

# TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Institut de  
Seguretat Pública  
de Catalunya





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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Toboso is a professor of the Degree in Security at the Institute for Public Security of Catalonia as a centre ascribed to the University of Barcelona. He participated as an expert speaker on terrorism at: European Diversity Expert Meeting (EDPOL, 2011); XI Permanent Seminar on Terrorism Studies, organised by the Fundación Ortega-Marañón and the Real Instituto Elcano (Madrid, 2012); Summer Courses at El Escorial, 2016. He participated as an expert speaker on individual terrorism at: 1st Conference on Intelligence in the Face of Radicalisation (2012); 9th and 11th International Course on Jihadist Terrorism, organised by the University Pablo de Olavide (Carmona, 2014; Seville, 2016); 3rd Conference on the Prevention of Jihadist Radicalisation (Castellbisbal, 2014). He was a speaker in the Commission of the Parliament of Catalonia on the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks (September 18th 2018). He participated as an expert on individual terrorism at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT- The Hague, Netherlands, 2015); as an expert on counter-narrative at University Pompeu Fabra (2017), and as an expert on terrorism at University Abad Oliba (2018).

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This manual is only intended to be a modest tool for reflection and a stimulus for critical thinking. My thanks also to all the students who will one day open this manual because their curiosity will be the driving force that will help us change the world. But above all my last words of thanks are to the four women who always guide me, support me and accompany me in this adventure.

**Mario Toboso Buezo**



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# PREFACE

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The Institute for Public Security of Catalonia —and previously the Police School of Catalonia and the Fire Service and Civil Protection School of Catalonia— has always actively collaborated with the university world and has incorporated its teaching staff into the training programs of the professionals who make up the country's public security system.

The creation of the Institute in 2007 not only entailed the integration of the Police School and the Fire and Civil Protection School, but also clearly meant expansion of its scope of activity. Since then, in 2014, a step forward was taken in the creation of the Institute as a university centre attached to the University of Barcelona and the teaching of the Degree in Security, a new qualification in the Catalan university system. In 2019, with the second graduating class already in place, we can celebrate the consolidation of these studies and the university centre.

It is well known that the Police School and the Fire and Civil Protection School are essential parts of the Institute for Public Security of Catalonia. However, it is also true that structuring university studies and promoting research in the field of security is a key element in creating the knowledge that governments and organisations need for the development of public policies and strategies that must respond to the increasingly complex security demands that we face today as a society.

With regard to the knowledge generated by training and research activities, the Institute works in a no less important way, which is to discover and circulate it so that safety and emergencies specialists, and the general public, have access to it and can enrich it with their contributions.

This collection, 'Segments de Seguretat', was started with this objective in mind, and it is greatly satisfying that this fifth edition is the result of materials prepared for one of the courses that counts towards the Security, Terrorism and Antiterrorism Degree. It is unequivocal that the phenomenon of terrorism is, in today's society, of enormous importance and complexity. Therefore, I would like to thank the author and professor of the Degree, Dr. Mario Toboso, who is also a member of the Generalitat-Mossos d'Esquadra police force, for the result of this work: rigorous and interesting and, at the same time, didactic and enjoyable, from a multidisciplinary perspective and with a hopeful vision.

At the Institute we celebrate this new step in our project to connect the knowledge of academics with that of security system professionals. This is the spirit that guides us, and this publication is a sign of the evolution of the university studies that we teach.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that this collection has also been consolidated as an instrument to circulate the knowledge generated in the Institute, which is the result of the efforts of security and emergency professionals, as well as the academic world, who participate and are involved in its training and research activities. It deserves all my recognition. I hope, therefore, that it will be useful for all readers for years to come.

**Montserrat Royes Vila**

Director of the Institute for Public Security of Catalonia

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# FOREWORD

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We live in an increasingly impersonal society where social interactions have been replaced by virtual relationships and where the saturation of information can encourage a certain vital and moral disaffection. A society where lies or the capitalisation of anger in social networks favour emotion over reason.

In this context, studies on terrorism are recurrent in the academic world since, unfortunately, it continues to be a major problem on the security policy agenda of states. However, the approach to a phenomenon as complex as this can never be one-dimensional, as it evolves so rapidly that it is not unreasonable to venture that, in the medium term, it may resemble more a sort of urban insurgency or Hans Magnus Enzensberger's concept of molecular civil war. What is unquestionable is that curiosity for the study and evolution of the phenomenon must encourage us to ask ourselves questions, such as: why is there an increase in individual terrorism or the impact that new variables such as technology, climate change, the growth of cities or the symbiosis between organised crime and violent extremism may have.

The book is structured in five chapters of easy reading where issues such as: the conceptual approach of terrorism, the different typologies, jihadist terrorism in a more specific way, the radicalisation process or the projection of scenarios of the violent extremism are explored. The bibliographic resources provided at the end of the book are relevant for all readers who want to delve deeper into a specific topic. On the other hand, the scientific rigour in the approach proposed by the author is the best antidote to avoid sensationalism and unjustified scaremongering when analysing this phenomenon.

To conclude, we would like to mention one of the reflections most used by the author in his academic production and that is the concept of pedagogy of threat and risk acceptance. Undoubtedly, if this book has an objective it is precisely that: to educate in order to promote evolved societies that are capable of understanding the magnitude of the threat but also that are trained and empowered to respond responsibly.

## **Josep Baqués Quesada**

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# INTRODUCTION

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*The most dangerous of ignorances comes from those who  
think they have explanations for everything*  
Milan Kundera

The philosopher Daniel Innerarity believes that we live in an age where our feelings float without any institutional anchorage and this results in exasperated, anxious and irritable societies. A time where the lack of appreciation for facts is one of the vectors that explains the growing social polarisation that is articulated from the stomach and not from the brain.

Terrorism represents a particularly complex subject of study, but we all have a responsibility to try to understand the world around us in order to improve the future that awaits us. Its analysis is a recurrent topic of academic debate and has been under constant review in recent years. Like any other phenomenon of a sociological nature, it is changeable and evolves at the same rate as the society in which it is developed. Its complexity demands that it be studied from a dynamic and holistic perspective as opposed to a static, unidisciplinary, dogmatic or subjective one. Social relationships between individuals behave, using a simile of cell biology, like synapses and electrical stimuli between neurons. There can be synapses between different members of a social group that can provoke a passive stimulus equivalent to non-involvement in subversive activities, or an active stimulus equivalent to involvement in something that can lead to terrorism. In fact, the circumstances that cause a person subjected to the same social or environmental conditions to act in one way or another respond to many criteria, such as psychological, social, cultural or religious criteria. Factors as diverse as the influence of certain religious or operational leaders, recruitment, radicalisation processes, hierarchy, and sense of belonging or obedience seem to be inherent elements of terrorist organisations, networks, groups or cells. Additionally, there are other intangible values that shape terrorism as a preferably collective activity:

- the commitment to the terrorist cause, which is reinforced when the individual recruited is socialised into the traditions, methods and objectives of the terrorist organisation to which they belong;
- the feeling of belonging or obedience is considered a very important quality when an individual enters a terrorist organisation; in contrast, disloyalty, retaliation or disobedience is punished even by death.

1. Especially relevant is the globalisation of indifference, to which Pope Francis already alluded when commenting on the tragedy of the refugees who die at sea: "Who among us has ever wept over this fact and events such as this? Who has mourned the death of these brothers and sisters? Who has cried for those people who got on the boat, for the young mothers who carried their children, for those men who wanted something to support their families? We are a society that has forgotten the experience of crying, of 'suffering with': the globalisation of indifference has taken away our ability to cry!"

2. The Stoics of Ancient Greece and other religious reformers of the Renaissance believed that there were superfluous and unimportant things contained in politics. This kind of unimportant thing is called *adiaphoron*, which in Ancient Greek means indifferent. In his doctrine, Zygmunt Bauman has developed the theory of the *adiaphoria* of conscience, arguing that, in times of unrest or intense social change and in critical historical junctures, people lose part of their sensibility and refuse to apply the ethical perspective to other people. Well-known examples are the Jewish or Armenian genocides, the separation of families in the US, or the death of immigrants at sea.

People eliminate the ethical perspective towards other people who are not their enemies or adversaries, but rather are statistics, circumstances, obstacles, anomalies, variables, factors, figures or unpleasant details that get in the way of others. Bauman says that these are people we don't want to meet face to face nor that we can stand the sight of or smile at, but we remove their humanness and turn them into 'the other'. This means that we are selective in dealing with human distress and suffering through a mechanism of ethical neutrality.

3. It is estimated that there are between 10 and 20 million profiles of dead people on Facebook and some 80 million fake profiles.

## WHAT DOES TERRORISM PRESENT AND WHAT ARE ITS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES?

The answer is to *alter the socio-political* status quo by using violence to convey a message of fear and provoke a *disproportionate response from the state in which it acts*. This message is sent to an audience made up of a triple target:

- the society receiving the message in the first place
- the media that act as spokespersons
- the politicians who articulate the measures to respond to the terrorist threat

Once we know the strategic objective of terrorism, we can pose the following question.

## WHAT IS THE PERFECT ECOSYSTEM IN WHICH TERRORISM CAN BEST DEPLOY ITS EFFECTS?

The answer to this question should provide us with clues to promote and develop public policies of prevention that hinder the conditions of this ecosystem. We'll look at this next.

### • Is our society the most dangerous and violent to date?

The answer is no. Never has society been safer and lived with the lowest levels of violence in its history. Thinkers like Steve Pinker wonder how a society with the highest levels of security in all history is so afraid. One answer could be that there is a dissonance in the assessment of perceived risk and actual risk. What has grown in our time is not so much the real risk but the knowledge of the perceived risk. Risks that were previously known represented a tiny fraction of the actual risk; today, however, an increasing fraction of potential risks are being researched, discovered and made public, so that the rate of perceived risk seems to be increasing well above the actual risk rate. For example: computer viruses, explosive cyclogenesis, pandemics, terrorism... Hence the pessimism of public opinion, which reflects an unequivocal climate of social alarm. We live in a society where individualism, protectionism, indifference,<sup>1</sup> the *adiaphoria* of conscience,<sup>2</sup> superficiality, posing and the perception of constant urgency are on the rise. An irascible society where emotions prevail over reason, temperaments over speech, and where social networks easily ignite to give rise to real 'emotional bubbles' in a mixture of information, entertainment and spectacle. Moreover, social networks often democratise stupidity, insult and contempt for truth and provide a space for the germination and development of hate speech, which is a precursor to violent extremism. A society where virulence is seen as an exercise in sincerity, and nuanced speeches as inauthentic. In environments populated by lies, irrelevant data and confusing moods, extremism has a suitable ecosystem in which to root hate speech, moral relativism, capitalisation of anger or the desire for revenge.

This ecosystem prevents the digestion and sedimentation of facts and ideas and cancels out our ability to offer a response that goes beyond the emotional language of emoticons or immediate reactions. Without critical thought and reflection we cannot discern between truth and falsehood.<sup>3</sup> We live in the age of the triumph of virality over veracity...

**IN A TIME OF UNIVERSAL DECEIT,  
TELLING THE TRUTH IS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT**

GEORGE ORWELL

So,

• **Terrorism best displays its effects in fragile societies, vulnerable to the discourse of fear, disjointed, lazy in the search for truth and, in short, polarised**

Terrorism, on the other hand, struggles to achieve its objective in evolved and resilient societies. Resilience<sup>4</sup> is closely linked to the concepts of pedagogy of threat and risk acceptance. In fact, being resilient is the best antidote to the terrorist message, even being resistant without the slavery of short-termism because jihadism is not precisely short-termist. Educate to foster evolved societies that are capable of understanding the magnitude of the threat, but also that are trained and empowered to respond responsibly.

Terrorism also deploys its targets better when the media act as spokespersons for the terrorist message with alarmist, sensationalist or even reckless media coverage.

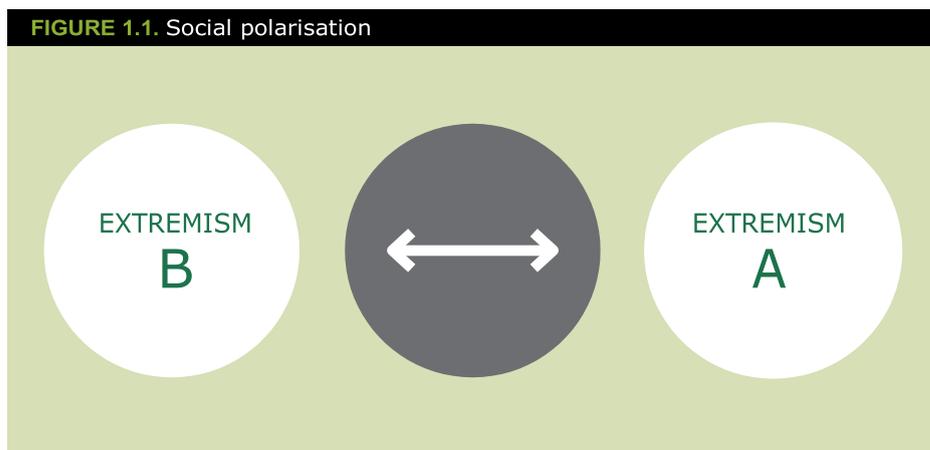
We should ask ourselves whether the overexposure of the terrorist phenomenon to information can be counterproductive, especially when, after an attack, special three- or four-hour programs are made with looped images of the attack, which flirt more with entertainment than with the desire to rigorously inform people. The information saturation turns into noise that calms our disorientation. With the increase in available information and the impulsive updating of this information, it is not that we are very informed, but that we may believe that we are exempt from exercising personal reflection. In late August 2018, one of Daesh's producers broadcast a 54-minute audio message from Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, proclaiming, among other things, that "one attack in the West is worth a thousand in the land of the Caliphate". Why? Among other things, obviously because of the media coverage. The theatre of terror needs to publicise its message because advertising is its oxygen.

• **To appease these fears, the state is often driven to respond to the theatre of terror with its own theatre of security**

Security policies that are established during high-anxiety period are often limited in their usefulness. This confusion may result in policy measures being applied that are disproportionate, strictly security-conscious or based on overreaction. This can lead to the stigmatisation of a particular group and a greater social polarisation that allows violent extremism (VE) to articulate its narrative of hate and the construction of real or perceived toxic grievances. This polarisation favours the emergence of extremist positions such as the emergence in Europe of Islamophobic groups or the increase of young European Muslims exploring the jihadist doctrine. The grey area in which millions of citizens are becomes more permeable to certain dichotomous or binary messages and also to extremist impulses and violent narratives. Jihadism, for example, tries to capture and recruit precisely those people who are in this grey area. Policies for the prevention of radicalisation and VE should be particularly oriented towards this grey area. How? Through the moderation policy,<sup>5</sup> based on transversal prevention policies and counterterrorism policies hinged on police coordination. As Daniel Innerarity would say, at a time when governing no longer means guaranteeing security but managing insecurity, probably the most revolutionary concept is peace.

4. Resilience, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress. But in psychology, we add something else to the concept of resilience: not only does it allow us to deal with crises and traumatic situations, but we can also come out stronger.

5. According to political scientist Rafael del Águila Tejerina, the politics of measurement is the antidote to fanaticism, the demand for a pluralistic outlook, democracy open to criticism and permanent self-reflection, the value of the ethics of responsibility and the need to manage political contingencies objectively, without idealisation.



Source: own elaboration.

Therefore, it is more difficult for terrorism to achieve its strategic objectives in evolved and resilient societies where the media do not act as spokespersons for the terrorist message and when the State articulates prevention policies not exclusively oriented towards a security approach or counterterrorism measures based on overreaction. After all, terrorism is provocation and aims to generate emotions of all kinds, mainly a state of terror that conditions socio-political decisions. The strength is to resist that state and not to seek short-term solutions. What counterterrorism needs is:

- persistence;
- policy coherence and state policies;
- strategic patience, which requires evolved and cohesive societies that do not allow themselves to be carried away by the emotional over-politicisation intrinsic to terrorism, accepting its challenges and patterns and, with this, fitting into the logic it seeks to impose.

## DISMANTLING SOME LOGICAL FALLACIES

When we talk about terrorism, in order to carry out an analysis, we must specify some logical fallacies, mental automatisms and contaminated concepts that are often used.

### • All terrorists are crazy... or maybe not

It is reasonable to think that the perplexity and outrage caused by terrorist acts will prompt us to reject the idea that those that carry out terrorism may be ordinary people. However, the different scientific studies indicate that there is no pathology or mental disorder underlying the generality of terrorists, so we can find ourselves before a reflex mechanism of understanding to rationalise an act of great lethality.

The individual psychology of terrorists is not homogeneous and their psychological traits are varied, although no common pattern can be established. As Luis de la Corte points out: "Over-simplification in explanations of terrorism is a temptation to which politicians, the media and citizens easily succumb and against which academics are also not immune. In their most reckless forms, these simplifications offer explanations for terrorism based on a single set of causal factors and describe

an attack as an act of madness, the action of a fanatic or due to the injustice of the world political and economic system. These clichés are useful for ratifying prejudices, but not for understanding and analysing the phenomenon from a scientific perspective". Most terrorists are psychologically normal and do not fit into any diagnosed medical category.

The objective and scientific fact is that numerous quantitative and qualitative studies have shown that the ratio of terrorists suffering from psychiatric disorders is similar to the existing ratio in our society. There is no over-representation of the disturbed within terrorism and, therefore, it is a logical fallacy. Rather, it seems to be a mechanism for protection, rationalisation and/or understanding of the phenomenon to think that a person or group plans in detail an attack of great lethality. Marta Creenshaw, one of the most prestigious experts in the field of terrorism, also says that "the main characteristic of the terrorist is precisely their normality". And this is difficult to digest, but any approach we make to the phenomenon without taking into account scientific variables like this will be from a wrong perspective and from a position of weakness.

Therefore, the —generally accepted— belief that terrorists are mostly mentally disturbed or 'crazy' must be dismantled. Among the behaviours of terrorist actors, there have been cases of both rational calculation and self-destructive nihilism. Terrorism is a normal political and psychological phenomenon shaped by various factors and motivations and without a single root cause.

- **Lone wolf packs**

Sometimes the use of certain terminology provides 'ideological fuel' to articulate and legitimise violent extremist narratives (VEN) because the words act as triggers. Therefore, the use of contaminated or imprecise concepts should be restricted, such as: kamikaze terrorists, lone wolves... There is also certain terminology and rhetoric that favours certain discourses such as, for example, war against Islam, crusade against terrorism. On the other hand, how many more generations of Muslims born in Catalonia will be considered immigrants? First generation, second, third, fourth? When will they be considered full citizens? In the fifth, sixth generation? Does one really inherit immigrant status forever and ever? Obviously not. This type of rhetoric favours the identity gap and can compromise —and greatly— the sense of belonging.

- **Less speculation and a more scientific approach<sup>6</sup>**

The approach to terrorism has to be critical and based on evidence (empirical science), analysing any negative aspect of the system, even if it becomes a politically incorrect discourse. If we reduce the capacity of reasoning to public opinion or to the mainstream<sup>7</sup> —which tends towards the reductionist explanations of such a complex phenomenon—, we run the risk of sweeping everything that causes the reaction of terrorism under the carpet. As the arguments and causes of terrorism are ignored, the danger of terrorism becoming more subversive and destructive also increases (Horvat, 2017). At the same time, there is a very evident deficit in the use of control groups in the study of terrorism and the process of radicalisation.

- **Has the Internet facilitated and spread jihadist terrorism?**

The use of the Internet for terrorist purposes does not imply that it is to blame, but rather that it is the means to propagate certain discourses. Therefore, the Internet and ICT are tools and enablers, but not the cause of the spread of the terrorist message or radicalisation.

6. Only 3% of studies on radicalisation are empirical.

7. Mainstream, majority trend or current thinking that is widespread. It includes popular culture and mass culture, which are usually circulated by mass media.

8. In the period analysed, from July 1st 2014 to March 1st 2016

9. The Incel movement (Involuntary Celibates) is a subculture linked to the alternative right (*alt-right*), often characterised by misogyny and a special hatred for multiracial couples. The frustration they feel leads to hatred; the chats or forums feed back this hatred and, at the same time, incubate violence. They have similarities to the so-called 'school killers' (cases of Columbine, Virginia Tech or Sandy Hook). In terms of security, we have to be aware of the emergence of new subcultures: certain television programs, the objectification of women, the sexualisation of young girls... Everything can be a breeding ground for hate.

#### • Need to foresee new VE scenarios

In this increasingly liquid, uncertain and complex globalised world, VE can mutate in the same way that the societies in which it is developed evolve. Terrorism is not a passing phenomenon and the most complex scenarios are yet to come. Consequently, an event that has not yet occurred could yet occur. Modern terrorist actions have a disruptive pattern and security efforts are currently focused on promoting prevention or response mechanisms and bureaucratic structures that, when they reach their peak of development, detect that the threat has already been transformed.

Balance, imagination, adaptability and sanity must govern the application of some measures or others, without generating uncertainty or uneasiness in the civic responsibility. A certain social resilience is therefore required in order to address the threat from different perspectives.

For example, all the variables of jihadism, such as the increase in converts, should be analysed. Why are they overrepresented now? They are people who seek their oasis of identity, as Manuel Castells would say. Radical Islam provides them with a clear and unambiguous code of life, as Salafi jihadism is disruptive of traditional Islam. The role of women should also be studied, as they are more involved. The increase in jihadist propaganda directed at women has led to an increase in the numbers of jihadist women.<sup>8</sup> But we cannot focus exclusively on violent extremism with jihadist roots either, because in the future others may evolve or emerge: Incel Movement,<sup>9</sup> the resurgence of far-right VE, technophobic groups...

This book aims to study some of these variables with the aim of obtaining the ability and critical thinking to be able to analyse how terrorism behaves. The final objective is to promote teaching around the terrorist threat from the knowledge and weighting to encourage the management and prevention of the phenomenon from a multidisciplinary point of view.

## CHAPTER 1

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# HOW DO YOU DEFINE TERRORISM?

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## HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF TERRORISM

The first mentions of insurgent behaviour can be found in the Old Testament and the attempts of the people of Israel to flee from Egypt. The ten plagues that struck Egypt could be scientifically interpreted as a destabilising attempt to put pressure on the Pharaoh to give in to the claims of the Israelites. Reading the Old Testament gives us the answer from a religious point of view. At the end of this book we will deal with the explanation of the ten plagues from a scientific point of view. Religion or science? What is the correct interpretation? We will not be so pretentious as to presume to know the answer to such an existential question, but we will establish the starting point for our object of study:

The analyst must have the capacity of discernment intact to consider different perspectives, without disregarding any of them at first, but he must try to reach a logical and considered conclusion.

The historical background to terrorism is set out below.

## THE ZEALOTS AND THE SICARII (1ST CENTURY AD)

In the Roman Empire, insurgent groups were rebellious and treated as a threat to the security and stability of the Empire. In Roman law, the worst crimes were those of rebellion, sedition or treason against the Empire, for which they reserved the punishment of crucifixion. So feared was this penalty that the Jews who rebelled against the Roman authorities in the first century AD and who took refuge in the fortress of Masada made the decision to commit suicide rather than surrender to the Romans, aware that a punishment of *flagrum*<sup>10</sup> and, if they survived, crucifixion was in store for them.

In the time of Christ, the first problems in relation to security came from the hand of Jewish extremist groups: the Zealots<sup>11</sup> —a Jewish movement that opposed Roman domination— led by Judas of Galilee, a leader similar to that of today's jihadist groups, who understood the political struggle against Roman power as an obligation ordained by God. The first known terrorist acts are considered to have been inspired by this religious fanaticism. The historian Flavius Josephus explains that during the 60s and 70s of the first century AD, a fearsome sect called *Sicarii* emerged among the Zealots.

10. Punishment whip composed of two or three strings finished in stone or metal balls.

11. The Hebrew name for zealot comes from the word 'zeal'.

The Sicarii owe their name to the mortal skill in handling the *sica*, a small dagger with which they used to cut the throats of Roman legionaries and Jewish traitors or apostates by surprise in the light of day and in the midst of a crowd among which they disappeared, with their faces and the *sica* hidden under their robes. As an addition to their campaign of terrifying murders, the Sicarii also set about burning barns and poisoning wells to deprive Jerusalem of water.

## BETWEEN THE 11th AND 13th CENTURIES: THE ORDER OF ASSASSINS

The Shia sect of the Ishmaelites (Shia Ismaili) gave rise to the band of *hashshashin* or assassins,<sup>12</sup> whose leader was Hassan-e Sabbāh, also called 'the Old Man of the Mountain'. They were given this name because their members were used to getting drunk on hashish before starting their violent missions against Christian crusaders and some Sunni Muslims living in Persia and Syria. The assassins started attacking their enemies in the open. However, because of their obvious numerical inferiority, they ended up developing and applying a very different strategy of attack based on a systematic and prolonged succession of surprise operations: the assassins disguised themselves as foreigners or Christians and attacked with daggers, throwing weapons or poison. Some of the most characteristic features of this order were its asceticism, secrecy and a conception of its killings as true acts of religious obedience. Often their actions involved their own death when it was impossible for them to flee. Yet, like many of today's jihadists, the killers believed that dying during an attack would lead them directly to paradise. But there is a big difference with today's jihadism in the way they perpetrate their actions: the order of assassins only killed their target selectively, without collateral damage, unlike the jihadists, who do not hesitate to cause as much damage as possible.

12. The etymological origin of the word 'Assassin' comes from the word *hashshashin*, but this literally means 'hashish'.

**FIGURE 1.1.** Alamūt Fortress in present-day Iran

The Alamūt fortress is located in present-day Iran and is situated in a valley about 50 km long and 5 km wide. It was built around 865 and was very difficult to access. According to legend, it was built by a king who saw his eagle fly over a rock and interpreted it as a propitious omen. That is why he called the fortress Aluh Amukt (teaching of the eagles or eagle's nest).

Life in Alamūt was strict and severe. According to Marco Polo, a garden had been built in the Alamūt fortress with fountains from which honey, milk, wine and water flowed, as indicated in the Qur'an. There were also women who sang and played instruments. When the followers of the order who were trained in the art of fighting became intoxicated with hashish, they would wake up in this garden and enjoy all the pleasures. Afterwards, they could only have a similar experience again if they died in combat. Hence the ferocity of the Shia order of assassins.

Let us not forget that the current jihadists, prior to carrying out some attacks, had consumed Captagon, a drug derived from Amphetamine that causes a state of euphoria. Contract killings were also one of their specialties.



Photo: Ignacio Izquierdo

## 17th TO 19th CENTURY: THUG

Finally, the background to pre-modern terrorism often includes reference to the ritual killings by strangulation practised by the ‘thugs’ or *thags*,<sup>13</sup> goddess Kali worshippers who acted in India mainly between centuries XVII and XIX. This sect considered crime as a lawful means of financial gain. Those who fought most actively against the sect were the British, since the movement remained in existence when India was a British colony and British soldiers or settlers suffered their crimes. It is estimated that the organisation has murdered some 200,000 people throughout its history. The thugs were organised in small groups of ten men and had the characteristics of a classic terrorist structure: hierarchy, clandestinity, financing and, in this case, a religious pretext.

## ORIGINS OF MODERN TERRORISM

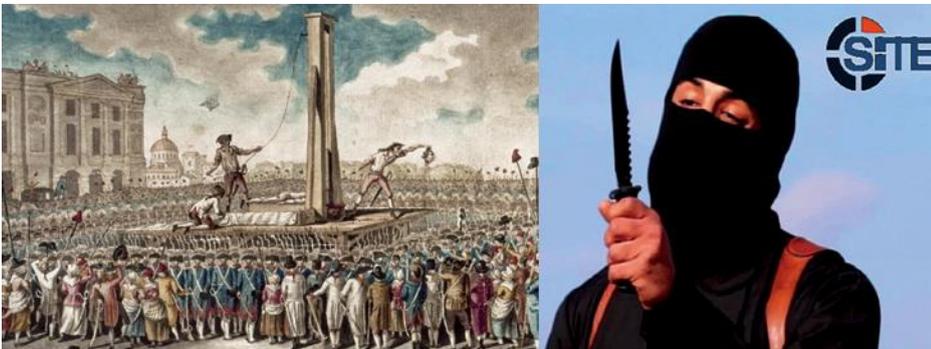
### FRENCH REVOLUTION: REIGN OF TERROR 1793-1794

Some experts have serious doubts as to whether the sectarian violence and intimidation of the above groups should be defined as ‘terrorist’. Strictly speaking, terrorism, or ‘modern terrorism’, was born with the proclamation of the French Revolution, as it was the revolutionaries themselves who provided the first definition of the phenomenon. For Robespierre, the establishment of a government based on intimidation, coercion and terror was the only method capable of spreading the new civic virtues required by the new regime.

For this reason, between April 1793 and July 1794, the Jacobins declared a state of emergency in France called the *Régime de terreur*, during which trials and summary executions were proliferated, designed and carried out publicly with clear exemplary purposes. Robespierre and the Jacobins went so far as to kill, by guillotine, between 11,000 and 45,000 people with the accusation of carrying out activities against the French Revolution, asserting any suspicion to bring anyone to the scaffold. Sound familiar? Don't you find similarities with Daesh's public executions broadcast on the Internet?

Since then, the words ‘terror’, ‘terrorism’ and the expression ‘state terrorism’ have gained the pejorative connotations that still accompany them today.

**IMAGE 1.1.** Visual comparison between the Reign of Terror & Daesh's propaganda



Left: painting *Exécution de Louis XVI*, col. Carnavalet Museum (photo: Fine Art/Heritage/Getty Images). Right: image taken from the website of the North American company Site-Intelligence Group Enterprise.

13. The English word ‘thug’ originates from the Hindi word *thag*.

## THE FOUR WAVES OF TERRORISM

The American political scientist David C. Rapoport, one of the most renowned historians of modern terrorism, considers that, from the last decades of the 19th CENTURY until today, the world has known four waves of terrorism. With the exception of the last wave, in which we are still immersed, these waves have each lasted approximately 30 or 40 years. Although the periodisation of any phenomenon may involve some simplification, Rapoport's chronology gives us an idea of how modern terrorism has evolved during recent times. The four stages or waves are explained briefly below.

### FIRST WAVE OF TERRORISM: IN TSARIST RUSSIA OF 1880

Russian anarchists theorised about individual killings and the concept of 'propaganda of the deed'. Assassinations of political figures were frequent during this historical period, when this method was applied and justified, even extending it to other foreign revolutionary movements. Mikhail Bakunin, one of these ideologues, considered that the 'sacred' goal of the revolution demanded that revolutionaries abandon any trace of compassion and disregard for public opinion in order to frighten society. The Narodnaya Volya organisation, which promoted the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, considered terrorism to be the most 'humanitarian' way of making revolution. Why? Because the number of victims caused by terrorism would be far less than that caused by a mass struggle. The protagonists of this wave referred to themselves as 'terrorists', without any ethical or moral drawbacks. Dynamite and guns were the classic instruments to spread their revolutionary ideas. This idea spread to contexts much more remote than Russia, for example: Armenia, Poland, the Balkans, France, Spain (attack on the Liceu de Barcelona in 1893), Italy, the United States and India. The spread of revolutionary ideology encouraged the assassination of some of the highest political authorities<sup>14</sup> of the 19th century such as, for example, French President Carnot, assassinated in 1894; Spanish President Cánovas del Castillo, in 1897; King of Italy Umberto II, in 1900, and U.S. President William Mackinley, in 1901.

### SECOND WAVE (1917-1965): ANTICOLONIALISM

Starting in 1917 and continuing until around 1965. The justification for this second wave was the right to self-determination of peoples, a principle that the countries that had won the First World War helped to spread by imposing it on the colonial territories of the European countries that had won after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The end of World War II reinforced the anticolonial trend. If the first stage of modern terrorism was characterised by attacks against political leaders, this second wave is characterised by attacks against the police and colonialist forces, seeking excessive and atrocious state reactions that serve to increase popular support for the terrorists and to deteriorate the image of the state or of the colonial and repressive government. At the end of this period, terrorism had contributed to the development of the international climate that led to the creation of states such as Ireland, Israel, Cyprus or Algeria.

14. These types of murders are called *assassinations*.

### THIRD WAVE (1968-1980): EVOLUTION OF THE 'NEW REVOLUTIONARY AND NATIONALIST LEFT'

This begins at the time of the social upheavals of 1968 and extends through the 1980s. The existence of conflicts all over the world, the proliferation of dictatorial governments, guerrilla and paramilitary movements in Latin America or confrontations between Arabs and Israelis are the breeding ground for the emergence of terrorist groups operating during this period. Radical ideological movements linked to European intellectual circles have led to the creation of terrorist organisations such as the RAF in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy or the GRAPO in Spain. Latin America also saw the emergence of revolutionary terrorist organisations such as Sendero Luminoso in Peru, the Tupamaros in Uruguay or the Montoneros in Argentina. The third-wave terrorism practised in Europe, the Middle East and Latin America acquired an important internationalist aspect, which led to the establishment of links of collaboration, ideological sympathy and, sometimes, the will to attack outside their countries of origin. The Palestine Liberation Organisation provoked more attacks in Europe than many indigenous European groups and provided cover and training to members of some 40 terrorist groups in their camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. On the other hand, the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine recruited non-Palestinian and foreign extremists with the aim of creating a kind of international brigade ready to participate in 'liberation struggles' anywhere in the world. This reflection is very interesting because it has many similarities with the phenomenon of foreign fighters who are fighting in different jihadist scenarios such as Syria, Libya or Iraq.

The so-called terrorism of the new left led to the emergence of antagonistic far-right organisations, often linked to state security forces or foreign secret services, as is the case with Avanguardia Nazionale in Italy or the Ulster Defence Association in Northern Ireland. Some terrorist campaigns in this third wave merged nationalist aspirations with the ideology of the far left. This happened with ETA and the IRA, original movements of the second wave that incorporated into their activities and ideological principles some of the subversive guidelines of the radical left.

### THE FOURTH WAVE, IN WHICH WE ARE STILL INVOLVED

This wave is riding on the final echo of the previous cycle. Chronologically we can consider it to have begun in 1979. This is the year of the revolution of the Ayatollah in Iran and the beginning of an era in which religious fundamentalisms are emerging. Religious or sectarian groups in this wave seek to expand their dogma and target individuals, groups or states that allegedly may have violated these dogmas or are perceived as enemies of the very religious community that the terrorists claim to represent (Islam, Christianity, the white and Aryan race...).

There is one important factor that must be taken into account in the analysis of the fourth wave: religious duty. The acceptance of violence as a religious duty or a divine mandate encourages the destructive capacity of extremists in relation to other terrorist campaigns of a political or secular nature. This is the time of the first suicide attacks of modern terrorism—a tactical innovation—perpetrated by Hezbollah in 1983. Another key factor in the spread of jihadist terrorism was the resistance of the Afghan Mujahideen to the Soviet invasion. This resistance was a pole of attraction for thousands of Muslims from all over the world and the result was the global terrorist organisation Al-Qaeda.

## WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Generally, when we talk about terrorism and terrorists, we take the meaning of these words for granted. But it's not that simple...

We've all heard the phrase: "What is a terrorist to some may be a freedom fighter to others". For Western public opinion, an individual who kills dozens of people with a truck in Nice is undoubtedly a terrorist, but for today's jihadism, he is a mujahid or soldier of the Daesh caliphate who defends Islam against Western attacks. The public or the media differ in their criteria when they use the term 'terrorist' and even the experts do not agree on this point.

But before proposing a definition, we must delve a little deeper into the concept. Throughout history, many governments in the world have labelled insurgent groups that have practised violence against them as terrorists, and this word has often been chosen to describe an excessively different set of acts and events. Here are some examples of this interested use of the term 'terrorist'.

- a) A case in point is that of the South African governments of apartheid. Their official documents read that any activity that jeopardised the maintenance of law and order could be defined as terrorism. In fact, Nelson Mandela was considered by government authorities to be a terrorist, and was also included on the United States' terrorist list. Later, in 1993, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
- b) During the civil war in El Salvador between the government and a large guerrilla group calling itself the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in the 1980s, it was common for the pro-government media to define the guerrillas and their actions as terrorists. Those who supported the FMLN or were sympathetic to its cause often denounced this way of reporting on the Salvadoran conflict as unfair and inaccurate.
- c) The disproportionate use of concepts such as financial terrorism to refer to economic crimes.

## WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD WE TAKE?

Considering the confusion and demagoguery that cloud the public use of words such as 'terrorism' and 'terrorist', one option is that which certain media have adopted, i.e. to renounce the use of these terms. For example, at the time, news agency Reuters or newspaper Chicago Tribune stopped using the terms based on the argument that the word 'terrorism' had degenerated into a mere defamatory and propagandistic label without any information load. Is that really a solution? If it is, it's not without its drawbacks. If we academic researchers had to give up using any word that could be pronounced cynically, demagogically or inaccurately, our vocabulary would be restricted and we would surely have to replace these words with other more ambiguous or esoteric terms that would make the transmission of knowledge much more difficult and uncertain. The use of precise terms is very important in the pedagogy of the terrorist threat because otherwise empty spaces or inaccurate definitions might lead to uncertainty and ignorance.

As the historian Walter Laqueur says, those who have chosen to erase the word terrorism from their vocabulary are similar to those who prefer to use 'agricultural tool' rather than a 'shovel'.

## PROPOSAL FOR SCIENTIFIC DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

There are more than a hundred definitions of terrorism in academic literature. A questionnaire addressed to international experts found that the concept of violence appeared in 83% of the definitions, that of politics in 65% and that of fear or terror in 51%. Therefore, it seems that we are approaching a definition, since there is a wide consensus that terrorism is a type of violence that pursues political and/or religious objectives through the fear it generates.

The terms 'terrorism' or 'terrorist' undoubtedly refer to a particular emotional state: terror. Etymologically, the word 'terrorism' comes from the Latin *terrere*, which means to provoke a tremor. If we combine it with the Latin origin suffix *-ism*, referring to 'the practice of', it results in: the practice of terror.

In its first meaning, the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) defines terror as an 'especially intense fear'. We can therefore deduce that terrorist acts are characterised by their ability to instil and project the psychological state of very intense fear. However, terror can be caused by other phenomena, such as an earthquake, the fear of flying in a plane or a zombie apocalypse...

We therefore need to be more precise with our definition of terrorism. We need not only a psychological state but also an act. The word 'action' (an act) is equivalent to human intentional behaviour, that is, the whole series of manifest behaviours that do not constitute a simple spontaneous and uncontrolled reaction to some environmental stimulus. 'Action' (an act) is equivalent to a conscious and voluntary behaviour that is the result of a plan or purpose and that carries certain consequences. We cannot talk about terrorism if the terror has not been wanted, desired, planned and anticipated. Lenin himself said that "terrorism has a purpose and this purpose is to terrorise". Terrorise, but not in any way but through actions that involve the exercise or threat of physical violence on people and objects.

**TABLE 1.1.** Proposed definition of terrorism

Successive acts of violence executed to instil terror(*)	Terror + act
This is certainly an objective and clear definition, although it is perhaps too closely linked to the literalness of the term.	

(\*) Source: second definition of terrorism in the RAE dictionary.

We must take into account certain variables when analysing terrorism.

- a) In reality, terror is the ideal tactical or strategic objective of any terrorist campaign. However, it is more correct to use the word 'fear' to describe the main psychological effect caused, with different degrees of intensity, by terrorist actions on the victims and the potential target of their activity. Fear is man's greatest enemy, to the point of being able to explain any situation from this point of view: fear of death, fear of failure, fear of failing our loved ones, fear of loneliness, fear of conflict, fear of not being accepted, fear of change and new challenges. Fear has a devastating effect on societies: it makes them manipulable and fragile; but it generates an additional problem: fear educates and is transmitted from parents to children, from rulers to citizens, from teachers to students.
- b) Fear will be caused by the threat directed towards a potential victim by a letter or a graffiti on the door of their house and fear will cause the irruption of a group

of terrorists in a Parisian nightclub. The objective of the actions will be the same, but certainly the intensity of the fear they will generate will be proportional to the perpetrated act.

- c) The perception of fear is very important. Statistically speaking, the number of victims caused by terrorism in recent years in Europe is significantly lower than those caused by road accidents, but the perception of fear is much more intense when we talk about terrorism. Why? Because fear is epidermal and terrorist attacks want to communicate and spread a message to the effect of: "You, who are now observers, may be the next victims" or "There is no State capable of protecting you". The communicative effects of terrorist attacks serve to reinforce the emotional impact and to increase and expand fear. At present, the impact of propaganda and the media is very important in spreading fear.<sup>15</sup>
- d) Terrorism is almost always a form of political activity, as its usual purpose is to alter or preserve a particular power structure.

