechanism and individual. This convergence is catalyzed by the trigger of psychologically vulnerable individuals to dedicate themselves to an entity bigger than themselves at the cost of their natural moral compass. Identification is completed when this forced convergence in belief systems is solidified. After the completion of identification, the final necessary means in the radicalization process of potential LWTs is initiated; externalization.

Externalization

At this point in the radicalization process, potential LWTs are isolated and have subsequently identified with an overarching movement. As complex as the first these first two steps may be, a lone wolf terrorist has not yet been formed. Rather, a socially marginalized "ideologue" has been produced. In order to be considered a terrorist, one must perform a terrorist act. To be considered an act, a potential LWT must physically externalize his or her inner frustration. A new combination of mechanisms must come into contact with a different set of triggers in order for externalization to occur.

Rightwing extremist Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people in twin attacks in Norway appears in court, July 26, 2014.

Mechanisms of Externalization

Externalization is, similarly to isolation and identification, manifested via structural elements. These three elements include the formation of a perceived injustice, development of a negative identification, and a lack of legitimate political outlets available to externalize frustrations. These mechanisms interact with one another to direct a potential LWTs inner animosity outward. Once in place, these elements lay fertile ground for certain triggers that ultimately result in a terrorist act. The three mechanisms of externalization follow a pattern of occurrence. First, the "what" that is the root of a certain problem is identified. Next, the "why" a problem needs to be nullified becomes solidified. Finally, the "how" a problem or frustration should be dealt with is considered by potential LWTs.

After the identification process, potential LWTs end up forming a favorable opinion of a certain movement's values, beliefs, and actions. These favorable opinions form what is known as positive identification. A potential LWT positively identifies with a movement. This positive identification, depending on the movement with which the potential LWT is identifying, can have negative effects. Identifying with a certain movement or group means that those opposed to it may be viewed in a negative light. Since social movements are formed in order to change the status quo of a certain issue, antagonistic forces, such as those trying to maintain the status quo or change it in a different direction, may be seen as "the enemy." Usually, this is not an issue because social movements and their entailing organizations are not militant towards one another. In the context of transnational terrorist or criminal entities, however,

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24. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on

Pathways," 81.

militancy is the lingua franca. Groups or individuals impeding on the progress of a certain militant movement are literally seen as an enemy force that needs to be completely undermined or destroyed. In the case of potential LWTs, the process of vilifying an asserted antagonistic entity results in the process of negative identification towards those opposed to their (potential LWTs') groups. Seemingly common sense, negative identification has grave consequences when contextualized in potential LWTs. If a movement asserts that a certain entity is its enemy or decreases its capacity to reach its goals, members become fixated on such a "problematic" entity. This fixation is extremely dangerous when considering isolated individuals. The extent to which a problem occurs can be drastically miscalculated among isolated actors, especially when psychologically vulnerable to narrow-minded assertions and the appeal of grandiose actions. This fixation ultimately turns a certain entity (whether a person, group, government, or label) into an enemy. Since both parties are "opposed" to one another in terms of competing for similar resources of a shared issue, the enemy's gain is seen as the potential LWT's loss. Thus, the enemy becomes a target so that it cannot decrease the LWT's operations. This targeting acts as a structure for externalization because it provides the potential LWT with a direction to where actions can be manifested towards if need be. Essentially, this direction represents the "what" of which externalized actions will be focused on.

Negative identification provides the "what" of externalization. At this point a potential LWT may have a good idea as to "what" should be targeted if necessary. The second externalization mechanism, a perceived injustice, provides the potential LWT the "why." A perceived injustice is exactly as it seems; an action by another, seemingly adversarial, entity that is seen as a direct attack on the potential LWT and

his or her associated group or goal. This injustice is "perceived" because it may or may not have been a direct attack on the LWT. The action was construed by either the potential LWT or his or her identified group as an attack. Such an "attack" justifies the reasons for hating a certain enemy in the first place. The perceived injustice thus structures the potential LWT's opinions so that they believe something must be done to counter it so that similar actions do not re-occur.

A third structural mechanism for externalization is the lack of legitimate political outlets through which frustrations can be facilitated. If a potential LWT is exhibiting frustrations but is willing to use a legitimate outlet to induce change, the externalization of a terrorist act could be nullified. The positive use of political processes do not always pan out, however. Even if legitimate political outlets do exist, isolated individuals may so delusional about a certain problem that they deem any form of accepted political activism as inherently corrupt and unable to yield preferred results. Whatever the cause, a lack of actual or perceived political outlets give the potential LWT the "how" to externalize his or her action. If legal means of externalizing a frustration are not available, a different route must be chosen. A lack of effective political mechanisms thus structure the externalization of a potential LWT action by convincing the individual that the way in which frustrations can be vented must include something outside the parameters of legality. In the case of militant movements, violence is usually considered a more than viable action. The "what," "why," and "how" of externalization integrate at this point. A fertile basis of violent preferences for actions is solidified and waiting for a catalyst to ultimately manifest the structured potential LWT frustrations.

Triggers of Externalization

Three triggers accompany each of the aforementioned structural mechanisms of externalization. At this point, three mechanisms have "laid the foundation" for the externalization of a terrorist action and the official forging of a lone wolf terrorist. As stated before, catalysts are needed to physically manifest an action derived from the foundation that the mechanisms lay out. These catalysts are a development of strong reciprocity, moral obligation, and the formulation of alternative strategies to vent frustrations. An important point to note is that these triggers are largely derivatives of an individual's psychology. Mechanisms, in contrast, are implemented via sources outside the parameters of the individual. Only the potential LWT his or herself can decide to act on the structural mechanisms. This point illustrates the very nature of LWTs; their ultimate autonomy in formulating decisions. These triggers, like their respective mechanistic counterparts, follow a process that results in a LWT action. The pattern of "what," "why," and "how" a certain grievance become physically externalized takes place to produce an action and official an LWT in one fell swoop.

