Master Thesis

FRAMING TERRORISM AS RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

Implications for Counterterrorism and Conflict Transformation

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ABSTRACT

A variety of previous studies have attempted to answer the question of the causes of terrorism, and more recently, violent extremism and radicalization. Despite the fact that Islam is rarely referred to as the direct cause, it appears that there is an embedded assumption in public discourse that at least some extreme form is one of the main driving forces. Consequently, counterterrorism and CVE/PVE policies have been, and still are, largely focused on Muslims. This tendency is being increasingly criticized, particularly in the light of its impact on human rights and civil liberties, as well as the growth of Islamophobia.

Applying insights from framing theory, this analysis shows how the frame depicting terrorism largely as religious violence has emerged over time, how it impacts CVE/PVE policies and conflict transformation and gives suggestions on how to transform it. Through the application of discourse analysis, this research revealed that it is not a problem of availability of information, but rather of the selective and reductionist use of that information in public discourse. The media, significantly influenced by the sensationalist tendencies of its audience, play a significant role in this regard.

Most of the time, we take the meaning of our concepts for granted. Of course, we know that our conceptual language is an invention and that the meaning of key terms is not carved in stone. We are aware that a particular concept may be interpreted differently. [...] Usually, [however,] concepts tend to be reduced to static 'variables', which are broken down into 'indicators', without taken into account the rich history and multiple meanings of the concept underpinning the variable. The reasons for this range from our modern belief that we can actually arrive at the true meaning of a concept, which is singular and simple (Berenskoetter, 2016: 1).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

9/11	September 11, 2001
Casus belli	"an act or event that provokes or is used to justify war" (literally, "a case of war")
CTS	Critical Terrorism Studies
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
IR	International Relations
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
TVE	Transforming Violent Extremisms
NCTV	(the office of the) Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism

INTRODUCTION

In January 2017, Donald Trump presented a list containing 78 terrorist attacks from September 2014 to December 2016, which he argued had been misleadingly not reported by the media. Interestingly, in his narrative on terrorism, he completely ignored the anti-Muslim terrorist attack that had taken place only a few days prior to his statement (Mohamedou, 2018). In his defense, US Representative Sean Duffy declared that 'there is a difference between terror acts by white people and those committed by Muslims'(Duffy, 2017).

Similarly, the media coverage of recent events in Germany raises questions. When Anis Amiri drove a vehicle in a crowd attending the Christmas Market in Berlin on December 19, 2016, the attack was immediately, and continues to be, labelled, one of "Islamist terrorism" (Sarovic, 2017). When Jens R. drove his VW-bus into a crowd in Münster in April 2018, the event quickly disappeared from the main pages of the news outlets after it became evident that he was mentally unstable. Within the first few hours, however, one of Germany's leading newspapers, *DIE ZEIT,* published an article informing the public that there was no Islamist background found (Klormann, Creveld, Kohrs, Schrader, & Ulken, 2018). Moreover, the Dutch media outlet *NOS* even revoked the following statement that had been online for 35 minutes: 'In first instance, German media was talking about an attack. Meanwhile, it was revealed that the perpetrator had no migration background' (NOS, 2018).[1]

The trial of the German right-wing group "Freital" adds another aspect. Over time, the group had been responsible for the explosion of a car, attacks on refugee centers and residential complexes with explosives including Cobra-12, and the throwing of explosives into the office of the political party "Die Linke" to demonstrate the disapproval of their pro-refugee attitude. As their social media accounts showed, the members of the group were overtly right-wing and they even referred to themselves as "terrorists" in their WhatsApp chats. Despite these indications, however, the public prosecutor's office in Dresden trialed them only on the basis of use of explosives, bodily harm and damage to property. Both the police and judiciary refused to press charges based on terrorism. It was only after the Attorney Generals' Office in Karlsruhe took over the case in 2016, that the group was eventually declared and charged as a terrorist group in March 2018 (Steffen, 2018).

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[1] This is a translation of the statement, which is published in Dutch: 'In eerste instantie spraken Duitse media van een aanslag, maar inmiddels wordt gemeld dat de dader een Duitser zonder migratieachtergrond is'(NOS, 2018).

These are only three recent examples of German news media coverages. They, however, indicate that there seems to be strong underlying assumptions about who is a terrorist and who is not. It appears that there is an embedded perceived causality between terrorism and religion, particularly Islam that people might not even be consciously aware of. This is highly problematic, since it contributes to the alienation and stigmatization of a particular community, resulting in hostilities from both sides. Since 2014 for instance, every year, attacks against religious targets in OECD[2] countries have nearly doubled. More than one third of these attacks were anti-Islamic and more than 40 percent occurred in the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Austria. Another third occurred in the United States alone ("GTI," 2017: 54).

The questions "What leads people to turn to political violence?" , and particularly "terrorism" (Mills & Miller, 2017: 45) are arguably two of the greatest questions we are confronted with nowadays. Already since the 1970s, and even more since the attacks of September 11, 2001, enormous investments have been made in research and counter-terrorism programs aimed at finding an answer and preventing future acts of "terrorism" (Mills & Miller, 2017: 45). Throughout the last decade, the globalization of CVE policies has been the most significant development in the field of counter-terrorism. Even the singer Bono, who spoke in 2016 in front of the US Senate Committee, called upon the United States to 'deploy a Marshall Plan to head of the rise of violent extremism in North, Africa, the Middle East, and the Sahel" (Bono in Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 4). In contemporary discourse, however, it often seems that terms like "extremism", "radicalization" and "violent extremism", despite their quite different meanings, have emerged as synonyms of "terrorism" (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 4).

With the UN now calling for all of its member states to devise and implement National Action Plans, there is an urgent need for policymakers to reflect whether CVE policies and practices that are anchored in a failed 'war on terror', which by any objective measure has only increased politically-motivated violence and extremism, are fit for the purpose (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 5). In order to do so, it is crucial to examine whether there is a certain framing of terrorism taking place that establishes a causal link to religion and religious violence, how this framing emerged and what it takes to transform it. This research provides a contribution to these three questions.

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[2] The Global Terrorism Index uses the typology of OECD countries, since "Western countries" usually also includes Israel. Considering the political situation there, including Israel in these statistic would have a significant impact on the numbers (Ackman, 2018).

After positioning the research within the existing literature and elaborating on the research paradigm, the third chapter shows how terrorism as a field of study was invented, how the religious terrorism frame was constructed and how and when it entered public discourse as common sense.

The fourth chapter focuses on the impact of this framing on counter-terrorism policies, using the example of approaches to violent extremism (VE). The dominant focus on Muslim communities is deeply embedded in these policies and one of the main points of criticism. The chapter gives a brief overview of the origin of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) policies and the main problems inherent in these policies.

The fifth chapter focuses on possibilities to transform the framing of terrorism and religious violence, which is needed to overcome the obstacles of CVE/PVE. Transforming Violent Extremism (TVE) policies, based on the concept of conflict transformation, are presented are elaborated upon in order to bridge the problems associated with the CVE and PVE.

The conclusion summarizes the main points of this research, followed by Annexes, which provide the transcripts of the interviews, the respective interview guides and the communication log.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review applies insights from critical terrorism studies (CTS) and religious studies to the fields of (counter-) terrorism studies and international relations (IR), aiming to present the more skeptical and nuanced approaches that have evolved recently regarding the relationship between religion, violence and terrorism.

Terrorism is without any doubt a highly complex, politically sensitive and subjective issue in the contemporary world (Bakker, 2015: 19). Even though it is a worldwide phenomenon, however, not all parts of the world are equally troubled by terrorist acts. Most attacks occur in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the northern part of Africa and Russia. In many parts of the world, terrorism thus presents a comparatively low physical and strategic threat. Nonetheless, it is regarded as the dominant threat to a state's security, requiring full attention of both policymakers and politicians. Particularly after September 11, 2001 counterterrorism legislation has expanded significantly, a process that has not gone without criticism, in particular with regard to its proportionality, legitimacy and the debate about the trade-off between security and human rights (Bakker, 2015: 19-24). Seventeen years after the declaration of the global "war on terror" the interest of politicians, media and academics in counterterrorism and terrorism has not declined. It has, however, been continuously accompanied by increasingly critical voices from the field of CTS, which has evolved simultaneously to (counter-) terrorism studies (Jackson, 2016b).

Over the past decade, CTS has made considerable achievements, establishing itself as a unique approach within the broader fields of terrorism and security studies. It has amongst others (1) highlighted and strengthened critical discussions and reflexivity within (counter-) terrorism studies about definitions, categories, labels, assumptions, media biases, values and institutional relationships, which shape perceptions and policy making. Moreover, CTS has (2) opened and widened debates about the terrorism's very nature and definition, its labelling, the need for more primary research in the field, the muting of state terrorism and the exaggeration of the terrorist threat. Furthermore, CTS (3) brought foundational debates and social theory that were long present in other fields such as IR to the field of terrorism studies, which prior to this lacked any kinds of ontological, epistemological, methodological and practical discussions (Jackson, 2016b). Notably, in their review of the "state of the art" of terrorism studies, Scott Englund, Michael Stohl, and Richard Burchill stress that there is still work to be done in this matter, since 'most of the scholarly work on terrorism […] has not been interested in the hard work of

theory building' (Englund, Stohl, & Burchill, 2017: 2). Citing Schmid and Jongman, they add that 'Perhaps as much as eighty percent of the literature is not research-based in any rigorous sense' (Englund et al., 2017: 2).

Additionally, there is a considerable research gap within CTS with regard to the role of religion in terrorism (Dunning, 2015; Jackson, 2016). One of the most noticeable gaps concerns the causes of both state and non-state, and public and private terrorism, widened by the apparent widespread abstention of CTS scholars to make claims on this matter (Jackson, 2016b). Scholars more closely related to the field of religious studies, however, have been less shy to do so in their attempts to close this gap.

Scholarship on Religion and Terrorism

Before examining the relationship between religion and terrorism in more detail, it is important to note that it has been examined already before 9/11 (Hoffman, 1998; Ranstorp, 1996; Rapoport, 1984). This research, however, has not been without flaws.

In his examination of research on terrorism pre- and post- 9/11, Andrew Silke stresses his concern about the state of art of terrorism studies (Silke, 2004, 2007, 2009). Despite the fact that the quantity of literature on terrorism has grown extensively in the past, particularly since 9/11, it remains a flawed field of studies, amongst others because of the shortage of experienced researchers in the field (Silke, 2009: 38). A pre-9/11 survey found that more than 80% of scholarly articles on terrorism in the 1990s were written by scholars who had only written a single article on the issue over a ten-year period (Silke, 2007: 77). This consequently leads to a lack of awareness of previous findings on the topic, as well as poor or even absent links with already existing knowledge and theory (Silke, 2007: 77). This is particularly interesting considering the drastic increase in publications on al-Qaeda after 9/11. Prior to the attacks, only 0.5 percent of publications in the field focused on the group. In the aftermath of the events, however, the amount of publications quickly rose to 20 percent (Silke, 2009: 42) causing a significant shift towards focus on Islamist terrorism (Silke, 2009: 47). This has been accompanied by a drastic increase in publications on terrorism in both the form of books and articles in academic journals (Silke, 2009: 35). Another survey showed that research with a historical focus dropped from 3.9 to 1.7 percent after 9/11 (Silke, 2007: 89), a finding that is relevant for this research at a later stage. According to a 1979 survey by Garvey, Lin and Tomita, a publication process from starting with the actual research until the final publication, can often take up to two and a half years (Silke, 2009: 37).

Even though research on religion and terrorism existed prior to 9/11, the field of terrorism studies experienced a very distinct momentum in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in which critical and cautionary voices were lost (Tellidis, 2016). Albeit various studies showing the inconsistencies and errors of establishing a causal link between terrorism and religion (Cavanaugh, 2009; Gunning & Jackson, 2011; Pape, 2005; Wilkinson, 2001), 'extreme Islamist organizations dominate research attention, with almost 60 percent of articles devoted to such groups' (Silke, 2007: 85). Similarly, the assumption that an extreme version of Islam has been and still is the primary driving force behind terrorism has manifested itself within policy circles (Mills & Miller, 2017: 47).

Before presenting the dominant approaches in the debate on the relationship between religion, violence and terrorism, the next two subsections give the ontological background to the concepts of terrorism and religion. The concept of violence will be examined at a later stage in the literature review.

Conceptualizing Terrorism

The concept of terrorism emerged in the 1970s (Stampnitzky, 2013), a development that will be further examined at a later stage in this research. Until now, it has emerged as a very popular term, which is often accompanied by a rather negative connotation and notions of Islamist terrorism. The question "What is terrorism?" is therefore a very important and legitimate one (Pisoui & Hain, 2018). The answer to this question, however, is highly problematic, since there is no universally accepted and applied definition of the term, and many scholars agree that such an agreement is unlikely to occur in the future (Silke, 2009: 36). A study carried out by Simon in 1994 came up with 212 different definitions of terrorism, 90 of which were being used by governments at that time (Matusitz, 2013).

It is thus evident, that it is not possible to speak of a universally accepted definition of terrorism. Paul Wilkinson (2011: 4), however, established 5 key characteristics, which are arguably mostly universally agreed upon:

1. It is predetermined and designed to create a climate of extreme fear;
2. It is directed at a wider target than the immediate victims;
3. It inherently involves attacks on random or symbolic targets, including civilians;
4. It is considered by the society in which it occurs as 'extra-normal', that is in the literal sense that it violates the norms regulating disputes, protests and dissent; and
5. It is used primarily, though not exclusively, to influence the political behavior of governments, communities or special social groups.

Evidently, the absence of a coherent and universally accepted definition presents a set of problems. Politicians and mass media often use the term as a synonym for all types of political violence, while other parties are aiming at banning the term as a whole (Wilkinson, 2011: 4). Also, many definitions and their practical applications are criticized for overemphasizing acts by non-government organizations over so-called state-terrorism (Blakeley, 2009, 2017; Blakeley & Raphael, 2016; Mills & Miller, 2017; Pisoui & Hain, 2018; Raphael & Blakeley, 2016), which will be elaborated upon in more detail later. More generally, Lisa Stampnitzky (2013: 3) shows in her analysis of the emergence of the concept, that acts we now define as terrorists acts, were 'generally perceived the work of rational, sometimes even honorable, actors' before the 1970s' (Stampnitzky, 2017) . Similarly, albeit the fact that other forms of terrorism have not died out, Hain and Pisoui claim that 'it is religious terrorism that occupies the frontlines' (Pisoui & Hain, 2018). This, however, opens up an entirely different and highly significant debate on whether or not there is such a thing as 'religious terrorism' or 'religious violence'.

Conceptualizing Religion

The conceptualization of religion is equally problematic and elusive as that of terrorism. William Cavanaugh is arguably one of the most avowed, and at the same time most critical scholars with regard to the debate on religion and violence. One of his main criticisms is that the complexity of the definition of religion is often ignored, and replaced by the conviction that everybody knows what religion is, or quoting Jonathan Z. Smith: 'we all know it when we see it' (Cavanaugh, 2009: 58).

As in the case of terrorism, there are innumerable definitions of the term 'religion'. In his research on definitions of religion, Steve Bruce found that

> [O]ur problem is not the definition of religion: it is the operationalizing, identification and measurement of features of religion and of all the other social phenomena which we wish to deploy in our explanations (Bruce, 2011: 118).

Kocku von Stuckrad (2010) derived at a similar conclusion when examining the limits of reflection, arguing that the academic study of religion should rather focus on analyzing, demarcating and describing the fields of discourse than continuously debating about and searching for a better definition of religion. His work is an invitation to the discursive study of religion, since it is evident that independent of the level of reflection and critique on a definition, 'there will be another perspective on exactly this reflection and critique that will put

it into context and thus questions its alleged power of conviction' (von Stuckrad, 2010: 158). Therefore, scholars of religion should devote themselves to intelligently contributing to current conversations and debates, offering well-argued analysis of recent and past events in view of present-day issues (von Stuckrad, 2010: 158).

Hence, there is a foundation to argue that the discussion should be less about the exact definition of what religion actually is, and more about how these definitions are used to make sense of the world and justify actions. Using William Cavanaugh's terminology, this research focuses on the functionalist, rather than the substantivist approach to definitions (Cavanaugh, 2009: 57). The danger then is, that religion, 'comes to cover virtually anything humans do that gives their lives order and meaning' (Cavanaugh, 2009: 50). This is not unproblematic of course, but it dissolves the frequently used analytical distinction between the secular and the religious. Furthermore, it allows to move away assumption that "religious ideologies" are more irrational, absolutist and decisive than secular ones. This is particularly important in the light of discussions about 'religious violence' and 'religious terrorism'. These terms have become part of our everyday language and are too often being used without problematizing and critically examining their actual meaning and consequences.

"Religious Violence" & "Religious Terrorism"

As a disclaimer, there is no simple answer to the question of whether religion is the victim or the problem of violence. What is certain and will be shown in more detail in this research, however, is that this knowledge has not prevented academics, public officials and media commentators from making and reinforcing their generalizations about this particular relationship. The assumptions, upon which their generalizations are based, are the foundations of contemporary news reports, policy choices and academic theories on the topic (Juergensmeyer, 2017: 11).

This is not to indicate that their positions are not opposed. Juergensmeyer (2017) identifies three main positions:

1. Religion *does* cause violence (Juergensmeyer, 2017: 12).
2. Religion *does not* cause violence; it is either
    a. an innocent victim, or
    b. irrelevant (Juergensmeyer, 2017: 14).

3. Religion is *not* the problem, but it is *problematic* (Juergensmeyer, 2003, 2008, 2017: 17).

Lorne Dawson's work on discounting religion in the explanation of home-grown terrorism can be added as a fourth position. He argues that:

4. Religion *does not* cause violence, 'but we need to acknowledge that many terrorists think it is primary, so *in effect it is*' (Dawson, 2017: 43). This also refers to the argument that religion is being institutionalized (Strozier, Terman, & Jones, 2010).

Since the last position can be seen as a relatively clear statement, only the first three positions are used as subheadings to structure the debate.

"Religion does cause violence"

In order to answer the question whether religion is inherently violent or not, Hector Avalos compared violence in religious and nonreligious contexts, establishing a new theory regarding religion's role in violent conflicts. After analysing the fundamental texts of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, he identified four scarce resources that are highly prone to creating religious violence: (1) *sacred space*, for instance the shared notion of Jerusalem as such by Judaism, Christianity and Islam, (2) *the creation of holy scriptures*, and the conviction that this particular scripture is privileged over other revelations (3) *group privilege*, which is connected with the idea of the chosen people and consequently strengthening practices of 'othering', and (4) *salvation*, a concept that accepts some and refuses others. Arguing that these resources are actually neither scarce, nor need to be scarce, Avalos claims that religious violence is unnecessary (Avalos, 2005).

The scholar's theory is regarded as highly controversial particularly due to the growing agreement within the academic community that conflicts that are currently perceived as religious ones, are rarely only about religion per se (Juergensmeyer, 2017). With regard to, but not limited to the phenomenon of terrorism, political grievances and psychological processes play a significant role as well. Even though there is some truth to Avalos' theory, it is too simplistic and reductionist with regard to the causes of terrorism. It amongst others does not take into account that humans are the subjects of study, who this research regards as hardly able to distinguish their religious views from other grievances and outside influences. This will be elaborated on more closely in later parts in the discussion on the causes of terrorism.

"Religion does not cause violence"

The arguments that presumably religious conflicts are seldom about religion per se and that religion can hardly be defined as something *sui generis* (Cavanaugh, 2009: 39; McCutcheon, 1997) is one of the main building blocks of the advocates that religion does not cause violence. As mentioned earlier, William T. Cavanaugh is arguably the most avowed scholar in this regard. His main criticism of scholars supporting the notion that religion is particularly prone to violence is that these arguments lack empirical evidence and only serve as an 'ideological justification for the dominance of secular social orders that can and do inspire violence' (Cavanaugh, 2017: 30). This "myth of religious violence" precipitates us to neglect the origins of non-Western violence against the West and simultaneously, in the case of Islam, reducing the sources of Muslim anger directed at the West to 'religion'. He does not neglect the fact that people do kill in the name of God but instead, he emphasizes the importance of other reasons. The idea that religion causes violence, according to Cavanaugh, rests exclusively on the religious/secular distinction that is dominating the discourse. The 'religious' in this line of argumentation is thereby defined in terms of the 'world religions', while the 'secular' incorporates all nonreligious categories of human life, including economics, politics and practices and ideologies such as capitalism, Marxism and nationalism (Cavanaugh, 2017).

Cavanaugh's line of argumentation is taken up by a variety of recent publications in the field. In his analysis of the role of religion in al-Qaeda's violence, Pieter Nanninga stresses that it is impossible to separate 'religious' from 'nonreligous' or secular' factors, given that they are strongly intertwined (Nanninga, 2017b: 162). While both Cavanaugh and Nanninga rather fit Juergensmeyer's categorization of defining religion as an innocent victim, Robert Pape's analysis of 315 suicide attacks conducted between 1980 and 2003 can be identified as an advocacy of the argument that religion is an irrelevant factor in this regard (Pape, 2005). Pape showed that the majority of attacks were conducted by secular ethnic movements and that there is 'little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, or any one of the world's religions (Pape, 2005: 4). While this research is more hesitant to draw the conclusion that religion indeed is an irrelevant factor, it is important to keep his findings in mind. Like many authors in the field, this research agrees that religion is not the dependent variable, but nevertheless regards it at least as problematic.

"Religion does not cause violence, but it is problematic"

In his book 'The Myth of Religious Violence, Cavanaugh (2009: 17) examines three overlapping types of arguments concerning this relationship. He states that most authors are likely to use at least one of the following three arguments to support that religion causes violence, arguing that religion is either

a) Absolutist (Hick, 1987; Kimball, 2002; Wentz, 1993),
b) Divisive (Juergensmeyer, 2003, 2008, 2017; Marty & Moore, 2000; Rapoport, 1991), or
c) Insufficiently rational (Appleby, 2000; Parekh, 1999; Selengut, 2017).

Considering the scope and focus of this research, it is not possible to discuss all abovementioned positions in detail. The focal point therefore will be on the contributions that are most valuable for the purpose of this particular project, namely Scott Appleby, Mark Juergensmeyer and more recently, Peter Neumann.

Scott Appleby arguably made one of the most critically aware contributions based on the nonrational features of religion (Cavanaugh, 2009: 44). Drawing upon the Ambivalence of the Sacred, Appleby established the metaphor of the two faces of religion: (1) religion has the 'ability to sustain cycles of violence beyond the point of rational calculation and enlightened self-interest' (Appleby, 2000: 4), as well as (2) the ability to contribute to peace by inspiring believers with 'sacred rage against racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination' (Appleby, 2000: 6). Religion can thus be both, a powerful medicine and a driving passion of violence.

Mark Juergensmeyer is another key figure and one of the leading scholars in terms of the thesis that religion is problematic but does not cause violence. He stresses that the conditions leading to tensions and conflicts are usually either economic or social in nature, and agrees with Pape's argumentation about the fight for freedom against perceived control by an outside power (Juergensmeyer, 2003, 2008, 2017). He further highlights the importance of religious ideas and language, which despite not playing the initial role, can emerge as a problematic one. In many cases, the political contest becomes religionized, creating a new set of problems since religion emerges as the ideology of protest against the secular global systems and their secular nation-state advocates. This often results to the notion of a 'cosmic war', a larger than life and divine struggle that makes religious violence exceptionally relentless and savage (Juergensmeyer, 2017). His work 'Terror in the Mind of God' (Juergensmeyer, 2003) is regarded as the core

text for the advocates of the 'new terrorism hypothesis'[3] (Mills & Miller, 2017), which will be critically examined later on. Juergensmeyer's work does not remain without criticism though. The most famous criticism is arguably by Cavanaugh who amongst others stresses the lack of a clear definition of what religion is – a phenomenon present in the majority of texts on this subject – and Juergensmeyer's treatment of the religious and secular, and the religious and political as mutually opposed binaries (Cavanaugh, 2009).

Juergensmeyer is a key influencer of Peter Neumann's work (Neumann, 2008a, 2016). The director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence might be a late proponent of the 'new terrorism thesis', but that does not have any impact on the value of his research on radicalization in Europe. Both scholars agree that religion is not a cause of terrorism, but it is problematic as a medium of grievances, 'since it exacerbates conflict through its abiding absolutism, its justification for violence, and its ultimate images of warfare that demonize opponents and cast the conflict in transhistorical terms' (Mills & Miller, 2017: 55). While both Neumann and Juergensmeyer are two of the scholars dedicated to introducing and advancing a sociological rigor to the dominant 'new terrorism thesis,' they are criticized for still falling short with regard to the causes of terrorism (Mills & Miller, 2017: 56).

The Causes of Terrorism

The lack of accurately identifying the causes of terrorism is a problem with terrorism studies more generally (Mills & Miller, 2017). According to Peter Neumann, it was extremely difficult to discuss the 'roots of terrorism' after the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Neumann, 2008b). Until today, neither a universal formula, nor a scholarly consensus on a number or combination of factors, has been discovered (Vike-Freiberga & Neumann, 2015). According to Tom Mills and David Miller (2017: 56), this has resulted in the loss of

> 'a rational analysis of the forms of political violence conventionally labelled 'terrorism' and their underlying causes. […] [I]n focusing on particular actors, and the cultures of violence they propagate, they [terrorism experts] simply describe in detail precisely what needs to be explained'.

Already in his 1990 piece in *The Atlantic*, Bernard Lewis named the 'policies and actions, pursued and taken by individual Western governments, that have aroused the passionate anger of Middle Eastern and other Islamic peoples'(Lewis, 1990) as one of the root causes. As

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[3] "According to this conceptualization, the "new terrorism" is characterized by religious motivation, networked organizational structures, tendency to launch mass casualty attacks and possible use of weapons of mass destruction" (Kurtulus, 2011: 476)

indicated earlier, 'terrorism' has emerged to be understood in terms of violence of non-state actors, largely towards the West[4]. Particularly this isolated focus on non-state actors, however, is being increasingly criticized in recent years. As Mills and Miller argue, the underlying cause of terrorism, if one can speak of the existence of such, 'is most likely found in war and political repression' (Mills & Miller, 2017: 58). Their argument is strengthened by the findings of the 2015 Global Terrorism Index, which found strong correlations between terrorism and ongoing-armed conflict, political terror (state violence) and hostilities between groups, including religious ones. The report, however, did not find any correlations between terrorism and either religious prevalence or the ratio of Muslims in a population ("Global Terrorism Index," 2015: 5; Mills & Miller, 2017: 58).

Despite the gained knowledge that 'instability, ethnic and religious division, violence and repression' (Vike-Freiberga & Neumann, 2015) are clearly established causes of terrorism, most counter-terrorism policies are largely still very authoritarian and not intended at reducing both repression and violent conflict (Mills & Miller, 2017: 59). Moreover, the dominant focus in terrorism studies, as well as of public attention, is still on Muslims and Islamic culture. Policymakers, media and academics often use terms like 'Islamist', 'Islamic terrorism' interchangeably with 'jihadist', 'wahabi', 'fundamentalist terrorism' and 'salafist', resulting in the representation and idea of the Islamic culture and Muslim world as a homogenous and monolithic entity (Tellidis, 2016).

Islamophobia

This arguably uncritical adoption of terminology is counterproductive and leads to misconceptions of the issue at hand, contributing to a 'cultural gap' (Jackson, 2007: 359) between ethno-religious communities, and simultaneously reinforcing the correlation between radicalization and Islamophobia (Abbas, 2012; Massoumi, Mills, & Miller, 2017).

Even though the term Islamophobia itself might still be contested (Massoumi et al., 2017), there is little disagreement about the existence of 'post 9/11 discrimination and overall suspicion against people of particular appearance or (presumed) identity by security agencies and the general public alike' (Mills & Miller, 2017; Tellidis, 2016). The term islamophobia is often objected to, based on the assertion that Muslims do not constitute a race. Considering, however, that all races can be regarded both socially and politically constructed, 'it is perfectly

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[4] The term 'the West' in the context of this thesis refers to the countries in Western Europe and North America.

possible for cultural markers associated with Muslimness (forms of dress, rituals, languages, etc.) to be turned into "racial signifiers"' (Kundnani, 2014). Hence, there is a foundation to argue that stigmatization and other related phenomena lead to islamophobia.

Recently, the claim that counterterrorism policies particularly in North America and Europe target Muslims disproportionately, contributing to increased hostility and suspicion towards Muslims, has gained more attention. Consequently, Muslims are more prone to be victims of unlawful detention, miscarriages of justice, as well as state and racist violence. This tendency forms an unwarranted and direct threat to their human and civil liberties and rights (Mills & Miller, 2017). Also, recent tendencies have shown a significant increase in right-wing extremism, while the West is still fighting the 'War on Terror' abroad. Talal Asad's observation puts this discussion in an interesting light:

> People at all times have […] justified the killing of so-called enemies and other they deem not deserving to live. The only difference is that today liberals who engage in this justification think they are different because morally advanced. That very thought has social implications, and it is therefore that thought makes a real difference' (Asad, 2007).

Particularly when considering the social implications and the issue of state terrorism or state violence, it is important to realize that violence can go beyond its purely physical form.

Violence

When discussing different forms of violence, both Johan Galtung's and Slavoj Zizek's notions have to be taken into consideration. In short, both reject a narrow definition of direct violence, arguing that it can be both physical and psychological. According to Galtung, 'violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations' (Galtung, 1969: 168), defining it as the difference between the actual and the potential. Central to his model is the distinction between personal and structural violence. Contrary to *personal* or direct violence, *structural* or indirect violence is not carried out by individuals but hidden to different extents in structures that prevent individuals from achieving their full potential. Galtung highlights the importance that there 'is no reason to assume that structural violence amounts to less suffering than personal

violence' (Galtung, 1969: 173). This distinction was reaffirmed by Zizek (2009) forty years later.[5]

Applying a broader definition of violence is crucial in many aspects, amongst others when attempting to examine the causes of terrorism. Taking the case of the 2015 Paris attacks, for instance, it becomes evident that 'understanding the acts and biographies of the Kouchi brothers and Coulibaly through the lens of the discourse of religious violence, neutralizes the French nation-state's potential culpability in the acts' (Nilsson, 2017: 195).

Despite the fact that CTS has made considerable and important contributions to the field of terrorism studies, it has been shown this development is far from reaching its full potential, particularly with regard to religion and religious violence. The apparent disconnect between the academia, the media and the counter-terrorist intelligence community's knowledge is one of the central obstacles in this regard (Bakker, 2015; emphasis on media added). In the two years after the attacks of September 11, 2001 for instance, the media's portrayal and coverage of Muslims has grown significantly more negative (Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007), a tendency that may affect public attitudes in the long run.

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[5] He distinguishes between (1) *subjective violence*, which concerns direct physical violence, such as terrorism, mass murder and conspicuous racist acts, and (2) *objective violence*, which is often neutralized, hidden and more broadly characterized as the 'inherent' violence to the normal order, e.g. social inequalities, racist discrimination, economic exploitation. He further distinguishes between (a) symbolical/meaning making, and (b) systemic/structural violence (Žižek, 2009).

2. THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The literature review has highlighted a variety of ways in which terrorism studies and counter-terrorism policies are flawed, particularly with regard to definitions, categories, assumptions, labels, media biases and values, which in turn significantly influence both individual perceptions and policy making. The question arises, how these flaws emerged and why they seem to be so difficult to engage in critical discussions about them. CTS has been engaged in such attempts for more than a decade, but the flaws, despite some improvements, remain persistent. This chapter presents the research's research paradigm, including its ontology, epistemology, theoretical framework, hypotheses and methodology. It takes a critical approach to reality, arguing that reality is socially constructed and that it is crucial to become more aware of the constant influence all entities are under.