Let's recap: what is a terrorist act? Conscious and voluntary human acts involving the carrying out or threat of physical violence for some instrumental purpose often of a political, religious or sectarian nature. Unlike other forms of violence, terrorist attacks are not primarily aimed at neutralising or destroying victims, but at psychologically influencing their direct or indirect viewers. But we are not finished yet because terrorism, moreover, incorporates two distinctive variables:

- firstly, terrorism is not carried out through single or unconnected operations, but through a systematic succession of attacks and threats;
- moreover, these acts are mostly directed against non-combatant populations, especially members of civil society.

Therefore, we could define terrorism with the three academic proposals cited in the table below.

**TABLE 1.2.** Definitions of terrorism: three academic proposals

**Fernando Reinares**

To speak of terrorism is to speak of violence. First of all, we can consider an act of violence to be terrorism when the psychic impact it causes in a given society or in some sector of it far exceeds its purely material consequences. That is, when the emotional reactions of anxiety or fear that the violent act provokes within a given population are disproportionate to the physical harm caused intentionally to people or things.

**Bruce Hoffman**

Terrorism, as a widely-accepted concept, is fundamentally and inherently political. It is about power or acquiring and using it to bring about political change. Terrorism is therefore violence or —just as important— the threat of violence used and directly related to a political purpose.

**Luis de la Corte**

A premeditated succession of violent and intimidatory acts carried out on a non-combatant population and designed to psychologically influence a much larger number of people than the total number of direct victims and which almost always has a political, religious or sectarian objective.

15. This aspect is discussed further in Chapter 3.

## WHY DOES TERRORISM EXIST?

The Croatian philosopher Srećko Horvat believes that "any discourse around terrorism that highlights negative aspects of the system is condemned to remain a discourse on the edge of political correctness". The dangers of reducing reasoning to mainstream or public opinion have already been mentioned in this book's introduction.

Over-simplification in explanations of terrorism is a temptation to which politicians, the media and the public easily succumb and against which academics are also not immune. In their most reckless forms, these simplifications offer explanations of terrorism based on a single set of causal factors, which describe an attack as an act of madness, by a fanatic or by the injustice of the global political and economic system. These clichés are useful for ratifying prejudices, but not for understanding and analysing the phenomenon from a scientific perspective.

### INTENTIONAL CAUSES

Terrorists *want* to achieve certain objectives derived from their political or religious beliefs. At the same time, *they decide* to act using violence and intimidation because *they believe that* these actions are the most effective means of achieving their goals. Finally, terrorism is not improvised, but requires a plan (a strategy) that the terrorists are responsible for implementing. Therefore, the *intentions or intentional factors* constitute the basis for any rigorous explanation of terrorism.

But intentions cannot be dissociated from external facts and the preceding experiences that give rise to them. The external background factors that precede terrorist activity fall into the following three categories.

### PRECONDITIONS OR TERRORIST BREEDING GROUND

For example, several studies suggest that having grown up in a violent environment or having witnessed or been a victim of acts of strong repression may be a precondition for a terrorist vocation.

### PRECIPITATORS OR DETONATORS

Grievances are the most common type of trigger. Ariel Sharon's visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque esplanade on 28 September 2000 precipitated the second intifada, which led to an increase in terrorist attacks by several Palestinian terrorist organisations such as Hamas.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Terrorism has no choice but to adjust its actions to each circumstance and to adapt them to its available resources at any given time. The life of a terrorist organisation is not linear; rather, depends on a multiplicity of variables. The Arab Spring or reformist current that spread through Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain after the incidents triggered by the Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi when he carried out self-immolation in December 2010, could be seen as the opportunity that

gave rise to many terrorist groups that later appeared. No one could have foreseen that an individual event would provoke a global response of great impact in such a short space of time.

## VARIABLES OF INTEREST IN TERRORISM ANALYSIS

### MACRO-SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Like any other human activity, terrorist actions emerge in a certain social and geographical environment. Not all societies have experienced terrorism, at least not with the same frequency and intensity. It seems that explanations of terrorism that focus only on large macro-social variables underestimate the fact that these variables can lead to very different behaviours. It is forgotten, for example, that the political, economic, cultural or historical conditions in which terrorism has manifested itself have been the same as those experienced by a majority of people who have not acted as terrorists. Terrorism cannot be explained by looking exclusively at macro-social variables.

### DOES TERRORISM DEPEND ON ECONOMIC ISSUES?

There are some exclusively legitimising or exculpatory explanations for the causes of terrorism. This diagnosis considers that the main causes of terrorism are economic inequalities, political oppression, colonialism, imperialism or social injustices. The German philosopher Michael Walzer, who has studied the moral justifications for political violence for years, recalls that “terrorists exploit oppression, injustice and human misery and these generally count...towards their excuses”. It is worth reading and reflecting on the quote from Canadian scholar Michael Ignatieff illustrated in the table below.

**TABLE 1.3.** Variables in the macro-social analysis of terrorism. Michael Ignatieff quote

Terrorists may claim to speak for the weak and defenceless, but terrorist acts in the name of liberation are quickly directed not only against the oppressor, but against all those within the group of the oppressed who oppose the use of terrorist means, or those who have collaborated or worked with the forces of the opposing side. The war against traitors, informants, sympathisers, fifth columnists and spies, or in other words, the war against your own people, is an indispensable feature of any terrorist campaign. The terrorists argue that their actions express the will of the people, but in reality the violence imposes silence and dominates their populations with the same violence that they display against the oppressor.

Economic deprivation and inequality provide two of the most common social explanations for the cause of terrorism. Terrorist organisations of the far left, anticolonialists, nationalists or fundamentalists have often declared themselves to be acting in favour of the poorest. In poorer societies, the percentage of homicides is higher than in more developed societies. There is also scientific evidence that economic problems or shortcomings encourage processes of political violence (riots, coups d'état, rebellions and civil wars). Despite these explanations, the relationship between economic deprivation and violence does not follow such a simple pattern. Most disadvantaged people are more concerned with their daily struggle for income, food and opportunities for their children than with any violent struggle.

Taking into account the available scientific studies, a strict cause-effect relationship between poverty and terrorism cannot be established. Terrorism is a virtually unknown phenomenon among the 49 countries that the United Nations considers least developed because of their low incomes, lack of resources and low economic diversification. We could consider that, if there were a direct connection between terrorism and poverty, Africa would have many more terrorist groups than there are today. Moreover, many of the terrorist groups operating in Africa today are inspired by jihadist ideology rather than directly by issues of economic inequality. In fact, the discourses and objectives of economic prosperity rarely occupy space in the jihadist ideology.

More generally, since the end of the Second World War, terrorism has been more frequent in developed societies than in underdeveloped ones. Therefore, economic deprivation has not acted as a cause of the terrorisms that have emerged in prosperous countries, such as ETA terrorism, racist and neo-Nazi movements in the United States and Europe, jihadist terrorism by Daesh or Al-Qaeda, or ecoterrorism.

Finally, we find examples that completely contradict the conventional association between terrorism and poverty. American researcher Jessica Stern warns that some of the bloodiest and most violent Indonesian terrorist groups have emerged among indigenous populations living in regions particularly rich in natural resources, and that it has been the desire not to share this wealth that has stimulated their purposes of separation and their terrorist activities.

## DO TERRORISTS COME FROM DISTRESSED SOCIAL CLASSES?

To answer this question, it is necessary to look at known data on the social class of terrorists. From a comparison between different terrorist organisations integrated in the third wave of terrorism (1970-1980), Spanish academic Fernando Reinares draws two conclusions.

- a) The first conclusion is that the terrorist organisations that failed to mobilise a large number of activists were composed of middle-class and highly educated people. Some examples are the German Red Army Faction, the Japanese Red Army, the American Weathermen or the Italian Neofascists. In contrast, in the organisations that mobilised a large number of activists, the level of education and social stratum was lower, such as the Red Brigades or the IRA.
- b) The second conclusion is that in their initial stages, the vast majority of the terrorist organisations in the third wave were made up of far more middle-class and highly educated militants. The durability of the group over time favoured the recruitment of discontent persons from lower classes.

Other data supports the thesis that, in a very high proportion of cases, terrorists are not direct victims of economic inequality, or poor or ignorant. On the contrary, they are middle-class people, with sufficient training and opportunities to prosper. According to Walter Laqueur, in Latin America in the 1970s, terrorism was an activity typical of middle-class students who wanted to rebel against a consolidated oligarchy. The case with the most militants from poor social classes was Sendero Luminoso in Peru.

What can we say about jihadi terrorists? Often, we insist that these are people of

low or very low economic status. In the Middle East, many terrorist organisations are made up of a majority of poor people: Hamas or Hezbollah are some examples; but this is not an attribute exclusive to jihadists, but to a large part of the Palestinian or Lebanese population. Even so, the leadership of these terrorist organisations is in the hands of middle-class people.

The case of Al-Qaeda is interesting because there is a proliferation of university students or children of liberal professionals. In the most exhaustive and rigorous research that has been done on Al-Qaeda terrorists, the American expert Marc Sageman has obtained results that contradict the typical image of the poor and ignorant jihadist. Three out of four terrorists tested were middle or upper class. Six out of ten had received higher education. Almost all were professionals, or had part-time jobs (police, mechanics, military, etc.). As for many of the foreign fighters who have joined Daesh (the Islamic State), the same patterns are repeated as in the case of Al-Qaeda, i.e. middle class and all types of professionals.

### **DOES TERRORISM EMERGE IN DEMOCRATIC OR AUTHORITARIAN SOCIETIES?**

Historically, terrorism is a rare phenomenon in authoritarian or totalitarian systems. The most oppressive governments of the 20th century, such as the German Third Reich or the Soviet Union, did not suffer the terrorist threat, unlike many of their citizens, who were victims of the terror of their governments. Paradoxically, the greater the repressive capacity of a state, the less likely it is that any kind of protest or insurgent movement will emerge. This is the key to explaining why strong authoritarian political regimes are less vulnerable to terrorism. In contrast, failed states are excellent candidates for terrorist activity. On the other hand, historical analysis shows that terrorism is more frequent in democratic countries.

### **PSYCHOSOCIAL ANALYSIS**

When it is recognised that terrorism is not a widespread response to certain social conditions, but a minority practice, this question arises: what kind or what profile of people can become terrorists? We cannot answer this question by looking at macro-social factors alone. Therefore, we need a new level of analysis. Unlike at the macro-social level, the individual conditions or personal characteristics that define terrorists are much more defined.

### **AGE**

Most terrorists are young (19-25 years old), single men. Young people are living a transition phase dominated by the need to acquire an identity of their own, different from that provided by their family. Young people are much more open than adults to experimenting with different roles, new ways of thinking and acting, to rebelling against all kinds of prohibitions. Consequently, the demands to transform the world are never as attractive as in the years between adolescence and adulthood. Age is a particularly relevant variable in Western society, based on the culture of image, in which, without any talent, a radicalised young person can become an idol or inspiration point thanks to social networks. The impact of visual images, the fascination with violence, apocalyptic prophecies, the aesthetics of Black OPs, conspiracy theories, posing or selfies counter the nihilism of many young people

who fill their existential void and reaffirm their identity in a terrorist group that admits them as equals.

**GENDER**

The nationalist organisations that emerged during the 1960s and 1970s had a ratio of 9 out of 10 male militants. In jihadist terrorism, the rate of women is also very low, although there are exceptions, such as Chechen Black Widows or women who have joined Daesh in recent years. The highest levels of women's participation have been recorded in some far-left organisations such as the RAF, where women made up as much as a quarter of the total number of its members. Finally, in far-right groups, the proportion of women is three times lower than in far-left groups.

There are basically two explanations for male dominance in terrorist organisations. The first is based on the superior innate aggressiveness of men compared to women. The other explanation is based on ideological or cultural arguments. The lower proportion of female Muslim terrorists is closely linked to the role that jihadism gives to women, which is more linked to the care of children and the maintenance of the family home. In the same way, the large quota of women in far-left organisations is very much reflected in the ideology of these groups, which made women's liberation one of their maxims.

**ARE TERRORISTS MENTALLY DISTURBED?**

The behaviour and speech of terrorists is often reminiscent of those of individuals who are affected by mental dysfunction or disorder. Post-attack media coverage is often associated with news stories such as 'action by a disturbed person' or "the perpetrator of the terrorist act has a psychiatric background". This is why a wide variety of pathological explanations for terrorism have been put forward. However, with the information accumulated after decades of research, it can be stated that the vast majority of known terrorists have not suffered from severe psychopathological disorders.

<b>TABLE 1.4. Variables in the psychosocial analysis of terrorism. The Anders Behring Breivik Case</b>	
Anders Behring Breivik <sup>16</sup> was initially defined by the media as a person suffering from psychiatric disorders.	This is a good example of the care that must be exercised in the assessment of cases.
In a first forensic psychiatric evaluation, Breivik was found to be suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. However, a second assessment concluded that he was not suffering from any significant psychological or psychiatric disturbance and was therefore fully responsible for his actions.	

The perplexity and indignation caused by terrorist acts encourages us to reject the idea that their executioners could be ordinary people. However, the data shows that the majority of terrorists do not suffer from any underlying pathology or mental disorder. There is also insufficient evidence to allow for the development of a generic personality profile that is particularly prone to terrorism. The individual psychology of terrorists is not completely homogeneous; their personalities vary, and so do their psychological traits. Therefore, generalisations in this area are quite risky.

16. Perpetrator of the 2011 attacks in Oslo and Utøya, in which he killed 77 people.

## INSURGENCY, SUBVERSION, WARFARE AND COUNTERINSURGENCY.

Here we analyse the characteristics of other forms of political violence and the distinction between them: guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, popular revolt or uprising, coup d'état, etc. Often, what some interpret as terrorism, others define as actions typical of guerrilla warfare or conventional armed conflict. For example, in the face of the American occupation of Iraq, the actions of the insurgent group Al-Qaeda in Iraq —the beginnings of Daesh— were considered to be actions of resistance in many Arab countries. In other words, terrorism is a type of political violence that tends to be confused with other forms of political violence, such as guerrilla warfare or conventional warfare. If we are to avoid this confusion, therefore, we need to clarify what variables characterise other violent means that pursue political objectives and are often confused with terrorism.

If we refer to the Italian mafia as a terrorist organisation, we could surely suggest a wrong or very vague idea of the kind of activities that take up the time of the mafia. The same could be said of a guerrilla group or a regular army that may or may not have used terrorist tactics.

Most armed conflicts in recent years have taken place within the borders of a single State and have pitted Governments against non-State armed groups, most of which are insurgent in nature. For this reason and because of the importance that scenarios such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya have acquired, insurgency has become a frequent term in security studies. When talking about insurgency, there are a number of preliminary considerations that are noted below.

- Reference is not made to the exercise of a casual, fortuitous or random type of violence, but to violence that pursues a specific objective of a political nature.
- Popular support —as we shall see now— is a key element of the insurgency and occupies a central position in its strategy. Recognition and acceptance by the population is fundamental to the movement and will largely determine the likelihood of its success or failure.
- Insurgency is often characterised by an imbalance of forces; consequently, insurgents opt for an asymmetric, usually prolonged, confrontation where psychological warfare and political mobilisation become central tools of their strategy.

### INSURGENCY

Some of the official definitions of insurgency are given in the table below.

**TABLE 1.5.** Official definitions of insurgency

CIA Guide to Analysis of Insurgency (1980)  
Political-military activity aimed at obtaining partial or total control of a country's resources through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organisations.

British Army Field Manual (2001)  
Actions taken by a minority group within a state to force political change through a combination of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, persuading or intimidating the population to accept this change.

U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (2007)  
An insurgency is an organised and sustained political-military confrontation aimed at weakening the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power or other political authority, while increasing insurgent control.

Spanish doctrinal publication on counterinsurgency PD3-301 (2008)  
An organised violent movement that undertakes a prolonged struggle in order to change the established political order.

## FROM PROTOINSURGENCY TO CONSOLIDATED INSURGENCY

There are a number of factors that influence the transition from a protoinsurgency to a consolidated insurgency.

### a) Generate a relevant political identity

To succeed, the proto-insurgents must appropriate or create an identity that will earn the loyalty of their followers and counteract the political authority they challenge. Exceptional or triggering circumstances such as foreign occupation, prolonged suffering from injustice or ethnic conflict help to highlight identity issues associated with the insurgency.

### b) Raising an attractive cause

Identity alone is not enough. Proto-insurgents need to link the cause to some kind of grievance that mobilises thousands of people. The most attractive causes are: the fight against social inequality, against ethnic exclusion or against foreign occupation, as they can recruit militants and obtain social support. If there is no attractive cause, the proto-insurgents will be perceived as a group of criminals who resort unnecessarily to violence.

### c) Attract a large number of committed supporters

This condition derives from the success of the first two and feeds the loop that generalises the insurgency. Size is a determining factor, because a small group cannot sustain large-scale political mobilisation, nor can it wage guerrilla warfare.

### d) Prevailing over rival groups

Often the main adversary of the proto-insurgents is not so much the declared enemy as other groups that share a similar cause and with whom they compete to recruit and finance themselves. In some cases, the competition can be resolved by creating alliances or common fronts, but in other cases it can lead to armed confrontation with other sectors of the opposition whom the proto-insurgents will brand as traitors.

17. Ba'athism is an Arab ideology with socialist and secular components, founded on the struggle against European colonialism. It was one of the ideological bases for Pan-Arabism. *Baas* in Arabic means resurrection, as a symbol of the unity of the Arabic language and a common bond that should enable the peoples from Morocco to Iraq to be united in one nation. Precisely in Iraq, Saddam Hussein turned the Ba'ath Party into a tool of power and control of an authoritarian state.

Joining the party became an almost obligatory step to access job promotions, military or economic advantages. During the Gulf War in 1991, Saddam Hussein's regime approached religious leaders by renouncing the principle of Ba'ath Party secularism. After the fall of Hussein in 2003, the US authorities banned the party and initiated a De-Ba'athification policy to expel a huge number of party members —like the army or the police— from Iraqi institutions. Subsequently, this US administration policy was considered a strategic error as many of these Ba'ath Party members were military and police officers who were integrated into the Iraqi insurgency.

### e) Refuge

Insurgencies that do not have a refuge have little chance of survival. In contrast, insurgents who have a refuge increase the likelihood of a victory against the established regime. Proto-insurgents can find refuge in mountainous areas, forests, jungles or remote parts of the country. Another option is to hide in urban environments that are gradually fleeing state control, as happened in the Iraqi insurgency.

### f) External support

The assistance of other states is essential in the birth of an insurgency. International support can take the form of shelter, training camps, funding, military advice, weapons... The Việt Cộng would hardly have been viable without the help of the USSR or China; Hezbollah, without the support of Iran or Syria, or Hamas, Al-Qaeda or Daesh, without the help of Saudi Arabia or other Muslim countries.

### g) Socio-political context and state capacity

States with resources, effective administration and representative institutions are better able to meet the basic needs of the population and reduce the incentives that fuel political violence. Strong states have effective coercive resources to neutralise insurgent activity. For example, 'Che' Guevara chose Bolivia as a place to foment the insurgency because Cuban intelligence assessed that Bolivian forces were the most poorly organised and trained in all of Latin America.

### h) Wrong behaviour of the State

Indiscriminate repression alienates the State from the population and can facilitate support for the insurgents. For this to happen, the insurgents have to be able to protect the population from state violence and offer other types of incentives that compensate for the risks of integrating or collaborating with the insurgency. Post-war Iraq offers us a lesson in the wrong behaviour of the state: the triple decision to dissolve the Iraqi interim government, De-Ba'athification<sup>17</sup> the regime and dismantle the army reinforced the invading image of the US forces and caused widespread unrest that triggered and accelerated the insurgency.

## PURPOSE OF INSURGENCY

Generally speaking, insurgents can pursue three types of objectives:

### a) Power and political strategy

This is the case of insurgencies that try to gain control of the state in order to implement a different system of government (for example, of jihadist or Marxist inspiration). This type of insurgency can be called a subversive, insurrectionary, rebel or revolutionary movement.

### b) Political power and territory

Most insurgencies in this category are aimed at national independence, i.e. to end a situation perceived as foreign occupation (as was the case with the anti-colonial insurgencies or the Spanish guerrilla movement against Napoleon's troops). These insurgencies are known as resistances and, a priori, enjoy more legitimacy in the eyes of national and international public opinion.

**g) Local or tribal political autonomy**

These insurgencies create or maintain a situation that is beyond state control and are intended to undermine the authority of a failed state, in whole or in part, before it forms a government or creates a new state. This is the case with struggles promoted or defended by tribal leaders or warlords, who profit from the internal conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia. In many cases, their cause is not inspired by grievances but by greed and the possession of public and private property as criminal organisations.

**INSURGENCY-RELATED CONCEPTS**

The concept of insurgency must be differentiated from other associated terms. In particular, we will discuss subversion, guerrilla warfare and terrorism.

**INSURGENCY AND SUBVERSION**

Insurgency includes and transcends subversion. By subversion we mean the set of actions aimed at undermining the stability of a regime in political, economic and military terms. Subversion can be carried out with very little use of violence (for example, through street riots) or even without recourse to it. On the contrary, insurgency requires a continued and substantial use of violence; therefore, not all subversion is carried out in a context of insurgency, but all insurgency implies subversion. When subversion is directed against a dictatorial state and seeks to initiate a process of democratic transition, it is usually called dissent.

Another subversive strategy is to provoke riots, wildcat strikes and other activities that seriously disrupt social order and seriously damage the economy and the country's image abroad.

**INSURGENCY AND GUERRILLA WARFARE**

The term 'guerrilla' refers to a different military tactic from the insurgency because it is just a tactic. Guerrilla warfare avoids frontal attacks in order not to offer an identifiable target to the adversary. It doesn't intend to win the war with decisive battles. The guerrilla uses surprise, mobility and concentrated attack on a single target. This tactic is often part of the insurgency. Sometimes, guerrilla warfare includes actions that can be considered terrorist, since it is not always easy to draw a line between the two methods.

**INSURGENCY AND TERRORISM**

Terrorism is another tactic used by some insurgent movements. Let us remember the definition of terrorism as a set of violent actions that generate psychic effects disproportionate to their material consequences and that are intended to condition society's attitudes. Terrorist violence can turn against insurgents if they use it indiscriminately against the civilian population. This was the case with the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria, with Al-Qaeda in Iraq, with Sendero Luminoso in Peru and, currently, with Daesh in Syria and Iraq. Widespread terror does not ensure long-term control of the population.

## THE FIVE PILLARS OF INSURGENCY

### ARMED CONFLICT

As we have said, insurgency differs from subversion by the continued and intensive use of violence, which results in armed conflict, most of which is sometimes asymmetrical in nature. Once the proto-insurgency phase is over, the fighting averages about a decade and many insurgencies reach sixteen years in duration. However, as the conflict drags on, the chances of an insurgent victory are also reduced. And this happens for several reasons: loss of the appeal of the cause, ideological deviation of the insurgents, indiscriminate use of terrorism or deactivation of the conflict by the government through political and social reforms.

### PROPAGANDA

The insurgents need their support bases (inside and outside the country's borders) to know their cause. Faced with the imbalance in military terms, the insurgents focus on the political and psychological aspects where they can equal or exceed political authority. A crucial aspect of the insurgency and counter-insurgency is winning 'the minds and hearts' of the people. In terms of propaganda, the insurgents use the resources of the environment in which they operate, so the range of media extends from merely spreading rumours in informal groups to managing sophisticated websites. The use that the insurgent actors make of information technology, especially web 2.0, transcends the anecdotal because of the strategic implications it entails.<sup>18</sup>

### SOCIAL WELFARE

Social activities are another strategic pillar of many insurgent groups. Ideology is an important component of any insurgency, but in many cases it is insufficient to mobilise the population because a large part is apolitical or has more immediate concerns such as survival and security. Social assistance may include services of a different nature: education programs, health, employment, supply of commodities, care for victims of the conflict, etc. Welfare tasks provide a friendly image of the insurgents and create clientelist networks. No less important is the fact that social welfare can enable the transmission of insurgent ideology, especially through the educational, cultural or health services offered by the insurgent movement.

Hamas and Hezbollah are two organisations with extensive experience in this type of activity. But also Marxist-inspired insurgent groups such as the FMLN in El Salvador or the Eritrean People's Liberation Front put this strategy into practice.

### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

When the social and political context allows for it, the creation or infiltration of civic associations, trade unions or even political parties contributes to the extension of the insurgent movement. In exceptional cases, insurgent actors may play inside and/or outside the system, such as Hamas and Hezbollah. The integration of insur-

<sup>18</sup> The current relevance of propaganda to terrorism will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

gent actors (or actors with an insurgent past, as is the case with Hezbollah) in the political system offers the opportunity for them to abandon violence and opt for the reformist rather than the revolutionary path.

## FOREIGN RELATIONSHIPS

Foreign support is the last key aspect in the development and continuity of an insurgency. Among foreign support, the one which stands out is that provided by other States, as it is usually translated into shelter, financing, supply of weapons, training, etc. Indeed, insurgencies often target a global audience in order to capitalise on foreign support.

## COUNTERINSURGENCY

Counterinsurgency (COIN) combines offensive, defensive and stabilisation operations. It requires flexible forces and considerable effort in time and resources. See the following table for two definitions of counterinsurgency.

**TABLE 1.6.** Official definitions of counterinsurgency

U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (2007)  
Military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological or civilian actions carried out by a government to overcome the insurgency.

Spanish doctrinal publication on counterinsurgency PD3-301 (2008)  
A set of political, diplomatic, economic, social and military, law enforcement, civil and psychological activities necessary to overcome an insurgency.

COIN actions call for a multi-dimensional approach combining economic, political and social solutions, as disconnected actions can cancel each other out and open windows of opportunity for the insurgency. Concerted action is needed by the state and non-state actors involved: civilian administration, police, intelligence services, international humanitarian agencies, NGOs, international military forces, etc.

We find two examples of the failure of a COIN in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. In these two countries, the strategy of winning hearts and minds discussed about from the beginning, but for various reasons its implementation largely failed. In the case of the American forces, there was an excess of optimism towards the attitudes of the Iraqi and Afghan populations. It was expected that, because they had been liberated from evil regimes, they would welcome the occupying forces with open arms. There were no viable reconstruction plans, no organised government in exile, no money to maintain and repair basic services or reorganise the security forces. In reality, the concept of winning hearts and minds was interpreted in a prosaic way, that is, it could be summed up in smiles, handshakes and handing out sweets to children.

**TABLE 1.7. How did COIN fail in Iraq?**

<p>In the case of Iraq, when people found that there were far fewer hours of electricity supply, the possibility of being mugged in the streets increased exponentially and the possibility of finding a job decreased equally, the strategy was shaken.</p> <p>This lack of security gradually reduced the novelty feeling of the recovery of freedom and the smiles of their liberators. But the situation worsened when the smiles and candy disappeared in the face of the first attacks by the Iraqi insurgency.</p>	<p>The American forces' obsession with security gradually drove the military away from the civilian population and a wall of precautions, incidents and grievances appeared. We recall that grievances can be triggers or accelerators of terrorism. In this case, jihadism and insurgent groups were able to gain media coverage of incidents such as the torture of inmates in Abu Ghraib prison. The Iraqi Shiite government isolated and persecuted the Sunni community in Iraq and this also triggered the formation of some Sunni insurgent groups who were seen by the population as Mujahideen fighting against the US occupation forces and a government that was mistreating them.</p>
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**TABLE 1.8. How did COIN fail in Afghanistan?**

<p>The process was similar in Afghanistan and the strategy of winning hearts and minds failed for the same reasons, even though the process was slower. The Afghan population was in such a state of poverty that it could hardly imagine conditions worse than those it was already suffering in 2001. The arrival of the Western soldiers was welcomed, not because they brought with them freedom and democracy, but because they represented the hope of improving the local standard of living. As in Iraq, the strategy had been based on ideas rather than material facts. This lack of materialisation of the hopes placed on it led to fatigue and disappointment among Afghans.</p>
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Fortunately, in both cases the correct approach of a COIN was recovered. To a large extent, this success has been based on the transfer of control of security from multinational forces to local forces. In both cases, it has been recognised that the prolonged presence of foreign forces is unsustainable and that the strategy of winning over the hearts and minds of the people is degraded when a repeated dynamic of escalating violence is applied. The civilian population can only endure foreign forces for a limited time, if they find them useful in improving their daily lives and if their numbers gradually decrease rather than increase.

**TABLE 1.9. Paradoxes of counterinsurgency**

<p>a) The more you protect your forces, the less safe you are. Counterinsurgents win by protecting society, not themselves.</p>
<p>b) The more military forces you use, the less effective you are, as the chances of mistakes and innocent victims are increased, which benefits insurgent propaganda.</p>
<p>c) Sometimes doing nothing is the best answer. Insurgents often commit terrorist attacks in order to provoke overreaction.</p>
<p>d) COIN's best weapon does not fire bullets: counterinsurgency is won by providing the native government with popular support and legitimacy not by killing insurgents.</p>
<p>e) If a tactic works this week, it won't work next week. If it's going well in this province, it doesn't necessarily mean it will do well in another. Insurgency tends to learn and apply countermeasures quickly. Counterinsurgents have to avoid complacency and adapt as quickly or more quickly than their adversaries.</p>

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The causes of terrorism vary considerably from case to case. Terrorism can be born in poor societies, but also in prosperous and democratic societies.
2. The socio-economic pattern of the composition of terrorist groups is varied and does not confirm the stereotype of the terrorist who has always emerged from the most disadvantaged strata.
3. The equation: negative social conditions = negative emotional response = violence does not describe any universal law.
4. The analysis of terrorism shows us that it is multi-causal and that within this multiplicity of variables we find economic, political, cultural and personal causes.



## CHAPTER 2

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# TYPES OF TERRORISM

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*I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into  
confusion every nation you encounter.  
I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run.*  
Exodus 23:27

There are various classifications of terrorism according to its intent, its geographical scope and political claims. In this case we choose the classification that refers to the political demands or the objectives of the terrorist group. We will discuss:

- nationalist terrorism in Europe
- far-left terrorism inspired by revolutionary movements
- far-right European fascist and American supremacist terrorism
- and, finally, so-called state or 'vigilante' terrorism

A separate chapter will require the study of individual terrorism, which has become one of the most versatile and serious threats to Western security.

## NATIONALIST TERRORISM

Nationalist terrorism targets the political segregation of part of a territory within a pre-existing State through the use of violence. The organisation that claims this objective can assume concrete ideological profiles, linked to national conservative or revolutionary left values in order to be able to present them as arguments to ask for the support of the population of reference or international actors that can provide collaboration. The great rise of the nationalist groups appears after the Second World War. The success of the terrorist practices of the Israeli group Irgun for the establishment of the State of Israel or of the Algerian war of liberation between the insurgent group of the FLN and the French Army were much studied by organisations such as ETA or the IRA.

### ETA

In 1959, an organisation, eminently cultural in nature, was created, called *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) which stands as a defender of the Basque identity and values:

as its main objectives, it advocates for the regeneration of Basque culture, the teaching of Euskera and the history of the Basque Country. Its initial activities were limited to the placement of ikurrinas (Basque flags). The objective pursued by ETA, according to its ideological postulates, was to fight for the freedom of an oppressed people. During this first phase, violence was one more form of struggle between a range of options, but soon they would start theorising about the possibility of adopting terrorist tactics emulating the Israeli Irgun. The first ETA militants did not form a politically homogeneous social body, nor did they have a very rigid hierarchical structure. Torture in the 1960s was a trigger for the organisation to clearly adopt a violent strategy. The influence of the Algerian war led to ETA adopting territorial divisions called *herrialdes*, modelled on the Algerian *wilayas* or those currently held by Daesh.

The event that marked the projection of ETA in the 1960s was the so-called Burgos trial, through which several militants were sentenced to very severe penalties. This trial projected a heroic image of repressed militants who fought for their principles before the Franco regime, and it was also the trigger or catalyst —let's remember the concepts of 'trigger' or 'precipitating' of Chapter 1— of the democratic sensibility opposing the regime. One of its first selective and premeditated actions was the murder of Franco's policeman Meliton Manzananas, head of the Social Investigation Brigade of Guipuzcoa. Gradually, and until Franco's death, the number of ETA victims increased. Another important event in ETA's history took place in 1974, when the terrorist organisation split into two factions:

- *Political-military ETA*, which opted for a strategy in which military activity was made subordinate to political activity
- *Military ETA*, which focused only on military strategy

The military ETA always brought together the majority of terrorist operations and perpetrated the actions against the Civil Guard, the National Police and the Lemoniz nuclear power plant in Biscay. After Franco's death and the approval of the Basque Statute in 1979, ETA continued its terrorist activity with severe attacks. At this time, its structure was much more hierarchical and the highest step was an executive committee that was made up of eight leaders who held monthly meetings on military, propaganda, economic and political issues. ETA members assumed three possible roles: released or illegal, legal and collaborating. This differentiation between part-time and full-time militant has also been made in other organisations of the time, such as the IRA and the Red Brigades.

- The *released members* of ETA were known to the police and lived and worked underground. Many of them resided in French territory, which for a long time served as a sanctuary or refuge. Those who were released were the ones who usually carried out the armed terrorist actions.
- The *legal members* were not registered with the police and this allowed them to live more ordinary lives, keep their jobs and live with their families. The degree of commitment was very different depending on each individual. The legal members made up the majority of the operational commands, even though they only met every eight months and every time the organisation's executive asked them to plan an attack. Each command or platoon was composed of a minimum of three activists and a maximum of five. Others served as couriers or did surveillance of targets.
- The *collaborators* formed support cells and performed tasks such as supplying food, clothing, shelter or falsifying documentation.

The dissolution of political-military ETA in 1981 and the establishment of an autonomous Basque government slowly changed the political landscape of the preceding years. The rise of a moderate and democratic Basque nationalism, the change of attitude of a good part of the Basque population in relation to ETA attacks and the counter-terrorism policy of the Spanish State contribute to explain the decreasing activity of ETA during the following years. In 2000, ETA had one thousand active militants and in 2010, only fifty, due to the investigative activity of the security forces and certain criminal reforms. ETA announced on October 20th, 2011 the definitive cessation of its armed activity. In 2014, ETA handed over a very small part of its arsenal to international observers. Currently, the recognition of the damage caused by ETA terrorism and the dispersion of ETA prisoners are two of the variables that require a negotiation process that has yet to begin, despite the fact that the political parties disagree on how to manage it.

## IRA

The IRA, which stands for the 'Irish Republican Army', was a terrorist organisation founded in 1919 to fight British rule in Ireland.

To understand the genesis of this terrorist organisation, we must look to history. In 1920 Ireland became independent, but six counties in the province of Ulster chose to secede from the rest of Ireland and maintain their link with Great Britain. The majority of the population of Northern Ireland was Protestant and the Irish Catholics interpreted that there was a prevalence of the Protestant religion and the dominant position of the British in the area. The free state of Ireland in 1948 became the Republic of Ireland and the British Parliament ratified the status of Northern Ireland (a breakaway part of Ireland) as part of Great Britain. From 1955, the IRA began a campaign of terrorist attacks aimed at achieving the unification of the two Irelands and, in response, in 1969 Great Britain sent its army to Northern Ireland. Support for the IRA increased as it stepped up its attacks on Protestant activists, unionists and the British army. But in the same year, 1969, differences over the use of terrorist tactics led to the splitting of the IRA into two groups:

- the *Provisional IRA*, which defended the armed struggle and terrorism as the only way to achieve the unification of the two Irelands
- the *Official IRA/Official Sinn Féin organisation* (political arm), which valued the political path to achieve the objectives

On 30 January 1972, on the sadly named Bloody Sunday, during a demonstration in Derry in support of civil rights and against the imprisonment without trial of IRA suspects, British troops killed 14 protesters.

The political objective of this terrorist organisation was the union of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland and its organisational manual is contained in the so-called Green Paper, a type of internal constitution loaded with military rhetoric that the IRA provided to its militants.<sup>19</sup> In its early days, the IRA was connected with a military structure in brigades, battalions and companies led by a number of higher departments. The control over the members of the organisation was very strict and the functions of each structure were very defined.

By 1975, the IRA modified its structure and, while retaining some of its military characteristics, the organisation mutated into a more cellular form and replaced brigades, battalions and companies with small groups or platoons of between 3 and

**TABLE 2.1.** Bloody Sunday in Derry, recalled by U2

This case was recalled in a song by the Irish group U2 entitled 'Sunday Bloody Sunday', which speaks of suffering, the absurdity of violence and hatred. The lyrics of a section of the song follow:

*And the battle's just begun  
There's many lost, but tell  
me who has won  
The trench is dug within our  
hearts  
And mothers, children,  
brothers, sisters torn apart  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
How long? How long must  
we sing this song?  
How long? How long?*

19. This fact is not extraordinary in terrorist organisations. For example, Al-Qaeda produced several manuals, the most famous being the *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad* ETA also circulated to its support environments the so-called *Zutabes*, which contained communications and operational guidelines of the organisation.

10 members. These platoons worked independently but could not make strategic decisions; rather, they followed the orders and guidelines of the central authority. This type of cell structure was adopted for safety reasons since, as they were isolated from each other, in the event of the capture of one of these cells or platoons, the viability of the rest of the organisation was not compromised.

In 1998 the Real IRA—a breakaway from the Provisional IRA—carried out a car bombing in Omagh, killing 29 people. Shortly afterwards, in the face of the outright rejection of all political forces in Northern Ireland and even of the Official IRA itself, this new group announced a truce.

After many obstacles to the peace process between the British Government and the Northern Irish authorities, in 2002 the IRA expressed its commitment to the peaceful path and apologised for the civilians killed or injured over the years as a result of its armed activity. The Provisional IRA was officially considered dismantled in 2008, although there were some other splits in the organisation.

## FAR-LEFT TERRORISM

Far-left terrorism started to take shape in Europe at the end of the 1960s inspired by the revolutionary postulates of the Marxist, Leninist and Maoist models, impregnated with a *foco* theory (*foquismo*), exemplified in the actions of Ernesto Guevara and the Cuban Revolution. The far-left terrorist groups in Europe had no social support and in many cases were reduced to university groups with the support of workers' movements. However, they left an imprint that can still be seen in many manifestations of our society. Left-wing terrorism is based on an ideology that emerged in middle-class intellectual sectors that sought a transformative and rupturist yearning against the perverse effects of capitalism, unlike nationalist terrorism, which seeks the segregation of a territory for ethno-nationalist reasons.

## THE CHINESE AND CUBAN SEEDS

The international order established after the Second World War remained oblivious to the political and social upheavals occurring in other settings. Following the success of the communist revolution in China in 1949, the philosophy of revolutionary war permeates different processes that find in the Maoist model the practical realization of achieving power through subversion. Mao Tse-tung's strategy was based on the principles laid down by Clausewitz, who said that 'war is politics with bloodshed'. He considered that the purpose of a war is precisely to eliminate war and achieve perpetual peace (an elimination that does not include just war, which is waged by the oppressed classes against the dominant ones). The 1949 triumph of Chinese communism was seen by the Third World as a boost to this complex mode of armed confrontation. The revolutionary atmosphere spread in Latin America. In fact, it was the triumph of the Cuban Revolution that served as a catalyst for the process, along with the French May 1968.

The Argentinean revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara defended the thesis that it is not essential that objective conditions exist in a country to develop a revolutionary process, but that only minimum conditions are necessary to form a first guerrilla group and thus constitute the revolutionary focus. This is the *foco* theory, which inspired many far-left groups. In fact, Guevara, after the Cuban Revolution, marched to Bolivia in search of involvement of the United States to be able to fly

the flag of anti-imperialism and force them into violent intervention with the aim of ending a civil war as a step towards its extension throughout the South American continent. The failure of this experience frustrated Fidel Castro's plans to export the revolution.

## GENESIS OF EUROPEAN LEFT-WING GROUPS

Europe watched the Chinese and Cuban revolutionary processes with interest to adapt them to a society where the younger generation was beginning to question the capitalist socio-economic system. The rise of far-left terrorism in Europe was in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Contrary to the classical Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which considered that the armed struggle had to be selective and always ascribed to a subversive process, the European 'new left' that emerged from university environments and workers' movements designated violence as the central nucleus for developing its revolutionary strategy inspired by the theory of Guevara's *foquismo* and driven by the success of other revolutionary and subversive movements in China, Vietnam or Cuba.

The ideological creed of these groups has some remarkable characteristics:

- capitalism is the root cause of all the problems of the proletariat and can only be displaced by force
- the traditional communist parties have lost their right to represent the proletariat
- the revolutionary struggle has two phases: propaganda and revolutionary civil war

## RED ARMY FACTION (RAF)

The RAF, a German acronym for *Roter Armee Fraktion*, is a terrorist group that appeared in 1970 in the Federal Republic of Germany. It was also known to the German authorities as the Baader-Meinhof group, which was the name of its leaders Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. Their goal, like all far-left groups of the time, was to defeat the capitalist-imperialist system. The RAF wanted to form an anti-imperialist front in Western Europe, together with other groups in France and Belgium. Their terrorist activity consisted of placing explosive devices in official centres, kidnapping politicians or robbing banks, but without a strong ideological basis for their actions. In 1975, members of the RAF, under the leadership of Venezuelan terrorist Carlos 'El Chacal' (the Jackal),<sup>20</sup> attacked the office of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The RAF continued to perpetrate terrorist actions until the early 1980s. The state apparatus of Federal Germany reacted strongly against the terrorist activities of the RAF. In 1992, when its founding leaders had already died, the RAF published a statement in which it conditioned the end of the armed struggle "on a solution to the problem of the prisoners" and in April 1998 it published its dissolution as a terrorist group. In the trials that took place, the members of the RAF asked to be treated as enemy soldiers.<sup>21</sup> Although they called themselves 'The RAF's Urban Guerillas', the government and the media referred to them as the Baader-Meinhof group, trying to delegitimise their subversive and terrorist movement.

