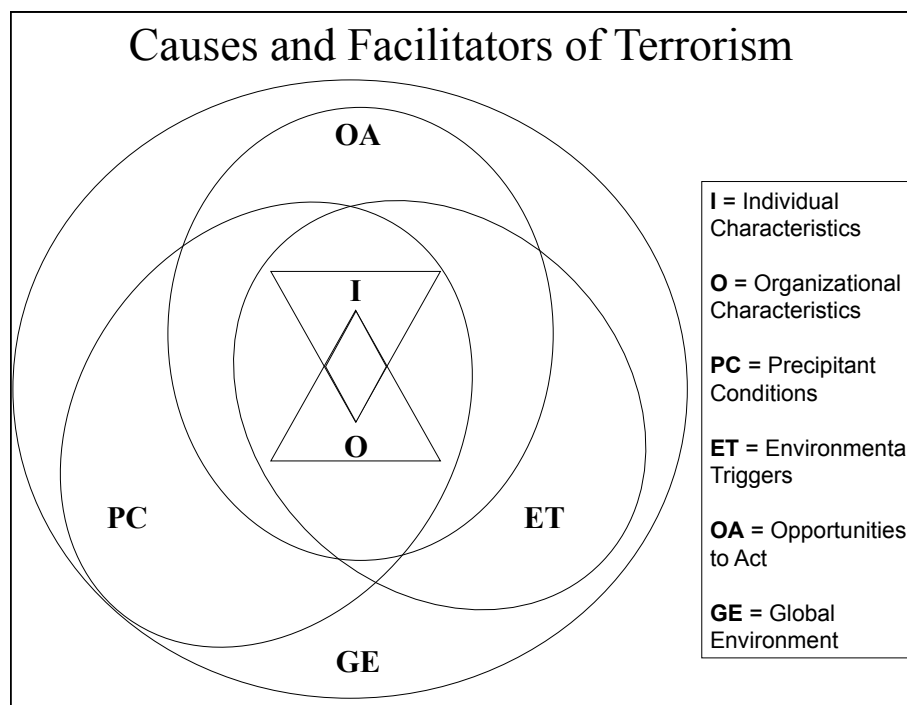


THEORY

- A Theory of Terrorism? No such thing
- Theories, however . . .
 - Theories about where, why, etc.
(e.g. enablers, facilitators)
 - Theories about who, how, why, etc.
(e.g., recruitment, radicalization, ideological resonance)
 - Theories about terrorist group behavior
(e.g., learning, using suicide bombings, WMD, etc.)
 - Theories about combating terrorist groups
(e.g. disengagement, deterrence, obliteration, etc.)



POLITICAL GRIEVANCES

- Corruption among political and economic elites
- Oppressive, authoritarian regimes that stifle civil liberties
- Marginalization, favoritism/discrimination, institutionalized exclusion (e.g. Ethno-nationalism, cf. Byman)
- Injustice (real or perceived)
- Political disagreements (e.g. reconstruction, *Roe vs Wade*)

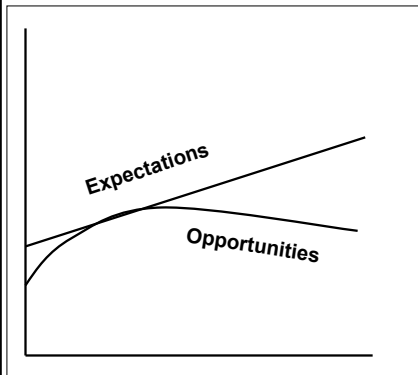
Most often, many of these conditions coincide, creating a cumulative effect of animosity toward those in power

Ted Robert Gurr (1970): "As legitimacy declines, people rebel"

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES

- Plato and Aristotle:
"Economic factors are fundamental in the outbreak of violence."
- Marxism:
"War is a mechanism for maintaining inequalities in a struggle for control of raw materials and markets."
– Violence is an inevitable outcome of capitalism
- Poverty (Blomberg, et al); Widespread economic disparities (often tied to corruption, centralization of power and wealth)
- Lack of government investment in education, public infrastructure
- Unequal barriers to social, educational and economic opportunities; perceived injustice is structural, deeply rooted
- Changing demographics (youth bulge); job, resource demands
- Globalization (Benjamin Barber, "Tribalism and Globalism")