2.1 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework to the phenomenon of framing, combines insights from (1) behaviourism, (2) René Girard's theory of generative scapegoating, (3) cognitive psychology, more precisely Bandura's theory of moral disengagement, (4) the framing theory established by Chong and Druckman and (5) a insights into the relationship between knowledge and power, referring to the work of Harold Bloom, Michel Foucault, Edward W. Said and Hamid Dabashi.

Following Felix Berenskoetter (2016: 4), *Frames* are specified in terms of a formulate: They are a construct or construction of something. In this research, frames are the dominant and frequently taken for granted concepts used in the academic and public discourse on terrorism and religion, particularly Islam. Consequently, *framing* is defined as comprising or constituting a collection of concepts that influence the worldview of individuals and societies at a larger scale. *Concepts,* in turn, are images created by our minds in order to generate knowledge about the reality. They are abstract heuristic tools facilitating the human minds task of generating knowledge about the world and reality.

2.1.1 BEHAVIOURISM

In recent years, behaviourism has played an increasingly important role in the development of a new model of human decision-making in the social sciences (Kelly, 2012: 7). This approach is rooted in the work of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, who demonstrated in their 1970s

research that human decisions do not always comply with the assumptions of rational choice theory. They showed that human decisions are rather dependent on heuristics: simple but efficient rules and mental shortcuts that have the tendency to focus on only one particular aspect of a complex problem (Kelly, 2012: 8).

The on-going globalization of the world is accompanied by a rising tendency to rely on heuristics. It can be regarded as a coping mechanism to facilitate dealing with uncertainties. "Thick globalization", the period after the Second World War, the Great Depression and the 1960s more generally, has contributed to the shrinking of the world to a global village. Technological innovations and the increasing pace of life have expanded our possibilities (Stausberg, 2016), but simultaneously strengthened anxieties and insecurities (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2012: 22). We are part of a world 'filled with tensions, oppositions, clashes, prejudices, and misunderstandings between people of different cultural backgrounds, who never in history have been so interconnected with each other as in the present era'(Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2012: 21). This has led to increasing complexities, which in turn lead to people relying on heuristics even more (Tversky & Kahneman, 1985). Hence, there is a persistent need for a critical examination of our everyday taken-for-granted categories and frames through which we see the world and act within it.

2.1.2 GENERATIVE SCAPEGOATING

René Girard's theory of archaic religion and violence finds its origins in the 1960s and has developed ever since. Girard began by developing a "mimetic theory", based on the mimetic desire, which he stresses, is inevitable in group dynamics (Girard, 2011). Accordingly, human beings are fundamentally directed and guided by their "mimetic desires", which are not biologically given but shaped through imitation (Dahl, 2017). Girard argues that

> [w]ithout a social diversion, mimetic desire ends in violence because models react against the desires of the disciples, who react in turn to the models. The cycle of reactions explodes into reciprocal violence. By themselves, humans have no internal braking mechanisms against reciprocal violence. […] Hence, reciprocal violence leads to cycles of revenge and ultimately to social chaos (Girard, 2011: 128).

This is where the scapegoat comes into play. In the interest of avoiding social chaos and violence, the mimetic rivals tend to redirect their enmity towards a third party – the scapegoat. The aim of this practice is to redirect the violence that would most likely be directed at the societies' own members, towards a relatively indifferent and "sacrificeable" victim (Girard,

2011: 130). Scapegoats are usually picked form the margins of societies and can be a variety of things, ranging from animals to individuals, institutions, political parties, religions, and races (Dahl, 2017: 89). Often, spilling the blood of the killer is perceived as the only satisfactory revenge for spilt blood (Girard, 2011: 136).

Girard explains the current violent events taking place as 'mimetic rivalry on the global scale' (Girard, Tincq, & Hilde, 2002: 22). The "war on terror" is an example, considering that the United States responded to the attacks of September 11, 2001 by imitating the attackers (Girard in Dahl, 2017: 93). He expresses the need to 'undertake historical studies, both longitudinal and at different levels, of the conditions for the trend to extremes' (Girard, 2010: 41). Following Karen Armstrong's argument that 'modern society has made a scapegoat of faith' (Armstrong, 2014: 1), this reserach adds that, particularly in the context of terrorism, Islam and Muslims are the primary subject to scapegoating. It is, however, not the only phenomenon taking place.

2.1.3 THEORY OF MORAL DISENGAGEMENT

Girard's theory of scapegoating provides important insights into the extreme measures often taken to counter-terrorism, as well as reasons why Islam and Muslims might often be in the centre of attention in debates on terrorism. The question remains how such a generalization and neutralization are possible on such a large scale. Applying concepts of social cognitive psychology, Albert Bandura's 1998 theory of moral disengagement gives the needed insights.

Usually, human conduct and behaviour is regulated by self-sanctions or moral standards, which are developed through socialization processes. A different kind of socialization, the so-called "intensive psychological training in moral disengagement", however, can result in the adoption of these neutralizing mechanisms. The two central mechanisms, which are applicable to both state and non-state actors, are:

1. *Moral justification*. It refers to a process or phenomenon where "people see themselves as fighting ruthless oppressors who have an unquenchable appetite for conquest, protecting their cherished values and way of life, presenting world peace, saving humanity from subjugation to an evil ideology, and honouring their country's international commitments" (Baduras in Pisoui & Hain, 2018: 15).

2. *Dehumanization*. Besides the first process of leaning to see the enemy as the fundamentally different, often evil oppressor, there is also a need for 'dehumanization' of the other. 'As non-humans, victims are not perceived as persons with feelings, hopes

and concerns', but rather as 'mindless savages, gooks, satanic friends and the like' (Baduras in Pisoui & Hain, 2018: 15).

Richard Jackson (2005) emphasized the impact of the phenomena linked to the abovementioned processes as well:

> The truth is, once a group has been reduced to being an evil 'spawn', 'animals', 'parasites', 'a cancer' on the human condition, 'a scourge on the world' and 'a curse' on the face of the earth – once they have become faces, both figuratively and literally – it is relatively easy to treat them in an unconscionable manner and without any regard for their human rights (Jackson, 2005: 75).

With specific regard to counter-terrorism, he concludes that

> [i]n short, destroying the face of the terrorist, removing all traces of their personality or humanity and depoliticizing their aims and goals was essential to constructing the massive counter-violence of the 'war on terrorism' (Jackson, 2005: 75).

2.1.4 FRAMING THEORY

The question remains how concepts, frames and, using Girard's language, scapegoats emerge and become manifested in discourse, and how certain moral justifications and processes of dehumanization become almost universal. According to Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007), public opinion often significantly depends on the ways in which elites choose to frame issues. They established a framing theory, identifying the psychological process and contextual factors required for frames to have significant impact on public opinion. The emphasis on competitive frames marked a unique contribution to the field, since it provides a solution to the general problem associated with framing, namely that 'it can't account for why one frame succeeds while others fail' (Stampnitzky, 2017: 6). In short, it is possible to distinguish between two kinds of frames (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 100-101):

1. *Frames in communication* or *media frames* refer to words, phrases, images and presentation styles used by media outlets or politicians when referring to an issue in front of an audience. They reveal the elements about the topic considered relevant by the speaker.
2. *Frames in thought* or *individual frames* refer to (a) an individual's cognitive understanding of the issue, and (b) the aspect of the issue believed to be most noticeable or important by a member of the audience.

Chong and Druckman (2007: 100-102) identify four stages through which the former frame can influence the latter:

1. *Frame building* is directed at the speakers' dynamics and specific choice of frames in communication.
2. *Frame setting* focuses on the impact of *frames in communication* on *frames in thought*, including the psychological processes at work.
3. *Individual-level effects of frames* are concerned with the influence of *frames in thought* on future behaviour and attitudes.
4. *Journalists as audience* investigates how citizen's actions effect the primary frame-building process.

Individuals are faced with a variety of frames in differing frequency on a daily basis. Sniderman and Theriault (2004) established that individuals have a strong tendency of adhering to the frames most consistent with their personal values. Chong and Druckman built on this research, adding that if in a competitive environment either of the competing sides has established the relevant terms central to a particular debate, this side will be most influential in convincing individuals of its position (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 102). Consequently, the competing parties' ability to equally influence the frames in debate has to be considered as well. In case of an unequal relationship, one competing dominates and cancels out the other and thereby prevents public opinion to develop further (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 102). This phenomenon makes it crucial to distinguish between varying strength and quantities of frames:

1. *Noncompetitive, asymmetric* or *one-sided frames* refer to a situation where the individual is only presented with one frame and therefore receives only one perspective on the controversy. This can occur once or more times.
2. *Competitive frames* are either (a) *dual* or *symmetric*, ensuring an equal influence of all competing parties' frames in equal quantities, or (b) *asymmetric* or *two-sided*, meaning that the individual is presented with the competing frames in unequal quantities.

In this context, the *strength* of a frame is significant as well. Naturally, strong frames are more compelling than weak ones. According to Chong and Druckman (2007), strong frames are often related to basic human needs, such as public safety and their strength is increased when it originates or is confirmed by a credible source and does not the individual's priory (strongly) held beliefs.

Subsequently, it is important to consider power relationships, particularly the relationship between knowledge and power. An interview conducted by Diacritics with Edward W. Said (Said, 2001) provides more insight and an interesting starting point in this matter. As part of his philosophical criticism, Harold Bloom came to the conclusion that human activity is always dependent on power relationships. 'One doesn't just write: one writes against, or in opposition to, or in some dialectical relationship with other writers and writing, or other activity, or other objects' (Said, 2001: 13). In 1991, Michel Foucault took this argument further by stating that, especially in the policy field and the production of knowledge *for* policy, the process of producing knowledge never is a neutral one. (Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, & Breen Smyth, 2011: 11) Foucault states that domination can be hidden systematically and quietly because discourse appears to be systematic and inevitable. In short, it is impossible for writing to exist materially without a network of actors that shape, limit, arrange, select, and maintain it (Said, 2001: 13).

Considering that the study of terrorism has emerged in the context and service of Western states, it is likely that it is at least partly rooted upon Orientalist assumptions. According to Edward W. Said (2003),

> Orientalism is […]a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness […] but also of a whole series of "interests" which […]it not only creates but also maintains; it *is* […] a certain *will* or *intention* to understand […]; it is above all, a discourse that […] is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power (Said, 2003: 12).

Orientalism, is thus a considerable dimension of modern intellectual and political culture and has more to do with "our" world than the Orient itself. Following Boom and Foucault, Said agrees that nothing ever is without outside influence. Despite the growing emphasis and attempts to raise awareness of it, the influence of such critical views seems to diminish, allowing for reductive polarizations such as "Islam versus the West" to spread. (Said, 2003, p. xvii)

In his work on "Post-Orientalism", Hamad Dabashi (2015) further developed Said's insights. Even though many of Said's insights are still highly relevant today, Dabashi argues that they need to be updated in light of the events post-9/11 (Dabashi, 2015: xvii). Considering that Said's work originated in the 1970s, Dabashi stresses the need to examine how and by which means "the Orient" 'continues to be represented and sought to be dominated, but, more to the point how (in what particular terms) a resistance to that will to dominate is possible' (Dabashi,

2015: xviii). Focusing on the will to resist power and the critical question of agency (Dabashi, 2015: xviii), he goes beyond the Saidian approach to critique the colonial representations and stresses the modes and manners of resisting and fighting it. He highlights the importance of the possibility of the production of counter-knowledge, emphasizing that the will to resist power must match the will to represent and dominate (Dabashi, 2015: xix). His objective is to highlight the production of knowledge about Islam and "the middle East" as a case of *epistemic endosmosis* - 'interested knowledge manufactured in think tanks and percolating into the public domain' (Dabashi, 2015: 213), and the most recent production of knowledge in this context (Dabashi, 2015: 223).

Arguing for historical genealogies and epistemic analysis (Dabashi, 2015: 212), Dabashi criticizes the means of *disposable knowledge production* (Dabashi, 2015: 213) connected to the former since it is 'predicated on no enduring or legitimate epistêmê, but in fact modelled on non-refundable commodities that provide instant gratification and are then disposed of after one use only' (Dabashi, 2015: 213). Moreover, he argues that we have reached a point where we are on a haymarket where authors who are authorities on none of the issues at stake and enjoy a limited education in that regard, and media outlets competing for the audience's attention, produce widely disseminated and accepted knowledge (Dabashi, 2015: 276). He concludes that we have entered a new epistemic in the post-9/11 production of knowledge about "The Middle East" and Islam. Therefore, in order to understand and ascertain the particulars, as well as allow for the counter-epistemic to enter, it is crucial to start by accepting and examining the social construction of reality (Dabashi, 2015: 220).

2.1.6 THE COMBINED THEORETICAL APPROACH

The combination of the abovementioned theoretical components, allows for a complex theoretical framework that takes different components into account. In a world where people tend to rely on heuristics, it is crucial to critically examine the frames and concepts that are used to make sense current affairs. It is equally important to be aware of the relationship between power and knowledge, since no knowledge or activity is neutral and independent. It is always dependent upon outside influence.

Since we are not living in a world with symmetrical and universal views, there is usually more than one frame competing for dominance. This research is based on the hypothesis that if all frames were to have equal access to the debating table, levels of misconceptions and

misinformation would presumably be relatively low. In most cases, including debates on political violence, terrorism and religion, there is usually one frame that is significantly stronger than its competing ones. These views are often influenced by Orientalist differentiations between "us" and "them", allowing for increasingly reductive polarizations such as "Islam versus the West". Furthermore, knowledge is often is produced by people with limited education in the field. This combination, in turn, gives significance to the Girard's scapegoat theory. It seems that the West has turned faith into a scapegoat, accompanied by the taken for granted assumption that religion is inherently violent. This simplification leads to a tendency to ignore the fact that people commit violence for reasons other than religion. Misconceptions like this have significant consequences when trying to counter and prevent political violence and more precisely terrorism.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

Following ontological, epistemological and ethical-normative considerations laid out in the theoretical framework, this research aims to prove that terrorism is not a brute fact that can be studied as an isolated phenomenon, but rather a social construction. Since it does not possess objective characteristics, it is dependent upon outside interpretation and judgements of acts of violence, their contexts and circumstances (Jackson et al., 2011: 35; Schmid & Jongman, 2017: 101). The goal is to stress the flaws of using the reductionist terrorism frame on an individual or a group, since it limits the abilities of understanding their behaviour and potentially has harmful effects for society at large (Jackson et al., 2011: 36) and to examine the consequences thereof. Considering the current emphasis on and development of policies on countering violent extremism, these policies are a suitable and highly relevant point of focus. The research is based on the conviction that knowledge is a social process, which can never be neutral or objective, and more broadly to linkages between power and knowledge.

Using insights from both Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS), Religious Studies and Critical Security Studies (CSS), this research argues for a shift of focus from state-centrism and state security to the situation, well-being and freedom of human individuals. Stressing the importance of acknowledging the different forms of violence, particularly structural violence, (Galtung, 1969; van der Linden, 2012; Žižek, 2009), and related scholarship on conflict transformation (Lederach, 2014) , it advocates a prioritization of human over national security – a commitment also referred to as emancipation or emancipatory praxis (Jackson et al., 2011: 41, 43).

The underlying objective is finding an answer to the main research question: "*What are the implications of framing terrorism as religious violence for counter-terrorism and conflict transformation?*" Considering that counter-terrorism is a very broad field, this research will focus on policies CVE/PVE policies. While it is without any doubt crucial to examine implemented counterterrorism policies, and in this case CVE/PVE policies, and their effects in more detail, it is at least equally important to take a step back and first focus on the underlying regimes of truth that inspire and justify these policies.

The question how the term "terrorism" became manifested in public consciousness and emerged as such a powerful discourse, is still in need of further exploration (Jackson et al., 2011: 43). So far, social sciences 'have failed to initiate a historically contextualized, global […] and nuanced discussion on the phenomena at hand (Mohamedou, 2018: Introduction). This even more the case with regard to the role of religion and the notion of religious violence. Moreover, understanding the social construction of 'terrorism' can provide crucial insights into how the war and terror and counterterrorism have been and continuously are practiced, legitimized and devised (Jackson, 2016a: 79). In recent years, scholars have begun making a strong case that 'terrorism' is more than acts of political violence. Many argue for a broadening of the definition and a realization of the underlying metaphors, labels, assumptions, narratives and discursive formations (Jackson, 2016a: 79; Jackson et al., 2011). More specifically with regard to, but not limited to the role of religion, there are a number of myths that collectively dominate the discourse, resulting in a regime of truth in the West. Consequently, the following three sub-questions will guide the research:

1. *What are the origins of orthodox terrorism studies and the narrative on the relationship between terrorism and religion?*
2. *How did this particular knowledge become 'common sense' and what is needed to transform it*?
3. *How is religion framed in counterterrorism approaches?*
4. *What are the consequences for counter-terrorism as conflict transformation?*

The overall goal of this research is not to demonize or blame any side or particular actor. It is rather to highlight the interplay of events, knowledge and power relations that, in its combination, led to the problematic construction and framing of terrorism, as well as political violence.

2.2.1 THE PARADIGM BEHIND: ORTHODOX/ TRADITIONAL TERRORISM STUDIES VS. CTS

This research chooses a middle position on the continuum between the radical positivist and critical stances of terrorism studies, following Pisou's and Hain's argument that taking sides would be very unproductive (Pisoui & Hain, 2018: 21). When differentiating between orthodox or traditional terrorism studies and critical terrorism studies, it is important to realize that the former has not grown out of any particular theoretical tradition of IR, but rather evolved into one of the discipline's sub-fields. Hence, considering that the field of terrorism studies combines insights from various social sciences, and despite the fact that it shares many of the paradigm's characteristics, it cannot be seen as simply positivist prior to the "critical turn" (Pisoui & Hain, 2018: 20). Moreover, critical terrorism studies are not homogenous either and differ significantly with regard to the ontological role of language. The two scholarships, in fact, even show a certain degree of overlap regarding their ontological assumptions. A comparison, however, shows clear differences with regard to the underlying epistemology, where this research leans towards the critical position. In contrast to traditional terrorism scholarship, CTS considers power and context as *a priori* conditions for knowledge and knowing. Moreover, the normative element of emancipation encourages researchers to continuously examine, question and question these contexts (Pisoui & Hain, 2018: 21).

Positioning itself within CTS, this research leans towards the 'minimal foundationlist' position, which 'does not deny the existence [of terrorism] out there, most of the time brute violence, but challenge[s] the specific meaning contained in the concept of terrorism' (Pisoui & Hain, 2018: 20).

2.2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a historical approach in order to examine the frames and concepts related to the discourse on the relationship between terrorism and religion. The focus will hereby lie on the period after 1970, considering that this is the time when scholarship on 'terrorism' emerged. This approach enables the identification of the first two instances in a concept's life: (1) concept invention (emergence), and (2) concept fixation (reification), referring to its emergence as common sense (Berenskoetter, 2016: 9). With regard to the concept of terrorism, this approach enables the research to de-essentialize the term by examining the usage of the term over time (Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 27).

Adopting an interpretative logic, this research uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to outline the constructed knowledge and the underlying assumptions regarding the role of terrorism and religion. Terrorism is embedded in contexts of history, culture and power. It does not simply exist out there. It is dependent upon the interpretation of humans. CDA therefore aims at depicting the social and textual processes present in the discourse on terrorism, religion and religious violence, as well as the occurrence of representations and their consequences (Jackson, 2007 in Pisoui & Hain, 2018: 16). Adapting elements of Jacksons (2005) *steps for the examination of the discourse on Islamic terrorism*, this research applies *second order critique*, going beyond the pure text and, depending on the text, show how the discourse is used to

a) *Structure* the primary subject positions, accepted knowledge, commonsense and legitimate policy responses to the actors and events being described;
b) *Exclude* and *delegitimize* alternative knowledge and practice;
c) *Naturalize* a particular political and social order;
d) Maintain a hegemonic *regime of truth'* (Jackson, 2005:397; emphasis and bulleting added).

This practice is used to examine the following groups of texts (Jackson, 2016a: 82): (1) official speeches, interviews, and documents of senior policy-makers and political leaders, (2) articles, and reports by and interviews with (major) think tanks, public intellectuals, and journalists, and (3) academic books and scholarly articles related to the subject. The latter will be used in particular to answer the first two sub-questions of this research regarding the emergence of the terrorism frame. Considering that extensive and highly valuable research has been done in this regard in the past covering a broad spectrum of sources, it neither necessary nor beneficial to conduct primary research in this regard. The works of Richard Jackson and Lisa Stampnitzky will be of particular relevance in this regard.

More specifically, the analysis is based on self-conducted semi-structured interviews with

1. Geran Kaai, the head of the Unit Strengthened Cooperation of the Directorate Counterterrorism of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security, more precisely the NCTV. This interview was conducted on April 30th, 2018 at the Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations in The Hague. Since recording the interview was not permitted, the information used in this thesis is based on notes taken during the

interview. These notes were sent to Geran Kaai afterwards for a fact check. Moreover, it was agreed that his name is kept between the author of this research and the two assessors. In other contexts, he is to be referred to as a policy official within the NCTV.

2. Otso Iho, a senior analyst for Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre at IHS Markit. The interview was conducted in London and was recorded.

3. Murray Ackman, a senior researcher at the Institute for Economics and Peace in The Hague, and the main author of the Global Terrorism Index 2017 - 'the world's leading think tank dedicated to developing metrics to analyze peace and to quantify its economic value' ("IEP," 2018). The Index is one of the 23 indicators for the Global Peace Index, 'the world's leading measure of global peacefulness'. The interview was conducted in The Hague and was recorded.

Each interviewee was informed about the scope and purpose of this research and given the opportunity to deny the answer of questions if they wish. All transcripts and notes are provided in the Annex, including detailed information of each interview, e.g. the venue and duration. Moreover, the communication log in the Annex shows the lines of communication with all informants.

Furthermore, the analysis includes

4. A conference call with Rukmini Callimachi, a correspondent for the New York Times on Al-Qaeda and Islamic Extremism, 'reporter Andy Mills, who joined her on one trip to Iraq, and Jodi Rudoren, associate managing editor and editorial director of NYT Global'(Callimachi, Mills, & Rudoren, 2018). The conference call was accessible for premium subscribers of the New York Times on April 4th, 2018 and I had the opportunity to ask one of the four questions in the discussion round. A transcript is provided in the Annex. The conference call and questions were related to her current project 'The Caliphate', a new audio series on the Islamic State and the fall of Mosul, based on the leading question "Who are we really fighting in the War on Terror?". It gives insights into primary sources of, and personal conversations with ISIS members and returned foreign fighters. The podcast "The Caliphate" is also subject to this analysis. Initially, the plan was to conduct a semi-structured interview with Callimachi. The New York Times had already given the permission, but due to time constraints, it did not take place in the end.

5. Insights from informal conversations with Dr. Nasharudin Mat Isa, a former member of Parliament of Malaysia and current CEO of the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation. He is currently involved in the development of CVE and PVE policies by both UNESCO and The Commonwealth, deradicalization efforts in Malaysia, and peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka. He has been very helpful in providing insights in current policy developments, as well as providing documents and brochures concerning the current UNESCO and Commonwealth projects on VE. It has been helpful in gaining a better understanding of the status quo and the different dynamics as stake. Unfortunately, due to the scope of this research, the majority could not be incorporated with the exception of one recent publication (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018). His answer to specific TVE related questions and the ongoing projects is provided in the Annex.

6. The media coverage of different terrorism-related events in German, Dutch and UK and US media.

The combination of the above-mentioned sources makes it possible to approach the research topic from different angles. Taking into consideration that one of the contemporary issues is the gap between the academia and policy circles, this triangulation of sources enables the incorporations of insights from all three umbrella groups mentioned before, hence making it possible to contribute to filling this gap. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with stakeholders from different sides of the spectrum, providing insights from academia, policy making, research and think-tanks, as well as journalism. Moreover, by combining the historical development of the concepts and frames of terrorism and religious violence with the focus on most recent events and publications up to, the relevance of the issue at hand is emphasized and the most recent challenges faced with regard to counter-terrorism polices can be presented.

Naturally, this research has its limitations and challenges. The availability of literature is one of them. Considering that the University of Groningen possesses a highly limited collection on Terrorism and particularly Critical Terrorism Studies, and has denied requests to broaden this collection, the vast majority of the literature used for this research is self-purchased. The focus here was on the most recent publications, as well as the key publications in the field. Another challenge are the complex and extensive networks the different actors in the world of expertise on terrorism are part of. As stressed by Mills and Miller (Mills & Miller, 2017: 59) this field of study has been significantly influenced and shaped by the interests of 'certain influential figures and key journals' (Mills & Miller, 2017: 59), a critically aware reading of the literature used for this research was pivotal. Lastly, a variety of books used for this research are eBooks.

Considering that eBooks do not contain fixed page numbers, the references include, if applicable, the respective section where the information is found.

3. THE INVENTION OF "TERRORISM" AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE "RELIGIOUS TERRORISM" FRAME

As stated earlier, in order to be able to examine the framing of terrorism and religious violence, and its impact on counterterrorism and conflict transformation, it is crucial to first provide a brief genealogy of terrorism and terrorism studies, as well as the origins of the popular narrative regarding the tendency of religion, and particularly Islam, to incite violent behavior. Taking a historical, chronological approach, the usage of the word 'terrorism' and the development of the corresponding field of terrorism studies over time is examined. Following Dabashi (2015), the focus will be on events post 9/11. It is, however, crucial to provide a brief overview of the prior development.

This research does not to imply that there is no conviction of other types of terrorism, such as right-wing terrorism taking place. The hypothesis is, however, that these cases receive much less attention by the media and policymakers. This in turn negatively influences the civil liberties of many Muslims and contributes to increasing Islamophobia and increases in right-wing extremism. This chapter provides an insight into how terrorism is socially constructed. According to Stampnitzky (2013: 143)

> it was the combination of incidents, experts, and methods of knowledge that produced the problem of "terrorism" as we now know it. And it was the way in which experts integrated these incidents into evolving threat narratives that led them to have a lasting effect on the evolving understandings of terrorism as a problem.

The following timeline gives an overview of the key events that significantly influenced the production of knowledge on terrorism, religion and religious violence.

Up to the 1970s

| French Revolution & the "Reign of Terror" | World War I
• decline of anarchist violence
• from 'terrorsts' to more postive notion of 'freedom fighter' | (Height of) Cold War |

1970s:

| Orthodox Study of Terrorism as distinct field | Shift of focus from (counter)insurgency to (counter)terrorism | 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre
• change of discourse on terrorism: shocking, irrational violence | War against Soviet Union in Afghanistan (1979)
• term 'jihadi terrorism' first used by Western sources
• transformation of political Islam | Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis (1979)
• birth of term "Islamic fundamentalism" | 'Terrorism Mafia' | 1979 Jerusalem Conference on internatonal terrorism |

1980s

| The First War on Terror / reframing terrorism as war (& "small wars" appraoch to terrorism) | "international terrorism will take the place of human rights" | shift of governance of terrorism from focus on international law and crisis (1970s) to a more overt use of military force | 1981-1986 Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism hearings |

1990s

| "New terrorism" framework:
• irrational, unfathomable, capable of mass emass destruction | End of Cold War, occurence of new terrorist events, fear of WMDs
• "new" discourse and experts | "The Muslims are coming" | 1993 Olso Accords & Hamas changing tactics | Movement within experts on right-wing violence to define groups within the scope of "terrorism studies" |

36

Even though "terrorism", as we understand today, took shape throughout the 1970s, its roots can be traced back to an earlier time. When examining the concept of 'terror' more closely in its usage over time, it appears that it emerged as a political term and eventually became embedded in the vocabulary throughout the 18th century, more precisely the French Revolution. Interestingly, it was then mainly associated with actions of the state – contrary to its prevailing connection with non-state actors nowadays (Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 27).[6]

Throughout the French Revolution, particularly the period of the "Reign of Terror"[7] (1793-94), the meaning changed. In order to manage the chaos, the leaders of the Revolution sought to establish strong institutions, one of them being the Revolutionary Tribunal, characterized by the motto 'let us be terrible so that the people do not have to be' (Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 28). After Robespierre's fall, 'the term received the negative connotation it retains to this day' (Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 30). It became associated with 'propaganda by the deed' and anarchist violence. This period introduced the communication element to terrorism, referring to its use as a sort of last resort means of communicating grievances, after previous attempts have failed.

At the advent of the First World War, the 'freedom fighter' narrative emerged as a positive alternative to the use negative associations with the term terrorism. Political violence presented the Western countries as an increasing challenge in the late 1960, in particular due to the question regarding the characterization of their actions and perpetrators (Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 30). It was around this time, the height of the Cold War, that the study of terrorism emerged as a distinct subject. As part of the broader struggle against decolonization and communism, Western states began referring to their opponents as 'terrorist'. The British forces for instance, referred to the Malayan insurgency as "communist terrorist" (Jackson et al., 2011: 10)

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[6] Following the research of Thorup (2010 in Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 27-8), the notion of terror had four meanings, which partly became politicized during the period of Enlightenment and incorporated into the concept's political understanding during and after the French Revolution: (1) The *terror of helplessness*, (2) The *terror of eternity*, or the *fear of God*, (3) The *terror of arbitrary government*, and (4) The *terror of aesthetic witness*, or the *terror of the sublime*. For more detailed descriptions see (Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 28).

[7] Terror became one of the central elements of the regime and the tribunal was used to eradicate political dissent, as well as at a later stage even execute suspects of such dissent. Until today, researchers are fascinated by the period between 1789 and 1794, in which the revolutionaries moved from strong opposition to death penalty to demanding more heads than ever. Maximilian Robespierre significantly contributed to the change in the notion of terror. By twisting terror to become a neutral tool and a form of 'selfless violence' that is not committed for one's own sake but that of the larger community, he and his allies turned 'the concept form a description of what various actors and events caused of fear in the individual, into a political concept about how this fear might help create the future'(Thorup 2010: 93 in Maskaliùnaitė, 2018: 29).

In sum, although the terms 'terrorism' and 'terror' were used prior to the 1970s, they were mostly connected to either *state* or *institutional* violence – hence, in clear contrast to the current associations of non-state and oppositional actors (Maskaliūnaitė, 2018: 11). Furthermore, the term was used more broadly with the intention to delegitimize the opponent as part of the larger Cold War superpower rivalries between communism and capitalism (Jackson et al., 2011: 10). With the beginning of the 1970s, however, a new framework began to develop that 'would recast such incidents as the acts of pathological, irrational actors, precluding its application to the actions of states or legitimate institutions' (Stampnitzky, 2013: 9).

3.1 FROM THE 1970S ONWARDS: THE INVENTION OF THE TERRORISM FRAME

The field of terrorism studies began to grow and establish itself quickly from the 1970s onwards as a distinct field of study, accompanied by the emergence of "terrorism experts". Acts that we nowadays define as acts of terrorism were considered 'the work of rational, sometimes even honorable, actors' (Stampnitzky, 2013: 3). Hostage takings and hijackings for instance, were not a new phenomenon. There were 97 airplane hijackings between 1930 and 1973, 85 of which occurred in the United States (Guelke 1995 in Stampnitzky, 2013: 2). The perpetrators were generally referred to as rebels, bandits, (urban) guerillas, insurgents or revolutionaries (Tucker 1997: 2 in: Stampnitzky, 2013: 2). By the end of the 1970s, however 'bombings, hijackings, kidnappings, and hostage-takings were melded together, conceptualized not simply as tactics but as identifying activities, and joined to a new and highly threatening sort of actor: the "terrorist"'(Stampnitzky, 2013: 2).