Like the great majority of European far-left groups, the activities of these terrorist organisations were derived from a revolutionary idealism inspired by the Cuban or Chinese revolutions, and were directed towards a forward flight, without popular support and without any solid ideological component beyond the initial postulates which, with the passage of time, became obsolete.

**IMAGE 3.2.**  
RAF leaders Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof



Photos: DPA, German News Agency

20. Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, better known as 'El Chacal', was a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FPAP), among other terrorist groups.

21. So did the Italian Red Brigades.

## GRAPO

In Spain, the terrorist violence of the far left presents the peculiarity with respect to other European organisations in approaching real combat against a dictatorial regime that rural (maquis) and urban (anarchist) guerrilla methods had already attempted to overthrow in previous decades. In October 1964, the newly formed Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Spain (PCE), a pioneer of the Spanish Maoist groups, proclaimed the need for an anti-Franco 'people's war' that would have to be carried out by the Revolutionary Armed Forces. Once Franco died, the Spanish far-left terrorist group First of October Anti-Fascist Resistance Groups (GRAPO) emerged. The structure of the group was always very small and, according to existing sources, consisted of about 30 or 40 people. Their terrorist activity included kidnapping businessmen, attacking police and military personnel and handling explosive devices, as well as robbing banks or armoured cars as a source of financing for the group.

It never managed to establish itself as a revolutionary terrorist group and this fact, together with the dismantling of its structure on several occasions, caused its terrorist activity to become increasingly residual. However, since its inception, the terrorist group has killed 80 people and 19 of its activists were killed in clashes with Spanish security forces.

## FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM

The antagonism of far-left terrorist groups has their genesis in far-right European groups. Sometimes it was the result of the so-called strategy of tension, which consisted of the far right's attempt to create a climate of chaos and lack of confidence in institutions in order to impose a strong government during the 1970s and 1980s. In Italy, this 'strategy of tension' was very evident in the Italian neo-fascist far right, with terrorist groups such as Ordine Nuovo or Fronte Nazionale, which took advantage of the terrorist campaign of the far-left revolutionary group of the Red Brigades to push the social climate to the limit. In Spain, although in a different context, this strategy also emerged with far-right groups.<sup>22</sup>

**TABLE 2.2.** Main characteristics of far-right extremist groups

a) The identification with the totalitarian postulates of Italian Fascism, Spanish Falangism and German Nazism. Even so, the new far right avoids linking itself to this fascism and accepts the parliamentary system.
b) Of an anti-system nature.
c) They understand violence as a political instrument to subvert the established system.
d) They hold an exclusive discourse on the basis of race, cultural differences, religion
e) One of the usual narratives of today's far right is the fight against the Islamisation of the West: they promote Islamophobic discourses and equate Muslims, immigrants and refugees with jihadi terrorists.
f) There is currently discursive feedback between jihadism and the far right which, as we have seen in the first sections, aims to polarise society in order to foster a climate of tension and the proliferation of hate speech, of dichotomous arguments of 'them against us' and of violent extremist narratives.

22. For some authors it is a term that corresponds to the far right.

## SPANISH FAR-RIGHT TERRORIST GROUPS

After the death of the dictator Francisco Franco, various far-right terrorist groups emerged in Spain and carried out terrorist attacks against people of opposing ideologies. The Spanish Basque Battalion, the Anti-Communist Apostolic Alliance (or Triple A) or the Warriors of Christ the King were some of these terrorist groups. The different actions they carried out caused the death of more than sixty people, from ETA militants to left-wing lawyers or trade unionists. Its members were civilians, police and military more or less linked to the Franco regime. The final objective they pursued was to contribute to the destabilisation of Spain's fledgling democracy. As democracy was becoming more and more consolidated and after the failed coup d'état of February 23rd, 1981, these groups went into decline until they disappeared shortly thereafter. Some of the members of these far-right groups were the beginnings of what would later become the Antiterrorist Liberation Groups (GAL), which fall under the heading of state terrorism.

## SUPREMACISTS

Jihadism pursues as a subsidiary objective to foster among Muslims a sense of grievance from the West towards Islam. The toxic grievances of the jihadist narrative orbit around premises such as: 'The West attacks Islam' or 'Jihadists defend Muslims against attacks by kaffir'. The starting premise of the jihadist narrative is clear: to promote a common consciousness of aggression against Islam with the aim of mobilising ideological and/or operational support among Western Muslims. Through this promotion, a sense of belonging to the jihadist cause is fostered.

Terrorist actions in the West often lead to an increase in expressions of Islamophobia. It is not a minor side effect; rather, is intended to polarise the Western Muslim community from the rest. Any violent act committed against Muslims in the West is instrumentalised by jihadism to obtain profit and to favour individual and collective processes of radicalisation. Particular attention should therefore be paid to the rise in individual terrorist actions in the West or the emergence of violent groups that attack Muslim interests such as shops, mosques, associations that take in refugees... Recent studies on the impact of Twitter have found that the number of followers of white nationalist movements in the US has increased exponentially. Today they outperform Daesh in almost every social metric, from the number of followers to the number of tweets per day.

There are groups that justify violence on racial grounds. These groups share some idiosyncratic features:

- in the case of the United States, the clear rejection of the federal government
- hatred of minorities
- Islamophobia
- the defence at all costs of the right to bear firearms
- and a defence of the idea of 'sovereign citizen'

In recent years, terrorist actions linked to the far right have increased.

The deadliest episode linked to far-right terrorism in Europe was that of Norwegian Anders Behring Breivik in 2011, who killed 77 people in the Oslo and Utøya attacks. Breivik, author of the manifesto 'European Declaration of Independence', issued shortly before the attacks, made the following reflection:

One of the great strengths of our enemies, the European cultural Marxists and their multiculturalist regimes is their vast resources and their advanced investigation/forensic capabilities. There are thousands of video cameras all over European major cities and you will always risk leaving behind DNA, fingerprints, witnesses or other evidence that will eventually lead to your arrest. They are superior in almost every respect. But every seven-headed monster has an Achilles heel. This Achilles heel is their vulnerability against individual cells.

On June 18th, 2015, Dylann Roof, a 21-year-old American, broke into a Methodist church in Charleston, South Carolina, frequented by African Americans, and killed nine people. Roof entered the Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, joined a group that was in a Bible study session, and sat there for an hour before starting to shoot. Roof got up and said he was there to 'kill black people'.

On March 15th 2019, 28-year-old Australian Brenton Tarrant broke into two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, and killed 49 people. He recorded his action with a GoPro camera and later broadcast it by streaming it on social networks in search of maximum media impact. This is a novelty in the attacks committed by individual actors or ultra-right groups, but is common in jihadism as a propaganda tool.

**IMAGE 2.2.** Cover of Australian terrorist Brenton Tarrant's manifesto and screenshot of the method used



23. Speech inspired by German National Socialism and the use of similar or identical symbolism and aesthetics as in the Third Reich. His arguments focus on the criticism of liberal parliamentary democracy; the proposal of a social and political system based on National Socialism, and on the explicitly racist, but Europeanist, idea that defends the existence of an Indo-European identity.

24. The title of the manifesto, 'The Great Replacement', is a reference to the concept of white genocide, where it is argued that the European population is being replaced by Muslims.

Tarrant's manifesto, described as a racist ecofascist 'digression' and symbolised by the black sun linked to German National Socialism,<sup>23</sup> contains a coherent, yet deeply disturbing narrative based on several key concepts and beliefs expressed by far-right white supremacy, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-government patriot movements.

Tarrant's violent extremist narrative (VEN) can be summarised as follows:

- a) The 'white nations' are experiencing an alarming cultural and racial demographic decline, caused by the low white birth rate and mass immigration or migration.
- b) The end result of this process is the demographic and cultural disappearance of Europe's heritage, which is described as a 'white genocide' and a 'great replacement'.<sup>24</sup>
- c) Their action is revenge for the deaths of Europeans in terrorist attacks.

- d) His model was Anders Breivik.
- e) His goal? To be an idol, to generate violence and to encourage polarisation between the European population and immigration.
- f) Idolisation of the idea: Brenton Tarrant, according to the manifesto he circulated, accepted his hypothetical death during the attack. This is very similar to the acceptance of death by jihadists.
- g) And very important in view of our object of study: to create an atmosphere of fear as a previous substrate of a future social revolution.

25. White supremacy or white supremacism is an ideology that holds the white race superior to other races. It is a concept that describes a political ideology that promotes the social and political dominance of the white people. Today there are white supremacist groups in countries such as the United States, Australia, South Africa and Russia.

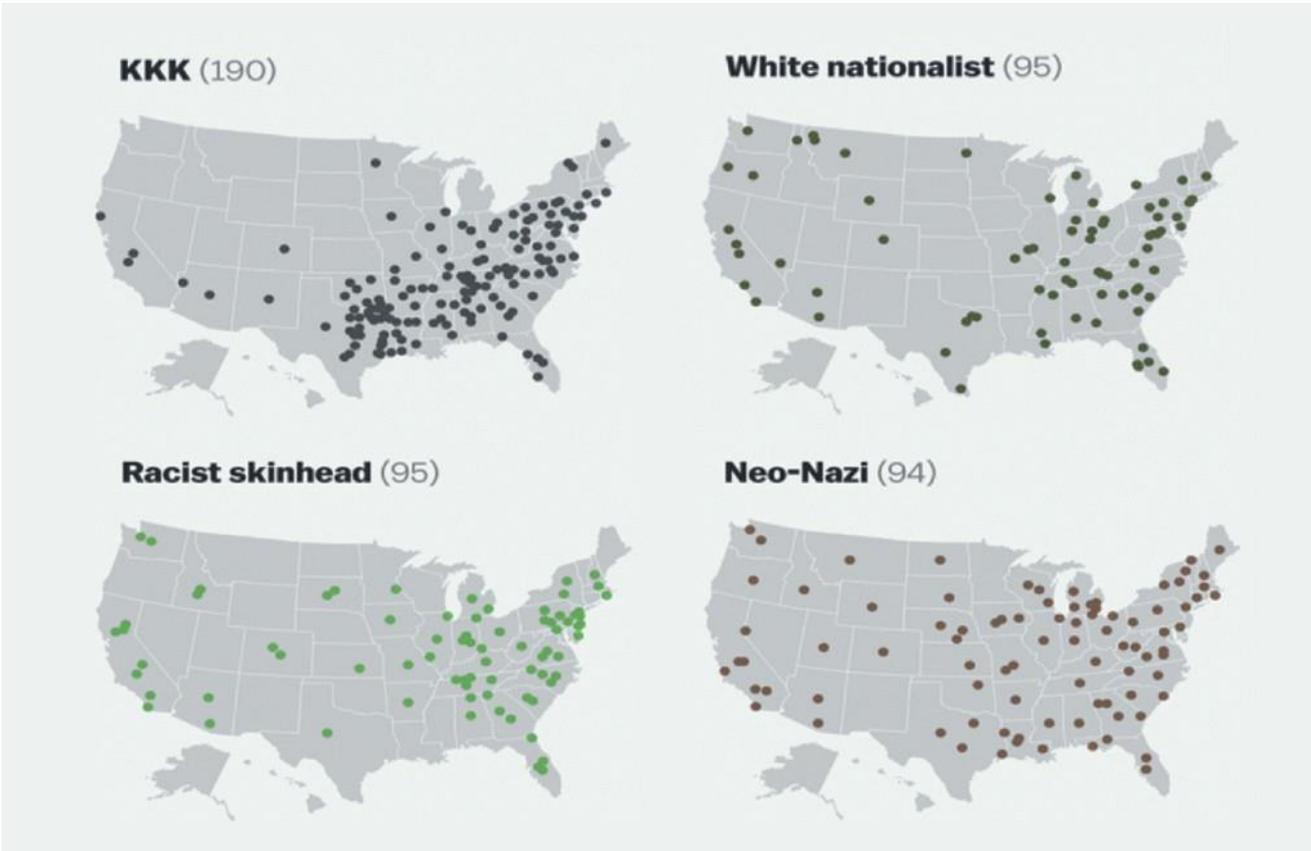
A few weeks later, on April 27th, 19-year-old John Earnest entered a synagogue in Poway, California, and shot and killed several people. The act suggests that it was a 'copycat' incident inspired by the Christchurch attack.

Below, we analyse the three movements that pose the greatest threat to the security of the United States, because of their implementation.

### WHITE SUPREMACISTS

White supremacy<sup>25</sup> is an ethnocentric ideology that holds that the white race is superior to other races such as the African, Asian or Latino. The Aryan Nations or the Ku Klux Klan are some of the groups that are part of this movement and, although they would not be officially classified by the American authorities as terrorist groups, they have employed terrorist tactics on several occasions.

**CHART 2.1.** Implementation of supremacist groups in the US UU.



Source: CroCkett, Z. (2016)

The recent case of Dylan Roof discussed above is a good example of white supremacist terrorism. The following table illustrates a case of supremacist terrorist act from a few years ago.

<b>TABLE 2.3.</b> Example of a supremacist terrorist act	
<p>On April 19th, 1995, Timothy McVeigh parked a truckload of explosives outside FBI headquarters in Oklahoma. The result of the attack was the death of 168 people. The reason for their terrorist act was to respond to the federal government for the various policies of banning weapons.</p>	<p>McVeigh was inspired by a racist propaganda novel called <i>The Turner Diaries</i> written by an American Nazi named William Pearce.</p> <p>This novel, which described —long before McVeigh's action— an attack on a federal building using a truck with explosives, captivated thousands of American extremists.</p>

## MILITARY MOVEMENT

Despite not being considered terrorist groups, it is worth mentioning the so-called paramilitary militias implanted since the 1990s in different states, such as the Michigan Militia or the Montana Militia. They are characterised by conspiracy and *survivalism*—the so-called *survivors*—, as they encourage people to prepare for the apocalypse by stockpiling weapons and food or by training in survival techniques and guerrilla warfare. They are also characterised by their hatred of Jews and their intention to overthrow the federal government, which they disparagingly call the ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government).

## THE CONTEMPORARY NORTH AMERICAN ANTI-GOVERNMENTAL PATRIOT MOVEMENT

It is composed of far-right actors who, among other variables, are mainly motivated by hostility towards the US federal government and perceived evil international influences (e.g. New World Order, United Nations). The historical origins and early incarnations of the movement were also heavily influenced by white supremacy, especially so-called Christian identity beliefs, which are based on racist and anti-Semitic interpretations of the Bible.

## VIGILANTE OR STATE TERRORISM

The use of terrorism in order to maintain existing order is called 'vigilante terrorism' and is usually carried out by governments —almost always totalitarian or authoritarian regimes— through parastatal groups that use illegitimate repressive methods with the intention of neutralising political opposition and ensuring the subjugation of the population. The manifestations it may have are coercion, kidnapping, disappearances, torture and murder. Let's look at some examples below.

- The *Salvadoran death squads* were far-right paramilitary groups, made up of the military, police without uniforms and civilians who carried out actions against political opponents of the government of El Salvador during the civil war (1979-1991).

- The *State terrorism in Argentina* developed in the period between 1970 and 1980. During this decade, the Argentinean dictatorship made 30,000 people disappear through repression, violence and torture. The military dictatorship established a clandestine structure for the repression of opponents, which included 'task forces', kidnappings, forced disappearances, detention and torture centres, disinformation in the media and the denunciation of any person suspected of activities contrary to the dictatorial regime. Especially despicable were the so-called death flights, where thousands of detainees were thrown into the sea.
- In Spain, the GAL (Antiterrorist Liberation Groups), which carried out attacks against ETA's environment. They were active between 1983 and 1987 and committed 27 murders, acting mainly in the French Basque Country, although they also kidnapped and tortured people elsewhere in Spain. Their attacks were directed against ETA militants and sympathisers, but they also killed people who had no connection with the terrorist organisation. According to the judicial investigation, members of the GAL from the law enforcement agencies received funding from State funds reserved for managing the organisation's operational issues. Among the terrorist actions committed by this organisation, the kidnapping, torture and murder of two ETA members in Alicante (Lasa and Zabala case) had special media coverage.

## INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM: LIQUID TERRORISM

This section analyses one of the most complex and unpredictable forms of terrorism: acts of violence committed by a single individual. Every time an attack of great lethality is committed, such as those in Paris, Brussels, Orlando, Nice, Berlin, Barcelona or New Zealand, the 'classic' discussion —essentially academic— that orbits between the preeminence of collective terrorism *versus* individual terrorism, resurfaces. After the attacks on the Bataclan hall in Paris or the Zaventem airport in Brussels, it was commonplace to argue that the threat of individual terrorism had been overestimated and that the real threat to the West was limited to the operational commands that carried out coordinated attacks on Europe. The actions of individual terrorists —according to this stream of opinion— were residual, anecdotal and largely carried out by disturbed or unbalanced individuals. Even so, after the Orlando, Nice, Berlin or New Zealand attacks, the media 'lone wolves' such as Mateen, Bouhlel, Amri or Tarrant seem to represent the most versatile face of individual terrorism.

Operationally, the dogmatic differentiation on the preeminence of one form of terrorism or another is not so evident. The current threat level, as assessed by the security and intelligence community, has always predicted both scenarios:

- a) that of a coordinated attack executed by a *base network or operational cell*, directed against one or more targets;
- b) the task of a *single individual* acting independently but inspired by jihadist ideology.

Jihadism and the far right —and perhaps in the future other VEs— call for both tactics. So why insist on the preeminence of one over the other? It does not seem prudent to be guided by the immediacy of the actions, nor by the media's pace, nor the momentum of the incendiary 'post-mortem analysis', nor obviously to simplify

the complexity of the phenomenon. If we usually refer to terrorism as a polymorphic phenomenon, it is precisely because, among other things, the two tactics coexist and the choice of one or the other depends on a multiplicity of factors of an objective and subjective nature, as well as on a calculation of costs and benefits, wills and capacities and, sometimes, even... chance.

Some academics classify them as lone actors and others as lone wolves. The controversy created by the denomination of individual terrorists does not diminish the uncertainty that per se generates a much more unknown phenomenon than classic or collective terrorism. However, this debate is not taken into account in jihadist propaganda, as it uses the concepts of lone wolf, lone mujahid or lone jihad in an increasingly frequent way. Regardless of their name, strictly from a security point of view, individual terrorists pose a growing problem for the intelligence services and law enforcement agencies of the various states where they operate.

Recent years have seen a significant increase in terrorist attacks and failed attempts by individuals with little operational preparedness, acting spontaneously and without direct links to terrorist organisations. The increase in cases of individual terrorism in the West can be explained by four factors:

- a) the influence of charismatic leaders like Anwar al Awlaki;
- b) the vulnerability of hierarchical terrorist organisations, as specified by Abu Mus'ab al Suri in his doctrine;
- c) the adaptation of the intelligence services to these structures;
- d) the operational simplicity of this type of individual terrorist action.

## THE HISTORY OF INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM

The history of individual terrorism goes back to anarchism of the 19th century. Ideologues of anarchism from Russia, Italy, France and Germany laid the foundations of the concept during this century. Mikhail A. Bakunin (1814-1876) was one of the most important ideologues of this period because he established the postulates and doctrinal foundations of individual terrorism, as well as being a precursor of the concept of 'propaganda of the deed'.

The term 'propaganda of the deed' encompasses a revolutionary strategy based on the fact that the impact of violent act is much more effective than words in encouraging revolution. Its implementation was intended to raise the latent conflict to the level of explicit conflict and to generate a great social uncertainty that would force the majority to come out of their indifference. Even so, anarchism does not have to be directly associated with terrorism, but rather the period of most violent activity has to be put in context with a series of historical events in Russia and Eastern Europe that precipitated an escalation of attacks.

'Lone wolf' is a semantic term that became popular in the 20th century. During the second half of the century, the concept of the lone wolf was especially associated with white supremacists, and also with the concept of 'leaderless resistance', which was the term used by the white supremacist Louis Beam, a member of the Ku Klux Klan and the Aryan Nations, to propose a new strategy of harassment in the State. Leaderless resistance can be defined as a type of operation made by an individual independent of any movement, support network or leader. Although the concept was adopted by Beam, it had already been coined in the 1960s by American Colonel Ulius Louis Amoss as a defensive strategy against communism.

**FIGURE 2.1.**  
Mikhail A. Bakunin



Bakunin was firmly convinced that direct action was an effective revolutionary tool for provoking the spontaneous rebellion of the masses.

**IMAGE 2.4.** One of the representations found in the network of the concept of leaderless resistance



The term is often identified with a system of independent cells that would have some similarity to the autonomous cells of insurrectionary anarchism. This form of organisation is based on the fact that all the individuals who make up these cells have to operate independently without having to report to any other group or any other leader. To give an example, Beam used to cite an analogy in which he compared cells to fog, as they had to appear when conditions were favourable and disappear when they were not. In general terms, but more specifically in the operational dimension, the concept of resistance without a leader challenges the pyramidal organisational system, which is unidirectional and exposed to a hierarchical chain in which the leader is at the apex of the pyramid. According to Beam, this pyramidal structure was vulnerable to infiltration and could therefore compromise decision-making processes and the execution of violent actions against the State.

Currently the concepts of lone wolf or leaderless resistance have been adopted by a variety of actors such as: Christian fundamentalism, anarchism, jihadism or radical activism in defence of animal rights and/or the environment. The new strategy and tactical evolution of jihadist ideology has adopted the concept of 'jihad without leaders' to ideologically and operationally mobilise potential followers in the West.

## TODAY'S LONE WOLF CONCEPT

The most consensual —though not the only— definition of lone wolf is proposed by American analysts Fred Burton and Scott Stewart: "The person who acts on their own, without receiving orders or having connections with a terrorist organisation".

Other authors have contextualised this concept within the framework of jihadism and propose terms such as 'jihobbyist' to describe individuals who are not active members of any jihadist organisation but who manifest or express an enthusiasm

and admiration for the jihadist postulates.

However, the definition of lone wolf can generate debate and academic discussion. For example, in Spain, the term 'lone actors' has been chosen —with good reason— to the detriment of lone wolves, to refer to individuals who act on their own terrorist agenda, while in the United States and Northern European countries it is more common to find the term 'lone wolf' to refer to individuals who spontaneously commit terrorist acts. The term lone actor diminishes the epic importance of the lone wolf concept and can be an effective way to reduce media saturation.

It should be mentioned, however, that regardless of the terminology used, the concepts of lone wolf or lone mujahid are increasingly common in the propaganda jargon of Al-Qaeda or Daesh. This fact is decisive for sticking to the same slang used by the jihadist ideology and which lately seems to mark a rising trend in the use of the term.

## PROPOSAL FOR DEFINITION OF SINGLE ACTOR

Over-attention, contamination of the concept and media mitigation of the lone wolf figure risk indirectly encouraging the repetition of incidents linked to individual terrorism. For this reason, and to avoid contaminated use, it is essential to conceptually delimit the term lone actor.

A lone actor is defined as one who meets the following characteristics:

- a) operates individually;
- b) does not belong to any terrorist organisation, group or network;
- c) acts without the direct influence of a leader or a hierarchical structure
- d) plans its own terrorist agenda: operations, logistics and targeting are the result of its planning without regard to external guidelines;
- e) experiences a process of religious and/or ideological radicalisation from sources of radical ideology (jihadist, supremacist, etc.).

## THE CONTAMINATION OF THE TERM 'LONE WOLF'

The Council Framework Decision of the European Union of June 13th, 2002 on combating terrorism (2002/475/JHA) defines 'terrorist group' as any structured organisation of more than two persons, established over a period of time, acting in coordinated manner. Directing a terrorist group and participating in its activities must be considered, according to the Council Decision, as offences relating to a terrorist group. Therefore, terrorism is defined as belonging to groups and, at the time of the elaboration of this definition, cases of isolated individuals practicing it on their own were very rare.

Terrorists are not isolated entities; rather, they are linked in some way to society and are also linked directly or indirectly to the channels of communication established by the ideology by which they are inspired. For this reason, there are grey areas in the definition of a lone actor as an object of study, which give rise, as seen above, to interesting academic debates.

Some studies tend to classify certain cases as lone wolf assumptions that, *stricto sensu*, are not. Fundamentally the use of the term lone wolf is generalised because, although the subject has perpetrated the terrorist act individually, the activity in some of the previous phases of the cycle of the terrorist attack has been in groups and therefore would correspond to a different classification from that of the lone wolf.

In this document this conceptual deviation is called ‘contamination of the lone wolf concept’. For example:

- during the planning or execution phase the individual receives guidance or logistical support from an organisation, terrorist group or third party;
- when the act is executed individually in response to a calculation of tactical and operational benefits, but is integrated into the terrorist agenda of a terrorist organisation or group;
- when the act is carried out by more than one person, but is classified by the media as an assumption of individual terrorism.

Therefore, one must be restrictive in the use of the term and it would be more appropriate to use more neutral or aseptic terms such as lone actor or simply individual terrorist.

### THE SATURATION OF THE TERM ‘LONE WOLF’ BY THE MEDIA AND THE CONTAGION EFFECT

The media have a fundamental role in understanding and teaching the terrorist threat. If the information is rigorous, the threat is not overestimated and, if the language is accurate, uncertainty is not encouraged. Individual attacks have made the expression ‘lone wolf’ common knowledge. The media attraction of the term in the media, as well as in other mediums, means that it is often used with a mixture of confusion and recklessness.

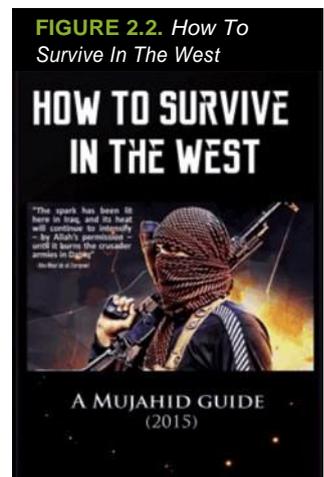
For this reason one has to be very restrictive with the use of the term ‘lone wolf’. Firstly, because it is usually used in a contaminated manner by referring to cases such as those of the Tsarnaev brothers or Mohammed Merah as lone wolves, which were not lone wolves by their own definition. Semantic constructions such as ‘pack of lone wolves’ or ‘lone wolf packs’ are also currently used in a contaminated sense of the term.

Moreover, this imprecision in the use of the term causes —without pretensions— another phenomenon that must be taken into account when establishing trends: the insistence on the publicity of these attacks feeds back the phenomenon. The saturation by the media in the use of the term ‘lone wolf’ often causes a contagion effect that is evident in ‘replica episodes’ of individual attacks. Western ethnocentrism has a negative influence on the media’s treatment of cases and creates a sense of uncertainty and vulnerability that increases ignorance of the phenomenon of individual terrorism. Al-Qaeda, Daesh or other terrorist groups linked to the far right are not oblivious to this and are increasingly interested in the exploitation of their ideological dimension in the West. In a hostile environment, the ‘image culture’, the immediacy of events and the saturation of information become the most effective tools for attracting followers to the radical cause.

**TABLE 2.4.** Example of media saturation and ethnocentric vision

On April 15th, 2013, the date of the attack during the Boston marathon, there were several attacks in Iraq, Somalia and Pakistan, which caused almost a hundred deaths. Despite the high death toll, the treatment by the Western media was disproportionate to the Boston bombing and the subsequent persecution of the Tsarnaev brothers. But this ethnocentric view was also seen two days later, when an explosion at a fertiliser factory in West, Texas, caused some thirty deaths.

- With the comparative analysis of media coverage, it was much wider for the Boston bombing than for the West explosion.
- This media saturation creates the perception of an increase in cases, which facilitates the proliferation of false positives, and also increases the uncertainty of the phenomenon.



Page 52 of the ‘Guide to Surviving the West’, issued by Daesh in 2015, gives us a clue to understanding the increase in false positives when analysing terrorism.

According to this publication, the increase in lone wolf attacks —a term the document itself uses— will cause difficulties for intelligence agencies because they do not have the resources to respond to the threat. In fact, this jihadist argument is not new either.

## FALSE POSITIVES IN INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM

Individual terrorism, according to the jihadist ideology, aims to create a state of confusion and 'chasing shadows' in the intelligence services, as well as an investigative overload in the security forces that promotes the proliferation of false positives. During the year 2015, the increase in false positives had an increasing impact on the development of the citizen security protection functions carried out by the law enforcement agencies. The casuistry can be diverse: let's see it in the following table.

TABLE 2.5. False Positive Case Studies	
a) Individuals disassociated from jihadism who present a picture of emotional or psychological instability and who, in certain circumstances related to the evolution of their pathology or to simple criteria of opportunity, commit violent actions that could apparently correspond to a jihadist act..	
b) It is increasingly common for law enforcement agencies, in the exercise of their duties, to identify or arrest individuals who have committed ordinary crimes and who are masking their actions with false jihadist motives, even though they are absolutely unconnected with the global jihadist movement.	
c) Actions which, by virtue of the capacity or the <i>modus operandi</i> , meet in the first instance the parameters of an individual or collective terrorist act but which are in fact related to organised crime.	For example, on November 24th 2015 a robbery in the French town of Roubaix, near the Belgian border, led to a hostage-taking incident. For a few hours it was assessed that the case was related to a terrorist act, taking into account the state of alert that the events of 13 November in Paris had generated. Finally, the investigators ruled out that the kidnapping was terrorist-motivated and it was corroborated that it was a robbery.
d) The spread of rumours or toxic information is also closely related to false positives and may, in certain circumstances, encourage simulations..	

## WHO CAN BE AN INDIVIDUAL TERRORIST?

Errors are inherent in any human procedure, as it is impossible to equip oneself with an absolutely infallible security system. If one is to answer the question "Who can be an individual terrorist", in addition to requiring a large investment of time and resources, it is very likely that one will make the mistake of seeking 'ethnic profiles' or focusing on individuals who may be sympathetic to beliefs of radical Islam but who have neither the intention nor the will to participate in terrorist actions. Answering this question will lead to a huge, unpredictable scenario and will exponentially increase the possibility of 'false positives'. It is a valid assumption to consider that the detection of terrorist activity seems more feasible when it is in groups and more complex in cases of individual terrorism.

Does this mean that there is no preventive or reactive capacity to deal with manifestations of individual terrorism? Not at all, it simply establishes the valid starting point for detecting its trace and interpreting it.

In fact, the formulation of the title's question is incorrect because there is no specific profile of an individual terrorist. The answer, therefore, is not to the question "Who can be an individual terrorist" but to "How does an individual terrorist radicalise and act?" How do they radicalise, how do they plan, how do they acquire weapons or explosives... The approach to understanding the phenomenon of individual terrorism should therefore not focus on who, but on how. The interpretation of the

lone actor's trail is a method that proposes 'connecting the dots' from a proactive rather than reactive approach.

For this reason, we need to be aware of the operational advantages that an individual terrorist has, but also of their vulnerabilities, which in the end become our opportunities to detect their trail. It is a practical orientation to know that in a very high percentage of cases their closest environment —family, friends, professional colleagues or the Islamic community of reference, in the case of jihadism— knows relevant details of their radicalisation process or their willingness to commit acts of violence.

## OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF INDIVIDUAL TERRORISTS

Tactical advantage is a favourable condition that gives superiority over the potential target. Vulnerability, on the other hand, is a condition that entails a weakness that can be exploited by the enemy (or the security forces).

Individual action, the Internet or the exaltation of the individual that is characteristic of jihadist ideology form a series of tactical advantages of the lone wolf. However, variables such as amateurism or vulnerability to detection in the early stages of the terrorist attack cycle are part of its tactical weaknesses. The individual who plans a terrorist act generally applies one method to achieve a goal: the execution of the act. The development of the method is subject to certain circumstances or variables that influence the cycle of the terrorist attack.

The following sections address this method from a tactical approach, i.e. listing the advantages and vulnerabilities.

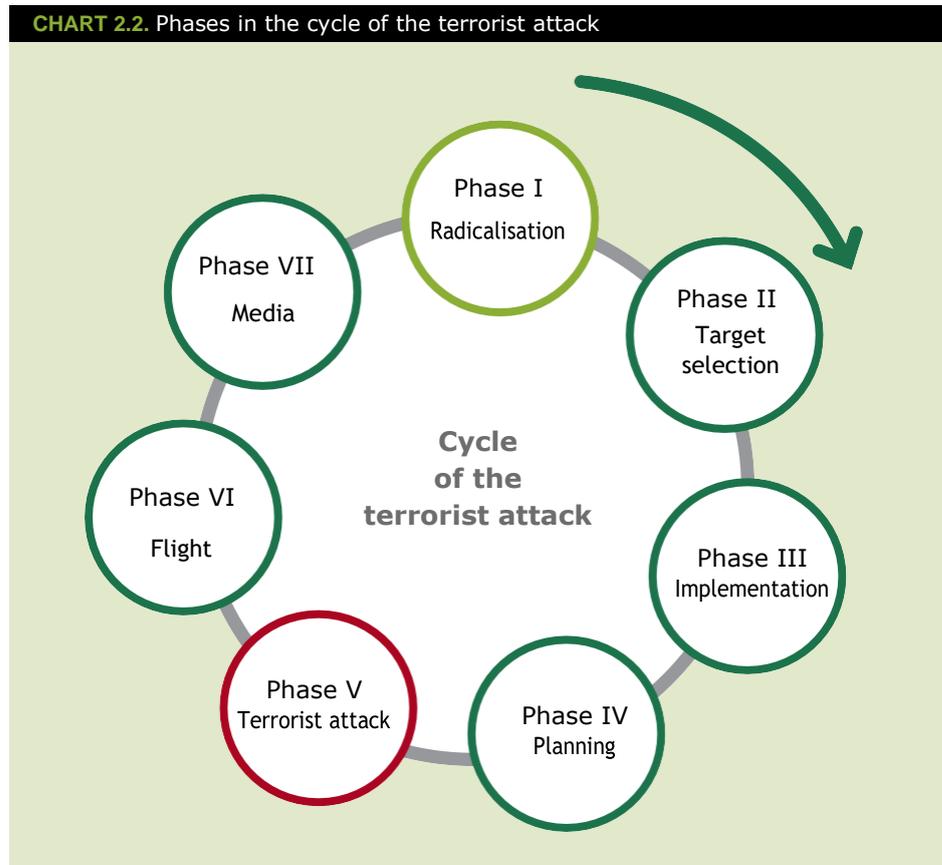
### ADVANTAGES

#### The individual performance

Terrorist organisations with hierarchical structures are more vulnerable to infiltration and their collective activity is more easily detected. Recent years have seen intelligence services and the police adapting their structures to counter terrorist activity by terrorist organisations, groups or cells. As jihadism has developed, it has succeeded in countering these advances by the security forces through the exploitation of individual actions. Unlike terrorist organisations, groups or networks, the figure of the individual terrorist has an enormous tactical advantage that makes it impossible, in most cases, to identify and detect them: their individualism. This condition favours their camouflage since it is difficult to communicate or disseminate to third parties their plans or intentions before committing a terrorist attack and thus also favours the discreet planning of their activity.

Its weakness is that its operational and logistical capacity is lower and for this reason a large part of the assumptions will tend to act on soft targets that require less tactical difficulty. Even if they are not part of terrorist organisations, groups or cells and are not under their hierarchical leadership, individual terrorists are often inspired by and share their strategic objectives.

On the other hand, cases of individual tactical jihad pose the most serious threat of individual jihadist actions, as its members often have the opportunity to go through a training camp (since the middle of the decade most cases are related to Pakistan) and therefore acquire the necessary skills to manufacture explosives, handle firearms easily and receive guidelines and teachings from experienced combat instructors.



Source: own elaboration.

### Perfection of tactics: the escape

In May 2016, issue number 15 of the magazine Inspire was published, which, among other religious and operational content, referred to a tactical aspect that should not go unnoticed: the escape of the individual terrorist after committing the attack. In this regard, it is suggested that not all operations by individual jihadists need to end with martyrdom. The journal calls them, with some presumption, Lone Mujahid professionals in view of the complexity and ambition of the proposed objectives. Great importance is given to surveillance of the target in order to better plan the attack and ensure the escape. However, it should be borne in mind that the more complex the choice of objective and means used, the more likely it is to fail. If the terrorist takes the right precautions, they can preserve their life with the aim of committing more terrorist attacks. The following operational and strategic advantages are obtained by securing the escape:

- a) planning a campaign of terrorist actions over a long period of time;
- b) increase the impact that the Western media often provoke by the subsequent 'hunt for the terrorist'.

Securing the escape implies an implicit will to prolong the sequence of violent actions of the lone actor. We have several recent examples: Mohammed Merah committed various terrorist acts over several days and captured the full attention of a country during the siege of his apartment. Even Anis Amri was able to escape after running over the crowd at the Berlin Christmas market. The magazine proposes the

sniper's tactic as an operational element to ensure the escape. Throughout the last few months, Daesh has also been advocating—in forums, Telegram or through propaganda messages—this operational recommendation and advises the use of explosives, car bombs and timers to ensure the escape of the terrorist and the possibility of continuing the terrorist raid. This operational guideline can be interpreted in two ways:

- a) as a symptom of the inability to consolidate stable operating cells in the West;
- b) as a diversification of the operational product with the ultimate aim that terrorists can commit more than one terrorist act, attract media attention and prolong the media echo as long as possible.

## VULNERABILITIES

Looking at the tactical advantages that make up individual terrorism, the question could be raised: why are more violent episodes not committed by individual terrorists? The answer is not simple, but one of the most important constraints is the operational capacity to move from theory to practice. Fundamentally because there is a mismatch between intention and operational capacity. As discussed in the previous section, the lone wolf figure has tactical advantages but also certain limitations, which can become opportunities for detection or vulnerabilities in the planning of their terrorist agenda. The most important weaknesses are mainly due to the precariousness of the operational planning and the possibility of being detected during the initial phases of the cycle of the terrorist attack.

### Tactical Amateurism and Logistical Austerity

An individual terrorist, a priori, has difficulty planning and committing attacks against complex targets. In order to commit an attack, the lone wolf leaves with the disadvantage of not having the means, training, operational or logistical support of professional terrorist groups or operational skills in the vast majority of cases. Jihadi manuals that are disseminated on the Internet cannot completely replace actual training. In most of the cases studied, they lacked the necessary talent to prepare a major terrorist attack and therefore did not succeed in fulfilling their objective because of the difficulty of planning. A person poorly trained in surveillance or in the commission of terrorist activities can be detected in the early stages of the cycle of a terrorist attack. This is why jihadism prefers to operate on soft targets that require little operational logistics, or media targets. For example, in most cases, the desire to imitate the most lethal actions committed by large organisations leads lone wolves to opt for bomb attacks, a resource that is not easy to acquire or to manufacture at home. As there is an imbalance between their technical preparation and their goals, the results are generally in vain or even fatal for the terrorists themselves. A priori, the premise is fulfilled that the more lethal their terrorist actions are, the more difficult it is for them to obtain explosive, chemical, biological or radioactive material. The scarce training and lack of operational knowledge are therefore a vulnerability in the planning of their actions.

### Internet as a tactical vulnerability

The Internet, as we have seen, can be a great tactical advantage for the individual who intends to commit a violent act, but it also exposes the lone wolf to the observation of their movements and their interaction with other individuals who are very close to the foundations of the most extremist ideologies. All this makes them very vulnerable to the intelligence services. Currently the United States security

agencies work in cooperation with Internet service providers to establish protocols for action, for example, in the use of social networks.

### Vulnerable to detection

It could be said, therefore, that the terrorist is more vulnerable in the initial stages of preparation of the attack as they are going through a process of uncertainty and reaffirmation of their extremist cause that makes them more careless in their personal relationships and in the intelligence tasks for the selection of a target. For this reason, some basic premises could be established to help measure a terrorist's level of vulnerability:

- a) The more cautious the terrorist is in planning the violent act, the greater the difficulties in detecting him. Obviously, the fact that the individual is more cautious will make it difficult for them to access the logistics necessary for the perpetration of an attack against a complex target (military academy, airplane, nuclear power station or political personality) and therefore will depend exclusively on their operational training and talent.
- b) On the contrary, the more interaction the subject has with third parties, the more likely it is to be detected: if the subject interacts with third parties they will be able to obtain the logistical support necessary to commit an attack on a more complex target, but in return they will be more vulnerable to detection; this establishes a balance of intentions and capabilities.