POLITICAL & SOCIOECONOMIC



- Aspirations/expectations vs. opportunities
 - Regime unable or unwilling to change/improve
- Political, socio-economic conditions offer fertile ground, but do not always lead to emergence of terrorism

Contextual relevance plays a critical role in ideological resonance

RESEARCH ON “WHO”

Various explanations offered:

- Religious fanaticism
- Poverty
- Ignorance
- Revenge for personal suffering
- Brainwashing
- Psychopathology



None of these “explanations” are supported by significant data

RESEARCH ON “WHO”

- The most common result of research indicates a pattern of “normalcy”— the absence of any unique attribute or identifier that would distinguish one individual from another
- “Terrorists are . . . rarely mad, and very few suffer from personality disorders” (Andrew Silke)
- “Many of the personal traits or characteristics . . . are neither specific to the terrorist nor serve to distinguish one type of terrorist from another.” (John Horgan)
- “30 years of research has found little evidence that terrorists are suffering from psychopathology.” (Clark McCauley)

RESEARCH ON “WHO”

Research on psychology of terrorism indicates:

- The inability of psychopathology to explain terrorism
- The absence of any clear personality profile
- Common themes of trauma, injustice, and alienation provide strong motivational “push” factors for involvement in terrorism
- The allure of personal status and other rewards (e.g. excitement) proved a powerful “pull” factor
- The reduction of moral restraints on killing (e.g. Bandura’s “moral disengagement” research)

Data sources include:

- Over 25,000 scholarly articles published since 1971
- Police records; interviews with incarcerated terrorists

LaFree & Ackerman, 2009

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

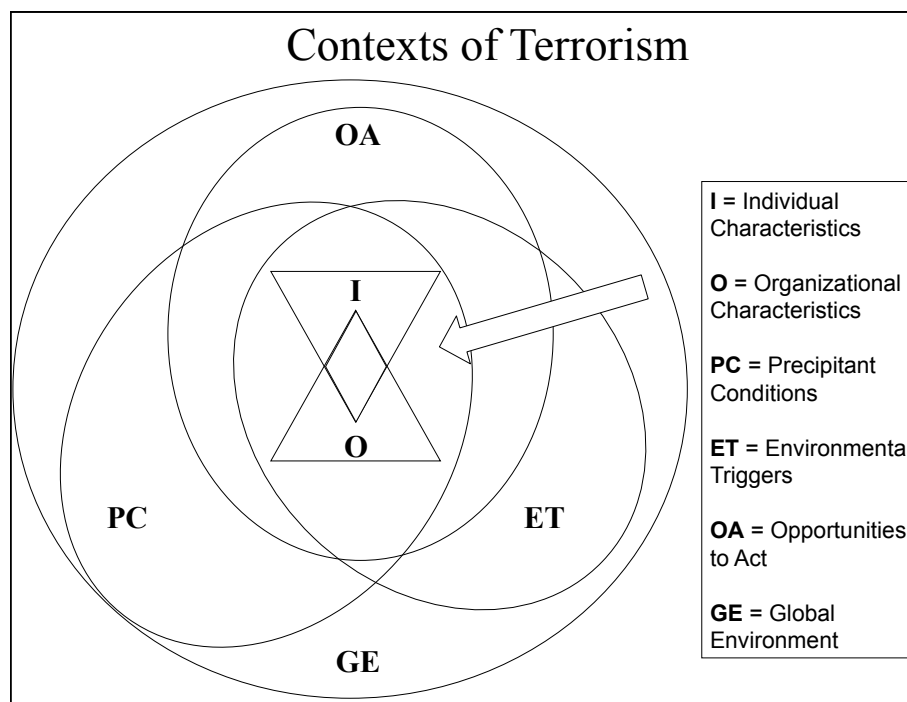
- An individual's **choice** could be driven by:
 - Personal attributes (especially when a “seeker”)
 - Sense of crisis
 - Intense grievances (local or global)
 - Retribution for perceived injustices
 - Address a power imbalance - empower the disenfranchised
 - Criminal/profit motive
 - The ties that bind: training camps, extended family, social networks; trusted networks = key
 - Many other kinds of possible reasons