THE 1972 MUNICH OLYMPICS MASSACRE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TERRORISM CONFERENCES

The 1972 Munich Olympics massacre was '*the* event that inaugurated the era of modern terrorism' (Stampnitzky, 2017: 21).[8] Being part of the Olympic Games, this event was

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[8] On September 5, 1972, eight members of the Palestinian nationalist Black September Organization stormed the dormitory of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, killing two and taking nine others hostage. In exchange for the hostages, they demanded the release of 236 Palestinians imprisoned in Israel, as well as several members of the Red Army Faction imprisoned in West Germany, and a guarantee of safe passage out; they threatened to kill one hostage every two hours until their demands were met. All nine Israeli hostages, along with five of the Palestinians and a West-German policeman, were killed in a gun battle following a failed rescue attempt by the West German police (Stampnitzky, 2013: 21).

broadcasted to approximately 900 million people worldwide (Stampnitzky, 2017: 22). The massacre did not only introduce "terrorism" as a problem to the public sphere, it also made it a phenomenon to study for experts. Simultaneously, media and world leaders condemned the attacks and their perpetrators as "criminals, madmen and murderers', 'an abhorrent crime', and 'the work of sick minds who do not belong to humanity' (Stampnitzky, 2013: 22).

In its aftermath, conferences were organized, research centers established, academic journals specialized in terrorism were founded and with it, the literature expanded rapidly (Jackson et al., 2011: 10). The following figures present an insight into the rapidity with which the field of terrorism studies grew and became interconnected.

Figure derived from (Stampnitzky, 2013: 31)
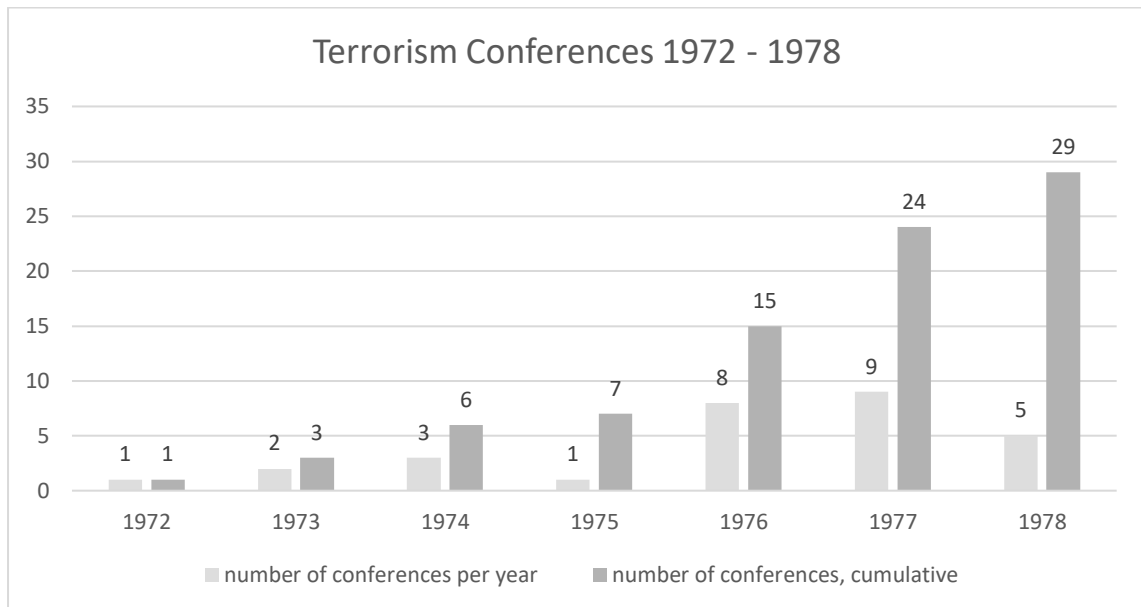
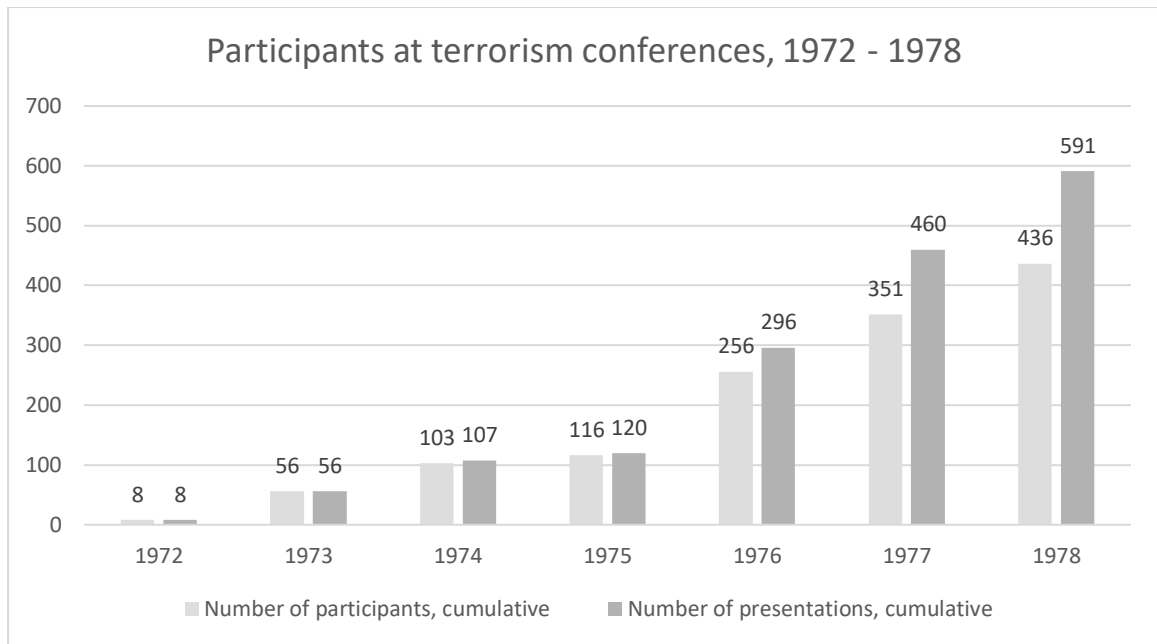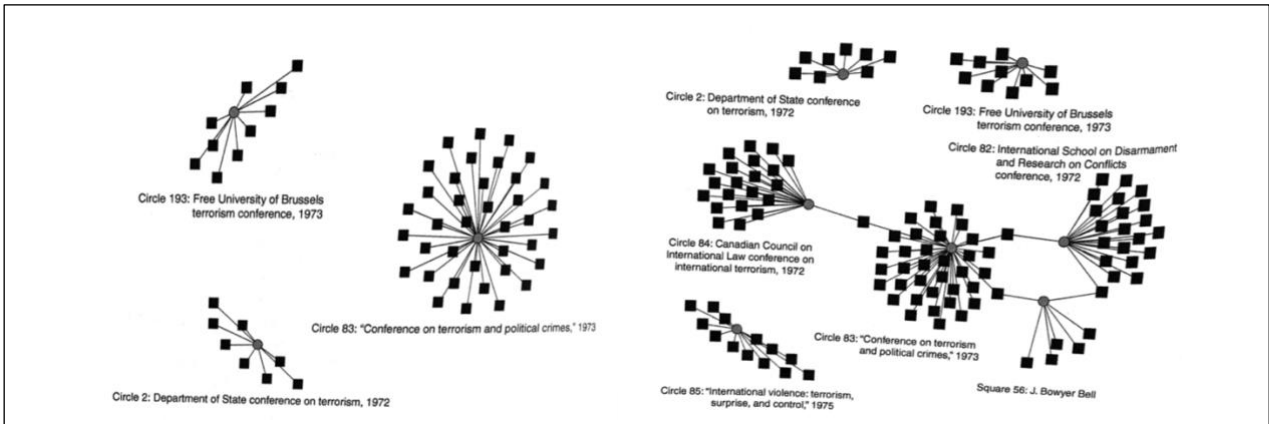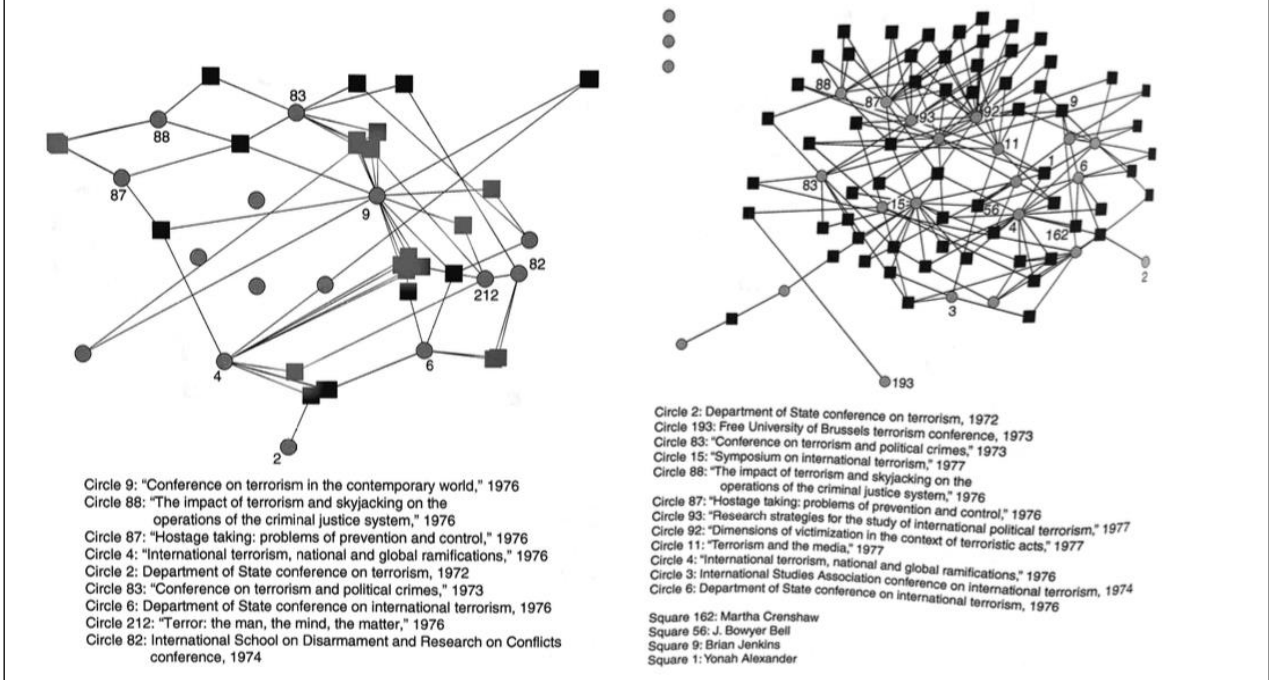Participants at terrorism conferences, 1972 - 1978

Figure derived from (Stampnitzky, 2013: 31)

1 PRESENTERS AT TERRORISM CONFERENCES 1972-1973

2 PRESENTERS AT TERRORISM CONFERENCES 1972-1975

3 PRESENTERS AT TERRORISM CONFERENCES 1972-1977

4 PRESENTERS AT TERRORISM CONFERENCES 1972-1978

Derived from (Stampnitzky, 2013: 36-39)

Considering that these conferences were attended by people who considered themselves experts in terrorism, as well government representatives and other practitioners of counterterrorism, they presented a crucial platform for different sectors to share their knowledge (Reid 1983: 24-5 in: Stampnitzky, 2013: 14).

At the beginning of the 1970s, however, there were hardly any experts on the topic (Silke, 2004, 2009; Stampnitzky, 2013: 29). Despite the lack of expertise, there as a great need for advice and recommendations. The period between 1974 and 1978 emerged as the "golden period", characterized by a great amount of conferences and discussions of different points of view (Hoffman 1984 in Stampnitzky, 2013: 30).

THE "TERRORISM MAFIA"

This increase in expertise was accompanied by the establishment of a group of scholars, who referred to themselves as the "terrorism mafia". Founded by Martha Crenshaw, Brian Jenkins and Paul Wilkinson after the 1976 conference on terrorism, which was organized by the U.S. Department of State, this group would play an important role in the emerging field of terrorism studies (Mills & Miller, 2017: 48; Stampnitzky, 2013: 41). Arguably one of their most important actions were their ongoing efforts to depoliticize the field drawing attention to the problematic and polemical use of the term in political discourse (Stampnitzky, 2013: 132).

THE SHIFT FROM COUNTERINSURGENCY TO COUNTERTERRORISM

Simultaneously, the discourses on kidnappings, hijackings and bombings shifted to a framework of "insurgency" to one of "terrorism" in the 1970s, leading to significant changes in the understanding of violence and the possibilities of analysis thereof. The most fundamental changes in the understanding of the violence behind these actions that were now considered "terrorism" were regarding the notions of rationality, morality, and politics. The following two tables provide more details regarding this development.

TABLE 1 THREE NEWLY PROBLEMATIC DIMENSIONS OF "TERRORISM" DISCOURSE

	MORALITY	RATIONALITY	POLITICIZATION
AS PERTAINING TO *TERRORISM/ TERRORISTS*	Necessarily immoral (slightly contested)	Rationality of motives and tactics always in question	Whether terrorists have political motives / goals is contested
AS PERTAINING TO *TERRORISM EXPERTS* (AND THEIR RELATION TO THE PROBLEM/ DATA)	Requirement to condemn; possibility of moral detachment; value-neutral research is questioned	Possibility of rational analysis in question	Possibility of apolitical expertise continually in question

Derived from (Stampnitzky, 2013: 78)

TABLE 2 "INSURGENCY" VS. "TERRORISM"

	INSURGENCY / COUNTERINSURGENCY	TERRORISM / COUNTERTERRORISM
MORALITY OF *ACTORS* PART OF DEFINITION?	No	Yes (contested)
RATIONALITY OF ACTORS IN QUSETION?	No	Yes (contested)
POLITICAL MOTIVES OF ACTORS OF MOTIVES IN QUESTION?	No	Yes
MORALITY OF *EXPERTS* IN QUESTION?	Yes*	Yes
POSSIBILITY OF RATIONAL ANALYSIS IN QUESTION?	No	Yes
POSSIBILITY OF APOLITICAL ANALYSIS IN QUESTION?	Yes**	Yes
INSURGENTS / TERRORISTS CONSIDERED PARALLEL TO THEIR OPPONENTS?	Yes	No
INSURGENTS/ TERRORISTS RESIST APPLICATION OF THE LABEL?	No	Yes
EXPERTISE DEFINED BY A "PROBLEM OF DEFINITION"?	No	Yes
	* The moral relation between experts and their object of study undergoes a fundamental shift between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, however.	** Although the relation between politics and knowledge was highly contested under both counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, the form of this contestation would shift significantly
Derived from (Stampnitzky, 2013: 79)

The discourse of (counter)insurgency in the 1960s was, at least formally, morally neutral. It neither questioned the moral character of (counter)insurgents, nor evaluated the morality of their actions. "Terrorism" and "terror" did appear in the literature on counterinsurgency, but in terms of a tool or tactic and as one of the stages of revolution or insurgency (Stampnitzky, 2013: 52). It was even considered to be separable from morality (Stampnitzky, 2013: 78). In comparison with the discourse on (counter)terrorism, it becomes evident that both discourses are not only characterized

by a fundamentally different understanding of the nature of violence, but also a different level of seeing the subject or act in question (Stampnitzky, 2013: 77). While insurgents were considered parallel to their opponent in discourses on (counter)insurgency, this was/is clearly not the case with regard to (counter)terrorism.[9] By 1976, terrorism was frequently associated with terms like "new barbarism", "fanatics", "naïve", "irrational" and "wrong" (Stampnitzky, 2013: 65).

This was partly because "terrorism" was increasingly seen as a problem in the public eye. While issues of (counter)insurgency were rarely part of public debates, this changed when (counter) terrorism debates were moved to a more public realm, leading representatives and senators in the United States in order to advance political agendas. In contrast to forms of political violence previously referred to as "insurgency", "terrorism" emerged as an imminent threat (Stampnitzky, 2013: 66-67).

Even though this move did not remain uncontested[10], voices establishing terrorism as "unspeakable" and "barbaric" were louder and stronger. Also, Contextualization of "terrorism" in the context of political grievances and motivations were receiving rising objections (Stampnitzky, 2013: 63).

BEGINNING CONCERNS ABOUT "ISLAMIC TERRORISM" AND THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

The specific concern about and focus on "Islamic" terrorism, emerged in the United States during the Iranian Revolution 1978-79 and the hostage crisis (Stampnitzky, 2013: 141). These events are also the origin of the term "Islamic fundamentalism" - a

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[9] This contrast, however, was not a very clear one from the beginning on. On both the 1972 Department of State Conference and the 1973 conference on terrorism, participants framed the actions in as understandable and rational. In the summary of the 1972 Conference it is stated that "the participants agreed generally that terrorism was the product of frustration induced by unresolved grievances" (Stampnitzky, 2013: 63). Moreover, a UN study from the same year highlighted that '[t]he underlying causes of these forms of terrorism and acts of violence […] lie in misery, frustration, grievance and despair […] which cause some people to sacrifice human lives, including their own, in attempt to effect radical changes (Stampnitzky, 2013: 63). The issue of rationality as well as its recognition as being political, however, became increasingly contentious from 1974 on (Stampnitzky, 2013: 63).

[10] For more information see (Stampnitzky, 2013: 71). Richard Falk for instance raised the issues of human rights, justice and international law, arguing that these are 'integral to achieving any kind of meaningful stability' (Falk in Stampnitzky, 2013: 71) He stated that 'I think it is often true that the perpetrators of terror are fanatical individuals, perhaps psychologically unstable, but I think it is more to the point to acknowledge that their recourse to desperate politics arises from objective grievances that are widely endorsed by the international community' (Stampnitzky, 2013: 71).

highly problematic term often claimed to be rooted in Western misunderstandings (Antunez & Tellidis, 2013: 124).[11]

The framing of the events contributed to the "the West vs. the Muslim world". One of the most important consequences of the media coverage was, that the events were regarded as proof of the incompatibility of modernity and Islam (Hurd, 2009). During the beginning of the crisis, approximately 300 journalists were broadcasting the events to the entire world. None of them, however, spoke Persian or was actually specialized in the region (Said, 1997: iii). Furthermore, for the first days of the crisis, the ABC news team (one reporter and a camera crew) was actually the only team on the ground reporting to the entire world (McAllister, 2005: 202). This one-sided coverage led to an account of what was taking place that was highly undisputed and unanimous. Reports of events and political processes outside of the "Islamic mentality" or "anti-Americanism" frame were not provided during these first days of the crisis.

Hence, the *media frames* had a significant impact on the *individual frames*. Additionally, this framing was a strong one. Throughout the 444 days of the hostage crisis, Walter Cronkite –the CBS Evening News' anchor man and the then most-trustable person in the United States- played a central role in this context. Moreover, these frames were also communicated in a *high quantity,* since the crisis was brought to American homes by the television each night (McAllister, 2005: 202).

The hostage crisis' coverage continued and intensified throughout the 1980s. It 'took up more than twenty percent of all television news; on ABC coverage averaged 4.1 minutes out of every 22 minute broadcast (McAllister, 2005: 206). Attempts to contest the asymmetric and one-sided way of framing, were unable to match the strength of the media frames, resulting in a non-competitive framing of the crisis. Importantly, reporters explained Iranian actions through Islam throughout the entire coverage of the Irian revolution and the hostage crisis – neglecting and ignoring any factors related to the specific U.S.-Iranian relations and their history (McAllister, 2005: 210).

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[11] "Fundamentalism" as a term first emerged in the United States to describe an ideological branch within the U.S. Protestant community (Antunez & Tellidis, 2013: 124). It became associated with adherence to a strong adherence to a set of beliefs and is currently mostly associated with "Islam" and "Muslim" (Antunez & Tellidis, 2013: 124). The latter emphasis was shaped significantly by U.S. broadcasting companies, in particular during the coverage of the Iranian Revolution (Antunez & Tellidis, 2013: 124).

More generally, the media coverage and of both the Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis had a significant impact on the already existing of anti-Iranian attitudes and sentiments, particularly in the United States. The images created transformed into stereotypical representations of Arabs and the Middle East more generally, contributing to the image of a homogenous "Arab world", and notions of "Arab terrorism" (McAllister, 2005: 214) and "Islamic fundamentalism" (Antunez & Tellidis, 2013: 124). It is frequently used as a point of reference in the context of the origin of the apparent modern phenomenon of religiously based terrorism (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011: 17). It was, however, not until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War that Islam and the fear thereof would emerge as a central issue in the eyes of the public (Stampnitzky, 2013: 141).[12]

THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE UNLEASHING OF TRANSNATIONAL VIOLENCE

While the Iranian Revolution and the beginning of the hostage crisis led to the emergence and spread of the term "Islamist terrorism", the term "jihadi terrorism" was first used by Western sources in the context in the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (Antunez & Tellidis, 2013: 129). For the first time, the conflict had united different Arab groups under the umbrella of *jihad*.[13] In this context, however, the role of political Islam in the Middle East and the Global South cannot be ignored. After the great hopes of many in the region for independence after decolonization were betrayed by the new states' move towards authoritarianism, the notion of *Islam houa al hal* - Islam is the solution – gained momentum (Mohamedou, 2018: Uleashing Transnational Violence).[14,15]

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[12] Also note that according to Rapoports' "waves of terrorism" theory, 1979 marked the beginning of the forth "wave of religious terrorism" (Rapoport in Bakker, 2015: 58).

[13] The concept itself is deeply rooted in Islam, is highly familiar to the vast majority of Muslims and has, in its broader interpretation and usage, accrued both non-violent and violent meanings. While many authors in both the Islamic and the Western world have engaged in various analysis and conversations about the meaning of *jihad*, Western media has is mostly used and translated as "holy war", a concept arguably contributes to the idea and image of an opposing world (Tellidis, 2016: 129). Moreover, the Soviet invastion led to the merging of the Wahabism of Osama bin Laden, al-Zawahiri's radical Islamism and the Salafism of Abdullah Yusuf Azzam. For more information see (Mohamedou, 2018: Unleashing Transnational Violence)

[14] Movements such as the Egyptian Free Officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser and their coup against the British-supported King Farouck in 1952, led to the emergence of political Islam as the 'nemesis of the post-colonial Arab state' (Mohamedou, 2018: Unleashing Transnational Violence). For more information see (Mohamedou, 2018).

[15] Taking the development of political Islam into account also helps to explain why, in contrast to for instance the war between Iran and Iraq that was declared in September 1980, the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan on 24 December 1979 had a more significant impact on Islamists in the Arab world. While the former was largely regarded as a geopolitical contest between the two regimes, the latter was seen by Islamists as a clear *casus belli*, and consequently ground for *jihad*, religious struggle (Mohamedou, 2018: Unleashing Transnational Violence), thereby creating a powerful incentive for the unification under the umbrella of *jihad*.

It was during this time that Islamism gained its dual justification: (1) the battle against the corrupting and corrupt state, and (2) the promise of real independence under the umbrella of faith instead of identity. The idea of *Islam houa al hal* was only strengthened by the continuing failure of the post-colonial Arab states, particularly in three areas: (1) militarily with regard to Israel, (2) economically in the light of the failure to engineer modernization, and (3) geostrategically by remaining inferior to the major powers (Mohamedou, 2018: Uleashing Transnational Violence).[16] The resulting feelings of powerlessness and frustration were also expressed in Bin Laden's 2004 message to the American people, in which he clearly places the reasons and origins of his violent opposition to the U.S. in their support for the crimes committed by Israel in 1982 in Lebanon (Mohamedou, 2018: Uleashing Transnational Violence). This shows the importance of avoiding the dehistoricization and depoliticization of discussions of groups like al-Qaeda and IS, as well as limiting them to their religious dimension. This problem will be elaborated further at a later stage.

With regard to the establishment of groups like al-Qaeda, it is important to realize that in contrast to traditional Islamist groups,

> Al Qaeda's first embodiment was to serve as a welfare service provider originating in the rentier state Arabian Gulf, but one whose action was oriented outwardly and militarily with the *jihad* campaign against the Soviet Union in the 1980s and with little emphasis on religion per se (Mohamedou, 2018: Unleashing Transnational Violence).

'Azzam's son in law, Abdulla Anas, who was part of the fighting in Afghanistan, actually stated in a 2014 interview that 'Osama [Bin Laden] never thought he was a religious sheikh. [He] never led prayers or gave sermons' (Anas in Mohamedou, 2018: Unleashing Transnational Violence). There is thus a solid foundation to argue that the genealogy of violence by Bin Laden and since 2009 also Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, has not emerged solely and primarily from their religious convictions, but rather from both the colonial and the post-colonial experiences, and continuing perceived reappropriations of imperial power (Mohamedou, 2018: Genealogies of New Violence).

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[16] For more detailed information see (Mohamedou, 2018), particular the part on "Unleashing Transnational Violence". Mohamedou, amongst others, stresses that Abdullah Yusuf al'Azzam, Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al Dhawahri, experienced feeling of powerlessness, since they lived throughout these years in Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. They gradually accepted their limited power to change and reform the local status quo and as the link to the external reasons for their domestic situation crystallized even more, they began to move their resentment and hostility towards the Western powers that they perceived as backing the local authorities.

Naturally, Islamist groups were not the only ones that focused on the Soviet Union. With a different nuance and still in the Cold War context, claims in the West stating that terrorism was organized largely by the Soviet Union gained more momentum (Mills & Miller, 2017; Stampnitzky, 2013). The Jonathan Institute[17] played a central role in this narrative. The Institute organized several high-profile conferences, where terrorism was portrayed as immoral and evil and which contributed to a specific understanding of who is, and who is not a terrorist. Most speakers at these conferences were highly critical of the arguments that socioeconomic and political conditions were direct causes of terrorism and that the removal of these causes was the solution to stop terrorism (Mills & Miller, 2017: 49). Terrorism was framed as specifically directed against "civilization", "democracy" and "the West". This contributed to the creating of binary opposition and the unification against a common enemy (Stampnitzky, 2013: 113).[18]

Additionally, considering that the Iranian hostage crisis was still dominating everyday news in the beginning of the 1980s, terrorism emerged as a central topic in the 1980 U.S. presidential elections (Stampnitzky, 2013: 109), taking an unprecedented position throughout the Reagan administration. In 1981, U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig stated that '[I]nternational terrorism will take the place of human rights... The greatest problem to me in the human-rights area today is the area of rampant international terrorism' (Haig quoted in Wills, 2004: 3). Consequently, counterterrorism policies moved from crisis management and diplomacy towards military retaliation, strengthened by the framing of terrorism as a struggle between civilizations – between "the West" or "the democracies" against the Soviet backed terrorism network. This reframing of terrorism as war was not simply a shift in discourse. It significantly impacted the responses to the problem by the Reagan administration, as well as the

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[17] The Jonathan Institute was founded in 1976 by future Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and named after his brother. One of its greatest impacts was the advancement of the idea that the West had to continue to back Israel unconditionally if it wanted to maintain its position in the Middle East – stressing that Israel was the heart of the region and the carrier of Western ideals (Mills & Miller, 2017: 49)

[18] Besides the extensive international media coverage (Stampnitzky, 2013: 116), the Conference also inspired the making of soon-to-be popular documentaries, such as *The Russian Connection*, as well as the 1980 and 1984 books by Netanyahu on the nature of and fight against terrorism (Stampnitzky, 2013: 112; 116), which arguably had a significant influence on the individual frame.

following George H.W. Bush and Clinton ones. In contrast to the rather pre-emptive "war on terror" following 9/11, this first war on terror was largely driven by retaliation (Stampnitzky, 2013: 110).[19] The 1982 US backed invasion of Lebanon, for instance, is stated as one of the main reasons for the later 9/11 attacks by Bin Laden [Figure 5]. 2021

Throughout the 1980s, critics the biased and politicized nature of the concept of 'terrorism' as it was used (Stampnitzky, 2013: 110). A conference on "Contemporary Research on Terrorism" in April 1986, headed by Paul Wilkinson, explored the myth that 'terrorism research is biased in favor of Western governments and their policies, and by the same token, incapable of rigorous critical examination of government policies and measures' (Wilkinson and Steward quoted in Stampnitzky, 2013: 136). During his talk, Ronal Crelinsten, attempted to enable an objective and/or depoliticized field of terrorism studies by highlighting the need to avoid the focus on purely non-state or anti-state terrorism. 'Governments which exercise terrorism are not really interested in funding research or basic research into the causes of state terrorism' (Crelinsten quoted in Stampnitzky, 2013: 136).

He continued his presentation by problematizing that research had arrived at a point where it saw terrorism as pathological, irrational and immoral – a development that consequently led to scientific knowledge turning into polemics (Crelinsten quoted in Stampnitzky, 2013: 136). Crelinsen was not the only one highlighting this problem. Martha Crenshaw specifically confronted the assumption that terrorism was irrational, arguing that terrorism can be a purposeful, logical and rational expression and choice

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[19] The U.S. bombings in 1986 of cities in Libya in response to a bombing in Berlin in a disco that had killed an American soldier, is only one example. In general, 1985 is frequently seen as the peak year of terrorism in the Middle East (Chomsky, 2012: 74).

[20] As the literature review has shown, the discussion on state-terrorism is still going on. Even though the common definitions of terrorism focus largely on non-state actors, it is possible for states to commit acts of terrorism as well. In this case of Israel, the notion of self-defense – which is highly disputed in the context of his invasion – adds a layer of legitimacy to the violence, which, however, does not completely dismiss the argument that these acts can be regarded as acts of state-terrorism. According to Chomsky (2012: 74) 'these atrocities fall within the category of state-supported international terrorism, if not the more severe war crime of aggression'.

[21] Chomsky (2012) examines other of the events of US-backed state terror in the Mideast/Mediterranean region. While 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israel (Chomsky, 2012: 74) was arguably the worst, the US , was involved in other incidents in the region, which are referred to by Chomsky (2012: 74) as 'the three candidates for the prize of most extreme terrorist atrocity of 1985'.[21] 1985, however, was not declared the peak year of terrorism in the Middle East because of the above-mentioned events. The year gained its name because of two atrocities in which a single American was murdered. The 1985 Klinghoffer murder[21], 'remains the most vivid and lasting symbol of the incredible evil of Arab terrorism and the unanswerable proof that there can be no negotiating with these vermin' (Chomsky, 2012: 75). Again, the news coverage was asymmetrical, ignoring the political motive and retaliation for the Israeli and U.S. supported bombing of Tunis only one week before, which actually never entered the canon of terrorism (Chomsky, 2012: 75).

of political strategy (Crenshaw in Stampnitzky, 2013: 137). Despite this criticism, however, the narratives distributed by terrorism experts, the media and politicians spread.[22] This became evident amongst others at the 1981-1986 series of congressional hearings organized by the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism. [23] Moreover, as became evident in the preceding literature review of this research, these issues are still central to the contemporary debates on terrorism. This is partly because of the inability of those academically oriented researches aiming to separate themselves from the arguably politicized discourse on terrorism, to successfully construct their work as legitimate (Stampnitzky, 2013: 138).

There was also a shift in reliance on expertise in the late Cold War period. Think tanks emerged as vital sources of information for policy-making directed at the Middle East. While think tanks gained influence, facilitated by significant funding, access to the media and policymakers, university-based scholars were increasingly met with criticism (Khalil, 2018: 294). This development– at least partly – offers an explanation for the still persistent gap between academia and policy circles.

3.3. THE 1990S AND THE "NEW TERRORISM": "THE MUSLIMS ARE COMING!"

The 1980s, and the dominance of the Soviet theory, had resulted in increasing attention as well as funding related to the issue of terrorism. With the end of the Cold War, however, both the interest and funding decreased significantly.[24] The early 1990s were a relatively quiet period, particularly in comparison to the 1980s [Figure 7].