## THE TRAIL

As stated above, it is valid to consider that the detection of terrorist activity seems more feasible when it is group based and more complex in cases of individual terrorism. Probably because the analysis of group terrorism is made from the observation of macro-social variables, the knowledge of geopolitical and geostrategic consequences, the research of terrorist organisations, their financing or the dynamics of their members. In contrast, the versatility and flexibility of individual terrorism increases the uncertainty generated by any terrorist act. Does this mean that there is no preventive or reactive capacity to deal with manifestations of individual terrorism?

At this point it is interesting to explain the case of Mohammed Merah, a young Frenchman of Algerian origin who in 2012 put all the security of a modern state in check. The successive murders of three soldiers, a teacher and three Jewish children in Montauban and Toulouse, the long siege of his home and, finally, his death, make us reflect on the facts. For his neighbours, Merah was a discreet and even, in some cases, helpful individual.<sup>26</sup> No one would have suspected that he was linked to the Islamist group Forsane Alizza, which was responsible for recruiting jihadists to fight Afghanistan and which was disbanded in 2012. Merah's life trajectory is complex and his admiration for jihadist ideology makes him, at the age of nineteen, take his first step towards violent extremism.

Before analysing the case and according to Nassim N. Taleb's theory, it must be said that Mohammed Merah is not a black swan but a grey swan,<sup>27</sup> because his terrorist act is part of a scenario set out in the framework of jihadist operations against the French state. But, in spite of being a proposed scenario, Merah in a way innovates and surprises because individual terrorism is usually executed by a single terrorist act and it is not usual to perpetrate a chain of attacks.

The case of Mohammed Merah is paradigmatic because of the absence or a vague interpretation of his process of violent radicalisation. Failure to detect its pattern is a common dysfunction in the information gathering and generation of in-

26. **The Good Neighbour Syndrome:** it is not uncommon for terrorists' surroundings to often identify them as educated or helpful people.

27. According to Nassim Nicholas Taleb, Professor in the Sciences of Uncertainty at the University of Massachusetts, a grey swan refers to extreme modellable events; a black swan, to unknown events (TALEB, 2008, 367). According to this theory, Merah is a grey swan; in fact, 90% of terrorists are grey swans. Some events can be strange and momentous, but predictable. A black swan terrorist would have to come up with an innovation that would exploit an unknown or unimagined vulnerability. Grey swans are rare but expected events, such as 9/11 2001, most individual terrorist attacks or the detonation of a dirty bomb in an urban environment.

telligence phases. The difficulties involved, both individual and organisational, are those inherent in any complex evaluation process: resistance to change, internal dynamics or structural rigidity are individual difficulties that are repeated in professional patterns. Just as terrorist organisations are operationally conservative, so are the organisations that analyse the phenomenon.

Obtaining information and developing intelligence requires an exercise in creativity, imagination, intellectual honesty and intuition based on the logical and rational fusion of data. The dynamic and polyhedral phenomena linked to radicalism mutate with society and to explain them we cannot rely only on previous data or experience, as this may be an obsolete perspective. In addition, in many cases we consider future scenarios that cannot yet experience. Each phenomenon must be tested from the current perspective and integrate intelligence reserves that study 'everything' from a holistic perspective.

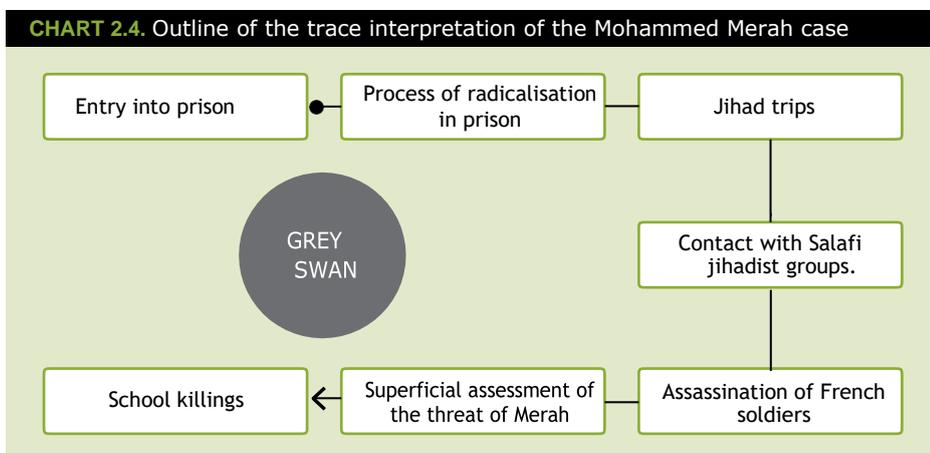
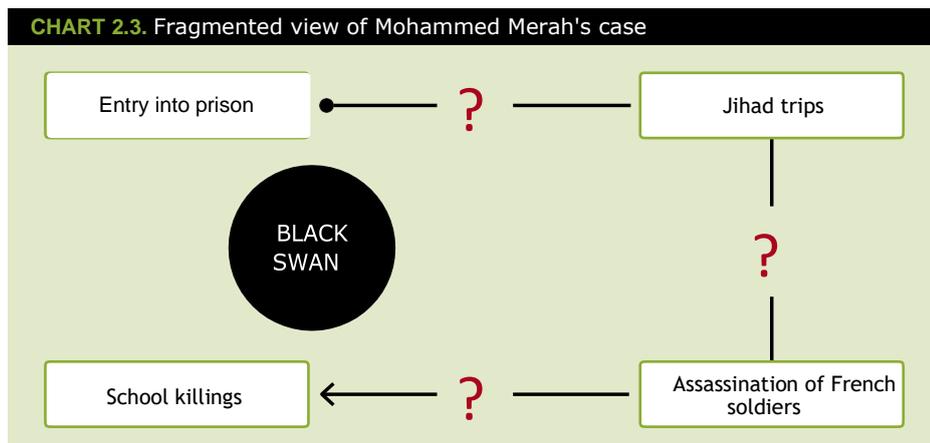
The partial view of Mohammed Merah's life story makes it incomplete and the increase in uncertainty is explained by the fact that the evidence,<sup>28</sup> indicators<sup>29</sup> and weak signals<sup>30</sup> were detected and interpreted in a superficial or ambiguous manner. Information gathering needs to be methodical, rigorous and participatory because it is the phase where the threat can be identified and uncertainty reduced for subsequent understanding. The fusion of evidence, indicators and weak signals from the trail is one of the mechanisms of anticipation of terrorism. Reducing uncertainty and unknown assumptions limits the problem, helps to visualise it and allows it to be influenced.

28. In the trial, the evidence is part of the proven facts, it does not move in the field of uncertainty, as the evidence is not interpreted, but judged. The evidence is the most important trace because, by containing more criminal information, it can be detected and interpreted more clearly.

It is the activity aimed at seeking the conviction of the judge on the facts stated by the parties in their briefs of qualifications. In some cases, it distorts the presumption of innocence and is always an essential part of the process.

29. The indicator can be defined as an uncertain factor that is based on dubious evaluation and difficult to interpret (GRAVAR, 2004, 3). An indicator cannot be considered as objective or conclusive evidence in terms of procedural law, and for this reason the trace of its trail is less deep.

30. In the intelligence community it is sometimes argued that all indicators are ambiguous and the phrase 'more of the same' is used (GRAVAR, 2004, 97). The most ambiguous indicators are called weak signals, a concept that is more uncertain than that of indicator but which provides data that can enrich or complete the process of detecting and interpreting the trail and are also located in the approach of how and not in who (BAKKER, DE GRAAF, 2011).



Source: own elaboration.

There is no perfect and complete model for approaching the uncertainty of individual terrorism, but this manual proposes that the approach tool for reducing the irreducible uncertainty inherent in individual terrorism is the trace detection and interpretation.

The tracking of the individual terrorist is a complex method and an exercise in abstract analysis that integrates the set of evidence, indicators and/or weak signals that shape the individual's fait accompli during their radicalisation process and/or cycle of terrorist attack. A methodical exercise during the detection of the trail, but intuitive and imaginative in the interpretation phase, as terrorist creativity has to be part of the scenarios planned to avoid the appearance of 'black swans' and/or the proliferation of 'grey swans'.

The approach to understanding the phenomenon of individual terrorism must therefore focus not on who but on how. This epistemological approach to the phenomenon attempts to create a space of balance between minimising the threat and respecting fundamental rights and freedoms. Trace analysis is the fundamental tool for detecting certain assumptions about individual terrorism and for reducing the uncertainty ratio. The trail does not allow for the identification of individuals, does not allow for profiling and does not answer the question: who can be a terrorist? Tracking is an exercise in abstract analysis that, after being interpreted according to the parameters of logic, reason and imagination, shows the previous path of the individual in the cycle of the terrorist attack. Trace interpretation is a method that proposes to 'connect the dots' from a proactive rather than reactive approach. The proposed measures are tools for obtaining information and assessing the risk of individual terrorist scenarios.

## TRACKING INTELLIGENCE

For the commission of any attack, the terrorist must take into account many operational aspects and is therefore vulnerable to detection. This opportunity arises above all in the operational phase of its actions and in the trace interpretation it leaves in these preparatory phases. By knowing how an attack is conceived and planned, mechanisms can be designed to detect terrorist activity. This requires the processing of objective information and data (evidence, indicators and weak signals) to transform them into intelligence (turning apparent black swans into grey swans).

**TABLE 2.5.** Planning in the case of Anders Behring Breivik

Anders Behring Breivik's planning was meticulous and methodical. As we have seen above, according to his 'European Declaration of Independence' manifesto, issued shortly before the Oslo and Utøya attacks, he began its planning during 2010.

During the planning phase, he rented a farm in Aasta, Norway, for beet harvesting and sugar production.

Throughout this period, he wrote, kept active on social networks (more than seven thousand friends on Facebook), studied bomb-making manuals on the Internet, trained physically, instructed himself in shooting and bought the necessary weapons and chemicals (six tons of fertiliser) for the manufacture of explosive devices.

**TABLE 2.6.** Differences between information and intelligence

It is important at this point to differentiate the concepts of information and intelligence because the trace interpretation of individual terrorism requires it.

**Information**

- This is unevaluated material derived from observation, i.e., communications, reports, rumours, follow-ups, imagination, or other sources.
- It can be true or false, accurate or inaccurate, confirmed or unconfirmed, relevant or irrelevant, positive or negative.

**Intelligence**

This is the product of the process of information gathering, evaluation and interpretation.

For example, if an individual manifests via the Internet to their closest environment their willingness to carry out jihad, the collection of information has to provide the raw product needed for further evaluation and interpretation. The final result of the process will be a warning (indicator or weak signal in this case) that will lead to a decision. This decision will have to range from accepting the risk as a case with no apparent links to terrorism, to simply following it up or implementing specific measures, such as bringing a source closer to the immediate environment.

Therefore, the trace interpretation is situated in the second and third phase of the intelligence cycle (evaluation and interpretation), while the capture or obtaining of information (evidence, indicators and weak signals) corresponds to the first phase of the process.

Intelligence warning is an intangible concept, an abstraction, a theory, a perception and even a belief. It is a product of reasoning and logic. A hypothesis whose validity cannot be confirmed and when it is refuted it is too late. Therefore, we are once again in the field of uncertainty, where the alert is neither an objective fact nor a certainty, but a probable hypothesis. In intelligence, surprise is relative and rarely complete or absolute. The analysis of the surprise generated by many unplanned attacks shows that, after a review of the facts, the event included enough information and/or signals that warned of the possibility of this attack. Attacks that generate an absolute surprise or no alert at all —black swans— are usually non-existent. Attacks that generate a high number of signals or alerts are also rare (HANDEL, 2006, 383). The following table shows the relativity of surprise:

**TABLE 2.7.** The relativity of surprise

No alert	Any warning signs	Partial or incomplete alerts	Full alert
No signals	High noise ratio, some warning	Some clear signals received	Many signals received. The attack is neutralised
Very rare	Many cases	Some cases	Very rare

It can therefore be said that absolute surprise is very rare, as is total alert. However, there is a very broad threshold of cases where there are partial alerts or incomplete signals that can or should be interpreted. Obtaining, processing and analysing evidence, indicators and/or weak signals is part of early warning in intelligence, of what is very unlikely, of what is commonly called 'the worst case'.

The trail, as we have seen, does not identify individuals, establish profiles or answer the question: who can be a terrorist? Detecting and interpreting the trail of the individual terrorist is extremely complex, as well as a huge source of uncertainty that can lead to errors, a fragmented view or a proliferation of false positives. Trace interpretation is unfortunately not a foolproof solution and, like other methods, it has vulnerabilities and blind spots that make it impossible to anticipate violent acts without exposing it to the risk of increasing the number of false positives and compro-

missing the freedoms of the rule of law. In a state of law, false positives cannot proliferate in which any individual who follows a pattern of behaviour represents a threat to security. The detection of a potential terrorist has to respond to an approach that minimises this risk and at the same time can capture, interpret and analyse the signals of the environment to discover the traces that could represent a real threat to security. In order to avoid the proliferation of such misinterpretations, a series of multidisciplinary measures are proposed here for the tracing of individual terrorists in certain cases. Data fusion and source contrast are the appropriate mechanisms for detecting the trail of an individual who is moving between cognitive radicalism and action. The characteristics of these two types of tracking tools are set out below.

### TRAIL DETECTION OR COLLECTION MECHANISMS

- a) Collaboration measures are presented especially in the social agents that can favour the establishment of bridges or channels of prevention and detection of cognitive and/or violent radicalisation processes.
- b) Muslim communities and associations are potential generators of evidence, indicators and/or weak signs of suspicious behaviour or manifestations and can play a very important role in the process of detecting a threat.
- c) The signals can be observed in the environment, or the environment can be provoked to observe the signals. The criticism of the ideological postulates of the VEs is a powerful tool for discrediting and disarticulating arguments, but it is also a way of transmitting a message to the environment to observe the reactions that these provoke.
- d) The family or close circle of friends can be an important source of information (evidence, indicators and/or signs) in the process of cognitive and violent radicalisation of an individual.

### TRAIL INTERPRETATION MECHANISMS

- a) Inaccuracies usually arise in the evaluation and interpretation phases of information obtained after the detection of the individual terrorist's trail. The explanation for this anomaly in the intelligence cycle can be linked to ignorance, inaccurate knowledge or a fragmented view of the threat. Just as intelligence agencies adapted to neutralise classic terrorist organisations, individual terrorism requires a new adaptation. The trace interpretation phase requires an exercise of creativity, imagination and intuition based on the logical and rational fusion of data. Creativity and intuition (MEDINA, 2006, 421) have to be structural elements in any analysis using a chronological approach that allows the vision of information that is not fragmented.
- b) The detection of the terrorist's trail is methodical but its interpretation is extremely complex, as well as an enormous source of uncertainty that can favour the chaining of errors, the fragmented vision or the proliferation of false positives. Obviously the trace interpretation will not necessarily always lead to an investigation, because it could cause the collapse of the system, but it will lead to an orderly procedure of merging the information into intelligence.
- c) Prospective studies of specific or potential events that could favour radicalisation processes should be encouraged, for example, political events, certain sports events, elections, social events, etc., as in many cases cognitive

and violent radicalisation go through a catalytic event (BAKKER; DE GRAAF, 2011). The catalytic event can take many forms: economic (loss of a job, blocked social mobility), social (marginalisation, discrimination, racism), political (international conflicts) and personal (death of a loved one). In addition, there is a long list of triggers (real or imagined) that can initiate the progressive movement towards violent extremism.

- d) The integration of intelligence analysts in operational counterterrorism units, forming coordinated work teams in the different phases of the intelligence cycle, would encourage the trace interpretation phase. Often, the intelligence-gathering phase and the evaluation and interpretation phases are disconnected. This dysfunction is quite widespread and is one of the usual causes of imprecision in risk assessment. The FBI has integrated all phases of the cycle into so-called fusion cells or units (FBI, 2009, 139).
- e) The use of artificial definitions that are difficult to apply generally should be eliminated or restricted as much as possible (CLAUSEWITZ, 1976, 128). It is recommended that intelligence fusion units work in a coordinated manner, bringing together multidisciplinary intelligence pools such as religious scholars, sociologists, operational experts, cultural mediators or specialists in explosives or chemical weapons.
- f) Collaboration with experts or consultants from the academic world who work on research projects in disciplines directly or indirectly linked to the phenomenon of individual terrorism, such as thermodynamics, biochemistry, computer security, nuclear energy or bacteriology, is a source of knowledge that can be used to formulate future scenarios that could become possible threats (Jiménez, 2012).
- g) The innovation of terrorism is a huge source of uncertainty that has to be part of hypothetical and uncertain scenarios. The collection of unverified or contrasted information may give rise to a tactical or operational innovation that, if implemented, would increase the uncertainty of individual terrorism. The interpretation of these uncertain scenarios would have to propose the creation of teams of experts to carry out tasks of exploiting vulnerabilities susceptible to being exploited by terrorism in order to reduce the uncertainty of the phenomenon and anticipate possible innovations. In the American intelligence community these expert teams that test uncertain scenarios are called 'red teams' (HARRIS, 2006, 348).

## THE CONTAGION EFFECT AND 'COOL JIHAD' IN THE WEST

The imitation of violent actions has been a common occurrence throughout history. The manifesto of Theodore Kaczynski, aka Unabomber, is still circulating on the Internet and inspired the sending of anthrax letters after September 11th, 2001. He also influenced Anders Behring Breivik ideologically. Similarly, Breivik was a source of inspiration for the racist Brenton Tarrant, the author of the 2019 attack in New Zealand.

An individual who acts on their own initiative, without receiving logistical support, and is successful can be mythologised as an idol, leader, behaviour reference or fighter for the cause. These types of incidents are known as contagion effect or replication episodes. It is likely that excessive media attention to the figure of the individual terrorist will contribute to an increase in the number of acts of individual terrorism, particularly in the West. For a segment of young Muslims in the West, jihad has become a cool way<sup>31</sup> of expressing dissatisfaction with society. Radical ideology provides them with an oasis of identity where they can express their rejection and strengthen their identity.

31. As in 'good', 'fashionable' and 'modern'.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL TERRORISTS AND THE 'SCHOOL KILLERS' PHENOMENON

Sometimes isolated individuals commit violent actions without any terrorist motivation and this is not a new phenomenon. For example, in 2012 Adam Lanza killed 27 people, 20 of them children, at the Sandy Hook School in Connecticut, USA. We must clearly differentiate between terrorist acts and the cases of so-called 'school killers' such as Columbine, Virginia Tech or Sandy Hook, because they are absolutely different phenomena.

A terrorist is always motivated by an ideology linked to a political, religious or millenarian objective. Frustration or anger are only catalysts or triggers of the radicalisation process, but they are not the essence or main motivation of the terrorist's actions, as in the case of the school killers.

## ARE INDIVIDUAL TERRORISTS MENTALLY DISTURBED?

The habit of thinking that there is a very high ratio of mental disorders among individual terrorists is an argument at best. Recent studies have stipulated that a significant proportion of foreign fighters who were part of Daesh had also experienced episodes of psychological instability. Therefore, it does not seem, a priori, to be a specificity of individual terrorists, but can be extrapolated to any terrorist who undergoes a process of violent radicalisation. While it is true that individual terrorists linked to the far right appear to have a certain prevalence of suffering from mental disorders, in the case of jihadism the variable is much more residual.

It seems simpler and more 'comfortable' for society to think that an individual is deranged or disturbed than to admit that they can plan a terrorist attack with some rational thoroughness. While we limit ourselves to talking about 'disorders' and not 'tactics', the approach will be from a position of weakness because unfortunately it has been shown that only an individual with some planning and a dose of expertise can be very lethal.

## THE 'TROJAN HORSE' EFFECT

Extremist ideologies value as one of the most important tactical advantages to infiltrate sensitive structures for international security such as the army, police, intelligence agencies, airlines, chemical or biological industry or nuclear power plants. The process of infiltrating or recruiting individuals into these structures is defined as the 'Trojan horse' effect, through which, with the appearance of a professional activity, a tactical and/or strategic advantage can be obtained to plan a terrorist act. Let's look at some cases.

- During 2012, the Afghan insurgency infiltrated into areas such as the police and the army; this led to an increase in the number of attacks —the so-called green on blue attacks— against Western forces deployed in Afghanistan, especially those dedicated to the training or coaching of these institutions.
- On December 19th 2016, Mevlüt Mert Altıntaş, a twenty-two year old Turkish policeman, murdered the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, Andrei Kárlöv, while inaugurating an exhibition in the centre of Ankara. The attacker took advantage of his role as a police officer to gain unrestricted access to the target.

- In this sense, the profile of Roque Núñez—a member of the German intelligence services arrested this year—is heterodox, multifaceted and inconsistent with jihadist postulates but particularly attractive because of his professional activity in the German secret services.
- The Dutch authorities admitted that during 2016 approximately twenty Dutch soldiers had been recruited by different factions operating in Syria and Iraq. Some of these soldiers had also joined the Kurdish and Christian militias fighting Daesh.
- The problem is not limited to the Netherlands, because countries such as France and Germany had also detected that dozens of their soldiers had joined the jihadist armies. This circumstance is a security breach as, in addition to having proven military experience, they may have provided tactical information on counterterrorist targets or dynamics.
- The use of police or army uniforms in the planning of terrorist actions is a proposed scenario. For example, Anders Breivik, during the attack on the island of Utøya in 2011, wore a police uniform that he used to gather most of the young people at the summer camp.
- More recently, on October 3rd, 2019, Michael Harpon—a forty-five year old administrative assistant who had been working as a computer technician at the Intelligence Directorate of the Paris Police Headquarters since 2003—killed four people working at the same Headquarters with a knife. Because of his professional status, Harpon had access to confidential data and highly sensitive information related to files of individuals at risk of violent radicalisation. In theory, the level of access required in order to consult this type of data is obtained after an exhaustive examination of the candidate. Obviously, the case of Michael Harpon is an assumption of superficial assessment of a threat, as no weak indicators or signs were detected, such as: his conversion to Islam in a sensitive environment, the contact he had with Salafist circles, the justification of the attack in the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* of 2015 or certain intransigent behaviour with women. The subsequent investigation showed that Harpon also stored videos from Daesh, as well as police data including their personal addresses.

**TABLE 2.8.** The Trojan horse’ effect: terrorists’ tactical advantage

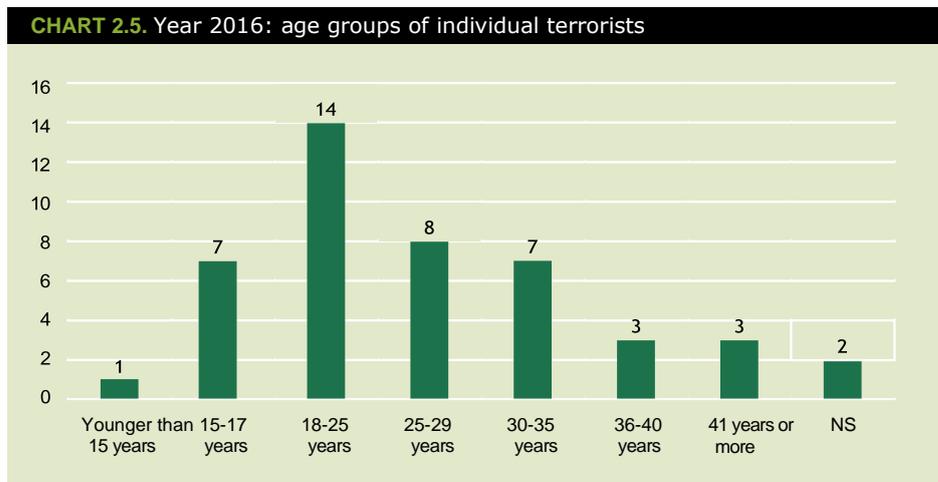
On page 57 of issue 2 of the magazine Inspire there was already an article that explains the importance that Al-Qaeda gives to the professional role of the individual as a tactical advantage in the perpetration of terrorist acts:

“Some of our brothers who are experts or specialists in some field and who work in sensitive locations that may offer a unique opportunity to wreak havoc on the enemies of Allah.”

Obviously, the greater the professional specialisation of the individual, the greater the security threat. Therefore, a careful filter must be applied to professional roles that involve risk, especially those related to access to nuclear, chemical, biological, or weapons material or security protocols of facilities and personalities.

## OLD WEAK SIGNS: TWENTY YEARS OF LONE ACTORS

The equation associated with individual terrorism still maintains variables such as youth or the increase of lone Islamophobic actors. With regard to the first variable, the majority of individual terrorists who carried out attacks in the period from 2016 to 2019 have been men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. We could estimate, therefore, as a descriptive variable of individual terrorism that is carried out by young men.



Source: own elaboration.

Of the sample N=45 cases in 2016, almost half of the cases are younger than twenty-five and eight are under eighteen years old. This well-defined target group can be directly related to three factors:

- a) the influence of a Western society in which the culture of image is deeply rooted and in which an individual without any talent can become a reference point thanks to social networks;
- b) the result of jihadist propaganda where visual impacts, fascination with violence, apocalyptic prophecies, the aesthetics of Black Ops, conspiracy theories, posing or selfies counteract the nihilism of many young people, fill their existential void and reaffirm their identity;
- c) the profile of a young man in his twenties who is a regular user of Telegram or WhatsApp and has little or no religious training is a very desirable target group for operational facilitators.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Individual terrorism is identified as an anomaly of a phenomenon that is commonly defined as a collective activity. It is currently the most global, ambiguous, versatile and flexible form of terrorism faced by intelligence services and police forces.
2. The use of the term 'lone wolf' should be restricted because it exudes a certain epic sense that can have an unwanted effect. It is more appropriate—in a logic of prevention and pedagogy of threat—to use more neutral terms such as 'lone actor' or simply 'individual terrorist'.
3. Individual terrorism per se is not a new phenomenon because it goes back historically to the 19th century, but individual attacks are a tactical and strategic innovation from the jihadist roadmap. It is a tactical innovation because the number of attacks has increased over the last few years. But it is also a strategic innovation, in the case of jihadist propaganda, because of how they have exported the ideological product to the West to exponentially diversify the possibility of individual terrorist actions.

4. Such terrorist actions have a range of tactical advantages and, at the same time, suffer from operational limitations. The tracking of their activity during the radicalisation process and the traffic through the cycle of the terrorist attack makes it possible, in some cases, to interrupt the progress of the attack. The individual terrorist is therefore a disturbing figure, not so much because of their potential lethality but because of their evolutionary and tactical room for manoeuvre.



## CHAPTER 3

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# JIHADIST TERRORISM

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*Fight in God's way!  
You will be bound only to yourself.*  
The Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa Ayahs 86/84

The most lethal terrorism in terms of the number of victims it causes is jihadist. We only have to look at how Daesh has killed thousands of Muslims in recent years in order to consider whether they are apostates complying with Sharia law.<sup>32</sup> For jihadist terrorism a war is established, led by the forces of good and evil, where the objectives are sacralised. Its objectives are not limited to a particular country; rather, they are global, as we shall see.

We talk about international or global terrorism when we analyse terrorist groups or organisations acting outside the borders of a country. Professor Fernando Reinares considers that *international or global* terrorism has to meet two conditions:

- a) that aims at deliberately altering the structure and distribution of power in whole regions of the planet or even on a global scale;
- b) that the actors who practice it have spread their activities over a significant number of countries.

Jihadist terrorism meets both requirements and we can therefore say that it is global terrorism.

Not all jihadist organisations are global terrorist organisations like Al-Qaeda or Daesh. There are jihadist organisations that have a political agenda that is limited to a certain geographical area. For example, the cases of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine. Both organisations are transnational because their activities and infrastructure extend beyond borders and even beyond the Middle East, but in both cases their political objectives are limited and closely linked to national identity.

## PRIOR CONSIDERATIONS IN RELATION TO ISLAM

Islam, along with Christianity and Judaism, is one of the three major monotheistic religions. There are currently approximately 1.3 billion Muslims across five continents. The term 'Islam' comes from the Arabic word 'submission', which implies acceptance of God and His laws. It was revealed by Allah to the prophet Muhammad and recorded in the Qur'an in the 7th century in the Arabian Peninsula (610).

32. Canonical law of Islam, based on the Qur'an and the Hadith, which regulates the public and private activities of all Muslim worshippers (Source: TERMCAT, Centre for Terminology).

Its sources are the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the teachings of Muhammad), as well as the intellectual tools used by its exegesis: the consensus of the wise, analogy, interpretation and reasoning of religious law. The absence of a clerical establishment (with the exception of Shi'ism in Iran) that gives unity and homogeneity to the possible interpretations explains the diversity of currents and schools that make up this religion, and also that among the diverse interpretations there are some —as we will see in the following sections— that justify the use of violence with religious objectives.

It is important not to confuse the term Muslim with Arabic. A Muslim is a person who practises Islam, while an Arab is a person who belongs to a culture or ethnic group that maintains a common bond around the Arabic language. Only 15% of the world's Muslim population are Arabs.

## THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an is the holy book of the Muslims, where the word of God revealed to Muhammad is recorded. It consists of a total of 114 surahs (chapters), which are the revelations that the prophet had for twenty-three years. These surahs are divided between those that were revealed in the city of Mecca and those that were revealed in the city of Medina, after its hegira. The surahs contain different verses that are called ayahs.

The Qur'an is designed as a complete way of life that governs clothing, economy, business ethics, taxes, justice and punishment, politics, war and peace, marriage and inheritance, rules of greeting, sexual relations within marriage, education, diet or rules of hospitality. All these aspects are regulated by Sharia.

One of the main differentiations in Islam is the two denominations within the Muslim world: Sunni and Shia Muslims. The origin of this split is found in the succession of Muhammad and the subsequent war between Umayyads and the followers of Ali. After Muhammad's death in 632, problems of succession began within the Muslim community.

Followers of the religion, in order to be good Muslims, have to fulfil a series of obligations or practices. These requirements are called the five pillars of Islam.

**TABLE 3.1.** The five pillars of Islam

<b>Shahadah</b>	Profession of the Islamic faith: "I testify that there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah".
<b>Salat</b>	Performing prayers five times a day, from sunrise to sunset.
<b>Zakāt</b>	The Quranic tax, different from the Sadaqah (alms or donation).
<b>Şawm</b>	Ramadan fasting, that is, not drinking or eating or engaging in sexual activity, except for pregnant women, children and elderly or sick people...
<b>Hajj</b>	Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime. Images of thousands of pilgrims walking around the Kaaba in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia are famous.

## SALAFISM

Salafism is a political, religious and social movement that embraces various currents and organisations aimed at the Islamisation of the State and its institutions with the ultimate goal of establishing a world caliphate governed by Sharia. Europe, with fifty million Muslims, is experiencing how the permeation of Islamism has, over the

years, made Salafism the pre-eminent trend in European institutional Islam. Its appeal lies in the simplicity of its message. Salafism is not linked to any culture or country and is a particularly suggestive proposal for young Muslims who have no sense of belonging to any particular country (either by birth or by adoption) and who see the Islamic religion as a structuring element. Salafism offers them an identity of resistance and also offers them to be part of the universal Muslim community. It also exerts a great influence on certain Islamic communities as it favours cultural closure and isolation from Western society. This hermeticism means that many of these communities find it difficult to adapt and identify with the host country and creates a framework for collective action of mutual distrust and rejection. Salafism claims the reading of the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the only valid sources to regulate individual and social behaviour. It should be taking into consideration that both the Qur'an and the Sunnah are texts produced in the 7th and 9th centuries respectively, so that, despite the fact that in certain aspects they were very advanced regulations in their time, from the perspective of Western society they represent a strict and even anachronistic view of social activity. Salafism can also be classified into three branches (WIKTOROWICZ, 2006, 207-239):

**a) Purist Salafism**

This branch rejects political participation until Islam is 'purified' of innovation and other ills. Political disputes lead to division or internal conflict (*fitna*)<sup>33</sup> of the community of believers.

**b) Political Salafism**

This branch rejects the position of the purists as ineffective and believes that it has the legitimacy to seek solutions. This Salafi bloc argues that politics is a goal for Muslims as an instrument of reforming society. Jihad is legal in situations of defence of Muslim countries, but it opposes or is reluctant to offensive jihad (terrorist actions in the West). This branch is often linked to the Muslim Brotherhood.

**c) Jihadist Salafism**

It differs from the two previous categories in its support for the use of violence in the name of Salafism. The ideologues and followers of this branch of Salafism believe that political and social reform can only come through jihad.

All three categories are permeable, since Salafism is a fluid and dynamic phenomenon. Many Al-Qaeda ideologues, such as Anwar al-Awlaki, made the transition from political Salafism to jihadist Salafism and their hybrid ideology may be one of the keys to the success of their discourse among young Western Muslims (WIKTOROWICZ, 2006; 207-239).

Islamologist Gilles Kepel uses Islam to explain violent radicalisation. In his work *Terreur dans l'Hexagone. Genèse du djihad français* (2015) stresses that the recent attacks on European territory are a warning sign of the growing religious radicalisation of the Muslim population in Europe. According to his thesis, the Salafist current has been gaining ground in France and Europe for years. Therefore, he considers that the religious factor is central in the processes of radicalisation and establishes a continuum between Muslim conservatism (in this case non-violent Salafism) and jihadism. In other words, he interprets jihadism as a consequence of a radicalisation of Islam. However, contrary to Kepel's arguments, it can be said that most of the foreign terrorist fighters in Daesh (2011-2015) had little theological knowledge.

33. A term in the Qur'an that defines periods of internal division in Islam.

Political scientist Olivier Roy rejects the thesis of the radicalisation of Islam. In his essay *Le djihad et la mort* (2017) he proposes a reading that goes beyond the issue of Islam. It introduces the concept of jihadist radicalisation and dissociates it from religious radicalisation. How does he argue this? Numerous research works show that the vast majority of European jihadists are 'second generation' (we will talk about this terminology later) and have undergone recent radicalisation without having gone through a trajectory of religious commitment and with an absence of theological knowledge and of the foundations of Islam. For Roy, jihadist radicalisation does not result from religious radicalisation in which Islam is only the instrument to access violence. In this sense, he prefers to speak of the 'Islamisation of radicality', which he interprets as a 'generational revolt' similar to other types of radicalism, such as the far-left movements of the 1970s. In my view, the ideological involvement of certain individuals and groups cannot be underestimated, as it favours the nihilistic dimension but banishes the religious dimension.

A third geopolitical approach that considers jihadism as a political-military struggle (Romain Callet or Nassim Wasr) considers that radicalisation is generated by the dynamics of the post-colonial world and by the violence that Western policies in the Middle East entail. The failure of the Arab springs, the Syrian conflict or the repression of Islamist parties in Egypt, Morocco or Tunisia show the Salafists that Islamist projects cannot be realised through the ballot box. Criticism: this approach has the advantage of framing this phenomenon in a more global and fundamentally political context, although it seems to apply more to movements such as Al-Qaeda. Even so, most jihadists who joined Daesh did so for personal reasons (90% according to former Judge Trévidic).

The three approaches are complementary, but none of them explains how they are radicalised. It is a process involving personal, psychological, socio-economic, religious and political factors.

## THE JIHAD

Jihad, like other words linked to a religious context, has a long history and a complex set of meanings. Conventionally it has been translated as 'holy war', but this definition associated with the time of the Crusades is widely rejected by Muslims. The term jihad comes from the verb *yahada*, which means 'to strive'. An effort aimed at personal improvement, but also an effort aimed at changing the environment. For some jihadist ideologues, jihad is the sixth pillar of Islam. Jihad can be understood as the legitimate defence of people and religion, but also as the struggle to spread Islam. On December 9, 2001 Osama bin Laden declared:

The jihad has become *Fard al-Ayn*<sup>34</sup> for each and every Muslim [...] The time has come for all Muslims in the world, especially the youth, to unite and cry out against the *Kafir*<sup>35</sup> and continue the jihad until these forces are totally eliminated, until all anti-Islamic forces are wiped off the face of the earth and Islam conquers the whole world and all other false religions.

What does *al-jihad al-fardi* really mean? The concept of jihad emerges from the Qur'an and, unlike the Gospels, it is not a starting point for further theological evolution, but the fruit of a unique and unrepeatably revelation (ELORZA, 2004, 271-281). According to this theological approach, the Islamic religion surrounds the life of the believer, provides them with the guidelines of behaviour and a fundamental identity, all this from some principles contained in the writings of the origins: the Qur'an and the Hadith.<sup>36</sup>

34. Mandatory.

35. Denial of divine truth.

36. Usually called traditions, they are sentences, sayings and exemplary acts of the prophet that form a strict pattern of life to which the believer must adhere in all their behaviour. The group of hadith integrates the Sunnah or tradition from which the qualification of the collective of believers as a community derives. For the religious authorities of Islam, there is no doubt that these sentences pronounced by the prophet on the most diverse subjects constitute a true reflection of what Muhammad said and did in each case.

The individual jihad or *al-jihad al-fardayn* consists of internal, individual and spiritual struggle and the effort to adequately follow the precepts of the Islamic religion. The defence of Islam, Muslims or their countries against the external enemy can take on the character of a struggle and is thus prescribed by the Qur'an, which encourages the fight against infidels if Islam is attacked:

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Allah does not love aggressors. Slay them where you find them and expel them from where they expelled you. (Qur'an, II, 186-188)

The doctrinal basis of jihadism has hardly evolved over the past decades. But the way of carrying out jihad has indeed varied, and jihadi ideologues have placed much emphasis on this strategic and tactical evolution. Such relevant figures of jihadism as Osama bin Laden, Ayman al Zawahiri, Anwar al Awlaki, Abu Muhammad al Adnani or Abu Bakr al Baghdadi have focused their discourse on reorienting the combat strategy against the West and the apostate Muslim governments. Jihadism emphasises armed jihad as one of the fundamental pillars of Islam against deviant behaviour, apostate Muslim governments or Western democratic systems because they consider them a form of polytheism where man is worshipped. For radical Islamism there is no doubt about the divine desire to eradicate the infidels or *Kafir*. This will, according to the jihadist doctrine, can be materialised by Allah Himself or through the hands or sword of his followers.

However, for traditional or moderate Islam, jihad is a collective undertaking for the Muslim community reserved for very limited cases, which requires a prior call to arms by a legitimate ruler in the face of aggression.

## DOCTRINAL BASE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF JIHADISM

Throughout history, radicalised currents have emerged in Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam that have justified the use of violence. One of these radical currents is jihadism. Jihadism, as a form of global terrorism, is a violent current rooted in radical Islamism that pursues a dual objective:

- a) unify the community of Muslim believers into a new caliphate governed by *Sharia* (Islamic law), which includes territories that at some point in history have been under the political control of Islam;
- b) avoid, through violence, the interference of Western countries in Islamic affairs.

The historical review of the doctrinal sources of jihadism goes back to the Hanbali school, named after its founder, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855). Its doctrine is based on the fact that the deviation from the Islamic Ummah<sup>37</sup> was caused by innovation in the interpretation of how Muslims were to behave.

According to this interpretation, the Islamic Ummah could only be recovered if the Muslims complied with the precepts of the Qur'an interpreted in the Sunnah and if they followed the customs of the first believers (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) (GUERIN, 2005, 99-102).

At this early stage, Muslims who were unable to sustain the unity of the Ummah and preserve the customs of the early believers were considered enemies of Islam. Jihad had an internal connotation for Islam, as it was a struggle with oneself to avoid deviating from the path shown in the scriptures and represented in the customs of the early believers.

37. Word designating the community of Muslims, which comes from the root *umm*, 'mother'. [Source: TERM CAT, Centre for Terminology].

Between the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century, Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) considered jihad as an obligation that justified the overthrow of the ruler who did not respect Islam or who did not apply Sharia from a position of power. His thinking would later nourish the foundations of the contemporary jihad.

Already in the 18th century, the uniqueness of Allah was threatened by reason, the European separation of powers or the assignment of sovereignty to the people instead of God. From then on, the effort no longer had to be made only among Muslims who did not follow the Quranic precepts, but in order to counteract the wave of decadence and ignorance coming from the West.

The writings of the thinker Yamal al Din (1839-1897), known as Al Afgani, who first identified the West as the enemy of Islam (DE ARISTEGUI, 2004, 167-168) stand out in the 20th century. His views created the current of Salafism, which was based on ideas already mentioned above, in which it was postulated that the Ummah would be reconstituted if the life of the Muslim was guided by the behaviour of the prophet and his companions (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*).

## THE CONTEMPORARY JIHAD

The sources of modern jihadism date back to 20th century Egypt. Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, was one of the forerunners of today's jihadist movement. In al-Banna's doctrine, the identification of the corrupt Western civilisation as the main enemy of Islam was emphasised.