Strong reciprocity occurs when an individual is willing to make a sacrifice for a thing or idea which he or she is not directly affected by.[25] The development of this psychological inclination is actually derived from altruism. Individuals who exhibit strong reciprocity want to put forth their resources to sustain an overall cause or idea they deem worthy. However, in any social environment, there will always be those who free-ride off of altruistic behavior (defectors). Those who "defect" from a cooperating with a cause or movement are considered an enemy by individuals who behave altruistically because they (the defectors) impede upon the advancement of a certain movement, idea, or goal that others are working for. Strong reciprocity induces individuals to remedy the problem of defectors by either coercing them into cooperation or exterminating them. The defectors represent the entity of which the potential LWT negatively identifies with. The negative identification already put in place by this point is furthered via strong reciprocity by the individual's decision to carry out "justice" against the antagonistic defector. Thus, the psychological process of developing strong reciprocity against an "antagonistic" defector

ultimately produces the "what" which needs to be subjected to justice.

A simple, yet crucial, psychological complement to strong reciprocity is a moral obligation. A moral obligation produces the trigger manifestation as to "why" a potential LWT must externalize an inner frustration in the form of a terrorist act. At this point, the psychological process of strong reciprocity has identified a target. Moral obligation provides individual justification for externalizing an act against the aforementioned target. Here, the perceived injustice comes to fore. The "injustice" is derived from an external actor (although formulated internally by the potential LWT). The formulation of a moral obligation continues the psychological process of justifying an externalized action. The moral obligation instills a determined will to carry out a potentially violent action because of the severity of the perceived injustice. The "what" is reinforced and sustained by the "why."

The final trigger in order for an externalized LWT act to take place is the formulation of an alternative way in which a frustration can be expressed. Here, the potential LWT has psychologically solidified his or her moral obligation to exacting exhibiting strong reciprocity against a specific target. What has not yet been determined is exactly "how" such a moral obligation will be acted on. As previously mentioned, legal political outlets that the potential LWT views as sufficient in taking care of his or her frustration(s) are lacking. In order to carry out his or her "obligation" as the only legitimate means of exacting justice, the potential LWT autonomously formulates an alternative outlet. Although acting autonomously, it is important to remember that potential LWTs act under the influence of a certain (often violence-prone) group or movement. The alternative strategy a potential LWT devises is frequently a violent act. The "what" and "why" end up facilitating the "how" externalization takes place. Devising an alternative strategy, often one of violence, is the final trigger in externalization. This strategy integrates the power of the two previously mentioned triggers and guides them to a self-directed action. When a potential LWT takes the route of his or her own individualized alternative outlet to vent a frustration, a lone wolf terrorist act is executed and a lone wolf terrorist is formed.

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25. McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko, "The Psychology on Lone-Wolf Terrorism," 121

Conclusion

The process of an individual transforming into a lone wolf terrorist contains an immeasurable amount of interacting factors. These factors differ from individual to individual as psychologies and experiences are never the same between any two people. However, a commonality between every single lone wolf terrorist is that each underwent a process. This process, no matter the amount of variables involved, forged an individual that autonomously committed an act of terror. These acts of terror without a doubt have and will continue to differ according to place, time, extent of destruction, and justification. The point of this project is not to give an exact formula for the type of person that will become a lone wolf terrorist but to provide a procedural framework in regards to the psychological and socio-structural forces that interact to lead an individual down the path of lone wolf radicalization. The effects of both structural mechanisms and triggers are indisputable. We, as humans, are not born with the innate will and ability to perform a terrorist act on our own accord. Learned behaviors, rather, combine an individual's environment and psychological impulses to produce actions. This complex combination forges the radicalization process of the lone wolf terrorist.

Generally, it is clear that three main forces set the stage for the radicalization of a lone wolf terrorist: isolation, identification, and externalization. These forces are broad enough to encompass the variety of known LWTs yet specific enough to put specific facets of a LWT's radicalization into context. The key to these forces is the process by which they are experienced. Although anything in reality (especially in regards to lone wolf terrorism) is difficult to quantify, it can be seen that a lone wolf terrorist is formed via isolation, subsequent identification in isolation, and entailing externalization derived from isolated identification.

Mechanisms and triggers must also both be present within each of the overarching forces. Socio-structural and individual psychological elements must both also be present for a LWT to be formed. These two elements, under each of the respective forces, complement one another to form the radicalization process. Individuals are born with psychologies. These psychological bases are exposed to structural mechanisms that direct and mold vulnerable individuals. The complimentary nature of these micro and macro forces highlight the complex nature of lone wolf terrorist radicalization.

Members of the French GIPN intervention police forces secure a neighbourhood in Corcy, northeast of Paris, Jan. 8, 2015. (Photo Credit: Reuters)

The lone wolf terrorist is by no means a new phenomenon. Individuals have been, and will continue to be, morphed into autonomously-acting terrorists. This inevitability of recurrence warrants further study of lone wolf terrorism. This study provides a procedural framework for the radicalization process of lone wolf terrorists. What it does not yet do, however, is contextualize individual case studies within this framework. In order to better understand how individuals make the plunge into lone wolf terrorism, case studies must be applied to this study's structural explanation. A continuation of this study will be undertaken to do just that. As the radicalization of lone wolf terrorists will undoubtedly continue, so will the drive to understand and undermine it.

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