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[22] The 1981 book "The Terror Network" by Claire Stairling and the controversy surrounding the facts it included. For more information see (Stampnitzky, 2013: 111).

[23] Interestingly, the previous experts involved in the development of terrorism studies throughout the 1970s, were not invited, despite initial requests of members of the "terrorism mafia" to testify (Stampnitzky, 2013: 122-23). Instead, 'the discursive space on political violence… was taken over by a small but vociferous community of interpretation' (Gold-Biss quoted in Stampnitzky, 2013: 126). A group Gold-Biss refers to as "terror cabalists" (Gold-Biss quoted in Stampnitzky, 2013: 126) was invited, closely linked to more politically linked organizations and think tanks (Stampnitzky, 2013: 123).

[24] Hoffman even made the decision to leave RAND, since '[e]verybody was telling [him] that with the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, terrorism was going end' (2006 interview with Bruce Hoffmann in Stampnitzky, 2013: 140)
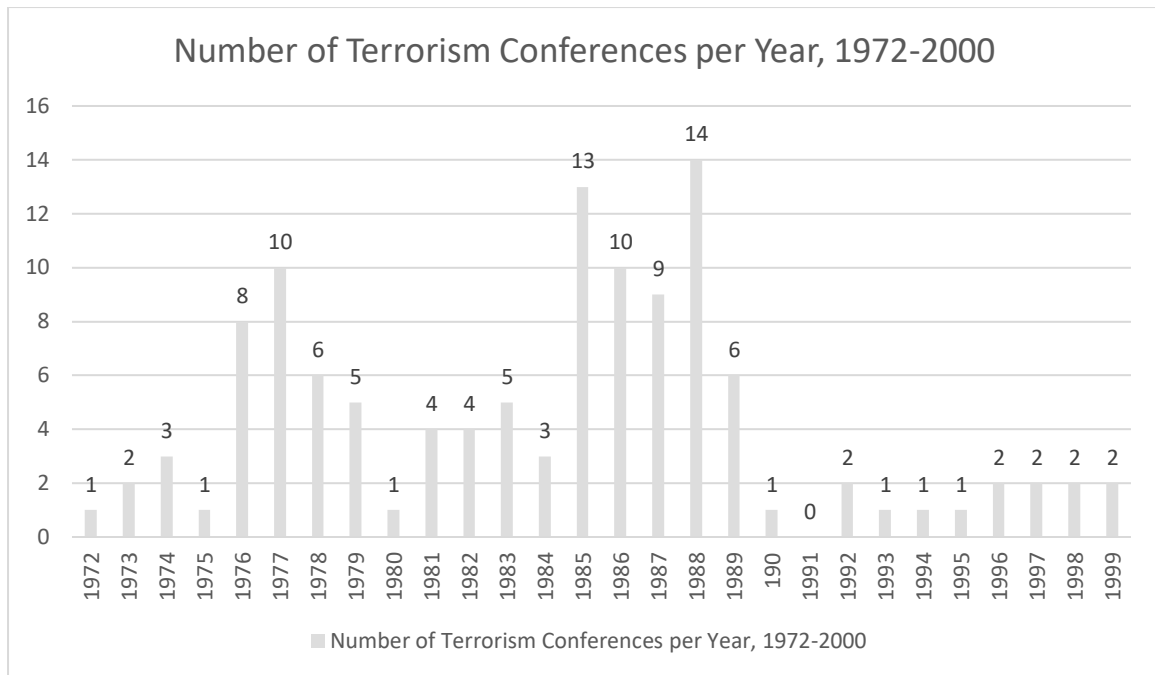
FIGURE 5 NUMBER OF TERRORISM CONFERENCES PER YEAR, 1972-2000 (STAMPNITZKY, 2013: 139)

It was throughout this relatively quiet period that the discourse on "the new terrorism" and "Islamic terrorism" emerged, a framework that laid the intellectual base for the understanding of the 9/11 attacks and the following "war on terror". Throughout the 1990s, four new threat discourses emerged: (1) Islamic terrorism, (2), right-wing terrorism, (3) small wars, and (4) weapons of mass destruction. Each of these new discourses was brought about by new groups, emerging from the realignment of the field of experts in terrorism (Stampnitzky, 2013: 140-1).[25]

One of the new groups of experts was primarily concerned with the issue of "Islamic terrorism" and sometimes went as far as declaring Islam inherently aggressive and violent, thereby following Said's Orientalist discourse.

> Framing Islam as the new "civilizational" threat, much as the Soviet Union had been cast as an existential threat throughout the 1980s, these experts sought to identify the new number one national enemy (Stampnitzky, 2013: 141).

Despite the fact that "Islamic terrorism" had been part of debates at conferences before, it was not until the 1990s that it was clearly identified as a central threat in terms of a "new terrorism", significantly different from "traditional terrorism" [Figure 8]. The

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[25] Due to the scope of this paper, the four fields cannot be examined in detail. It is, however, important to notice their interdependency with regard to the creation on the "new threat".

suggestion that it had taken the place of the one previously posed by the Soviet Union, emerged as a key theme in the discourse (Stampnitzky, 2013: 143), leading to the emergence of the discourse of the Islamist threat as the most influential one of these new approaches (Stampnitzky, 2013: 145).[26]

Despite the existing criticism, the 'new terrorism synthesis', as illustrated in [Figure 8] spread, very much in line with Samuel P. Huntington's (1996) "Clash of Civilizations" thesis. The new category posits a clear difference to the traditional or old terrorism, in terms of goals, beliefs, organizational structure, personnel and attitudes towards violence (Jackson et al., 2011: 167).

	"TRADITIONAL TERRORISM"	"NEW TERRORISM"
TERRORISTS' GOALS /MOTIVATION	Tangible / political	Inscrutable / religious / nihilistic
ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	Hierarchical, focused	Networked, dispersed
ARE TERRORISTS LIKELY TO USE WMD'S?	No / unlikely	Yes / possibly
POSSIBLE TO PREDICT NATURE OF FUTURE TERRORISM ON THE BASIS OF PAST EVENTS/	Yes / somewhat	No
APPROPRIATE MODE OF GOVERNANCE	Punishment (via criminal justice or military / event management)	Precaution / pre-emption / preparedness
		Derived from (Stampnitzky, 2013: 153)

FIGURE 6 THE NEW TERRORISM

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[26] This shift is illustrated in amongst others Bernard Lewis previously mentioned piece work on Muslim rage and Daniel Pipes' 1995 text "There are no moderates". In the latter, he stated that '[t]hough anchored in a religious creed, fundamentalist Islam is a radical utopian movement closer in spirit to other such movements (communism, fascism) than to traditional religion. By nature anti-democratic and aggressive, anti-Semitic and anti-Western, it has great plans' (Pipes, 1995). Even more explicitly, a 1996 New York Times article by Elaine Sciolino titled "The red menace is gone. But here's Islam' stated that 'the end of the cold war sparked a kind of intellectual contest to identify the biggest and most credible new enemy'(Sciolino, 1996). It is interesting though, that while Stampnitzky (2013: 143) portrays this article as emphasizing the above-mentioned linkage by Pipes, it actually criticizes this link, largely drawing upon the work of Esposito and others warning of the overemphasizing and misunderstanding the threat posed by politicized Islam. It can, hence, be seen as part of the growing body of critical literature on the "new terrorism" that emphasized the inaccuracy and analytically unhelpful nature of this category (Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, & Breen Smyth, 2011: 167)

Three events were very influential for this development: (1) the 1993 Attack on the World Trade Center in New York, (2) the spread of suicide bombing, particularly by Hamas in the aftermath of the 1993 Oslo Accords, primarily targeting Israeli targets, and (3) the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City. The 1000 casualties of the 1993 attack and the lack of a definitive claim of responsibility in its aftermath were a turning point in the problematization of terrorism. It 'introduced a new mode of attack, one that disrupted the expected "script" of claims-making, publicity, and stated demand' (Stampnitzky, 2013: 143). It was the spread of suicide bombing as a tactic, however, that significantly and long-lastingly shaped the narrative of religious terrorism being irrational (Stampnitzky, 2013: 143). This was arguably even intensified in the 2000s, considering that Palestinian National Authority, led by Arafat, was initially opposed to this tactic. It was only during the second *intifada* in 2000 that they, and other Palestinian organizations, started committing suicide attacks (Khalil, 2018: 278).

Nevertheless, already in 1995, the narrative seems to have been strong enough, that the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was immediately connected to Arab or Muslims terrorists by commentators – despite the actual perpetrators being Christian, white and native-born U.S. citizens (Stampnitzky, 2013: 147).

> The categories of "Islamic terror" and "right-wing terror" did not only reflect essential distinctions in the world but differences in experts and the way they approached their subject matter (Stampnitzky, 2013: 146).

In fact, the majority of experts on right-wing violence hardly had any connections with the network of terrorism studies. Perpetrators of right-wing violence were mainly white and Christian and usually not considered "terrorists".[27] This narrative on religious and "Islamic" terrorism, as well as the focus on the phenomena, would only be intensified and become more manifested in public and political narratives after the attacks of 9/11 and its aftermath.

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[27] After the Oklahoma City bombing, it appeared for a while that right-wing domestic violence was likely to become integrated in the traditional study and narratives of terrorism. Despite the strong tendency of political and public discussions to exclude the issue, however, it became an increasingly integral part of the scholarship, being debated in both journals and on conferences towards the end of the 1990s (Stampnitzky, 2013: 146).

4. REIFICATION: RELIGIOUS TERRORISM AS COMMON SENSE

4.1 9/11 AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

The events of 9/11 are widely known and in no need of further elaboration. Equally common is the referral of the events as "the day that everything changed", "the end of one phase of human history" or "the beginning of World War III" (Friedman 2002 in Jackson, 2005: 57). The main problem, however, as Richard Jackson put it, is 'that event has not been allowed to speak for itself but has had a particular interpretation imposed on it' (Jackson, 2005: 57). Particularly in the context of the war on terror, and the language in the discourse surrounding it, it is important to recall that writing or speaking never is a neutral act, since language cannot be used objectively – it's use has, however significant consequences, since it creates and constructs the reality we live in (Jackson, 2005: 24).

President Bush framed the events in terms of a "civilization's fight" (Bush, 20 September 2001, in Jackson, 2005: 50) and declared the perpetrators as 'enemies of human freedom' (Bush, 14 September, 2001 in Jackson, 2005: 51), 'an evil and inhuman group' and 'faceless enemies of human dignity' (Bush, 21 May, 2003 in Jackson, 2005: 74). The destruction of the terrorist's face and the removal of any signs of humanity and personality, as well as the depoliticization of their actions, was an essential and a central part of the construction of the counter-violence that followed in the "good war on terrorism" (Jackson, 2005: 123). This construction of the evil, alien and cancerous terrorist in the aftermath of 9/11(Jackson, 2005: 75), particularly in contrast and opposition to the "good American" (Jackson, 2005: 76) made it possible to respond in an unconscionable way without having to respect their human rights (Jackson, 2005: 75). It was, however, highly counterproductive in understanding the causes and creating a successful response. Peter Bergen is one of the few people who actually interviewed Bin Laden. He concludes his 2001 work by stressing that Bin Laden is fighting a *political* war with the United States:

> [B]in Laden cares little about […] cultural issue[s]. What he condemns the United States for is simple: its policies in the Middle East […] The hijackers who came to American did not attack the headquarters of a major brewery or AOL-Time warner or Coca-Cola, nor did they attack Las Vegas or even the

> Supreme Court. They attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, preeminent symbols of the United States' military and economic might. And that fits the pattern of previous al-Qaeda attacks on U.S. embassies, military installations, and warships (Bergen, 2001: Afterword).

Despite various to contest the dominant framing of the 9/11 attacks[28], most scholars, as well as politicians and the greater public followed the narrative of the "new terrorism" that had emerged during the 1990s and unsurprisingly grew even stronger in the aftermath of these events. The attacks sparked an unprecedented, enormous growth in the study of terrorism, 'more than doubling its output compared to the whole pre-9/11 era' (Bakker, 2015: 75).[29] As a result, the number of publications increased rapidly [Figure 9]. Recalling Silke (2004, 2007, 2009), it is important to keep in mind that quantity does not always equal quality. With the emergence of the global war on terror, the synthesis of the new, and primarily religious, violence emerged as a common sense in public and political discourse.
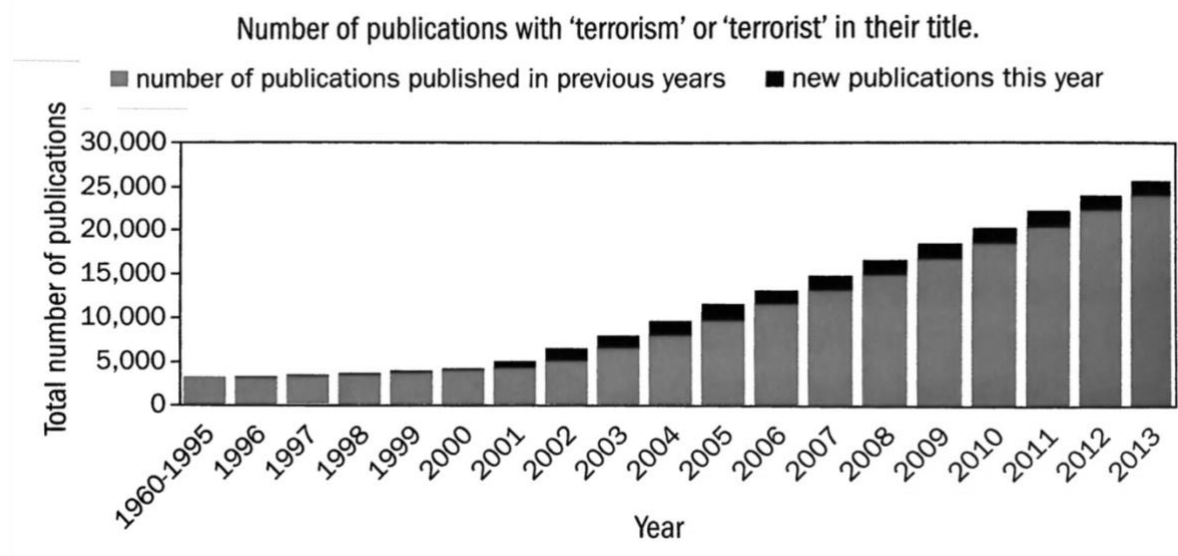
FIGURE 7 TITLES OF BOOKS AND ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS CONTAINING "TERRORISM" OR "TERRORIST" ACCORDING TO GOOGLE SCHOLAR (BAKKER, 2015: 74)

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[28] Rubin & Colp Rubin, 2002 have created an extensive collection of world leader's responses to 9/11. While many expressed unconditional solidarity in the immediate aftermath, many also highlighted the political dimension and responsibility of the U.S. The most drastic statement was by then Iraqi-President Saddam Hussein in his television broadcast on September 12, 2001 (Rubin & Colp Rubin, 2002: 283-4).
[29] Higher education quickly increased their focus on terrorism. In the United States alone, 100 programs at state, as well as private universities and colleges had been launched by 2004. Millions of US dollars were invested in their developments and grants. By 2005, for instance, the National Science Foundation had awarded 135 grants in the field, worth more than $47 million. This number is in clear contrast to the $1.5 million for eight grants between 1996 and 2000 (Khalil, 2018: 279)

Particularly after 9/11, terrorism emerged as a powerful label. Terrorist acts have been framed as irrational and evil acts, contributing to the dehumanization of the perpetrator and the inability of the perpetrator to communicate a contesting side of the story that does not fit the Western understanding. This development goes along with the continuous dehistoricization and depoliticization of terrorism, particularly visible in the media coverage and the language of the War on Terror as established by Jackson (2005), resulting in a highly one-dimensional frame of the act and the reasons behind it.

The persistence of the focus on religious and particularly Islamic terrorism became visible at a variety of attacks since 9/11. Throughout the last decade, however, the narrative changed slightly, emphasizing the "new threat from within".

4.2. POST 9/11 TERRORISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Until today, despite increasing emphasis on the fact that it is not Islam as a religion that is responsible for terrorism, the emphasis is still very much on the notion of religious terrorism and Muslims.[30] There is a persistent conviction in the West that there is something about Islam that makes it particularly prone to violence – and more importantly, that religion – or some definition of it – is the main cause of that violence. Consequently, the supporters of this "myth of religious violence" tend to turn a blind eye to other causes of that violence, particularly grievances against the Western world.

> We reduce the cause of Muslim anger at the West to their "religion" thus casting a convenient fog of amnesia over Western aggressions on behalf of Western interests (Cavanaugh, 2017: 23).

Considering the strength of the framing of "religious terrorism" over time, many might not even be highly aware of this. Particularly the period after 9/11 has contributed to the intensification of the perception of the "Muslim other" and the one-dimensional,

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[30] In an interview in April 2017, Dick Schoof, the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism at the NCTV, said jihadism is the primary reason why the Dutch threat level has been, and still is, at level 4/5. Even though the emphasized that the reasons why people become a terrorist are probably not rooted in Islam itself, he also stressed that the readiness or preparedness to commit violence based on this religion, that people have defined for themselves, has never been higher (Schoof, 2017).

asymmetrical framing of the reasons behind terrorism, resulting in increasing Islamophobia and right-wing extremism.

Naturally, it is not possible to give a complete and definite account of the reasons behind this development, considering the limited scope of this research, especially given the complexity and amount of attacks that have occurred since 9/11. It is, however, possible, to examine a few events and thematic issues that have certainly contributed, in more detail:

(1) The continuing de-politicization and discourse on religious violence, and
(2) The voicelessness of the "other", or more precisely Muslims.

CONTINUING DE-POLITICIZATION AND DISCOURSE ON RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

The attack on the radical weekly Charlie Hebdo on January 7, 2015 and the accompanying "Je suis Charlie"- slogan, are one of the recent key events in this regard. The illustration and the associated slogan emerged as the arguably biggest hashtag of solidarity so far. Within one week after the attack, it was used six million times on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Moreover, it has inspired many "copycat" slogans ever since (Devichand, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of the discourse behind the slogan that remains to be associated with it.

The discourse on religious violence in France after the attack on Charlie Hebdo, was very much framed in the light of the narrative that "There is a war going on between the West and Islamism" (Nilsson, 2017: 191). In the aftermath of the attack, people, including journalists, who were aiming to 'understand the irrational' and 'legitimize the unlegitimizeable' (Nilsson, 2017: 191), were quickly and highly criticized, as well anyone highlighting the attacks' justification by IS as retaliation for the airstrikes – which were perceived as part of the French "war against Islam" (Nanninga, 2017a: 179). As the "Je suis Charlie" movement of apparent solidarity spread throughout the world, 'not everybody wanted to be Charlie, nor was everybody allowed to be Charlie'(Nilsson, 2017: 191). The creation of binary identities turned the discourse of religious violence into a legitimizing statement in the post-Charlie debate (Nilsson, 2017: 201). The post-Charlie discourse of religious violence is thus yet another example of asymmetrical framing of events that significantly influenced the individual's way of

seeing the event. This asymmetry remains persistent, since up to today, competing frames - even from within the media or policy circles – are either highly criticized, or simply silenced by the strength of the dominant frames. This becomes evident when considering the continuous depoliticization of events.

The Boston Marathon Bombing in April 2013 and the Woolwich Attack in May 2013 are only two examples. According to Arun Kundnani (2014), 'What was most significant about the Boston and Woolhich attacks was left unmentioned'(Kundnani, 2014: Introduction). In both cases, the perpetrators had neither received any training, nor have they had any proper plan beforehand. This aspect of "amateurism", was largely ignored, however, because did not fit the framing of terrorism 'in which every act of terrorism was, at some level, a repeat of 9/11 – with all of its associated emotional energies' (Kundnani, 2014: Introduction). Moreover, in both cases, the political reasons, and the wider link to US and UK foreign policy, behind the attacks did not receive any significant attention, despite the messages left behind by the perpetrators.[31]

The coverage of these events by both the news and social media, were 'strikingly one-dimensional: it was restricted to the official narrative of radicalization by a dangerous ideology'(Kundnani, 2014: Introduction). This draws upon another connected phenomenon that has manifested itself over time, namely that of the voicelessness of the "other".

VOICELESSNESS

Christopher Hartney's (2017) work raises a very interesting point in this context, namely the question of 'who gets to speak, and who gets to speak over and silence others' (Kundnani, 2014: Introduction). Particularly on the screen, the threat of terrorism and religious violence is often used as a contrast for the American

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[31] Dzokhar Tsarnaev, one of the asserted perpetrators of the Boston attack, wrote on the following on the inside wall of the boat in which he was hiding from the police: 'The US government is killing our innocent civilians […]. I can't stand to see such evil go unpunished […] we Muslims are one body, you hurt one, you hurt us all […] Now I don't like killing of innocent people it is forbidden in Islam but due to said [unintelligible] it is allowed […] Stop killing our innocent people and we will stop' (Kundnani, 2014 Introduction). Similarly, the perpetrators of the Woolwich murder made the decision to, instead of running from the scene, make the following statement to the cameras of the bystanders: 'The only reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers. And this British soldier is one. It is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. By Allah, we sear by the almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you until you leave us alone […] alone […] leaver our lands and we can all live in peace. That's all I have to say' (Kundnani, 2014: Introduction). Moreover, Ingrid Loyau-Kennet, a woman who was walking by before the police had intervened, actually asked the perpetrator for his reasons. His response was that the British soldier, the victim, had been responsible for the murder of Muslims abroad. 'They drop their bombs on women and children and no one cares' (Kundnani, 2014: Introduction).

exceptionalism to shine (Hartney, 2017: 219). Popular TV shows, such as "24" have been proven to have influenced the policies of the White House under Bush, as well as the military (Hartney, 2017: 221). It inspired 'brainstorm meetings' and Diane Beaver, a US staff judge advocate general, even admitted that she legally approved 18 new controversial interrogation techniques. Similarly, movies like "American Sniper" and "Zero Dark Thirty" fit into this idea of the battle between good and evil, and more generally the Orientalist paradigm, portraying the non-Western other as prone to violence and incomprehensible (Hartney, 2017).

When looking particularly at the question of 'how precisely "religious" is all this violence?', it becomes evident that it most movies or tv shows, the "other" is often a voiceless Muslim operative aiming to harm America for reasons that often remains unknown.

> [B]ecause of this obscurity, ultimate motivation for their violence must rest in the only thing we know about them – that they are Muslim. It follows that then there is something inherently violent in Islam itself (Hartney, 2017: 233).

This phenomenon of voicelessness of the "other" and particularly Muslims on the screen is part of a much bigger problem related to the traditions of gathering of information and the tradition of the "taboo of talking to the terrorist". It has to do with the – often non-deliberate – reproduction of official, one-sided stories, thereby neglecting insights that might actually bring more nuance or different insights. Rukmini Callimachi's experience in Mali in 2013, after a part of the North had been taken back from al-Qaeda, is an excellent example:

> I was relatively green to the field and I covered the field like most news agencies covered the field. I couldn't get a hold of these terrorists – it didn't even occur to me that one could – and so I called officials. As it turned out, I reported the version of reality that these people have told me – and probably in good faith – which turned out to be completely wrong. They were saying that Bin Laden had been killed, therefore al-Qaeda had been destroyed, therefore all these other little groups that carried the al-Qaeda name, are just opportunistically taking on this name. They have no other connective tissues. (Callimachi et al., 2018)

So it really kind of broke my world because I didn't realize then, what I know now, which is of course that the war on terror is politicized (Callimachi, 2018).

Callimachi found internal records, which turned out to prove the official story of the Obama administration wrong. What her admission shows, is amongst others one of the problems related to the long tradition, particularly within terrorism studies, to rely

solely on official government information. It has had a significant impact on our understanding of whom we are fighting in this "global war on terror". When actually breaking the tradition of the "taboo of talking to terrorists" and starting to talk to these people, and engaging with their narrative more closely, it becomes evident that "they" are not so much different from "us". The responses of Rukmini Callimachi and Andy Mills, to the question of what impact the framing of terrorism and IS more specifically has had on their imagination of IS, and how this view might have changed throughout their years of personally engaging with both IS fighters and officials give a crucial insight:

> [Rukmini] For five years now, I've been covering this beat, meaning al-Qaeda and ISIS. […] And the thing that always surprises me about them is first of all, we see these people who do these horrific acts. It's even hard to watch some of the videos that ISIS had put up because of grotesque and savage they are. So, the mind immediately wants so say: Oh my God, these people are monsters, these people are psychopaths, these people are very different from you and I. But the revelation that I have over and over again from sitting across these people is that they are just a bunch of guys. You know, they are just a bunch of dudes. And, anyway, I think that in a way, that is more insidious, and more dangerous. They are not these crazy, out there bulky-man that you would expect. They are the guy that grew up watching Star Wars, who had a myspace account, and you know, who was teased at school or was not teased at school, and that humanity is interesting to me (Callimachi et al., 2018).

This statement shows the effects of the framing, and the dehumanization that has taken place in the past. Andy adds another dimension. Throughout his coverage of ISIS, he saw the rise of hate groups in the West.

> And one of the things that changed for me was that how similar it is to ISIS. You often see middle class, often sub-urban, often male people, who feel disillusioned, feel underrepresented, misrepresented or not understood or something like that and they have legitimate doubts in institutions. They have this distrust in government and they have a lot of time on the internet. And those things are mixing together not only the perfect storm that makes ISIS, but I think similarly the perfect storm that has shown in the West with significant rise in different groups. And I would predict that if we don't do much more reporting on this, that we will see a diverging of more and more groups like this, that we will see different agendas popping up (Callimachi et al., 2018).

This lack of emphasis on right-wing, or any form of extremisms other than "Islamist extremism", that has accompanied this dominant way of framing terrorism and religious violence has had significant consequences for counter-terrorism and a significant

impact on approaches to violent extremism (VE) that have emerged and are still emerging.

In sum, since the 1990s and particularly in the aftermath of 9/11 it appears that a certain causality between religion and violence has become embedded in public discourse. This is problematic, since it works as a blind to other causes of violence, particularly the political and historical dimensions. Moreover, it led to an enormous emphasis on the religious element leading to a neglect of other forms of political violence, particularly right-wing, that is arguably not that different from its "religious" counterpart.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM AND APPROACHES TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Since the events of September 11, 2011 countries have increasingly invested in the formulation of policies and strategies to deal with terrorism, with a rising focus on the assessment of violent extremism, and the "threat from within".

FIGURE 8 ARTICLES MENTIONING RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISMS IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWS SOURCES, 1995-2015 (KUNDNANI & HAYES, 2018: 7)

This led to a significant increase in the focus on violent extremisms [Figure 10], as well as an increase in both national and international CVE and PVE policies. Over time, these programs have been implemented and established as central elements of international humanitarian aid and development programs (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5).

The following sections shortly provide the origins of and elaborate on the problems associated with both CVE and PVE approaches, building a bridge towards the discussion of ways to transform the frame, and overcome these problems in the following chapter on transforming the frame.

5.1 GOING DUTCH & BRITISH EXTREMES: THE ORIGINS AND CVE AND PVE APPROACHES TO VE

The globalization of CVE/PVE policies is arguably the most compelling development of counter-terrorism policies in the last decade. This development, however, is also criticized for having given a new vocabulary to both the war on terrorism and the agencies involved (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 4-5), and has resulted in a status quo

where the terms "radicalization", "extremism" and "violent extremism" have become synonyms of "terrorism" in public discourse (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 4-5).

[Figure 11] demonstrates the stages of approaches to VE, showing the development from counter-terrorism to CVE and eventually PVE. The Netherlands and Britain had a significant influence in this development and will be briefly elaborated upon, alongside a glimpse into the intergovernmental sphere on both the EU and UN level.

"GOING DUTCH"

The first country to focus on the development of a model of the process of radicalization was the Netherlands. In the direct aftermath of 9/11, the Dutch General Intelligence Service (AIVD) determined many of the central themes that would later dictate the analysis of policy-making in this field. In its 2002 report, the AIVD amongst others set out the first profile of young men (in the Netherlands) most likely be recruited to "radical Islamic opinions"' (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 7). Engaging in partnerships with "moderate Muslims" was one of the proposals to counter radicalism (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 7). Furthermore, after the murder of Theo van Gogh in November 2004 in Amsterdam, the AIVD was the

> first Western intelligence agency to describe radicalization as an essentially ideological process that could occur autonomously in Western countries without the involvement of a recruiting organization. [It] described radicalization as driven by a "purely religious ideological component of radical-political Islam" disconnected from organizational recruitment or social and political context (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 8).

It was also in Amsterdam, that the first CVE policies emerged, aimed at the creation of an "early warning system", able to identify and intervene in cases of the ideological radicalization of young Muslims. This was done by means of collecting information on individuals 'who expressed religious and political opinions that were lawful but were nevertheless perceived to indicate a risk of extremism' (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 8). This "local approach" (Kaai, 2018) exists until today and has been adopted by other Dutch cities. It involves an "Information House", which closely cooperates with police agencies and intelligence, and is still primarily directed at Muslim communities, justified by the conviction that they constitute the biggest threat (Kaai, 2018).

The Dutch approach had a significant impact upon the development of CVE policies in Britain. The 7/7 attacks in London in 2005 are a key moment in his regard. From then on, there was a noticeable shift in the UK security official's analysis of extremisms from the focus on formal groups[32] to Islamist ideology.

In 2006, the UK's first PVE policy, which was renamed *Prevent* in 2011, was introduced under Tony Blair's government. It would emerge as the world's most extensive counter-extremism policy, and a key point of reference for the globalization of CVE[33]. In 2009, it was given a budget of £140 million (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 9).

It underwent a variety of modifications since the beginning, which cannot be elaborated on in detail due to the scope of this research. The year 2015, for instance, saw the implementation of *Prevent* on a statutory basis, resulting in more than 400 000 public sector workers, receiving special training. Only in 2015, 4000 people being reported as potential risks, 3/8 of which were children younger than eighteen. This development touches upon the problems connected to CVE and PVE more broadly. Specifially, it assumed that

> religious ideology was the main basis for understanding and countering violent extremism; […] and that individual radicalization was a predictable and easily identifiable process that could be halted through recruiting a large number of public officials to participate in surveillance and targeted intervention (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 10).

THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

While the interest of the EU in "radicalism" actually is much older than 9/11 – considering the role of the 1975 TREVI group, an intergovernmental predecessor of the

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[32] including animal rights activism, radical environmentalism, Irish nationalism, Black nationalism, anti-fascism, anarchism, the peace movement, communism, neo-Nazism, Trotskyism, and Islamic political movements

[33] It contained three main focus points: (1) Communities, referring to targeted capacity building and community engagement within Muslim populations' in Britain, aiming at empowering the moderate or mainstream Muslim voices against the violent extremist ideology; (2) Individuals, through the implementation on an early warning system inspired by the Amsterdam model, focusing specifically on individuals perceived at risk of becoming extremists, and (3) Overseas, by facilitating and supporting strategic communications projects and civil society organizations in Egypt, Pakistan and the Middle East, through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 9).

framework of police cooperation under "Third Pillar" and "Schengen" – the post-2005 objectives remained very constant for the first decade (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 20).

> 'Radicalisation' was essentially seen as a conveyer-belt process in which vulnerable Muslims were susceptible to external influences – first al-Qaeda, then, from 2008, a broader church of "radical Islamists" – said to espouse an "extremist worldview" that distorted the reality of Western policies and conflicts around the world in order to justify violence (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 20).

The EU strategy change significantly in 2014, when its central challenge was extended form the prevention of recruitment and radicalization to Islamic terrorist groups to actually 'combating violent extremism *write large*' (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 21), resulting in a move "beyond Islam". This change had two main purposes: (1) the prevention of the emergence of a "new generation of terrorists", and (2) the countering of all radicalization ultimately leading violent extremism, disregarding the underlying political and/or religious ideology (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 21).