At the same time, the Egyptian thinker Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), the doctrinal source of the Muslim Brotherhood, established the basis of the current radical conception of Islam. According to Qutb, *Jahiliyyah*, understood as the pagan ignorance prior to the message of the Prophet Muhammad, which came mainly from the West, had to be fought. This confrontation between Islam and *Jahiliyyah* has no middle ground since, according to this interpretation, both societies cannot live together in the same time and space and, therefore, the Islamic civilisation is the one that has to prevail worldwide over the *Jahiliyyah*. For Qutb there is only one law, the Sharia, and any other precept that departs from it must be fought. This Egyptian official and great ideologue of modern jihadism divided reality in an absolutely Manichean way: he considered that today's world was the scene of a battle between the forces of good and evil, between faith and unbelief, between virtue and ignorance or *Jahiliyyah*. One of his legacies to later generations was his denunciation of what he considered the degeneration and depravity of the American way of life and the threat it posed to Islam.

Abdullah Azzam, a jihadist ideologue and co-founder with bin Laden of Al-Qaeda, claimed that if jihad were a passing phenomenon in the history of Islam, the prophet would not have devoted so many passages of the Qur'an to the same subject. His intellectual, operational and logistical wealth in the fight against the Soviets made him a great reputation among the jihadists. His article entitled 'The Solid Foundation' laid the foundation of the Al-Qaeda organisation (KEPEL; MILELLI, 2005, 212-217). Contemporary jihad theorists such as Abu Qatada or Abu Hamza, according to their Salafist interpretation, rely on the primal sources of the Islamic religion to legitimise the exercise of violence (AZZAM, 1987).

Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian physician (1951-) and current leader of the organisation, is another leading ideologue of the global jihad. One of his most important dissertations is his criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood for their approach to power and their deviation from the path laid out by their founder Hassan al-Banna. At that time, he recommended that the Muslim Brotherhood strive to return to *Sharia* as the only legal source and also recommended that the willingness to participate in democratic institutions be abandoned (AL ZAWAHIRI, 2005, 243-261).

Osama bin Laden (1975-2011), the third major promoter of the new ideological approach, contributed significantly to spreading the message beyond the ‘territory of Islam’ through his fatwā "Declaration of Jihad Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Mosques", issued in 1996, where the keys to understanding this process of fixation on the distant enemy can be found. This excerpt from an interview with him in 1997 shows the importance he attaches to the obligation to jihad:

There is no choice but to return to the original sources of this religion, the Book of God, honour and glory to Him, and the Sunnah of His prophet, peace be upon Him, as our predecessors understood it, God be with them. From this it follows that the apex of the religion is jihad.

Jihadist terrorism distils a deep and active hostility against all political regimes in the Muslim world that it considers apostates (communities or individuals who abandon the precepts of their religion). To solve this doctrinal obstacle, these apostate governments are denied the status of true Muslims. The pernicious influence of the West on these Muslim societies, along with their continued state of sin and relaxation, would have returned these Muslims to a state of ignorance or *Jahiliyyah*.

According to global jihadism, Islam lives under a continuous state of aggression by a coalition of Christians and Jews and their allies in the Muslim world. This implies, therefore, that no Muslim has to wait for the collective call of the ruling class to undertake the jihad. This differentiates jihadism from the rest of traditional Islam.

TABLE 3.2. Vision of jihadist terrorism	
Jihadist terrorism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deprives their opponent of any trace of dignity</li> <li>• carries out a process of demonising entire collectives</li> </ul>	
<b>Examples</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sectarian struggles between Sunnis and Shiites.</li> <li>• The persecution or killing of Yazidis by members of the Islamic State.</li> </ul>	The promotion of hatred is greatly facilitated when anger is directed at entire peoples and not only at specific individuals.
Satanising the enemy not only allows moral support or justification for the violence used against them, but also allows the affirmation of one's power and the undermining of the legitimacy of an adversary who is presented as a subhuman being who deserves to be humiliated and despised.	

## DOCTRINE OF THE INDIVIDUAL JIHAD

One of the great ideologues of the doctrine of individual jihad is Abu Musab al-Suri (Mustafa Setmariam),<sup>38</sup> as he outlined the general strategy of global jihadism taking small cells or individual terrorist acts as a reference model. Abu Musab al-Suri proposed the design of an organisation with fewer links to facilitate autonomy and reduce visibility and vulnerability to possible infiltration by the intelligence services. *Nizam, la Tanzim*, which can be translated from the Arabic language as ‘system, not organisation’, is al-Suri's slogan, in which he summarises his doctrine. al-Suri classified the generations or stages of contemporary jihadism according to the spatial-temporal and operational aspects described below.

38. Syrian jihadist with Spanish passport born in 1958 into an aristocratic family in Aleppo. He carried out his military training among the Muslim Brotherhood in his country and during the days of the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s. He had excellent knowledge of Europe for having lived for several years and for having studied engineering in France. He later became a Spanish citizen through marriage. During the 1990s he found refuge in Londonistan. al-Suri built his reputation by running the magazine supporting the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) from London, *Al-Ansar*. After his return to Kandahar in 1997, he worked as a public relations officer for the Al-Qaeda chief, for whom he organised interviews with foreign journalists. This is how he met the leaders of the second wave of jihadism.

### FIRST GENERATION: MUJAHIDEEN IN AFGHANISTAN (1979-1989)

Influenced by thinkers like Sayyid Qutb and Abd-al-Salam Faraj and by the grassroots militants who applied, through terrorism, the ideas of these intellectuals during the 1970s and 1980s. During this first phase, jihadism aimed at defeating the atheistic Soviet army, which had invaded Afghanistan on Christmas 1979, by providing arms, training and funding to groups of Islamist guerrillas from Afghanistan (Mujahideen) and around the world (jihadists). In 1989, the Red Army was retreating from Kabul in defeat, having become a 'paper tiger', according to jihadist rhetoric. The aforementioned withdrawal would become the trigger for the Soviet collapse, exhausted by decades of the arms race. The symbol of the end of communism was the fall of the Berlin Wall a few months later. According to Gilles Kepel, the Cold War ended with the defeat of Moscow, at minimal cost to Washington: the Sunni oil monarchies had paid the highest price and, moreover, the victory of the jihad was a firewall against the expansionist danger of Khomeini's Iran. At that time, the Mujahideen were called 'freedom fighters' in the United States. Subsequently, international jihadists returned home and tried to replicate Afghanistan's success in overthrowing the apostate governments of the *munafiqun* in Egypt and Algeria, but failed. In the case of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), they lost popular support because of their excessive violence and also no longer had the logistical and military support of the CIA. In the autumn of 1997, after five years of civil war—which caused 100,000 deaths in Algeria and some 10,000 in Egypt—the jihadists were defeated because they had turned away from a population they had excommunicated (*Takfiri*) because of their religious extremism and branded as apostates or infidels those who had not joined their ranks. They justified the widespread killing on the grounds that their blood was *halal* (lawful).

### SECOND GENERATION: THE RISE OF AL-QAEDA (1998-2005)

The campaign against the Soviets in Afghanistan was the nexus of unity and coincidence for many radical volunteers. Abu Musab al-Suri is recognised as a member of this second generation of jihadists. His operational teachings and ideological doctrine were a reference in the training camps of Mujahideen in Afghan lands. Most members of this second generation have been captured or have died after the international campaign in response to 9/11.

For Ayman al-Zawahiri—the current leader of Al-Qaeda—the lessons learned from the first stage of the jihad showed that the masses had not followed the Islamist vanguard and that its violence had turned against them and led to isolation and failure. The reason was that the Muslim populations were afraid of facing a close enemy—for example the Egyptian or Algerian state—with more or less support from American power. During the second phase of jihadism, al-Zawahiri proposes to direct the jihad against the United States, which he calls the 'distant enemy'. That is why he proposes as a strategic objective to attack the West directly by means of a bold tactic: to convince the Muslim population that the United States is nothing more than a colossus 'with feet of clay', incapable of supporting its apostate allies. The double attack of 11 September 2001 on Washington and New York is part of a jihadism directed against the West. The attack was perpetrated after the attacks on the Kenyan and Tanzanian embassies in 1998 and on the USS Navy School in the port of Aden (Yemen) in 2000. Still, the desired mobilisation did not occur, despite the material and symbolic success of the attack, and despite the fact that translations of the Qur'an into English became bestsellers and former leftist terrorists embraced jihadism (Carlos Ramirez Jackal), a promise of anti-imperialism that had gone from red to green. Jihadists embodied the spirit of time, the Hegelian *Zeitgeist*. They

were convinced that the Afghan apotheosis could be repeated without difficulty in Egypt, Algeria, Bosnia or Chechnya, where several hundred of these international brigades came from. In Bosnia, they believed they could transform the civil war resulting from the collapse of Yugoslavia into a jihad to set foot in Europe. These dreams never came true.

### THIRD GENERATION OF JIHADISM: *NIZAM, LA TANZIM*

After analysing the failure of the first two phases of jihadism, Syrian engineer Abu Musab al-Suri published a 1,600-page online 'Call for Global Islamic Resistance' in January 2005. This voluminous Arabic text is a mixture of militant encyclopaedic terms and jihad instruction manual. It underlines that Europe will be the battlefield of the global jihad. It replaces the pyramidal organisation of the most classic jihadism of Al-Qaeda with a jihadism of proximity, reticular and liquid that penetrates societies from the base and not from the top and that induces to attack in a spontaneous and individual way. It advocates civil war in Europe, with the support of poorly integrated and rebellious young Muslim immigrants. Europe, a few hours away from the Islamic world (Tunisia, Libya, Istanbul, Tripoli, Beirut...), and the millions of young Europeans who have emerged from Muslim immigration represent the future *Jund al-Khilafah* (soldiers of the caliphate). The Arab revolts provided the theatre of operations for training thousands of Muslims. On the other hand, the spread of a Salafist and rigorist ideology of Islam —propagated and financed by the ulama of the Gulf oil monarchies— which advocates a break with Western values, democracy, human rights or gender equality, has prepared the ideal ideological ground prior to violent extremism in some cases. The third generation of jihadists has a crucial character according to al-Suri's interpretation. The last generation can lead the decline of the jihadist movement or, on the contrary, initiate a new decentralised and global insurrection capable of destabilising the West in the coming years.

**TABLE 3.3.** What is the third generation of jihadism based on?

- The logic of networks and the liquidity of terrorism
- Enhanced by the existence of disadvantaged neighbourhoods or vulnerable social environments
- By recruitment and incubation in prisons
- By Internet
- By the construction of a VEN that includes variables such as: the humanitarian doctrines of coming to help the brothers, the killing of entire populations, the aggression against 'our sisters', the insult to the prophet, the fight against *Tawhid* and *Sharia*.
- The millenary aspirations of the arrival of the Messiah (Īsā) in the land of Sham (Levant), fed by Salafist prophecies and culminating in the aspiration of martyrdom.

Abu Musab al-Suri believed that for this latest generation of current and future jihadists<sup>39</sup> to achieve the goal of challenging the West, several fundamental requirements would have to be met:

- the new generation of Mujahideen would have to abandon the pyramidal structures of the two previous generations, as classical-style organisations are vulnerable to intelligence pressure and military confrontation with the West;

39. The son of this third generation are Mohammed Merah, Mohamed Bouheli, Ayoub Khazzani, brothers Saïd and Chêrif Kouachi, Amedy Colulibaly, Mehdi Nemmouche, the Bakraoui brothers, brothers Brahim and Salah Abdeslam, Omar Omsen and Abdelhamid Abaaoud.

- has to be formed by small groups contributing to the Islamic resistance movement according to their capacities;
- the new organisational structure of jihadism has to be based on the existence of previous social networks;
- trust, friendship, place of origin or kinship are elements of connection and identity that reinforce the structure of the small groups;
- keep in mind the motto of Abu Musab al-Suri: 'A system, not an organisation' (LIA, 2009, 421);
- defends the absence of hierarchy and the actions of independent cells and isolated individuals; hence the importance of individual terrorism in the third generation of Mujahideen.

Their strategy was based on the creation of completely autonomous jihadist groups, detached from any superior organisational entity, based on jihadist Salafist ideological postulates and guided by simple operational principles. His basic premise was to organise and act, so that he is considered one of the greatest exponents of individual jihad from a tactical and operational point of view:

I call on all youth and all Muslims to participate in individual resistance. This means that the resistance does not have to depend on pyramidal structures, networks or hierarchies, which could lead to the capture not only of some but of all its members. This can be avoided by choosing a working method different from that of an organisation; that is, everyone is involved in the resistance, shared by all Muslims, and with one name (the international Islamic resistance), where the arrest of one of them does not lead to the arrest of all because there is no relationship between them. (AL-SURI, 2004)

It is possible to distinguish al-Suri's imprint on the tactics and operational evolution of the attacks carried out in the main Western countries in recent years. The concept of individual jihadist terrorism (*jihad al-irhab al-fard-ayn*), according to al-Suri's dictates, is based on the operational methods of urban or rural guerrilla warfare and is the most effective strategy to cause the collapse and extenuation of the enemy (LIA, 2009, 371).

## AL-QAEDA: ORIGINS, CHARACTERISTICS AND ROADMAP

The evidence suggests that, today, Al-Qaeda, although weakened by the continuous operations of neutralisation of its ideological and operational leaders, maintains its terrorist capacity, while the adaptation of foreign intelligence services and the passage of time have allowed a deeper understanding of its structure and pretensions forming a circle of constant evolution and adaptation to the environment.

Although Al-Qaeda's ideology is conservative, it is an essentially modern organisation that takes advantage of current technology for its purposes: it disseminates jihadist magazines online, uses laptops and encryption, creates websites and forums... It also adapts the message to be reproduced in the West and inspires the will of individuals not directly linked to the organisation.

## THE ORIGINS OF AL-QAEDA

We can trace the origins of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organisation<sup>40</sup> back to the war against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan during the 1980s and early 1990s. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 offered a great opportunity to put jihadist ideas into practice in a war against the atheistic enemy. Despite what is often thought, the key person in the creation of the group was not Osama bin Laden, but his mentor, Abdullah Azzam, who, like other supporters of the armed jihad, saw in the confrontation with the Russian army a religious duty against the enemies of Islam. The second most important man in this organisation was Osama bin Laden, who soon sympathised with Azzam's doctrinal views and made his wealth and contacts with the Saudi royal house available to the group.

The logistical and recruitment effort during more than a decade of confrontation with the Soviet army led to the creation of a truly global network of personal contacts, both in the Islamic world and in the Muslim communities of the West, called the Afghan Service Bureau (ASB) and which was the beginnings of today's Al-Qaeda. Neither bin Laden nor Azzam were willing to dismantle an infrastructure so useful to the aspirations of a global jihad, but differences emerged between them. Azzam intended to use the ASB in other regional conflicts where Muslims, according to this jihadist ideologue, were oppressed. bin Laden's vision was much more ambitious: he intended to use the network of contacts of thousands of Mujahideen to carry out the Islamist project of overthrowing the apostate rulers by force and restoring the caliphate a reality.

The contrast of views and the disagreement between bin Laden and Azzam also arose over the tactics to be used on jihadist targets. Azzam did not favour the exclusive use of terrorist actions: he preferred guerrilla warfare and the asymmetrical strategies that had worked so well in driving the Soviet invader out of Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden, on the other hand, argued that the only way to bring about change was through the use of terrorism.

Abdullah Azzam and his two sons were killed in a bomb attack in November 1989. There has been much speculation about who was the perpetrator of this attack: the Afghan secret services, the Israeli Mossad, etc. One of the most widely accepted hypotheses in recent years is that bin Laden himself would have commissioned the assassination to take control of the organisation.

The invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein was the event or trigger that accelerated the creation of Al-Qaeda. Taking advantage of the good relationship that bin Laden had with the Saudi monarchy, he offered his contingent of Mujahideen to fight against Iraq. The Saudi monarchy rejected the offer and accepted American aid instead. That was a momentous occasion in the history of Al-Qaeda, because bin Laden interpreted the deployment of Western forces as a desecration of the holy land. He broke with the Saudi regime and fled to Pakistan and later to Sudan.

In this first phase of Al-Qaeda, most of the European networks, except for France, did not show violent attitudes against their host countries. Still, the discourse and propaganda criticized morality, secularised society and some aspects of European politics.

In Sudan, bin Laden continued to develop Al-Qaeda and took the opportunity to start business activities to economically sustain the network. The terrorist organisation moved most of its members to Sudan, where it built new training camps and established contact with Islamist armed groups in East Africa. Al-Qaeda began to help the guerrillas fighting in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. One of the events that most conditioned the strategic vision of the terrorist organisation took place in the latter country.



Source: Pixabay

40. The word *al-qaeda* comes from the Arabic root *qaf-ayn-dal*. It has a polysemic nature that can mean: the base, the pedestal, the precept, a method or a model. Even so, this nomenclature was not used by bin Laden until after the 2001 attacks.

**TABLE 3.4.** The episode of the Black Hawk down

Members of bin Laden's organisation made a series of trips to Somalia to organise armed actions against the American forces deployed by the humanitarian operation Restore Hope. The Islamists feared that the Americans would establish bases in the country and from there attack Sudan.

The Mujahideen veterans of the war against the Soviets—called 'the Afghans' for their prestige— trained Somalis to shoot down helicopters with rudimentary rocket launchers. With this tactic, the militias of 'warlord' Mohamed Aidid were able to shoot down two American helicopters in the course of an operation in Mogadishu in October 1993. That battle, which cost the lives of eighteen American soldiers and a thousand Somalis, was widely reported in the media. CNN cameras filmed the bodies of two dead US soldiers being dragged away by the angry crowd.

American public opinion—which shortly before had supported the sending of troops to protect the distribution of humanitarian aid—demanded the withdrawal of the troops. The terrorist organisation interpreted the United States' withdrawal as a victory of similar magnitude to that achieved in Afghanistan against the Soviets. bin Laden and other leaders of the organisation considered that the Americans were withdrawing when they suffered casualties.

## SECOND PHASE OF AL-QAEDA: THE AFGHAN SANCTUARY

The second phase of Al Qaeda's tactical and operational evolution was consolidated during the second half of the 1990s. By 1998, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri reinforce the structure of the terrorist organisation and create the Islamic Front against the Crusaders and Jews.

bin Laden's next refuge was Afghanistan, where he was taken in by the Taliban regime. The Taliban had created an Islamic emirate and shared the ideology of jihad. The terrorist organisation built training camps in different parts of the country and made its contingent available to the Taliban to fight their Northern Alliance opponents. The period from the arrival of bin Laden in Afghanistan to the beginning of the American military campaign in October 2001 was the most relevant period in the terrorist network. That region of Central Asia became a secure base for training terrorists from all over the planet.

## THIRD PHASE OF AL-QAEDA: SEPTEMBER 11th, 2001

In the history of Al-Qaeda, we can consider a before and after September 11th, 2001. The attacks of that day were the culmination of its roadmap. All the requirements of the jihadist ideology were fulfilled: to strike at the heart of the enemy's territory and to provoke a great psychological impact due to the unexpected, simultaneous, suicidal and spectacular nature of the attacks, despite the fact that the operation did not achieve all the planned objectives. Nineteen members of Al-Qaeda, by hijacking four commercial aircraft to hit various targets, caused the death of some three thousand people. The targets were the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, the Pentagon (home of the US Department of Defence) and United Airlines Flight 93, which did not hit any targets and crashed near Pennsylvania. As a result of this attack, NATO forces invaded Afghanistan and punitive operations against the organisation's operational leaders succeeded in weakening its structure and reducing its influence on European networks. From that moment on, European networks started to act more autonomously. International cooperation after 9/11 led to a wave of arrests which, combined with the military operations in Afghanistan, reduced the organisation's operational capacities and chain of command by 80%.

**TABLE 3.5.** Other relevant facts of the third phase of Al-Qaeda**The second Iraq war**

The second step was the invasion of Iraq in 2003 in search of weapons of mass destruction. The invasion meant the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, but it also triggered the gestation of a jihadist insurgency that gave rise to what we know today as Daesh.

**11-M attacks**

On the morning of March 11th 2004, several terrorists activated explosives on four trains that were running in suburban stations in Madrid. They caused 191 deaths and over a thousand injuries. The explosions took place at rush hour —between 7.37 and 7.39 am— while many people were going to work or study. These attacks were committed three days before the general elections and at first the Ministry of the Interior attributed the acts to the terrorist group ETA. Later, a jihadist propaganda group called the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades claimed responsibility for the 11-M attacks on behalf of Al-Qaeda.

## FOURTH PHASE: THE SURVIVAL OF THE ORGANISATION

This phase is probably the most complex and is characterised by the lack of uniformity between the different networks. The scenario is hybrid and ranges from domestic or indigenous networks to regional groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. It is a phase in which the figure of the individual terrorist is being developed and where they are competing with a new organisation that has hijacked their international media attention: Islamic State.

On May 2nd, 2011 Osama bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in an attack by US special forces. His successor is Ayman al-Zawahiri and the organisation's 'old guard' is taking refuge between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Despite suffering numerous casualties from the drone missions, his jihadist roadmap continues. Hamza bin Laden, son of Osama bin Laden, may —in the short or medium term— lay claim to Al-Qaeda. His youth, charisma and nostalgia for his father's figure are variables that identify him as one of the emerging leaders of jihadism.

## AL-QAEDA REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Al-Qaeda is made up of affiliated organisations that have their own agenda. The two most important subsidiaries are:

- **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)**

AQIM is a remnant of the jihadist insurgency that destabilised Algeria during the 1990s. AQIM comes from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC). The integration of these groups into Al-Qaeda can be interpreted as a response to the process of decline experienced by Algerian jihadism during the 2000s and an opportunistic manoeuvre. The 'Al-Qaeda' brand has an undoubted appeal in radical environments, which favours the acquisition of human and material resources. The organisation has continued to finance itself through smuggling, the payment of ransoms to kidnapped persons,<sup>41</sup> extortion and taxes imposed on drug trafficking networks established in the Sahel.<sup>42</sup>

41. It is estimated that since 2003 AQIM has raised over \$40 million in hostage rescue. In addition, it should be noted that the price of the bailouts has been increasing over the years, from €150,000 in 2003 to €7,500,000 in 2014.

- **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)**

The origin of AQAP dates back to November 2003 when groups linked to central Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia first used this name in a propaganda statement. The organisation benefited from the arrival of hundreds of Saudi jihadists from Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime at the end of 2001. The organisation operates especially in Yemen where tribes continue to be a de facto and parallel power to the state.

42. The western Sahel is a highly unpopulated and vast area, with fragile and underdeveloped states that do not effectively control their territory.



The country is economically underdeveloped, and approximately 70% of the population lives outside the large urban centres. The intention of AQAP is to attack Western targets (hydrocarbon infrastructure, commercial aircraft, ships, tourists or Western diplomats), both within Yemen and in neighbouring countries. One of the great strengths of the group is the propaganda and media activity that it carries out, mainly through the publication of the magazine *Inspire*,<sup>43</sup> from where it disseminates the objectives of the movement and operational information on how to carry out attacks.

The AQAP has received significant media attention following two plots against the air transport system. The first occurred when an individual attempted to explode a bomb on a flight with more than 200 passengers during its landing in Detroit in December 2009. The second was the shipment of packages with explosives on flights of the transport companies FedEx and UPS, in 2010. One of its most important leaders was Anwar al-Awlaki, born in the United States, who recruited and indoctrinated hundreds of individuals through his videos or sermons on the Internet.

- **Jabhat al-Nusra**

Jihadist organisation formed in January 2012 and linked, until 2016, to central Al-Qaeda. Their aim was to establish an Islamic state in the post-Assad era. It was decreed a terrorist organisation by the United States in December 2012.

## DAESH

Islamic State (Daesh, the Arabic acronym) is a jihadist organisation based in territories of Iraq and Syria and has its origins in Al-Qaeda in Iraq. During 2014, Islamic State/Daesh created a caliphate in Syria and Iraq, with capital in Raqqa, with the aim of spreading throughout the Muslim world. This organisation is led, for the moment, by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, self-proclaimed caliph of all Muslims.<sup>44</sup>

Despite losing the territory it had controlled during the establishment of the caliphate in Syria and Iraq, the threat posed by the Islamic State/Daesh is related to the group's great capabilities (weapons, fighters, financial resources, etc.), the intentions to expand internationally and to strike at Western countries. After losing control of territory in Syria and Iraq, it has become a global jihadist group again but locally it operates with the insurgency.

In the territories it controlled, Islamic State/Daesh imposed the Salafist jihadist interpretation of Sharia. This interpretation has led to public summary executions broadcast on the web (many are slit throats and crucifixions), the beheading of Western journalists and aid workers, and the destruction of Christian churches, Sufi shrines and Shia mosques. The group's main sources of financing come from the control and exploitation of natural resources (essentially oil) in northern Syria and Iraq, the looting of the Central Bank of Mosul, the sale of stolen artwork, oil trafficking on the black market, taxes on the transport of goods and on religious minorities, and donations from Gulf countries. The bombing operations of the various coalitions have considerably reduced their funding capacity.

One of the great strengths of the Islamic State/Daesh has been the widespread use of propaganda to circulate its strategy and objectives. For this reason, its media and propaganda apparatus have contributed to the international news coverage of the group. The organisation periodically issued a magazine called

43. The organisation has already published 15 issues of this magazine. The format of *Inspire* is modern and attractive, with numerous colour photographs and articles on ideological indoctrination, operational manuals and strategic guidelines.

44. The term *caliphate* refers to the first system of government established in Islam. The caliph is the representative of the people and of Islam and has to rule according to Islamic law (*Sharia*).

*Dabiq* (in English)<sup>45</sup> and *Dar al Islam* (in French). The use of Western languages is related to the specific interest in recruiting young people from Western countries. The attack in Sri Lanka in April 2019 was linked to Daesh. In fact, the terrorists made the *Bay'ah*<sup>46</sup> and there is speculation that some of them returned from jihadist scenarios. Even so, at the time of writing this manual it is only a hypothesis.

## THE PHENOMENON OF FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS IN DAESH

Foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) are civilians (neither military nor personnel linked to security companies) who are not citizens of the states where the conflict is taking place and who join armed insurgency groups for religious reasons. Persons who are to be trained in training camps of armed insurgent groups are also considered foreign combatants. The definition includes both people who carry out combat activities and those who carry out logistical or support tasks in the groups in which they are incorporated.

The FTF phenomenon is not new. The first FTFs to go into conflict were in Iraq (4,000), Afghanistan (10,000) and Bosnia (1,000-2,000). The difference between those conflicts and those in Iraq and Syria is that the contingent of foreign fighters who have travelled to the latter countries has exceeded the number of FTFs from previous conflicts and in a very short period of time. Another interesting variable is that the countries of origin of the FTFs have also become widespread. The contingent in the most active phase of the Syrian conflict was about 25,000 FTF from, among other countries: Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Russia, France or Belgium.

There are several factors that explain this increase in FTFs compared to in previous conflicts:

- a) the use of the Internet and social networks makes it possible to spread conflict online, radicalise young people and attract potential combatants from all over the world;
- b) the apocalyptic narrative, as according to the Muslim imaginary the area of Syria is where the last battles between Islam and the infidels will take place, leading to the end of time;
- c) the creation of the caliphate as an Islamic State: when the leader of Daesh proclaimed the caliphate in June 2014, he indicated the duty of all Muslims to go to the area of the caliphate to help establish and defend it;
- d) easy access to the combat zone until 2015: until Turkey's involvement in border control, most FTF arrived in Syria through the Ottoman country, which became a relatively easy access to the caliphate.

As the Islamic state loses territory to international military intervention, there has been extensive debate in academic and political circles about how Daesh combatants, especially foreign combatants, will respond. The main concerns of Western security agencies relate to whether these combatants will return to their countries of residence or to neighbouring countries to carry out attacks; the question of whether these combatants and their partners will be able to reintegrate into society; and also concerns what should be done with all children born on ISIS territory, who may soon become stateless because of lack of proper documentation on marriages and births. Having the ability to identify, arrest and pursue returned combatants who have become radicalised would be a great help to law enforcement.

45. The organisation has already issued five issues of this magazine.

46. Pledge of allegiance to a leader.

## OTHER ISLAMIC TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS

Islamist terrorism is not a monolithic phenomenon, although all groups agree on the need to establish Islamic regimes. There are terrorist organisations that fight to liberate a certain territory, but without having a global pretension. These groups have similar objectives in comparison with non-religious groups of a nationalistic nature, despite the fact that they add the will to create a political-religious structure once independence is achieved. These groups gain much greater popular support than those who only fight to establish Islamic regimes in their respective countries.

### HEZBOLLAH

Suicide operations were introduced into contemporary terrorism by the Shiite Islamist organisation Hezbollah.<sup>47</sup> Most analysts agree that Hezbollah committed the first suicide attack in 1983, when a militant of the organisation crashed a van loaded with explosives into the US embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 63 people. After different terrorist acts against the forces deployed by the UN in Lebanon, they withdrew in 1984 and it was interpreted by jihadists as proof of the cowardice and lack of resistance of the western governments. In 1992, Hezbollah was integrated into political life and obtained parliamentary representation in Lebanon. Despite its participation in Lebanese political life, it is included in the list of terrorist groups by the European Union and the United States.

Since its creation, Hezbollah has acted as a somewhat pseudo-state within Lebanon, controlling education in many localities, obtaining representation in many town halls in the south of the country, or participating in programs for the reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure damaged by the various Lebanese civil wars.

Hezbollah has used the tactic of terrorism, but also guerrilla warfare in a context of insurgency against Israeli troops. Popular support has been key to their survival over time. The war in the summer of 2006 between Hezbollah and the Israel Defense Forces was the longest confrontation between a powerful army and an insurgency. In general, previous wars between the regular Arab armies and the Israeli army had lasted an average of one to two weeks. Hezbollah's leader at that time became one of the most popular Arab leaders in the Muslim world. If we remember the characteristics that an insurgency must have, it is worth mentioning that Hezbollah has received logistical and economic support from states such as Iran and Syria for many years. Hezbollah's military capacity is currently an enigma, despite estimates that it has more than 7,000 paramilitaries and some 20,000 reservists in its ranks. During the war in Syria, Hezbollah has supported the regime of Bashar al-Assad in terms of military, basically because if the regime falls, the supply of arms from Iran may be compromised.

### HAMAS

This Palestinian organisation was consolidated during the first intifada against Israel in the late 1980s. It was born out of the associative movement of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and has maintained for many years an extensive social network of schools, mosques and hospitals. Its ideology combines Palestinian nationalism and Islamism. Hamas has tried to avoid civil war among Palestinians and has con-

<sup>47</sup>. Meaning 'God's party' in Arabic.

centrated its attacks on Israel. Most of their suicide attacks were carried out on Israeli territory and against civilians. In the mid-1990s, when the Oslo Accords were beginning to be successfully implemented, Hamas committed a series of attacks on city buses and car bombs that led to Israeli repression and a deterioration in the negotiation process between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel. Hamas leaders have been regular targets of Israeli intelligence operations. The organisation is funded by contributions from countries in the Persian Gulf, Iran and the Islamic communities in the West.

## INTERNET AND PROPAGANDA: A VARIABLE DETERMINANT OF JIHADIST TERRORISM

From the first manifestations of anarchist terrorism, with the concept of ‘propaganda of the deed’, to the videos of despicable executions produced by the Islamic State, there has always been certainty about the essentially communicative side of terrorist violence. The circulation of this type of act has sought not only to spread the fear and anxiety of its victims, but also to convey a message to an audience. Violence and message have been two indissolubly linked realities in terrorism, regardless of the ideology and motivations that have supported the actions of the different groups.

**TABLE 3.6.** Propaganda video example: DAESH

It is undeniable that videos in which Daesh shows extreme violence have been key in forging the popularity and image of ‘sure thing’ in relation to Al-Qaeda.

With the desire to magnify the terror caused by their actions, this group has manipulated the images to make them more dramatic.

For example, in a video recording the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians on the beaches of Libya, the height of the executioners dressed in black was built up with special effects, in front of victims who seemed even smaller in their submission. They also used special effects to achieve the reddening of the waters of the Mediterranean Sea with the blood of the victims as revenge for the death of Osama bin Laden and the abandonment of his body at sea.

Jihadist terrorism has found the Internet to be a valuable tool for enhancing its activities. Jihadist terrorist organisations have integrated the use of this tool into their activities to achieve greater reach and efficiency in some of their traditional actions such as propaganda, internal communications, planning new attacks, obtaining information, financing or recruitment. However, this technology also has a negative side for terrorists. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies have taken advantage of the technological vulnerabilities of the terrorist presence on the Internet to disrupt terrorist cells, abort new plots and increase intelligence gathering on these networks.

The photographers or video makers of Daesh or Al-Qaeda propaganda use cameras and recording equipment that are no match for those of the Western media. In addition, in many cases, the authors of this propaganda material were previously involved in graphic design and film direction in a professional manner. Images recorded from sniper targets, slow-motion explosions, different shots for the same attack, or even images captured from a drone are some of the techniques that have become commonplace in jihadist propaganda.

**IMAGE 3.3.** Frame of one of the Islamic State propaganda videos broadcast on the Internet and social networks



In addition to the technical specifications of their content, the innovation lies in the use that jihadist groups have made of social networks to spread their messages, as they have adapted to the languages of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram or WhatsApp. The main users of the social networks integrated in jihadist organisations come from western countries. Accustomed to social networks, they spread the life of the Mujahideen to their environment with images of training, weapons, selfies and a stage design typical of a video game.

**TABLE 3.7.** The main objectives of jihadist groups' propaganda

- Instilling fear and weakening the enemy's morale  
The fact that the recipients of this propaganda can see the brutality of some of these groups has a deterrent effect.
- Fostering support and internal cohesion within the organisation  
The media impact of any terrorist action is multiplied when it passes through the spokespersons of its supporters.
- Recruiting new militants  
Particularly important has been the campaign to radicalise and recruit young people.
- Gaining the support of the Muslim population

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Firstly, that Al-Qaeda, Daesh and, by extension, the global jihadist movement continues to represent the most serious threat in terms of security.
2. Al-Qaeda has been able to adapt to ensure its survival.
3. The contingent of foreign fighters who have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join terrorist organisations such as Daesh or Jabhat al-Nusra has surpassed the number of foreign fighters from previous conflicts and in a very short period of time.
4. The Internet and propaganda have played a key role in this.

## CHAPTER 4

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# THE RADICALISATION PROCESS AND COUNTERTERRORISM MEASURES

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*Today the only certainty in relation to identity that a boy from the northern suburbs of Paris has —whether his name is Mohamed, Mamadou or Ishmael— is his religion. He knows he's a Muslim and that's not negotiable. Then you don't know what it is anymore.*

Mourad Goual<sup>48</sup>

The demands of the suffragettes, the civil rights movement of the black population of the United States or the fight against *apartheid* are just some of the revolutions led by 'radicals' that served to end injustices, demand the exercise of rights or erode dictatorial, oppressive or authoritarian regimes. People living in representative democracies have the right to defend ideas that address the root of problems (which is the literal meaning of radical), as well as to support drastic political, economic or social reforms. Having radical opinions is not a crime and only if they are associated with the planning or consummation of a violent action they have criminal relevance. Not all radicals are terrorists, but all terrorists are radicals. The ideological challenge, in certain cases, can be more productive than the prohibition, persecution or clandestine nature of radical beliefs, as long as these do not entail problems of coexistence, the breaking of social peace or public security.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COGNITIVE RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Radicalisation, from the point of view of psychology, is a state of mind resulting from a complex psychosocial process where numerous elements interact at the same time. The combination of all these elements can give rise to situations of varying degrees of personal, family and social destruction. The process of radicalisation is affected by individual aspects (frustration, feelings of humiliation or injustice...), social aspects (discrimination, marginalisation...), political aspects (social or geopolitical conflicts), ideological or religious aspects (fundamentalism, fanaticism...), family aspects (traumatic experiences, mourning...) and group aspects (indoctrination processes).

Unfortunately, the problem of radicalisation has been confined almost exclusively to radical Islamism and jihadism, because simplistic, partial or generalist arguments are often used. But we can observe various degrees of violent extremism in non-exclusively religious contexts such as far-right, far-left or violent criminal gangs or destructive sects.

48. Candidate for the 2012 French legislative elections.

At this point, we'll stop to look at some aspects of sects. A sectarian relationship is a relationship established between a person who intentionally induces another person to be partially or totally dependent on them in relation to vital decisions. When we speak of coercive sects we refer to groups or movements with a rigid and pyramidal structure and where, above all, the leader is situated, who instils in their followers the conviction that they have a special talent, a gift or superior knowledge. Generally, there is only one leader, although in some groups there may be a couple of leaders or even a small leadership group. The ultimate goal of coercive sects can be summarised as the achievement of power.

Typical scheme cult activity pattern is as follows: a dominant person imposes a delusion, an ideology or a world view with which a shared psychotic disorder can occur. That's why it takes a dominant mind and a group of minds prepared for shaping such delirium or ideology. For example, in the case of the Manson family sect, Charles Manson was the dominant mind and the receptacles for his delusion, manipulation and revenge a handful of disaffected, deranged, potentially violent, abused and yet spoiled teenagers from their familiar surroundings.

#### FIGURE 4.1. How did Charles Manson manipulate his followers?

Kiko Amat describes it brilliantly in the prologue of the book translated into Spanish *Helter Skelter* (Bugliosi and Gentry, 2019):

"By means of mendacious prison chatter, hippie monstrosity, philosatanic eschatology (he had studied satanic readings in prison), folly as liberation and apocalyptic-racial dystopia. He spiced it up with regular orgies, LSD, crucifixion scenes and long musical evenings in which he performed his own repertoire of mediocre but less than expected folk songs. [...] A fervent, fanatical cult composed of California's upper-middle class teenagers with a brainwashing and fornicating compulsion, hooked on lysergic drugs with an underlying creed: 'Kill your parents and be born again' [...] Manson was right-wing, the son of an unknown father, rejected by his alcoholic mother, he was 5'4", ultra-violent, almost an innate criminal, cunning, elusive, and yet a coward."<sup>49</sup>

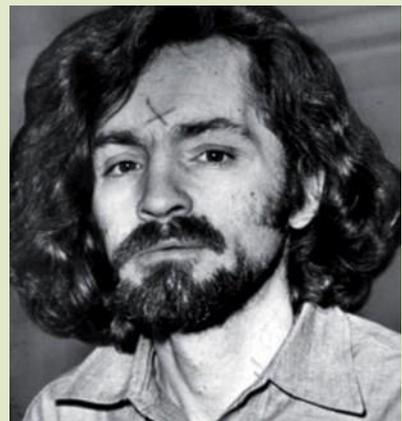


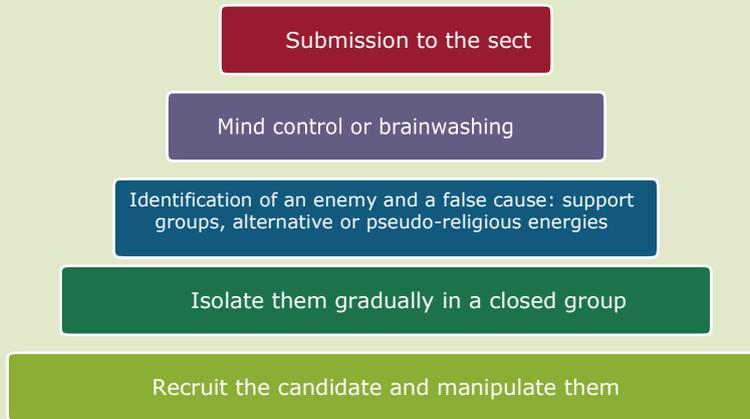
Photo: John Malmin; Los Angeles Times

Charles Manson during his life experienced —as in a high percentage of radicalisation processes— episodes of frustration and failure to achieve his life goals. His childhood was turbulent and with an evident lack of affective relationships and socialisation motivated by a broken family. He wanted to be a musician and his failure was incubating a violent and manipulative personality. His connection to the prison and criminal world has shaped his profile as a terrorist.

To conclude this section on sects, we can simplify their recruitment pattern more specifically by means of the following chart:

<sup>49</sup>. He knew exactly who he was predated and who he was potentially victimising. He was always deferential and obsequious with many of the 'bikers' that visited the family.

**CHART 4.1.** Recruitment pattern of hierarchical sects



**TABLE 4.1.** Three definitions of radicalism or violent extremism

**Farhad Khosrokhavar, sociologist**

Defines radicalisation or violent extremism (VE) as the articulation between a radical ideological vision and the relentless will to implement it.

**UNESCO**

Defines VE as the set of beliefs and acts of those who pay for violence or use it for ideological reasons in order to impose radical ideological, religious or political views. VE can involve the practice of various types of violent actions such as: hate speech, urban violence, violent activism and, ultimately, terrorism.

**Clark McCauley, psychologist**

Explains that 99% of those who hold radical views never go so far as to act violently. There is, therefore, no direct path from extremist beliefs to extremist or violent actions. And he insists that fighting radical ideas is a different problem than that of fighting terrorists.

I believe that one of the errors in the study of radicalisation is that, in a recurrent way, those who have radical ideas and those who commit acts of violence are placed in the same conceptual field. This increases uncertainty and leads to cataloguing errors in threat assessment and in the implementation of public prevention policies.