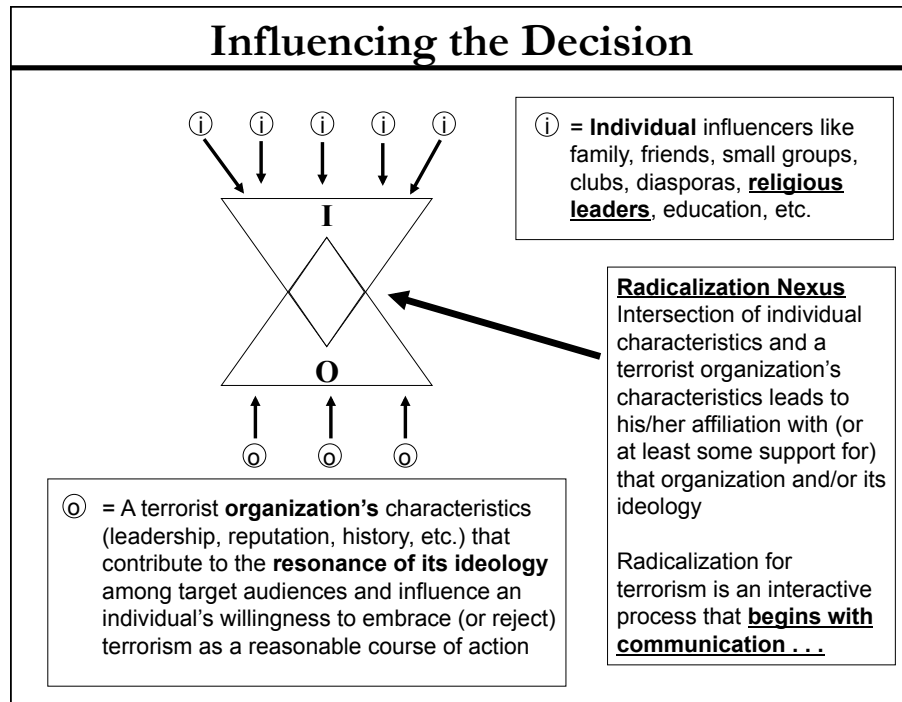
DIASPORA SUPPORT

- Tamil communities in Canada, elsewhere (often through extortion rackets) supporting LTTE
- Pakistani communities in the UK, Denmark, elsewhere in Western Europe supporting Kashmir separatist groups
- Algerian communities in France supporting GIA, GSPC, AQIM
- Moroccan communities in Spain supporting AQIM
- Kurdish communities in Germany supporting PKK/Kongra-Gel separatist guerillas in Turkey/Northern Iraq
- “For the children” jars in Irish pubs in Boston; Irish Freedom Committee soliciting funds from roughly 40 million Irish-Americans to support IRA/PIRA

RADICALIZATION AS A PROCESS

- Radicalization for terrorism is an interactive process that begins with communication
- - Pathway, staircase: *steps or stages in the process*
 - Individually specific processes; context is key
 - Often, personal relationships are critical
- Radicalization is rooted in information, beliefs and perceptions, and interpretation





COMMUNICATION

- Ideology and ideological resonance

Terrorists seek to influence at least 3 primary audiences:

- Victimized locals and terrified observers elsewhere in the target country (and perhaps even worldwide)
- Sympathizers (including potential funders)
- Themselves & each other (in-group cohesion)

Terrorist radicalization as product of choices influenced by whomever and whatever help us interpret the world around us.

SHAPING PERCEPTIONS

- If an individual is motivated by perceptions of injustice, how are those perceptions formed or influenced?
- Think about how you have formed your view of the world, and your place within it.
 - Who in your life has influenced your perceptions the most?
 - What if your “influencers” were considered “extremists” by others”? Would you know?

AQ & GLOBAL SALAFISTS

Data on 172 members of the global Salafi movement:

- Little or no relationship between poverty or religious devotion of individuals and their reasons for joining terrorist networks
- Typically, individuals in their mid-20s, relatively more education, many from more privileged backgrounds than average citizens
- Often, the compulsion to join terrorist groups evolves through friendship and kinship networks; radicalization often occurs together
- Many are first-generation or second-generation immigrants struggling to assimilate into new (Western) surroundings
- Bottom line: small group dynamics significant for recruitment and mobilization

Sageman, 2004

UK HOUSE OF COMMONS

Radicalization defined as “the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.”