> The process by which the EU CVE policy was developed has in turn led to the incorporation of many of the problematic features of national CVE frameworks, while avoiding the difficult conversations about fundamental rights, legitimacy, effectiveness, and the questionable underlying assumptions on which they are built (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 23).

It is expected that the EU will spend a total of €400 million on CVE and counter-radicalization initiatives between 2007 and 2020 (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 27). However, until today, the scientific literature questioning the core assumption of these initiatives, is still largely disregarded by policymakers on the EU level – because it questions the expansion and maintenance of these policies (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 29). In this context, it is also important to become aware of the non-legislative character of these EU policies (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 23).[34]

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[34] This refers to the fact that national and European parliaments are largely excluded from the decision-making process, with the exception of the 2015 European Parliament's involvement in a non-binding resolution (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 23) Also, more than 75% of relevant documents of the EU Council are not available for public scrutiny (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 21). Furthermore, more generally, the EU up until today, fails to provide any clear definition of either "extremism" or "radicalization" (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 21).

Alongside abundant fragmentation and incoherence, particularly the lack of a clear definition of terrorism in Security Council Resolutions is being increasingly criticized. It allows states to decide who does and does not count as a terrorist in their national legislation. This politicization endangers the transformation of longstanding (violent) conflicts between state and non-state actors into domestic "wars on terror". The former UN Special Rapporteur on Counterterrorism and Human Rights noted that:

> [O]verly broad definitions of 'terrorism' have been routinely used to target civil society, silence human rights defenders, bloggers and journalists, and criminalize peaceful activities in defense of minority, religious, labour and political rights (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 30).

More generally, as reconfirmed in 2010, the UN's Strategy is based on four pillars: (1) the tackling of conditions promoting the spread of terrorism; (2) the prevention and combating of terrorism; (3) creation of national and UN capacity to achieve the former goal; and (4) assure respect for the rule of law and human rights. However, (1) and (4) 'have attracted the least attention and remain relatively unimplemented compared to the more operational and security focused pillars (2) and (3)' (UN Special Rapporteur on Counterterrorism and Human Rights in Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 30).

The UN underwent a decisive shift towards PVE at the advent of the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, leading ultimately to the "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremisms" issued in 2016 by the UN Secretary-General. It entails more than 70 recommendations for international, regional and national action and calls upon all member states use this strategy as a basis for the implementation of national PVE programs (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 33).
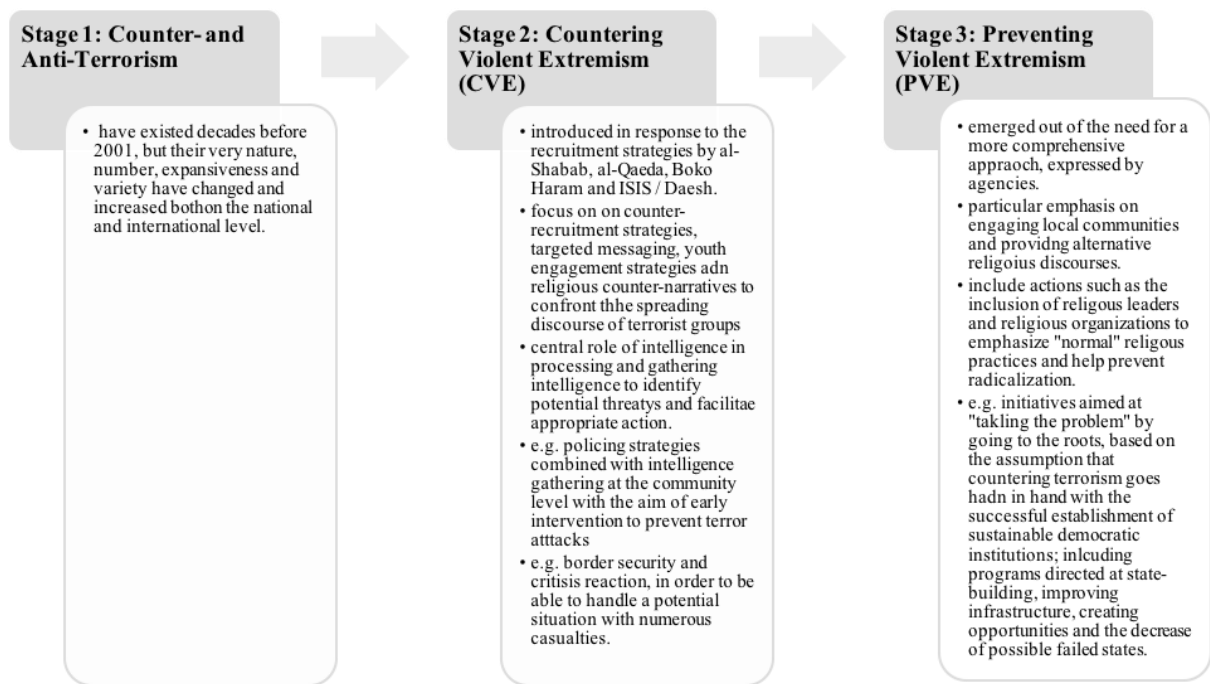
Stage 1: Counter- and Anti-Terrorism	Stage 2: Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)	Stage 3: Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)
• have existed decades before 2001, but their very nature, number, expansiveness and variety have changed and increased bothon the national and international level.	• introduced in response to the recruitment strategies by al-Shabab, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and ISIS / Daesh. • focus on on counter-recruitment strategies, targeted messaging, youth engagement strategies adn religious counter-narratives to confront thhe spreading discourse of terrorist groups • central role of intelligence in processing and gathering intelligence to identify potential threatys and facilitae appropriate action. • e.g. policing strategies combined with intelligence gathering at the community level with the aim of early intervention to prevent terror atttacks • e.g. border security and critisis reaction, in order to be able to handle a potential situation with numerous casualties.	• emerged out of the need for a more comprehensive appraoch, expressed by agencies. • particular emphasis on engaging local communities and providng alternative religoius discourses. • include actions such as the inclusion of religous leaders and religious organizations to emphasize "normal" religous practices and help prevent radicalization. • e.g. initiatives aimed at "takling the problem" by going to the roots, based on the assumption that countering terrorism goes hadn in hand with the successful establishment of sustainable democratic institutions; inlcuding programs directed at state-building, improving infrastructure, creating opportunities and the decrease of possible failed states.

FIGURE 9 OVERVIEW OF BASIC APPROACHES TO CVE/PVE (BASED ON INFORMATION FROM (ABU-NIMER, 2018: 3-4))

5.2 THE MAIN CRITIQUE ON CVE/PVE

In sum, the development indicated in the previous part and [Figure 11] has resulted in an emphasis on the Islamic religious community, particularly selected organizations and leaders, and the assumption that it occupies a central position in countering violent extremisms (VE) (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 4). Despite the varied and abundant nature of numerous CVE and PVE approaches, and the development they underwent throughout the last decade, they still fall short with regard to the following aspects:

(1) **'Securitization of CVE/PVE and the question of whose security**' (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5)

Counter-terrorism in general, and CVE/PVE policies in particular, are aimed at (1) intelligence and security gathering, and (2) the enhancement of local, national, regional and global security. Especially "early-warning systems", however, often prioritize intelligence gathering over taking an honest interest in community development. (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 6) 'One of the key issues has been the tension felt by many communities

that DVE initiatives were not there to support them but rather to spy on them' (Houry 2017 in Abu-Nimer, 2018: 6).

Moreover, the focus on international and regional security brings up the question of "whose security?". Many European- and US-led programmes in Niger, Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso for instance, have been mainly focused at countering and preventing the expansion of al-Qaeda and ISIS in the Sahel region (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 6). This prevention and countering is without any doubt important.[35] The problem, however, with these international and regional policies and programs, is that they are often led by the question whether they contribute to the security of Europe and the United States. This has been repeatedly criticized by veteran participants in in local community development programmes in the MENA:

> We know that you are worried about American security and not our security; that is why you came to work with us. Why to international agencies suddenly care about VE when we have had political violence and mass crimes for decades (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 6)?

The question of whose security is not only an international one. It is also one that deserves to be questioned on the national level. Taking the Netherlands, for instance, the only terrorist attack that has taken place is the 2016 attack on a mosque in Enschede. Despite this, the main focus of CVE/PVE is still direct at Muslim communities. Murray Ackman (2018) raises an interesting point in this regard. When talking about Western policies, he states that often it is neither about probability, nor about rational thinking. It is about removing the fear. Consequently, the main incentive may not be trying to deal with the drivers of terrorism, but 'responding in a way that makes people feel safer. Because terrorism *is* highly emotional. […] Right wing is just not as scary. Even though

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[35] For more information, see the interview with Otso Iho (Iho, 2018) Especially since the position of ISIS has weakened, three of the main questions emerging are whether al-Qaeda will fill that vacuum, whether it will benefit from ISIS fighters defecting (back) into al-Qaeda, and whether or not there might be an emerging cooperation between the two. Despite the fact that the two movements are ideologically very opposed, 'they are also probably more pragmatic than you might think' (Iho, 2018).[35] With regard to the cooperation between these groups, there have been signs on a low level, particularly in the Sahel region. 'And of course, you know, if you have a situation where you have kind of conservatives' campaign of international terrorism that is being pushed by a unified amalgamation of these two organizations, then you are looking at many more networks and recruits of people that can be used to further those aims. And that's not a particular positive prognosis' (Iho, 2018). This also refers to the problem of treating both al-Qaeda and ISIS under the umbrella label of "religious terrorism", can thus be problematic and cause the lack of noticing significant differences needed to effectively counter terrorism.

[…]there is quite a lot of right-wing attacks' (Ackman, 2018). In the context of past terrorist attacks, people

> 'wanted the government to respond and the government has. So, these people want the government to ensure security and they want it almost at all cost. Some people are very upset about the civil liberties and I think not everyone is. They are much happier to give up a lot for their sense of feeling okay' (Ackman, 2018).

This exchange of civil liberties for perceived increased safety, however, is problematic. In the context of the UK for instance, 'in order for such policies and strategies to be implemented […] many defining liberal democratic rules have had to be suspended' (Miller & Sabir, 2012: 27)[36]. As this research shows, CVE/PVE policies particularly target Muslim communities and an increase in their liberties and rights can have significant consequences [Figure 12]. As Otso Iho said, it is crucial, despite arguments that certain groups may be more prone to radicalization than others, that people are not treated as pure security risks (Iho, 2018).

(2) 'Externally imposed programming and designs' (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5)

The rapid globalization of CVE/PVE policies, led by the stressed urgency to counter VE and terrorism, has put increasing pressure on program designers to quickly produce and deliver indicators of success. Consequently, the vast majority of these programs tend to lack effectiveness in the long-run. In this context, the question emerges whether the focus on changing Islamic religious narratives, and publicly emphasizing diversity and denouncing VE in the name of religion, actually adds value to these initiatives. By specifically targeting one selected group, other stakeholders in need of such programs, are ignored (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 6).

Furthermore, these programs often lack of formal political and legal accountability (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 19). Most of the time, they are not implemented based on legislative frameworks. Consequently, these policies are carried out through 'partnerships between state agencies, local government, civil society partners and service providers, with very little formal accountability beyond the state bureaucracy' (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 19). This lack of a formal legal framework is strengthened

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[36] For more information on the UK strategies and policies, and their criticism, see (Kundnani, 2014; Miller & Sabir, 2012).

by the widespread lack of publicly available information. Thus, besides frequently being implemented externally, also including the EU and UN context, and within the context of the state bureaucracy, it is also very difficult for the public to assess where, how and by whom these policies are being implemented (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 20).

(3) '**Real added value of CVE/PVE initiatives compared to structural factors'**
(Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5)

Besides being presented as an effective cure to the problem of VE, initiatives often ignore 'deep-rooted infrastructural factors driving violent extremism' (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5). These include amongst others, corruption, discriminatory governance, a lack of policies that successfully ensure individual and collective freedoms, media censorship and/or territorial occupation. While the previous factors are more likely to be present in non-Western countries, structural violence is a problem that Western countries have to deal with as well – particularly given that there are more factors causing VE than any interpretation of a religion (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5).

(4) '**The root causes of terrorism and radicalization'** (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5) **&
"Islamization of CVE/PVE"** (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 11)

This is arguably one of the main and most important problems, particularly in the Western context. For the most part, scholars, politicians and public officials are denying a direct causal relation between terrorism and Islam, as well as between being religious and being a terrorist. In recent years, the concern and awareness of negative impact of associations making such a causal relationship have gained momentum.[37] Nevertheless, this connection remains persistent (Dawson, 2017: 44), mainly because religion remains the main explanatory factor in public debate (Nanninga, 2017b: 158). Particularly in the context of Western homegrown terrorism, the reluctance to consider religion an independent variable in the evaluation of the causalities of terrorism, becomes visible. Hence, the study of terrorism is flawed by a lack of a 'systematic and

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[37] In 2014, the even the UN Security Council stressed 'terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization'(UNSC 2014:1 in Tellidis, 2016: Terrorism and Religion)

differential analysis of the reciprocal effects of multiple variables' (Dawson, 2017: 32). Dawson raised the problem of the "explanatory gap" in this regard, stressing that 'far more people are affected by the cause in question than will ever become terrorists'. The factors may thus be needed for the explanation of who eventually becomes a terrorist, but there are clearly insufficient on their own (Dawson, 2017: 44).

The Global Terrorism Index 2017 visualized this phenomenon in the circle of individual and group grievances, [Figure 13], showing that religion is by no means the sole direct cause of alignment with violent extremism.
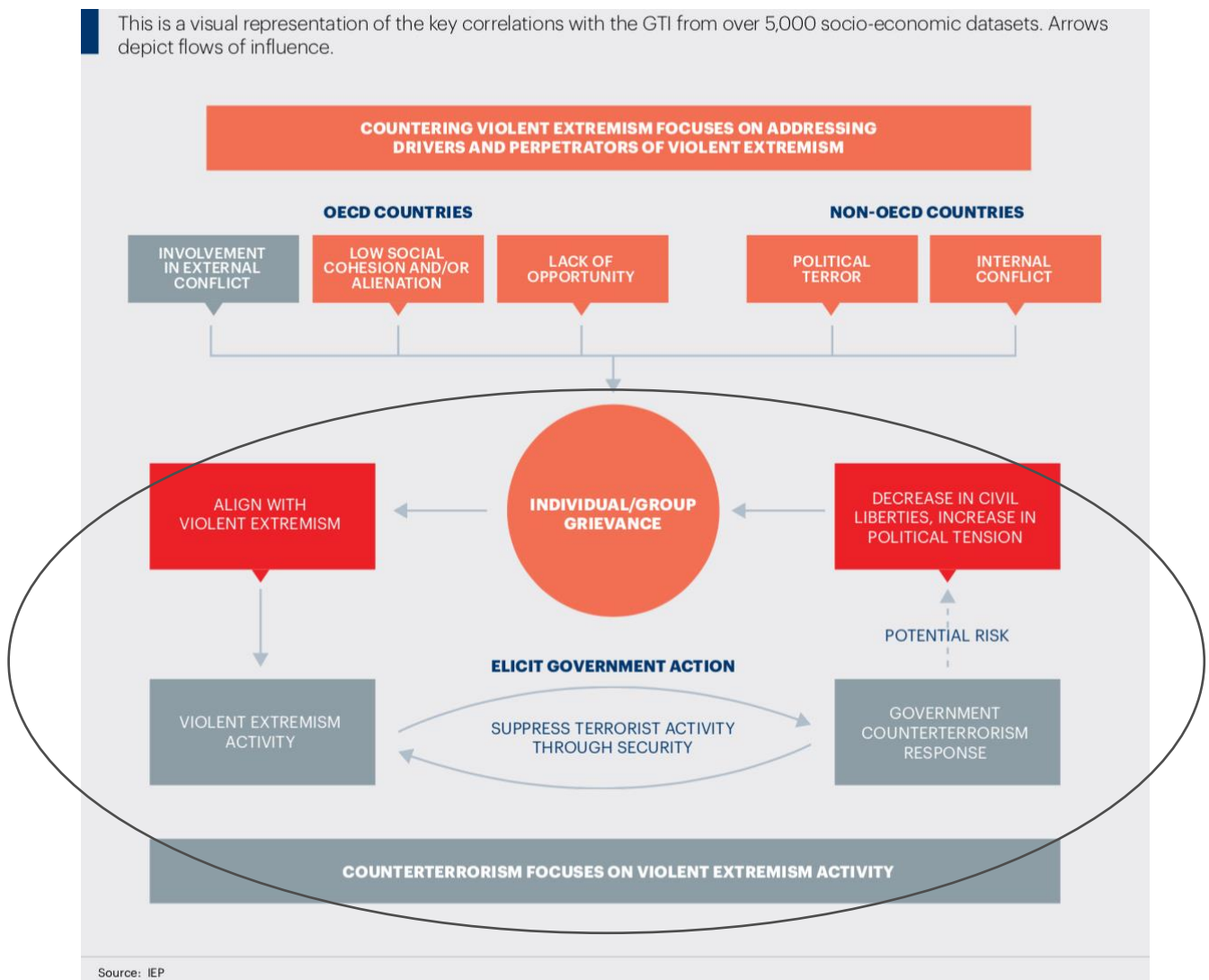

FIGURE 10 CIRCLE OF INDIVIDUAL / GROUP GRIEVANCES ("GTI," 2017: 64)

The realization of the other causes and contributors to VE is crucial. It is not that CVE/PVE are not effective counter-terrorism tools (Jackson & Pisoui, 2018; Koehler,

2018). The problem, however, is that the current narrative of radicalization does not possess any predictive power (Heath-Kelly, 2018: 219):

> [B]y searching for an easy explanation for home-grown terrorism, policymakers and the media have come to rely on 'conventional wisdom' about Islamic otherness as dangerous – rather than basing policies on scientific research (Githens-Mazer and Lambert, 2010 in Heath-Kelly, 2018: 219).

Exactly this emphasis on Islamic otherness has become the main lens through which Muslim identity is seen in the West. David Cameron's speech at the 2011 Munich Security Conference is an indicator of this. He stated that

> Behind Muslim terrorism lay[s] a "question of identity"; "the passive tolerance of recent years" had to be abandoned in favor of a much more assertive defense of British values against "Islamist extremism"; Muslims had to privilege their Britishness of their global allegiance to Muslims (Cameron in Kundnani, 2014: An Ideal Enemy).

It is the use of language like this, and the language of counter-terrorism more generally, that contributes to a stigmatization of Muslims, which leads to increasing political and societal tensions.

As a Muslim youth worker involved in a project funded by *Prevent*, said:

> The push for Britishness causes alienation. We become the 'other'. We need to be studied, managed, contained. Every conference we go to on Prevent frames things this way (Kundnani, 2014: Hearts and Minds).

Oliver Roy summarizes the above-mentioned points when stating:

> The process of violent radicalization has little to do with religious practice, while radical theology, as Salafism, does not necessarily lead to violence. The "leap into terrorism" is not religiously inspired but better seen as sharing "many factors with other forms of dissent, either political (the ultra-left), or behavioral: the fascination for sudden suicidal violence as illustrated in the paradigm of random shootings in schools (the 'Columbine syndrome') (Roy, 2008 in Kundnani, 2014: The Primacy of Politics).

This one-sided focus on religion has over time led to the denial or at least strong hesitation of regarding religion as a significant variable in countering terrorism. There thus appears to be a second consensus, derived from Western/ European history, namely that when examining the relationship between politics and religion, that religion is a private matter and should not exert any influence on the public policy affairs (Dawson, 2017: 45).

> The lack of sincere engagement with or even denial of religion and its identity components has been a programmatic limitation of many CVE/PVE initiatives. As a result, in most cases IGOs and government agencies have historically relied on secular international, regional, or local civil society entities to implement their programmes. […] Denying the need for positive, constructive engagement of religious actors has been, until recently, a characteristic of many international policy agencies (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 6)

In the context of policies associated with VE, it is crucial to realize that '[t]he delegitimization of the religious other's violence is not only a question of framing; the principle of legality is central to the continued expansion of objective violence' (Asad, 2007: 27).

This research is in no way intended to undermine the need to address violent extremism and underscore the importance of the aims of CVE/PVE programs (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 3). The problem, however, is that they often fail to adequately address the root causes, often resulting in the infringements upon civil liberties and/or the specific targeting of one group (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 5). 'Ultimately, addressing VE is fundamentally about conflict transformation, yet, CVE/PVE interventions are rarely designed to be transformative' (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 3). There is a great need to take the "human factor" into account – 'the community context, culture and religion, building trust with the community, fostering intra-community relationships through dialogue, finding a language of peace and peace education, etc.' (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 3). This holds for the international, as well as the national context, considering the recent in anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamophobia.

Particularly since the beginning of the European refugee crisis in 2014, politicians and political parties have increasingly began to stress the need of efficiently responding the threat posed by VE (Kreiswetter/Chane in Abu-Nimer, 2018: 3). In turn, the prevention of radicalization of Muslim youth among the incoming refugees and at home has emerged as a top priority on the international agenda (Koehler in Abu-Nimer, 2018: 3). In order for these policies to be successful and transformative in the long run, an environment allowing for dual or symmetric competitive frames has to be created as a first step.

Transforming this long-existing and in the meantime well-established asymmetrical framing, however, is not an easy and quick fix. Despite the growing inter/governmental concern about growing 'populism and the Far Right, there is up until today hardly any

analysis of the intersection of counterterrorism narratives with the increasing crisis of human rights democracy and fascism (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 19).

6. A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE: TRANSFORMATION

As established previously, there is a persistent need to enable dual or symmetric competitive frames with regard to religion, terrorism and radicalization. This chapter elaborates on possibilities to contribute to achieving this goal. It begins with a focus on the frame more generally and then, focusing on CVE/PVE more specifically, presents the strategy of Transforming Violent Extremism (TVE) as a possible solution to bridge the "explanatory gap" inherent in CVE/PVE strategies.

First of all, it is important to highlight that acts of terrorism and political violence in regions other than "the West" are reported on and analyzed on a regular basis (Mohamedou, 2018: Introduction). Institutions like the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) for instance cover all casualties of terrorism all over the world in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (Ackman, 2018), and IHS Markit has informants all over the world, covering all attacks of political violence (Iho, 2018).

The problem thus does not seem to be the availability of data. It is that the 'the core representation of terrorism in the well-embroidered media and policy drapery is centrally the menace it represents to the West' (Mohamedou, 2018: The Islamic State and Political Violence in the Early Twenty-First Century). Hence, as it has been previously in the examination of the invention and reification of the framing of terrorism, non-Western victims and "Western" receive significantly less attention, both on the national and international level.

The main reasons for this unequal attention most certainly is a very human one, namely that of sensationalism and interest. Murray Ackman provided a highly interesting insight in this context:

> [I]t's not the media's fault, you can blame humans - people [who] like reading that ISIS is involved with everything. That's why people read a story and that's what sells. So, there is a tendency to make an ISIS-connection. Like […] the Nice attack, […] there was this guy on television saying 'There is all the hallmarks of ISIS.'. And I said "What?! What are the hallmarks of ISIS?" This kind of attack has never happened before. But this is what all people are wanting

to do, it's being the first to call a connection. It's the thing to do'(Ackman, 2018).

As this quote already suggests, changing this frame and consequently breaking the circle of individual and group grievances, is not an easy task. This research proposes two main, interconnected focus points:

(1) The continuation of previous efforts by CTS to increase and spread awareness of the complexities and different meanings of the concepts central to the discourse on terrorism and religion, as well as the awareness of the impact of the terminology we use.

(2) The decrease of the voicelessness of the, in this case, Muslim "other", that has been so persistent over time.

CONCEPTS AND LANGUAGE

This approach dives directly into the contemporary debate about the definition of terrorism, and whether or not terrorism is (still) a useful term, or should be abandoned (Jackson & Pisoui, 2018). At the very beginning of this debate, it is crucial to be aware of two things: Firstly, 'this word is simply not going to disappear from the political vocabulary (it is far too useful to too many people for this to occur)' (English, 2009 in Richards, 2018: 14). Secondly,

> the users of political language are not entirely free to shape it; once concepts are constructed and endowed with meaning, they take on a certain autonomy, especially when they are adopted by the news media, disseminated to the public, and integrated into a general context of norms and values (Crenshaw in Whittaker 2001 in Richards, 2018: 14)

Acknowledging, that the concept will most certainly stay for the future, it is important to think about ways to transform it. While Anthony Richards (2018) proposes an analytical definition, understood in terms of a particular method of violence, rather than in terms of who the perpetrator is. While this suggestion would certainly contribute significantly to weakening the framing of terrorism in terms of religion, it is not very realistic. '[T]here will always be a focus on the actors, regardless of whether it is a state or a non-state. In part because it is more interesting: it is about stories, about narratives and politics' (Ackman, 2018).

While it is thus very unlikely that the term itself will disappear, it is possible to change the use of it, allowing for a more nuanced reporting on the events at stake. The news agency *Reuters* is one example. Since 2014, its editors and reports are strongly advised to restrain from the use of terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" whenever possible, except when in direct quotes. The *Reuters Handbook on Journalism* calls upon their employees use more specific words and

> [a]im for a dispassionate use of language so that individuals, organisations and governments can make their own judgement on the basis of facts. (The Reuters Handbook on Journalism 2014 in Bakker, 2015: 30).

Considering that the media frames have a significant influence on the individual frame, an expansion of a use of the terms like at Reuters, can certainly have an impact on the long run. Eventually, this will then also arrive in the political sphere. Changing the latter, however, appears to be equally problematic. Murray Ackman reclass the attitude of a former White House official who armed under Obama:

> [H]is view is that language doesn't matter. The people that know, know. And they already know that it's the groups you are talking about and that it's not all Muslims. The people are inclined to believe that this mysterious other that is responsible for all ill and evil, they're going to believe that, regardless of the terminology. […]His view is that these debates [about language and concepts] are the wrong hills to die on (Ackman, 2018).

As this research has shown, language, words and the labels we do attach to things do matter. Terms like 'terrorism' are lenses that co-construct and shape the world around and attribute meaning to our observations. It is crucial to understand that 'whenever we use language to understand a process or event, we *necessarily* exclude alternative languages – and thus alternative understandings – of the same occurrence' (Jackson et al., 2011: 113). Throughout the history of the field of terrorism studies, alternative languages have been marginalized consistently. Moreover, after 9/11 and the beginning of the war on terror, a description of this new, "religious terrorism" has been accepted quickly and reproduced beyond Bush's administration (Croft 2006 in Jackson et al., 2011: 113)

The work of Pieter Nanninga on al-Qaeda deserves attention in this context. It is common knowledge that al-Qaeda's struggle is a religious one according to the movement's own representation. The concepts of religion, terrorism and politics,

however, do not have a universal meaning (Nanninga, 2017b: 161).[38] Consequently, any conclusion and statement that 'religion' has contributed to an attack is inconsistent (Nanninga, 2017b: 163).

This research further proposes that there is a need of a powerful actor to introduce this change. Many had hoped that Obama would be this person (Ackman, 2018; Jackson, 2014; McCrisken, 2014).

> 'However, even the most cursory examination of Obama's first term suggests that in the counterterrorism field at least, there is far more continuity than change with the policies and approach of George W. Bush Jr era' (Jackson, 2014).

Hence, even though the message changed, the policies did not. The argument that political realities have complicated Obama's attempts to effect ideological change and 'reconstruct the narrative of the "War on Terror" by ceasing to use the same language as the Bush administration" (McCrisken, 2014) is without any doubt valid. Nonetheless, it is also crucial to realize that the public might have been selective in what they wanted to hear in this regard (Jackson, 2014; McCrisken, 2014).

The end of the Obama administration, however, does not mean that there are no current efforts that can contribute to the changing of the asymmetrical framing. The NCTV is for instance currently drafting a letter to the House of Representatives, stressing the urgent need to avoid stigmatization in their use of language and warning of the negative consequences thereof (Kaai, 2018). Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced an alternative vision to the UN line in its February 2017 report "Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and the Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity" (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 34). While most analysis and approaches to VE begin with terrorist or extremist groups, this

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[38] 'Although al-Qaeda claims to wage a religious war, the meanings it attributes to the concepts of religion, politics and terrorism diverge from those that are dominant in the West. […] To understand al-Qaeda's attacks, one should look at the specific backgrounds and motivations of both the organisers and perpetrator sin their particular contexts. […] There is plenty of empirical material that shows that particular constructs of beliefs which actors consider religious can contribute to violence. For instance, my research on the farewell videos of al-Qaeda's suicide bombers demonstrates that al-Qaeda's message of a worldwide religious conflict provided these men with a sense of agency and empowered them as the alleged followers of pure Islam who defend the *umma* against their enemies. However, this is something different than designating al-Qaeda's suicide attacks as 'religious violence' or claiming that religion, as an abstract category, has contributed to these attacks. Attributing a specific role to religion is arbitrary […] (Nanninga, 2017b: 161-2).

report actually starts off stating that any effort to prevent VE "must acknowledge the primacy of politics", asserting that '[p]olitical decisions and developments at global, national and local levels are key divers of violent extremism (UNDP 2017 in Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 35).

> This provided a critical shift away from the dominant idea among EU and UN discussions: that support for terrorism and violent extremism was primarily the result of individual radicalization processes. It also stated form the outset that such efforts "can be profoundly counterproductive if they curtail basic political, human and civil rights", and that they must "avoid focusing exclusively on religious extremism but consider the full range of extremist discourse and behavior. The UNDP report then […] calls for […] actors to "focus on understanding and addressing the root causes of violent extremism as part of a prevention agenda" (UNDP 2014 in Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 35)

Moreover, the UNDPs September 2017 report "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment", found that

> While deprivation, marginalization and perceived state violence or abuse of power was pushing young Africans into the clutches of violent extremism, the "tipping point" that triggered 71 percent of recruits to join an extremist group was some form of government action (UNDP 2017 in Kundnani & Hayes, 2018: 35)

Considering the position of the UNDP in the international arena, there is a high chance that the insights may one the one handside spill over to other areas of CVE/PVE, and on the other handside, impact the frame and lens through which most Western actors view the issues of radicalization and terrorism.

GIVING A VOICE AND LISTENING TO 'THE OTHER'

What these recent developments will do for sure is to increase public debate, a key necessity to decrease the voicelessness of the "other" and transform its depiction.

> [D]ialogue is necessary for both creating and addressing social and public spheres where human institutions, structures, and patterns of relationships are constructed […] Dialogue is needed to provide access to, a voice in, and constructive interaction with, the ways we formalize our relationships in the ways our organizations and structures are built, respond, an behave (Lederach, 2014: Defining Conflict Transformation)

According to Geran Kaai, this is one of the most crucial elements to counter stigmatization (Kaai, 2018). Kaai suggest the political "migrant" party "Denk" might play in the Dutch context, considering its intention to counter the populism from

amongst others the PVV. Interestingly, the German newspaper *DIE ZEIT* published an article in May 2018, raising the question whether Germany is in need of a party like "Denk" as well (van Eijck, 2018).

Another project that has literally given a voice to the "other" is the New York Times podcast "The Caliphate" by Rukmini Callimachi and Andy Mills, which aired in April 2018. It is currently praised as one of the top podcasts on the international level. Considering its broad and increasing audience, its insights are likely to transform the individual frames of many.

In sum, it is crucial to become aware how this framing of terrorism and religious violence over time has influenced our understanding of the phenomenon and is influencing policy making up to today. In the light of the potential threat posed by returning foreign fighters and the risk of radicalization, it is pivotal to eliminate factors that might contribute to further alienation and consequently violent behavior. The framing, however, has not only negatively influenced the rise of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim sentiments and right-wing extremism in the West, it also had an impact on peacebuilding operations.