**TABLE 4.2.** 'Being rebellious' is not a crime

On November 5th, 2015, the media reported the arrest of several young people associated with the Straight Edge movement.<sup>50</sup>

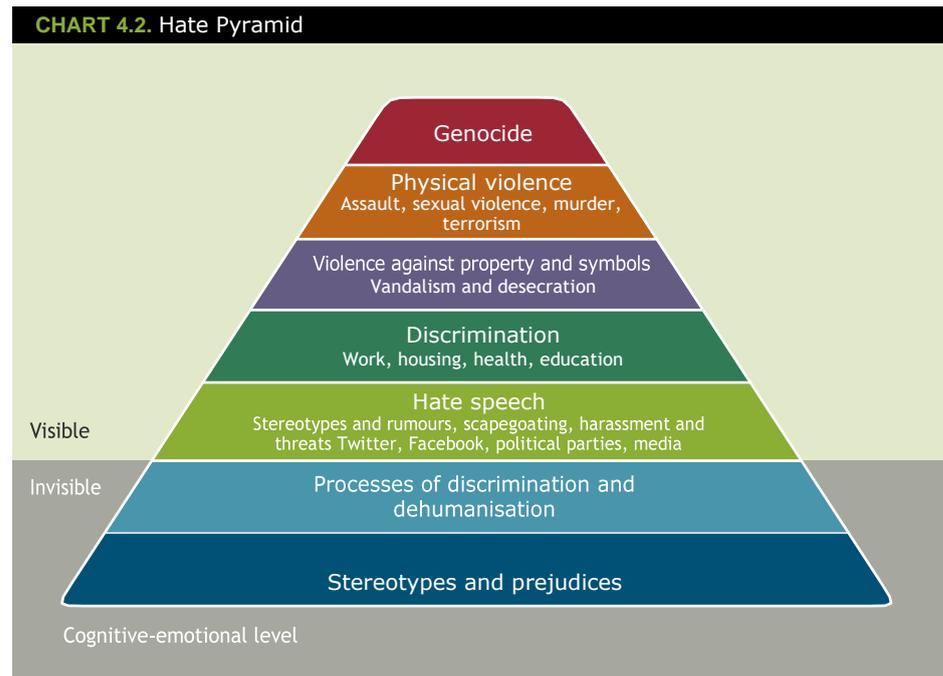
Police held a press conference to announce operation *Ice* against what was presented as a hitherto unknown terrorist group, with roots in a movement that emerged in the US. They considered it a very structured organisation and highlighted the connections with other violent groups.

The judicial process against them dragged on for two years and nine months. The one considered the 'main leader' spent half of this time in prison. Finally, the Criminal Court of the National Court of Justice issued the sentence 28/2018, on July 26th, which acquitted the six Straight Edge young men for whom the prosecutor's office requested two-year prison sentences each for glorifying terrorism through social networks. The legal argument: 'Being rebellious is not a crime'.

50. They practised radical veganism and rejected the use of drugs, tobacco or alcohol and promiscuity.

Therefore, in order to make a prudent and rigorous approach to the process of radicalisation it is pertinent to differentiate previously between

- a) cognitive or ideological radicalisation (radical opinions or beliefs), which is not punishable and may involve actions such as peaceful social activism; and
- b) violent radicalisation (violent actions), which implies the explicit acceptance of using violence as an instrument to achieve objectives.



Source: #BCNvsOdi website on hate speech of the Directorate of Citizenship Rights and Diversity of the Barcelona City Council

One of the first premises that we have to be clear about when dealing with this process is that radicalisation is not congenital or permanent but arises from a change or transformation in the perspective and behaviour of the radicalised subject. Typically, these tendencies have been incubating for months or years. Experts disagree on when the process of violent radicalisation ends. For a majority, this process ends with the adoption of a pro-violence mindset and attitude. Others add other complementary phases such as mobilisation and execution of terrorist attacks. Fortunately, radicalisation processes do not always progress or culminate: sometimes there are variables that can have a positive influence, such as finding a partner, a job, participating in a prevention plan or the family.

Social psychologist Naffes Hamid says that "radicalisation is a process in which the whole is more than the sum of its parts: it is like an ecosystem where removing one factor does not cause the collapse of the system, but makes it evolve positively or negatively".

CIDOB academic researcher Moussa Bourekba tackles the causes of the process of radicalisation<sup>51</sup> from four dimensions: personal, socioeconomic, political and religious. Through these variables he explains the reasons that can lead a converted middle-class European to align himself with an extremist group as a reaction to an authority vacuum or in search of a new identity oasis.<sup>52</sup> But also, through other dimensions, he addresses the reasons why a young French person

51. In the clarifying document entitled "Barcelona Attacks: Reactions, Explanations and Pending Debates", published in February 2018 (see the bibliography relating to this chapter).

52. Concept created by the sociologist Manuel Castells.

from a marginalised neighbourhood experiences feelings of exclusion, frustration or injustice, which is the prelude to cognitive radicalisation. Bourekba also considers that the decision-making and action capacity of the terrorist organisations themselves (human agency) must be taken into account, such as the increase in propaganda aimed at women, which led to the increase in the proportion of women from 1/7 in 2014 to 1/3 in 2016.

There are different academic approaches to explain the process of radicalisation, but almost all models design a gradual advance in different stages, in many cases with a pyramidal pattern, in others with a 'scale' pattern and in others, progressive or linear. In our case we will use a double pyramidal pattern by which as we ascend the steps of the pyramid we achieve a greater degree of commitment and radicalisation. Firstly, there is always a process of ideological or cognitive radicalisation integrated by the different strata where a violent narrative and a radical belief are assimilated.

The first piece of good news is that the process of cognitive radicalisation is almost never linear and not all individuals who initiate it complete it, since there may be resilience factors that can contain or reverse it.

- Reversal includes both cognitive and behavioural elements. It is not always necessary to abandon certain values, but rather to be disinterested in certain cognitive closures, desiderative thoughts or to accept the instrumental use of violence. Efforts need to focus on two complementary aspects: social assistance and psychological support. The first calls for employment guidance, advice in life practice or employment assistance, while the second calls for resilience factors.
- What are these resilience factors or environments? Self-affirmation, introspection, frustration tolerance, critical thinking, empathy, education and promotion of knowledge, self-control, social cohesion and support, delegitimisation of violence and hate speech, family fabric, personal autonomy, prevention plans, intervention projects, research on positive models, the birth of a child, youth programmes, promoting the existence of various identities instead of binary or dichotomous identities, knowledge of the victims' story, participation in communication workshops, artistic expression or sport.

Programmes in the education of young people in democratic values and critical thinking should be promoted that aim to train them in civic and democratic values, stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice, responsibility and cultural diversity. The field of education thus becomes a stage for fighting radicalisation. Education programs are aimed at promoting critical thinking, the portion of digital universalism; therefore, discussion forums, guided visits to concentration camps or lectures given by former extremists have been created.

There is no doubt that both educators and teachers have a key role to play in the fight against radicalisation. Not infrequently they have to deal with the ideas and behaviours of radicalised, vulnerable, at-risk or simply frustrated young people. That is why they must be trained and they must also have the vocation to be trained for:

- a) acquire social skills, so that they can initiate discussions and conversations with their students on sensitive and difficult topics, related to personal feelings, principles and beliefs;
- b) must have sufficient knowledge to be able, in addition to countering the radical discourse, to provide not only narrative but also occupational alternatives, referring to different bodies, NGOs and associations that offer a suitable alternative to students who want to contribute to a cause and channel their feelings of injustice;

- c) educators must have their own networks for exchanging experiences, both inside and outside their school;
- d) educators, tutors and teachers must have a minimum knowledge of youth social spaces, both physical and virtual.

The second piece of good news is that, very often, during the first stages of the cognitive radicalisation process, the individual raises doubts and has periods of ambivalence and cognitive dissonance.<sup>53</sup> It is in this space of doubt or ambivalence where the counter-narrative finds its space and where we have the opportunity to apply prevention policies to contain or reverse the process if we are able to identify factors and environments of resilience. The absence of alternative narratives favours the occupation of empty spaces by extremist narratives.

The life story of the terrorists who made up the cell that perpetrated the attacks of August 17th and 18th, 2017 in Catalonia has been carefully analysed with the aim of identifying the predisposition<sup>54</sup> and attraction<sup>55</sup> factors of their radicalisation process. But is it possible that not all of the members of the Ripoll cell had the same conviction and predisposition to commit violent acts? Perhaps some participated actively in the planning of a terrorist action because of strong ideological convictions, and others because of inter-group dynamics such as the influence and descent of the big brothers on the younger ones.

53. Cognitive dissonance is an uncomfortable psychological stage that occurs when someone is aware of a conflict between two opinions that they believe to be equally true.

54. Emotional vulnerability factors such as impulsivity, anxiety, victimhood or frustration. Triggering factors: catalysts or tipping points

55. Attraction factors: ideology, the radicalising agent and favourable environments (Internet, prison environment, ghettos...).

56. Dissatisfaction refers to a negative assessment of group membership and can be related to negative experiences of rejection or discrimination.

57. Dissimilarity implies that the individual is perceived differently from other members of the same group.



People are different, and our permeability or resistance to extremist discourse can vary throughout life. It is important to identify people who are immersed in group dynamics of radicalisation processes and who can verbalise, externalise or question the identification with the group showing dissatisfaction,<sup>56</sup> dissent or dissimilarity.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the work of schools, other social institutions for young people, such as leisure activities, gyms, neighbourhood associations or after-school workshops, can also be involved.

**TABLE 4.3. Violent radicalisation and violent extremism**

Violent radicalisation must be understood as a process of transformation in which extreme ideologies are assimilated and which, if it culminates, may involve a logic of violent action with the aim of provoking profound changes in society.

There is no standard pattern of radicalisation, but a pattern of acceptance of violent narratives that articulate extremisms can be established.

Violent extremism is a broad concept that encompasses all violent acts committed by extremists (political violence, terrorism, hate crimes, sexual violence, etc.).

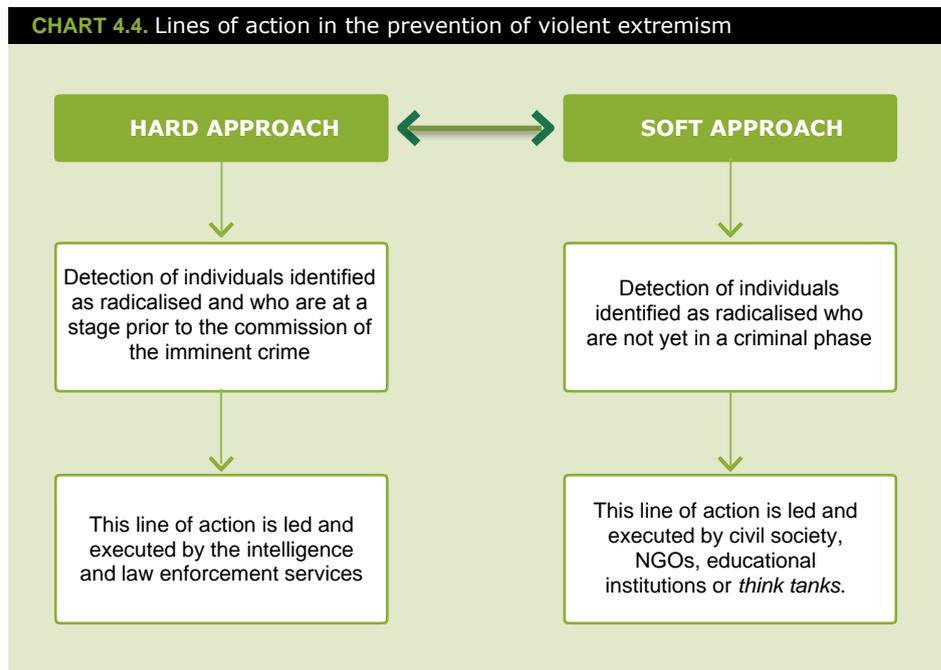
The analysis of violent radicalism has generated many academic studies, despite the fact that most are speculative in nature. Empirical research is needed to assess policies to prevent violent extremism. In this sense, collaboration between the academic world and the security forces is very relevant, as the former develops the conceptual frameworks and the police have a lot of proven operational information from police investigations. The creation of spaces for collaboration or research is a measure that would help to better understand the processes of radicalisation.

On the other hand, one does not have to look for standard profiles, models or patterns because studies indicate that they are very heterogeneous. After reviewing the attempts to establish an archetypal profile, it could be concluded that there is a wide variety of personal profiles, educational levels and socio-economic patterns. It seems difficult to establish or sustain a causal root or a unique and consistent characteristic.

This type of study can be interesting from a descriptive point of view, but it does not explain why it happens. Everything would be much easier in terms of prevention if there were genuine and airtight author profiles, but this is not the case. It will be productive scientifically to move from a profile-centred perspective (who they are) to one that focuses on psychosocial and environmental processes (how they came to be). Descriptive studies help us to know who the terrorists are from a retrospective viewpoint, but they do not tell us how their path from cognitive radicalisation to violent extremism is in order to apply prevention, detection and intervention tools.

Policies for the prevention of violent extremism cannot be developed by proposing criminal sentences, single solutions or one-dimensional approaches, which favour the dispersion of responsibility or lack of coordination among the various actors involved.

In summary, radicalisation is a cognitive process of socialisation and adoption of uncompromising views or beliefs about political, social, cultural or religious problems that is characterised by rejection of or opposition to the existing *status quo*. On the other hand, violent extremism is one more stage through which a doctrinal corpus is acquired, characterised by the absence of flexibility towards the points of view of others, with the creation of an imaginary that bases the division between 'them' and 'us'. This is why radicalisation can lead to extremism, but it can also lead to not adopting this type of behaviour and opting for a theoretical political framework. It can be an activist extremism (civil disobedience, boycotts, strikes...) or a violent extremism (terrorism, hate speech...).



Source: own elaboration.

One last thought. Is deradicalisation possible? If there is already some controversy to define what radicalisation is, it is easy to imagine that there is also controversy to define what deradicalisation is. What does it mean to deradicalise? Dismount the pyramid? Deprogram? We could suggest that, in general, deradicalisation does not have to imply the abandonment of radical opinions but the explicit renunciation of justification and the use of violence. Perhaps we have to be less ambitious and think that the process can be contained or reversed, but it is difficult to completely deradicalise a person because this would mean changing their life paradigm. Radical postulates are possible as long as they do not imply or justify violence, and it even seems more sensible to refute them if appropriate— so as not to encourage clandestinity. There are very few deradicalisation programs that have been published or their results evaluated. In theoretical terms, the formula for deradicalisation is a combination of several factors such as the influence of charismatic leaders, the reactive response of the government to contain radicalisation, the interaction of different actors and, finally, incentives (coverage of basic needs or granting of relevance as positive reinforcement) [ASHOUR, 2009, 12].

## THE PHASES OF THE RADICALISATION PROCESS

Categorising or classifying the range of motivations of an individual on their way to committing a violent act is a daring exercise that depends on a multiplicity of variables as unpredictable as: an unfair dismissal, a disappointment in love, the traumatic loss of a loved one, the desire to be in the spotlight, schizophrenia, social injustices, international politics, war conflicts, a jihadist forum or the persuasion of a friend.

To a greater or lesser extent, the general variables described below are present in the process of violent radicalisation:

- a) The individual or group that is radicalising in gradual phases must abandon moderate cognitive schemes and adopt uncompromising positions.
- b) In some way the process of radicalisation is migratory or a journey resulting from a combination of push factors that encourage it and pull factors or individual motivations. The push factors are:<sup>58</sup>
  - a feeling of exclusion or lack of belonging
  - a traumatic experience (it can be some kind of discrimination, watching videos...)
  - the perception of a non-future
  - the relative deprivation
  - the lack of friendship ties
  - a parental authority vacuum (stopped clock syndrome)<sup>59</sup>
  - the perception of injustice, which can be nourished both by the local context (stigmatising laws, perception of racism...) and by the geopolitical context (Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Syrian war...)
  - the feeling of not being able to live out their religion
- c) Entering into a discursive logic that admits non-democratic factors of legitimacy.
- d) Going from sympathetic to committed (higher level of cognitive dissonance) in the pattern of violent extremist narrative (VEN). It is also influenced by Quintan Wiktorowicz's concept of cognitive opening, which is a process or previous state of predisposition of some individuals or groups that are receptive to accept certain beliefs. For example, in the case of adolescents, this variable is very important, understood as a favourable predisposition to receive and consider new ways of giving meaning to one's existence and the world.
- e) Becoming involved as an activist and overcome legal inhibitions to support the aims and methods of the organisation.
- f) Judging as legitimate terrorist actions.
- g) Political or social desertification favours cognitive and violent radicalisation processes.
- h) Criticism of radicalisation studies; few studies include a control group because they understand the scientific fact of comparing radicalised individuals with others who have not experienced radicalisation despite having travelled similar biographical paths and being exposed to the same stimuli and experiences.

In September 2005, the European Commission defined violent radicalisation as the phenomenon whereby people adhere to opinions, views and ideas that can lead them to commit terrorist acts. On the other hand, in 2008 the manual *Violent radicalization – Recognition of and Responses to the Phenomenon by Professional Groups Concerned* was published, in which a definition of radicalisation was proposed that included the following characteristics:

- Radicalisation can be defined as the growing desire to bring about far-reaching changes in society that may be aimed at abolishing the established democratic legal order and may involve the use of undemocratic methods.
- A process that causes an individual or a group to accept, support or encourage the use of violence as a political means.
- A process of personal development in which an individual adopts even more extreme political or religious ideas and objectives.
- A process of adopting an extremist belief system and involving a shift from ideas to actions.

58. The factors referred to as 'push factors' are the most frequent in the case of radicalised individuals in Europe.

59. Expert Jordi Moreras uses this euphemism very aptly to define the absence of social and religious references in the community and family environment.

The *Centre de prévention de la radicalisation menant à la violence*<sup>60</sup> defines violent radicalisation as a process by which people adopt an extremist belief system that includes the willingness to use or facilitate violence with the intention of promoting an ideology, political project or a cause as a means of social transformation. In short, three relevant aspects stand out:

- the adoption of an ideology that becomes a lifestyle and a framework for meaningful action for the individual
- the belief that the use of violence is necessary to advance the cause
- the fusion of ideology and violent action

Radicalisation, whether violent or not, is a complex, non-linear and dynamic process. It cannot be explained by a single factor, but is a multifactorial process that causes a lack of homogeneity in the different paths to radicalisation and results from a complex interaction of multiple mechanisms. There is, therefore, no single cause. That is why there is no single model that can explain this complexity. Nor can we reduce this phenomenon to specific people or contexts.

According to many scientific studies, the most important dynamics of violent radicalisation are detailed in the table below.

**TABLE 4.4.** Relevant features of violent radicalisation

Usually it is not a fast or hasty process, although more recent radicalisations linked to jihadism have been quicker.

Radicalisation is the result of a collective identity that the individual perceives as inclusive and makes them adopt an image of strength that makes them feel special and empowered. This new identity implies a break with the past (an example is the burning of passports by foreign terrorist fighters from Daesh). Social psychology helps to understand terrorist behaviour more rigorously as a phenomenon of a collective nature. The individual psychology that governs the process of self-radicalisation is an exception and a huge source of uncertainty.

Most terrorists are psychologically normal and do not fit into any diagnosed medical category.

Charismatic leaders or ideological references are fundamental in the processes of radicalisation. Their ability to spread the message among the discontented, the alienated or the marginalised is a reinforcement of the process of radicalisation.

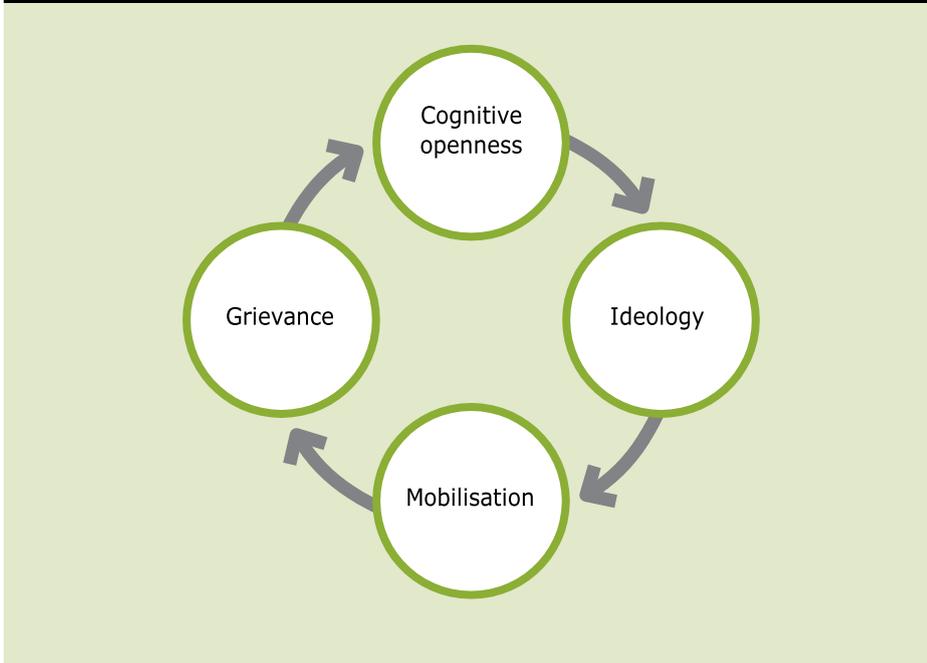
<sup>60.</sup> Centre created in March 2015 in the city of Montreal with the support of the Government of Quebec (Canada).

<sup>61.</sup> Professor of Security Studies at the War Studies Department at King's College London, and Director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR).

<sup>62.</sup> Executive Director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and professor at the University of Maryland 2017 of the Understanding Terrorism and the Terrorist Threat course.

Peter Neumann<sup>61</sup> explains that there are three ingredients that fuel radicalisation: grievance, ideology and mobilisation. To these three, Professor Bill Braniff<sup>62</sup> adds one more: cognitive opening.

For a person to be radicalised, it is not necessary for all these elements to be combined, it is not a linear process. Radicalisation can occur if some or all four aspects are combined. Grievance is having the idea that something is wrong or bad in the world. Some examples that could cause this grievance are the inequalities and injustices.

**CHART 4.5.** Ingredients that feed radicalisation, according to Neumann and Braniff

Source: own elaboration.

After the grievance, Braniff exposes a new element, which is to have a cognitive opening. This traumatic event or personal crisis shakes the person's confidence in the beliefs they previously held and pushes them to re-evaluate their whole life and open themselves up to a radical change in values and behaviour. In the case of the IRA or ETA, the new members justified their membership of ethno-nationalist terrorist groups by mentioning the death (or torture) of friends and family by the State and therefore it could be inferred that terrorism was an act of revenge. More recently, it seems that some criminals who joined jihadist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda did so because they realised that their criminal behaviour had been harmful and they needed to break with their past and purge their 'sins'. This 'point of no return' was an argument for resorting to religion and justified their involvement with the Salafist followers of the ultraconservative branch of Sunni Islam. This refers to individuals who are vulnerable to being influenced by external factors or third parties.

Another aspect that plays an important role in radicalisation is ideology, that is, a set of beliefs that describe what is good and what is bad in the world and how this world should be. Ideology provides a plan of action towards a real outcome. And finally, mobilisation, which is the moment when the individual takes action in the real world by gathering the resources necessary to achieve real objectives and results.

This circle works in the following way: radicalisation begins with a grievance that can be either group or individual and this creates a cognitive opening towards the search for answers. Cognitive openings can arise even before the grievance. Ideology can give some answers such as who is responsible or indicate what things are wrong in the world and how this world should be, and it can also help to interpret grievances. When an ideology is extremist it offers polarised ideas about complex situations where only black or white exists: it promotes a sense of urgency to change things and tends to adopt a unique knowledge and vision of what reality is like. Ideologies play an important role in the process of radicalisation because they help

to divide society and create an ideological mechanism based on the action-reaction of *us* against *them*. This polarisation helps to radicalise, recruit and mobilise individuals. When these ideas are *associated* with others, either online or in person, that is when mobilisation towards violence can be generated. And in mobilisation, the grievance can once again be fed.

The processes of radicalisation are basically materialised in two types of contexts: the macro-social and the micro-social. Macro-social context means marginalised areas (e.g. slums), radical doctrines, prisons or the Internet, while micro-social context means friendship, kinship or endogenous factors which are, a priori, the shortest and safest way to get involved in the radical cause.

The process of violent radicalisation can be approached in different ways. In 2005, the American psychiatrist Jeff Victoroff published an article on the explanatory models of radicalisation and concluded that no theoretical pattern can cover all the causes or factors involved. We will propose two models to understand the process of radicalisation: that of the FBI and that proposed by the prestigious Iranian psychologist Fathali M. Moghaddam.

## FBI MODEL

The model developed by the FBI establishes four stages of the radicalisation process and is applicable to any type of extreme ideology.

### 1. Pre-radicalisation

It is a phase where the subjective aspects are very important: the desire for notoriety, wanting to be admired or respected, the feeling of belonging or popularity. These are psychological aspects that are part of the microcosm of the individual and can have a significant influence on the psyche of potential terrorists. The search for acceptance can be an important factor, especially in people with fragile social ties. The most important stimulus of the pre-radicalisation phase comes from the influence of leaders, references or family members, who can spread their message in many ways: universities, prisons, places of worship, social networks or private meetings.

### 2. Identification

It is characterised by acceptance and devotion to the cause. Commitment to the cause requires a greater degree of involvement on the part of the individual, as well as the mentoring or reinforcement of other members of the radical group. Social interaction with other individuals committed to the same cause is a stimulus that favours the acceleration of the radicalisation process.

### 3. Indoctrination

In this part of the process of violent radicalisation, there is a conviction that the cause requires violent action. In this phase, radical postulates such as: 'Islam is attacked by the West', 'the white race is superior', 'the State must be destroyed', 'the Shias must be exterminated' are accepted...

### 4. Action

The last phase is the manifestation of the commitment to use violence. The process of radicalisation has been completed. Individuals are deliberately involved in the activities and offer their knowledge and skills to the cause. However, this commitment does not always have to be violent (funding or cover-up).

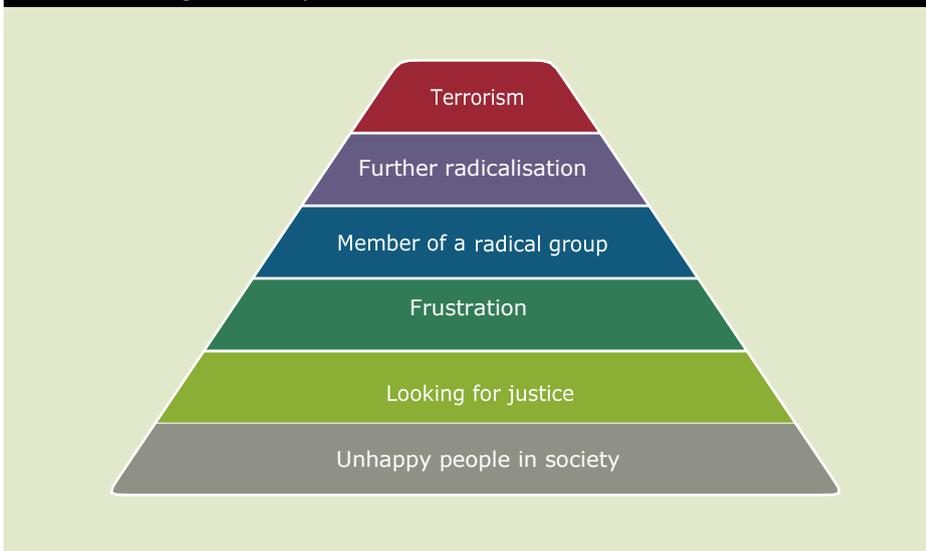
Lately the concept of self-radicalisation is used to define the process experienced by individual terrorists acting alone. If we look at the criteria of social interaction, the process of self-radicalisation is an almost impossible phenomenon, because everyone, to a greater or lesser extent, is subject to a certain social interaction. The big difference between the two processes lies in the fact that the process of conventional radicalisation is the result of a collective identity and the process of self-radicalisation is autonomous, subjective and, to a large extent, individual.

The process of radicalisation is not linear but multifactorial, but there are some factors that are catalysts and that encourage the process, such as: the consumption of the Internet, the influence of a recruiter, the viewing of propaganda videos of radical organisations, the feeling of exclusion, life experiences lived as grievances, condemnation of close relatives, etc. Not everyone goes through the same stages. Only a small group of people will complete the whole process.

## THE MOGHADDAM MODEL

This model in the form of a ladder has been developed in the field of psychology and simulates a pyramid that narrows and culminates in the willingness to commit a terrorist action. Whether a person stays at a certain level or goes up to a higher level depends on a multiplicity of macro- and micro-social variables. The further up one climbs, the harder it is to leave the process.

**CHART 4.6.** Moghaddam Pyramid



Source: Moghaddam, F. M. (2005).

### 1. Unhappy people in society

The first rung of the ladder is absolutely subjective, as in all societies there are dissatisfied people who feel they are being treated unfairly but, of this group, only a part will want to seek justice.

### 2. Looking for justice

A small group of people will move up to the next level of the process because they need to vent their frustration. They will hold meetings, demonstrations, and watch propaganda to demand justice. We must bear in mind that Western society embra-

**TABLE 4.5.**  
The exceptional case of  
Ted Kaczynski

#### Ted Kaczynski, aka the Unabomber

As we saw in Chapter 2, this American philosopher and mathematician sent sixteen letter bombs to different targets between the years 1978 and 1995. His motivation was to protest against the technological development of mankind. His terrorist actions resulted in the death of three people. He lived in social isolation and physical seclusion for over twenty years in a cabin in Montana.

ces everything as long as no crimes are committed during these activities. A large group will remain at this level and will continue to fight for justice in a lawful manner. Despite all this, a small group will move up a level because their actions will not have had the expected result.

### 3. Frustration

At this level, individuals are disappointed that their actions have not had the expected effect. Frustrated, they will start looking for other people with the same ideas and opinions. It is in this phase of the process that certain people will become members of a radical group. However, it should also be taken into consideration that not all individuals who approach a physical or virtual radical environment will accept the assumptions and be captured or recruited. In some cases the behaviours resulting from radicalisation will be limited to passive support for violence.

### 4. Member of a radical group

At this level, they may be introduced to recruiters, preachers or charismatic people who will offer them an explanation for their anger and frustration. Integration into the radical group is the step prior to the culmination of the process and at this stage it will be very difficult to reverse it.

### 5. Further radicalisation/terrorism

Eventually, a very small group rises to the top level and achieves the belief, conviction and will to commit a terrorist act.

**TABLE 4.6.** The four phases of the indoctrination pattern in the process of violent radicalisation

<b>Victim mentality</b>	The individual or group feels unfairly treated by their environment. If the victimisation is group-based, group cohesion and identity are encouraged.
<b>Blame game</b>	Giving their grievance a name. The blame game identifies the groups responsible for the ills suffered by the victims. They identify their enemies. This offers a goal to fight against. It implies a drift from Manichean thinking (dualistic vision, good and evil) that has been generated and contributes to the cohesion of the group.
<b>Solution / justification</b>	Once the enemy has been identified, the solution to the group's problems is to eliminate this enemy. A determination is made that action must be taken to reverse the situation.
<b>Activism</b>	Membership of the new group becomes effective, as well as the need to act against the enemy. The only solution is to follow the guidelines of the extremist group, and therefore it is necessary to use violence as the only solution to defend the group. Violent activism can be classified into several types of criminal offences: indoctrination, collaboration, glorification, provocation/conspiracy/proposal, integration/membership.

## EUROPEAN AND STATE INITIATIVES TO PREVENT RADICALISATION PROCESSES

To effectively address the VE, it is essential to devise prevention plans against radicalisation that aim to protect the vulnerable. Prevention has to operate in a pre- or non-criminal space and has to serve to identify individuals at risk of radicalisation and commission of violent acts. Multidisciplinary teams are needed that are capable of detecting irregularities and factors of vulnerability to radical behaviour.

The pedagogy of threat is fundamental to improve the knowledge of citizens regarding the threats they plan on security. The spread of toxic information, rumours and false alarms through social networks or WhatsApp weaken us because fear and confusion spread out of control. Below are some of the state and European initiatives to prevent radicalisation processes.

The European Union (EU) understands that the prevention of radicalisation is a task which falls primarily to the Member States and which must be managed at state, regional and local level. Thus, the Council Declaration of 25 March 2004 includes an annex reviewing the EU Action Plan on Strategic Objectives to Combat Terrorism, which invites the identification of factors contributing to terrorist recruitment, as well as the links between extremism, socio-economic factors and terrorism. This 'cornerstone' led to the European Counter-terrorism Strategy of November 2005, which already sets out the usual concepts of 'Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Respond'. The text recognises the existence of a variety of motives for radicalisation, which vary according to the subject, and proposes the study, identification and neutralisation of methods, propaganda and conditions that favour jihadist radicalisation. Furthermore, it considers the globalisation of physical and information communications to be relevant factors in the dissemination of radical ideas, the polarisation of perceptions and the existence of failed states.

Since January 2015, Spain has had a National Plan to Fight Violent Radicalisation (PEN-LCRV)<sup>63</sup> which includes measures, initiatives and projects for the prevention of radicalisation. The objective of the plan is: "to be an effective tool for early detection and neutralisation of outbreaks and centres of violent radicalism, acting on those communities, groups or individuals at risk or vulnerability." The Ministry of the Interior, under the name Stop Radicalismos,<sup>64</sup> has made available to the public channels of communication to report and alert the authorities of persons and actions suspected of belonging to extremist groups in their environment.

On the other hand, in Catalonia, the Police of the Generalitat-Mossos d'Esquadra has developed an instrument called PRODERAE (Processes of Detection, Intervention and Prevention of Radicalisation) with the aim of preventing and detecting processes of violent radicalisation. The protocol has been divided into three levels of action:

### a) PRODERAE Legal Execution

Prisons can be an environment conducive to radicalisation. The prison is a space with social and psychological dynamics unrelated to those in freedom. The consequence is that many personal changes initiated during the deprivation of liberty do not have continuity when the liberty is recovered. In some cases, religious radicalisation can be sincere, but in others it can be adapted to the situation of confinement, either to be part of a group, to be respected or as a measure of psychological escape while the period of confinement lasts. The discernment and evaluation of each case is the objective of this level of action.

63. Available on the Ministry of the Interior's website:

<[64. Citizens have three channels of communication in relation to the Stop Radicalismos campaign: website \[www.stopradicalismos.es\]\(http://www.stopradicalismos.es\), mobile application Alertcops and telephone 900 822 066. All three free, safe and anonymous. France, the UK and the USA have already developed similar campaigns. All of them, including Spain's, are part of the actions of the Global Coalition against Daesh, formed by 63 countries.](http://www.interior.gob.es/ca/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/planestrategico-nacional-de-luchacontra-la-radicalizacion-violenta/plan-estrategico-nacional#></a></p>
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**b) PRODERAE Proximity**

This is intended for units, groups or agents of the Mossos d'Esquadra and local police forces that have more direct contact with citizens and communities. The proximity to the citizen provides these agents with a faithful knowledge of the social reality of the municipality. Proximity is an opportunity to detect processes of violent radicalisation.

**c) PRODERAE Educational Community**

It aims to prevent, detect and intervene in the processes of violent Islamist radicalisation in schools in order to preserve the growth of minors in a tolerant environment. It provides guidance and resources for the identification of risk factors that may lead to the radicalisation of young people. Only the culmination of the process of violent radicalisation of a child will require the involvement of other actors such as the police or the juvenile prosecution service.

The cross-cutting nature of this instrument involves other actors such as professionals from the prison environment, community police, community representatives, teachers from educational centres, etc. With the implementation of these protocols, it has been possible to obtain objective information on a considerable number of radicalisation processes in different stages of evolution.

Spain is also collaborating in an international initiative called Sawab Center United Against Extremism<sup>65</sup> to counteract Daesh's propaganda apparatus on social networks. Sawab's materials and messages are essentially vignettes, videos and computer graphics that show how people live in countries that have been under the influence of Daesh.

In the EU, the CoPPRa project (Community Policing and Prevention of Radicalisation)<sup>66</sup> has also been running for several years with the aim of preventing radicalisation by providing training for local agents to detect radicalisation processes.

The Aarhus model is a Danish institutional project in which different actors participate: the local council, the East Jutland Police, the University of Aarhus and the PET,<sup>67</sup> among others. The main objective of the Aarhus model is to dissuade young people who intend to go to conflict settings and to promote the reintegration of returnees, provided they have not committed violent crimes. The project involves a network of professionals from different sectors: social workers, teachers, police, volunteers and families of young radicals. Individual counselling is complemented by mentoring and communication workshops. The application of the model, according to the promoters, is having some success, especially in the earlier stages of the radicalisation process.

Exit-Deutschland is a German organisation that provides direct advice and online information for individuals who intend to leave, in this case, neo-Nazi movements.<sup>68</sup>

The Centre for the prevention of sectarian aberrations relating to Islam<sup>69</sup> is a French association created in 2014 which works in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior in the prevention and treatment of radicalisation processes. Its aim is to provide educational advice, through a mobile intervention team, to families who may have a radicalised individual in their midst.

65. The Sawab Centre was co-founded by the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America in July 2015, in support of the global coalition against extremism. As an online and networked initiative, its campaigns are mainly spread through Twitter (@sawabcenter).

66. Project promoted by the Belgian Federal Police and financed by the European Union <http://www.copprra.eu>

67. PET is the Danish security and intelligence service.

68. <https://www.exitdeutschland.de/>

69. <http://www.cpdsi.fr/>

## THE COUNTERNARRATIVE

The seduction of violent narratives calls for the search for *ad hoc* instruments that mitigate or interrupt the potential radicalisation processes of many individuals who are attracted to them. The terrorist threat is often described as polymorphic or polyhedral, so if it manifests itself in so many shapes and faces it does not seem logical to counter it in one way. Counternarrative can be a valid way to contain, erode or reverse the appeal of the violent extremist narrative.

What is the counternarrative? Counternarratives are stories that seek to erode the legitimacy of violent extremist narratives by moving the conflict into the realm of ideas. Counternarrative requires that a violent narrative exists in advance that advocates the achievement of a goal through the use of violence.

Expert Alex Schmid<sup>70</sup> establishes five stages for the trafficking of the violent extremist narrative (VEN) and the passage to action and acceptance of terrorist acts in the case of Al-Qaeda, which can be perfectly extrapolated to other typologies of violent extremism:

1. The VEN exposes these young people to situations of aggravation or injustice.
2. Construction of a moral justification for violence (religious, ideological, political) aimed at correcting injustice or wrongdoing.
3. Once violence has been unleashed, the narrative holds the victims responsible for their fate and attempts to dehumanise them through language and symbols.
4. In the face of accusations of the use of violence, the discourse shifts attention to those responsible for the acts or attempts to dilute their responsibility (the group, not the individual, is responsible).
5. Minimising the harmful effects of violence through the use of euphemisms.

Any counterterrorism strategy requires two very different approaches: prevention and response. In addition to the necessary reactive approach, new proactive tools are required—one of which is counternarrative—to erode the versatility of violent rhetoric. The road is not exactly short and it needs travelling companions who, in the medium term, will undermine the violent story and present it as petty. The response to this threat has to be the co-responsibility of many actors: public institutions, Islamic communities, media or victims are some examples.

The use of counternarrative also generates debate and some sectors doubt its usefulness, validity and effectiveness. This critical current proposes that the counternarrative encourages the polarisation of arguments. Another criticism it receives is the methodological complexity in measuring its impact.

## PATTERNS OF THE VIOLENT JIHADIST NARRATIVE

The jihadist narrative uses collective action frameworks or ‘toxic grievances’ that help to convincingly spread its message. These frameworks are dynamic and evolve with history to constantly renew themselves by taking advantage of the international political moment and the situation of active conflicts in Muslim or Western countries. Some of the main collective frameworks for justifying jihadism can be divided into religious, political and moral.

**TABLE 4.7.** Example of violent extremist narrative (VEN)

The story that spreads jihadism longs for the creation of a universal caliphate, governed by the Salafist jihadist interpretation of the *Sharia* and achieved through the use of violence.

70. Schmid understands radicalisation as the "individual or group process of becoming increasingly involved in acts of political terrorism".

**TABLE 4.8.** Patterns of the Jihadist narrative: toxic grievances

Collective action frames	Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banning the full-body veil in France</li> <li>• Artistic manifestations offensive to Islam, such as the cartoons of Muhammad</li> <li>• Moral decline of the West</li> </ul>
	Political/ideological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Palestinian cause</li> <li>• The regime's excesses against the civilian population in Syria</li> <li>• Sectarian polarisation</li> <li>• Apostasy</li> <li>• The refugee crisis</li> </ul>
	Moral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The individual obligation of all Muslims in the defence of Islam</li> </ul>

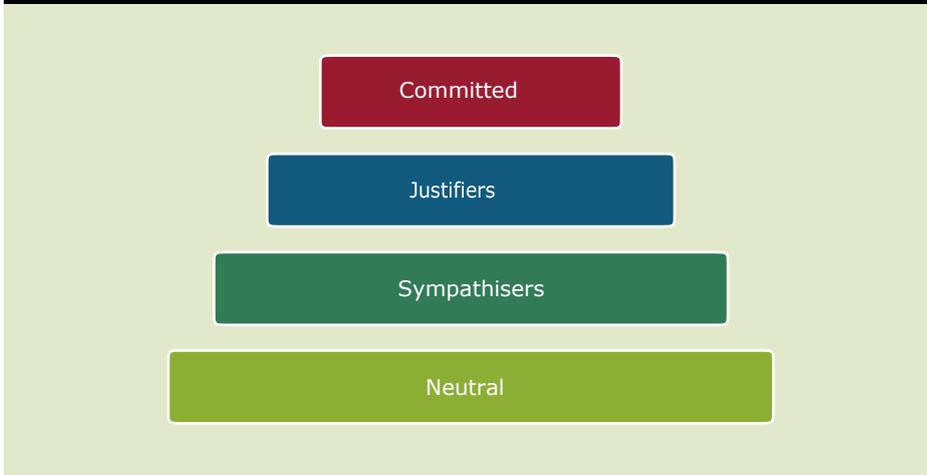
Jihadist propaganda, together with the confluence of political and social contexts that produce grievances, gives rise to structures of opportunity in which the process of cognitive radicalisation prior to violence can take place. For example, the narrative of Daesh as a claim to recruit followers is based essentially on three arguments:

- a) The first argument is strictly ideological and is based on the claim to live in a territory governed by the Salafist Jihadist doctrine, the *Sharia*, and freed from Western decadence (BUNZEL, 2015). According to the jihadist narrative, liberal democracy, freedom of expression or gender equality are entelechies of Western societies that have favoured moral decay, individualism, corruption of youth and the replacement of Sharia by laws created by man. Life in the caliphate provides a sense of belonging to a life project and this is very important reasoning for recruitment.
- b) The second argument is moral and responds to the obligation of all Muslims to defend the Sunnis in Syria against the excesses of Bashar al-Assad's regime, which is probably the most solid reasoning to catalyse processes of violent radicalisation in the West (MALET, 2014). The apocalyptic narrative also says that in Syria the last battles between Islam and the infidels will take place, leading to the end of time.
- c) The third argument is based on a materialistic discourse by which joining Daesh satisfies many material expectations such as: an economic remuneration, a house, the thirst for adventure or the possibility of obtaining prestige, in addition to other more 'earthly' claims.

Below is an outline of the process of acceptance of the jihadist narrative. Like the pattern of violent radicalisation we have seen above, the scheme takes on a pyramidal pattern that is divided into different layers according to the vehemence and conviction with which each person shares the violent narrative.

The base of the pyramid is made up of the largest group of recipients of violent narrative. The people at the base maintain a position of neutrality and do not share any of the fundamental elements of the jihadist narrative.

The immediate upper stratum is made up of fewer people but, unlike at the base of the pyramid, they identify with a structural feature of the jihadist narrative; they are neutral in terms of other underlying features. The ideological collective action framework with which this layer of the pyramid is identified could be the following: "We Muslims are under attack and the West is our enemy." Individuals from this layer are called sympathisers.

**CHART 4.7.** Pattern of acceptance of violent narrative

Source: own elaboration.

The next layer of the pyramid includes even fewer people. The main characteristic is that its members, besides accepting the first narrative premise, legitimise the use of violence by third parties. The framework of religious collective action would be as follows: "The Islamic state defends Muslims, so its actions are justified." Individuals from this layer are called justifiers, and their position implies explicit support for the violence that legitimises the actions of jihadist groups. This argument is fallacious and is discredited by the fact that 90% of the victims of jihadism are Muslims.

Finally, at the apex of the pyramid we find the group of the committed, who assume the two previous narrative levels and additionally consider it a personal obligation to support and participate in the violent actions. The framework for moral collective action would be as follows: "It is our personal duty to take sides in the defence of Islam." The apex of the pyramid, therefore, is also the tip of the iceberg, as those committed to accepting the jihadist narrative are likely to get the closest to the process of violent radicalisation.

## THE PYRAMID MODEL OF VIOLENT RADICALISATION

Individuals can be radicalised not only by the incorporation of a violent narrative, but through their actions. The action radicalisation pyramid represents the process by which a person assumes a greater degree of commitment in their behaviour for the defence of the group to which they belong:

- a) At the base of the pyramid we find the inert individuals (no violence), who are in the majority and who do not develop any action linked to the defence of their group. It would be equivalent to the neutral segment of the violent narrative. A counternarrative based on prevention could be applied to this group.
- b) Supporters and followers of a cause (do not use violence). Also at the base of the pyramid is this group of individuals who are not prepared or willing to use violence. This is where ideological legitimacy lies and where terrorists are supported, especially in bad times for the organisation. In the organisation's supporters and followers (who sometimes correspond to the political arm of an armed organisation), the emotional ideology prevails over the behavioural. For them, ideology is an element of personal identity, the actions required of them

- are usually attendance at meetings or demonstrations, financial support, participation in social events or dissemination of propaganda and ideas.
- c) Activists (non-violent) participate in political actions of a legal and non-violent nature. The VEN and the ideological framework have been fully assumed, so that now it is a matter of assuming more protagonism; attitudes are materialised in behaviours, there are personal contacts with icons of the movement, it is necessary to advance towards some apparatus of the system, there is a progressive approach towards violent behaviour and towards the commission of acts susceptible of incardination as apology of terrorism. The real or imaginary perception of feeling investigated begins to generate a state with paranoid traits that accentuates the polarised perception of reality and the need to approach the terrorist group. This can include supporters, justifiers and committed people who have taken up the VEN but are not involved in violent actions at this point. A counternarrative based on prevention could also be applied in this group.
  - d) The radicals (use of violence) defend the group by perpetrating illegal actions (dissidence, disobedience...). In this sector, a reactive counternarrative is required after detection.

**CHART 4.8.** Pyramid model: violent radicalisation

Source: MOSKALENKO, S.; MCCAULEY, C. (2010).

- e) Terrorists (explicit use of violence as an instrument of change) are at the top of the pyramid, in a very small group, who practice violence against people with lethal means. Ideology determines all their behaviour; their social-emotional support networks have already been influenced by their own decisions or by persuasive communication. At this level, for security and tactical-operational reasons, the monitoring of guidelines and compliance with orders has to be maximum. It is the execution of plans that develop the organisation's strategy. Now the ideology is moving towards something more concrete, the individual feels part of the cause and feels that participation is a moral obligation. From this moment on, conduct is relegated to ideology, until it becomes a mere mechanism for justifying actions. Once the first terrorist act has been committed, cognitive dissonance can act together with the mechanisms of escape from legal repression and a path of no return begins. Even if some terrorist groups have broad popular support, the individuals who will inevitably become involved in violence will always represent an and extreme violent minority within the immediate social reference group with

**TABLE 4.9.** The alternative narrative...

... requires the sectorisation of the target groups that receive them, with the aim of undermining the violent narrative.

whom they share beliefs and ideology. Therefore, the number of individuals who will actively engage in violent campaigns of a terrorist nature is usually relatively low. The latter sector requires a reactive counternarrative after detection.

## MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

Can the proliferation of media, platforms and news agencies offering universal coverage have an impact on the terrorist phenomenon? Terrorism existed before the media, but it is true that it has mutated and adapted to today's society. Can terrorist organisations influence public opinion? Let's look at some examples.

### 1947: THE IRGUN

The tactic of putting pressure on the state was implemented by Menahem Begin and his insurrection movement. The pretensions were the creation of the current State of Israel: the Irgun. The Irgun's plan wasn't to defeat their enemy, England, militarily, but to undermine their international prestige and their hold on Palestine. The Irgun attacked the King David Hotel and killed two British sergeants in response to the execution of three of the group's terrorists. For the British, the Israeli problem was, until that moment, nothing more than a distant conflict that was part of the daily overreporting, but the photographs of the two hanging sergeants appeared in all the British newspapers. The conclusion that the British public reached after seeing the images was that the presence of their army in Palestine made no sense and that the conflict had no solution. In September 1947 Arthur Creech Jones announced the British withdrawal from Palestine and on May 15th, 1948 the State of Israel was officially proclaimed.

The Irgun revolt served as a model for other anticolonialist struggles and the strategy of attracting media attention through violence was followed in other territories such as Cyprus or Algeria.

### 1972: BLACK SEPTEMBER

The first major attack to attract mass media attention was the 1972 Munich Olympics. The event began in the early morning of September 5th. Shortly before five in the morning, eight hooded men belonging to a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), known as Black September, entered the dormitories of the Olympic athletes of the Israeli delegation: they killed two and took nine hostages. The terrorists' demands consisted of the release of 236 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, as well as the release of five German prisoners.<sup>71</sup> They also demanded to be transferred to any Arab country, except Jordan or Lebanon.

After a long negotiation, it was agreed that the terrorists along with the hostages would be transferred in two helicopters to a German base. From there, a plane would take them to Cairo, where the exchange between prisoners and hostages was intended to take place. But the plan didn't work out. At the German base, a shooting took place, killing three terrorists. Their comrades, in the midst of the confusion and seeing themselves betrayed by the police, began to kill hostages. At 1:30 the next morning, the rest of the terrorists surrendered and were arrested. They had killed all the hostages and a German policeman.

71. Among the German prisoners that had claimed were Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof, who, as we have seen in Chapter 2, were the founders of the far-left terrorist group RAF.

72. The term 'kamikaze', of Japanese origin, refers to the suicide attacks carried out by the pilots of the Japanese Imperial Navy against ships of the Allied fleet during World War II. Jihadists who attack with explosive belts are 'suicide bombers' and should not be attributed any further semantic charge or linked to the Japanese term.

73. The use of the term 'war' legitimises the actions of jihadist groups, and therefore must be restricted.

74. As seen in Chapter 2, the media saturation of the lone wolf figure can indirectly favour the repetition of individual terrorist incidents and the emergence of false positives. The more aseptic alternative is to use the terms 'individual terrorist' or lone actor.

75. It is not advisable to use the verb 'immolate' to refer to the suicidal action of a terrorist seeking a massacre.

Phrases such as "At least 29 dead after a man carries out self-immolation in a mosque in Yemen" sometimes appear in the media. The main dictionaries define the verb 'immolate' as "to give one's life, property, rest, etc., for the benefit or honour of someone or something", "to sacrifice or give one's life, usually for a cause or a person" or "to give one's life or sacrifice for an ideal, a cause or for the good of others". These definitions reflect an individual action that does not involve causing harm or pain to others. Therefore, it is not appropriate to use the verb 'immolate' to refer to the actions of suicide bombers who pursue the death of others and frighten the population; rather, it is recommended to report suicide bombings using alternatives such as suicide, suicidal action, terrorist action or suicide bombing.

76. The continuous references to the term 'geniuses' to talk about terrorists implies positive connotations because it explicitly evokes intelligence and planning. The use of terms such as leaders or ringleaders is suggested.

Even though the terrorists failed in their plan, they managed to make their action news across most forms of media for several days. It is estimated that a quarter of the world's population was aware of the event. The whole world was aware of the occurrence of events in Munich, yet unaware of the Palestinian conflict. In addition, the act led to the emergence of dozens of terrorist organisations around the world, which grew from eleven in 1968 to fifty-four in 1978.

### MARCH 11th, 2004

The same thing happened on March 11th, 2004, when the entire media flooded the programming grid with information about the terrorist attacks in Madrid. In the following days, the 11-M had decisive influence over the general elections and later on the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq.

Therefore, one of the target groups of the counternarrative has to be the media as they have a fundamental role in the understanding and pedagogy of the threat. If the information is rigorous, the threat is not overestimated and if the language is accurate, uncertainty is not encouraged and fear has much more difficulty in spreading. What the media teaches at the first level of counternarrative action is multiple:

- Excessive coverage generates hasty conclusions, unconfirmed information and long discussions rich in superlatives that often lead to perverse effects. Information saturation can make information redundant and irrelevant, can encourage false stories or feed collective distraction or apathy. The demand for information and the desire to provide data —not always accurate— in real time can favour the heightening of vulnerability, alarmism, chaos and anxiety pursued by terrorists.
- Not using contaminated or imprecise concepts, encouraging the precise language of terms and avoiding excessive media coverage and saturation of certain phenomena. The use of a certain terminology provides 'ideological fuel' to legitimise and articulate violent narratives. Therefore, the use of concepts such as 'counterterrorism crusade', 'kamikaze terrorists',<sup>72</sup> 'war on Islam',<sup>73</sup> 'lone wolf',<sup>74</sup> 'immolation',<sup>75</sup> 'geniuses', etc. should be avoided.<sup>76</sup>
- An image of supremacy of Daesh or Al-Qaeda should be avoided by reporting their defeats, defections or the mortality of their operational and ideological leaders. The erosion of Daesh prevents the projection of power and success that seduces thousands of vulnerable young Muslims.
- Weighing up the dissemination of jihadist propaganda videos to avoid amplification of the terrorist message, humiliation of victims and the perception that every execution or killing of people is banal. Filming the execution of a helpless person is an act of vileness and cowardice, far from any creative flair that some approaches might suggest.
- We must avoid giving a romantic image of the terrorist by offering data or details about their criminal background. The repeated circulation of photographs of terrorists, as well as the detailed disclosure of their life story, can have a counterproductive effect as they could be examples for individuals experiencing a process of violent radicalisation or acceptance of the jihadist narrative. On the other hand, it is important to exalt the figure of the victim in the face of the terrorist story so that it doesn't tilt the protagonism of the victim towards the terrorist.
- Insist on the objective fact that the majority of victims of jihadist terrorism are Muslims.

- Analysing ‘tertullianism’ and promoting the circulation of a message without stereotypes or generalities that could contaminate the essence of the threat. Collaboration with experts from the academic world who work on research projects in disciplines directly or indirectly linked to the phenomenon of terrorism can help to spread an objective, moderate and rigorous message.
- Insisting on the argument of terrorist injustice may be perceived as a sign of vulnerability.
- There is a need for orientation tools in environments populated by lies, irrelevant data and confusing moods. Separating the essential from the anecdotal, analysing and putting the data into proper perspective, requires mediators who have time and competence.
- Finally, if everyone agrees that restricting the circulation of images of victims after an attack is a good decision, is it really necessary to circulate images of terrorists killed while a bomb squad robot is approaching the body? We would have to assess what the informative revenue is from the circulation of this type of image. Perhaps the ethnocentric bias that imbalances media coverage of terrorist attacks on European cities against attacks in the Middle East or other non-Western countries should be corrected. On the other hand, the presence of Muslims in the media is often associated with terrorism or immigration, so they should enjoy more media space to deal with many other issues.

A positive example of the containment of the intended effect of terrorism and the management of the crisis during the attacks of August 17th and 18th 2017 in Catalonia is the service communication made by the Mossos d'Esquadra corps and the emergency services.

The following table explores the main effects of a terrorist crisis in relation to the media.

**TABLE 4.10.** Effects of a terrorist crisis on the media

<b>Surprise</b>	No one expects or can anticipate a terrorist attack. It is an unforeseen event that, in addition, generates a devastating, contagious effect: fear.
<b>Confusion, inaccurate or even contradictory information</b>	After an attack, an avalanche of information, data and emotions follows. Any crisis generates distorted, late and confusing information that comes from channels that are normally truthful, but also from private social communication networks such as WhatsApp, Telegram or Facebook.
<b>It causes a big impact</b>	Terrorism can strike trains, public spaces, police or military infrastructure, airplanes, soccer fields, companies... Everything can be a target. Sometimes terrorism uses symbols of our collective ideology such as the Twin Towers, the Eiffel Tower, London Bridge, La Rambla in Barcelona...
<b>Destabilisation</b>	All levels of society are altered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• political: for example, the electoral shift of March 11th 2004;</li> <li>• economic: after 9/11, the US economy suffered losses in the millions and the airlines were also hit hard;</li> <li>• social: social mobilisations to reject terrorism such as those that took place after the attacks in Paris in 2015 or Barcelona in 2017.</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency</b>	Terrorist crises cause an immediate demand for information and this sometimes leads to haste or recklessness. Hence the importance of communication that builds trust and provides evidence. Therefore, it is necessary to have the initiative to circulate information so that it is not led by social networks or alternative media.

## MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

The messenger described the so-called *Khawarij* explaining that they do not have the understanding of Islam:

They will recite the Qur'an, but it will not reach beyond their throats. They will pass through the religion just as an arrow passes through a hunted game.

The previous fragment corresponds to the content of a text disseminated by the web *Pure Islam*, linked to the Salafist doctrine.<sup>77</sup> The message intends to delegitimise, in relation to the precepts of Islam, the terrorist actions of the *Khawarij* of Daesh or Al-Qaeda. The *Khawarij* or Kharijites identify themselves with the most intransigent and radical stream of Islam. According to this website:

The response to this extremist ideology has to be very elaborate, it has to be persistent, and it has to hold on to Islamic doctrine. On an ideological level, extremists have to fight with Quranic and prophetic narratives, based on the sayings and writings of the first generations of Muslim sages. This has a double effect:

- Firstly, it helps to silence the jihadist propaganda machine that proclaims that it follows the Qur'an and the teachings of the prophet, which is a lie;
- Secondly, Muslim youth, especially in the West, will be able to recognise the false arguments of the extremists when they hear and read these refutations.

The above fragment could be a doctrinal armour on which to articulate an alternative narrative to the jihadist one. If Islamic scholarship identifies the *Khawarij* or Kharijites as 'those who deviate' of Islam and consider Daesh or Al-Qaeda to be Kharijites, it can be deduced that the acts of these two organisations are not protected by the precepts of Islam.

Increasingly, the expression 'articulating a counternarrative' is used to counter the jihadist narrative. The approach to articulating an alternative story requires a broad perspective and the involvement of various actors, and cannot be the exclusive result of abstract theoretical approaches. The counternarrative requires a sectorisation of the target group and a practical, imaginative orientation, open to different strata of the population. In order not to limit ourselves to surviving uncertainty, in order not to limit ourselves to responding *post facto* to the perpetration of the next terrorist attack, in order not to amplify the jihadist message, or in order to be able to detect, contain or reverse the trail of an individual who is making the transition between radicalism and action, credible, practical and persuasive instruments are required.<sup>78</sup>

In the case of violent jihadist extremism, the complicity and involvement of Muslim communities is fundamental and a valuable asset in proposing an alternative narrative to jihadism. The conviction of the social and religious references of the Islamic community is a key factor for the alternative narrative to have the necessary legitimacy to undermine the jihadist narrative. The Islamic communities themselves have to be co-responsible and have to expel foreign bodies from their structure.

The jihadist narrative is a particularly suggestive proposal for young Muslims who do not have a feeling of belonging to any specific country (either by birth or adoption) and who see in it a stabilising element. Modern Muslims in the Western diasporas are possibly the best argument to counter the jihadist narrative. They can incorporate the best elements of both worlds —Islam and the West— and create a credible narrative that expresses their vision of what it means to be a Muslim in the modern world. Gilles Kepel in this sense considers that:

77. Available at:  
<http://www.islam-puro.com>  
(accessed: 17 July 2019).

78. For example, in Spain the transition from a dictatorship to democracy has been a very effective argument in the fight against the story used by ETA to justify its terrorist campaign (Alonso, 2010).

A promising generation of young European Muslims now have opportunities to exercise democratic rights that are forbidden or restricted in countries where Islam represents the majority religion [...] A separation of the mosque and the state is required, as Islam is established in the European environment. This separation of secular and religious domination is the prerequisite for the liberation of the forces of reform in the Muslim world, going beyond the ideological limitations of jihad and *Fitna*; in fact, beyond the geographical borders of Europe, these young men and women present a new face of Islam, reconciled with modernity.

The ideological challenge should not start with the radical elements but should focus on maintaining and protecting the spaces in which Muslims are comfortable with their Islamic identity, and also stimulate critical thinking and acceptance of grey areas of discourse.

On the other hand, how long will we continue to alienate generations of Muslims born in Catalonia? First generation, second, third? When will they be considered full citizens? In the fifth, sixth generation? Does one really inherit immigrant status forever and ever? Obviously not. This type of rhetoric favours the identity gap and can compromise—and greatly—the sense of belonging.

Finally, *the Islamic community cannot be identified as a monolithic group, unable to think for themselves*. The Islamic community is made up of individuals. For example, the number of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) who travelled from Spain to conflict scenarios such as Syria or Iraq during the last few years was, according to official sources, approximately 230 people. Within the FTF contingent that joined the ranks of Daesh, despite being a worrying figure, it is not one of the highest in Europe. This figure is always emphasised for security reasons, but emphasis should also be placed on the almost half a million Muslims living in Catalonia or the two million Muslims living in Spain who have not travelled to conflict scenarios. Beyond the bluntness of a figure, they are two million personal stories of people trying to get on with life just like the rest of society. The message of the violent narrative of jihadism cannot be delegitimised from an ethnocentric perspective, but needs the support of Muslim communities and ‘credible voices’ to act as a barrage or ideological firewall against radical messages that seek to inculcate hatred. Who can these credible voices be? Victims of terrorist attacks, relatives of radicalised young people, certain religious leaders or radicalised individuals who are disappointed with their process.

## THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE JIHADIST NARRATIVE

In order to influence the degree of acceptance of the jihadist narrative of the justifiers and committed, different actions can be proposed.

Firstly, undermining the credibility of leaders or referents of the jihadist narrative. For example, the imam Anwar al-Awlaki—the instigator of many jihadists attacks on the West—regularly engaged the services of prostitutes (SHANE, 2015). The Brahim brothers and Salah Abdeslam—the perpetrators of the Paris bombings in November 2015—appear in a video of February 2015 dancing and smoking in a club in Brussels. In fact, the Abdeslam brothers were gamblers and cannabis dealers. Their immoral conduct with respect to the precepts of Islam can serve to undermine the credibility of both extremist and terrorist leaders who may be considered models by individuals in the early stages of the radicalisation process.

Another action, apart from moral legitimacy, may be to make visible the incapacity of some referents. For example, in 2006, a video of Abu Musab al-Zarkawi handling an automatic weapon clumsily was released. After his death, al-Zarkawi is still con-

sidered one of the most relevant leaders of jihadism and images such as those that show his lack of skill in the use of the weapon erode his prestige as a mujahid.

The most recent example of the lack of moral legitimacy of a jihadist leader is the story of American aid worker Kayla Mueller, kidnapped in August 2013 by Daesh. Kayla was a twenty-six year old girl who dedicated her life to helping those in need. She had worked on humanitarian missions in India, Israel and Palestine. In December 2012, she decided to travel to the Turkish-Syrian border to work in the refugee camps. On August 4th 2013, she was captured in Aleppo by Daesh supporters. After a year and a half of captivity, Kayla died during a Jordanian air raid in February 2015. Kayla's life story could be equivalent to that of many other aid workers who have sacrificed their lives to help those in need. But Kayla's story has a distinctive and execrable feature: during her captivity, she was repeatedly raped by Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi himself. Some sources doubt that Kayla Mueller died during that bombing and speculate that she may have died because of the mistreatment she suffered during her captivity.

## STORIES OF FORMER MEMBERS OF A TERRORIST ORGANISATION

The social recognition aroused by the most radicalised groups that take part in violent acts can be affected by the circulation of stories about their victims or about those who abandon violent militancy.

The partial or total acceptance of violent discourse can only be countered by individuals who are recognised as having a high degree of credibility, authority and authenticity. The story of disappointed former members of terrorist organisations is a very convincing claim as they enjoy more credibility than other outsiders in demystifying the jihadist story and disrupting radicalisation processes. The voice of the defectors erodes and challenges the image of unity and determination that many jihadi groups wish to convey, as well as influencing their contradictions and hypocrisies.

In the story of 58 Daesh deserters —51 men and 7 women— four shock narratives were identified (Neumann, 2015), which are described in the table below.

**TABLE 4.11.** Shock narratives identified in the Daesh dropout story

<b>The internal struggles</b>	Daesh is more interested in fighting Sunni insurgent groups than the Bashar al-Assad government itself. While Daesh leaders regard the Free Syrian Army or Jabhat al-Nusra as enemies, they are perceived by rank and file as less hostile. Several defectors described the internal struggle as <i>Fitna</i> .
<b>Brutality against Muslims</b>	Daesh commits atrocities against Sunni Muslims involving the killing of innocent civilians, the killing of hostages or the execution of combatants at the hands of their own commanders.
<b>Corruption and behaviour contrary to the precepts of Islam</b>	Daesh is a corrupt and anti-Islamic organisation. Syrian defectors complained about the privileges of foreign fighters based on the arbitrariness of their leaders.
<b>Quality of life</b>	A discreet but significant number of defectors expressed their disappointment with the conditions and quality of life in the caliphate. The materialistic argument for recruitment is weakened by the account of disappointed defectors who had joined the group for purely selfish reasons. This circumstance is accentuated among Western foreign fighters, who are unaccustomed to shortages of electricity or basic necessities.

The credibility of the story of these individuals is an added value that governments should take into account, so in some cases state assistance and collusion would be desirable to reintegrate them and ensure their safety.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF VIOLENT RADICALISATION

The knowledge of this type of experience can be an inhibiting mechanism for other processes of radicalisation and the contribution of people who have lived through them in youth-oriented deradicalisation programs can be a credible and powerful witness testimony.<sup>79</sup> For example, the association Moms for Life formed by mothers who have lived through the processes of violent radicalisation of their children tells stories that have an enormous sentimental charge and credibility.

Another case is that of Andrew Isa Ibrahim's mother, who is part of the Mothers Move group, and who often participates in conferences where she talks about her son's radicalisation process. The number of women who have been radicalised in recent years has increased substantially. In this sense, the story of a woman who has experienced a process of radicalisation or of a mother who has protected her children in the face of violent narrative are credible and emotionally charged witnesses.

### THE VICTIMS

The testimony of the victims of violent actions has the effect of undermining the prestige of the combatant's life, as it highlights the most unacceptable aspect that the violent narrative seeks to hide. The survivors represent the human consequences of violent extremist acts and strip the perpetrators of heroism.

## SOCIOCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PREVENTION TOOL

Sociocultural intelligence (SOCINT) is the antidote to counteract the absence of cultural relativism. We understand cultural relativism as the need to flee from absolute truths or to try to analyse the world within the parameters of each culture. This leads to the fact that certain institutions, security phenomena or international relations are not analysed and therefore not properly evaluated; as a result, the measures taken are inefficient. In a similar way—and adapting terminology used by the Australian intelligence—we can talk about an unconscious ethnocentrism, that is, the use of one's own cultural criteria to interpret and value the culture and behaviours of other groups, races or societies. Institutional ethnocentrism is also a symptom of partiality and weakness in the articulation of measured public policies.

SOCINT helps to prevent and/or neutralise security threats. There are many cases—especially in the police or military—where the absence of SOCINT has aggravated a security problem. An ethnocentric approach to the study of a violent narrative can hinder understanding from the perspective of its followers. SOCINT analyses the culture of a given actor or social group in order to increase the security of the environment in which it operates. Approaching certain security styles requires a preliminary social, political, cultural, demographic and historical contextual analysis. If we know our interlocutor in the face of a security problem—idiosyncrasy, values, reasoning and behaviour—we will probably have a better chance of preventing or, in the worst case, minimising the effects of that problem.

**TABLE 4.12.**  
The counternarrative...

It is not a magic wand that neutralises the process of radicalisation, but it can favour a period of ambivalence or doubt before the seduction of the violent story.

Radicalisation does not always necessarily evolve towards violence and it is precisely this state of ambivalence or indecision where the alternative narrative finds its space and can be decisive in containing the process or reversing it.

79. In the area of the far right, there are programs to support deradicalisation, with actions that promote the abandonment of violence by people who are part of far-right or radical right-wing groups. For example, as we have seen above, Exit-Deutschland offers support to individuals who want to leave neo-Nazi movements and has an advisory and guidance service to accompany the process of disengagement.

But before we can apply SOCINT, we have to foster intercultural awareness and this implies, on the one hand, the ability to become aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions, and, on the other hand, the ability to understand and interpret the values, beliefs and perceptions of people who interact in the operating environment, whether they be friends or adversaries. Interculturality imposes working precisely on the points of connection that exist.

If we look at a few examples of the absence of intercultural awareness and SOCINT, we can probably understand the purpose much better.

### THE CLICHY-SOUS-BOIS UNREST (AUTUMN 2005)

The terrible riots that took place in this French municipality from October 27th to November 18th 2005, with four deaths and 9,000 cars burned, shook the country in a context of shock and forced the government to declare a state of emergency—for the first time since the Algerian war. The streets of the Parisian suburbs were taken over by a generation of young people for three days. One of the triggers of the riots was the death of two teenagers who had fled from the police and taken refuge in an electric transformer. The riots were self-destructive, concentrated around neighbourhood infrastructures such as: fires in schools, gyms, post offices or means of transportation, of which the rioters were the main users. The incidents spread like wildfire throughout France, because they generated a contagion effect for which the media provided publicity and acted as a sounding board. It was precisely the constant media reporting that conveyed to the public the sensation of an incessant and universal action, although in reality it was spasmodic and limited to specific suburbs.

**TABLE 4.13.** The Double Trigger for the Clichy-sous-Bois Riots (2005)

First trigger: the death by electrocution on October 27th 2005 of two teenagers, Bouna and Zyed, one of Malian origin and the other Tunisian, who were hiding in a transformer to avoid being arrested by the police. This event initially provoked only a concentration of repulsion.

The second trigger that rekindled the riots: three days after the teenagers' deaths, the besieged police dropped a tear gas canister that landed at the entrance of a crowded mosque during Ramadan. The vision of worshipers choking on gas and panicked prisoners rekindled the weakened mobilisation and spread to different neighbourhoods as a protest against the police action.

#### Absence of SOCINT

Ramadan provided the framework for the two triggers: Bouna and Zyed were rushing back to the family flat to arrive at the time to break their fast when they were forced to take refuge in the transformer. Masses of worshipers were gathered in the Biilal mosque after the meal of *Iftar* to fulfil the prayers of the holy month. Only a year before, the law banning the wearing of the hijab in French schools had been passed. The young people stood as defenders of the honour outraged by their parents, attacked in dignity by the desecration of their place of worship.

### EXAMPLES OF BURNING OF THE QUR'AN IN AFGHANISTAN (2012)

This event took place at the American military base of Bagram. The sight of American soldiers burning copies of the Qur'an provoked a wave of protests at the gates of the base that spread throughout the country. As a result of these protests, a policeman killed two senior American officers who were working as consultants. The final balance was over fifty dead.

## THE CASE OF PROPAGANDISTIC PAMPHLETS IN AFGHANISTAN (2017)

American soldiers distributed pamphlets showing a lion (wanting to represent the Afghan army and police) chasing a dog (representing the Taliban). In order to make people understand that the dog symbolised the Taliban, the designers of the pamphlet superimposed a section of the Taliban flag on its image, but without realising that this was the very part where the Shahadah was represented. The Shahadah is the profession of faith and the first pillar of Islam, so to associate it with the image of a dog—an animal that Muslims consider impure—is an offence.

## THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PASTORALISTS AND FARMERS IN TANZANIA

The bases in Africa are usually the distribution of political power and the distribution of resources. In this case that we analyse, a problem is exposed between Maasai pastoralists and farmers. The tourist area of Tanzania, where the Serengeti and Ngorongoro National Parks are located, was once Maasai land. The Maasai are nomadic and are very proud of their culture. Tanzania, since its independence, has tried to integrate all nationalities so that they have a strong sense of Tanzanian nationality. A local national language, Swahili, was imposed on everyone and attempts have been made to force all nomadic groups to settle. The Maasai have traditionally been so proud of their style and way of understanding life that they have always had problems with permanent settlement. Even now there are nomadic Maasai, despite the insistence of the Tanzanian government and the international community, who have often mistreated them socially. They occupied parts of the Serengeti, but, as this geographical area became a national park, the Maasai were expelled. Entire villages that lived there were moved and given other lands. The problem is that they are nomadic people, they already had their route on which to take the cows and the government settled them in areas where they did not want to be.

As far as farmers are concerned, there is a whole section in the south of the Arusha area that is quite fertile, where the Tanzanian Government has promoted agriculture and is trying to bring farmers. The problem is that these lands were Maasai and the cows passed through them. And this is where the conflict between the farmers and the nomads begins. The Maasai pass through where they have always passed, but now there are crops that the cows destroy. Agriculture also takes away the water, so there is less water for the cows. There is less grass for grazing too, so the Maasai take the cows to where there is better grazing, which is where the farmers are settling. The government supports the farmers against the Maasai with the army and the NGOs support the Maasai against the government. Episodes of escalating violence between Maasai pastoralists and farmers have become more serious in the area. The farmers warn the army, which is trying to bring order by using violence against the Maasai.

This case is very complex and does not support simplistic and Manichean analyses. The conflict, then, is about the distribution of resources. The strategy of the Tanzanian government, allied with the farmers, is to impose control and take the land from the Masai. On the other hand, the Maasai, encouraged by international organisations for the protection of local culture, are trying to recover what they have lost.

**TABLE 4.14.** Absence of SOCINT in the burning of the Qur'an (2012)

It was a huge mistake to ignore the fact that the Qur'an is the most sacred material object for any Muslim and this act was interpreted as an offence. It is so important to its believers that no other object can even be physically placed on top of the Qur'an, which always has to occupy a superior and prominent position.

**TABLE 4.15.** Absence of SOCINT in the distribution of pamphlets (2017)

This is one of the most graphic examples. For American military units, dogs have a double role: they are an indispensable support in the search for people and in the search for ammunition depots; their skills surpass those of humans and they already used these animals during the Second Gulf War. In contrast, in Arab culture, the dog is an unholy and dirty animal. To enter a Muslim's house with a dog is to make it dirty and thus cause unwanted damage.

**TABLE 4.16.** SOCINT success story in Tanzania

One of the big problems in conflict resolution is that, in many cases, only the groups that cause the most problems or defend a more intransigent position are invited to the negotiating tables. On the other hand, other people or groups working for peace who are less belligerent are not called because they are not really the problem.

In the conflict between Maasai pastoralists and farmers, only the most violent farmers and Maasai were invited to the negotiating tables organised by the government and international NGOs. The agreements adopted tended to favour the group of violent people and excluded, for example, women. Women and children in conflict are primarily the victims. In Africa, they are hardly included at any negotiating table, although they are major players.

The success of the mediation in this case was to exclude the most extremist actors and to include women as a main actor in the process of negotiation between farmers and pastoralist Maasai in order to advance in the negotiation process and the search for a consensus.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The family, work, friends and community environment of a person at risk of violent radicalisation must have resources, instruments and professional environments available to them, other than strictly the police, to be able to convey their disquiet and doubt in the interpretation of weak signals. Who can train their sight? Maybe social services, school, municipal technicians, social mentors that are already used in other areas, but it does not always have to be a security response. And besides, it's worth it! In fact, in a sample of fifty cases of individual terrorists, 70% left traces and weak signals warning of their violent radicalisation process or the planning of an attack.
- No policy for the prevention of violent extremism can be made through sentencing measures, single solutions or one-dimensional approaches favour the dispersion of responsibilities or lack of coordination among actors. If we accept that terrorism and violent extremism are polymorphic or polyhedral phenomena, it seems intelligent —and even prudent— to analyse them from various perspectives, as Moussa Bourekba's multidimensional analysis proposes.
- In order to avoid the dispersion of efforts, energy and responsibilities, the spreading of knowledge and promotion interdisciplinary work groups where academics, police officers, communicators and professionals with experience in field work on violent extremism converge is convenient. What would be the objective of these multidisciplinary groups? The transfer of knowledge, the sharing of best practices, the correction of bad practices and the articulation of actions aimed at preventing extremism. The result would be an empirical product, not a speculative one, and useful for policy makers who, after all, promote public policy.
- In this increasingly liquid, uncertain and complex globalised world, violent extremism can mutate just as the societies in which it is developed evolve. We have to analyse all the variables of jihadism, such as the increase in the number of converts or the role of greater involvement of women. Can it be that the West encourages individualism, superficiality or the liquefaction between the true and the false? Many people with an identity crisis find their oasis of identity —as Manuel Castells would say— in radical Islam, which provides them with a clear and unshaded code of life, because Salafism is disruptive and, despite being a literalist current, it attracts many young people because it is rebellious and belligerent towards the West and breaks with traditional Islam. But we cannot limit ourselves exclusively to violent jihadist extremism because other extremisms may evolve or emerge in the future.<sup>80</sup>

80. Like, for example, the Incel movement mentioned in Chapter 1, and also Neo-Luddism or technophobia.

**CHART 4.9.** Elements of sociocultural intelligence

Awareness of citizenship at a local level

Encouraging people's talent and passion for communities.  
What is their talent?

Social innovation: creating new solutions to old problems

Don't fall into clichés and encourage empathy

Create spaces of trust. Reflect on why you do it  
There's definitely some interest behind...

We have to hesitate and ask

Above all, sociocultural intelligence



## CHAPTER 5

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# SCENARIO FORECASTING

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*The wind blows out a candle and rekindles the fire*  
Nassim Nicholas Taleb

In Chapter 1 we referred to the flight of the Israeli people from Egypt and now as we begin the last chapter of this book we will look again at this historical passage to talk about the new forms of terrorism. The exodus shows us what could have been the first actions of bioterrorism, that is, the use of biological weapons to destabilise a society. Let us now look at a plausible scientific analysis of the facts contained in the Old Testament.

According to the biblical scriptures, the first of the plagues turned the river Nile, the source of life in ancient Egypt, into blood. Dr. John Marr, who was head of epidemiology in New York, shared a theory that the Nile River turned red because of the presence of a type of algae. This proliferation of algae caused the sea and river water to take on a reddish colour similar to blood. On the other hand, the high concentration of toxins, according to Dr. Marr, caused the following four plagues: the frogs grew out of control because there were no predators. Once the frog overpopulation died, flies appeared that would later affect the herds. People, being in contact with this cattle sickened by infections transmitted by flies, began to suffer sores, which were interpreted as the sixth plague.

Hail and fire appeared due to the eruption of the volcano on the island of Santorini in 1627 BC, a time when the exodus of the Israeli people is approximately dated. The volcanic explosion was so great that the dust expelled into the atmosphere obscured the sunlight for days, a fact that was recorded in the rings of the tree trunks. Egyptian writings of the time have been discovered describing this event as a long night that lasted nine days.

However, Jewish, Christian and Muslim theologians pose a mystery that science did not solve at first. The tenth plague had no scientific explanation and demonstrated divine intervention, since there is no natural mechanism for selecting the firstborn so that they and not the rest of the sons would die from the last of the plagues. This is the plague that supposedly convinced Pharaoh that God was with the Jews and that it was useless to fight against his power; so he agreed to the march of the people of Israel.

But... this selection of first-born in the tenth plague may also have a scientific explanation. In ancient Egypt, first-born sons were entitled to receive a double ration of grain. Because of the volcanic eruption and to prevent the hail from destroying the crops—which would have caused a great famine—the grain was hastily gathered. The Pharaoh ordered the urgent harvest of the grain and it was stored without taking into account the humidity of the silos and the grain itself, which caused it to bloom and become covered with deadly toxins. If the first-born were receiving double por-

tions of food, it is perfectly logical that they died earlier and in bulk, practically all at the same time.

This example is intended to explain that the study of terrorism must analyse all the information and data available to it before making a premature, unwise or incomplete judgment. The presentation of the facts that have been explained about the flight of the people of Israel is only an explanatory approach from a scientific perspective, but obviously no one can deny that the biological explanation of the influence of the algae and the geological explanation of the volcano's eruption may be plausible. The task of an analyst will be to find rational explanations that dismantle the fundamentalist, partisan or subjective argumentation of any terrorist organisation. Even irrational, imaginative or speculative explanations will often be necessary and relevant in order to detect vulnerabilities or future scenarios.

## TERRORISM AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

In 2006, the United States National Security Advisory Council defined weapons of mass destruction as "weapons capable of inflicting serious destructive, psychological and/or economic damage". The probability of a terrorist attack with chemical, biological or nuclear agents seems, a priori, low. However, the effects of such an attack would be very serious, as we will see in the two examples we will discuss in this section. Even so, as scholars of the terrorist phenomenon, it is a scenario that we have to consider.

Let's take a look at some ideas around this issue: Al-Qaeda has released an eleven-volume manual, the last of which is devoted to weapons of mass destruction. Information contained on the hard drive of a laptop computer forgotten by Osama bin Laden's followers when they fled Kabul in the autumn of 2001 suggests that they were already working on the acquisition of chemical and biological agents at that time. In February 2002, nine terrorists were arrested in a slum on the southern outskirts of Rome. They were carrying four kilograms of cyanide and an updated map of the Italian capital's water network. It is suspected that the detainees intended to pollute the city's waters at the risk of causing a tragedy because of the amount of chemical agent seized by the police. Therefore, we cannot be naive and think that the execution of such an attack is impossible. It's unlikely, but not impossible.

## TERRORISM AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The use of chlorine by Daesh in Iraq or Syria, as well as the recruitment of qualified professionals, shows the effort and interest that this terrorist organisation has had in the manufacture of chemical weapons. The following is the only case of a completed terrorist attack using chemical weapons.

**TABLE 5.1.** Consummate terrorist attack with chemical weapons**Aum Shinrikyo**

A terrorist organisation originating in Japan, with a resemblance to an apocalyptic sect, which in 1995 carried out a deadly sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway. Aum Shinrikyo, which means 'supreme truth', was founded by Shoko Asahara, who claimed to be both Christ and the first 'enlightened one' since Buddha.

The group officially became a religious organisation in Japan in 1989 and had thousands of followers. Some of its members were students from elite international universities. The group, initially religious, gradually became an apocalypse cult, as its members were convinced that the world would experience a Third World War and that only they would survive. As time went by, the group became more violent: they kidnapped, wounded and killed those they considered to be their adversaries.

On March 20th, 1995, members of the group scattered bags of sarin gas in the Tokyo subway. Sarin gas is the most volatile of the nerve agents and can cause death within minutes. The result of the attack was thirteen dead and hundreds injured. The attack had a big impact on Japan, a country that prided itself on its low crime rate and social cohesion. Currently the group has spread to different European countries with more presence in Russia, where, despite being illegal, it is estimated that it may have about 30,000 followers. In the United States and many other countries, Aum Shinrikyo is considered a terrorist organisation.

Today it is called *Aleph e Hikari no wa* and is legal, despite being classified as a 'dangerous religion' and subject to special surveillance by the Japanese authorities.

## BIOTERRORISM AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

The use of biological weapons is a scenario of enormous impact because of the hypothetical balance of potential victims. Planning and executing this type of attack requires—as we will see in the following example—a certain degree of experience and technical knowledge. The discovery in 2014 of a laptop computer belonging to a member of Daesh in Syria highlights the terrorist organisation's interest in access to biological weapons. The computer found contained sensitive information on the manufacture and effects of biological weapons, more specifically the use of bubonic plague in large-scale attacks. The self-inoculation of a virus or the spread of a pathogen to areas with a high concentration of people are also scenarios that are posed in terms of safety. In the following table we analyse the most relevant case of the use of biological weapons in the recent history of terrorism.

**TABLE 5.2.** Bruce Ivins and the anthrax shipments

On September 18th 2001 in the United States, one week after the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, several anthrax spore-impregnated letters were sent.

The envelopes were sent by regular mail to different television networks and to two Democratic senators. The anthrax used in the first letters was a brown powder, while in the second letters it was a much more refined powder.

The direct consequences of sending the letters were the death of five people, the infection of more than twenty and the prophylactic treatment with antibiotics of more than ten thousand people exposed to the biological agent. The collateral consequences were the paralysis of the postal service for days and the closure of some postal branches for years. The economic cost generated by the anthrax crisis exceeded one billion US dollars. But the most important subjective consequence was the atmosphere of fear and insecurity that was generated for months in American society. An atmosphere that will always act as a historical precedent or underlying memory to any event of similar characteristics.

In 2010, after several years of investigation, the FBI concluded that Bruce Ivins, an American microbiologist, was the author of the letters. A single individual put the American authorities in check, prolonged an FBI investigation for years and generated a lasting and latent perception of insecurity even today.

## NUCLEAR TERRORISM

The detonation of a nuclear weapon remains the least credible form of WMD terrorism. The probability is less than that of a chemical or biological attack. But, should it materialise, it would have unimaginable consequences for the internal cohesion and governance of the societies concerned. In 'The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism', Charles D. Ferguson and William C. Potter explore the various possibilities that a terrorist organisation might have for using nuclear means or radioactive elements to carry out attacks:

- the theft of a nuclear weapon from its warehouse or place of custody, or its purchase on the black market, with the purpose of detonation;
- the collection of nuclear material whether purchased, stolen or self-produced, for the purpose of making a bomb;
- attack on nuclear installations or storage facilities or on transports of radioactive waste, to cause the release of contaminating elements to the outside world;
- the use of conventional radioactive material and explosives or other means to produce dispersal or emission into the surrounding environment.

The most likely terrorist option in the short term is the use of conventional explosives attached to contaminating radioactive materials, i.e. a 'dirty bomb'.

## TERRORIST INNOVATION AND THE SEARCH FOR BLACK SWANS

Is it possible that there are aspects of terrorism that have not been investigated, or that have not been investigated sufficiently, and that generate innovation? A priori, the answer would have to be no. Few issues in recent history have attracted so much attention from journalists, academics, police, judges or the general public. Historically, terrorist innovation has consisted of imitating, emulating or adapting an existing tactical capability (EVANGELISTA, 1988, 51). Currently, terrorist innovation is defined as the introduction of a new tactic, method or technology that improves the operability of an existing capability (DOLNIK, 2007, 6).

We have already seen in Chapter 2 that black swans are facts that cannot be predicted but that have a big impact and for which an attempt is made to find an explanation in retrospect (TALEB, 2008).

Taleb presents the problem of induction —to obtain general conclusions from particular data— using the parable of Russell's turkey, named after the philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell.

**FIGURE 5.1.** Bertrand Russell's turkey parable

The turkey found that it was fed every morning and, after months of observation, concluded that there was a universal law: "These kind humans must hold me in high esteem because every day they feed me generously." When Thanksgiving came, the kind humans sharpened the knife and proved that the law that the turkey had formulated was worth very little. For the turkey, this was a black swan. But for the butcher, no, because he knew what would happen. So a black swan depends on our knowledge, and we must bear in mind that there are many things we do not know.



Terrorism is always looking for black swans. The attacks of 9/11 meet the requirements of a black swan and are one of the most descriptive examples of innovation in terrorism, as it was a failure of imagination in the security measures adopted in air transport, but it was also one of the most significant examples of the impact it had on the definition of international security policies designed to incorporate the figure of terrorism as one of the main threats to international stability.

In many fields of culture and society, creative and innovative thinking in the search for black swans is praised and encouraged. Disciplines such as art, music, science, economy or technology value talent and creative capacity as sources of innovation. Terrorism, like any phenomenon, adapts at the same pace as society and will therefore always seek to infiltrate the gaps in security. Let's look at some examples in the table below.

**TABLE 5.3.** Examples of adaptation and innovation of terrorism

<b>If security personnel at Western airports...</b>	tighten their grip on stereotypical physical profiles, terrorists with Western features go more unnoticed and terrorist groups will tend to recruit new Western members and, if possible, with European documentation.
<b>If the authorities control...</b>	the flow of jihadists flying to Turkey, alternative routes are proposed to access jihadist scenarios.
<b>If the pressure is focused on Syria or Iraq...</b>	jihadism proposes alternative scenarios like Libya.
<b>If terrorism directed at complex targets...</b>	(police stations, military facilities, airplanes...) is more difficult to execute, terrorists respond with the infiltration of terrorists as a mechanism to approach the targets in order to commit attacks.
<b>If because of police pressure...</b>	terrorist organisations do not have the capacity to establish groups or platoons on a permanent basis in the West, the circulation of propaganda calling for individual terrorism increases and the possibility of a terrorist attack increases exponentially.

It is usually determined that there are three categories of terrorist innovation:

- tactical innovation, which involves the invention or adoption of new techniques, methods or technologies to achieve planned objectives;
- strategic innovation, which implies innovation in the historical development of terrorist campaigns and in the formulation of new objectives;
- organisational innovation, which involves new ways of structuring the terrorist group or new methods of recruitment.

Terrorist innovation can include more than one category.

For example, the hijacking of planes by the terrorist group Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) involved strategic innovation because it aimed to internationalise the Palestinian conflict. It also involved tactical innovation because they took advantage of vulnerabilities in airline security. It also involved organisational innovation because the terrorist group used foreigners, such as Germans and Japanese, to carry out the actions.

We found another example of terrorist innovation on October 12th, 1984, when the IRA attacked Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Brighton, England; the tactical innovation was the use of the timer that ensured the escape of the perpetrators. Another case is that of September 11th, 2001, when Al-Qaeda introduced the conjunction of two innovations used before: the hijacking of PFLP planes and the

Hezbollah suicide attacks for the creation of real missiles. For security specialists, aircraft hijacking had always been a bargaining chip and security measures were geared towards detecting weapons between passengers. The innovation lies in the fact that no one imagined the possibility that the hijacking of an aircraft would become a martyrdom operation and that the aircraft itself would be the weapon used to carry out the terrorist action.

**TABLE 5.4.** Examples of terrorist innovations, in chronological order

Date	Type of innovation	Group
1968-70	Aircraft hijacking	PFLP
1973	Assassination of Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco	ETA
1984	Use of timer in the failed attempt on the life of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher	IRA
1995	Sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway	Aum Shinrikyo
2001	September 11 attacks in the United States	Al-Qaeda
2005	London Underground Attack	Cell linked to Al-Qaeda
2008	Attempting to detonate a liquid explosive on a plane	AQAP
2015	Attacks on Paris	DAESH

The tendency towards terrorist innovation seems more likely in individual terrorism because tactical change or evolution within terrorist groups or organisations can generate hostility or resistance among their members. In addition, in group terrorism innovation can be affected by other variables such as scepticism, the strategic perspective of the organisation, leadership or internal group dynamics. In general, therefore, terrorist groups are 'operationally conservative' and reluctant to adopt new tactics and means. In more recent history there are many instances of tactical innovations in individual terrorism:

- Mario Buda, an Italian anarchist, planned a terrorist action in 1920. The tactical innovation was to combine forty kilograms of dynamite, a horse-drawn carriage and a rudimentary timer. This action was the first car bomb and it caused 38 deaths on Wall Street —the chosen target. Therefore, attacks that have been carried out by organisations such as the IRA, ETA or jihadism using vehicles loaded with explosives have their historical precursor in the tactical innovation of Buda.
- Ted Kaczynski, a math professor, sent letters with explosive charge by regular mail for over a decade. Until now, this terrorist tactic has not been common, even though other terrorist groups such as ETA have also used it.
- Richard Reid, the terrorist who tried to blow up a plane between Paris and Miami in December 2001 using explosives hidden in his shoe. Since then, additional measures have been put in place at passenger access points to check shoes before entering the plane. In fact, today it is still mandatory, in many cases, to take off our shoes at pre-boarding airport security checkpoints.

- Khalid Aldawsari is an example of a tactical innovation to use drones loaded with explosives against official buildings.
- Abdellatif Chiba planned to poison water wells in campsites and resorts.
- Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to detonate a liquid explosive during a commercial flight between Amsterdam and Detroit. His action led to a change in airport security legislation restricting the possession of a certain amount of liquids at access controls.

## FUTURE FORMS OF TERRORISM

What does the future hold for us? What new forms of terrorism will appear in the medium or long term? No one knows...

With some exceptions (KENNY, 2013; JENSEN, 2015), terrorism studies are an eminently retrospective, descriptive or short-term prospective. The vast majority of those who point to the future can be encompassed in intelligence analysis aimed at supporting the action of agencies with counterterrorism responsibilities.

However, the best research tool for this issue is scenario analysis and construction, which consists of trying to answer many 'what if' questions by posing and imagining various futures. It should be noted that scenario forecasting cannot predict the future, as the future is unknown. We have already seen that recent history has black swans. Let us recall, for example, the 'butterfly effect' of the 2010 sacrifice of Mohamed Bouazizi —the young Tunisian university student and street vendor who set himself on fire— which led to protests and the fall of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, and which spread to other countries, giving rise to Arab revolts. It is unlikely that many analysts would have foreseen his action having such decisive geopolitical consequences.

- Terrorism will continue to exist over the coming decades as an instrument of subversion, coercion and sociopolitical destabilisation.
- The growth of the systemic influence of terrorism and other non-state armed groups will have a direct bearing on the advent of a very wide range of transformative technologies.
- The symbiosis between organised crime and terrorism will be increasingly greater, and the line between the two phenomena will be blurred (BASRA y NEUMANN, 2016). In fact, organisations that were considered to be terrorist have been transformed into transnational criminal organisations with profit motives and pursuing certain political objectives (WANG, 2010).

Although in this book we do not focus on scenario analysis, we will deal a little with the evolution of the new forms of terrorism and the incidence of some variable of interest during the next decades. Cyberterrorism and ecoterrorism are not, *stricto sensu*, new forms of terrorism; in fact, we have been talking about them for years, but their evolution is largely overshadowed by the evolution of global terrorism, which gets all the media attention. It is therefore worth talking briefly about these new forms of terrorism and some variables, because of their scope for tactical, strategic and organisational evolution.

## CYBERTERRORISM

Cyberterrorism is the convergence of cyberspace and terrorism. It is defined as the illegal attack or threat of an attack against computers, networks and the information stored on them that is intended to intimidate or coerce a government or society in pursuit of political or social objectives. A few years ago it seemed implausible to talk about cyber-attacks that could disable critical infrastructure, but today, in a society increasingly dependent on technology, it is possible. Despite this evolution, cyberterrorism still has a long way to go and will be perfected when it is not only a means but also the target of a terrorist attack against information and communication systems. Currently, terrorist groups use cyberspace for propaganda, indoctrination and recruitment, but they can evolve strategically by directing their attacks towards taking control of some critical infrastructure (airport, road network, nuclear power plant, rail transport...) which could cause extremely serious damage.

## ECOTERRORISM

This form of terrorism seeks to defend ecology and animal rights through violence towards people and things. The Animal Liberation Front or the Earth Liberation Front are considered to be terrorist organisations in the United States. However, we must make it clear that the movement in defence of animals and the planet is largely peaceful and that its protest or protest actions are excluded from the definition of terrorism. Moreover, in our society, radical beliefs can be held as long as they are not defended through the use of violence.

## OTHER VARIABLES

The convergence of sciences such as engineering, biotechnology, computing or nanotechnology opens up a fertile field for new forms of terrorism.

If we review Chapter 1 and the four Rapoport waves of terrorism, we see that the first three waves each lasted approximately forty years. This suggests a pattern or model that follows the cycle of human life and where the dreams of the parents are no longer attractive to the children.

If we venture into the terrain of pure speculation and hypothesis, perhaps the fifth wave of global terrorism will overlap with the current wave and will lead, as a heterogeneous doctrinal basis, to a hybrid scenario between socioecological activism, nihilism and religious extremisms immersed in the Deep Web.

We must study terrorism without focusing exclusively on jihadism, even though it is the most real threat, because moving away from media attention or majority opinion often gives us different and enriching perspectives with which we can analyse other important phenomena that may emerge.

One of the goals of jihadism is to foster the West's sense of grievance towards Islam. Terrorist actions in the West often generate Islamophobic manifestations that, in some cases, have led to explicit violent episodes. It is not a minor side effect, but this jihadist roadmap aims to polarise Western Muslim society from the rest. In the future, if the jihadist threat continues to attack Western countries, the episodes of violence against Muslim interests could worsen and even favour the gestation of Islamophobic terrorist groups. In fact, in recent years the number of deaths in Europe at the hands of far-right groups or individuals has increased.

There are also other manifestations of extremism that are not directly terrorism, but which are variables of interest and which we must take very much into account in the near future, such as hate crimes, xenophobia, homophobia, nihilism, Islamophobia or anti-Semitism.

Another variable that must be taken into account in the future is the growing permeability between terrorism and organised crime due to the spreading of interests and criminal methods. Access by terrorist groups to firearms, explosives or even weapons of mass destruction can have many links and windows of opportunity with organised crime.

To conclude, I would like to make the following reflection:

Infinite security does not exist and it must be assumed that security is a subjective, volatile and increasingly liquid concept. Society accepts some mantras such as zero risk does not exist or that absolute security is a utopia. The acceptance of risk is the first sign of strength to avoid a timorous and weak society in the face of the terrorist threat.

Terrorism is an example of what in public policy is called a malevolent problem because of its twisted nature, because it mutates with society and because of the enormous difficulty in solving it. Malevolent problems are the result of complex interdependencies and their boundaries are porous. The fight against terrorism will never be an exact science because it is a problem of minds and emotions, of convictions and ideologies in which there is a fine, hard to draw line between the expression of legal opinions, despite being extremist, and the perpetration of a terrorist action.

## SCENARIO FORECASTING: VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN 2050

When Roy Batty —the replicant from the movie Blade Runner— saves agent Rick Deckard from plunging into the void and certain death, he gives us something to reflect on. Aware that his life as a machine comes to an end, he reflects in front of the vulnerable Deckard with one of the most iconic phrases in science fiction cinema.

**IMAGE 5.1.** Reflections of the replicant, Roy Batty

Words of the replicant  
*I... have seen things you wouldn't believe. Warships burning beyond Orion. I've seen c-rays glow in the dark, near Tannhäuser's door. All these moments will be lost in time. Like tears in the rain. It's time to die.*

The soliloquy of the replicant is a mixture of resignation, transcendence and vital yearning.



Photo: frame from the film Blade Runner

In a certain way, modern man is going through a historical moment in which reflections similar to those of the replicant are being made. It resigns itself momentarily to the face of death, but, aware of its vital importance, it seeks to over-

come it through science and technology.

Currently, if this life is not up to being shown off, there are social networks that could do it after death. "When your heart stops beating, you'll keep tweeting" —that's the slogan that greeted visitors to LivesOn, a web service that, by analysing tweets, likes, syntax and previous hobbies, committed itself to tweeting for the deceased user by adding a personal 'touch'. Fortunately it seems that LivesOn or Dead Space have not been very successful in their attempt to interrupt the eternal rest and, if no one makes up for it, we will continue without Wi-Fi in the beyond...

To finish this manual, five tendencies have been identified that structure the evolution of terrorism and the proposed scenarios, and five drivers, understood as agents or factors that drive a change forward. Let's take a look at the table below.

Tendencies	Drivers
Technological evolution in biomedicine	Biological divide
The emergence of new ideologies	Transhumanism and bioconservatism
Climate change	Sociopolitical destabilisation
The structural unemployment associated with automation	New placebos
The increase in population	The rise of the mega-cities

Source: own elaboration.

The multipolar future will encourage the revival of old rivalries and the emergence of new ones. Inequality exacerbated by the biological divide, structural unemployment, climate change, the rise of city states and the emergence of new ideologies will combine their effects to increase sociopolitical instability and will be the best breeding ground for radicalism. Terrorism will continue to exist during the next decades as an instrument of coercion, subversion and sociopolitical destabilisation encouraged by radical ideologies already in existence or yet to be developed. The symbiosis between organised crime and terrorism will be increasingly productive and the consequence will be that the maximalist and ideological goals of terrorism will, in some cases, be subordinated to purely criminal interests.

## THE BIOLOGICAL DIVIDE AND THE DISPOSAL CULTURE

In the first scenario, by 2050 technology applied to medicine will improve the capabilities of the human body beyond mere healing. The advances will be multiple: nanorobots that will circulate freely in our body looking for tissue lesions, bionic arms osseointegrated in the nerve, exoskeletons that favour the stability of people with neurological lesions, brain-computer interfaces that enhance sensory capacity, or pacemakers with integrated mini-pacemakers fed by the flow of the bloodstream. These advances, among others, will help increase the life expectancy and quality of life of millions of people in the short term. The Western population, in general terms, will be old, and while advances in medical technology will lead to longer and

healthier lives, increasing the risk of many more people contracting degenerative diseases. Future access to major advances in biomedicine could also lead to a kind of Darwinian effect, called the biological divide, which would operate as a driver of technological evolution. The biological divide could favour the survival of the 'fittest' and the creation of an improved social caste vis-à-vis other human beings. On the one hand, there will be the elite with the economic capacity to access this biological improvement technology and, on the other hand, the social strata without the capacity to access it. The democratisation of this improvement medicine could bridge this gap. In fact, during the 20th century, many medical advances —such as the use of vaccines and antibiotics— began to be used on the upper classes, but in the end they benefited the entire population, which helped to reduce rather than widen social gaps.

The biological divide would pose a scenario in which millions of people would claim access to technology to heal their loved ones and enjoy greater physical and psychological well-being. The claim could be strictly sociopolitical, but it could also lead to radical options that, through dissent or subversion, would coerce governments, international corporations and public opinion to avoid the biological divide and defend the universality of medical advances. The inaccessibility of a large part of society to these advances could encourage a new criminality linked to the biological divide, such as the emergence of black markets, clandestine surgery, trafficking in biological implants or organs, biohackers who could pirate bionic devices...

The biological divide could favour discriminatory policies in favour of certain social elites or business corporations or, in the worst case scenario, regulation of surplus or what is called the culture of discarding.<sup>81</sup> Vigilante terrorism could encourage the emergence of an insurgency for survival in socially and economically depressed areas.

## THE NEW OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE

The biological divide described in the first of these scenarios would favour the consolidation of sociopolitical ideologies linked to transhumanism and bioconservatism, which could confront each other in the future and lead to political violence. Transhumanism is an ideology that exacerbates technological progress and seeks to improve the human species by increasing its physical and cognitive capacity, but not in a natural way, as biological evolution does, but by integrating —among other emerging technologies— nanotechnology, robotics, biotechnology or artificial intelligence. The purpose of transhumanism is to eliminate unwanted and unnecessary aspects of the human condition such as suffering, illness, aging and even death. The standardisation of cyborg technology could promote the creation of a sense of belonging to a subculture in all its dimensions.

Bioconservatism, however, would be tantamount to a belligerent and even hostile ideological choice with technological optimism and transhumanism. Discontent with political institutions and elites and the increase in the immigrant population in some countries will create fertile ground for populist discourse and the rise of far-left and right parties.

The threshold of the year 2040 could bring political controversy, more activism and social polarisation but also the emergence of radical ideologies in both political spectrums and that could opt for violence to impose their ideology. As we have seen in previous chapters, Ted Kaczynski, alias Unabomber, sent sixteen bombs to different targets between 1978 and 1995 to protest against the technological development of humanity, killing three people and injuring twenty in the process. In his Neo-Luddite manifesto entitled 'The Industrial Society & its Future', published in

81. Pope Francis, after visiting the Auschwitz and Birkenau death camps, said that "our society is contaminated by the culture of discarding, which affects the weakest and most fragile people. A culture of exclusion of all those who do not have the capacity to produce according to the terms that exaggerated economic liberalism has established and which excludes animals, human beings and even God himself". Pope Francis has repeatedly defined this practice of discarding products and even human life as unacceptable: the poor, immigrants, the old, unborn children, the economically vulnerable, or the voiceless.

1995, Kaczynski reflects: "If you think that a big government interferes too much in your life now, just wait until it starts to regulate the genetic makeup of your children". The emergence of individuals or terrorist groups linked to bioconservatism or the resurgence of Neo-Luddists could lead to the identification of scientists, philanthropic patrons, transhumanist leaders or technology corporations as potential targets. The other end of the terrorist spectrum would be made up of violent groups or movements linked to a radical ideology split from transhumanism that could target bio-conservative leaders and perpetrate sophisticated attacks with autonomous lethal weapons (nanorobots, microdrones, killer robots...).

Currently, an eco-extremist movement called *Individualistas Tendiendo a lo Salvaje* (ITS) has perpetrated different violent actions using explosives against companies and has killed experts in nanotechnology, chemistry or biotechnology. On 29 June 2016, ITS-Mexico claimed the murder of a worker at the Faculty of Chemistry of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. His statement describes the belligerence against the concept of a 'better tomorrow' associated with progress and technology:

We do NOT believe in a 'better tomorrow', we are not 'revolutionaries' nor do we identify with their recycled ideologies, we are individualist-terrorists with egocentric, politically incorrect, amoral and indiscriminate objectives [...] We execute this man to show that we have NO respect for the lives of the hyper-civilised university students or anyone else, that we DISPRECIATE their routines, their norms and their morals, that we REJECT equality, human progress, tolerance, science, collectivism, Christianity, pacifism, modernity and other shit that smacks of civilised domestication.  
*Communiqué from ITS, 2016*

Technohumanism —the gospel of innovation— and Datism —the religion of data— are the two pseudo-religious currents that will feed the souls of millions of acolytes during the coming decades. The 20th century is widely considered the century of property and the 21st will be the century of use. But the use of what? Well, the use of data to accumulate and process more information. The major technology giants operate on the premise that there is no limit to the amount of data that can be produced, collected, marketed and shared. But connectivity is not only a means of data exploitation, it can also be a means of domination. In the past, censorship involved blocking information. In the future, the truth may be an anecdote. There will be an abundance of information that, if not accompanied by the skills needed to convert it into knowledge, will increase the risk of trivialising important debates and will be fertile ground for manipulation and lying. The multiplication of images and the saturation of data can lead to an anaesthesia of the senses, to temporary blindness, to a vital and moral disaffection that can favour false stories or feed collective distraction or apathy. By 2040, censorship may work by circulating vast amounts of data that will cause people's attention, once again as 'people's opium', to be diverted towards trivialities.

Currently, transhumanist parties are marginal, but in the future the classic duality between right and left may progressively transform into a political and ideological opposition between bio-conservatives (right) and transhumanists (left). Ultra-Catholic extremism or the evolution of jihadism could potentially target individuals, corporations and associations representing the above-mentioned technoreligions and identify them as infidels or heretics who question God's will.

## CLIMATE VIOLENCE

The third scenario relates to climate change and the scarcity of basic resources, which will favour conflict and sociopolitical fragility. Climate change can have an impact in different ways. On the one hand, the fragility of ecosystems will make food security and access to water difficult for millions of people. Water scarcity —by controlling water resources and their quality— will increase demand and competition, likely increase pressure on government structures and increase political instability. The less water, the fewer crops, and with fewer crops, the higher prices. Climate change is very likely to disrupt food production in many regions, increase prices and market volatility, and also increase the risk of protest, unrest and social conflict.

On the other hand, there will be severe flooding in densely populated areas that will cause coastal degradation and threaten the viability of the lowland, even before it is submerged, leading to displacement and migration. The average temperature on Earth will continue to rise and heat waves, droughts, fires, hurricanes and tornadoes will increase. The absence of precipitation will diminish the quality of the air and in the big cities the pollution will be perpetuated, facts that will favour the respiratory affections. The general deterioration of the quality of the environment, with air pollution, loss of biodiversity and degradation of natural habitats, will affect the quality of life of people and will cause large migratory movements in search of more environmental security.

Climate change will lead to more political instability, new conflicts over natural resources and insecurity of livelihoods. Non-state armed groups, although not a new phenomenon and not always associated with terrorism, will progressively play a more important role. In the future they will evolve as a hydra in the form of militias, insurgent groups, warlords, mercenaries, paramilitary groups, cartels, street gangs, criminal organisations and professionalised terrorist groups linked to new ideologies influenced by the fragility of the State, the scarcity of resources and climate change. In some fragile environments with resource shortages, non-state armed groups will operate to 'fill the gap' left by the State and provide basic services to ensure trust and support among the local population.

The affected population groups will be more vulnerable not only to negative climate impacts but also to terrorist recruitment, which will provide alternative livelihoods and economic incentives. Security challenges arising from conflicts over local resources, large-scale violence and mass migration will be particularly strong where the authority and legitimacy of the state is weak and will feed a vicious circle of fragility and armed violence. The social tensions caused by migration and the perception of an intrusive global culture will be most acute among those who seek to maintain their indigenous and traditional customs and beliefs and feel threatened by the changes. Marginalisation, as it is today, will continue to be one of the vectors of radicalisation.

## THE TREACHEROUS TURN AND THE PAPERCLIP MACHINE

We imagine that we build a machine whose goal is to make as many paperclips as possible. We know that process automation increases production efficiency with the aim of producing more while spending less. We could establish that our machine would only produce one million paperclips, but perhaps once that figure was reached —here the concept of the treacherous turn— it could obsessively and relentlessly devote itself to improving its productive efficiency, consuming more and more resources. In terms of technological efficiency, its objective would always be to improve the last decimal place of the production measurement. The machine would

**IMAGE 5.2.** The paperclip machine and the treacherous turn



The disturbing story of the paperclip machine serves to show that fears about automation and loss of occupation have been recurrent throughout history.

manufacture millions of paper clips around the clock, without getting sick and, of course, without demanding the revision of the labour agreement. When our machine had exhausted the raw material needed to do its job, it would find the most efficient way to transform any material on the face of the earth—who knows if even human flesh—to continue making its precious paperclips.

Concern about technological unemployment has emerged periodically since the Industrial Revolution, when English weavers and craftsmen fell by the wayside after the introduction of mechanical looms. In the 1980s, Pittsburgh, once known as the 'City of Steel', suffered a huge economic crisis that led, concurrently, to a demographic crisis. Foreign competition, the automation of industry and the national recession plunged it into a deep crisis that impacted an entire generation of workers. Forty years later, Pittsburgh has re-emerged and its economic source is health care, education, technology and robotics. Pittsburgh's renaissance is a historical argument for the fact that industry automation, although a priori may have a negative economic and demographic impact, is a prerequisite for the growth of many cities. However, experts also predict that the implementation of new technologies in industries will mean the elimination of millions of jobs. There is a risk that the direct benefits of this process will be very selective and will fall mainly into the hands of the owners of the means of production: multinational corporations, investment funds, elites that accumulate a high percentage of capital and profits.

By 2050 there could be a more polarised wealth scenario, as algorithms push people out of the labour market and economic and technological wealth becomes concentrated in the hands of an elite, generating unprecedented social and political inequality. With the disappearance of hundreds of professions, a growing pool of structural unemployment will emerge, made up of citizens without the knowledge and skills needed to fill some of the new jobs. The most important economic and social dilemma of the 21st century could very well be what to do with the millions of people expelled from the labour market. If we add to this scenario that demographers project that the world population will rise to nine billion by about 2050, the working middle class will have the largest surplus in human history.

It does not seem difficult to predict that millions of people could form a critical mass, dissatisfied, frustrated and vulnerable to being radicalised by ideologies opposed to exclusion from work and the replacement of people by machines. Paradoxically, the countries that are most economically developed and therefore best able to afford the economic investment associated with the economic paradigm shift will also be those that suffer the highest risk of political turmoil.

The social fracture between a sector of society that enjoys the benefits of the new productive model and a growing mass of excluded people will generate enormous tensions in the viability of the political models of the welfare state, not only because of the inability of the state to pay the growing costs of subsidising a majority sector of the population that is unable to cover its needs, but also by the legitimacy of the system itself, questioned on the one hand by the fed up citizens who will become clean contributors of resources and, on the other hand, challenged by the indignation of the majority sector of the population stagnant in terms of welfare and without real options for improvement and social advancement.

The political management of social discontent can also take on a dystopian character. Faced with the government's inability to involve the majority of the population in the benefits of automation, these institutions can encourage the excluded to or endure their immersing themselves in virtual worlds that will provide them with the dose of placebo needed to survive the grey everyday. The use of slow-metabolic—depressant—drugs would also be a popular escape route to temper the 'discarded'. This mass potentially addicted to new drugs and virtual worlds,

would be an ideal target group for a narrative that would encourage violent revolt against the actors (public and private) who, in order to preserve their privileged way of life, have thrown society into a pseudo-vegetative state.

The statement 'automation = poverty and oppression' is an argument that, dressed with a certain revolutionary patina, would encourage the genesis of groups linked to the far left and right, which would present themselves as the vanguard of popular classes that have to fight against digital capitalism in order not to end up subjugated by the elite that owns the machines.

From the security perspective, the social conflict that caused the first Industrial Revolution was eminently local and repressed by the State. What is the big difference with the conflict that could be generated by the elimination of millions of jobs during the 21st century? The difference will be that the same technology and access to data will amplify the social conflict globally. Technologies related to virtual sociability will continue to facilitate the organisation and dissemination of social protests that transcend borders and trigger other protests at increasing speed. Knowledge of events abroad will be constant and in real time, which in turn provides the opportunity for violent responses to be orchestrated through new, untraceable communication networks.

The most belligerent and revolutionary options against automation could have synergies with individuals or terrorist groups linked to bioconservatism, Neo-Luddism or anarcho-primitivism, which could involve the collusion of propagandistic and tactical objectives.

## POLIS OF THE FUTURE

By 2050, about 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas, drawn by access to jobs, resources and security. The largest increases in urbanisation will be in Africa and Asia. The urban dichotomy that may arise, in terms of security, can be explained by extrapolating to the absurdity the following contemporary examples.

On the one hand, the consolidation of several city states, such as Singapore, which will become nodes of global trade and poles of technological innovation. Many of these cities will be home to biological elites and will be the headquarters of large business corporations. These cities will become examples of highly managed economic and population growth, with the capacity to create cities that are not only economically large, but also technologically advanced and culturally vibrant, and where it is pleasant to live.

On the other hand, we find cities like Lagos, which have not known or have not been able to manage their growth well. They are excessively populated spaces, with structural problems of mobility, deterioration, corruption, illness and death. Millions of people live on boats without electricity or toilets because the sewerage and drainage are so poor that when it rains the excrement floats into the houses. The police are understaffed, ineffective and unpredictable. Violent crime has become an everyday occurrence and many symbols of civic culture, such as libraries and cinemas, have disappeared. The population, disillusioned with the police and judges, creates neighbourhood patrols that confront the criminals with machetes and shotguns. By 2025, Lagos is expected to have grown by another 50% to 16 million people, making it the twelfth largest city in the world.

By 2050, therefore, in the outskirts of some cities of more than 10 million mega-suburbs will sprout in which approximately 2 billion people will survive in very harsh conditions, excluded from the labour market and victims of the biological divide and incubating resentment, anger and frustration. This urban, degraded, crowded and dangerous clot will be suitable for the emergence of 'sanctuaries of crime', hotbeds

of radical ideologies and for the presence of the hydra of non-state armed groups. Perfect environments for the production and trafficking of drugs, people, nuclear waste, weapons, and also for executing extortion and kidnapping with political or profit-making interests.

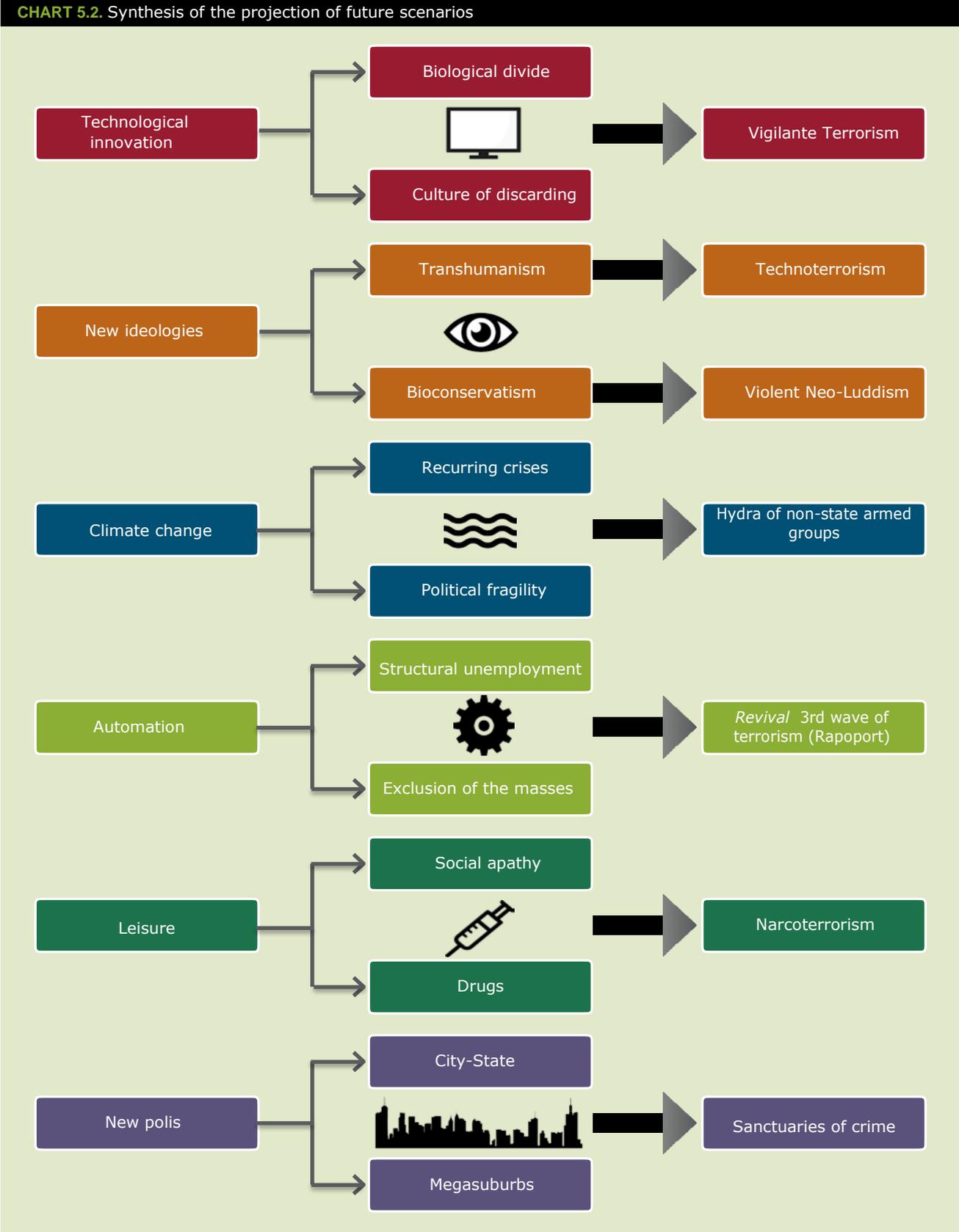
In these sanctuaries, criminal organisations will lend their support to terrorist structures for reasons of ideological or religious affinity or mere practical interests involving some material exchange or economic transaction. Rapid urbanisation and armed conflict against the hydra of non-state armed groups will make the urban insurgency more likely, in many cases moving from rural or desert areas. The battles between insurgents and the army in cities such as Aleppo or Mosul demonstrate the difficulties that arise in a three-dimensional environment with limited fields of vision because of the urban terrain itself. Environments where combat is very different tactically and operationally and which facilitate the prolongation of the armed conflict by using explosives, snipers and taking advantage of the urban structure itself. Using the concept of the German essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger, scenarios of molecular civil war encouraged by the growth of the urban insurgency could be proposed.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. While technology is neither the causal nor the only element involved in all these possible dystopian outcomes, it is clear that the risks and opportunities of the future will be strongly conditioned by the emergence of a new technological context and its power to transform social values, the economy and the distribution of power. The great strength of technophobia<sup>82</sup> as a possible mobilising element of the fifth wave of terrorism is its cross-cutting nature and that it can be an accepted cause by any substrate of tomorrow's societies, regardless of their ethnicity, beliefs, political culture or level of material development. The difficulty in specifying who is ultimately responsible for this technological dystopia that we are trying to combat, far from being a problem, will be a facilitating element of this violence, because the existing terrorist groups—and other new ones that appear—will be able to adapt the rejection of the technological society to their respective agendas and priorities, pointing out as enemies to be beaten by the objectives that best suit their characteristics. This will favour synergies that today seem implausible to us: jihadists, anarchists, anti-capitalists, Christian extremists, animalists, etc., all alienated in the fight against a diffuse enemy.
2. As social and political grievances become more pronounced, it will be inevitable that a previous moment in history (before the technological breakthrough) will be idealised in the imaginary of these groups, and for that ideal moment to return, these groups will struggle violently. This does not mean that tomorrow's terrorist violence is a re-edition of today's terrorist tactics, but that, as is usual in the history of terrorism, these groups will use the instruments created by the very society they seek to destroy. The level of technical sophistication of these actors will vary according to their ability to rationalise these contradictions and their room for manoeuvre in a repressive environment.
3. The probable scenarios that have been outlined are just that, a simple probability. However, it encourages us to observe trends, uncertainties and hypothetical outcomes with a more open and sensitive mind. Harmony between the future of humanity and the defence of universal values must be the challenge for the coming decades, perhaps talking less about technology and more about how it affects people.

82. For more information on this issue, see the recent article by Toboso, M. and Torres-Soriano, M. (2019).

CHART 5.2. Synthesis of the projection of future scenarios



Source: own elaboration.



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Terrorism represents a particularly complex object of study: its analysis is a recurrent subject of academic debate and is under constant review in recent years. What is the purpose of terrorism and what are its strategic objectives? What is the perfect ecosystem in which it can best deploy its effects?

Based on these and many other questions, the author explains the multiplicity of factors and variables that must be taken into account to try to determine the definition, types and causes of terrorism, while questioning argumentative inertias and contaminated concepts that are often used. The overall objective is to promote critical thinking and an education around terrorist threats based on knowledge and consideration, in order to be able to analyse how terrorism behaves and to encourage management and prevention from a multidisciplinary and dynamic point of view.

This fifth volume of the collection 'Segments of Security' is published with the aim of circulating the knowledge generated in one of the subjects of the Degree in Security taught at the Institute for Public Security of Catalonia as a centre attached to the University of Barcelona.

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