The following groups are particularly vulnerable to radicalization:

- young people and people from lower income and socio-economic groups;
- those who distrust Parliament and who see a conflict between being British and their own cultural identity; and
- those who perceive discrimination, experience racial or religious harassment, and have a negative view of policing.

Radicalized individuals come from a wide range of backgrounds: recent research described them as “demographically unremarkable”.

UK House of Commons, *Roots of Violent Radicalisation*, (Feb. 6, 2012)

INFLUENCERS: IDEOLOGICAL ENTREPRENEURS

- Influencing perceptions through words and images is a core mission of any terrorist group, (or any group seeking to confront or counter terrorist activity)
- Individuals who become adept at communicating a given ideology in a way that “connects” with a broad audience are an invaluable asset to terrorist groups
- Influencers tend not to carry out attacks themselves but focus on inspiring others



TERRORIST MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Perception management is central to Al-Qaida's war against the West

- AQ has its own media branch (as-Sahab); audio, video distribution
- Leadership clearly describes network's doctrine, strategy (and even some tactics) in its Internet and news media articles
- Attacks are filmed and uploaded to the Internet complete with ideological spin even before the commanders can even give a full report on the incident

"We are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. We are in a race for hearts and minds of our umma" [the global community of Muslims]. . . We must get our message across to the masses . . . This is an independent battle that we must launch side by side with the military battle.

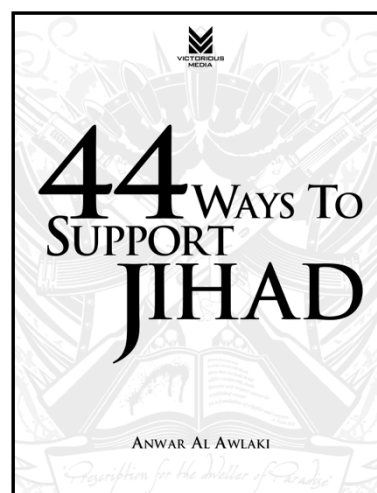
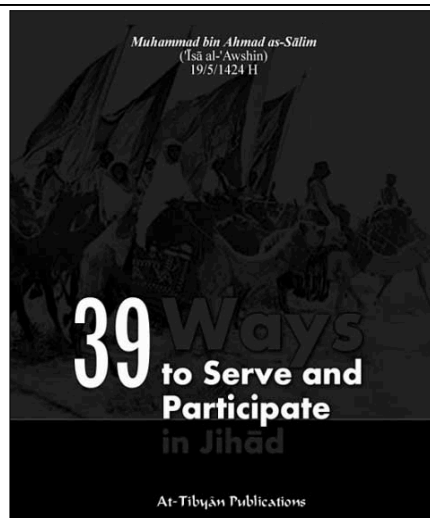
- Ayman al-Zawahiri

FROM MEDIA TO INTERNET

The Internet has come to replace traditional media as the main conduit for influencers to communicate with their intended audiences
(However: no substitute for personal interaction)

Websites, blogs, videos, e-mail are used for:

- Propaganda, recruitment, radicalization and indoctrination
- Music, video games, other forms of entertainment can have ideological purposes
- Training and guidance (in strategy and tactics)
- Fundraising (soliciting donations) & "friendraising"
- Operational communications with cells, leadership
- Target surveillance, intelligence gathering
- Identification, exploitation of online vulnerabilities



Marxist view of human endeavor: "from each according to your ability . . ."

[illegible]

INSPIRE MAGAZINES



INSPIRE MAGAZINES

- Making the ideology more accessible to the masses
- Tips on how to use encrypted communications
- How to get to a training camp, what to expect, what not to bring with you
- The importance of the buddy system
- "How to build a bomb in your mother's kitchen"

SUMMARY

- Radicalization is viewed as a product of dynamic interactions between ideas and people, framed and influenced by many contextual factors and by personal relationships
- Ideological entrepreneurs have many tools to spread their ideology, but the ideas must resonate among the target audience and motivate action
- Why do the same political and socioeconomic conditions exist in many places, and yet terrorism exists in only a few of those places?