> In order to get funding for our peacebuilding programs, now we have to describe them in the context of violent extremism, otherwise we have no chance of being supported or even making it to the initial screening (Head of an International NGO, Washington DC in Abu-Nimer, 2018: 2)

CVE/PVE/TVE: "FROM DENIAL TO AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH"

As previously established, both CVE and PVE have their strength, and, most importantly, their weaknesses. 'TVE [Transforming Violent Extremism] is viewed as complementary efforts bridging between CVE [and] PVE endeavours (Mat Isa, 2018), based on the concept of conflict transformation (Lederach, 2014).

So far, most international policy agencies have denied the need for a constructive and positive engagement of religious actors. Hence, the notion of integration is central to TVE [Figure 13]:

> To bridge the gap between the secular and the religious and to increase the likelihood of funding solutions that will work, there is a mutual responsibility in which religious leaders and community actors must be genuinely involved in initiating alternative framing for CVE/PVE approaches used in their

communities, especially when they are externally imposed. Religious leaders and religious peacemakers not only have the well-earned trust of their communities, but they are also able to use their religious identity to positively shift perceptions along the conflict-peace continuum (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 15)

Even though there has been a positive development recently (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 7), the scale and nature of this engagement has remained at the first, *instrumentalization* level (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 8). The importance of properly integrating religion in efforts to counter VE has also been stressed by Rukmini Callimachi in her interview with Abu Huzaifa al-Kanadi, a returned foreign fighter from Canada:

> If we take the time to listen to these people, we learn that it is belief that brought them to this place, but it is also belief that brought them out. It is the contradictions, the hypocrisy and the moments in time when the Islamic State does not live up to its theological message that it finally propels people like Huzaifa to leave' (Callimachi & Mills, n.d.: 11.35).

In the same interview, Huzaifa, at that point still hiding from the Canadian authorities, actually admits that he turn himself in for help and treatment to religious authorities, but certainly not to the government and security instances (Callimachi & Mills, n.d.).
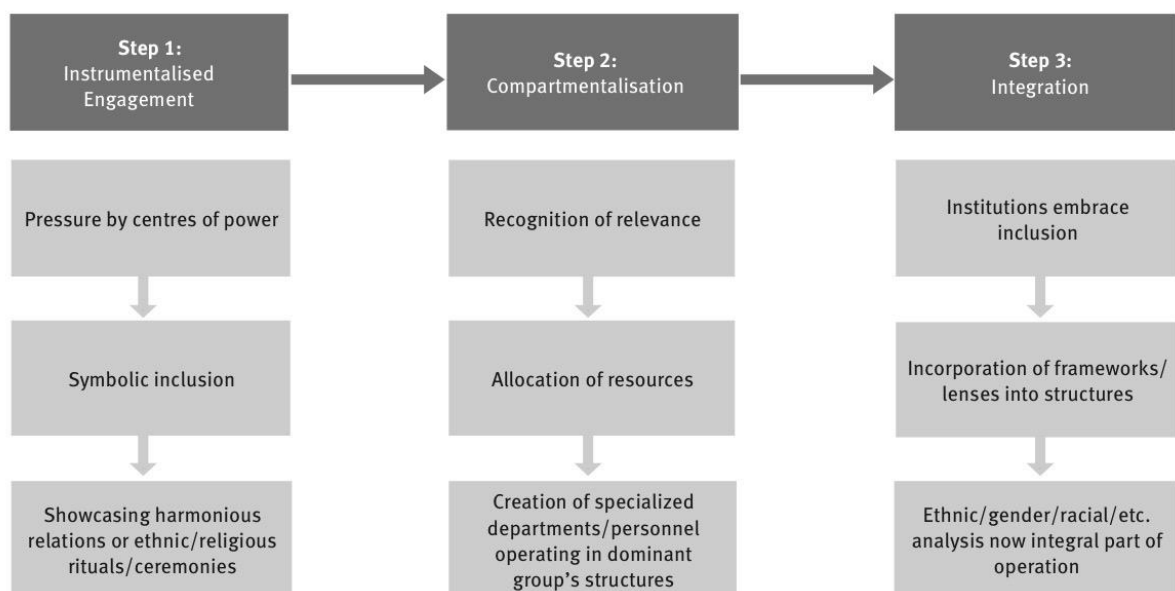

FIGURE 11 FROM INSTRUMENTALIZATION TO INTEGRATION (ABU-NIMER, 2018: 8)

So far, there is no example or practice in both national and international policy-making that can illustrate such an institutional and systematic integration of religious actors

(Abu-Nimer, 2018: 9). An inclusion of the concept of conflict transformation in CVE/PVE could be successful, however.

> 'Perhaps, most importantly, conflict transformation places before us the big questions: Where are we headed? Why do we do this work? What are we hoping to contribute and build? […] finding constructive ways to address conflict require[s] a complex web of change processes guided by a transformational understanding of life and relationship. (Lederach, 2014: Conclusion)

CONCLUSION

As this research has shown, the question of the consequences of framing terrorism in the light of religious violence for both counterterrorism and conflict transformation is an important one. It does not only affect human relations and the way we look at "the other", but also the policies made to secure our future. As became evident, however, both are victim to deeply inherent misconceptions and misinterpretations that emerged through a combination of events, means of knowledge production, experts and other stakeholders. The emerging narratives continue to have a lasting effect on the contemporary understanding of terrorism.

As the examination of the origin of this framing has shown, the development of (counter)terrorism is rooted in the late 1960s. The focus then, was still largely on (counter)insurgency and only a few scholars shifted their focus towards terrorism. The academic output, as well as the number of scholars, grew significantly throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when terrorism studies emerged as a distinct field. It was, however, heavily marginalized within Western, and particularly American, academia. As the Cold War heightened, terrorism became largely associated with the Soviet sponsorship and network narrative. It was after the fall of the Berlin Wall that the focus drastically shifted towards religion and particularly "Islamic terrorism" and replaced the position previously held by the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the massacre at the 1972 Olympics, the Iranian Revolution 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had already sparked negative portrayals of Muslims in the West. The 1993 attack on the World Trade Centre and the spread across borders of suicide bombings by movements such as Hamas, strengthened the notion of "religious" and "Islamic terrorism" was turned into a powerful frame that significantly influences policymaking until today. The attacks of 9/11 only supported this narrative.

The asymmetrical representation of competitive frames by both politicians and in the media continues to play an important role in this regard. Throughout history, there have been numerous examples of one-sided, depoliticized and dehistoricized coverage of events related to terrorism and political violence, particularly when there is a religious element involved. Coverages of incidents often leave the "other" voiceless, reducing them in the case of Muslims to the sole information available about them – their religion.

The problem, however, does not appear to be the availability of information. As the interviews with Otso Iho and Murray Ackman showed, there are extensive databases available that cover all cases of political violence, as well as all forms and types of terrorism. Rather, the problem appears to be selective and reductionist use of that information in public discourse. The media, significantly influenced by the sensationalist tendencies of its audience, play a significant role in this regard. Simultaneously, particularly at the local level, policymakers are faced with the highly emotionalized concept of terrorism, resulting in policies often more directed at reducing the fear of the broader population than actually being effective in countering terrorism. These policies often go hand in hand with a reduction of civil liberties. While the broader population appears largely willing to exchange them for (perceived) increased safety, it is problematic for the target groups of these policies – primarily Muslims. It can lead to stigmatization, alienation and grievances. Moreover, it results in an enhanced focus on one type of political violence, downplaying others such as right-wing terrorism which is actually increasing significantly in OECD countries and is largely directed at the same group.

Hence, the inability of telling and creating an equally strong competitive frame is highly problematic. This research shows, that particularly with regard to CVE/PVE policies, there is an enormous focus on Muslim communities, based on the conviction that their belief – or a certain interpretation thereof – is the main cause of VE. This depoliticized assessment of the causes of extremisms, violent extremism, and radicalization only strengthen the circle. In combination with the use of language in public discourse, there is a persistent danger of stigmatization that may cause further alienation and incentives for retaliation.

In order to effectively counter conflict, on both the international and national level, a transformation of the current held beliefs regarding the relationship between religion and violence is needed, including the realization that religion – while undeniably being problematic in certain cases – can be a helpful tool in achieving this. Rukmini Callimachi's work on "The Caliphate" for instance has shown that despite being a reason to join ISIS, a person's belief was often also the deciding factor that got them out. Moreover, TVE approaches have the ability of bridging the gaps of CVE and PVE policies outlined in this research.

There is a great need of breaking the binaries of good and evil, religious and secular that are so embedded in Western discourse. They have led to misinterpretations and misconceptions, which have to be highlighted and eradicated. This is not an easy task and it requires increasing communication between the different parts of society and the creation of space for equally strong competitive frames to evolve. It requires powerful actors to create room and a move towards a less emotional connotation of terrorism. People such as Rukmini Callimachi, Andy Mills, the NCTV and the UNDP have the potential to be such actors, each targeting a different audience. The last year has seen an increase in critical attitudes and voices towards the topic and it will be interesting to see how they play out in the future.

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ANNEX 1: COMMUNICATION LOG

DATE	COMMUNICATION
25.01.2018	First contact with Otso Iho (IHS Markit) via e-mail. Put in touch by M. McIvor. Exchange about research topic and agreement to conduct an interview in London on 07.03.2018.
26.01.2018	Sent e-mail to Tom Mills and David Miller, asking for interviews in London.
10.02.2018	Sent reminder to Tom Mills and David Miller. No response.
01.03.2018	Meeting with supervisor about literature review and interview guide Otso Iho.
07.03.2018	**Interview with Otso Iho in London.**
07.03.2018	Contact with Nusharadin Mat Isa established in London. First exchange of ideas and contact details.
13.04.2018	Sent e-Mail to Talia Hagerty (IEP), asking for a contact to answer questions about the GTI.
14.04.2018	Talia Hagerty put me in contact with Murray Ackman. Appointment for interview made with Murray.
14.04.2018	Sent e-mail to Dick Schoof at the NCTV, asking for an interview.
16.04.2018	Response by Secretary of NCTV, stating that Dick Schoof is absent in the given period, but that Geran Kaai will contact me to conduct the interview.
24.04.2018	Received e-mail by Secretary of Geran Kaai, proposing a meeting on 30.04.2018. Meeting accepted.
25.04.2018	Contact Rukmini Callimachi for interview. Positive response.
	Contact New York Times to sign off on interview request; received positive reply.
26.04.2018	Short meeting with supervisor to check interview guide for the interview with Geran Kaai (NCTV).
30.04.2018	Agreement that the interview with Rukmini won't take place due to her packed agenda in the upcoming weeks.
30.04.2018	**Interview with Geran Kaai (NCTV) in The Hague.**
30.04.2018	E-Mail by Murray Ackman asking to change interview date to 01.05.2018
01.05.2018	**Interview with Murray Ackman (IEP) in The Hague.**
04.05.2018	**Conference call with Rukmini Callimachi and Andy Mills.**
08.05.2018	Sent interview notes to Geran Kaai for fact check. Received fact checked notes back.

Background Information

1. Could you tell a bit more about (a) IHS Markit and Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre and (b) your work within the organization and (c) how you got involved?

Operationalization of 'Terrorism' and 'Religion'

1. Could you elaborate on the methodology used for the Global Attack Index? How do you 'select' attacks, who double checks them, who 'categorizes' them and based on what?

2. You mentioned in your e-mail contact that at Jane's you analyse and cover all forms of political violence. What constitutes a 'violent' act?

3. How do you deal with 'religion' at Jane's? In the infographic about the Global Attack Index 2017 I noticed that you use 'subcategories' like: 'Sunni-Islam'. But how is it possible to distinguish between 'religious' and 'political' motives? How can you clearly distinguish 'religious' from 'secular' behaviour?
   - Attacks on the West are often justified in terms of revenge for killings and bombs; foreign policy in general.

4. In our e-mail contact, you touched upon the question why violence driven by radical Islamism (or propagated by actors driven by that ideology, even if individuals who commit the acts sometimes have a limited understanding of the ideology) is treated as international terrorism, while often violence perpetrated by right-wing extremist groups is portrayed more in terms of domestic violent crime.
   - What are the implications of this?
   - How is it possible to draw such a clear line between domestic and international violence/terrorism? The person who drove a vehicle into a Christmas market in Berlin for instance was about to be deported. How is it possible to distinguish between international and domestic issues? And religious/political ones? Similar with al-Qaeda's and IS's attacks on the West: framed in political terms; as revenge for their foreign policy.
   - Do you know more about the motives of the perpetrators of the recent three attacks in the UK? (affiliation with network, etc. was rather unclear)

5. Why is Jane's only focusing on non-state violence? In the context analysis / profiles of the approx. 290 groups, is state terrorism or violence accounted for?

Islamophobia

- In the literature, there is a debate emerging about the impact of counter-terrorism practices on individuals, particularly Muslims and their human and civil rights. (e.g. Terrorism Act 2000. Under Section 44 of that Act, the police were entitled to stop and search any person or vehicle without any requirement for 'reasonable suspicion). What is your view on that?
- 'New wave of terrorism' (anti-Muslim violence). Ask about his dissertation on Counter-Jihad (e.g. White Wolves in the UK in the 2000s). Is this a growing problem?

How Terrorism Ends

1. There is a lot of talk about a victory over IS, especially after it's 'capital' Raqqa fell last October. To what extent do you think that a military defeat is significant and most importantly successful to 'end' IS in the long run?

2. What about people who do not return? I would assume that the support network of a group is of significant importance. Even though a group might be militarily defeated, the supporters are still out there.

3. What is necessary for counter terrorism and de-radicalization programmes to successfully counter terrorism (if one can say that this is even possible). And how are the two intertwined?
- Focus across the family unit; counter terrorism focus on foreign fighters most likely to conduct attacks; de-radicalization programmes ensure wider family

4. What and how big is the threat of returning fighters? Across Europe approx. 5000 men travelled to participate (UK: 850, approx. 450 returned).

5. Are there 'profiles' of returned fighters? Is there and should there be a distinction between foreign fighters and foreign *terrorist* fighters?
- UN Resolution 2170 of 15 August 2014 used FTF for the first time; though no definition of either FTF or terrorism.
- Are people fighting against IS (joining Peshmerga, etc.) also included in this definition and to what extent do they pose a threat? (e.g. 'Mike', Instagram account)

6. How 'strict' should they be dealt with? In one of your articles or interviews you touched upon significant differences amongst European countries, despite the harmonization taking place; e.g. difference Nordic countries & UK. You also suggested that the experience of a terrorist attack in the country often results in harsher sentences. Would you say that these hard tactics could present an obstacle to the conflict transformation?

7. Do you think that Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital will have an impact on jihadi groups, particularly their membership? (different responses, but will more people join their course? > if yes, how could you separate religion from politics then?

8. What do you think will happen to the power vacuum left by IS? Will it be filled by al-Qaeda?

Influence of the Media

1. What is the influence and role of the media in the debates about terrorism?
- Also: use of media by 'radical Islamists'
- Also: Hollywood & voicelessness of 'the other' in general? Often, we now very little about the people, other than that they are Muslim.
2. Do you think that it is important to differentiate between the various 'radical Islamist' groups? It is of course a useful umbrella term, but would you say that some important information and nuances might get lost by using it? (e.g. difference IS and al-Qaeda concerning beheadings).
3. What was the influence of the Charlie Hebdo / Paris attacks and the "Je suis Charlie" movement on counter terrorism but also public opinion?
- In an article you mentioned greater harmonization of tactics within Europe.

Could you tell a bit more about IHS Markit, Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre and your work there?

So, I work at a place called Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, short JTIC and we are part of company called IHS Markit. It's a big data analytics centre focusing on all kinds of things. They are literally looking at all kinds of things in the world from mineral compositions in different asteroids and their value potential for mining to maritime operations or shipping or energy and all kinds of stuff. So, I sit within a kind of defence and security area and in a sort of counter-risk and political risk area of that business. And essentially what we do is open source intelligence work, so everything we write about is based on openly available materials, so all kinds of media sources, official reports and sometimes we also use source networks on the ground – you know speaking to people and all that kind of almost reporting work. So basically, we work with everything that is open source and not classified and we sell this information to mostly, for my business line, to kind of government clients in the national security sector for industries and intelligence agencies and law enforcement and that kind of sectors. So that's the organization. It's really the bigger group, it's huge. It's about 10 000 people, maybe a bit more. And in the defence side we are probably a few hundred. And the terrorism desk is just a small part of that.

There is a lot of people working on all kinds of different issues from kind of the tactical side of things – it could be the use of different technologies by militant groups, stuff like drones and different kinds of explosives, and understanding the tactical requirements to build them or their impact, or stuff that is a bit more strategic, so for instance looking at new information or the trajectories that certain conflicts are taking and how that is affecting certain groups and their operational capabilities and that kind of stuff.

Super interesting.

So, that's what I do. I am there as a kind of generalist within the terrorism desk, which means in theory I have to write about things relating to the whole world rather than any kind of regional specialism. I have an area focus in kind of Asia, Pacific, South-East Asia region and Europe and Northern America. So that's my kind of story.

And how did you end up at the JTIC?

I just kind of went into political risk consultancy. I started off looking at networking and nuclear proliferation, looking at North and South Korea and essentially monitoring how the nuclear energy technology could be used to proliferate weapons. And as part of that work I kind of got my prestige in political risk consultancy and ended up moving around different companies and anyways now I am here.

JTIC publishes the Annual Global Attack Index. Could you tell a bit more about how you obtain the information?

So the Attack Index is essentially a kind of data digest of our database, which has all kinds of events related to terrorism, so everything from counterterrorism operations to attacks, the spread of propaganda, the release of statements and all those kinds of things. And they are all attached to lots of metadata. It is basically a database where you can filter with hundreds of thousands of events.

So the Global Attack Index is kind of an annual summary of our data, looking at – from a quantitative perspective - what have been the biggest trends and of changes in kinds of tactics, most active groups, and those kinds of things. So that's what the purpose of that Index is.

In your e-mail you also said that you don't only look at terrorism, but also at other forms of violence / "all forms of political violence".

That's right. So I don't quite remember the exact context of that e-mail, but I think the point was that it's not just Islamist militancy and Jihadism that we look. It includes everything that falls under politically motivated violence, so anarchism, we look at right-wing extremism of course, different forms and sub-genres on both sides. Nationalist insurgencies, all kinds of things. So anything that is kind of a non-state actors, we e will look at it if it has some kind of a political motivation.

And do you know why you only look at non-state actors and for instance not at actions by states? In the literature I came across about whether or not state terrorism – being aware of the debate thereof – should be included or not.

Well, I think those discussions are more relevant in the context of like defining what terrorism is and what the kind of policial implications of that are. From our perspective, we are looking at it from a more practical perspective. So non-state actors have different capabilities, different resources and different capabilities than state-actors. So there is a whole different infrastructure behind those actors and their ability to impact change and conducting operations on a

completely different scale. I think that's why they are separated in our methodology. And of course we have people in our company who look at state actors but in terms of the study of terrorism, we have to draw a line somewhere and for us that is non-state actors. And I think there is a practical reason for that.

Proabaly from a counter-terrorism kind of operators or government perspective there is also pratical reasons for it – for making those distinctions.

I also read that you have like 290 profiles of organizations or movements. How do you make those profiles and what is included in those profiles? If you can elaborate on that of course.

I can elaborate a little bit on that. They are essentially histories of these groups. So charging their formation to their operational capabilities to their leadership and organizational affiliations, those kind of things.

So like a very extensive history of particular groups.

And all of that is probably only accessible to your "customers", right?

Yes, that's right.

Ah, too bad ☺ I also had some question about the methodology and how you decide whether an act is an act of terrorism. You said that you gather your information from media reports.

Most of the event data is media driven. And then longer political work relies on a broader set of data and network of sources. But lots of events data is from the media. In terms of how we determine what we include and what we exclude is that they have to have some kind of political motivation usually. Some sort of, with some sort of grey areas. We work with most kinds of hate crimes if they are classified as hate crimes, so a violent crime that is motivated by Islamophobia or attacks against LGTB groups for example, all of that kind of action we would also cover. But there needs to be a clear, an ability to clearly see that this was motivated by, this was racially aggregated. If it's something that is just a violent crime, which has maybe ambiguous elements, but is not definitive from various open sources, we won't cover it. So it all comes down to what you can verify in open sources.

I also read that you double-check or fact check everything.

Yes, there is a verification process.

Interesting. And of course I am particularly interested in the notion of "religious violence". I noticed in the Global Attack Index, that you work with sort of sub-categories, so one group is "Sunni-Islam", whereas another one is "Marxist", etc. How is it possible to distinguish and categorize these groups so clearly? Because I can imagine that they overlap in cases.

I think typically from the perspective of the group, what they believe in and what they are motivated by, those are fairly clear. So in the case of militant Islamists, there is usually not that much ambiguity as to what the groups believe their own theological grounding may be. So of course from an outsiders perspective, so us assessing them, we might question whether what they are doing is actually representative of that religion or particular sector or whatever, but we are concerned with how these groups see themselves and classify themselves. That's where it really comes from. I mean most of these groups will have some kinds of manifesto or extensive literature that they've put out or you knew lectures or statements by key leaders laying out their positions. So that is true for Marxist groups and anarchist groups as well. There is a lot of anarchist literature laying out the foundation for why they are organizing the way they are doing. So that's what it is about basically.

I find that very interesting. I went to the presentation of the Global Terrorism Index where they for instance only had labelled religious and not the sub-categories that you are using for examples.

Yes, it is so important to make those distinctions. If you for example look at something like the conflict in Chechenia, the initial conflict or at the initial stage it was more Sufi-driven, while in the later conflict and also militants who left the North Caucasus now for Syria, they are mostly Sunni. And they fight and are motivated by quite different end states. So on the Sunni side there is a much more puritanical and extremist idea of what the world should look like and what kind of legal system should be established, whereas the Sufi aren't so much concerned with implementing that same kind of … like… puritan view of Islam in public or some estate. So how can you understand the motivations and objectives, you know what these groups are trying to do, if you don't distinguish between their kind of religious ideology – even if it is ideology that is driving their actions – at least to some degree.

And would you also say that it is important to distinguish within this religious ideology between the different group? For instance, IS, al-Qaeda and it's different sub-groups.

I think it is useful. There comes a point when it becomes a little bit academic. It depends on what your area of interest is, but you know if you're thinking about it form the perspective of like terrorism or groups that are already willing and/or have already conducted attacks in the West for example, in Western Europe, then to them to explain the different theological positions, it may not have like a practical purpose always. Then I think, and we have talked a little bit about this in our e-mail correspondence, I think for that reason a lot of governments would refer to radical Islamists militants networks, rather than going into the specifics. Because there is an understanding that these groups are kind sharing a worldview, even though there is differences between them.

Yes. Something I found quite interesting and I read an article about is the differences between al-Qaeda and IS when it comes to beheading videos, and that al-Qaeda kind of refuses that. In that light, I am just curious about the importance of such distinctions.
I think there is a lot of overlap as well. These categories are not mutually exclusive. There is a lot of movement and shifting among ideologies and transformation and evolution of the ideologies, ideas and groups. And Islamic State is a kind of case in point where evolution from a group that was kind of al-Qaeda in Iraq and then broke from al-Qaeda to practice a much more violent form of jihad, which is saying something. If you're saying something that al-Qaeda looks less extremist next to Islamic State.

True. I was also wondering, because I came across the claim that a lot of white men when it comes to terrorist attacks, are portrayed as mentally ill in a sense; and when the person has dark skin, is more likely to be called a terrorist. In your e-mail you also mentioned that some attacks or acts are more likely to be called international or acts of terrorism rather than domestic violence.
Well, I think there is a million questions that are involved in what you just said. And I think it's a problem that it has elements of racism, but it goes far beyond skin colour. In terms of how these distinctions are made, I think it's an interesting headline to write but, but I think there is a lot more nuance within it. It's true that right-wing extremist attacks are not as often and not as quickly and as easily labelled as terrorism, and from a criminal perspective they are not always prosecuted on a terrorist basis, whereas militant Islamist attacks – terrorist attacks – are much more likely to be – if they reach prosecution, which is also less usual in the case of attacks because they is a martyr element to it, but if they reach prosecution they are much more likely to be trailed as terrorism. At least anecdotally. I don't have any figures to prove that.

That's okay. I was also wondering if you have some deeper knowledge about the German Freital group? I just got a notification from a German newspaper a few hours ago that they are now sentenced for terrorism in a way, and apparently that was in the process that the German police and also the justice department, I am not sure what the proper English terms are, sorry, that they were really hesitant calling it 'terrorism', even though the group called themselves terrorists in their WhatsApp messages, etc.

I don't know the specifics of this case, I know that its just recent that they've come up this court element. But I would suspect that one of the kind of things that drove the legislation decision to trial them on terrorism charges was the kind of clear intention to cause meaningful damage to some of the explosive effects that they have conducted. So if you compare that to a lot, about 90% of the arsenal (?) attacks that are being conducted on refugee centres in Europe, those will not be trailed as terrorism. We record them as political violence, but when it comes to legislation, arsenal attacks on a refugee centre are unlikely to be conducted or to be classified as terrorism. I think part of the reason for that is probably that they are not looking to kind of cause the kind of mass casualties that we see in cases of Islamist militancy for example. So if you look at the number of mass casualty incidents by right-wing extremists and Islamist militants, you will find a lot more on the Islamist militant side. You might find a much larger amount of small scale assaults by right-wing sympathizers or extremists, but the nature of that violence is much closer to kind of criminal violence than a spectacular kind of mass-casualty attack that has a clear sort of propaganda and political value.

So that's really what makes the difference between the two, political violence and terrorism? Or…?

It depends from which angle you are looking at it from. If you're looking from a criminal justice angle, I think every country has different definitions. Finland for example it's something like they intend to cause significant like fear and death with like a political intent or a political motive. Something like this. And then it's up to the prosecutor to determine whether each case fits those criteria. And that's of course separate from how the media portrays all that kind of stuff. So in the media, yes, you're much more likely to see headlines claiming terrorism if it's someone shouting 'Allah Akbar' than if it's a white guy who is not showing those kinds of clear signs.

Yes. I find it quite interesting that the recent shootings in the U.S., the school shootings, I saw a picture of a student holding up a sign stating something like 'Why is this not terrorism?'. So, …

So the question there from our perspective would be about the kind of political motivation. We haven't covered Las Vegas, we haven't covered the latest shooting in Florida, because the links of that guy to a Neo-Nazi group that was initially reported didn't turn out to be accurate. It doesn't look like there is any political motivation behind it. But we have covered, for example, the vehicle impact attack in Virginia, Charlottesville by a neo-Nazi guy, we have covered racially aggregated and right wing-extremist church shooting in also in the U.S.. So yes, it comes down to each individual case. And those people's affiliations and what drives them to do their acts.

I also read something about, again in the U.S., some Christian groups bombing abortion centres. But that would also be a political violence, but to terrorism?

So that would definitely, from our company perspective, fall under our category of political violence. So we would cover that.

Okay. I find the different dimensions really interesting…

I mean there is no agreement on a definition of terrorism. Like globally, wherever you ask, it's such a political issue. So from our perspective, it kind of doesn't matter. We look at political violence, whether it's called terrorism or not in the media. You know, it doesn't matter to us. As long as it has a political motive and is driven by non-state actors, we look at it. The problem arises when governments are using the phrase for political means essentially.

Could you elaborate a bit more on that? What kind of political means?

So… I don't know. When you look at the Syrian conflict for example, and if analyse the way Assad's government, and the language that they used referring to opposition militants; or the war on terror, you know the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the justifications for those, they were at least a bit related to the political exploitation of terrorism as a tool. There was a lot more going on of course. So in that sense, terrorism is a kind of inflamed word.

But from our perspective, as people who study political violence, it kind of doesn't really – in a way it doesn't matter.

For my thesis I am also planning to look at the way the media and politicians tend to frame terrorism and how that term is being used…

So it might make, from my research perspective, it might make my work more difficult in terms of for example being able to source data on right-wing extremist attacks, because so much is being modelled up in just normal crime statistics, which means you're looking at thousands and thousands and thousands of incidents trying to kind of isolate political motive from that. Whereas Islamist violence is probably much easier to say that we're looking at a dataset from some specific country. You can probably do it in a much more straightforward way.

Okay. I am also curious about the motives of some people who commit those attacks, particularly in Europe. For instance, the guy who drove into the Christmas market in Germany. He apparently had these connections with ISIL, but he was also about to be deported. And I read in a Germany newspaper an article about the Finsbury Park, that he was also very outraged by the BBC showing the 'Three girls movie". I was also wondering if there is more know about the (main) other motives – other than the apparent religious connection?

I think you have to look at them first of all you have to do some sort of categorization. You have to look at Islamist attacks apart from right-wing attacks. There is some similar dynamics at play, but the kind of lump everything together. So for a group like the Islamic State, you have people who commit attacks in the name of the Islamic State; you have a kind of range of actors. So people who have often injected a lot of propaganda and material often online or participated in discussions, and have been kind of inspired to conduct an attack. And then you have individuals who have much stronger, physical networks where people are influencing them to conduct an attack. And then you have people who might have contact with some IS operators over the internet, so people getting instructions or encouragement. But they are not actually part of an organization and don't receive any financial support or anything like that. And then you have cells which actually do have organizational ties to the Islamic State. They have networks, they have financial supports, they receive weapons, training and all this kind of stuff. This is where it becomes a so much more complex situation. This is also when it has a much bigger weight behind than just someone driving a car or deciding to pick up a knife.

I also read somewhere about the copycat effect.

That's possible. Lots of different things are also meant by the copycat effect. Often it's talked about in relation to crime, violent crime – that someone will go and commit something in the same way as someone else just because they've seen it. In the context of terrorism, there has for instance been a great increase in the use of vehicle impact attacks and that has spread from

Islamist militants groups to also right-wing extremists. So yes, there is a sort of copycat effect. But you could also just describe it as evolution of kind of militant tactics. People adopting new ways to kill people.

I was also wondering if you have a bit more knowledge, because as already mentioned I am focusing on the use of media in my thesis and the way media is framing terrorism in a way, I am also interested in the notion that terrorists are using the media to create and spread a sort of "counter-narrative". If you know what I mean with that. So basically people using twitter, telegram, etc.

So social media, propaganda stuff…

Yes.

So, yeah if you look at every single militant group, if you're looking at you know Marxists in Northern Syria or the Islamic State in Iraq or al-Shabaab in Somalia or AQAP in Yemen, or anarchists in Greece, they are all creating their own narrative and are using new technologies to communicate their ideology and their ideas to recruit people and spread their kind of message. And they are doing it quite effectively. And that is something we are looking at in the long-term projecoeries of terrorism.

It has changed quite significantly since the mid-2000s. So there has always been you know, propaganda, there has always been videos, if you look at the early 1990s and the kind of recruitment efforts for the Chechnyan war, London was actually a hotspot for recruitments where VHS tapes were spread around showing kind of violent footage from the Balkans and the North Caucasus. And in the 2000s and the technological changes, with social media and the kind of decentralization of the, you know who can produce and who can distribute information, that playing field has become sort of completely levelled, which means that groups or even individuals can produce convincing material and spread it to thousands, if not tens of thousands and in case of some groups even hundred of thousands of people. I think the Islamic State for instance has a kind of revolutionlized the use of propaganda and the production of magazines and infographics, videos.

Even in English...

Yeah, I mean their magazines are published in 11 different languages.

I just read an article by Charlie Winter who said that in the last three to four month of 2017 there was a downfall in IS propaganda in IS media output and now it's kind of going up again? Do you analyse things like that as well?

Yes, we do.

And do you know if that has any implications and what the significance of this might be? Are there theories behind it?

The significance of what?

I meant the significance of this apparent decrease in media output and that it is now going up again.

Well, I think it's probably tied to very clear realities on the ground. I mean they had a very professional propaganda and media production network and then they lost all their territory and they didn't have a state anymore. People were being killed. So they didn't have the same infrastructure to produce the same amount anymore. So they produced less and their narrative changed as a result of what was going on.

I don't know if there has been a clear increase in stuff recently, I think we are still on the kind of low level. But yeah, it's probably has to do with increased efforts to stay relevant despite these losses of territory.

I also read that a couple of days ago that a video was released in Niger showing the killing of a U.S. military. There was this discussion going on whether or not it's official or not. What kind of difference does that make?

It does make a difference. It makes a difference on lots of different levels. Aehm. If a regional affiliate, so a group in Niger that is tied to the Islamic State, if they are able to transmit video material, or send video material, to an official Islamic State media office, that produces a high quality production, which tells a story, and is you know very stylized and kind of follows the Islamic State's normal branding, then that's a big deal. That shows the level of acceptance by the central organ of the Islamic State of this affiliate organization. On the other hand, as it was the case probably more so in this case, it is pretty low quality, it's pretty shit, it doesn't really have that full impact. It's released through unofficial channels, rather than as an official media production. It's still significant, but it also suggests that there isn't maybe the same level of relationship between these groups that there would be if they were completely aligned and sort of perfectly in tune with each other.

Okay. I am also interested in the idea of how terrorist groups might end. And I was wondering what you think about the idea that a terrorist group ends by military defeat? Because I remember you writing about returning foreign fighters, and having to look at (their) supporting networks, so can you actually defeat a group militarily?

I think it's like the million-dollar question. There is some examples around the world where insurgencies have ended, where conflicts have ended. And other places where there have been some dudes and there is still something going on. I mean you don't have to look far away from London, there is Northern Ireland for example where just a few decades ago there were car bombs going off where we were sitting now, and now that violence is much more criminal in nature. It's very much isolated to Northern Ireland, it's isolated to certain neighbourhoods and certain loyalists and networks retaliating against each other. And sometimes against the police. But that's about it. So that I would describe as probably a terrorism campaign on its' way out. You could look at Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers, you know, there is an example of a conflict that has very much ended, but of course there are still underlying tensions, not everything has been resolved, but there is no more active conflict.

You can look at North Caucasus and Chechnyna, that was a case of military defeat, but at the same it's not really resolved fully either. There is still a strong Islamist contingency that you know hundreds or thousands of people have left the North Caucasus for Syria, so the problem is still there.

In terms of how things end, I think for Europe for example, it's probably something that the threat of terrorism is fuelled by the conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere. So yeah, it's something, it's a kind of a security trend ascribed to wider geopolitical tensions and conflicts that just manifests itself in a different way.

I've just read for instance that Germany for instance is planning on increasing the military on the ground in Iraq and also, I think, Mali as well. And yeah, if you then look at the rhetoric of several terrorist organizations, they say that for every person killed, you know, the attacks here are often framed as a revenge or retaliation for the policy and victims.

That is definitely something that is a motivating factor and a driving factor. And it is also something that is heavily used in recruitment. But there is also a lot of other reasons for why attacks have been and are conducted.

You've also wrote a lot about returning foreign fighters and them being a big risk. Also, somewhere you mentioned the difference in how strict or how harsh countries within Europe deal with this and a correlation with their direct experience of terrorism. I was just curious, you probably know Peter Neumann, he made this distinction between foreign fighters that come home, and some are dangerous, some are uncertain – they might be reactivated, others may be disillusioned or traumatized. I was wondering if there is a distinction going on there?

I think that is an accurate distinction. The point about the threat posed by returning foreign fighters is not that every single foreign fighter that comes back poses a terrorism threat, but every single foreign fighter that comes back poses a potential terrorism threat. And this has to be assessed on a kind of case-by-case basis. There are various different formulas of looking at what that number could be. But whatever it is, if it is you know 200 or 300, 400, 500 out of the you know eventually couple of thousands that will come back to Europe, aehm… what they bring is skills that existing cells don't have. They've been in combat, they can handle weapons it's kind of the same concept as someone who's never had any military training and someone who is a [?] and has been through you know six months of military training. There is a big difference in how those people will be able to handle weapons and conduct and operation and follow orders, and all those kinds of things. So that's where the potential negative factor of foreign fighters really comes in.

And then, if you think about the wifes and children, that's another kind of very vulnerable group – vulnerable to further radicalization, vulnerable to further recruitment by people, networks who want to conduct attacks. And these groups are very systematic about the way in which they approach people. They approach vulnerable people, they exploit vulnerabilities. So to have thousands of these people coming back to Europe, yeah, it increases the pool of potential recruits for the future years as well. That's not to say that all these people should be treated as, you know, pure security risks. Because that can make things worse, but at the same time, that is just the reality – they are vulnerable and, in many cases, have been trained to kill and have taken part in violence. Regardless of traumatization or something else, yeah, they are involved in the world of extremism.

How is it actually that they are dealt with? Is it that everybody who returns kind of goes to prison for at least a couple of years, or are there different approaches?

I think every country has different takes. I think for the UK the latest numbers are there has been about 425 returnees and I think 52 convictions. So, I don't know what the case is with the

remaining people, if they are pending cases, or whether there wasn't enough evidence, or whether it was shown that they have been shown to not have conducted or have engaged in any terrorist activity.

But I think that there are different approaches in different countries.

And would you say that there is a difference with regard to whether people have joined on the side of al-Nusra or IS or were actually fighting IS?

I think there is a big difference in their motivations. I don't know how big the difference is in terms of convictions when they return, I don't know. You would expect that people would be trailed on a similar basis in front of the law.

I don't know how realistically that is carried out, but in terms of the threat posed by different people, yes there is a smaller threat than by someone who has been wiped fighting for the people's protection units with the Kurds in Northern Syria coming back and conducting a mass casualty attack; vs. someone who went to fight for the Islamic State and has been, you know, indoctrinated and told to attack their home countries in the West.

So yes, there is a very different risk profile. And I think the authorities are keenly aware of that, especially because they don't have the resources to monitor everybody. So if they can exclude people from their list, they will do it. And some will be easier to exclude others.

You have to leave soon, right? [Noticed him looking at his watch several times; before we had agreed to meet for one hour.] Let me just quickly see if I have another question that I really want to ask.

I am also curious, you mentioned somewhere that the power vacuum left by IS might be filled again by al-Qaeda?

Yeah.

Can you tell me more about the relationship between the two at the moment or how that might develop in the future? – only if you still have the time to answer it of course.

I do, I do. Give me one sec.

Yes, so … as you probably know the two are kind of ideologically very opposed and incompatible and on the battlefields have fought each other. And you know, people from al-Qaeda have defected into Islamic State and Islamic State has, you know, executed al-Qaeda captives and all kinds of.

So, on an ideological basis, there is really not a lot of cooperation. But I think what you have to look at is, as the Islamic States position has weakened, some of that ideological rigour that

they've been acting on will also probably soften. So these groups are as much as ideology is important, they are also probably more pragmatic than you might think.

And then, in the end, isn't it also often people knowing each other fighting each other? In a way?

Yes. And ultimately, they have quite similar objectives. When it comes to al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda has been very kind of out of the line light for the last couple of years when it comes to international terrorism anyways. If you look at North Africa, if you look at West Africa, the Sahel region, Yemen, they are being very much active, embedding into local communities by building networks from the ground up, rather than establishing a kind of state as such. So they are in quite a powerful position in most of the places so the real question is: will al-Qaeda try to fill that vacuum, or potential vacuum, left by Islamic State, when it comes to international terrorism, and will it start to benefit from the Islamic State's degradation and defection of Islamic State militants back into al-Qaeda networks. How might those two different groups come together? We have seen some signs in the Sahel for instance of movement between, and also some coordination between, Islamic State and al-Qaeda affiliated groups. So it's already happening a little bit on very low levels. And of course, you know, if you have a situation where you have kind of conservatives campaign of international terrorism that is being pushed by a unified amalgamation of these two organizations, then you are looking at many more networks and recruites of people that can be used to further those aims. And that's not a particular positive prognosis.

No, not really.

Do you still have a few minutes or not?

I have like three more minutes.

Okay. The Vigour fighters, do you have some more information on them? Because this policy brief I red was about them being the underestimated jihadi group.

Yeah. I think that's probably right. There is a whole units in Syria which are primarily from parts of Vigours. They are the primary group in Chingchang[?], in China. They have conducted attacks in the past. Vigour's were also tied, weirdly, to the August 2015 attack in Bangkok. So yeah, certainly, they are a very active group in Central Asia. You don't hear so much about them here, but…

On Islamophobia

The migration crisis in Europe has been the biggest driver, alongside the campaign by ISIS, the main campaign of attacks, in the increase of right-wing extremism. So yes, those things are tied together and they kind of feed each other. But that's because groups are actively conducting attacks based on those motives. But you know, the huge increase in right-wing attacks across Europe in 2015/2016 is directly tied to the migration crisis.

Okay, thank you! I would love to elaborate more on this, but I am also aware that I have taken up more of your time than planned. I am sorry, but it's just so interesting!
[Thank you & goodbye]

General Questions

1. Could you tell a bit about your work and how you got here?
2. Could you elaborate on the structure of the NCTV, its role and cooperation with other instances?
3. When talking about terrorism, many definitions come to mind. What constitutes a terrorist act according to you and what distinguishes it from other acts of political violence?
4. Who interprets these acts and, more importantly, based on what grounds/criteria?

Threat Assessment

1. The Netherlands estimates the current threat level at 4/5. Could you elaborate on the reasons for this high threat level?
2. How big is the threat to the Netherlands posed by returning foreign fighters? I read about an estimation by Peter R. Neumann that 1/3 of the foreign fighters have already returned, 20% have died and the Rest is still in the conflict areas – either imprisoned or supporting IS. (2012: approx. 300 left for Syria; Volgens de meest recente cijfers, schatten de Nederlandse autoriteiten dat 60 Nederlandse buitenlandse strijders zijn omgekomen in de regio en dat 160 Nederlanders zich nog in Syrië en Irak bevinden. Bij hen zijn 145 minderjarigen met een Nederlandse link, waarvan vele zijn geboren in het conflictgebied

Religion

- What would you say is the role of religion in the context of (counter) terrorism and how do you approach it at the NCTV?
- What makes the threat of 'jihadism' so much bigger than that of other groups? (rijksoverheid.nl: **Soorten terrorisme:** Jihadisme is op dit moment de belangrijkste bron van terrorisme. Maar er zijn meer vormen. Zo pakt de overheid ook terrorisme aan uit de hoek van links- en rechts-extremisten en van dierenrechtenactivisten.)
-

Preventing Violent Extremism

1. What are the current policies regarding de-/ counter-radicalization the Netherlands is engaged in, also in cooperation with other countries (EU level, etc.)?
   a. The Crime Terror Nexus
2. On what assumptions regarding the reasons for radicalization are these policies based?
   a. How is stigmatization of certain communities (Muslims) avoided?
   b. Are political grievances (or grievances of other kinds) taken into consideration as well?
3. Tweet by "The Crime Terror Nexus" (@CrimeTerror): "In the #Netherlands, Dutch authorities have been more effective than other #EU authorities in preventing

#radicalisation of inmates, says @PeterRNeumann now @ICCT_TheHague". To what extent does the Dutch approach differ from other European states?; also: this week's event "Introdcuing Dutch Police officers to the #Crime Terror Nexus"

4. What would you say are the major deficits we are currently facing? With regard to policy implementation, European cooperation, lack of knowledge, etc. (also Schengen borders, etc.) What needs to happen in order to make these policies more efficient?

5. About Dutch disengagement policies: disengagement also needs de-radicalization? Disengagement is of course the needed first step, but how is the second step achieved? (see social learning theory > transition is not merely an individual conversion, but a social one, related to amongst others finding new role models).

Justice

- Do you happen to know why the men who threw Molotov cocktails at a mosque in Enschede in 2016 were 'only' sentenced for 4 years (this was declared an act of terrorism).

Interview: 30.04.2018 (12:30 – 13:30; 13:00 – 13:40 & 17.30 – 18.00)

Turfmarkt 147, The Hague

The NCTV, it's role and cooperation with other instances

Geran is the head of the unit for strengthened cooperation of the directorate counterterrorism. Cooperation refers to all related actors, such as the NCTV coordinator, , the public prosecutors office, the national police, AIVD, local communities (especially important regarding the local approach), the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), the Royal Marshals (KMar).

Considering the interest in the role of religion, the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, particularly the Directorate on Integration is of interest. It is a unit working on the *grassroots level*, e.g. contact with mosques.

Actieprogramma Integrale Aanpak Jihadisme

Established in 2013/2014 and consists of 2 parts:

1. Repression

2. Prevention

   It is very much built on the *local / personal approach*, focusing on three types of individuals

1. those who left for Syria

2. those who wanted to leave, but were stopped

3. homegrown extremists

What is special about this approach, is the emphasis on the subject. The idea behind is to empower the local communities and create structures where they can talk about these subjects. Hence, so-called "local case meetings" for, and under the main responsibility of, local

authorities are being held on a regular basis. Depending on the case, different actors are present at these meetings:

1. Local authorities

2. local police

3. local public prosecutors

4. other relevant members, depending on the case, e.g. social workers.

The focus of these meetings is the person, as well as the exchange of information, aiming to examine (a) the best way to deal with the person (police, welfare worker, etc.) and then (b) set up a person-specific plan.

Also instruments at the *national level* are available, one of them being the NCTV. It is involved in case meetings if it is necessary, since it has the power to

- invoke the <u>Temporary Law on Administrative Measures Countering Terrorism</u>. This enables the NCTV to request a restrain on the freedom of movement of the subject of that particular case, given that he/she is linked to terrorist activities and therefore poses a threat to national security. In such a case, the Minister of Security and Justice can decide any of these measures (which are subject to legal appeal):

    o a geographical restriction order

    o a duty to report (meldplicht)

    o a command ("gebod") on where to stay.

- Moreover, it is possible to ask the local authorities to <u>withdraw the subjects passport based on the Passport law</u> , given that he/she is considered likely to leave the country and join ISIS or al-Nusra.

- Furthermore, the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs have the ability to <u>freeze assets</u>.

- Further, in case the subject has a double nationality, the Dutch nationality can be revoked in certain cases (only with two nationalities! E.g. Dutch – Moroccan). This can be done while the subject is the Netherlands and is final sentenced for terroristic acts and/or abroad fighting for ISIS.

The "Landelijk Steunpunt Extremisme"

Support for people who either voluntarily present themselves in order to get help with de-radicalization, and for people in their direct environment.

Letter to Parliament on PVE (2e kamer)

On the root causes of radicalization;

Aim: empowerment for professionals; amongst others more awareness for (changes in) *behaviour* and the role of *social media*.

Salafism

Definition (provided); strong will to live according to Qur'an and the life of the first three caliphs.

- Fawaz Jneid : imam to whom the geographical restriction is applied; considering his 'danger', he is no longer allowed to enter the districts 'Laak' and 'Schilderswijk'. Some movements within Salafism, including this imam, are placing and advocating the rule of law under the rule of Islam.

- Current trend: Salafis are taking over boards in mosques.

Religion is a difficult subject, since it is a 'double edged sword', which also occasionally leads to tensions and heated discussions between the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. It is also important to differentiate between what happened behind open doors, and most importantly, closed doors. The latter can always be a risk. (Also, consider e.g. the taking over of boards in mosques)

It is therefore, even more important to engage in dialogue and foster social cohesion.

Freedom of belief is very important, but one must keep in mind that there are also other actors trying to influence this freedom. He refers to people buying influence in mosques, particularly the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia.

Tweet by "The Crime Terror Nexus" (@CrimeTerror): "In the #Netherlands, Dutch authorities have been more effective than other #EU authorities in preventing #radicalisation of inmates, says @PeterRNeumann now @ICCT_TheHague". To what extent does the Dutch approach differ from other European states?;

"homegrown" / people stopped from leaving

(a) How does the Dutch approach differ?

The Dutch approach is rather special with regard to the other European countries. It is very proactive and well developed, operating on a 'the earlier the better' idea.

(b) isolation at Vught prison: how do you deal with danger of further strengthening grievances against NL authorities?

The isolation was very much debated in the Netherlands. More generally, it still remains unsure what the best approach is. Keeping convicted people together means a higher risk that they will increase their level of radicalization. But these policies have not been implemented for long; there are no long-term studies on effects, etc. Need for further investigate/explore this in the future.

Returned fighters

The basis of the Dutch policy with regard to the return of foreign fighters is very clear: if they don't want to come back, the Dutch government does not provide any assistance, since it does not want to import the threat (estimates that most people would rather stay there, find new groups, and/or die there than return).

If they want to come back to the Netherlands: they have to report themselves to either the diplomatic mission in Ankara, or Erbil (northern Iraq). All people who have left the Netherlands have a file, listing – if applicable- their activities. A European and an international arrest warrant has been filed, meaning that once they report themselves, they will be recognized as listed and the Dutch authorities will be notified.

As part of the diplomatic mission, they will be picked up in a plane – accompanied by the KMar, and (hopefully, if either Iraq or Turkey does not present an obstacle) will be brought to

a prison in the Netherlands until their trial. Depending on the information available, they will be sentenced to time in prison and located at Vught.

Reintegration (and de-radicalization) will be approached in cooperation with probation services (including therapy, etc.). This is a highly difficult and complex process. Currently, the Netherlands is investigating if they can learn from other countries and their experiences with regard to what is working for disengagement. It is still an on-going process and definitely a challenge for the upcoming time. With regard to religion, religious belief certainly poses a challenge as well, since the beliefs are often strongly established. Finding a new role model, or accepting a different interpretation of one's belief isn't an easy process.

How to you deal with trust in these policies? The Actieprogramma Integrale Aanpak for instance mentions the establishment of a '(nationale) vertrouwenspersoon ter ondersteaunding van sleutelfiguren' (a (national) person of trust to support stakeholders / key figures). Considering the emphasis on the local approach, how do you avoid or deal blurring the line between non-policing actors and policing ones? That must have an impact on the trust in certain cases the community has in them? How are these actors chosen?

Key actors are crucial and very central in the Dutch approach. They are furthering social cohesion and are characterized by their activity in the community. Moreover, they can reflect upon their own beliefs and activities. Balancing the trust of their community (and sometimes also biases with friends or family) with their role as stakeholder in countering and detecting signs of radicalization, however, is not easy and often a delicate point. → professionality

What would you say are the biggest challenges or deficits you / we are currently facing?

- How to deal with the 'new caliphate' (since there is no physical one anymore)

- Homegrown salafism/jihadism development in the future (their dream is gone, but dawa is still there)

- How to deal with returnees (especially mothers and children that were born and raised under IS)

- Reintegration and de-radicalization (what is the remaining threat? At some point there is no legal basis for probation)

- Complexity of hold

- Threat level (Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland (DTN)). The NCTV decides the current threat periodically. It is a challenge, however, on which information these assessments are based upon. In Belgium and the United States, for instance, the threat level was decreased. This new assessment, and particularly a decrease, has significant consequences, since all other instances/ actors (politics, intelligence, police, etc.) will shift their focus and attention away. It has to be based on reliable facts.

Who is interpreting facts as terrorist acts?

Police under the supervision of the district attorney & Supreme Court)

Current case: CONTEXT CASE (look up)

Intelligence (look up NEW LAW ON INTELLIGENCE SERVICES)

Administrative measures

What makes jihadism a much bigger threat than other forms of political violence? And on the Dutch level, considering that the last terrorist attack has been the attack on the mosque in Enschede by right-wings?

Facts. DTN: quite the fact that jihadists are outgrowing the other forms, e.g. number of fatalities, etc.

How do you avoid stigmatization? Avoiding stigmatization is very important! Especially with regard to radicalization, it is definitely one of the root causes. Also, it is crucial for PVE (and for all the 'role models' to be aware of). Social cohesion projects and traineeships are ways of trying to counter stigmatization.

What would you say is the role of framing by media and other public figures on the perception of terrorism and religion?

First of all, it is not up to him to make remarks on this issue. It is crucial, however, to let the debates, and the exchange of narratives, begin in the public domain. (see currently DENK vs. Wilders).

Personal notice; Until the murder of Pim Fortuyn's 2002, the Dutch media has always had a tendency to be very pc / politically correct. They for instance avoided stating that there was something wrong within the Moroccan communities. After 2002, they are not, and sometimes even very extremely 'not pc anymore'.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

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*considering the last minute change of date, the interview guide is only available upon request as a scan of the handwritten questions.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

The transcript of this interview (as well as the recording) is agreed to be for the research purposes of my MA thesis only.

The Interview was held on May 1ˢᵗ, 2018 (16.00 – 18.30) at the Mado Restaurant, opposite of the train station The Hague HS. We were brought in contact by Talia Hagerty, who is working for the Institute of Economics and Peace and who moderated the panel discussion during the presentation of the Global Terrorism Index 2017. She gave me her business card at the end of the event. Murray paid for the consumptions during the dinner. He was in a good mood, just a bit tired from a presentation he had given to diplomats from the Middle East at the Clingendael Institute.

Before the recording started, the conversation was mainly about that previous event, and him ironically complaining about diplomats and their behaviour (not applauding or given any sign of recognition after his talk). I also introduced myself and my research.

How did you get involved at the IEP?

He didn't study anything in the direction (but law), he said that he was just bored in his old job with corporate marketing and was at the right spot at the right time.

What is the role of the GTI?

It is one of the many (23?) elements that are combined together in the Global Peace Index. I

It is very interesting that the moment you call someone a 'terrorist', that person becomes a 'terrorist'. Take al-Qaeda in Iraq for instance: There was no al-Qaeda in Iraq before the U.S. invasion.

// start recording

You mention in the GTI that defining terrorism is not a straightforward issue and adopt the definition of the GTD: ' the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation'. Would you say that for instance a broadening of the definition, including aspects like state terrorism, or an analytical definition (which does not look at the actor, but the act itself), could be an alternative in the future? Especially the latter I just read a piece on and found it quite interesting – also considering the recent attack in Muenster.

Sure. Do you want me to answer form the Institute's perspective or my own?

Whatever you prefer. I find your own perspective is very interesting as well.

Alright. Well, form the IEP's perspective, the reason why we do the Global Terrorism Index is because it is an indicator in our Global Peace Index. It is one of 23 different indicators and we recognize that terrorism is one form of violence and terrorism as we understand it now – as actions by non-state actors engaging in violence for an ideological purpose –it's obviously imprecise. You can be a terrorist actor an engage in a certain form of violence, but then a state actor can engage in a similar violence. So, as an organization, yes we understand this. We look at it all, we look at all forms of violence in the Global Peace Index. This is only one of the many indicators and one of the forms of violence that has been increasing in recent years and that is why it is of interest for us. So we get a lot of people asking why we don't include state terrorism – but we do. Just in the peace index.

So that's the first thing to say.

The second thing to say is, I think, terrorism understood as non-state violence it fits into this particular view of the increase of non-state violence from the 1990s onwards. So the collapse of the Soviet Union if you will. So what was previously, there was a lot more foreign intervention in local conflicts as part of the Cold War. And so you had an internationalization of conflict. The Vietcong for instance were not a terrorist actor, because it was part of the Cold War. Whereas as if that was to happen now, the Vietcong would most likely be viewed as a terrorist actor. So part of that is just a reflection of a change in international geopolitics – it is

not two superpowers fighting for dominance through proxy conflicts anymore. I think this is a huge part of the terrorism debate, it's recognizing that it is not a Cold War proxy conflict anymore.

But from the 90s on we have seen terrorism with conflict more generally, an increase in non-state violence. This has overwhelmingly been in states that have had independence more recently; former colonies. So it's, this type of violence, is where the state does not have a monopoly on violence.

There is a theory that says that a viable state is one which monopolizes violence. So in the Netherlands most of the weapons are owned by the government; they are able to monopolize the violence, they can lock people up. So the government has…aehm…

The monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

Exactly. Whereas in Sudan the state does not have a monopoly on violence. There is other actors at play and this leads to destabilization, as other people are trying to be dominant power. Some groups are terrorists – [doing "bunny ears]

[Interruption: he's checking is bike, asking whether or not he can park it outside of the restaurant; short chat about bikes in the Netherlands and parking them]

I think it fits into the weak state, non-state actors fighting for significance. Then there is… There is also… These things are rarely simple. And the examples that I like referring to are the ones which are, well they are probably simple because I don't understand them and their dynamics and that's why they seem simple. For my understanding most of the major terrorism areas in recent times has been local goals. So it has been very localized. In Afghanistan, the Taliban want to be the legitimate government of that region, Boko Haram wants Shari'a to be extended from the 13 states to the 36 and they want to remove Western education which they think is corrupting the country. Then al-Shabaab are a little more difficult, because it seems to be a little… They had ideological goals initially, but now its a war and it becomes a bit more complicated with… Anyways, it's centralised to al-Shabaab and Somalia and Kenya. And back in the days, the American guy who was killed in 20… he was killed by a drone strike. His

initial intention was that he wanted it to be more international, but the al-Shabaab leaders wanted it to be more localised.

There is always a local dimension, and the local dimension is always more important than the international one. I think this fits into the post-90s increase in non-state violence, more specifically in civil conflict. It is very difficult to look at the rise of terrorism without looking at the rise of conflict. I think they are two sides of the same coin.

I keep rambling on this, but in terms of definitions, so we use STATS definition. I am happy with other definitions. I think just from a data perspective, the definition is important for coding purposes. So, I am not aligned to any one definition personally. …. trying to do it. We would love it to be, we would love to have non-state violence , and measure non-state violence everywhere but then also look at the interaction with states. Because obviously

Also because they are interdependent, right?

Yes, they are correlated. But also, the formal and informal economy. In all countries that have a high informal economy it means that the formal always interacts with the informal. So, you're a mining company in Nigeria and 80% of the mining is done informally, so you're selling lithium to … I don't even know if they have lithium…. You're selling a mineral. You're a Western company selling minerals based in Nigeria - it's all interacting with the informal economy and the interaction between the non-state and the state. The state is acting in its interest - generally- and being a disruptor our encouraging a disruptor is very easy to do. Some countries are particularly good at that, so the US has a very long history in supporting disruptors in various countries. Iran has it, Saudi Arabia, China appears to be in part but not that explicitly. So to talk about terrorism apolitically is very difficult to do. That is why we are just trying to talk about numbers. It is linked to the new world order if you will. I think I may leave it here.

Of course. And what would you say about the analytical definition - coming up with a definition looking primarily at the act and not the actor.

I think that there is a view that certain acts are by definition terrorism. An explosion in a city for instance, is terrorism. … I think that… because terrorism is a tactic, there are several goals it can achieve. To isolate the actor from the act I think complicates things because you have to understand how the act and the actor are wanting to achieve through this violence. It is meant

to be a tactic and it historically has worked for some organisations - for others it hasn't. I think there will always be a focus on the actors, regardless of whether it is a state or a non-state. In part because it is more interesting: it is about stories, about narratives and politics. It is all very interesting and there is an element of fascination with a car crash - oh, how did that happen. I think it could work, but policymakers will always be interested in the actors.

I just read this piece about it and I was just curious how and if that could work in real life.

I mean you could do a study, looking at that. But my understanding is that policymakers want to know what can we actually do to influence things. Or, depending on where they are - what can we do so it doesn't spread to us.

And I was also wondering - again about the definition and non-state actors - how do you deal with Hamas? because they are elected, but also seen as a terrorist organization.

So, the easy thing to say is that we use somebody else's data. So they made the decision for us. So the, Hamas, that's an issue. More problematically has been the inclusion of … conflict in the middle bult of Nigeria (Bulgani). They coded these as terrorist actors, but they are not a monolithic group. It's 23 million … an ethnic group from Mali… And I would say that ideologically I am a little uncomfortable with the contemporary lens of terrorism viewing non-state actors that engage in violence as necessarily terrorists. But I think it is what it is and you deal with how it is. But I think particularly in Africa - and this is my narrative which I have picked up, particularly in West Africa - armed groups, they've existed for a while and they have largely been to financial gain. There was an explosion in wealth with the change of trafficking routes. A lot of these groups, even 2011 onwards, have politicised if you will. But they are not profoundly different from prior to when they were having all the wealth. It's just, in some respect it makes it more legitimate to be a political non-government organisation but with an ideological bent, rather than just being an organised crime group. So there is definite benefits by aligning to a particular cause.

It's a bit counterintuitive, because then you also become a bigger target, but it legitimises your grievances - sorry not your grievances, but being dickheads. An example of this al-Shabaab - oh Sorry… -. Originally, piracy in Somalia was … to overfishing in Somalian waters. So there was a whole bunch of fishing by non-Somalian actors in Somalian waters. So the Somalians, and in particular the Somalian fishermen … discourage these people from using our waters and

stealing our fish, because then there is less fish available for us. And the state is not able to respond. So that was the initial impretus. Very soon after that the ideological motivation seems to have faded away and a lot of people became pirates that were not fishermen and after a number of years it is the line which everyone still uses, but it is in no way real. … a lot more. So that's an example of how the ideology does not seem to matter that much. And also the fact that you have Salafi-Jihadi groups selling drugs or trafficking drugs. I mean that seems odd.

That's true. Connected to that, I was also wondering how you operationalise religion. In the Index, there is this part on 'how terrorist groups end' and then there is the distinction between religious / nationalist/ etc. Is it possible, or how do you make this really clear distinction?

So I think for that one it's a RAND study. So it's all based on self-identification. I mean the reason why I think that it is not a meaningless distinction is that the classification of groups does in part dictate their objectives. A separatist groups, you know what their end game is. It's to control a certain area and be the government. Anarchist groups, it's to destroy the government. Religious groups, it's generally to adopt a specific form of government. And the reason why I think that it is important to differentiate is … If you do analysis, you need to simplify. Having 0.2% of a certain group is meaningless if you're creating a chart. I think that there are some groups that are relevant for determining the objectives of groups. The religious grouping I think there is relevance for that. Because there are groups that self-identify in terms of we do this for religious pruposes. I wouldn't say this is unique, that because you are a religious group you engage in a type of violence that is complete unique to Marxist groups, it's just there is different strategies available. For instance ISIL, it will be very difficult to negotiate with a group that is wanting to establish their own territory under a specific form of rule, who view democracy as an ophemate to their particular ideology. It's an absolutist claim that somewhat closes off negotiation. Whereas a separatist group could potentially be involved within the political process because they are seeking legitimacy in part or they could form a autonomous …. There is another option available than when you have an absolutist claim. That's mainly why there is a group like this - that you can say in a short hand, okay this is more like a kind of group that I am dealing with in my country.

So something that I was also wondering about is that when it comes to attacks on the West, that there are often also political motives that might in fact be prevailing than the

religious one. I sometimes get the feeling that by calling them religious that people maybe normal people think that it is a purely religious issue, ignoring any political, foreign policy or other elements to it - putting them under the carpet.

There is probably an element to that. If you look at a lot of the propaganda that is being most successful, I mean look at al-Qaeda, it was all about Western imperialism so that you could almost say that there was a Marxist, anti-imperial element to it. ISIL has also popularised that. It's very difficult to separate that from the ideology. But I think in the West obviously certain political actors benefit from particular rhetoric. It aligns to certain policies, so I think - I am not a huge fan of it - but it is what is it. I think the contrast with language between Obama and Trump and the fact that I am even saying that is an absurd thing. But people were very excited that Obama was distinguishing and that the official US terminology was a lot more cautious whereas the Trump is harmonious (?) Muslim terrorist. I think that's his phrase, isn't it? For Islamic terrorism? Whereas I can't remember what Obama's was, but Islamic extremist, jihadi… it was something like that. So I understand the ideology behind that. because it's very easy to exploit that. But I know, I've talked to a former White House official who actually worked under Obama, and his view is that language doesn't matter. The people that know, know. And they already know that it's the groups you are talking about and that it's not all Muslims. The people are inclined to believe that this mysterious other that is responsible for all ill and evil, they're going to believe that regardless of the terminology. And it's… You need to challenge that belief and the terms in the context of hyper-partisan politics in the United States. If it becomes a debate about the language then you always loose the debate. Because it's semantic in dull, whereas if it's a debate about the ideologies and the concepts, that's… His view is that these debates are the wrong hills to die on.

Okay, that's interesting. About a different thing, I was also wondering with regard to attacks and ISIL, ISIL, and other groups as well I assume, have the tendency to claim certain attacks and/or attacks are being misinterpreted. For example lone actor attacks not being lone actor attacks. How do you deal with those things, or are these things corrected in the Index and the Database?

So yes and yes. So we, for the database we use - I came up with my own database as well, with the West because the media is also very thorough in reporting on that, I've come up with a more up to date database than that. that's the question of attribution is a difficult one. It used to be three categories for ISIL attacks. What was it again? It used to be five, based on a Thomas

Heghammer study. He initially did a study in 2014 looking at a bunge of attacks, seeing if we can use that methodology. I think there are only two now: ISIL-directed and ISIL-inspired. So we went from five down to two, just because we found that it was foolish to claim admittance based on media reports, which subsequently also changed. we found that a lot of the ISIL-inspired, or some of them, subsequently became ISIL-directed, so having at least some connection to ISIL. I think there is also a part in the report on that.

We have a bit on fusion theory in the report I think. Maybe this is too esoteric. It's a merging thing, in that the individual becomes fused to the group, resulting in that an attack on the individual is an attack on the group and vice versa. So this is becoming really big in the terrorism field. I do think it makes sense, but it's also about group formation.

So there is Harvey… It's not Harvey Weinstein. It's a guy at Oxford, Harvey Winehouse…

No problem, I can look that name up ;) [edit: Harvey Whitehouse]

So he does stuff on fusion theory. His theory, and this is not answering your question at all, is that religion plays no role in these groups and it's all, these groups are all through ritual and common experience,, this is how groups form. He is doing stuff in Indonesia on deradicalizing religious extremists by testing some of these things, like having rituals together which are non-religious. This is meant to be like the big hope. I personally think religion does play a role. I don't think its not an exclusive role - Marxism can be a similar function as religion, but I … where am I going with this?

So there is two pushes. One is that religion has no role at all and two is that religion is entirely responsible.

Or that it is not entirely responsible but it is problematic?

[laughing] Yes. And there is also a lot of people, particularly in the West, that have the ideology - and the ill-informed ideology- that all religion is necessarily backwards and that we are the enlightened view. I think , and this is going to be ironic, any totalising view on religion and violence is redundant. I mean you can explain things with religion, but it is also people interacting. So a lot of group dynamics. Religion can be replaced with other things, but that's not to say that religion is irrelevant to the form of violence. I mean it doesn't have to be religion, it's not like it can only be religious groups. There are four waves of terrorism that happened…

[interrupted by waitress, asking if we wanted to drink anything else. Ordering more tea and sparkling water.]

Sorry, what was the question again?

It was about misinterpretations, but then we got to talk about the role of religion and violence.

I am rambling, aren't I? I am so sorry, I had a call this morning at 6AM. Okay. But… The misattribution is a big deal. And this is going to be high-level and rambly as well, is that okay?

Of course!

I mean, I am not in the media and I don't blame them. I think it's a tough business to be in. But I see that there is a - it's not the media's fault, you can blame humans - people like reading that ISIS is involved with everything. That's why people read a story and that's what sells. So there is a tendency to make an ISIS-connection. Like the, I remember there was some attack and the, it was the Nice attack, and there was this guy on television saying 'there is all the hallmarks of ISIS'. And I said "What?! What are the hallmarks of ISIS?" This kind of attack has never happened before. But this is what all people are wanting to do, it's being the first to call a connection. It's the thing to do. That's definitely difficult. But there has been an increase in attacks with an ISIL connection. So it's one of those media - I mean they are not a monolith and they are not to blame - but they know that it sells and that it gets more clicks if they say that it's ISIL. The way in which we deal with that is that it's easier to do it historically by looking at court records, etc. But with recent things the contentious ones you just give them, the way in which we try to code them is conservatively. So people say there is an ISIL connection and we look at it. I mean on the computer that was found there was an ISIL video. And that's definitely not enough to say that it's ISIL directed. So you try to be on the more conservative side saying that there is probably a lot in there, in the coding that we have that is undercooking it, maybe there is an ISIL connection and we have said there is probably not - but you just do a lot of unknown. That's the way in which it is.

[interruption by waitress, taking our glasses away]

That's mostly for the West, anyway.

Boko Haram is, I think, a better example of attribution of attacks. There was a long time that Boko Haram rarely acknowledged the they were responsible for an attack, or they rarely claimed attribution. But it's in an area where they are known to operate, who knows who the other actors available are. So there is a big period and I don't now what you do about that.

So if you look through the database, maybe too much information for you….

Well, I downloaded the database, but have not yet had the chance to take a very detailed look at it.

So there are a few things I can recommend. One is there is doubt-terrorism. So you have to remove all those where there is doubt-terrorism. That just adds a lot of noise. Just focus on the ones that meets their criteria. Then, you can delete a lot of the rows. That just makes it too complicated. All you really need is country, year, date and all of that. Actor type or actor name I think. Then it is good to have the description, number killed, number injured if that is interesting; and the summary is the description. Then weapon type. Basically, all the ones with text are the ones to keep. Get rid of the other ones, they are not useful and just make it too complicated.

Okay, that's great. I was a bit hesitant to delete things when I opened the database first.

You can do most of it in Excel, if you know how to use it. You can filter a lot for instance.

Well, Excel I do know. All the other statistics programs are bit more difficult, but I can manage Excel.

great. You can do most of it in Excel. So you are looking 1970s onwards?

Yes, as far as my research currently designed.

That's still a pretty big database then.

There is not that information prior to the 70s, right? Considering that terrorism emerged in the late 1960s/early 1970s? Or at least that's what I've read today?

Yes. I just remember from today [edit: the presentation he gave to diplomats from the Middle East] that there was this guy who kept making the point that why I am not talking about terrorism by Nazis and by in World War 2. Well,I just didn't know how to respond to that.

I can imagine. That's a difficult issue.

I mean that is not terrorism. That was a state actor. And then also I don't have a lot of patience for these kind of views. I mean we need to have a historical view on terrorism - sure! But we need to have a historical view of everything. We also need to recognise that what we are saying now is because of what has happened in recent times. It's not like human history is this long continuous things repeating each other. Obviously there is so on, so on and so on. But I think there is a reason why we go from the 1970s onwards or - and the data is better form the 2000s onwards. But a lot of the data today is linked to US intervention in aFghanistan and Iraq. A lot is linking to that. And yes, the reign of terror by the French, that was terrorism but I think the word that we use now, we are referring to something different. We are referring to something very specific. I just don't get it. The war we are talking about now is very different form the Second World War. And world War One is very different from WWII and again drone bombing. To use the world war, when we are using it now, do we need to take it in context of WWII?

Yes, I get that. You can't take everything into account all the time.

It just gets boring and then you end up constantly combining everyting, caveating it. I think this might just be stupid little talk to diplomats about things.

Laughing. Well, we just talked about the Iraq invasion and - wait, where is that [looking up page 36 in the Index].I was wondering about this graph, where you talk about the correlation. Do you know if these are specific events? If these years happened? Because this could be around 2003, but it is hard to see. Do you happen to have any specific information on this?

Okay, let me see. This is percentage, this is war death. I mean the simple thing to say is… 2001 the U.S. was a conflict country. Yes, this is Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia. It's pretty much all the countries that you thought about having terrorism as well. Sometimes the terrorism is the conflict. Nigeria, it's a conflict with a terrorist actor. I think it's circular and I would not say that to everyone.

I was just wondering if there is a correlation between the two. Between the decrease of terrorism related death in conflict countries and the increase in non-conflict countries.

Sorry, say that again?

So the number of terrorism related deaths in conflict countries increases as the number of deaths…

Well, that's just the spread of terrorism. Terrorism spreading into more countries. There is more terrorism in the West, in Europe, which are not conflict countries. There is terrorism in a bunch of non-conflict involved countries. I mean this is just.. there is another chart somewhere saying that 77 countries have had deaths by terrorism, comparing to 65. It's just based on that.

Ah, okay. That explains it. I was just curious about that correlation. And I was wondering what exactly distinguishes involved from non-involved countries in a conflict? Is for instance France, considering their involvement in the "war on terror", is that involvement in a conflict? Or is that "we don't have a conflict in our home country", so no.? What makes the difference?

So this is going to be, we take it form the Uppsala Conflict Database Programme (CDP). It's whatever they say. The US is involved in conflict, France is involved in conflict - in Mali and so on. And Canada would not be. And I am pretty sure that countries involved the NATO coalition would not be defined as being involved in conflict in that respect. So a lot of Western Europe is not involved in conflict, even though they are indirectly.

I was also wondering about the part you have in the Index about the rise of right-wing extremism. because I was very surprised by those numbers, that it has basically doubled each year since 2014. Especially in comparison to the part where it is said that ISIL is the biggest threat - or the dramatic increase in OECD countries due to ISIL. And I was wondering if right-wing isn't also an issue. Looking at the Netherlands for instance, the only terrorist attack that happened since the murder of Theo van Gogh (which seems to be debated as well) was the attack on the Mosque in Enschede in 2016.

So the thing would be… there is a couple of things to say on this… One would be the deadliest attacks have been by ISIL and their affiliated. So the risk is the potential plus or times the impact. So that… probability x impact, that's what risk is. So on that basis, you know the group in London November 2015 for instance, that's higher risk than a lone-actor from the right wing. So this is - and this is the second thing and going back to something hinted upon earlier - in the way in the Americans in particular, there is a huge disappointment, particular among people on the left, that how terrorism is discussed in popular discourse regarding terrorism by white people (as mentally ill) and the right-wing are never defined as terrorism - I mean they are

defined as terrorism and the FBI for a long time they had said that some citizens were a bigger threat domestically - I am pretty sure that would have been updated. But the right-wing, and that is something the US knows about and there are a lot of attacks, I think the complication with that is… the reason why it is more difficult to distinguish between a lone actor from the right-wing and let's say a lone-actor from a jihadi-salafi whatever, is because at least in the U.S. where there is the freedom of speech thing, it is a political ideology you are allowed to have. So you re allowed to have right-wing extremist views. Whereas when extremist jihadi-salafi mhwamwhamwha [making this sound] that's something which they never really pictured in the system. I think it is slightly disingenuous to say that it is entirely race - I mean race has obviously, there is part in that - but I think because it's a lot of right-wing and it's a political opinion that is allowed and what you are allowed to do.

And you see, there is a bit of a contest between the U.S. and Europe in this. I mean the line doesn't work as much in Europe. There is less doubt about a white right-wing terrorist being a terrorist. No one is saying, oh no he is mentally ill - he's a no brainer. And I think there is a recognition more in Europe of the threat of right-wing extremists. The contentious thing is always when you have a rise in right-wing populism there are actually parallels between certain particular actors and legitimate political representations. So that's were I think it is not as simple as a race thing. There is a little bit more to it.

I was just curious. Because when I talked to a policy official yesterday, we also talked about de-radicalization and this local approach the Netherlands has. He said that the focus was very much on preventing jihadism, because that is the bigger problem. And when I am reading those numbers in the Index, I started to wonder. I mean, I understand that ISIL presents a serious threat and that the impact is bigger…

Well, this is the second element. And this is not a very pc line. It is definitely not a politically correct line and something I think you should really not be saying. But I will say it anyway. The target group also impacts policy a little bit. The reason why, in my opinion - in somebody's opinion - the reason why in a country like the Netherlands jihadism is the focus, it is in part because it's viewed as non-discriminate violence. It's targeting anyone. Muslims, non-Muslims, basically everyone. It is very scary. Whereas a lot of the right-wing violence, it is much more focused. It's violence towards Muslim people, towards Jews, it's towards a particular subset which in part is not as scary.

That's the impression I got yesterday as well…

I think what it comes down to, because I mean the government has to respond to - and I don't like it. There is military in the streets in Paris still and I find that weird. But I can see that people wanted that. They wanted the government to respond and the government has. So these people want the government to ensure security and they want it almost at all cost. Some people are very upset about the civil liberties and I think not everyone is. They are much happier to give up a lot for their sense of feeling okay. So there is Daniel Kahneman, the guy who did "Thinking fast and slow" he's got a line in there about there was a bus attack in Jerusalem or somewhere in Israel. I think it was Jerusalem. And he was there a week after. And he was driving his car and every time got near a bus, he would speed up and make sure that he was nowhere near a bus because he didn't' want to be near a bus. Even though he knew as an economist , as a data guy, he knew the chances of being near a bus that explodes just because the one that had happened a week before is very low. But it's not about probability, it's not about rational thinking. What you want to do, you want to remove the fear. So he wanted to be away from the bus not because he thought he would explode and die, but because it made him think about exploding and dying. I think there is an element where policy in the West has to recognise this. It is not necessarily that dealing with the drivers of terrorism, it's not necessarily trying to… It's responding in a way that makes people feel safer. Because terrorism is highly emotional. So you kind of have to have an emotional response to the actor. So that's why I think it is… Right wing is just not as scary. Even though in my, and on the numbers, there is quite a lot of right-wing attacks.

Yes. I just watched this documentary on right-wing extremism in Germany and that they have those summer camps for kids in Germany to indoctrinate them. I find that slightly more scary.

Yes, that's concerning.

And I mean that has been going on for so long, but…

I mean all camps are weird, especially in Germany [laugh].

Also, if you have to leave, just let me know. I mean I would love to go on, but I've kept you here for quite a while already.

Not yet. I might actually get something to eat.

// [break: getting the menu to order something to eat.]

I also made this kind of bad joke to a friend of mine on my way here. Because there was this huge empty bucket of Greek Yoghurt in the train. And nobody seemed to care about it. A few weeks back I have been on a train with a friend of mine and she got up to use the restroom. Only a few minutes later the conductor came buy, highly concerned asking whose bag that was on the empty seat. It seemed that they were afraid of something dangerous being in that bag. And I was sitting next to that empty yoghurt bucket for such a long time... and just wondered why nobody cared about that. I don't know, I just found that interesting.

That's actually a good question.

It's the same on Kingsday in Groningen. They had these big cement blocks to prevent people from driving into crowds. I had a conversation with a friend of mine about that and we both thought that if people really want to do something, they will just get more creative, right?

Yes, this is the thing. They've not been very good at what they do. I mean there is a lot magical thinking. The other day I was lining up in front of a concert and you had to go through all that security to go in. And then as soon as the concert is over, everyone purrs out. It's very easy if you wanted to inflict maximum damage with little change of being caught, it's very easy to target before or after security points. I think the security is not necessary to prevent these things, but to make people feel saver. So you go into a venue and you feel much better because you had to pass through security. And I mean that's... it's.

Saying that, the November Paris attacks back in the day, the suicide bomber who was refused entry to the football match between France and Germany, the reason why he was refused entry was because he didn't buy a ticket. So then he subsequently designated himself near the entrance. And I don't know, but I think two people were injured? And if he had designated himself in the football stadium, how many other people would have died from that explosion and the panic afterwards?

He didn't' buy a ticket.

That's true...

It's like 70 euros. Maybe even less, it was a friendly game so maybe it's 30 euros. Why has that never entered your thoughts, that you need a ticket to enter place where you have to pay to enter? See, he wasn't refused entry because he had a bomb.

He was refused because he didn't have a ticket.

That's what I find just not very good.

[distraction by food menu]

Do you already know what you want? [food wise]

[Looking at the menu again, deciding to order)

So something else I was wondering about when talking about the causes of terrorism, it says in the Index that in non-OECD countries terrorism occurs on the largest scale and in the context of both ongoing armed conflicts and …. terror. In OECD countries, it's related to lower social cohesion and lack of opportunity. I was wondering to what extent this is really that back and white? When you look at radicalisation for instance, there are a lot of claims that political terror - or maybe more structural violence - have an impact as well.

Well, it largely comes down to… So the narrative used to be that poverty drives terrorism. That has been a big narrative for a while. And I mean it's not true. Saying that, in the West it's not all poverty per se, but it's relative deprivation. You could essentially it's feeling of alienation and disenfranchisement and then also feelings of discrimination. That you have a name with means that when you're applying for a job and you don't get it. And then you seen people with other kinds of names applying and not getting these jobs. That seems to be a big thing in OECD countries, whereas in non-OECD countries with terrorism it seems to be generally at larger scale. In Somalia it's whole sections, in Kenya its' the coast and boarder line section that are discriminated against. So saying, because I am poor or because I am discriminated against… there is more going on there because terrorism is on a larger scale. You're part of a discriminated community which is a lot bigger than part of a community in as a migrant community or a political minority in that you have outsider views - the right wing… It's a different thing. and this is, the interesting thing when you look at the right wing in the U.S. and these white guys who feel that they're feeling discriminated against because they are white -

so a sort of positive discrimination against minorities, it's a similar narrative. Perceived discrimination. It's not because they're necessarily poor or necessarily ill-educated.

Yes, true. I have to think for a moment because we have already touched upon so many things I wanted to ask. Maybe, there is another question I asked previous interviewees as well. What are the biggest challenges - if that's not a too broad question. I am aware of that, but I found the answers I received so far very interesting.

Alright, putting the pressure on me. The biggest challenges in my personal life…

Well, maybe more with regard to terrorism and its prevention in the Western/European context? It could also be with regard to the Index.

Ah, alright ;) So it would be in part that a lot of the governments don't have as much control over these things. that foreign policy decisions also influence. That the terrorism threat is evolved and is proven to be more organised crime rather than resilient and evolutionary in its tactics; that no one really knows what to do and how to respond. The example is that for a long time France was held up as the Model for what you should be doing and then France started having attacks. Then the UK was held up, it's this way you should be doing it. And then the UK started having attacks. No one really knows what to do.

Then, why have certain countries in Europe had nothing?

My personal theory is that it's so small and isolated a threat that it ultimately comes down to individuals and individual relationships. So it is very difficult to respond to and it is very difficult to have a totalizing policy. You can have this ideal policy and when it doesn't work for three people and they commit out an attack, then therefore the policy is failed. So my personal opinion is the best approach is - and I don't know if this is a good approach - is to view it more from a public health perspective of harm minimisation and prevention of course. You also want to educate people that it is not a bigger concern than other threats. More people slip in a bath and that kind of stuff, but that doesn't resonate of course. We are not suddenly scared of baths.

I think there is an element to that and there is an element of recognizing that it's not a necessarily a state failure for there to be a terrorist attack. But the response is more important if you want to ensure that this kind of tactic is not used. You need to ensure and highlight that

it is not effective but then - I mean on the flip side - as soon as you have people that aren't necessarily healthy, whether it is terrorism or not, there is always a risk of mass violence. I don't know, I haven't got any good answers.

No, I think it's a really good answer!

Outside the West this is the image I am conflicted by. There is a theory which I call the "bomb them all theory". And I don't know whether this will be useful and it will probably not be useful for your thesis, but I think it is an interesting idea.

So throughout history you've had very successful groups and empires that have been rather brutal. The Roman Empire when challenged erased an entire village. And then, if you want to have another uprising, we'll destroy another village. I think the Byzantine Empire is similar. The Turks also. And more recently Sri Lanka. The theory is that when people are more scared of government of military or whatever, than the terrorist group, then they'll give up any allegiance to the terrorist group.

Oh, that's interesting.

So, in Sri Lanka they palmed everyone indiscriminately. The media was pushed out beforehand and there was outrageous human rights abuses. But Tamil Tigers as a terrorist organisation were defeated. Oh, and they negotiated after they bombed []. I don't know how to reconcile this theory with… current appraoches. Because the United States can't use the 'bomb everybody' because there is still the human rights norms. But when you look at Nigeria, it hasn't been entirely successful, but the extreme abuses by security services, which is locking people up and killings, it does have an impact. It can be a blowback with other people joining the group, but it seems to also work. it's not ideal thing to do and I work for an organisation with peace in the name, but I don't know what to do with that information.

I get that. It is super interesting though.

I talked to someone when I was in London, a guy form Malaysia, and he's involved in counterradicalization there who is involved in de-radicalization programmes. He said that compared to Australia, Malaysia has a way softer approach to de-radicalization. In Australia, I heard, that people are really locked up with handcuffs on, etc. whereas it is supposedly much more "Friendly" in Malaysia. If you can say it like that. Do you think that this, the difference between soft and hard power, has an impact?

[part off the record]

That's probably true. It's just something that just came to my mind.

Also, you can be relieved that I can't think of any more questions at the moment. Of course, if there is anything you think I missed or should know?

No. I don't think so. Are you hoping, in June you're finishing your degree? **Well, I still have to do an internship. I am hoping to finish my first draft in June and then the final final deadline is the first of August. I am also hoping to present my topic at a summer school.** So how are you bringing religion into it?

So I am mostly looking at public discourse. The first part will really be about the emergency of terrorism and the idea/frame of "religious terrorism". I'll look at media coverages of terrorism and the hypothesis that terrorism is often framed in terms of religious, and particularly Islamist, violence. Take the Freital group for instance or the incident in Münster [followed by explanation of what happened in Münster]. Within 24 hours there was an article published in one of the biggest newspapers stating that there was no Islamist background. When it became evident that the man was "only mentally ill", the story quickly disappeared from the media.

Well, that is a very interesting dimension. In Melbourne there was a guy running away from the police and drove his car into a crowd. 6 people died including a baby. It was awful and it somehow disappeared from the media. So I understand the analytic view behind it, that the act of violence is independent from the ideology behind it. But in reality, it's about what people buy, and these stories are not part of that.

Yes, true. I just find that really interesting. I also really chose my topic out of curiosity and observations I had made in the last couple of months…

// end recording.

We still continued to talk a bit about life in Germany vs. the Netherlands and the Netherlands in general.

Generally, the interview was very nice, rather informal and he was very open with regard to the information he provided. Also, it seems like we were both very comfortable.

Andy Mills: `People have said into a microphone what they would never would have said to a camera.'

/ gender roles (within ISIS and reporting on ISIS) / Rukmini: It is usually a bunch of guys writing about a bunch of guys.

About Obama administration & Bin Laden & how she got into this subject:

So my sort of aha-moment was in 2013, when I was stationed in […] Mali, which had just lost the Northern Part of the country to al-Qaeda franchise. They had taken over this enormous territory. I was there behind French troops, just like in Mosul we were behind Iraqi troops, as they took back cities. I was there when they took back Timbuktu. I was relatively green to the field and I covered the field like most news agencies covered the field. I couldn't get a hold of these terrorists – it didn't even occur to me that one could – and so I called officials. [naming government officials and offices in Mali, as well as Pentagon] As it turned out, I reported the version of reality that these people have told me – and probably in good faith – which turned out to be completely wrong.

Jodi: Because the whole society was misunderstanding al-Qaeda.

Rukmini: Exactly. I started on this less than a year after Osama bin laden had been killed. And 2013, when I had like my breakthrough, it was like a year and a half after Bin Laden was killed. As we recall, the killing of Bin Laden had been a big part of that second Obama election. It was being reported as this enormous foreign policy success. And basically, the talking-heads in D.C. just took it a couple of steps too far. They were being that Bin Laden had been killed, therefore al-Qaeda had been destroyed, therefore all these other little groups that carried the al-Qaeda name, are just opportunistically taking on this name. They have no other connective tissues.

So I get to Timbuktu and in the trash that these group left behind, I find their voluminous correspondence. Including the correspondence with senior leadership of al-Qaeda Central, giving the group in Mali detailed orders. [narrative about going to the trash] I suddenly realized that these are the internal records of the society.

Social Media strategies: I spent a little bit of time thinking about this. The people who are in charge of protecting us, both senior law enforcement, Pentagon, are people who tend to be middle age – not millennials. What I've learned from ISIS is, that it is pretty much a millennials' game. Even as twitter is going along blocking their accounts, same as facebook and other portals, ISIS is constantly running circles around them. > Slowness in official circles and Silicon Villain.

ME: I am calling from The Netherlands and I was wondering, the underlying question of the project is "Whom are we really fighting?", and I was wondering what the impact of framing is on the topic of terrorism and IS more specifically. Also, I was wondering how your views might have changed throughout your years of coverage.

Rukmini: For five years now, I've been covering this beat, meaning al-Qaeda and ISIS. I started in 2012/2013. And the thing that always surprises me about them is first of all, we see these people who do these horrific acts. It's even hard to watch some of the videos that ISIS had put up because of grotesque and savage they are. So the mind immediately wants so say: Oh my God, these people are monsters, these people are psychopaths, these people are very different from you and I. But the revelation that I have over and over again from sitting across these people is that they are just a bunch of guys. You know, they are just a bunch of dudes. And, anyway, I think that in a way, that is more insidious, and more dangerous. They are not these crazy, out there bucky-man that you would expect. They are the guy that grew up watching Star Wars, who had a myspace account, and you know, who was teased at school or was not teased at school, and that humanity is interesting to me.

Andy: Can I?

Rukmini: Yes.

Andy: For me, I knew that ISIS, and when Rukmini wanted to work with me on this project, I knew that many of the members of ISIS were drawn together by sincere beliefs in what they were doing. And at least a large number of them had this notion that, in the early days, that what they were doing was good. And I knew that, but what happened – we started working on this in the fall of 2016, way before we knew that we were going to do the daily and all this other stuff, we kind of put it on the backburner for a time before we would actually get to make the project. In the interim time, you saw the rise of reporting on hate groups in the West. And one of the things that changed for me was that how similar it is to ISIS. You often see middle

class, often sub-urban, often male people, who feel disillusioned, feel underrepresented, misrepresented or not understood or something like that and they have legitimate doubts in institutions. They have this distrust in government and they have a lot of time on the internet. And those things are mixing together not only the perfect storm that makes ISIS, but I think similarly the perfect storm that has shown in the West with significant rise in different groups. And I would predict that if we don't do much more reporting on this, that we will see a diverging of more and more groups like this, that we will see different agendas popping up.

[Rukmini expressing her agreement on the perfect storm by repeatedly saying "yes"]

Jodi: Thank you very much for the question. [Move on to next question]

GMMF: Moderation Efforts Between CVE/PVE/TVE

To date, GMMF's counter terrorism efforts are mainly geared at Countering & Preventing Violent Extremism, where GMMF's work on preventing and countering violent extremism reflects the importance of having a comprehensive approach in eradicating all forms of extremism as an effort in ending violence.

In line with UN PVE Action Plan, the Foundation works with various stakeholders – government and non-governmental organizations, academicians, community leaders – traditional and non-traditional in coming up with the National Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism.

That being said, with regards to transforming violent-extremism, it can be mentioned of the close proximity to GMMF's commitment to its conflict resolution initiative – especially its endeavours at the regional front. These are in line not only with Malaysia's foreign policies but also as mandated within ASEAN documents, wherein the Foundation's efforts refer to the concerted and collective attempts to solve conflict head-on, and seeks to reconcile divergent interests, identity and ideology of all with the goal of fostering permanent and peaceful solutions via moderation.

While noting on the relative strengths of each, GMMF is still of the view that CVE and latterly PVE represent the current requirements which require attention and possess best potential success. The former being a short-term method in addressing current concerns with PVE being the inculcation of a culture of peace. TVE is viewed as complementary efforts bridging between CVE & PVE endeavours.

In line with the 2017 UN Resolution on Moderation (document L/72/L.21) which stated inter alia, on the roles of moderation in mitigating or preventing of war & human suffering. It was imperative therefore that moderation be seen as the bedrock of international relations in the global world where peace remained elusive. The backdrop of the resolution's tabling focused on the global environment (terrorism/issue of Jerusalem etc), which underscores the importance of voices of moderation and tolerance. Thus, moderation as an approach could contribute towards peaceful coexistence.

By terms of that text, the Assembly called upon the international community to continue to promote moderation as a value that promotes peace, security and development. Furthermore, it called upon the international community to support the Global Movement of Moderates initiative as a common platform to amplify the voices of moderation over those of violent extremism in addition to Members of the United Nations to undertake initiatives to promote moderation through activities such as outreach programmes and cross-cultural dialogue, and to promote the value of moderation, including non-violence, mutual respect and understanding, through education.

The Assembly would also come to decide to proclaim 2019 the International Year of Moderation in an effort to amplify the voices of moderation through the promotion of dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, thus GMMF seeks to fulfil the contents of the document via active engagements with like-minded global partners such as the UNAOC in addition to two international organisations which it feels possess sufficient clout and capacity to propel the movement and agenda of moderation within the global context. – namely UNESCO through its Preventing Violent-Extremism through Education (PVE-E) and the Commonwealth Secretariat's CVE initiatives.

UNESCO's PVE-E Initiative

UNESCO is helping countries deliver education programmes that help build learners' resilience to violent extremism and mitigate the drivers of the phenomena. This work is being undertaken within the framework of Global Citizenship Education and supports the implementation of UNESCO Executive Board Decision 197 EX/Decision 46: "UNESCO's role in promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism".

UNESCO's action to prevent violent extremism through education (PVE-E) seeks to strengthen the capacities of national education systems (i.e. policies, teachers, educational contents) to appropriately and effectively contribute to national prevention efforts.

This includes equipping learners, of all ages, and notably young women and men, with the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours, which foster responsible global citizenship, critical thinking, empathy and the ability to take action against violent extremism.

UNESCO's PVE-E efforts goes through 3 main initiatives or channels, i.e.

- Global Advocacy[39]

- Development of guidance[40]

- Capacity-building[41]

GMMF – with regards to its engagements with UNESCO and its fulfilment of the UN Resolution are in the midst of co-organising a number of events with UNESCO, geared towards moderation within the context of PVE in education.

Commonwealth Secretariat's CVE Initiatives

Commonwealth Heads of Government have affirmed that violent extremism represents a serious threat to international peace and security, shared values and aspirations, social harmony and economic and social development.

In line with the mandate given by leaders at their Malta summit, a dedicated unit was established within the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2017 to support national strategies to counter violent extremism (CVE). Its approaches recognise that, as violent extremists are adept at exploiting their own cross-border networks to recruit and to use violence, those dedicated to preventing this phenomenon must be just as adept.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is uniquely placed to assist member countries in sharing good practice and harnessing the role of governments and individuals to enhance the resilience of society to violent extremist messages. Its programme work leverages decades of experience in

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[39] Working with education specialists from around the world, UNESCO is building an international consensus around the need for an increased **and human-rights based engagement of the education sector** in the prevention of violent extremism and identify and examine concrete and comprehensive education sector responses to the threats of violent extremism.

[40] Furthermore, UNESCO helps education-policymakers plan and implement effective and appropriate education-related actions, contributing to national PVE efforts, both in formal and non-formal settings, and at different levels (secondary, technical and vocational training, higher education). This work includes also supporting teachers in managing classroom discussions in relation to PVE and radicalization and creating a classroom climate that is inclusive and conducive to respectful dialogue, open discussion and critical thinking.

[41] UNESCO also develops capacity-building initiatives for education professionals on how to address violent extremism through global citizenship education and genocide prevention, in partnership with the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA and the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU).

supporting governments – for example in strengthening the rule of law, human rights and youth empowerment – while drawing on the shared values, cultural and regional diversity of the Commonwealth.

Wishing to not reinvent the wheel, the CVE Unit is ever agreeable to working with like-minded partner institutions and to date, has the following CVE toolkits in place:

- Supporting Families in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE)

- Women and P/CVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism)

- Counter Narratives for Countering Violent Extremism

- Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons