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“THE TERRORIST IN A POSTMODERN PERCEPTION”

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dedicated to

I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it

*Evelyn Beatrice Hall,
summarising Voltaire*

volo, ergo sum

*based on
Friedrich Nietzsche*

The promotion of tolerance is the antithesis of the promotion of terrorism

Raphael Perl

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TOPIC

At the latest since 9/11 and the associated frights, Islamist motivated terrorism advanced to a major international security issue, which not only achieved extensive media coverage, but as well broad scientific attention. Nevertheless, the concrete national and international measures, with which international terrorism is countered, could well be regarded critically in terms of efficiency and accuracy.

Apart from questionable military engagements, loosened data protection and the curtailing of civil rights, there is one element in the discourse about terrorism, which particularly attracted the author's attention: The construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor. Several consequences are tied to this construction, which are probably not obvious in the first place. One of the most far reaching among these consequences is perhaps the *De-Individualisation* or *De-Humanisation* of the terrorist. This discursive practice disputes the humanity of the terrorist through which an ultimate enemy image is shaped in the so-called war against terror. This construction causes the preference of certain counter terrorism measures, whereas others are completely expelled from the circle of applicable opportunities of action. Most of all; this approach causes a blind spot in the perception of the terrorist, which hardly utterly hides psychological, socio economic, ethnic, cultural, religious and regional contexts in deep darkness that makes a comprehension of the complex lifeworld of a terrorist impossible.

One could argue that it is not at all important to understand perpetrators of terrorism, to acquire knowledge about their requirements; their social embeddedness or their motivations, as they could simplified be regarded as evil, irrational or mentally disordered psychopaths who pose a danger to the entire Western civilisation. However, as the conflict between the Western nations and the global Jihadist movement is not a classical conflict about territory or resources, but a *symbolic* conflict about values, ideologies and diametrically opposing *Modi Vivendi*¹, which can't be won through conventional warfare, I will hold against this reasoning that it is not only important, but crucial to understand the antagonist in order to implement accurate and efficient measures to face the threat of international terrorism.

In applying postmodern concepts, I will therefore try to deconstruct the image of the terrorist, which is currently especially in public discussion tainted with stereotypes and reconstruct it in a way which shall show, that there are indeed alternatives to the predominate associations, which could probably lead to more target-aimed opportunities of action.

¹ (Zalman, 2006)

RESEARCH QUESTION

The previous remarks lead to the following research question, which shall act as the recurrent theme around which this paper is going to circulate.

Which postmodern alternative(s) could be opposed to the construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor?

The construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor, or even as a non-individual has distinct effects on the possibilities of conflict resolution and prevention, on the strategies and measures of counter terrorism actions, on the expectations of the involved actors and on their methods of communication and interaction. Beyond that, this construction especially affect the discourse about the conflict between the Western-industrialised, "civilised" world and the people on the other side of this not nearly only virtual demarcation line.

Through a postmodern approach, I will try to describe terrorism, without trivialising or morally justifying it, as a phenomenon inherent in the system of the Wests' hegemonic globalising attempts and by that reveal alternatives to the current construction of the terrorist, which hopefully are not any longer blind towards his psychological, socio economic, ethnic, cultural, religious and regional contexts and lifeworlds.

These considerations lead us to the following working hypotheses, whereby the outlined topic shall be processed and which will serve as an argumentative structure for the paper at hand.

WORKING HYPOTHESES

- (H1) The construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor leads to a *De-Individualisation* or *De-Humanisation* of the individual.
- (H2) This De-Humanisation blocks the view on *psychological, socio economic, ethnic, cultural, religious and regional contexts*.
- (H3) The construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor prevents us from elaborating *alternative perceptions and strategies*.
- (H4) The implementation of *postmodern* approaches enables a *deconstruction of this concept*.

OPERATIONALISATIONS

The following enumeration of indicators, which shall help to operationalise the previous hypotheses, raises at this point no claim to completeness. Rather should the analysis of the gathered data unveil further indicators for the formulised hypotheses to complement this list or alternatively disqualify some of the subsequent factors, if they do not seem appropriate.

- (H1) The construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor leads to a De-Individualisation or De-Humanisation of the individual.

The concept of De-Individualisation or De-Humanisation shall be operationalised through the following indicators:

- disputing a terrorists *rationality*, as this is a fundamental feature of the human being
- different media coverage and *valuation of dead people and victims* (e.g.: the hostage-taking ended with no human victims; 8 terrorists were killed)
- *curtailing of the civil rights* in practice (e.g.: detainment without a concrete charge, torture, deportations, etc.)
- hiding of terrorists faces with masks or bags or blanking out social contexts to maintain the *perceived distance*

- (H2)** This De-Humanisation blocks the view on psychological, socio economic, ethnic, cultural, religious and regional contexts.

The following concepts shall serve as indicators for the second hypothesis, whereby the negative formulation of the hypothesis shall describe the absence of the consideration of these factors. The line of argumentation aims to show that blinding out these indicators has a negative impact on the comprehension of the genesis of terrorist potential:

- *psychological conditions*, as group dynamics, individual history, etc.
- *social framework conditions* as family structure, institutions, gender relations, etc.
- *economic conditions* as the predominant structure of income, differences in the allocation of wealth and goods, etc.
- ethnic backgrounds
- historically grown and socialised *action patterns*, especially regarding the legitimacy of the use of violence
- *cultural conditions, values and norms*
- *regional peculiarities*
- *educational level*
- *religious influence* on society

- (H3)** The construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor prevents us from elaborating alternative perceptions and strategies.

The third hypothesis sets itself the goal to question the apparently generally valid main imagination towards a terrorist by confronting them with alternative concepts and interpretations. The current discourse about the terrorist seems to be mainly dominated by the following indicators:

- *enemy image*
- *threat*
- *foreign*
- *uncivilised*
- *religious fundamentalist*
- *uneducated*
- *fanatic*
- *mentally disturbed*

- (H4)** The implementation of postmodern approaches enables a deconstruction of this concept.

The fourth hypothesis describes the authors' goal to deconstruct the perception of the terrorist through postmodern approaches and as a result showing alternative opportunities of association. Particular attention shall be thrown on possible sources of postmodern tendencies in current literature, on which could be build on in the progressing line of reasoning. Significant indicators for postmodernism could be:

- *pluralism* of value systems
- *equal value* of diametrical opposing *modi vivendi*
- *multi dimensionality* of social processes
- *difference* as a positive feature of society just as
- heterogeneity
- the *end of meta-narratives* and the great stories
- *pluralisation* of the modern key concepts, which are
 - o *truth*
 - o *rationality*
 - o *aesthetic*

VARIABLES

In this section, I will briefly illustrate the variables, which will form the core of the research at hand in order to be clear about what the main interest of this paper is and how this interest shall be processed.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable of this thesis is the *individual terrorist*. Put simply, a person shall be labelled as a terrorist, if he is a perpetrator of terrorist acts, uses the tactic of terrorism or supports such acts with significant contributions. Thus, a terrorist is an actor, who actually uses or at least threatens to use the means of violence against public institutions or against civilians to pursue religious, political or cultural goals and who lacks of an appropriate state legitimacy for his deeds.²

Because of the multiple forms and backgrounds of and various motivations for terrorism, it is hardly impossible to formulate general statements, which hold true for all perpetrators of terrorism. Therefore, it is important to specify the actors, which shall be included in this research and distinguish them from other groups to avoid an excessive conceptual stretching and maintain the validity of the following reasoning. Hence, the focus shall rest on the terrorist with an extremist Islamist background, who is commonly labelled as *Jihadist*. If the results of the argumentation in this paper could as well find application in the analysis of other terrorist actors has to be examined separately.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Serving the clarity, the independent variables, which come across as the vital factors in describing and defining the terrorist, will explicitly be mentioned below. As their respective indicators are already listed above, they shall not be repeated at this point, but be discussed in the referring chapters.

- the conception as an *illegitimate actor*
- the conception as a *non-individual*
- *psychological, socio economic, ethnic, cultural, religious and regional contexts*
- *censorship* of alternative approaches

² cf (Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, 2006)

APPROACH & PROCEDURE

The research design of this paper is explicitly laid out exploratory and qualitative and renounces the broad use of statistics or the inquiry of quantifiable data. Thereby, the design orientates itself at the prior interpretative research question, which tries to protrude into the interpretation and meaning adscription process towards the terrorist. The formulated hypotheses, operationalisations and indicators serve as an orientation at the start of this research and literature review and shall be understood as the authors' personal disposition and conceptual starting point. For the purpose of a grounded theory³ approach shall the review of the state-of-the-art scientific contributions deliver information about the structures, meaning- and association patterns, which characterise the discourse about the terrorist.

The *first* step in the research process will be a critical examination of the scientific contributions about the key theoretical concepts of the research question, which are terrorism in general, Jihadism and postmodernism. The aim of this first part is not to completely discuss all the different aspects and approaches of these complex phenomena, but to give an overview of the key considerations and specify the meaning of these terms regarding to the following arguments of the paper at hand.

As the aim of the author is to deliver a perception of the terrorist, which takes account of the global social processes, especially referring to globalisation and postmodernism, it is necessary to understand the phenomenon of terrorism as well. Thus, several levels of observation have to be considered when examining terrorism, including the tactical and strategic level of terrorism as well as its embeddedness in global structure processes. Turning back to the perpetrator of terror, again different layers of examination have to be considered, which range from the individual/psychological level, over the group level to the social level, finally ending up again at the highest layer of global structures.

After this introduction into the theoretical background of these topics, the *second* step will proceed to deliver evidences for or against the formulated hypothesis in recent scientific publications to draw a tentative picture of the current image(s) of the Islamist terrorist.

The *third* step is dedicated to the deconstruction of the previously delineated picture through the implementation of postmodern concepts into the predominant perception of the terrorist. Through this, the author hopes to design a genuine concept of the terrorist, which could be used for further scientific considerations and probably contributes to more efficient and prosperous counter terrorism strategies, which include the contemporary, often ambiguous societal processes in the world.

³ (Strauss, 1998)

THEORY, CONCEPTS & DEFINITIONS

TERRORISM

The following pages shall give an insight in the recent terrorism research and thereby deliver a profound fundament for further argumentation. This chapter will first deal with terrorism in general, how terrorism is defined by different international actors and institutions, and then proceeds with Islamist motivated terror, perpetrators of terrorism, their motivations and a discussion about root causes of terror.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

First of all, it is worth mentioning that there is neither a consistent definition of terrorism among the numerous disciplines of social sciences, which deal with this phenomenon nor among political institutions, which are responsible for counter terrorism measures.⁴ Therefore, this section will start with some examples of current definitions of terrorism, in order to get a slight overview over the existing concepts.

Second, whenever we talk about terrorism, we have to be aware that there is no such thing as "*the terrorism*" and that not all terrorism is the same. Noricks proposes at least ten different forms of terrorism, distinguished by its motivation and ideology, which shall be listed at this point to illustrate the heterogeneous character of this phenomenon.

- *criminal*
- *ethno-nationalist*
- *religious*
- *generic secular*
- *right-wing (religious)*
- *secular left wing*
- *secular right wing*
- *single issue*
- *personal/idiosyncratic*
- *state-sponsored*⁵

This list shall remind us during the further argumentation that the use of abstract words like terrorism always has to be framed with the context and that they refer to a complex pattern of meanings, structures and actors. After the introduction of common key features of terrorism, where the term is indeed used in its most general meaning, it will later explicitly refer to the phenomenon of Islamist motivated international terrorism.

⁴ (OSCE, 2007, p. 22)

⁵ (Noricks, 2009, p. 53)

DEFINITIONS

Bruce Hoffman defines terrorism in distinction to criminality or other activities of irregular armed fighters with the following features:

"terrorism is

- ineluctably political in aims and motives*
- violent - or, equally important, threatens violence*
- designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target*
- conducted either by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia) or by individuals or a small collection of individuals directly influenced, motivated, or inspired by the ideological aims or example of some existent terrorist movement and/or its leaders; and*
- perpetrated by a subnational group or nonstate entity"*⁶

A United Nations definition of terrorism reads as follows:

*"[Terrorism is] ...any action ... that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act."*⁷

Whereas the Central Intelligence Agency defines terrorism according to the Title 22 of the US Code, Section 2656f(d):

"The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.

The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving the territory or the citizens of more than one country.

*The term "terrorist group" means any group that practices, or has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism."*⁸

⁶ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 40)

⁷ (United Nations High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Changes, 2004, p. 45)

⁸ (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007)

An OSCE attempt to describe terrorism can be found in the Manual on Countering Terrorism, Protecting Human Rights:

"Terrorism occurs in many different contexts and takes different forms. Without seeking to define terrorism here, we can consider some of its consistent features including:

- *its organized nature (whether the organization involved is large or small);*
- *its dangerousness (to life, limb and property);*
- *its attempt to undermine government in particular (by seeking to influence policy and law-makers);*
- *its randomness and consequential spreading of fear/terror among a population."*⁹

The most fundamental definition of terrorism, used by the RAND Corporation in the cited publication, describes terrorism as:

*"... the use or threatened use of violence for the purpose of inducing terror."*¹⁰

One point, on which probably every institution or researcher could agree on, is that terrorism is a deeply pejorative term.¹¹ It is a word with intrinsically negative connotations, which is generally applied to ones enemies or opponents. Thus, the label terrorism is a quite subjective term; whom someone calls a terrorist or not strongly depends on his personal point of view, his social context, his lifeworld and socialisation and therefore, whether he sympathises with or opposes the actors or the cause that is concerned.¹² How important this subjective logic is going to be for the further argumentation will evolve in the upcoming chapter about postmodernism.

At this point, we shall lay our attention to the examples of definitions for terrorism. As we see, the first key feature of terrorism, so to say an essential condition for the connotation of an action as terrorism is the use or the threatened use of violence against civilians or noncombatants.

*"The terrorist is fundamentally a violent intellectual, prepared to use, and indeed, committed to using force in the attachment of his goals."*¹³

⁹ (OSCE, 2007, p. 23)

¹⁰ (Davis & Cragin, 2009, p. 4)

¹¹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 23)

¹² (Hoffman, 2006, p. 23)

¹³ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 38)

At this point, one could ask why we don't label terrorists as war criminals? If regular armed forces of a state intimidate, threaten or use violence against civilians or noncombatants, this would be the term to use. Here we find the *first* important distinction between perpetrators of terrorism and regular armed forces, who commit war crimes. While the former have *no recognised state-entity*, which hold responsibility for their actions, the latter are under the direct influence of an internationally recognised political body.

The *second* important distinction is settled in the simple fact that according to the general international law, terrorist and to a certain extent counter terrorist actions, are *not understood as activities of classical warfare*.¹⁴ Therefore, terrorists can't be labelled as war criminals, basically because they are not situated in a state of war. Furthermore, there is a fundamental difference between the violence of a regular armed force and the violence of terror attacks:

*"Even in war there are rules and accepted norms of behaviour that prohibit the use of certain types of weapons and proscribe various tactics and outlaw attacks on specific categories of targets."*¹⁵

Accordingly in theory, regrettably not always in praxis, the Geneva and The Hague Conventions on Warfare¹⁶ grant civilian noncombatants not only immunity from attack, but as well prohibit hostage taking, outlaw reprisals against either civilians or POW's, recognise neutral territories and the rights of their citizens and uphold the inviolability of diplomats and other accredited representatives. While regular armed forces in general respect this rules of warfare, terrorists' modus operandi is not rarely the intended violating of these rules.¹⁷

*"... one of the fundamental raisons d'être of international terrorism is a refusal to be bound by such rules of warfare and codes of conduct."*¹⁸

For further information about the legal status of terroristic acts in the international law, the author strongly recommends the master thesis of Raffelseder (2008).¹⁹

The *third* key feature, and what distinguishes terrorists from ordinary criminals, is that their aims are *fundamentally political*. While criminals usually perpetrate certain actions for personal benefits but do not question the regime itself, terrorists try to erode, if not destroy the political system as such with their campaigns.²⁰

Another important distinction, which demarcates terrorists from other irregulars like guerrillas or insurgencies, is their *formal appearance* and their *logistical capabilities*, while later operate

¹⁴ (Raffelseder, 2008, p. 44f)

¹⁵ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 26)

¹⁶ (Die Genfer Abkommen von 1949 und die Zusatzprotokolle I-III, 2010)

¹⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 27)

¹⁸ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 28)

¹⁹ (Raffelseder, 2008)

²⁰ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 37)

as a military unit, directly attack enemy military forces and seize and hold territory, the former:

*"... do not function in the open as armed units, generally do not attempt to seize or hold territory, deliberately avoid engaging enemy military forces in combat, are constraint both numerically and logistically from undertaking concerted mass political mobilization efforts, and exercise no direct control or governance a populace at either the local or the national level."*²¹

We will discuss the different possible motivations for terrorism in a far greater extent later on. Let us just keep in mind that *terrorist are currently not understood as actors of war*, and that *they use violence to intimidate a population to obtain political goals*.

THE HISTORY OF TERROR

The word terror itself was first popularised during the French revolution and had a quite positive connotation. The *"regime de la terreur"*²² was established 1793 after the French Revolution to maintain order during the transient anarchical period of turmoil and upheaval. Contrary to today's understanding of terror as actions *against* governments or institutions by non-state entities, the regime de la terreur was an *instrument of governance* implemented by the newly built revolutionary state and strongly tied to the values of the French Revolution, virtue and democracy. Indeed, even Robespierre firmly believed that virtue was the incentive of a popular government at peace, but that, during a time, which is characterised by revolution and turmoil; it needs terror to help democracy to triumph.

*"He appealed famously to `virtue, without which terror is evil; terror, without which virtue is helpless' and proclaimed: `Terror is nothing but justice, prompt, severe and inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue.'"*²³

Although there are serious divergence from its subsequent meaning, the French Revolutions "terrorism" still shares at least two key features with today's terrorist organisations: both are neither random nor indiscriminate, as modern terrorism is often described, but organised, deliberate and systematic; and moreover, both share the same goals and justification: the creation of a new and better society in place of a fundamental corrupt and, out of their perspective, undemocratic political system.²⁴

Not only on the ideological level, but as well on the operational level have the recent assaults of nowadays terrorist movements a lot in common with earlier formations. The Irish groups of the 19th century for example, had a deep impact on the evolution and development of

²¹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 35)

²² (Hoffman, 2006, p. 3)

²³ Robespierre quoted in (Hoffman, 2006, p. 3)

²⁴ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 4)

terrorism techniques. They were the first to recognise the importance of establishing a foreign base beyond the reach of their enemy. Such a sanctuary is crucial not only for logistical and strategic planning matters, but as well for promoting a protracted terrorist campaign, distributing propaganda and for the solicitation of operational funds.²⁵ These groups as well introduced time-delayed explosive devices and the targeting of mass transport, accompanied with a distinct disregard of innocent human life.²⁶

Shall it be the Russian Anti-Czarists of the late 19th and early 20th century, the Red Army Fractions in Germany, Italy's Red Brigades, postcolonial or separatist violence in Palestine, Africa or the Far East or nowadays-international terrorism, what all of them have in common is the ultimate goal to *change the hegemonic political system into an idealised regime* according to their respective ideologies.²⁷

The paper at hand is not able to roll up the entire history of terrorism at this point, but it is important to understand that terrorism is not a particular phenomenon of the second half of the 20th or the first decade of the 21st century and that the Western world as we know it in the present day is at least partly formed through processes and campaigns, which today could be easily labelled as terrorism.

This shows us that the label terrorism lies in the eye of the beholder and history could transform terrorists to freedom fighters or even political leaders. This subjective view on terrorism is brought straight to the point by Yasir Arafat, who declared in front of the UN General Assembly that:

*"The difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights. For whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from the invaders, the settlers and the colonialists, cannot possibly be called terrorist."*²⁸

This view is opposed by realist researchers like Jenkins, who counters this relativistic approach through a more pragmatic perception of terrorism:

*"terrorism... should be defined by the nature of the act, not by the identity of the perpetrators or the nature of their cause."*²⁹

What the author tries to illustrate is that one of nowadays most dangerous threats for global security, international Islamist terrorism, is not a particularity of the 21st century. It is just an anew uprising of a well-known phenomenon, which uses the capabilities of the modern society, like the Internet, international itineraries, cell phones or email to distribute their

²⁵ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 10)

²⁶ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 11)

²⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 4)

²⁸ (Arafat, 1974)

²⁹ (Jenkins, 1980, p. 2)

claims in the entire world. Through this globalisation of terror, of which we will hear more in a later chapter, terrorism gets de-regionalised and therefore affects the whole world population instead of strictly definable spots on the world map.

Therefore, the meaning of terrorism in general shifted from an individual phenomenon of subnational violence to one of several elements or part of a wider pattern of non-state conflicts³⁰, where non-state actors and non-governmental processes and organisations pose a threat to the stability of nation states and where the control of large regions or urban areas shifted through violence from governments to new half political, half criminal powers.

Terrorism and perpetrators of terrorism, especially in the context of Islamist motivated terrorism, today is not an exactly definable entity, with clear hierarchical structures, definite regional expansion or a homogenous group of participating individuals. The re-emergence of religious terrorism in the 1980's set in motion profound changes in the nature, the motivations and in the capabilities of terrorists that are still unfolding and thereby transformed the phenomenon of terrorism into an arguably more *diffuse and amorphous phenomenon*.³¹

In contrast to stereotypical terrorist organisations of the 1970's or '80's, which were organised in hierarchical, pyramidal structures in cohesive organisational entities, nowadays terrorist networks and their members are part of a far more indistinct and broad movement. They tend to operate in a linear rather than a hierarchical basis. The classical cell structure vanished today in favour of more loosely connected or indirectly linked networks, consisting of both "professionals" and "amateurs", who may lack the expertise or experience of their better-established counterparts.³² This phenomenon, often labelled as *leaderless resistance*, *phantom cell network*, *autonomous cells*, *networks of networks*, or even *lone wolves*, has become one of the most important trends in terrorism today.³³

Al Qaeda is the manifestation of this phenomenon, as it underwent an organisational evolution from a bureaucratic entity that could be destroyed and an irregular army that could be defeated into a clearly less powerful, but nevertheless more resilient amorphous entity it is today, which is active around the world.³⁴ Along with this transformation comes the geographical diffusion of terror attacks. Whereas earlier suicide campaigns were geographically concentrated in the regions, where a readily identifiable political, ethnic, and/or religious conflict were raging, today's suicide campaigns with Islamist background appear to be more and more unattached to national borders or certain regions and spread fear across the entire globe.³⁵

³⁰ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 18)

³¹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 257)

³² (Hoffman, 2006, p. 271)

³³ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 271)

³⁴ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 283)

³⁵ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 720)

This phenomenon of fragmentation and pluralisation is an important hint for the transformation of terrorism in the postmodern era. Hence, we will have to further discuss this later in this paper. But before terrorism will be embedded in the context of broader societal developments, the layer of observation shall focus on the tactical level for the moment.

TERRORISM AS A TACTIC

What is terrorism actually? Well an accurate answer has to refer to the level of observation. On the operational level, terrorism is nothing more than a tactic; Noteworthy, a tactic that works³⁶.

*"Although governments throughout history and all over the world always claim that terrorism is ineffective as an instrument of political change, the examples of Israel, Cyprus, and Algeria, and of Begin, Makarios, and Ahmed Ben Bella provide convincing evidence to the contrary."*³⁷

Not to forget the grandfather of today's terrorism, Robespierre.

Its utility lies in the capability of *provocation, polarisation, mobilisation and compellence*.³⁸

Terrorism is in addition *highly effective* and comparatively *cheap*.³⁹

It could harm millions of people *physically* and, probably even more important, *psychologically* through the actions of very few perpetrators. Terrorism as a tactic lifts groups, we otherwise never would have heard of, onto the cover pages of newspapers and into the prime time news. It enables these groups to broadcast their claims through *the medium of violence* into the entire world and as a result probably even activate imitators or sympathisers.⁴⁰

Terrorism as a tactic is used by groups or individuals, who experience the deep compulsion to raise their voice against the Western hegemonic system, which is distributed through globalisation into the remotest corners of the world. However, as these groups obviously believe, that their voices won't be heard, they instead speak through the sounds of their guns and the detonation blasts of their bombs.⁴¹

As mentioned before, on a very general level, perpetrators of terrorism seek to change the political system under which they, on a subjective level, suffer. In order to obtain this goal, they basically need two things: *publicity*, mainly through media coverage, and *power*.

Publicity, because in the modern society, the world is highly perceived through the lenses of the media. Whether it is online in social media like facebook, YouTube or in blogs, or offline in newspapers or television, we use the media to develop our view about worldwide events to

³⁶ (Perl, 2011)

³⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 61)

³⁸ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 73)

³⁹ (Perl, 2011)

⁴⁰ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 16)

⁴¹ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 11)

the highest possible extent. In order to obtain certain goals, or even to *exist* for a broad public, you have to be present in the media. Therefore, and as the predominating rule in the news business is *only bad news are good news*, perpetrators of terrorism use the instrument of violence to carry this rule to the extreme.

*"The primary target is not those actually killed or injured in the attack, but those made to witness it."*⁴²

Thereby, the victims' own information media amplify the attacks and therefore become the perpetrators accomplices in afflicting the larger target population. The special implications of the outstanding role of the media will be discussed more detailed in the chapter "Postmodernism". Let us at this point only record that the primary aim of terror attacks is to target the audience, not the destroyed object itself.

What gives terrorists *power* is the fact that their unpredictable attacks leaves a big part of the society in a state of fear. After 9/11 and the attacks against major European cities, terrorism was delivered straight into the heart of the Western society and into the heads of their citizens. Moreover, it is an ever-present, visible threat. It is manifested in the security controls at airports, public transport stations, malls or mass events. The fear of terror attacks compels our governments and municipalities to deploy video cameras on highly frequented places, abhorrent phone calls or intercept emails. The significant consequences for the Western civil liberties tied to these measures will be explored in detail later on.

This described fear forces us to recognise the existence of perpetrators of terrorism and avoids us from turning our heads away from them.

However, It is definitely too short handed just to identify terrorism as the tactic of choice for the weak, poor, suppressed or politically underrepresented communities, or as the irrational actions of a handful of fanatics or fundamentalists.⁴³

Terrorism, an especially suicide terrorism, of which we will hear more later in this section, is rather an efficient way for non-state actors to fight against perceived enemy states, whose armies easily outnumber them and would doubtless defeat them in a direct military encounter.

⁴² (Atran, 2003, p. 1534)

⁴³ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 73)

*"Terrorists further argue that, because of their numerical inferiority, far more limited firepower, and paucity of resources compared with an established nation-state's massive defence and national security apparatus, they have no choice but to operate clandestinely, emerging from the shadows to carry out dramatic acts of hit-and-run violence in order to attract attention to, and ensure publicity for, themselves and their cause."*⁴⁴

This tactic includes among others classical hit and run techniques, hidden bomb assaults against civilians, suicide missions, hostage taking, hijacking, briefly spoken, every technique, which enables terrorists to deploy a maximum of damage at comparable low costs.

*"Small groups of terrorists could kill millions and could make the economic system fall apart."*⁴⁵

The success of this tactic often lies in the perceived influence, in the impact on the reality of everyday life. This impact is measured through the amount of publicity and attention received. The satisfaction of simply being noticed even makes a distinction between positive and negative connoted publicity more or less obsolete.⁴⁶

As the wide public as well as the media get more and more progressively inured or desensitised to the seemingly endless litany of bloodshed, devastating bombings and suicide attacks, this obsession with public attention and media coverage could easily lead to an *upward spiral of violence*, as ever more shocking and tremendous attacks have to be committed in order to keep the eye of the media, and with that the focus of public attention, on the terrorists and on their demands.⁴⁷

Violence itself is used as a tool to gain the necessary (political) power to obtain the terrorists' goals. As all terrorism is a quest for power, power to dominate, coerce, to intimidate, to control and ultimately to effect fundamental political change, violence is thus the sine qua non of terrorists.⁴⁸

They are deeply convinced that their cause can only triumph and their long-term political aims can only be attained through the more or less extensive use of violence. Especially cruel and threatening forms of violence are suicide attacks, which we will discuss in the following paragraphs.

⁴⁴ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 26)

⁴⁵ (Perl, 2011)

⁴⁶ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 247)

⁴⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 248), (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 78)

⁴⁸ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 255)

SUICIDE TERRORISM

Suicide terrorism in general means the

*"... targeted use of self-destructing humans against noncombatant - typically civilian - population to effect political change."*⁴⁹

Despite the fact, that a suicide attack, just as terrorist attacks in general, aims to physically destroy an initial target, its primary use is, as we already heard before, typically as a weapon of psychological warfare intended to affect a larger public audience.⁵⁰

Martyrdom operations represent an odd and abnormal type of violent behaviour, which signals the perpetrators' *rejection of compromise* and their *recourse to unconventional warfare*.⁵¹

Because of its unique tactical advantages, terrorists became increasingly attracted to suicide terrorism.

*"Suicide tactics are devastatingly effective, lethally efficient, have a greater likelihood of success, and are relatively inexpensive and generally easier to execute than other attack modes."*⁵²

The decision to implement this tactic is therefore neither *irrational nor desperate*⁵³, as it is often described; it is rather a deeply *rational* and *calculated* decision and thus understood as a purposeful instrument of warfare.

Suicide terrorism, while looking irrational at first sight, may still be considered as the outcome of individual, or collective rational choice.⁵⁴ Especially if such acts of self-destruction have a cultural and religious context.⁵⁵ For radical Islamist groups, the instrument of suicide terrorism gets through religious and theological justifications an outstanding role among their toolbox. Not only justifies their interpretation of the Qur'an suicide attacks as a duty to fight against the perceived enemies of the Islam, but also ensures the legitimization of such attacks through several religious leaders a flow of recruits to these organisations, which they need in order to sustain suicide operations⁵⁶. We will learn more about the theological justification of suicide attacks at noncombatants in the chapter "Jihad and the Jihadist".

Generally spoken, a suicide operation differs from any other attack through the feature that the *death of the perpetrator is essential for the success of the assault*. The suicide terrorist becomes the ultimate smart bomb; a human missile relentlessly homing its target, but with

⁴⁹ (Atran, 2003, p. 1534)

⁵⁰ (Atran, 2003, p. 1534)

⁵¹ (Haddad, 2004)

⁵² (Hoffman, 2006, p. 132)

⁵³ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 132)

⁵⁴ (Schneider, Brück, & Meierrieks, 2010, p. 24)

⁵⁵ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 33)

⁵⁶ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 132)

the flexibility of timing and approach to the goal.⁵⁷ Not only is the suicide terrorist able to conduct *last minute changes*, depending on *visible security measures*, ease or *difficulty of approach* and the number of *civilians* at the target. In addition, suicide operations are *remarkable cheap* to mount. By virtue of appraisals, a typical Palestinian suicide mission costs about 150 USD, while suicide operations in Israel inflicting six times the number of deaths and 26 times more casualties than other acts of terrorism.⁵⁸

As we heard before, an important reason for radical groups to use terrorism lies in the desire to obtain public attention for their respective concerns. Given its irresistible combination of savagery and bloodshed, suicide attacks are hardly guaranteed to provide broad media coverage.⁵⁹ In addition, suicide terrorism is, after the use of WMD's,⁶⁰ probably the most powerful psychological weapon. No other terrorist tactic arguably induces the same fear and paralysis in the terrorists' target audience. As we heard before while discussing different definitions of terrorism, this is exactly the purpose of terrorist groups: to intimidate governments and entire populations alike and create a climate of profound fear and insecurity, which they can manipulate and exploit to their advantage.⁶¹ Thus, the subjective aspect of the threat is just as important as the objective aspect.⁶²

On the other side, the use of suicide terrorism marks a remarkable shift in the discourse about acceptable instruments and strategies in the fight against Western influence.

While suicide, the senseless act of taking one's life, especially in Islamic shaped societies, is usually regarded as *aberrant, abnormal and considered as a capital sin*, the suicide terrorist act becomes more and more accepted, commonplace and receives a demonstrably *positive connotation* through using the concept of self-sacrifice or *istishhad*.⁶³ Terrorist organisations achieve this mind-shift through a remarkable *marketing campaign*, consisting of images of suicide terrorists emblazoned on murals, wall posters, calendars and even key chains.⁶⁴

In addition, the families of a suicide terrorist are suddenly elevated in their social status and receive financial and material goods or nice living accommodations like furniture or even jewellery as death benefits.⁶⁵ This recalibration of social values by terrorist organisation leads to the opinion in the respective in-group, that suicide bombers are not at all people with psychological problems, but that they are celebrated for their bravery and selflessness.⁶⁶

Thus, suicide terrorism is basically an *instrumental strategy*. This exceptional threat to national and international security has intrinsically less to do with the perceived injustices, the desperation or frustration of its perpetrators, than with the *strategic requirements* of the

⁵⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 132)

⁵⁸ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 133)

⁵⁹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 133)

⁶⁰ Weapons of Mass Destruction

⁶¹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 133)

⁶² (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 77)

⁶³ (Haddad, 2004, p. 338)

⁶⁴ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 157)

⁶⁵ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 158)

⁶⁶ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 158)

organisations, which send these bombers on their mission. The strategic advantages of suicide missions are outstanding, as they are shocking, deadly, cost-effective, secure and very difficult to stop.⁶⁷

Furthermore

*"Suicide terror attacks are rational acts undertaken as part of a deliberately calculated and orchestrated campaign to undermine confidence in government and leadership, crush popular morale, and spread fear and intimidation."*⁶⁸

Apart from the striking tactical advantages of suicide terrorism, there is, at least for the purpose of this thesis, an even more crucial aspect of suicide terrorism, namely the salient *symbolic implications* of putting the own death into stake, of which more later.

RELIGIOUS TERRORISM

The IRA⁶⁹, the PLO⁷⁰ and the FLN⁷¹, just to name a few terrorist organisations, all have one feature in common: Although they have strong connections to a certain religion and even religion is often used as a legitimating reason for their actions, their nature is indubitably political. The pre-eminence of their ethno-nationalist and irredentist aims is incontestable.⁷² These groups are or were fighting for independence, territories, civil rights or equal secular goals.

For others, like Al Qaeda or Aum Shinrikyo, *"the religious motive is overriding."*⁷³

Actually, for lots of scientists, the religious imperative for terrorism is the most important defining characteristic of terrorist activity today.⁷⁴ This not only holds true for an Islamist background of terrorism, instead, hardly all the world's major religions produce fundamental subgroups, and lots of them tend to use violence in order to obtain their respective goals. Nevertheless, it is at this point important to mention, that

*"... although religion is not completely innocent (in many cases, religion provided the ideology, the motivation, and the organisational structure), it generally does not - by itself - lead to violence. Only when religion is combined with movements for social or political change, in which norms about the use of violence have been reinterpreted, does it lead to violence."*⁷⁵

⁶⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 165)

⁶⁸ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 168)

⁶⁹ Irish Republican Army

⁷⁰ Palestine Liberation Organisation

⁷¹ Front de Libération Nationale

⁷² (Hoffman, 2006, p. 82)

⁷³ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 82)

⁷⁴ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 82)

⁷⁵ (Noricks, 2009, p. 38)

The inversion of the former predominant secularisation of terrorism, which started approximately after WWII, leads to new challenges and dangerous situations.

Religious terrorism differentiates from its secular counterparts in its:

*"... radically different value systems, mechanisms of legitimation and justification, concepts of morality, and worldviews..."*⁷⁶

For the religious terrorist, violence is first and foremost a *sacramental act or divine duty* executed in direct response to some theological demand or imperative.⁷⁷ Thus, religious terror contains a *transcendental dimension*, which serves as an ultimate justification for their actions, despite their political, moral or practical consequences.

Whereas secular terrorist groups usually dismiss the option of using large scale violence against noncombatants or civilians, as such actions are seen as counterproductive for their cause, if not immoral, religious terrorists, on the contrary, seek exactly this elimination of a broadly defined population and see that not only as morally justified, but as necessary expedients for the attainment of their goals.⁷⁸

The religious justification of terrorist activities leads to a strong connection between terrorist groups and radical clerical authorities of the respective religion, who interpret the religious texts in a way, which legitimates violent actions. The distinctness of connection becomes more obvious, if we keep in mind that religious terror attacks not seldom require blessings from a clerical authority, which means nothing else but a *divine approval* of the assaults.

Finally, even the self-image of religious terrorists and the perception of their violent acts are highly different compared to those of secular terrorists. While the latter regard violence as a means of instigating the correction of an existing system or the creation of a new order, the former:

*"... see themselves not as components of a system worth preserving but as outsiders seeking fundamental changes in the existing order."*⁷⁹

This sense of *alienation* from this world enables them to implement far more destructive terrorist campaigns and to identify a far more open-ended category of enemies as targets for their assaults. In the utmost consequence, anyone, who is not a member of the terrorist organisation, sect or other form of community becomes a potential target.

Despite the cited arguments, it is questionable whether the "new" religious terrorism really differs significantly from the "old" secular terror campaigns along the three relevant dimensions, its *goals*, its *methods* and its *forms of organisation*.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 88)

⁷⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 88)

⁷⁸ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 89)

⁷⁹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 89)

⁸⁰ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 75)

Detailed discussion will follow in the upcoming chapters, but there are strong evidences that the new terrorism is not as new as often suggested. In fact, using terrorism to expel a foreign occupier is a tried-and-true method throughout history, just as the aim to seize power or to implement a revolutionary change. Moreover, the methods of religious terrorism are well known and remained largely low tech. Even the cloudy organisation form of today's international terrorism, especially of Al Qaeda, have been observed before and rather seem to be a response to the steady erosion of the organisation through the loss of key operatives in the ongoing war on terror.⁸¹

*"Thus, terrorism associated with Islamic extremist tendencies varies from the past along these three dimensions, but the difference is one of degree rather than kind. The fundamental process of terrorism has not changed."*⁸²

Even the role of religion, as we will hear later on, is more than questionable, if not on the instrumental, than at least on the organisation's motivation level.

Remarkably, the associated rhetoric of holy terror often labels anyone outside the respective in-group with denigrating and dehumanising terms, as for example infidels, dogs, children of Satan or mud people. This effect of dehumanising the opponent was mentioned in the introduction of this paper, but used it on the very other side of the mirror, namely in describing the way in which *the terrorist* is perceived in the Western media and public discussion.

Obviously, the process of depreciation of one's enemy is a very human strategy, both on the individual level, as well as at the group- and macro level, to demarcate an in-group from its respective out-group.

The deliberate use of such terminology is significant on both sides of this conflict. This is especially an alarming observation, as this perception of the opponent further erodes constraints on violence and bloodshed by portraying the victims of this conflict as either subhuman or unworthy of living.⁸³

*"Individuals tend to misperceive differences between group norms as more extreme than they really are. Resulting misunderstandings - encouraged by religious and ideological propaganda - lead antagonistic groups to interpret each other's views of events, such as terrorism/freedom fighting, as wrong, radical, and/or irrational. Mutual demonization and warfare readily ensue."*⁸⁴

A vicious circle, which could lead to an unpredictable death toll, suffering and dreads.

⁸¹ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 75f)

⁸² (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 77)

⁸³ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 89)

⁸⁴ (Atran, 2003, p. 1536)

JIHAD AND THE JIHADIST

After a rather general discussion of religious terrorism, we shall lay the focus on the radical Islamist terrorism, which is usually labelled as Jihadism and thereby give a special attention to the disputed theological justification of Jihad and its different forms. According to a rather moderate interpretation of the Qur'an,

*"Jihad in Islam is a defensive movement against those who impose violence."*⁸⁵

While the core characteristics of religious terrorism, described in the previous chapter, are more or less common to religious terrorists of all faiths, they have nevertheless most regularly been associated with Islamist terrorist groups in general and Al Qaeda in particular. However, it is important to emphasise, and the author apologises for any repetition at this point, that terrorism is not to be used equivalent with the word Islam, Arab or other ethnical, religious or national features of a single person or community. As we heard before, all the major religious communities and political entities in this world contain extremist elements to a certain extent.

Nevertheless, as the focus of this thesis shall lay on the Islamist motivated terrorist, in the following chapter, the main aspects of the Islamist motivated terrorist campaign against the Western society, commonly labelled as Jihad, will be briefly illustrated, and some of the main arguments and the intrinsic logic of this globally active movement will be delivered.

Because of the inherently subjective process of religious interpretation, whereby immutable religious texts and principles are applied to new circumstances and issues, Jihad can have different connotations.⁸⁶ Early Muslims were permitted to engage in *armed resistance*, but only under *certain conditions*. Fighting and killing in the name of Islam is *conditional*, requiring discrimination of noncombatants from warriors, and prohibiting harm to noncombatants. Furthermore, military Jihad is widely interpreted as essentially defensive.⁸⁷ Contemporary Islamic thought tends to offer divergent interpretations of the meaning of Jihad and its relevance to Muslims, as the concept of Jihad has undoubtedly experienced deep alterations over the last 1400 years.⁸⁸

*"The evolution of jihadi thought is less about changing principles embedded in the religious texts than the ways in which these principles are operative in the contemporary period."*⁸⁹

Islamic jurisprudence distinguishes between the *lesser* and the *greater Jihad*.

⁸⁵ (Faddlallah, 1996)

⁸⁶ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 76)

⁸⁷ (Haddad, 2004, p. 344)

⁸⁸ (Haddad, 2004, p. 342)

⁸⁹ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 76)

While the *lesser Jihad* is an external fight, either to promote the spread of Islam, Enlightenment, and civility to the *dar al-harb* (domain of war, meaning regions which are not under Islamic control), or to combat an external threat that invades Muslim territory to protect the faith and the faithful, comparable to the Judeo-Christian just war theory, the *greater Jihad* focus' lies on the struggle of the soul and inner purification.⁹⁰

In every case, Jihad is seen as an *undeniable duty* for a Muslim.⁹¹ Nevertheless, there is as well a differentiation between the *collective duty* of Jihad, and the *individual duty*.

Collective duties (fard kifayah) are obligations, which could be fulfilled by a group of Muslims in the name of the entire community. As long as the group is large enough to succeed in its fight, the remaining community is discharged from the duty.

Individual duties (fard 'ayn) are those that each and every Muslim has to fulfil in order to avoid falling into sin.⁹²

While the *offensive lesser Jihad* is usually understood as a collective duty, the *defensive lesser Jihad*, just as the greater Jihad is seen as an individual duty. To wage a legitimate defensive Jihad against a perceived enemy, it is crucial for believing Muslims to verify, that the aggressor poses a threat to Islam, to the *ummah* (the worldwide Muslim community), and/or to territories under Islamic influence. Among others, bin Laden argued that the eternal struggle to defend Muslims from the disbelievers is justified because of the extensive military presence of the United States on the Arabian Peninsula since 1990 and the since then ever growing US influence in the Middle East.⁹³ The critical need for a defensive legitimization of the Jihad is obvious in hardly every statement of Al Qaeda.

*"We are carrying out the mission of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him). The mission is to spread the word of God, not to indulge in massacring people. We ourselves are the target of killings, destruction, and atrocities. We are only defending ourselves. This is a defensive Jihad. We want to defend our people and our land. That is why we say, if we don't get security, the Americans, too, would not get security. This is the simple formula that even an American child can understand. Live and let live."*⁹⁴

Nevertheless, there are seemingly contradictory passages concerning Jihad in the Qur'an, which opens the door for a variety of interpretations that transcended the classical notion. In some passages, the Qur'an expresses tolerance of other faiths, whereas in others, it is devotedly hostile to other confessions, if it not purports intolerance and systematic violence

⁹⁰ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 83)

⁹¹ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 84)

⁹² (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 84)

⁹³ bin Laden quoted in (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 85)

⁹⁴ bin Laden quoted in (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 86)

against infidels...⁹⁵ In some passages, the Qur'an even stipulates, though with some reservations, that Muslims shall fight against Jews and Christians.⁹⁶

As we saw, the concept of Jihad is far more complex, than it seems to be in the first place. Essential is the insight, that there are different interpretations of Jihad and its legitimacy. One among those is the radical perception of the global Jihadist movement, which justifies its terror campaign with the Western presence in Islamic territories. However, as will be described more detailed in the chapter "Global Jihad", this is not the only, not even the dominant interpretation of the Qur'an verses on Jihad.

MARTYRDOM & SUICIDE

As we heard before, suicide attacks become more and more important for terror campaigns, due to their striking tactical and strategic advantages. However, martyrdom and suicide have not always been legitimate tools of Jihad, but were promoted to such over the course of time.

One of the birthplaces of today's international Islamist terrorism is the Iranian Revolution of 1979, which turned the country into an Islamic republic based on a fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic law.⁹⁷ The Iranian Revolution has been seen as an example for Muslims all over the world to reassert the fundamental teachings of the Qur'an, according to the Shi'a Islam promoted by Ayatollah Khomeini and to resist the Western - especially the United States - intrusion of influence into the Middle East.

One of the key features of this Shi'a interpretation of Islam is the *neglecting* of the legitimacy of *any secular government*.⁹⁸ According to this rationale, governmental legitimisation can only be achieved through the *implementation of Islamic law*. As Iran was the first country which began this redemption, its regime thinks that Iran has to be the advocate for all the other oppressed and aggrieved Muslims all over the world.

*"Not only are violence and coercion permissible in order to achieve the worldwide spread of Islamic law, but they are also a necessary means to this divinely sanctioned end."*⁹⁹

Another important landmark in the uprising of religious terrorism was the successful suicide terror campaign of the Hezbollah against the United States in Lebanon in the 1980's, which subsequently led to a withdrawal of US armed forces. This campaign consequently inspired other radical groups to adopt the suicide attack tactic not only in the Middle East, but also in other parts of the world.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ (Haddad, 2004, p. 342)

⁹⁶ (Haddad, 2004, p. 342)

⁹⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 89)

⁹⁸ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 90)

⁹⁹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 90)

¹⁰⁰ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 132); (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 92)

Although suicide is expressly forbidden in the Qur'an¹⁰¹ and is considered as one of the greatest wrong doings a Muslim can commit, suicide terrorism receives increasing prominence among Islamist radical groups. The religious legitimacy of suicide terrorism is maintained through a semantic distinction, which differentiates suicide.

While opponents of suicide attacks among the theological scholars focus on the *act* itself, consciously killing oneself, its proponents focus on the *intent* of the perpetrator.¹⁰² On the one side is suicide - the taking of one's own life because of desperation, weakness or a bleak outlook on one's own future - on the other is martyrdom:

*"... in which the perpetrator's death is a requirement for the attacks success and is thus justified and accepted. Suicide terrorism therefore becomes the ultimate expression of selflessness and altruism."*¹⁰³

The distinction consequently targets the *motivation* for the suicide. In this perception, a *mujahideen* (holy warrior) who kills himself during a suicide mission is imbued with faith in Allah's grace and generosity, while a suicide takes his life because he is tired of himself and Allah.¹⁰⁴

According to these interpretations of Islamic teachings, suicide, or *intihar*, designates despair and violent withdrawal from society, whereas martyrdom, or *shahadat*, represents the ultimate form of giving for the well-being of the community.¹⁰⁵

Two distinct types of *shahadat* could be distinguished. The *first* type of *shaheed* is one who gives up his life through Jihad, he is chosen by *shahadat*. The *second* type is rebels and consciously welcomes death, he chooses his own *shahadat*.¹⁰⁶

The most revered *shaheed* was Husayn, who was killed after refusing to avoid a confrontation with a superior, though illegitimate regime. This example served as a role model for contemporary suicide terrorists, as it introduced *shahadat* as a way to draw attention to injustice so that action can be taken against it.¹⁰⁷ Again, the aim of this act was to catch attention of a relevant audience, an already mentioned feature of past and present terrorism likewise.

Another common legitimization of suicide attacks is, among others, described by Dr. Eyad Sarraj, a Palestinian psychiatrist, who states that suicide terrorists are granted a special status in the Islamic community.

¹⁰¹ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 159)

¹⁰² (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 92)

¹⁰³ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 159)

¹⁰⁴ (Sheikh al Qardawi, 2003)

¹⁰⁵ (Haddad, 2004, p. 341)

¹⁰⁶ (Haddad, 2004, p. 343f)

¹⁰⁷ (Haddad, 2004, p. 344)

*"A person who would die for his country or tribe is glorified, even sanctified and blessed."*¹⁰⁸

He further cites a passage of the Qur'an, which is commonly used to underline the differentiation between suicide and martyrdom:

*"... and don't think that those who are killed in battle for God are dead. Sure they are alive and looked after by God."*¹⁰⁹

The *shaheed batal* (martyr heroes) are therefore not committing a sin, as they, in the understanding of proponents of suicide attacks, are actually not dead, but live further in the higher and true life after.¹¹⁰ Not only does this imply that martyrs do not really die, they rather are to receive rewards in the afterlife.¹¹¹ The seven blessings that the martyr is promised are:

- *"he is forgiven from the moment his blood is first shed*
- *he will be shown his place in Paradise*
- *he will be spared the trial of the grave*
- *and he will be secure on the Day of the Greatest Terror (the Day of Judgement)*
- *there will be placed on his head a crown of dignity, one ruby of which is better than this world and all that is in it*
- *he will be married to seventy-two of al-hoor al-'iyn*
- *and he will be permitted to intercede for seventy of his relatives"*¹¹²

For a deeply religious individual, these rewards, together with the moral justification of the use of violence, could well be a strong motivation force for committing suicide attacks.

The use of violence is further legitimated by radical theologians and perpetrators of terrorism through Sura 2, verses 190-91, which as well was reportedly cited by Sheikh Yassin, founder of Hamas and its spiritual leader:

*"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you... And slay them wherever ye find them and drive them out of the place when they drove you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter."*¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ (Sarraj, 1996) quoted in (Hoffman, 2006, p. 160)

¹⁰⁹ (Sarraj, 1996) quoted in (Hoffman, 2006, p. 160)

¹¹⁰ (Sarraj, 1996) quoted in (Hoffman, 2006, p. 160)

¹¹¹ (Haddad, 2004, p. 343)

¹¹² narrated in hadeeth of al-Miqdaam ibn Ma'di Karb quoted in (Haddad, 2004, p. 344)

¹¹³ (Davis J. M., 2003)

The four main justifications of suicide attacks are thus:

- *"Seeking for Martyrdom*
- *Hurting the enemy*
- *Encouraging Muslims*
- *Weakening the spirit of the enemy"* ¹¹⁴

Though there are several passages, which encourage Muslims to fight against their perceived enemies, the Qur'an is replete with enjoinders against killing civilians. Actually, nonviolent interpretations of the Qur'an emphasise numerous pieces of religious evidence to argue for a prohibition against targeting noncombatants:

"Set out for jihad in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah. Do not lay hands on the old verging on death, on women, children and babes. Do not steal anything from the booty and collect together all that falls to your lot in the battlefield and do good, for Allah loves the virtuous and the pious." ¹¹⁵

These kinds of evidences serve as a prohibition against purposely targeting civilians. Nevertheless, even moderate interpretations recognise the possibility of civilian casualties in violent conflicts, similarly to the Western concept of *collateral damage*, as an acceptable consequence in a legitimate Jihad.¹¹⁶

Therefore, although Jihadist fighters act under the obligation to do everything possible to limit noncombatant casualties, civil casualties are under certain circumstances tolerable. This holds true for example, when the enemy is using human shields to cover its forces. In this case, the Jihadist is allowed to attack and the responsibility for the civilian victims lies with the enemy.¹¹⁷ As the respective excuse for the killing of innocents, civilians or noncombatants often serves a verse of the Qur'an, which was for example cited by Antar Zouabri, a leader of the GIA¹¹⁸:

"I am innocent of those killed because they were associated with those who had to be fought." ¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, given the vast religious evidence from the Qur'an emphasising the sanctity of life and limiting attacks against noncombatants, Jihadist groups could hardly argue against noncombatant immunity. Still, Al Qaeda has definitely broken new ground to develop an

¹¹⁴ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 160)

¹¹⁵ Sunna of the prophet Mohammed quoted in (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 86)

¹¹⁶ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 87)

¹¹⁷ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 86)

¹¹⁸ Algerian Groupe Islamique Armé

¹¹⁹ Armed Islamic Group communiqué 1996; quoted in (Hoffman, 2006, p. 92)

expanded understanding about permissible targets in war.¹²⁰ This expanded interpretation meanwhile goes so far, as even civilians, who support the rival government or entity, are seen to act as *surrogates* and *representatives* of the enemy; thus, they can be directly attacked as *legitimate targets*.¹²¹

Moreover, Jihadists justify targeting non-Muslim civilians one the one hand through the doctrine of *proportional response*, and on the other hand through the argumentation that *anyone who assists the enemy* in any way, even through words, loses the protection of the noncombatant status.¹²²

As mentioned before, although the widely accepted interpretation that targeting of civilians is prohibited, it becomes justified if the enemy for instance attacked Muslim civilians.

*"And one who attacks you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you"*¹²³

In other words, if the enemy uses tactics, which are actually prohibited according to Islamic law, these tactics become legal for Muslims when attacking the enemy.

As numerous interventions of the United States in the past decades as well caused civil casualties among the Muslim community (Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, through the support of Israel indirectly Palestine as well) Al Qaeda justifies its attacks against noncombatants with the *proportional response argument*.

The other legitimization rests on the notion that those who stand in the way of Gods aim, which is pursuit through Jihad, must be fought. Even noncombatants fall within the circle of legitimate targets, if they support the enemy in any way, shall it be through words, deeds, in mind or in any other way.¹²⁴ With this subjective understanding of the capability to fight, even NGO's, journalists, academics, government consultants and business representatives become acceptable targets of violence. Especially Al Qaeda uses this subjectivity threshold to dramatically broaden the menu of legitimate targets to hardly anyone, who is deemed to support the perceived war against Islam.

This goes as far as the justification of the 9/11 attacks was that a *democratically elected government reflects the will of the respective people*, which therefore could be legitimately labelled as enemies of the Islam.¹²⁵

As already pointed out, a main difference in the use of violence between religious terrorists and their secular counterparts lies in the fact that the later were limited in their use of violence through the more or less realistic possibility of becoming part of a legitimate

¹²⁰ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 87)

¹²¹ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 88)

¹²² (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 89f)

¹²³ Qur'an 2:194 quoted in (Wiktorowicz, 2005)

¹²⁴ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 91)

¹²⁵ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 91)

government and terrorism thus was an instrument to achieve a concrete political end,¹²⁶ while the former see in violence

*"... a demonstrably divine or transcendental purpose, committed in the service or upon the commandment of their own god or religious figures, and therefore they feel little need to regulate or calibrate that violence."*¹²⁷

Although there is still an *instrumental purpose in violence*, it is also often an ends in itself, a demonstrably divine and transcendental purpose, committed in the spirit of their god or key religious leaders. Because of this divine, afterlife orientated dimension of violence, there is no need to calibrate or regulate this violence and some scholars thus completely deny the instrumental character of their violence.¹²⁸

A striking insight in the Islamist terrorists mind-set delivers a statement of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the former leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, who was killed 2006 during a joint operation of the US Air Force and the Iraqi military.

*"There is no doubt that Allah commanded us to strike the Kuffar (unbelievers), kill them, and fight them by all means necessary to achieve the goal. The servants of Allah who perform Jihad to elevate the word (laws) of Allah, are permitted to use any and all means necessary to strike the active unbeliever combatants for the purpose of killing them, snatch their souls from their body, cleanse the earth from their abomination, and lift their trial and persecution of the servants of Allah. The goal must be pursued even if the means to accomplish it affect both the intended active fighters and unintended passive ones such as women, children and any other passive category specified by our jurisprudence. This permissibility extends to situations in which Muslims may get killed if they happen to be with or near the intended enemy, and if it is not possible to avoid hitting them or separate them from the intended Kaffirs. Although spilling sacred Muslim blood is a grave offense, it is not only permissible but it is mandated in order to prevent more serious adversity from happening, stalling or abandoning Jihad that is [sic]"*¹²⁹

In summary, it can be said that the development of Jihad is characterised mainly by a *corrosion of the critical constraints*, which used to limit Islamic warfare, the intensity of violence and the range of possible targets to combatants and their leaders. Furthermore, nowadays Jihadists claim that any Muslim who leaves the way of Islam and any leader, who

¹²⁶ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 76)

¹²⁷ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 240)

¹²⁸ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 76)

¹²⁹ Zarqawi Statement May 20, 2005, Part 1," English Translation ©Jihad Unspun 2005, May 26, 2005 quoted in (Hoffman, 2006, p. 241)

does not implement and follow the Islamic law, is to be regarded as an *apostate* and thus is a legitimate target for attacks. Moreover, the traditional perception that noncombatants and civilians must be spared from attacks, is undermined in a way that makes everyone living in a Western democracy subject to attack.¹³⁰

GLOBAL JIHAD

The phenomenon of special interest within this paper is the global Jihadist movement. Therefore, after emphasising the tactical and strategic advantages of terrorism, the following paragraphs will deliver some major considerations about this phenomenon on a global level. There is no doubt, that Salafism, the ideological root of the jihadi terrorism, of which Al Qaeda is the most notable exponent, is profoundly illiberal, in stressing theocracy and intolerance of diversity and dissent above democracy, as well as being socially homophobic and misogynist.¹³¹

As justification for violence against the West serves its ascribed responsibility for the perceived humiliation and oppression suffered by marginalised people throughout the Muslim world.¹³²

Moreover, Al Qaeda is not, as already mentioned, a definable entity like a rogue state, which could be spatially isolated. This proponent of radical Jihadism has rather become a diffused movement that seeks to draw upon a sense of *grievance*, *humiliation* and *outrage* throughout the Islamic world, connecting a range of conflicts to a *global struggle*.¹³³

Moreover, this movement already reached the Western states, where Islamist groups challenge the prevailing secular, liberal consensus.¹³⁴

The already mentioned *delocalisation* of terror is a phenomenon, which marks the difference between the "traditional" terror groups and international terrorism of groups like Al Qaeda. The former usually are *subnational* organisations, which run terror campaigns against a perceived enemy state in order to advance *limited and well-defined political goals*. Such goals may be the end of foreign occupation, increased regional autonomy, and self-determination. These terror organisations have their strongest *presence in the respective conflict area*, *recruit* their members foremost *locally*, and traditionally choose *targets in the conflict area* or in close proximity thereof, which is quite obvious because of their regional aims.¹³⁵

International terrorism, and its most prominent agent Al Qaeda, on the other hand, contrasts this traditional, localised phenomenon with the *globalisation of martyrdom*.¹³⁶

Three main characteristics are tied to this phenomenon:

¹³⁰ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 94)

¹³¹ (Freedman, 2005, p. 106)

¹³² (Gurr, 2008, p. 141)

¹³³ (Freedman, 2005, p. 106)

¹³⁴ (Freedman, 2005, p. 106)

¹³⁵ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 720)

¹³⁶ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 721)

First, the new globalised terrorism campaign is deeply *transnational* in its nature and in its aspiration.¹³⁷ Today's terror attacks are planned by globally acting networks, prepared in countries far off from disputed regions and attacks not only take place in countries with actual conflicts. Even the recruits come from all regions of the world. Adherents of global Jihad do not consider themselves as an integral part of their host society. In fact, it is exactly the already mentioned alienation from their host society that explains part of their motivation to explode themselves along with innocent civilians.¹³⁸

The *second* characteristic of today's globalised martyrdom is that many terrorists and suicide bombers are driven by a *humiliation* that significantly differs from the concrete grievances of traditional suicide bombers. While the grievance of localised suicide bombers is strongly tied to personal encounters with occupational forces, to the loss of a close friend or relative or similar concrete traumata, this link today is far more complex and perceived grievances are rather *viscerally*, than directly, experienced.¹³⁹

The *third* characteristic of the global Jihad is the central position of the Internet. As mentioned before, the World Wide Web plays a crucial role in the indoctrination, training, recruitment and radicalisation process of today's martyrs. Not only deliver respective websites theological justifications and content tools of indoctrination, as the imperative to join the Jihad and defend Islam, the Internet as well serves as a virtual meeting and training ground for Jihadists to-be.¹⁴⁰

Thus, Al Qaeda is literally the first guerrilla movement in history to migrate from physical space to cyberspace.¹⁴¹ More information about this most significant phenomenon is found in Nico Pruchas remarkable effort to reveal the activities, structures and techniques of the Jihadist online community.¹⁴²

The globalisation could therefore well be held responsible for the internationalisation of terrorism. The resentment of being left behind of those who do not profit from globalisation could lead the marginalised to commit terror attacks to raise their voice against this perceived injustice.¹⁴³

However, as will be discussed later in this paper, today's perpetrators of terrorism are usually better educated and more prosperous than the average of their respective society, and are not rarely citizens of Western countries. Thus, another approach is probably more accurate. International terrorists are rather the *products of globalisation*, and not those left behind. Although they seem to be material beneficiaries of the modern world, they are socially and

¹³⁷ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 721)

¹³⁸ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 721)

¹³⁹ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 722)

¹⁴⁰ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 723)

¹⁴¹ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 723)

¹⁴² (Prucha, 2011)

¹⁴³ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 70)

politically unassimilated, spiritually adrift and caught between traditional values and modernity. If at all, they are left behind on a psychological rather than a material level.¹⁴⁴

Even more significant could be the notion, that globalisation, with all its developments, which make the world a smaller place, *enables terrorism* rather than motivating it. Islamist groups, who call for a return to the past, are paradoxically quite adept in using the tools of modernity like the Internet, international aviation, cell phones and worldwide money transfers.¹⁴⁵ The special character of globalisation, its structure, its force and its insufficiencies, which were indicated at this point, will play a crucial role in the understanding of the social processes, which lead to terrorism, and will be further discussed in the chapter "Postmodernism meets Terrorism"

Nevertheless, as a practical matter, one goal of Islamist terrorists, the restoration of the *Khalifa* (the worldwide Caliphate), has about as much chance as the Holy Roman Empire suddenly reappearing in Europe. Still, as a *rhetoric device*, the call for its return exercises a powerful grip on bin Laden's supporters.¹⁴⁶

The religious rhetoric, not only of Al Qaeda, but of the most religious terrorist groups with Islamist background, serves three primary purposes:

It is *first* a strong *legitimising force*. Whenever Al Qaeda attacked civilians, especially Muslim civilians, it legitimised its actions by invoking god's name.¹⁴⁷ Still, for Al Qaeda, killing apostate government officials is one thing, attacking ordinary Muslim citizens is something entirely different. After massacres among Algerian Muslims in the 1990's, committed by the GIA, the movement uniformly rejected targeting Muslim civilians, unless they assisted the infidels, as this would undermine the overall strategy of Al Qaeda to win the hearts and minds of Muslims in its battle against the United States and its supporters.¹⁴⁸ Especially the argument of the individual duty of defensive Jihad serves as a strong legitimising force, which even radical Muslims need to justify the killing of noncombatants.¹⁴⁹

Second, Al Qaeda emphasises the religious nature of Jihad in order to unify its followers. The leading figures of the network are very aware of the historical fact, that intra-Muslim divisions hindered resistance from the West.¹⁵⁰

Third, Jihadists skilfully use religious rhetoric to motivate their supporters, followers and sympathisers to join the global struggle against the perceived enemies of Islam and Allah.¹⁵¹

*"Bin Laden and Al Qaeda are engaged in a defensive jihad against the Crusader-Zionist alliance because they believe that the United States have made a clear declaration of war on God, his messenger, and Muslims."*¹⁵²

¹⁴⁴ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 70)

¹⁴⁵ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 70)

¹⁴⁶ (Bergen, 2001, p. 21)

¹⁴⁷ (Abrahms, 2005, p. 541)

¹⁴⁸ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 89)

¹⁴⁹ (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 86)

¹⁵⁰ (Abrahms, 2005, p. 541)

¹⁵¹ (Abrahms, 2005, p. 541)

Freedman describes Islamist terrorism as an *ideological threat to liberal values*, though not comparable to Nazism or Communism, as it is not backed by a powerful state.¹⁵³ The Western image of Jihadist terrorism is that it aims to undermine its values, that terrorists pose a threat to democracy, tolerance and freedom, and as they hate the Western population because of what "we" are, terrorism is seen as a threat to Western *identity* rather than *interests*.¹⁵⁴ We will have to remember this little, though highly interesting annotation at the final part of this paper.

Still, even within the different streams of Islam, the interpretations of Jihadists are more than controversial and contested. The Muslim Brotherhood, for example, condemned hardly every violent act perpetrated by Al Qaeda.¹⁵⁵ Although the Muslim Brotherhood openly supports resistance against perceived occupation in Palestine or Iraq, it denounced Al Qaeda's mad declaration of war against the whole world.¹⁵⁶

This shows us, that every scientific approach to Islamist terrorism has to bear in mind that the traditional, localised terror campaigns and terror organisation today coexist with a new, globalised pattern of (suicide) terrorism, which is significantly different in some of its characteristics. Summarised,

*"The perpetrators of the September 11 attacks represent a transnational, highly dynamic, increasingly decentralized, religiously inspired movement propelled for the most part by a diverse collection of nonstate actors."*¹⁵⁷

Nevertheless, although it is odd to declare a war against a diffuse network of extremists or against terror itself, which is notably not more than, a tactic, an abstract idea and not an identifiable actor, Freedman stresses that international terrorism still poses a serious threat to human security, and therefore has to be fought with appropriate deeds.¹⁵⁸

Recapitulating, the global Jihad movement is strongly influenced by the globalisation process and in addition highly decentralised and transformed into a diffuse movement, which is using the Internet as a virtual meeting point to exchange information, indoctrination and propaganda among its members. This transformation, as mentioned at the very beginning of this paper, could be seen as a strong indicator for a postmodern character of this movement, of which we will hear more in the respective chapter.

¹⁵² Bin Laden quoted in (Moghadam, 2006, p. 717)

¹⁵³ (Freedman, 2005, p. 105)

¹⁵⁴ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 79)

¹⁵⁵ (Lynch, 2010)

¹⁵⁶ (Lynch, 2010, p. 474)

¹⁵⁷ (Stern & Yacoubian, 2008, p. 425)

¹⁵⁸ (Freedman, 2005, p. 106)

INSIDE THE ISLAMIST TERRORIST

Despite the fact, that there are several situations and circumstances, in which it makes sense to focus on the operational level of terrorism and understand it as a tactic, while the perpetrators themselves and their motivations are left beside,¹⁵⁹ the author firmly believes that it is important to point the spotlight on the lifeworld of terrorists and to understand terrorism as a bigger phenomenon in the context of the contemporary society. Therefore, this chapter will be dedicated to the perpetrators of terrorism, their self-perception, their motivation, their social contexts and economic opportunities.

WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS OF ISLAMIST TERRORISM?

*"Terrorists perceive themselves as reluctant warriors, driven by desperation - and lacking any viable alternative - to violence against a repressive state, a predatory rival ethnic or nationalist group, or an unresponsive international order."*¹⁶⁰

Moreover, a terrorist will never admit that he is a terrorist, actually, terrorists don't understand themselves this way. Religious fundamentalists see themselves as fighters, or even as symbols of Islam.¹⁶¹ Instead, the society, the government, the socio economic system and its laws or the predominant political system are the true terrorist organisations and forces him to fight for his rights or for those of the population he claims to represent.

*"...people who struggle to liberate themselves from foreign oppression and exploitation have the right to use all methods at their disposal, including force."*¹⁶²

and further

*"All liberation movements are described as terrorists by those who have reduced them to slavery."*¹⁶³

This view is not surprisingly consistent with the observation of the subjective nature of the attribution process of the label terrorist, which we introduced some pages before. This little evidence will re-employ us later on and serve as a key factor in the promotion of a postmodern approach to the phenomenon of terrorism.

But before that, we shall illuminate different self-ascriptions and contexts of perpetrators of terrorism.

¹⁵⁹ (Perl, 2011)

¹⁶⁰ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 22)

¹⁶¹ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 42)

¹⁶² quoted in (Hacker, 1976, p. 174)

¹⁶³ Moulaye el-Hassen, Ambassador of Mauritania quoted in (Hoffman, 2006, p. 24)

Generally spoken, the terrorist is fundamentally, because he is not pursuing purely egocentric goals like grievance or personal needs, an *altruist*.¹⁶⁴

*"... he believes that he is serving a good cause designed to achieve a greater good for a wider constituency - whether real or imagined - that the terrorist and his organization purport to represent."*¹⁶⁵

What all terrorists as well have in common is their orientation on the future. They imperturbable believe that there will be a point in time, when they will assuredly triumph over their enemies and attain the ultimate realisation of their self-chosen political destiny. Whether it is the implementation of Gods, Allah's or Jahwe's will on earth, their national self-determination or the achieving of any other goal, the terrorist is convinced of the inevitability of his victory. This conviction is based on the subjective perception of the innate righteousness of their cause.¹⁶⁶

Despite the described altruism and the dominant future orientation, there does not appear to be a single terrorist personality. In addition, and what the author will extensively show later in this part, terrorists are *not diagnosable psychopathic or mentally sick*. Although there are contributions, which argue that especially suicide bombers are brainwashed into seeking martyrdom via self-immolation for a political cause with promises of heavenly rewards and display unmistakably millennial thinking,¹⁶⁷ the average terrorist is actually quite sane, although often deluded by an ideological or religious way of viewing the world.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it seems that people with particular personality traits and tendencies, which are *action-orientated, aggressive, stimulus-hungry* and *excitement seeking* with *narcissistic* tendencies and *low self-esteems*, are drawn disproportionately to terrorist careers.¹⁶⁹

Beside these possible features, terrorists are in general practically *indistinguishable* from ordinary people in terms of his outward appearance.¹⁷⁰

While different disciplines approach the phenomenon of radicalisation and terrorism in significant different ways, most scholars nowadays agree that to answer the question, why some people become terrorists, a trans-disciplinary and multidimensional approach is needed.¹⁷¹ Such an approach shall be introduced in this chapter.

In general, the causes of *revolution* and *political violence* are also assumed to be causes of terrorism. These causes include *ethnic conflicts, religious and ideological conflicts, poverty, modernisation stresses, political inequities, lack of peaceful communication channels, traditions of violence, the existence of a revolutionary group, governmental weakness and*

¹⁶⁴ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 37)

¹⁶⁵ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 37)

¹⁶⁶ (Hoffman, 2006, p. 241)

¹⁶⁷ (Haddad, 2004, p. 338)

¹⁶⁸ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 60)

¹⁶⁹ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 61)

¹⁷⁰ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 61)

¹⁷¹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 73)

*ineptness, erosions of confidence in a regime, and deep divisions within governing elites and leadership groups.*¹⁷² We will hear of some of these factors later on, while others will turn out to not hold true the cited empirical evidence.

Helmus sees a major issue in the genesis from an ordinary individual to a terrorist in the distinction between trigger factors, which lead an individual towards becoming a terrorist, and factors, which keep him to maintain his participation in the terrorist organisation.¹⁷³ Further,

*"... it should be emphasized that a psychological movement to terrorism is not a discrete choice. In this context, individuals generally do not make a single decision to "become" a terrorist. Rather, progression toward violent behaviour is gradual."*¹⁷⁴

In this sense, radicalisation is more like a process. Within this process, individuals are moved forward by a complex interaction of factors, which well may include socialisation, exposure to rewards, and other environmental influences.¹⁷⁵

When trying to identify several key factors, which make it more likely for an individual to undergo a process of radicalisation, Helmus describes the labels

- *Radicalising social groups*
- *Desire for change*
- *Desire to respond to grievance*
- *Perceived rewards*¹⁷⁶

It seems as if terrorism and the destruction it unleashes are fed and sustained by an ever-willing cadre of new recruits. Despite ten years of international efforts to stem the omnipresent threat of terrorism, attacks in Iraq, Israel, USA and in Europe suggest a more than adequate supply of willing recruits.¹⁷⁷ We now shall have a look, where these volunteers come from and how they radicalise from ordinary people to perpetrators of terrorism.

¹⁷² (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 15)

¹⁷³ (Helmus, 2009, p. 73)

¹⁷⁴ (Helmus, 2009, p. 73)

¹⁷⁵ (Helmus, 2009, p. 74)

¹⁷⁶ (Helmus, 2009, p. 74)

¹⁷⁷ (Helmus, 2009, p. 72)

RADICALISING SOCIAL GROUPS

Terrorism could well be seen as a rational strategic course of action decided on by a group. Terrorism is rarely committed by an individual, although the lone-wolf phenomenon gains more and more importance today. Rather, acts of terrorism are committed by groups, who reach *collective decisions* based on *commonly held beliefs*.¹⁷⁸ A communal groups capacity for political action, including violent forms, depends on the salience of *group identity* and *shared incentives*.¹⁷⁹ Thus, social groups have a crucial impact on the attitudes, beliefs and commitment to action of their respective members. Especially important aspects among these social-psychological processes that influence individuals are the *in-group/out-group biases, conformity, compliance, groupthink, polarisation and diffusion of responsibilities*.¹⁸⁰ The *in-group/out-group* biases, which are commonly observed instruments in obtaining group cohesion, play a special role in the radicalisation process as well.

*"It is quintessentially human to divide people and places into categories and to separate them into us and them to make sense of a complex world."*¹⁸¹

Groups tend to view themselves positively, while considering outsiders rather negatively. Terrorist groups, which demonise or dehumanise outsiders have a reduced threshold of perpetrating acts of violence against these outsiders.¹⁸²

Further, groups tend to deliver expectations for individual beliefs and conduct that result in shifting individual attitudes, opinions, and behaviours in favour of group norms in order to guarantee *conformity* in the group.¹⁸³

Increased *compliance* with group requests and obedience to orders is cultivated in groups through high group cohesion, increased cost of defiance, isolation from other groups and the degree to which the group satisfies individual needs. These factors increase the likelihood and severity of group *conformity*.¹⁸⁴

Groups commonly engage in huge efforts to reach agreement or consensus, which could result in *flawed judgements* on the part of individuals. The individual will get, to a certain extent, replaced by the groupthink.

In addition, group interaction tends to *polarise* individual attitudes to the extreme.

Finally, the *responsibility* for group action is spread over all members of the group, which is especially important when regarding group violence against outsiders and radical ideology. Thus, the individuals' perception of personal responsibilities for specific actions is limited.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁸ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 16)

¹⁷⁹ (Gurr, 2008, p. 143)

¹⁸⁰ (Helmus, 2009, p. 74)

¹⁸¹ (Paul, 2009, p. 125)

¹⁸² (Helmus, 2009, p. 75)

¹⁸³ (Helmus, 2009, p. 75)

¹⁸⁴ (Helmus, 2009, p. 75)

¹⁸⁵ (Helmus, 2009, p. 75)

At this point, it is worth mentioning, that although the outcome of decision processes within a terrorist group may well be different from the respective outcome of an ordinary group, the decision process itself is quite the same. May it be a single leader or a non-hierarchical discussion that delivers decisions for the group, as most members of terrorist groups resemble members of the general population and could therefore be considered as rational actors, even terrorist groups could be well *expected* to make *rational choices* according to their *beliefs, interests and goals*.¹⁸⁶

After these explications, it is not surprising that networks of friends and/or relatives, accompanied with group dynamics such as peer pressure and intra-group affection are instrumental in the radicalisation process of individuals and groups as well.¹⁸⁷

Professional terrorist recruiters use the described group socialisation processes in mosques, summer camps, or even in private homes to find potential candidates. These candidates are invited to smaller gatherings or even to one-on-one conversations, where motivation and qualification are assessed and potential participants are selected.¹⁸⁸

Nevertheless, there are more informal ways of recruitment as well. A considerable proportion of recruiting happens through personal indoctrination in the immediate circle of friends and in the respective family. Another phenomenon, which has to be mentioned in this context, is the radicalisation in bottom up peer groups, which is not rarely made responsible for the decentralisation of Al Qaeda and the transformation of Salafism into a broad social movement.¹⁸⁹

As already mentioned, the medium at hand for the radicalisation and indoctrination, especially among young peer groups, is the Internet. The World Wide Web provides a venue where radicals post and share training material, ideological manifestos, radicalised e-magazines, and videos illustrating attacks on the declared enemy, the United States and its armed forces.¹⁹⁰ These data sets deliver crucial information to would-be recruits and are used among pertinent individuals and groups as a key source of ideology. In blogs, wiki-lexica and social networks, like-minded individuals can interact and develop mutually supportive relationships.¹⁹¹ The Internet thus may serve as a meeting point and as a potential source for recruiting, just as a mosque or a club would do. In addition, the Internet creates a nearly egalitarian room, where everyone's voice has nearly the same weight and thereby it encourages participation of individuals, whose inhibition threshold probably would be too high in reality.

However, although the Internet could serve as an effective propaganda and recruiting machinery for terrorist groups, it is arguable whether it could establish valuable new links

¹⁸⁶ (Jackson, 2009, p. 220)

¹⁸⁷ (Helmus, 2009, p. 76)

¹⁸⁸ (Helmus, 2009, p. 77)

¹⁸⁹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 78)

¹⁹⁰ (Helmus, 2009, p. 80)

¹⁹¹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 80)

from scratch.¹⁹² As every other virtual network, extremist networks work at their best when they are backed and combined with real social linkages in special localised communities.

The decision to advance from discussions within the group to commit attacks is based on the belief, that *action will positively influence* relevant audiences and the belief that *action will advance the respective group goals and interests*.¹⁹³

In addition, the belief that *action will produce positive reactions* inside the respective group and the *acceptability of the risks* associated with acting play a crucial role as well.¹⁹⁴

Notably, the risk is usually compared with the expected achievements of the action, which strongly suggests a rational choice in the group's decision-making, of which we will hear more later on. The transition to violence, or the choice of terrorism versus other methods of protest, of groups is denoted through the following characteristics:

- *"The intensity with which the group delegitimizes its opponents*
- *the absence of moral inhibitions or antiviolence taboos in the groups culture*
- *members previous experience with violence*
- *whether the group has rationally assessed the risks and opportunities of violent action*
- *the level of its organizational, financial, and political resources*
- *the groups sense of imminent threat*
- *competition with other groups*
- *the age of the activists involved, where younger groups are more likely to turn to violence*
- *any external influence or manipulation of the group toward violence or support that makes the transition to violence easier*
- *a sense on the part of the group of humiliation and the need to take revenge*
- *the leader's past experience with violence"*¹⁹⁵

To sum up, the process of radicalisation and the advancement to violent action is highly linked to intra-group processes in reality as well as in cyberspace. Nevertheless, the processes within radicalising social groups cannot alone be responsible for the emerge of terror. An additional motivation force is the desire for change.

¹⁹² (Helmus, 2009, p. 80)

¹⁹³ (Jackson, 2009, p. 224f)

¹⁹⁴ (Jackson, 2009, p. 223f)

¹⁹⁵ (Jackson, 2009, p. 225)

DESIRE FOR CHANGE

Some terrorist recruits feel the vigorous desire to trigger a fundamental change in their environment. These desired changes are often related to the objectives of the terrorist organisation or to the broader movement they want to participate in.

Nevertheless, it seems that social bonds and personal inducement are more important in motivating participation than ideological commitment.¹⁹⁶

The main targets for desired change can be subdivided in *political, religious and legal goals*.

Political goals could be the wish to overthrow the capitalist social and economic system¹⁹⁷ or the desire for an independent state or to remove a perceived occupying power from a territory. Although in regions like Lebanon, Palestine or Sri Lanka, suicide terrorism was and still is often a response to perceived occupation and is designed to coerce governments into making territorial concessions¹⁹⁸, it is quite arguable whether (post)modern terrorism can be explained as easy as that.

Especially in the vocabulary of Al Qaeda, which often justifies its attacks with the occupation of Muslim territory, occupation not merely means the presence of military troops, but a much more loosely defined concept - a laundry list of historically accrued injustices currently manifested in the *military, religious, political, economic, and cultural influence* that the West is perceived to exert on the larger Muslim world, thereby *humiliating* it.¹⁹⁹ These perceived injustices again serve as strong indicator for a postmodern shift in international terrorism.

The wish to implement *religious related changes* is another motivating set. Especially Islamist motivated organisations seek to build a worldwide and united Muslim community, organised as a Caliphate based on the Islamic law, the *Sharia*.²⁰⁰

There are also some individuals or groups, which desire to change a *single and focused issue*, like environmental rights or abortion rights.

Although this motivation for terrorism is very fascinating and more than up to date, it is rather located at the borders of the topic of interest; hence it will not be discussed further in this paper.

The *perceived feeling of discrimination*, on the other hand, significantly contributes to the radicalisation process and could serve as a powerful motivator for participating in terrorist acts, as it can facilitate a sense of *alienation*.²⁰¹

*"Discrimination and other perceived injustices that are perpetrated by governing authorities may promote a sense that those regimes should be removed."*²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ (Helmus, 2009, p. 82)

¹⁹⁷ (Helmus, 2009, p. 83)

¹⁹⁸ (Helmus, 2009, p. 83)

¹⁹⁹ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 718)

²⁰⁰ (Helmus, 2009, p. 84)

²⁰¹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 85)

As we disused, *political, religious and legal factors*, which do not correspond to an individuals or an organisations ideology, in accordance with *perceived discrimination* and/or *alienation* could lead to radicalisation and a desire for change. If the *democratic institutions are weak* and the *use of violence* is regarded as a *legitimate means* to gain attention, these factors could play a critical role to understand the path of an individual to become a perpetrator of terrorist acts.

In addition, many of nowadays martyrs are second and third generation Muslim immigrants who live in larger cities of Western Europe. Because of their experience that the stubborn European nationalism leaves little space or opportunities for them to fully integrate together with the phenomenon of *detritorialisation* of Islam, meaning weak or non-existent relations to their origin country, deepens the sense of *humiliation* and *alienation* and further supports the radicalisation process.²⁰³

DESIRE TO RESPOND TO GRIEVANCE

The desire to respond to personal or collective perceived grievance as well appears to be a powerful motivational force for individuals to radicalise and participate in terrorism.²⁰⁴

Revenge or vengeance for personally perceived injustices and abuse, or the *perceived duty to defend* members of an identifiable social group,²⁰⁵ plays a critical role for perpetrators of terrorism, as many who enter terrorism report from personal abuse or abuse of a close relative through an occupying force or government authorities. Terrorism serves these perpetrators as a tool to exact revenge against the instigators of perceived injustice.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that although a significant part of civilians in relevant regions have experienced such abuses, only a very small percentage seek terrorism as a last resort to digest these experiences.²⁰⁶

Collective grievance in comparison refers to perceived problems of an identifiable social group.

*"Often, individuals increasingly identify with a social group whom they see as subject to unjust policies or actions. In the case of Islamic extremism, radicals increasingly identify with their Muslim heritage and the broader Muslim community."*²⁰⁷

²⁰² (Helmus, 2009, p. 86)

²⁰³ (Moghadam, 2006, p. 722)

²⁰⁴ (Helmus, 2009, p. 86)

²⁰⁵ (Helmus, 2009, p. 89)

²⁰⁶ (Helmus, 2009, p. 88)

²⁰⁷ (Helmus, 2009, p. 89)

Because of this identification, it is not always essentially necessary for perpetrators of terrorism to have experienced abuses or injustices on their own, but the discriminatory practices unjustly affecting the community could already serve as a motivating factor to engage in terrorism.

*"The doctrine and idea of global defensive jihad against aggressors attacking Islam and Muslims stands out as the single most important motivational factor at the group level."*²⁰⁸

Terrorist organisations use this collective grievance to mobilise a steady flow of new recruits. Their propaganda material is packed with images and reports of atrocities committed against Muslims living around the globe. Once again, the Internet serves as the medium at hand to spread worst-case scenarios through the *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community.

*"The mortality salience effect refers to a series of research findings that suggest that exposure to such imagery has a number of pronounced effects, including increased pride in one's country, religion and race."*²⁰⁹

Unsurprisingly, the process of *identification* plays a central role in facilitating the concept of collective grievance. The mechanism of identification brings with it a sense of responsibility for helping Muslims who are threatened by an external power, even if the perpetrators of terror never met them.²¹⁰

Especially interesting in the context of radicalisation and the commitment to terrorist attacks is the fact that within the Muslim community, there exists a hierarchy of identities, where the religious identity superseded the ethnic and national identity. Particular important is the related finding that *Muslim identity is positively correlated with the perceived importance of Jihad and martyrdom.*²¹¹

PERCEIVED REWARDS

Based on the paradigm of behaviourism, which postulates that consequences influence behaviour and the idea of rational choice, that assets that individuals choose the best action according to stable preferences, it is high likely that

*"... both real and expected consequences motivate terrorist participation."*²¹²

Helmus identifies as possible positive consequences *religious rewards, social status, financial rewards, friendship and excitement.*²¹³

²⁰⁸ (Nesser, 2006, p. 327)

²⁰⁹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 90)

²¹⁰ (Helmus, 2009, p. 90)

²¹¹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 90)

²¹² (Helmus, 2009, p. 91)

In the context of Islamist terrorism, the most significant *religious reward* is martyrdom, which has been discussed in detail before.

*"The perceived benefits associated with a martyr's afterlife include forgiveness of the martyr's sins, access to heaven and communion with God, the ability to guarantee access to paradise for 70 relatives or friends, and the belief that the martyr will be greeted in heaven to enjoy the sexual pleasure of 72 virgins."*²¹⁴

The concept of martyrdom and its promised rewards result in the ideological notion that fighting the perceived enemies of Islam fulfils a *divinely inspired imperative*. Using terrorism and violence to fulfil this imperative is seen as the only option due to the military superiority of the Western enemies.

The role of increased social status must not be underestimated as well, especially in the phase of motivating new recruits for terrorist campaigns. In Palestine, for example, popular support for terrorist attacks reached up to 70% in 2001.²¹⁵ This support is manifested in ritualised pomp and circumstance for suicide bombers, who are seen as heroic soldiers for a good cause.²¹⁶

*"Social applause can reach its peak after a suicide bombers death, where posters, Web sites, and public exhibits pay homage to the martyr. Mourning ceremonies provide further veneration of the dead."*²¹⁷

One could argue, that an increased social status is useless for an individual, who will be dead after a successful suicide operation. Still, we have to consider that not all terrorist attacks are suicide operations. Moreover, the social status of a successful martyr is transferred to his relatives and surviving dependents as well, which could be a strong motivating factor in societies with distinctive kinship ties.

Although the impact of *financial rewards* is not generally clear, it is worth mentioning that for example, some members of Al Qaeda used to receive regular salaries for their efforts in the network.²¹⁸

In addition, it is quite common that families of terrorists' killed in action receive financial contributions from the respective terror organisation.²¹⁹

However, the effect of these rewards is unclear, as suicide bombers not generally come from impoverished families. On top, there is no evidence that, in the case of Palestine for

²¹³ (Helmus, 2009, p. 91)

²¹⁴ (Helmus, 2009, p. 91)

²¹⁵ (Helmus, 2009, p. 92)

²¹⁶ (Helmus, 2009, p. 92)

²¹⁷ (Helmus, 2009, p. 92)

²¹⁸ (Helmus, 2009, p. 93)

²¹⁹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 93)

example, there is a significant relation between the pace of terrorist action and economic indicators.²²⁰

As mentioned earlier, the *close relationship* and the intergroup dynamics friendships foster are often fundamental to the radicalisation process.²²¹ As terrorist organisation usually seek to isolate their members from the broader community, they even more have to rely on the intergroup relationships. It seems self evident that strong group ties promote participation in terrorist attacks, once you are in the "inner circle".

Excitement is probably an arguable point, but there are strong indicators that this factor plays a role in the recruitment and reward process as well. In general,

*"Psychological research with nonterrorist subjects strongly suggests that exciting activities are perceived as rewarding by a significant subset of the general population."*²²²

Recruitment videos reportedly highlight the exciting side of terrorism, portraying training videos with weapons and footage of different operations.²²³ Along with the other portrayed rewards of participating in terrorism could excitement be an additional factor, especially for young male with a monotonous daily routine and a grim prospect of their future as it is predominant in certain territories like in Palestinian refugee camps for example.

SUPPORTING TERRORISM

It is quite obvious, that any organisation, who seeks to run and maintain a terrorist campaign needs the support of a significant part of the respective society in order to be adequately supplied with *manpower, funding, material, sanctuaries, intelligence*, and to receive a principle *tolerance of activities*.²²⁴

When discussing support, it is important to differentiate between the expression of sympathy and the material support, aid and abetment of terrorism.²²⁵ Although these concepts are overlapping, they must not be seen as equivalent.

The reasons for supporting terrorism are quite similar to those that cause participation in terrorism, which we have discussed above. The crucial difference between providing support for and participating in terrorism lies in the nature of the activity. Whereas former is restricted to the above-mentioned actions, the later means a concrete engagement in a certain attack or campaign.

Paul divides the individual reasons for support in *contextual factors, factors based on social or cultural processes* and *motives resulting directly from the actions of a terrorist group*.²²⁶

²²⁰ (Helmus, 2009, p. 93)

²²¹ (Helmus, 2009, p. 93)

²²² (Helmus, 2009, p. 94)

²²³ (Helmus, 2009, p. 94)

²²⁴ (Paul, 2009, p. 117)

²²⁵ (Paul, 2009, p. 115)

Contextual factors could be:

- *"Humiliation, intolerable frustration, alienation, and hatred*
- *repression and occupation*
- *lack of regime legitimacy, lack of opportunity for political expression, and lack of political freedom*
- *desire for resistance/action by proxy/"public good" (including self-defence)*
- *social movements (including ideology)*
- *grievances"* ²²⁷

As said before, these factors seem to be quite similar to those factors, which are responsible for participating in terrorist campaigns and which were discussed above. Hence, they will not be repeated at this point.

The *motivating factors* stemming from cultural or social processes are summarised by Paul as:

- *"identity processes*
- *kinship or fictive kinship ties, including tribal motivations*
- *cultural and social obligations*
- *revenge*
- *normative acceptability of violence*
- *cost-benefit calculations*
- *misperception and self deception"* ²²⁸

Again, some of these factors, like identity processes, revenge, and the normative acceptability of violence sound familiar to us. We heard of them when discussing the motivational factors of individuals participating in terrorism and earlier when talking about terrorism in general.

Of a special importance seems to be the *identity process* in communities and groups again:

"... (the) perception of an external threat is the most reliable source of in-group cohesion and associated idealization of in-group values and support for in-group leaders. This creates a more explicit causal pathway for some of the contextual factors identified above that lead to support." ²²⁹

²²⁶ (Paul, 2009, p. 121)

²²⁷ (Paul, 2009, p. 121f)

²²⁸ (Paul, 2009, p. 125)

²²⁹ (Paul, 2009, p. 126)

The perception of the status of the group, or the ethnic or religious community one is part of in a certain area plays a crucial role in the support of terrorism. Muslim perception of their status in a country highly contributes to their views about Islamist militancy as a solution.²³⁰

Moreover, Identity provides a reinforcing feedback loop for terrorism in both directions. A successful terrorist attack is a symbolic act inspiring solidarity among its supporters and promotes unification of identity among the victims as well.²³¹

Kinship ties are probably the strongest form of shared identity. Such ties could trigger similar processes like identity, but are mobilised more easily, as attachment to kin is much more constant than political or ethnic identity.²³²

Fictive kinship can actually be as powerful as actual blood or marriage ties. Cultures with a strong sense of community belonging construct together with a distinct Islamic ideology of shared religious beliefs and practices the idea of an worldwide Islamic brotherhood of believers.²³³ This kinship is used to justify terrorism against perceived enemies of this community, even if the supporter himself never suffered from injustices, occupation or other key factors for supporting terrorism. This evidence suggest that cultural identities - those based on common descend, experience, language and belief - may tend to be stronger and more enduring than most civic and associational identities.²³⁴

Cultural and social obligations are manifold, and some of them have already been discussed earlier in this paper. The point is that there could be a complicit surround²³⁵ where individuals in a community are exposed to a host of *assumptions*, *conditions*, and *obligations* that make supporting a- or participating in a terrorist organisation more likely, if not unavoidable or even natural.²³⁶

This assumption is strongly tied to the factor of the *normative acceptability of violence*. As mentioned earlier, the normative acceptability of violence not only plays a crucial role in participating in terrorism, but also in supporting it. Brought to the point, the social acceptance of violence lowers the entry cost for participation or support and lowers the barriers to identifying with terrorist action and thus with terrorists themselves.²³⁷

Several factors could contribute to calculated decisions to support terrorism in a *cost-benefit calculation*. Besides monetary incentives, which we already heard of, there are factors like the desire to earn *recognition* within an identity group, the *support* for the side, which is believed to *win*, or the prospects for *cooperation*, which are reduced as the probability of future interaction decreases.²³⁸

²³⁰ (Paul, 2009, p. 126)

²³¹ (Paul, 2009, p. 126)

²³² (Paul, 2009, p. 126)

²³³ (Paul, 2009, p. 127)

²³⁴ (Gurr, 2008, p. 137)

²³⁵ (Richardson, 2006, p. 49)

²³⁶ (Paul, 2009, p. 129)

²³⁷ (Paul, 2009, p. 129)

²³⁸ (Paul, 2009, p. 130)

The cost-benefit calculation presupposes an actor who comes to a decision through a rational choice. This assumption is important, regarding the first hypothesis of this paper and will be discussed in the respective chapter.

The *misperception and self-deception* could play a role especially if the terrorist organisation is providing critical services and/or is engaging in successful propaganda.

As support, which is motivated by direct activities of the terrorist group, Paul identifies:

- *"intimidation*
- *propaganda efforts*
- *provision of social services*
- *identification with the group (shared ideology, goals and legitimacy)*
- *excessive civil casualties or other unacceptable group behaviour*
- *corruption or penetration of the state"* ²³⁹

Intimidation can be particular effective in generating passive support, which means the ignorance of evidence of terrorism.²⁴⁰

We as well already heard of *propaganda*, which is nowadays spread especially through the Internet. Propaganda can be used to mobilise or leverage many of the contextual factors in a certain culture or society and is thus an important element in strategic communication and considerations.²⁴¹

The *provision of social services* in areas under control, or which are desired to become under the control of a terrorist organisation, has been found to be very effective in generating positive opinions, endorsement, and support.²⁴²

Identification with the ideology, the goals or the social or religious practices of a terrorist group is a strong social process, as we discussed earlier. Through propaganda and promotion can the legitimacy of the group be increased.

Unacceptable group behaviour not necessarily has to be tied to violence, hardly anything, that alienates the population from the group or works to sever existing identity ties will decrease prospects for support. Thus, the character of group behaviour or the amount of civil casualties of their attacks have to be within the acceptable bandwidth of the supporting society if the group wants to prevent a decrease of their legitimacy.

²³⁹ (Paul, 2009, p. 130)

²⁴⁰ (Paul, 2009, p. 131)

²⁴¹ (Paul, 2009, p. 132)

²⁴² (Paul, 2009, p. 132)

Corruption or the penetration of the state is an important source of support, as it allows these groups to siphon resources directly from the state into their own coffers.²⁴³ In addition, a penetrated administration is less likely to pursue terrorist organisations in their country by all available means.

After this short discussion of primarily motivational factors, we shall turn to possible root causes of terrorism, before we try to draw a first tentative picture of the Islamist terrorist.

ARE ROOT CAUSES ENOUGH?

After every discussion about terrorism in general, and religious terrorism, especially the phenomenon of Jihadism, in particular. The obvious first question often is, how should the modern society and the international institutions face terrorism in order to save the life of potential victims of violent attacks? One approach is to identify and fight the root causes of terrorism, figuratively speaking, to get down to the root of the trouble. At the first glimpse, this sounds like quite a good approach, but as so often when theoretical approaches have to face reality, the targeted phenomenon is rather complex.

First of all, root causes are not the proximate cause of terrorism. Rather, they are factors that establish an environment in which terrorism may arise. Such factors may be *political* and *economic* (structural), but may also reflect the *pervasive characteristics of culture and relevant sub-groups*.²⁴⁴

Noricks draws a basic distinction line of root causes between *permissive* and *precipitant factors*.²⁴⁵ While the former prepare the ground for terror, the later represent the miscellaneous sparks that trigger terrorism. Therefore, permissive factors have to be seen as preconditions, which allow certain ideologies to grow in a society and provide a social environment, a pool of potential recruits and widespread grievances out of which terrorism could emerge. Precipitant factors could be certain events or incidents, which catalyse the latent grievance and anger and thereby provoke a change in behaviour. Precipitant factors represent a window of opportunity, where a significant incident could lead to violent behaviour and terrorism.²⁴⁶

In general, there could be identified at least three major permissive factors, which, if dominant in a society, could lead to terrorism. These three are *global systemic factors*, *state structural factors* (perceived illegitimacy of the regime, repression, democracy, modernisation, economics) and *social and cultural factors* (education, human insecurity, grievances and anxieties, mobilising structures and social ties, ideology, culture, religion).²⁴⁷

²⁴³ (Paul, 2009, p. 134)

²⁴⁴ (Davis & Cragin, 2009, p. xviii)

²⁴⁵ (Noricks, 2009)

²⁴⁶ (Noricks, 2009, p. 15)

²⁴⁷ (Noricks, 2009, p. 15)

Global systemic factors understand terrorism as a consequence of event dynamics over a period of time.²⁴⁸ As historical waves of terrorism could be identified the anti-empire, anti-colonisation, anti-Western and the current, religion-based wave.

Global systemic factors lead to the assumption that terrorism is a by-product of broader historical shifts in the international distribution of power in its political, economic, military, ideological and cultural forms.²⁴⁹ This argument will be discussed extensively in the upcoming chapter about Postmodernism, and will serve as a main argument for the papers' conclusion.

State structural factors include *social, political and economic characteristics* of society.

Political factors, which are often used to explain the rise of terrorism are perceived illegitimacy of the regime, repression, democracy and modernisation.

The *de-legitimation of state institutions* often occurs during a period of political and social change within a society.²⁵⁰ Weak states are no longer able to mobilise sufficient resources for reform and thus deliver a fertile ground for violent oppositions and rebellion. Processes, which could lead to de-legitimation could be the regime support for unpopular economic, social or cultural institutions, evidence of corruption, weak infrastructural power, the exclusion of mobilised groups from political participation, and the use of indiscriminate violence.²⁵¹

Another significant contribution for leading an opposing group to violent behaviour is *government repression*. The use of violence against the own citizens is not only a key mechanism for state de-legitimation and for the alienation of its citizens, but moreover serves as a legitimating force promoting the use of violence overall.²⁵²

Furthermore are, relatively spoken, *young democracies* most likely to experience terrorism. As they are often lacking the already mentioned strong institutions and moreover could be perceived as imposed upon Islamic states by Western hegemonic forces. In addition, the, in democracies predominant, civil rights lower the costs of terrorism due to the freedom of movement, the easy access to government buildings and the legal restraints on government actions in countering terrorism.²⁵³

The *modernisation* force is thought to be a similar promoter of turbulence and social instability as well as to be a state de-legitimizing factor.²⁵⁴ Processes like social and political change that accompany economic evolution often lead to the breakup of the traditional family, job loss and weakened community ties.²⁵⁵ As already mentioned, the relationship

²⁴⁸ (Noricks, 2009, p. 14)

²⁴⁹ (Cronin, 2003)

²⁵⁰ (Noricks, 2009, p. 20)

²⁵¹ (Noricks, 2009, p. 22)

²⁵² (Noricks, 2009, p. 21)

²⁵³ (Noricks, 2009, p. 23)

²⁵⁴ (Noricks, 2009, p. 26)

²⁵⁵ (Noricks, 2009, p. 26)

between terrorism and modernisation might best be described in terms of the effects of feelings of desperation, loss of valued traditions and relationships and general anxiety.²⁵⁶

The role of *economic* factors is highly disputed among scientific contributions. Nevertheless, contrary to popular belief, poverty, whether on the individual or the community level, is barely capable to serve as an explanation for terrorism.²⁵⁷

The same is true for the *social factor* of *education*. If there is any correlation between the education level of a society and terrorism, it seems to be a positive one. Education can encourage terror in several ways. Schools could serve as convenient recruiting hubs or mobilising structures, which promote violent ideology. Thus, the role of education has to be strongly tied to the predominant culture, ideology and religion of a society.²⁵⁸

Human insecurity includes a low level of civil liberties, poor political rights, high levels of crime, low levels of education and health care is often suggested as contributing to terrorism and could well serve as motivational factors for perpetrators of terrorism.

Grievances and Anxieties, as we heard before, could as well lead to terrorism. While they are usually related to long-standing or historical grievances, like inequality, humiliation, revenge, alienation, despair, and impotence, they often need precipitating trigger events, which are significant enough for the individual to engage in violent actions.²⁵⁹

Finally, *ideology, religion and culture* are probably the most disputed factors estimated to cause terrorism. Although the immediate relation between these factors and the occurrence of terrorism is not at all definite, there is a wide consensus that violent behaviour is a consequence of violent socialisation.²⁶⁰

As already mentioned before. the use of violence and terrorism as a legitimate means to pursuit specific political, social or religious goals has to rest upon a normative justification for violence within the respective collective. In the chapter on Jihad, the religious justification for attacks against the perceived enemies of Islam has already been presented.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to repeat that although religion is not completely innocent, as it provides ideology, motivation and often as well the organisational structure, religion does not lead to violence by itself. Religion rather has to be combined with movements for social or political change, in which the use of violence is reinterpreted as justified, to lead to violent attacks.²⁶¹

After this short introduction of possible root causes, which not surprisingly often overlap with the already discussed motivational factors, it is important to mention that in most arguments, it is *state weakness* and *social instability* that really creates the political space for violence,

²⁵⁶ (Noricks, 2009, p. 26)

²⁵⁷ (Noricks, 2009, p. 31)

²⁵⁸ (Noricks, 2009, p. 32)

²⁵⁹ (Noricks, 2009, p. 34)

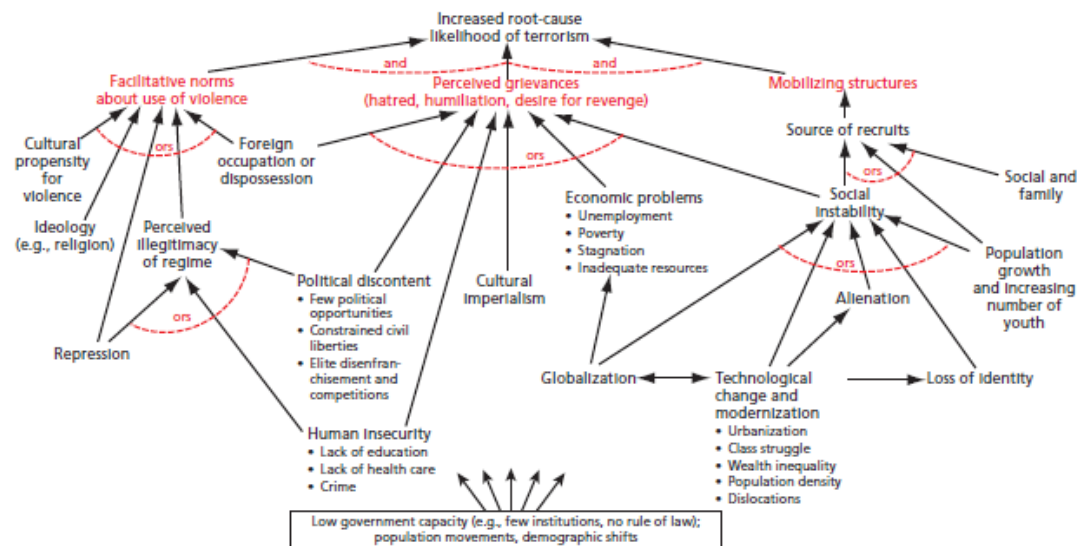
²⁶⁰ (Noricks, 2009, p. 38)

²⁶¹ (Noricks, 2009, p. 38)

terror and insurgency²⁶². Therefore, these permissive factors have to gain a special attention in the examination of terrorism's root causes.

The following factor tree summarises these predominantly permissive factors and organises them in an arguable hierarchy and chain of consequences.

Figure S.1
A Factor Tree for Root Causes of Terrorism



NOTE: "and" conditions are approximate; sometimes, not all factors are necessary.
RAND MG849-S.1

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Factor trees like this one remind us of the complexity of multi-dimensional phenomenon like terrorism and allow us to systematically examine different levels of decisions and contexts. The author explicitly recommends the cited RAND publication for a more detailed and structured examination of terrorism, which delivers, at least on the tactical and strategic level, a profound ground for further research.

*"As a whole, Figure S.1 is to be read as saying that whatever role root causes play in the phenomenon of terrorism, the likelihood that terrorism will ensue as a result of root causes will increase if the social group in question believes that violence is legitimate (even if others see it as terrorism), if it has substantial motivations (perhaps stemming from grievances) and if social structures exist permitting the terrorist actions."*²⁶⁴

Nevertheless, terrorism cannot simply be explained exclusively in terms of root causes. This would suggest a mechanistic approach to social interactions, which is widely discarded in recent scientific contributions. Although root causes doubtless can serve as motivation

²⁶² (Noricks, 2009, p. 27)

²⁶³ (Davis & Cragin, 2009, p. xx)

²⁶⁴ (Davis & Cragin, 2009, p. xxi)

factors for terrorism, violent organisations could as well misuse these factors and see them as opportunities for the advancement of their goals.²⁶⁵

In addition, as we heard already in the section concerning with radicalising social groups, groups facing similar conditions choose different responses, depending on the intra-group processes and the respective contexts, and terrorism is just one of those responses.

*"Terrorism is not a spontaneous reaction to circumstances."*²⁶⁶

After this first summary of the complex and numerous factors influencing the terrorist, we shall proceed to discuss the rationality of terrorists' activities. Through discarding the mechanistic cause and effect approach, which would solely rely on root causes and social contexts, and underscoring the rationality of the terrorists behaviour, committing terror attacks should be understood as conscious decisions and thus promote the assumption, that terrorists are rationally actors. As will be further elaborated, this assumption is crucial to draw a more accurate picture of the Islamist terrorist, than the one widely reproduced in popular belief.

THE RATIONALITY OF TERRORISTS

Despite the numerous arguments, root causes and motivational forces, which could lead individuals to conduct terrorist activities, their actions could still be regarded as irrational or as desperate cries of mentally-disordered psychopaths, thus de-legitimising them and their, though doubtless cruel, but still significant actions.

*"... it is probably conventional wisdom that people become terrorists because of some combination of economic conditions, educational attainment, religious zealotry, or mental illness. They lack the knowledge or ability to make reasoned decisions, or they are in such desperate circumstances as to seek extreme measures."*²⁶⁷

Nevertheless, a large body of recent empirical work, optimistically just as the paper at hand, disconfirms the underlying notion:

*"Terrorists are not particularly poor, ignorant, mentally ill, or religious. Their most notable characteristic is normalcy"*²⁶⁸

As already mentioned, the widespread opinion, that *poverty and lack of education*²⁶⁹ were root causes of terrorism, seems not to hold true due to recent scientific evidence. On the

²⁶⁵ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 73)

²⁶⁶ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 73)

²⁶⁷ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 151)

²⁶⁸ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 152)

informal level of evidence, several contributions portrayed perpetrators of terrorism as educated persons with mid-class professions and a certain wealth.²⁷⁰

Jodie Wilgoren described the 9/11 hijackers as follows:

*"They were adults with education and skill... [who] spent years studying and training in the United States..."*²⁷¹

After interviewing approximately 250 terrorists and associates, Nasra Hassan summarised 2001:

*"None of them were uneducated, desperately poor, simple minded or depressed. Many were middle-class and, unless they were fugitives, held paying jobs. More than half of them were refugees from what is now Israel. Two were the sons of millionaires."*²⁷²

Scott Atran reported 2003 in the New York Times:

*"Officials with the Army Defense Intelligence Agency who have interrogated Saudi-born members of Al Qaeda being detained at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have told me that these fundamentalists, especially those in leadership positions, are often educate above reasonable employment level; a surprising number have graduate degrees and come from high-status families."*²⁷³

One scientific contribution among others, which denies that economic grievance is a significant root of supporting terrorism, is found in Beck (2009):

*"... in fact, those who support religious mobilization are often from higher educational and socioeconomic backgrounds."*²⁷⁴

Accounts like this lead among other evidence to more scientific considerations of this controversial issue.

Berrebi states that the empirical evidences collected so far give little reason to postulate that improving education and the economic situation of individuals would decrease their desire to engage in terrorist campaigns.²⁷⁵

²⁶⁹ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 24)

²⁷⁰ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 153)

²⁷¹ (Wilgoren, 2001, p. A2)

²⁷² (Hassan N. , 2001)

²⁷³ (Atran, 2003)

²⁷⁴ (Beck C. J., 2009, p. 339)

²⁷⁵ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 155)

*"If anything, the findings suggest that those with higher educational attainment and higher living standards are more likely to participate in terrorist activity."*²⁷⁶

Based on these findings, one could argue that although those, who actively engage in terrorism, received a surpassing education and are wealthier than the average population, participate in terrorist campaigns because of poverty in their country or among their respective social in-group. The strong, even though fictive kinship ties, we heard about before, strongly suggest this hypothesis. However, literature on terrorism typically suggests that macroeconomic conditions have little if anything to do with the amount of terrorism in a certain area.²⁷⁷

While indicators of *economic development* have little impact on the arise of terrorism, variables like *population*, *ethno-religious diversity*, *increased state repression*, and, most significantly, the *structure of party politics* are found to be reliable predictors of terrorism.²⁷⁸

Another common variable to predict or at least explain terrorism is *religion*.

First of all, it is important to mention that none of the major religions has a monopoly on terrorism, countries with very different religious faiths have all experienced terrorism, as target, origins, and hosts.²⁷⁹

Further do we have to clarify, that:

*"Although religion in popular discourse has been suggested as an important determinant of terrorist activity, empirical evidence tells a different story... the nature of this linkage does not appear to be clear, as both a negative and a positive connection between spiritual ideology and terrorism can be detected."*²⁸⁰

On top of that, dealing with religious terrorism could be confusing, as organisations could use religious arguments to attract a wider audience, while actually pursuing secular goals.²⁸¹

Therefore, although religion definitely could be a powerful source for encouraging individuals to support or engage in terrorism, relying solely on religion-based explanations would leave a blind spot in our understanding of terrorism.²⁸²

Another important factor in the perception of the terrorist is the ascription of *irrationality* and *mental illness*.²⁸³ The question here is whether there is an intrinsic rationality in terrorist's behaviour, which would enable the use of a rational choice model, or if terrorists are disproportionately mentally ill, which would make the search for indicators of rational choices

²⁷⁶ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 155)

²⁷⁷ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 160)

²⁷⁸ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 161)

²⁷⁹ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 164)

²⁸⁰ (Krieger & Meierrieks, 2008)

²⁸¹ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 166)

²⁸² (Berrebi, 2009, p. 167)

²⁸³ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 27)

pointless. This section is especially important regarding to the working hypothesis H1, as the ascribed rationality of terrorists, or the lack of it, is assumed to be a key indicator of H1.

Reasoning in terms of rational choice when talking about terrorism, particularly when trying to describe suicide attacks, we have to bear in mind that *costly behaviour* does not necessarily mean *crazy behaviour*.²⁸⁴

In citing several recent studies and publications, Berrebi delivers evidence for the normal mental status of terrorists.

Crenshaw for example concludes, that:

*"What limited data we have on individual terrorists... suggests that the outstanding common characteristic of terrorists is their normality"*²⁸⁵

The same conclusion is found in Merari²⁸⁶, as well as in Hudson and Majeska²⁸⁷, who suggest that terrorists and suicide attackers were unlikely to be psychologically abnormal and therefore reason that the-terrorist-as-mentally-ill approach appears to be contradicted. Additional proof for this assumption is found in Atran's study of suicide terrorism, who states that:

*"Overall, suicide terrorists exhibit no socially dysfunctional attributes (fatherless, friendless, jobless) or suicidal symptoms. Inconsistent with economic theories of criminal behaviour, they do not kill themselves simply out of hopelessness or a sense of having nothing to lose."*²⁸⁸

Berrebi further cites Marc Sageman²⁸⁹, who found a near-total lack of mental disorders in his sample of Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists. These conclusions are actually not too surprising, as we already heard before that clandestine organisations tend to weed out any aspirants with potential mental disorders for security reasons. It simply would not make sense for a more or less professional acting terror organisation to recruit unstable candidates who might attract the attention of security forces and thus endanger the entire organisation.

*"In summary, individual terrorists do not fit the profile of poor, ignorant, or religious individuals with low opportunity cost and no valued marketable skills; nor are they mentally unstable."*²⁹⁰

²⁸⁴ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 167)

²⁸⁵ (Crenshaw, 1981)

²⁸⁶ (Merari, 2006)

²⁸⁷ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999)

²⁸⁸ (Atran, 2004)

²⁸⁹ (Sagemann, 2004)

²⁹⁰ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 169)

The previously described root causes of terror may well be of interest, but they work in complicated and sometimes nonintuitive ways.

Because of the cited arguments, it is quite reasonable to turn to a rational choice approach when trying to explain an individual's motivation for participating in terrorism. A rational cost-benefit calculus could under certain circumstances well lead to the conclusion that violence is the best available course.²⁹¹

Rational choice could be seen as the predominant paradigm of microeconomics and nowadays political science. Its core concept to describe the *homo economicus*, rationality, could be distinguished in three levels: in the weakest sense, all actions are rational as long as the individual is using them to *achieve predetermined ends*.²⁹² A stronger definition of rationality requires that individuals choose the best action to achieve a desired goal according to stable utility functions.²⁹³ The strongest definition of rationality requires that individuals *respond to incentive* and behave according to rational expectations.²⁹⁴

In all of these cases, chosen behaviour may turn out as ineffective or misleading due to erroneous information or perceptions, lack of information, or unpredictable complexity in the external world.²⁹⁵ This *bounded rationality*²⁹⁶ leads to the compulsion to choose solutions, which seem to be good enough, based on the available information.

The following passages will be dedicated to show, that terrorists, even suicide terrorists, satisfy the stronger demands of rationality inside their specific lifeworld and social contexts.

What first and foremost suggests the presence of rationality within terrorists groups and that terrorist are rational actors is the very fundamental fact that psychopaths or mentally ill individuals are simply too unreliable and incapable of being controlled to be of use to terrorist groups.²⁹⁷ Moreover, they can't easily converge to the target without attracting attention, nor can they merge back into the crowd after executing an operation.²⁹⁸

To describe terrorists' behaviour in terms of rationality, we have to include satisfaction from *altruistic behaviour, intangible psychological and social rewards* and *expected rewards in the afterlife* in a flexible form of utility function.²⁹⁹

As rational actors, they would commit terrorist actions in order to maximise their perceived utility, even if this means that the perpetrator will receive the promised rewards not until after his death. The calculus of terrorists includes their marginal benefits and costs.³⁰⁰

²⁹¹ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 19)

²⁹² (Berrebi, 2009, p. 169)

²⁹³ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 169)

²⁹⁴ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 169)

²⁹⁵ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 170)

²⁹⁶ (Simon, 1982)

²⁹⁷ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 30)

²⁹⁸ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 30)

²⁹⁹ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 170)

³⁰⁰ (Schneider, Brück, & Meierrieks, 2010, p. 12)

*"The main argument favouring a rational-choice model is that, if terrorists and terror organizations behave rationally, knowledge of their beliefs and preferences should help us understand and predict their behaviour. However, if they are irrational, their behaviour cannot be explained through rational-choice models, and no systematic trends based on these models should be observed or sought."*³⁰¹

In searching for indicators of rational behaviour, Berrebi decides to distinguish between *tactical, operational and strategic levels*.³⁰²

On the *tactical and operational level*, there could be found several indicators for the rational behaviour. of terrorist groups.

First, Berrebi proved that *targets* of terrorist attacks are reasonable chosen for a combination of target attractiveness, feasibility, effectiveness, and cost.³⁰³ In the Israel-Palestine conflict for example, four factors stand out as key determinants of a possible attack: *proximity* of terrorist *home bases*, *proximity of international borders*, the presence of *Jewish population* and the *presence of a centre of government administration*.³⁰⁴ While the first two improved access for terrorists and lowered the cost of an attack, the latter two probably raised the expected benefit of attacks in the eye of the terrorist group.

Just as the targets of terrorist attacks, the *attack timing* as well seems to follow reasonable thoughts. Especially the analysis of waiting time between attacks experienced by localities is consistent with a reasonable interpretation of the benefit value seen by the terrorist.³⁰⁵

Further are the chosen *attack tactics* quite reasonable. Especially suicide attacks are primarily used against "hard targets", which are well protected and therefore the probability of apprehension of a conventional attack is high. This significantly reduces the expected success of a conventional attack. This indicates a clear calculus in the terrorist's choice of attack tactics and targets.³⁰⁶

In addition, there seems to be a clear *recognition of human capital considerations* in suicide bombings. There is a clear correlation between the age and education level of suicide bombers and the outcomes of suicide attacks. Both education and age indicate ability and experience and seem to positively influence the success of suicide attacks.

³⁰¹ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 170)

³⁰² (Berrebi, 2009, p. 170)

³⁰³ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 171)

³⁰⁴ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 171)

³⁰⁵ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 172)

³⁰⁶ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 172)

*"In fact, there is very real danger in sending out poorly trained or intellectually instable suicide operatives. Dud bombers - those that fail in their attempt to detonate their explosives - get caught and can crack under interrogation, causing irreparable damage to their group, cell, or operator."*³⁰⁷

A rational choice approach would suggest that older, more experienced and well-educated individuals will be assigned to attack larger, more-lucrative and more-important targets. A similar argument is found in Berman (2003), who points out that those selected for missions are likely to be those most *committed*, but also the most *capable* of handling the complexities and difficulties that might arise and therefore they tend to have higher education and technical skills than most other members of terrorist organisations.³⁰⁸ In fact, this assumption seems to hold true according to the results of Berrebi's study.³⁰⁹

All these cases strongly suggest that terrorist organisations' acts are based on rational considerations on the tactical and operational level. This is an important finding, as one of the main arguments in this paper rests on the assumption that contrary to popular belief, terrorists are not at all irrational or even mentally disordered actors. To this point, this argument seems to hold true. Nevertheless shall we proceed with an inspection of terrorists' rationality on the *strategic level*.

On the long term, *strategic level*, rationality could be, among others, observed when looking at *economic warfare*. One of Al Qaedas' formulated goals is to force the US into bankruptcy with its attacks. Considering that the estimated costs of the 9/11 attacks, which were about 500.000\$, stand against several billions US Dollar, which were spent in the war against terror campaign and the two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, this strategy seems to be extremely successful.³¹⁰

If we take it for granted that one ultimate goal of terrorist campaigns is to maximise economic hardship on their enemies, Berrebi argues that we should be able to observe a serious, if not destabilising impact of terror attacks on the targeted economies, or at least a disproportionally higher cost of terror attacks and counter terrorist actions, than that incurred by the terrorist organisation which planned and executed the attacks. Indeed, there seems to be a significant correlation between the losses of directly or indirectly attacked companies and economies on the stock markets and respective terrorist attacks.³¹¹ In general, the literature agrees that flows of international trade may be negatively affected by terrorism events.³¹²

Moreover, waging a war is much more expensive than financing a terrorist campaign. On top, the special character of terrorist campaigns, which is the spread of fear, intimidation and the

³⁰⁷ (Wilner, 2010, p. 313)

³⁰⁸ (Berman, 2003)

³⁰⁹ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 173)

³¹⁰ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 174)

³¹¹ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 175)

³¹² (Schneider, Brück, & Meierrieks, 2010, p. 41)

radiation of the feeling of being vulnerable among the population, is mirrored in the economic effects of terrorist attacks. The majority of the economic impact of terror can be attributed to the *psychological reactions* in the aftermath of the attacks, rather than to the actual damages themselves.³¹³

Out of the view of terrorists, the use of terrorism therefore seems to be a rational decision regarding the significant effect on the attacked economies at comparable low costs.

Terrorist organisations could as well pursue *territorial and liberation goals*. Territorial aims usually seek to liberate significant religious or historical regions from the occupation of a foreign entity. This motivation can be, among others, observed when identifying the goals of Hamas, the Al Aqsa Brigade, Hezbollah or of the PKK³¹⁴, which all seek to liberate a distinctive territory from a foreign power. There are several evidences, which indicate that terrorism as a strategy to force the withdrawal of a perceived enemy from a region works:

*“..., over the past two decades, suicide terrorism has been rising largely because terrorists have learned that it pays. Suicide terrorists sought to compel American and French military forces to abandon Lebanon in 1983, Israeli forces to leave Lebanon in 1985, Israeli forces to quit the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in 1994 and 1995, the Sri Lankan government to create an independent Tamil state from 1990 on, and the Turkish government to grant autonomy to the Kurds in the late 1990s. In all but the case of Turkey, the terrorist political cause made more gains after the resort to suicide operations than it had before.”*³¹⁵

Because of these examples, it is well legitimate to ascribe terrorists rational behaviour, even on the strategic level. This return of rationality in terrorists' behaviour and actions enables new pathways in understanding terrorists, and to find alternative ways to describe this ambivalent actor. One of these possibilities will be introduced on the following pages.

³¹³ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 175)

³¹⁴ Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan

³¹⁵ (Pape, 2003)

TERRORISTS AS POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

A rational choice approach would therefore define terrorism as an extreme and violent form of *political activism*, as the systematic use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective.³¹⁶ This interpretation emphasises that terrorism is a form of political communication.³¹⁷ Notably, a form of political communication, which, at least in the case of Al Qaeda, *doesn't seem to work*.³¹⁸

Nevertheless, seeing terrorism as an extreme form of political activism would explain, why terrorists tend to be higher educated and generally wealthier³¹⁹ than the overall population from which they advent, as this is a general characteristic of political activists.³²⁰

Moreover, political activism is as likely to be based on religious motivation as it is to be rooted in secular ideologies.³²¹ This argument is based on the assumption that *values and beliefs cause terrorism*, which could be either secular or religious, or even both.³²² Furthermore are political activists barely to be considered mentally ill. All these arguments hold true for the evidence on the micro-level, as well as on the organisational level discussed so far.

On top, a strong indicator for the occurrence of terrorist organisations in a society is the amount of *political freedom and civil liberties*. Several studies³²³ suggest that origin countries of terrorism tend to have low levels of civil liberties. Moreover, increased state repression and the structure of party politics are assumed to be significant predictors of terrorism. This evidence strongly suggest the terrorist-as-a-political-activist argument, as especially wealthier and better-educated individuals tend to fight a repressive regime.

*"Repression of peaceful means of political dissent may force opposition movements into the underground and encourage their resort to violence, because they lack alternatives and face persecution from the state. Repressions fuels perceptions of injustice."*³²⁴

Another evidence for the political activist approach could be choice of attacked targets. The RAND Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism database shows that more than a quarter of all documented terrorist attacks between 1968 and 2007 were against government or diplomatic targets.

³¹⁶ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 182)

³¹⁷ (Abrahms, 2005, p. 529)

³¹⁸ (Abrahms, 2005, p. 531)

³¹⁹ (Hudson & Majeska, 1999, p. 48)

³²⁰ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 183)

³²¹ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 183)

³²² (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 72)

³²³ (Krueger & Laitin, 2008); (Piazza, 2006)

³²⁴ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 71)

*"In fact, political targets were attacked more often than any other target category, more than religious figures and institutions, educational institutions, journalists and media, telecommunication, food or water supplies, utilities, transportation, tourists, airports, airlines and aviation, nongovernmental organisations, maritime or military, abortion-related, or even other terrorists and former terrorist targets all combined. Notably, half of the assassinations perpetrated by terrorists and about 60 percent of the terrorist hostage and barricade attacks were against governmental and diplomatic targets."*³²⁵

Overall, it is quite reasonable to argue that terrorists act according to an intrinsic rationality. Terrorists and terrorist groups should be assumed to be rational, at least in the sense of taking actions they believe are consistent with their goals. In some cases in the sense of being smart in the choice of their tactics, in other cases in the even stronger sense of being consistent with a credible assessment of prospects.³²⁶ On top, regarding the given evidence, it is as well reasonable to understand terrorists as political activists, who seek to accomplish their goals with the means of violence.

This has strong implications on the way, we understand terrorists, which attributes we assign them, and how authorities and security forces will have to deal with this global acting network.

*"The first requirement is to recognise that terrorism is a political problem, to be solved through political means."*³²⁷

Those targeted should remember that terrorists' intend is to provoke *overreaction*, *support*, and *compel the abandonment of commitments*. Only a response that respects democratic values and rewards peaceful means of expressing opinion can make terrorism illegitimate.³²⁸

The previously drawn picture of the terrorist still could be assumed to be quite accurate on the motivational and contextual level, but definitely has to be complemented with the attribute of *rationality*, which finally promotes the terrorist to a political activist.

This is not a completely new approach, as the political aims of terrorism were undisputed throughout history. Important is the appreciation, that terrorism as a tactic, and as a strategy is a conscious and deliberately rational act of the respective perpetrator. Denying this rationality by labelling terrorists as mentally ill, religious deluded fanatics, unforgivably narrows the view and the possibilities of deeper understanding.

³²⁵ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 184)

³²⁶ (Berrebi, 2009, p. 192)

³²⁷ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 81)

³²⁸ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 81)

A SNAPSHOT OF THE TERRORIST

After the introduction of a rational choice approach, motivational factors and root causes, which promote the radicalisation process of terrorists and positively influence their commitment to terror attacks, the following image of the terrorists' self-image, social embeddedness and societal contexts emerges of the cited scientific contributions:

Perpetrators of Islamist terrorism perceive themselves as future-orientated fighters for a *just cause*, which can be either *political*, *religious* or tied to a *concrete inducement* and appear to be deeply convinced of the values and norms of their respective ideology (secular or religious).

As they are usually not pursuing purely egocentric goals, they could well be regarded as *altruistic* actors, who face the globalisation force of Western culture and values. Moreover, Terrorists tend to be wealthier and better educated than the average society, highly adapt in using modern technology and communication channels. Thus, their actions are *deliberate*, and indeed *rational* on the tactical as well as on the strategic level, following steady assumptions of their costs and benefits. These features strongly suggest labelling perpetrators of terrorism as *political activists*, who use the means of violence to maintain *publicity*, to pursue distinct goals and to provoke *overreaction*, attract *support*, and *compel the abandonment of commitments*.

They further usually are members of social groups, which promote the individuals' radicalisation process. Group members are interacting whether in face-to-face encounters or in cyberspace, which promote *in-group/out-group biases*, *conformity*, *compliance*, *groupthink* and *polarisations* among its affiliates. Social groups further *spread responsibilities* for actions among their members and especially to group- or higher authorities. The decision to conduct terrorist attacks is based on the conviction that action will *positively influence* and *advance* the respective group *goals* and *-interests* and will produce *positive reactions* among the group members and their respective community.

Deeper motivational factors for committing terror attacks are found in the perpetrators' desire for *political or religious change*, in personally or collective *perceived discriminations*, *injustices*, *grievances* or in the duty to *defend* members of a cultural community, to which the perpetrator is bound through strong, though mainly fictive *kinship ties*.

Especially for the second and third generation of Muslim immigrants, raised in Western societies, but as well for Muslims in Islamic countries, who perceive an omnipresent force of Western values, the *alienation* from the discriminating Western system, or even from this life and the identification with a traditional Islamic culture together with an idealisation of the hereafter promotes their radicalisation process and their willingness to die for their cause.

A crucial role in the cultural context play furthermore *cultural and social obligations* as well as the *normative acceptability of violence*.

In addition, perceived *social, religious and financial rewards* for themselves and their families, together with and *divinely inspired imperative* of struggle lead them to engage in terror activities.

Besides individual- and group motivational factors, which lead individuals to undergo a process of radicalisation and eventually come to be perpetrators of terrorism, root causes try to identify broader societal processes, which could lead to terrorism.

Some of these root causes, like *perceived illegitimacy* of the regime, perceived *repression*, or *injustices*, and *humiliation*, as well as *grievances*, *alienation*, the *acceptance of violence* and *human insecurity* or *global systemic explanations* partly overlap with the already mentioned motivational factors.

Others, like *poverty* or other economic factors, *educational level*, *modernisation*, *democracy*, just as *ideology*, *religion* and *culture* could serve as auxiliary preconditions for the emerge of terror, though not always in the intuitive manner.

In order to maintain support for their terror campaigns in the form of *manpower*, *funding*, *material*, *sanctuaries*, *intelligence*, and *tolerance of activities*, terror groups use the means of *intimidation*, *propaganda efforts*, *the provision of social services*, and *promote identification* with the group among the respective community and, if possible, even *penetrate weak state institutions*.

In order to contrast this quite elaborated picture of the terrorist, which emerges out of the cited scientific contributions, with a postmodern perception, we shall now turn to the concept of postmodernity, which is, at least on the behalf of the author, supposed to be the most significant global systemic determinant of Islamist terrorism.

POSTMODERNISM

After examining terrorism on the tactical and strategic level, and in addition delivering first indicators underlining the importance of global processes, as well as an discussion of motivations, root causes and social processes on the individual-, group- and social level, which influence individuals in their decision to become perpetrators of violent acts, we shall now have a closer look at the constantly reoccurring global structures, which promote, or probably even compel terrorism.

Thus one concept of global societal change, which shall be applied in order to describe the Islamist terrorist accurately, is postmodernism. The idea to use postmodern concepts to understand international terrorism, or even the terrorist himself, is based on several characteristics of Islamist terrorism. Lawrence Freedman suggested in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks that the postmodern war had finally begun. He stated that these attacks do not have physical consequences, but human, and are directed against symbols, which illustrate US superiority.³²⁹ This targeting of *symbols* and *identity* denotes the beginning of a postmodern conflict.

At least since the 1980's, the term postmodernism is omnipresent in the universities as well as in our everyday life. Despite its frequent use, postmodernism still lacks of a precise definition. The only certainty is that postmodernism is highly related to modernism. In which way, shall be explored on the following pages.

The complexity of defining postmodernism lies in the indecisive character of the postmodern era itself. It is not only about the question, whether postmodernism supersedes or continues modernism, but if time, history and modern thinking can even be uphold.³³⁰ Postmodernism in this meaning could describe the disembowelment of modernity's meaning.³³¹ Modernity is characterised through the *Enlightenment*, *logic*, *rationality* and the generally applicable *dichotomy of Good and Evil*. That doubtless included self-criticism, but only within its intrinsic logic.³³² Postmodernist argumentation questions this intrinsic logic, deconstructs it and confronts it with alternative narratives of its own history.

What all the different theories on postmodernism have in common is their critical relation to modernity. Basically, postmodernism is about the intransigent pluralisation of the modern culture and society.³³³ Along with this emerges a radical breach within the history of modernity, which forces us to rethink, rephrase, or even abandon all of its previous motives, patterns, and stipulations.³³⁴

³²⁹ Sir Lawrence Freedman quoted in (Behrens, 2008, p. 6)

³³⁰ (Behrens, 2008, p. 9)

³³¹ (Georg-Lauer, 1988, p. 191)

³³² (Behrens, 2008, p. 10)

³³³ (Behrens, 2008, p. 12)

³³⁴ (Behrens, 2008, p. 13)

While the imperative of modernity was strongly tied to the battle cry of the French Revolution, *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, postmodernism declared armistice with its main characteristics; *Freedom, Diversity, and Tolerance*. Bauman adds, if *Tolerance* could be converted in *Solidarity*, the ceasefire could even transform to *peace*.³³⁵

THE GENEALOGY OF POSTMODERNISM

The word postmodernism first appears around the 1900's, referring to "postmodern" paintings. Rudolf Pannwitz³³⁶ uses the term 1917 referring to Friedrich Nietzsche's critic on European culture. Postmodernism finally reached a broad prominence in the wider public through the developments of the Pop Art, which unsettled the conventions of the fine Arts, and a remarkable article by Leslie Fiedler, published 1969 in the Playboy, who stressed that the elitist demands of the dominant high culture should be overthrown. Instead, he suggested a constructive contact with the popular mass culture and consumption.³³⁷ This article was the summit of a wide debate in American literature science, which postulated the flatten of innovative potency after a period of consolidation in the modern high culture.³³⁸ The blending of high culture works with mass culture writings, which was until then unbelievable, precipitated realignment of literature science's evaluation process. This break away of the clear distinction between higher arts for the educated and the more prosperous and the "sub art" for the masses closed the gap between the artist and its audience. Postmodernism in the arts enabled an unknown liberty in expression for the artist that allowed him to facilitate between the reality and the mystic and imaginative world of the spirit.³³⁹ The artist combined these two contradictory dimension not through adaption, or levelling of the two extremes, but through *polyglotism*, *pluralism* and the construction of at least a *double-structure*, if not a *multi-structure*.³⁴⁰

Thereby, the American literature debate delivered not only a strong identification tool for postmodernism in literature science, but for all other scientific disciplines. Finally, the genuine cultural postmodern thinking even reached philosophy, which turned against the elite, violent and marginalising meta-narratives of modernity, thereby pluralising the monolithic and idealised concepts of *reason, truth, history, aesthetics and beauty*.³⁴¹ Thus, postmodernism emerged not out of an antimodern impulse, but because of the ambiguous dynamic of modernity itself and was further accelerated through modern technologies.

³³⁵ (Bauman, 1992)

³³⁶ (Pannwitz, 1917)

³³⁷ (Fiedler, 1969)

³³⁸ (Welsch, 1988)

³³⁹ (Fiedler, 1969)

³⁴⁰ (Welsch, 1988, p. 15)

³⁴¹ (Behrens, 2008, p. 15)

POSTMODERN PHILOSOPHY

Postmodernism means the fundamental practise of *pluralism of languages, patterns, and procedures*, not only side by side, but *interreferential*.³⁴²

Applied on our society would this mean a pluralism of *values and norms*, and the *coexistence of different spheres* with differing, often contradictory values and norms. Indeed are there significant gaps between the benchmarks of *culture* and *economy* for example. While the former postulates the value of individual fulfilment and indulgence, the later is orientated on values like *rationality* and *efficiency*.³⁴³ Politics could be an additional sphere, which is highlighting *equality* among the members of a society.

This heterogeneity not only promotes the *plurality of values, beliefs, languages, reality or action patterns*, it rather clamours it.³⁴⁴ Moreover, this heterogeneity in the postmodern era not only manifests in the mentioned spheres, but penetrates right into the subject. The individual has to follow conflicting values and interests, not only when leaving one sphere and entering another, but at the same moment, as the different spheres are overlapping. Within this set of contradicting values and norms, between which conflicts are bound to occur and reconciliation seems to be impossible, the individual has to develop an integrated personality and character. Thus, postmodern society is indissoluble plural. Who would try to ignore this pluralism as a sociologist would be ignorant; and as a politician would be a tyrant.³⁴⁵

Postmodernism is consequently characterised through *plurality, multidimensionality, discrepancy and heterogeneity*. The overall concept, the shared sense and context of all in everything, which dominated modernity is disintegrated in postmodernity. Nevertheless, this is not meant as a license for confusion, but as an uncompromisingly practiced offer for internal and external differentiation.

Hence, postmodernism could be described through the following features, summarised by Ihab Hassan:

³⁴² (Welsch, 1988, p. 15)

³⁴³ (Welsch, 1988, p. 24)

³⁴⁴ (Welsch, 1988, p. 24)

³⁴⁵ (Welsch, 1988, p. 25)

- *"Vagueness: herein fall all types of ambiguities, breaches and shifts within the knowledge of our society*
- *Fragmentation: as the reason for vagueness. Fragmentation results from the condemnation of any totalisation*
- *Dissolution of the canon: delegitimation of social norms, a subversion, which finds its most shocking dimension in terrorism, its most positive dimension in the mobilisation of minorities.*
- *Loss of Identity and depth: the identity disperses in a surface of stylistic gestures that refuse any interpretation*
- *not-portrayable: postmodernist art is unreal and not-iconic*
- *Irony (or perspectivism): play, interplay, dialog, polylog, allegory, self-reflection, and reflexivity as expression of the permanent creation process of human spirit*
- *Hybridisation: as genre mutations, de-definition and deformation of cultural genres*
- *Carnivalisation: as the anti-system, a cheerful relativity of reality*
- *Performance and participation: indecisiveness as practice*
- *Construct character: postmodernism works radically through tropes, figurative speech and irrealisms.*
- *Immanence: everything is transformed into signs of its own language. The immanence of the semiotic system leads to an intertextuality of life."* ³⁴⁶

Postmodernity radically questions the premises of modernity, A reflexive postmodernity, which not merely despises modernity and celebrates its catastrophe could be understood as a radical self-criticism of modernity. It does not discards the Enlightenment, rationality, truth and other elements of the modernity, but it rather tries to realise, maybe even materialise, the *respective excluded, the Other* and the *suppressed* of these fundamental concepts.³⁴⁷

Thus, postmodern theories refer to the most different approaches without following any tradition of thought or chronology. Postmodern theory rather question the possibility of systematic theory, criticise the claim of truth of modernity and discard the hegemony of reason in favour of a variety of rationalities, including the irrational.³⁴⁸

The postmodern formula "*anything goes*"³⁴⁹ targets the universal validity claim of modernity. Not only privileges modernity reason, the reasonable subject, definiteness and meaningfulness, truth, beauteousness and logic, modernity *violently excludes their respective Others* in their name. Irrationality, the craziness, the meaningless, silentness, the

³⁴⁶ (Hassan I. , 1988)

³⁴⁷ (Behrens, 2008, p. 19)

³⁴⁸ (Behrens, 2008, p. 20)

³⁴⁹ (Feyerabend, 2003)

unattractive and the illogicality are granted no space in modernity, they get banned, denied, disowned, disciplined, controlled and deported.³⁵⁰

The dynamic of this contrastive pairs was explored by Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*³⁵¹ and although modernity seeks to abandon the negative connoted counterparts of itself, they seem to be the engine of its social development.

Postmodern philosophy picks up this argumentation and is thus characterised through the following three concepts:

- *First*, postmodern philosophy seeks a *pluralisation* of the singular key concepts of modernity. Instead of one truth, one reason or one aesthetic, postmodernity pleads for *numerous truths, numerous reasons and numerous aesthetics*.
- *Second*, postmodern philosophy postulates the liquidation of the modern certainty that there exists after all deconstruction, a material world. Reality in postmodernity is instead a pure *medial simulation and a virtual reality*.
- *Third*, postmodernism emphasises the *end of the great narratives* like communism, democracy, or capitalism.

Nietzsche was the most consequent forward thinker of postmodern philosophy, who radically broke up with the modern rationality. According to him, it is not reasonable thought that determines the individual and its actions, but his volition to power. Descartes' reasoning *I think, therefore I am*, is replaced by Nietzsche through *I want, therefore I am*.³⁵²

Another important pioneer in postmodern thinking was the linguist Ferdinand Saussure, who postulated that there is no natural relationship between the shape of a word (*the signifier*) and its actual meaning (*the significate*), thereby revealing the constructive character of language. Thus, language is not a medium to describe a universal reality, but a result of human conventions. Consequently, reality, which becomes describable through language, is itself a social convention, a social construct.³⁵³

The breach of language, thought and the individual, as well as the collective perception with the not existing subsistent reality disemboogues in the *infinity of possible interpretations of reality*. Postmodern relativism of text and context and the denial of a subsistent reality constitute the exact opposite of modern thinking, whose ultimate target is the stabilisation of sense. Instead, the generally applicable meaning is liquidated³⁵⁴ by the notion, that all human

³⁵⁰ (Behrens, 2008, p. 21)

³⁵¹ (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2008)

³⁵² (Nietzsche, 2005 a)

³⁵³ (Saussure, 2001, p. 76ff)

³⁵⁴ (Behrens, 2008, p. 28)

values, including the basal distinction between Good and Evil, are nothing more than categorical projections of humankind.³⁵⁵

This radical cultural and ethical relativism is regarded as the end of the totalitarianisms, which seemed to lead more or less inevitably to justifying the use of force against different beliefs. Even without violence, the claim for one valid truth - once and for all - kills the dialogue with others and favours inhumanity in all dealings between human beings.³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, instead of totalitarianism emerges the dictatorship of relativism, which could point the way to the ultimate catastrophe of humankind, for it compels us to abandon the clear distinctions of modernity, between Good and Evil, between us and other people and finally leave human beings on their own and without guidance when facing the dangers of civilisation.³⁵⁷ This demand will be further discussed in the following chapter.

More important at this point is the composition of reality in postmodernity. As we mentioned before, reality is no longer regarded as a natural certainty, but as a social construction.

Hence, the surfaces of our constructed realities are not only huge playgrounds for arbitrary interpretations, but are as well expression of the sacrifice of emotions, experiences and memories, as the material evaporates in the immateriality of information.³⁵⁸

The denial of any materiality, any underlying reality consequently suggests the notion that we actually live in a *simulated world of symbols* and, in a strict sense, we ourselves are only simulations as well. As symbols, as we heard before, finally lost their relationship to an outer reality, and we further replaced knowledge and experience through symbols and pictures, distributed in the media, our perceived reality became its own representation. Instead of anything real, nowadays there only exist copies of copies of representations of representations, without an identifiable original, which could proof the authenticity or truth of the copies.³⁵⁹

What remains are surfaces, on which the copies of reality finally turn out to be truer, realer than reality, as they become more authentic than reality could have ever been. Therefore, postmodernity generates a *hyperreality*, characterised through *unreferenced bits of information, symbols and pictures, which are unbound to time and place*.³⁶⁰

This effect is paradoxically further promoted through modern technologies like television or the Internet, which not only *deliver* individualised footage of reality; the provided pictures *become* reality. Through modern communication media, locality and time become arbitrarily exchangeable, therefore they lose their privileged status as an origin or destination.³⁶¹

This *decentralisation* causes the loss of continuity of experience, which is constitutive for the substantiality of the recognised. The moment, in which the object and its picture are

³⁵⁵ (Nietzsche, 2005 b)

³⁵⁶ (Beck U. , 2010, p. 135)

³⁵⁷ (Beck U. , 2010, p. 135)

³⁵⁸ (Lyotard, 1986)

³⁵⁹ (Baudrillard, 1978)

³⁶⁰ (Behrens, 2008, p. 35) cf. (Baudrillard, 1978)

³⁶¹ (Raulet, 1988, p. 168)

experienced at the same time, in which they are referred to each other, is replaced by a digitalised simulation of it on the screen. This simulation does not refer to the actual object anymore, but to a *potentiality*, to an "it could be".³⁶²

While modernity was denoted by expansion, by a metaphorical "explosion", postmodernity disemboques in a catastrophic "implosion". The simulated hyperreality collapses in itself.³⁶³

With Baudrillard, the author will argue that this implosion is manifested by today's international terrorism.

THE POSTMODERN HUMAN BEING

As the aim of this thesis is to focus on the individual perpetrator of terrorism, it is necessary to examine the consequences of postmodernity affecting the modern idea of the subject.

Basically, postmodern criticism of modernity leads to the *death of the subject*. Humanism and Enlightenment shaped the image of the subject of modernity; it described the human being as free, equal, self-confident, and in command of reason and rationality to act self-determined.

However, the idea of the human as an autonomous subject remained an unredeemed promise.³⁶⁴ On these grounds, postmodernity not only questions humanism and Enlightenment, but argues that the human being itself is an invention of modernity. Indeed, it was Foucault, who revealed that the modern conception of the human being as a subject was a result of social processes in the 17th and 18th century and is not, just as a postmodern approach would suggest, based on the immanent nature of the human being.³⁶⁵

Because of the described vaporisation of modernity's certainties and liabilities, the human being can no longer be understood as a consistent and coherent individual. It rather appears to be *flexibilised, schizophrenic, standardised, disciplined, decentralised and at mercy of randomness, desires and wishes*.³⁶⁶

The human life in the era of postmodernism is determined by *contingency*.³⁶⁷ The *contingency* of identity, values and lifeworlds, even of reality itself, describes the lack of persuasive reasons for them being as they are. Postmodern reality is not only differing according to every subjects' individual perception, but it could as well be different, if the participating individuals would have had acted differently.³⁶⁸

The living conditions of everyday life could be described as meta-stable, marked of *breaches, flexibilities and recommencements*. It seems as if the postmodern individual is constantly forced to *re-invent* itself because it cannot rely on the disappeared coordinates of modernity any longer. There is no central subject, no epicentre of life, no compulsory

³⁶² (Raulet, 1988, p. 169)

³⁶³ (Behrens, 2008, p. 35)

³⁶⁴ (Behrens, 2008, p. 82)

³⁶⁵ (Foucault, 1983)

³⁶⁶ (Behrens, 2008, p. 82)

³⁶⁷ (Bauman, 1992)

³⁶⁸ (Baumann, 1992, S. 228)

destination, neither is there a determined origin. Therefore, the postmodern human being could well be labelled as a *decentralised subject*.³⁶⁹

The aesthetic experience of the subject's decentralisation is already described by Nietzsche, with his notion of the constantly *recurrence of the same*.³⁷⁰ This notion refers to the different pieces of the decomposed subject, which must be passed through. The reason for the decomposition is found in the postulated *death of God*, who served as the guarantor for identity in modernity. This persistent intern genesis leads from the modern statement of the value of worth to the postmodern question of the worth of values, a remarkable shift in the discourse that tags the line between the modern and the postmodern. The postmodern subject is due to its volition to power capable of overwhelming established values and able to create new ones.³⁷¹ This capability should definitely be understood as a compulsion, as the postmodern self-orientation postulates that only if the individual *makes* something of itself, it *is* something.³⁷²

The wish of second and third generation Muslim immigrants in Western societies for a *fundamentally possible alternative life*,³⁷³ could well be framed with this shift. Although Beck not explicitly goes that far, one could well argue that due to the Western narrative refusal to accept, not to talk about being able to *include* this wish for an alternative life in its modern conception, the West itself promotes the escalating of this struggle, which is finally exploding in terrorism, literally spoken.

³⁶⁹ (Behrens, 2008, p. 83)

³⁷⁰ (Nietzsche, 2005 a, p. 595)

³⁷¹ (Rippel, 1988, p. 111)

³⁷² (Funk, 2005, S. 55)

³⁷³ (Beck U. , 2010, p. 31)

TERRORISM MEETS POSTMODERNISM

*"With the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, we might even be said to have before us the absolute event, the Mother of all events, the pure event uniting within itself all the events that have never taken place."*³⁷⁴

In his postmodern analysis of terrorism, especially focusing on the 9/11 attacks, Baudrillard identifies several key factors, which promote, maybe even clamour terrorism.

First, the (postmodern) allergy to any definitive order, to any definitive power, is universal. Consequently, the increase in the power of power heightens the will to destroy it.³⁷⁵ There is no doubt that the United States, the hegemon of the West had their unipolar moment at the turn of the millennium.³⁷⁶ Thus, the twin towers of the World Trade Center, as the perfect embodiments and outstanding symbols of that definitive order, were more than obvious targets for subaltern movements.

Second, the more concentrated a system becomes globally, ultimately forming one single network, the more it becomes vulnerable at a single point.³⁷⁷

Third, when a global power monopolises the situation to an extent, as the Western hegemony did, where no alternative form of thinking is allowed, Baudrillard sees no other way but a *terroristic situational transfer*.³⁷⁸ He consequently argues that it was the system itself, which created the objective conditions and furthermore delivered the technological capabilities for this brutal retaliation.

Terrorism in this sense, just like viruses, is everywhere. It is terror against terror, the subaltern against the hegemon. It is not about politics, nor is there an ideology behind it. The global perfusion of terrorism accompanies any system of domination. Therefore, it is not any longer possible to draw a demarcation line around it, localise terrorism in certain regions, or identify the perpetrators by certain features.

*"[Terrorism] is at the very heart of the culture which combats it, and the visible fracture (and the hatred) that pits the exploited and the underdeveloped globally against the Western world secretly connects with the fracture internal to the dominant system."*³⁷⁹

The system is definitely able to face down any visible antagonist. But against the other kind, which, just as postmodernism suggests, is secreted in any machinery of dominance, against this form of automatic reversion of its own power, the system can do nothing.

³⁷⁴ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 4)

³⁷⁵ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 6f)

³⁷⁶ (Gärtner, 2009, p. 53)

³⁷⁷ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 8)

³⁷⁸ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 9)

³⁷⁹ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 10)

*"And terrorism is the shock wave of this silent reversion."*³⁸⁰

The opponents in this fundamental antagonism are not at all America and the Islam, the former is probably the epicentre, but not the sole embodiment of globalisation, while the latter is not at all the embodiment of terrorism. The antagonism lies in the fact, that the *triumphant globalisation is battling itself*.³⁸¹

The force of globalisation, just as any other hegemonic force, lies in its hermeneutic power to demarcate the ordinary from the abnormal, the order from the chaos, health from sickness and rationality from insanity. Sovereignty is anxious to describe the other sides of these relations as dangerous opponents. However, it is the force of hegemony itself, which produces these opponents by depriving of them what the hegemony force is claiming for itself. Through the creation of an enemy image, the force of Western hegemony tries to purify itself from ambivalences inherent in the global order, inherent in itself.³⁸²

Baudrillard labels this the Fourth World War. This war

*"...haunts every world order, all hegemonic domination - if Islam dominated the world, terrorism would rise against Islam, for it is the world, the globe itself, which resists globalisation."*³⁸³

This dynamic reveals a structural misunderstanding on the rationality of modernity about the relation of Good and Evil. In modern connotation, terrorism is the Evil, the Other, which has to be fought and conquered by the Good, the moral and the just represented by the West. This identification of the Good as the followers of God and the conquerors of the Evil leads to the fusion of the distinction between us and others and the distinction of Good and Evil. The Evil is constructed as the absence of God. Labelling certain people or groups as Evil changes them into monsters and disputes their humanity.³⁸⁴

The naive thought that the advance of the Good corresponds to a defeat of Evil neglects the fact that Good and Evil advance together as a part of the same movement.³⁸⁵

*"Good does not conquer Evil, nor indeed does the reverse happen: they are at once both irreducible to each other and inextricably interrelated."*³⁸⁶

During the Cold War, there was a balance in the narrative of Good and Evil. The dialectical relation of these two antagonists was maintained in an equilibrium of power. After the supremacy of one over the other, after the extrapolation of the Good over any form of

³⁸⁰ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 11)

³⁸¹ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 11)

³⁸² (Bauman, 1992, S. 277)

³⁸³ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 12)

³⁸⁴ (Beck U., 2010, p. 55)

³⁸⁵ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 13)

³⁸⁶ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 13)

negativity, this equilibrium was gone and the Evil transformed into an invisible autonomy and henceforward developing exponentially.³⁸⁷

Radical Islam was merely the moving front along which the antagonism crystallised. The significant difference of the manifestation of the inherent Evil is the form of resistance, of the exposure of power, which is no longer manifested by traditional armed forces that limited the expansion of influence to definable geographical borders, but is manifested in *asymmetric terror*. It is exactly this asymmetry of international terrorism, which leaves the global omnipotence entirely disarmed.³⁸⁸

At odds with itself, the hegemonic Western system can only plunge further into its own *logic of relations of force*, but cannot operate on the terrorists' terrain of the *symbolic challenge and death*.³⁸⁹ While the West operates on the modern level of reality, rationality and the dichotomy of Good and Evil, international terrorists switched into postmodernity, targeting not buildings, concrete persons or institutions, but the ideas, the values and the symbolic patterns manifested by them.

Furthermore, international terrorists are turning their own deaths into an absolute counter strike weapon against a system that operates on the basis of the exclusion of death. Therefore, all the Western meanings of deterrence and detention turn out to be ineffective against an enemy, who already putted his life on stake.

*"Our men are as eager to die as the Americans are to live!"*³⁹⁰

The significance of the suicide bombers' willingness to die lies not in his death itself, in the ending of his life on the level of reality, but in the symbolic and sacrificial performance of his death.³⁹¹ Well knowing, that fighting on the ground of reality, the sphere where the system is in advantage, would be desperate, the terrorist shifts the struggle into the symbolic sphere, where the rule is that of *challenge, reversion and outbidding*. Baudrillard suggest that on this level, death can only be met by equal or greater death, which ultimately leads to the collapse and death of the system itself.³⁹²

We already heard of the central role of pictures and images in a postmodern perception. This is especially important for terror attacks. Among the hegemonic systems' inherent weapons and technologies (stock markets, electronic information, or air traffic) which have been exploited and turned against it by international terrorists, the most important are the media, as terrorists exploited the real time of images.

³⁸⁷ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 14)

³⁸⁸ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 15)

³⁸⁹ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 15)

³⁹⁰ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 16)

³⁹¹ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 17)

³⁹² (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 17)

The image, as we heard before, consumes the event, absorbs it and offers it to the audience for consumption.³⁹³ It was the worldwide broadcast of the terrible attack on 9/11, which made it to an event. The fascination with the attack is primarily a fascination with its images, the reality of this attacks superadded a bonus of terror, an additional frisson.³⁹⁴

*"The spectacle of terrorism forces the terrorism of spectacle upon us."*³⁹⁵

The radicality and brutality of the spectacle is original and irreducible. Moreover, it can't be interpreted as historical violence, as the attacks had no rational meaning, which would suggest a moral axiom of good violence. Terrorism uses symbolic violence, and the media broadcast the symbolic events around the world. Thus, they become part of the terror, which would be nothing but single incidents lacking any symbolic power without the media.³⁹⁶

Terrorisms' true victory lies in the uncontrollable unleashing of reversibility in the demonstration of the hegemonic systems' weakness and incompetence to respond to actions, which are situated outside its intrinsic logic, its' enlightened rationality.³⁹⁷ This victory not only gets visible in its immediate economic, political, or financial consequences and the resulting moral and psychological downturn, but which is crucial, in the slump of the Western value system. The ideas of freedom, free circulation, in short, the *Western civil rights*, with which the West prided itself and which were to be promoted around the world by a *liberal globalisation*, are already fading from minds and a *police-state globalisation* assumes its place. Thus, the West, in trying to oppose the new threat, undergoes a strategic fallback, a painful revision of its values.³⁹⁸

*"Terrorism ultimately has no meaning, no objective, and cannot be measured by its real political and historical consequences. And it is, paradoxically, because it has no meaning that it constitutes an event in a world increasingly saturated with meaning and efficacy."*³⁹⁹

Thus, terrorism, beyond its spectacular violence, is the radical antagonism at the very heart of globalisation, a force irreducible to the technical and mental realisation of the world, a vital counterforce grappling with the death force of the system.⁴⁰⁰

Terrorism simply carries things to the extreme, to the point of paroxysm. It translates the virtual character of the world, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, into total insecurity and thus deconstructs the extreme form of efficiency and hegemony at its weakest

³⁹³ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 27)

³⁹⁴ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 29)

³⁹⁵ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 30)

³⁹⁶ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 31)

³⁹⁷ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 31)

³⁹⁸ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 32)

³⁹⁹ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 57)

⁴⁰⁰ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 57f)

point, which is the incapability to bear the spectre of opposition, to comprise the Other within itself, especially as the Other acts against the very principles of the hegemonic power.⁴⁰¹

Terrorism is in this perception the *subaltern answer to the hegemonic claim* of the West. A claim, promoted by globalisation, but simultaneously eroded by it. Incidentally, this claim reveals the irrevocable fact that globalisation is more than an economic process. It produces new kinds of de-nationalised subjects and life situations, new categories of rich and poor, at the top and the bottom of society, all of which undermine the premises of Western attitudes.⁴⁰²

Nevertheless, the globalisation of the Western values, basically those of the civil rights, could not keep abreast with the globalisation of economy, finance and information. Transnational companies, capitalism as such intruded into the remotest corners of the world and diversified the value chain into regions, which are far away from granting civil liberties due to the premise of profit maximisation. The respond to this cleavage was the discard of civil liberties. Consequently, the *globalisation of trade puts an end to the universality of values*.⁴⁰³

In the final analysis, we observe societies intruded by the Western lifestyle, but not in their institutions, their rights or value systems, but in their shops, there TV shows and their commercials; and while these societies could buy Western cars, clothes or technological devices, they are still politically suppressed or caught up between traditional value systems and the challenges of modernisation. It is exactly this area of tension, where some decide to battle the hegemonic force, which promised them everything but gave them nothing but unfulfilled desires.

⁴⁰¹ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 63)

⁴⁰² (Beck U. , 2010, p. 167)

⁴⁰³ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 89)

(H1) THE ILLEGITIMATE ACTOR

*"Contrary to popular belief and media depiction, most terrorism is neither crazed nor capricious. Rather, terrorist attacks are generally both premeditated and carefully planned."*⁴⁰⁴

The popular narrative about terrorists, which was particularly constructed in the aftermath of 9/11 was characterised through stereotypes and simplifications. In this discourse, all those labelled as terrorists share a *terrorist code of ethics*, work toward a *transcendent* terrorist objective based on one Arab mind and the nature of Islam. The result was an image of a monolithic and evil Enemy Other that negates the "Western" culture and its values.⁴⁰⁵ More or less scientific efforts drew the picture of a mentally disordered individual, suffering from borderline, brought on by Islamic child rearing practices.⁴⁰⁶

Thereby, suicide bombers were presented as terminal cases of a general Muslim malady. The image of the crazy terrorist not precisely describes an individual, but degrades an entire society.⁴⁰⁷

The ascribed attributes of the West were idealised and summarised under *Enlightenment, rationalism, individualism, democracy, and tolerance*, while the non-West was labelled as *emotional, communitarian, despotic, violent, and traditionalist*.⁴⁰⁸

For the educated reader, it is obvious that simplifications and stereotypes like that could scarcely prove to be true in reality, as they blind out the socio-political diversity in societies and historically grown social processes, values and norms.

Nevertheless, this image strongly influenced the popular image of the "non-West" world, degrading it to an uncivilised region, inhabited by natives insensitive to ethics. This native, the manifestation of the cumulated ascriptions of "the Arab" and "the Muslim" represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is constructed as the *enemy of values*, and in this sense as the absolute Evil, which has to be fought with all means.⁴⁰⁹

The intrinsic logic in this argumentation reads as follows: an enemy of human values (which are profoundly Western values) could himself not be human. The terrorist, or rather an entire society (which is not even a single society, but a heterogenic conglomerate of nationalities, ethnics, religious communities and even states) becomes dehumanised and disempowered.

*"To talk of Evil is to question the humanity of others."*⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁴ (Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, 2006, p. 229)

⁴⁰⁵ (Strindberg & Wörn, 2005, p. 24) see as well (Abrahms, 2005, p. 539)

⁴⁰⁶ (Strindberg & Wörn, 2005, p. 25)

⁴⁰⁷ (Strindberg & Wörn, 2005, p. 25)

⁴⁰⁸ (Strindberg & Wörn, 2005, p. 25)

⁴⁰⁹ (Strindberg & Wörn, 2005, p. 25)

⁴¹⁰ (Beck U. , 2010, p. 55)

This process of De-Humanisation opens the door for counterterrorism measures like targeted killings, of which we will hear later in this chapter, deportations, detentions without accusations and much more.

Osama bin Laden and his followers delivered the empirical bases for this argumentation, as they dwelled in caves, sported turbans, kept their beards long and appeared to shun the modern world when citing the Qur'an. This rejection of the West delivered a fertile ground for the narrative of a new white-man's burden: pacifying Middle Eastern terrorism; bringing secularism, democracy, and free market economies to the natives, and on top of that, making the region safe for the Eastern outpost of Western values, Israel.⁴¹¹

The often-cited clash of civilisations⁴¹² is the result of this narrative, which labels the Islamic world as antimodern and understands religious movements as the manifestation of the deep rejection of the West's paradigm of human- and civil rights.⁴¹³ The notion that Islamist terrorism is part of a clash of civilisations rests on the idea that...

"... culturally conditioned differences between our and their fundamental values - secular versus sacred, modern versus primitive. This dichotomy in turn draws on the notion that modernity is universal in application but necessarily Western in form and content: to be modern, one has to act, think, and consume like a Western (or, rather, like the idealized self-image of the civilization theorist)." 414

In fact, the West is confronted with the shock of discovering, that its model of modernity is not universal. But it is not just the differences between the religions that have such huge potential for conflicts, but the implosion of contextually shaped universalisms and social and moral certainties.⁴¹⁵

"However, there is evidence that cultural differences do not extend to political values, and that Islam and democracy are, in fact, compatible." 416

One important, yet relatively under-examined feature of counterterrorism means are targeted killings. This method have become a tactic of preeminent choice for combating violent, non-state organisations and it is used by the US against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, by Turkey against the PKK in northern Iraq and of course, among others by Israel against Hamas, Hezbollah, the Al Aqsa Brigades and the Palestinian Islamist Jihad in the Occupied Territories and its close neighbours. .⁴¹⁷ Numerous leaders of terrorist groups and

⁴¹¹ (Strindberg & Wörn, 2005, p. 26)

⁴¹² (Bergessi, 2008); (Huntington, 1996)

⁴¹³ (Beck C. J., 2009, p. 339)

⁴¹⁴ (Strindberg & Wörn, 2005, p. 31)

⁴¹⁵ (Beck U. , 2010, p. 43)

⁴¹⁶ (Beck C. J., 2009, p. 339)

⁴¹⁷ (Wilner, 2010, p. 308)

organisation have been killed through targeted attacks. But not only high ranked key figures have been assassinated. Among those targeted have been operators, facilitators, bomb makers, recruiters, commanders, and other mid-level organisers as well.⁴¹⁸ Besides the tactical or strategic significance in counterterrorism campaigns, targeted killings could well be questioned for their legality or morality.

There is hardly no doubt that targeted killings diminishes an organisations motivation to carry on coordinating campaigns of violence.⁴¹⁹ However, is it morally just to pick out a specific individual and end his life, even if he is a terrorist? Is targeted killing simply a political correct term for assassination? In fact, there is somewhat of a distinction between targeted killings and assassination. The former mean the intentional slaying of an individual terrorist subject undertaken with explicit governmental approval.

*"They involve the use of lethal force, are designed to target specifically identified individuals, are carried out with the deliberate aim to kill the individual in question, are used against individuals not in the physical custody of the targeting actor, and are carried out by states."*⁴²⁰

The latter has a pejorative connotation of murder and treachery and is often associated with politically motivated murders of state representatives⁴²¹, which falls under the 1974 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against International Protracted Persons, including Diplomatic Agents. This Convention bans attacks on states representatives and officials, arguing that this would create a serious threat to the maintenance of normal international relations. The idea is that even states at war retain the diplomatic abilities to negotiate.⁴²²

Still, the distinction is more than cloudy, and the fundamental question more or less remains the same. The legality of targeted killings remains unclear, as they involve the imposition of extrajudicial punishment on non-citizens, although the use of lethal force against an attacking enemy is an internationally recognised legal right, and if one is lawfully engaged in armed hostility, it is not assassination to target individuals who are combatants.⁴²³

Nevertheless, there are as well normative issues, which have to be taken into consideration. For democracies in particular, the question whether the employment of coercive punishment against individuals or not is not at all an academic one.

⁴¹⁸ (Wilner, 2010, p. 308)

⁴¹⁹ (Wilner, 2010, p. 309)

⁴²⁰ (Melzer, 2008)

⁴²¹ (Wilner, 2010, p. 309)

⁴²² (UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against International Protracted Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, 1973)

⁴²³ (Wilner, 2010, p. 311)

*"Those who authorize the hit are prosecutor, judge, and jury - and there is no appeal."*⁴²⁴

Therefore, targeted killings seem to rest outside the terrain of acceptable behaviour of democracies that enshrine civil liberties, due process- and constitutional limitation.⁴²⁵ Especially in Western cultures, the sanctuary of human life is an essential pillar. The fight against terrorism seems in this sense to overturn the democratic nature of the targeting regime. However, as Freedman emphasises:

*"The advantage of stressing the importance of the liberal dimension is that it sets standards for Western governments, against which they should be judged when putting civilians at risk or in their treatment of prisoners. It reinforces the argument that the values at stake must be reflected in the conduct of wars and the struggle against terrorist groups."*⁴²⁶

Although it is undeniable, that the democratic response to terrorism avoid the excesses of repression and violation of human rights that will trigger more terrorism⁴²⁷, evidence show that despite the moral doubts, counter-terrorism tactics like targeted killings are reality.

This suggests that the sanctuary of human life does not completely include terrorist actors and could be seen as a strong evidence for the first hypothesis, according to which terrorists are dehumanised through actual deeds. This De-Humanisation is implicitly executed through the objectification of the concrete individual to an abstract enemy image, which poses a surpassing threat to the Western society. Through labelling terrorists as combatants, though irregular combatants, military forces and the respective governments switch to a military connotation of the terrorist and thereby justify the killing of the individual.

This is especially problematic, as irregular combatants are not granted the status of regular fighters, when they are hold in custody or sued at regular courts, if they are sued at all, as the examples of Guantanamo Bay or the administrative detention practice in Israel tragically demonstrate.

Moreover, the use of torture, coercive interrogations, and indefinite detention underscores the mentioned moral hazards, as they, one the one hand poisoned the Muslim World with a virulent form of Anti-Americanism, and on the other hand, undermined the moral legitimacy of the West to call for civil rights in Islamic countries.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁴ (Dershowitz, 2002, p. 120)

⁴²⁵ (Wilner, 2010, p. 311)

⁴²⁶ (Freedman, 2005, p. 107)

⁴²⁷ (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 71)

⁴²⁸ (Donohue, 2008, p. 120)

*"Whether there were one, two, ten, or a hundred such incidents, the cumulative effect of the treatment given those in detention polarized world opinion and hurt the ability of the United States to fight terrorism."*⁴²⁹

Throughout the paper at hand, the author tried to deliver evidence for the first hypothesis, which questioned the construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor and the resulting processes of De-Humanisation and De-Individualisation. This construction is mainly indicated through disputing the terrorists' *rationality*, the *dichotomy of the good West and the evil non-West* and the *curtailing of his civil rights*. The narrative of the irrational, illegitimate fighter is probably best encapsulated by the following statement:

*"... the new enemy is fanatical."*⁴³⁰

The often-used term *fanatical* strongly indicates the lack of rationality, the terrorists' essentially evil character and denies the ability of conscious reasoning and decision-making. Especially the remarks in the chapter "The Rationality of the Terrorist", strongly suggest that approaches, which argue that Islamist terrorists are mentally ill, irrational actors should be ruled out in media-, political-, as well as in scientific contributions. Especially as this narrative De-Individualisation moreover results in a factual De-Humanisation, which is manifested in counterterrorism means like the before discussed targeted killings. In the last preceding paragraphs, the author tried to highlight the consequences, as well as the moral hazards, which are evident if the values at stake aren't applied on the means, which are actually meant to defend them.

In sum, there is strong evidence for the assumption that *first*, the construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor is still pervasive, although more and more recent scientific contributions strongly argue at least against the attributed irrationality of terrorism on the tactical, as well as on the strategic level. *Second*, the consequences of this construction, namely the De-Humanisation and De-Individualisation, at least at the factual level, are more than evident, as shown in the previous paragraphs of this chapter.

As long as this perception stays in the minds of decision makers, a sustainable approach of countering terrorism will further have a hard furrow to plough.

⁴²⁹ (Donohue, 2008, p. 120)

⁴³⁰ George W. Bush quoted in (Abrahms, 2005, p. 542)

(H2) CONTEXTS

The second hypothesis argued that the previously described construction of the terrorist causes a blind spot on psychological, socio economic, ethnic, cultural, religious and regional contexts of terrorism. It appears to be evident that as long as the dominating construction of the terrorist remains to be the one of an uneducated, mentally disturbed non-individual, there is no need for examining the terrorists' context for root causes of terrorism. Although it has been questioned whether root causes can be simply used to forecast terrorism, they nevertheless play a significant, though not always stringent role in the emerge of terroristic violence.

However, once the step is made to regard the terrorist as a social human being just as every other individual, far more differentiated analysis of the presuppositions of terrorism can be taken into account. A special role belongs to the social framework conditions and peer groups, as these are important contexts of the radicalisation process. Moreover, it appears crucial to consider the historically grown and socialised cultural action patterns and norms concerning the use of violence as a legitimate instrument of resistance, in order to understand the genealogy of terrorism.

More surprisingly is the disputed role of religion, economic conditions or the educational level as root causes of terror. While religion seems to be just as appropriate as any other ideology to develop extreme spin-offs and is moreover widely misused to legitimise originally political goals, economic conditions and the educational level seem to have, if any, a positive correlation with the emerge of terrorism as well on the micro- as on the macro-level. This observation strongly suggests the introduced concept of the terrorist as a *political activist*, especially as political circumstances like, state repression, party structure and the development of state institutions seem to be significant indicators of terrorism.

(H3) ALTERNATIVES

The third hypothesis targets the thinking barrier, which is caused by the dominant construction of the illegitimate actor. Although strongly tied to the first and second hypothesis, it goes a step forward and opens a pathway to a new interpretation of the phenomenon of terrorism.

As we heard before, popular ascriptions of terrorists often include the concepts *uncivilised*, *religious fundamentalist*, *uneducated*, *fanatic* and *mentally disturbed*. According to the numerous contributions introduced in the paper at hand, these characteristic could well be discarded.

What remains are the ascriptions *enemy image*, *threat* and *foreign*. This is highly significant as these ascriptions highlight the *modern* structure of the discourse about the terrorist, which is characterised through the dichotomy of Good and Evil, discussed earlier in this paper. Even among those cited authors, who suggest the existence of an intrinsic rationality within

the terrorists' decision-, action- and radicalisation processes and thus invalidate the conception of De-Individualisation and De-Humanisation, a vast majority still perceives Islamist terrorism as a *foreign threat* to the Western society; a threat, which is localised outside the Western value system, as it uses means like suicide attacks against noncombatants, which are illegitimate according to Western values and codes of conducts. Thus, the terrorist still remains an illegitimate actor, but not because of the lack of rationality, but because of the lack of *morality* in the terrorists' actions.

Disputing an actors' rationality actually seems to cover the underlying assumption of the amorality of his actions. Once the step is made to proof the rationality of terror attacks, the popular discourses' intention to deny the morality of terror becomes visible. Obviously, it is the Western idea of morality, against which the terrorists' morality is pitted. Postmodern argumentation strongly suggests that on the one hand, the claim of the one and only morality has become obsolete and that there coexist different morality systems, and on the other hand, that an implicit distinction between the values of these systems along a hierarchical order is highly inadmissible, if not discriminating. Thus, the modern notion that rational behaviour leads to moral behaviour, according to its' Western conception, should be discarded in favour of a pluralism of value systems, not only among different frameworks, but even within the system itself.

Consequently, the exclusion of terrorism from the Western sphere is, in times of a driving globalisation force, highly questionable, in regional just as in narrative terms. The globalisation of the Western hegemonic claim, with all its force, its immanence, manifested in the interconnectedness of the international economy and global finance markets, as well as in the international omnipresence of Western security forces, not only enables, but vociferously arrogates to itself a universal validity of its truth, its rationality, its morality and its values. Thus, terrorism happens not in some far away, underdeveloped regions, but in the very heart of our globalised society, manifested in the 9/11 attacks.

In a discursive perception, terrorism could be understood as the manifestation of the *clash of universalism*⁴³¹ and the *forceful re-entry* of everything that modernity expelled from its' intrinsic narrative of the one truth, the one rationality, the one morality and the one aesthetic, which again situates terror at the very heart of the Western culture, though on a symbolic level.

This leads us straight to the fourth hypothesis of this endeavour to draw a new image of the terrorist.

⁴³¹ (Beck U. , 2010, p. 164ff)

(H4) DECONSTRUCTION

The fourth hypothesis aims to deconstruct the ascribed image of the terrorist through the implementation of postmodern concepts. As discussed earlier, postmodernism is more or less characterised by a *pluralism* of value systems, the *equal value* of diametrical opposing *Modi Vivendi*, the *multi dimensionality* of social processes, by the appreciation of *difference* and *heterogeneity* as positive feature of society, by the *end of meta-narratives* and the great stories, and the *pluralisation* of the modern key concepts, *truth*, *rationality* and *aesthetic*.

Contrary to modernity, which excludes, even denies the structural Other from its narrative, although this Other is, as we heard, inextricably interconnected with its' good, beautiful, just and moral counterparts, postmodernity is constituted through the re-entry of exactly this expelled Other. Terrorism, in this reasoning, is the violent manifestation of this re-entry of the inconceivable, unimaginable Other, which was granted no space, no right to exist and no mouthpiece in modernity.

Therefore, the Western society is structurally unable to conquer global terrorism, as it still operates in the mindset of modernity, which is *reality*, while terrorism operates in the postmodern *symbolic sphere*.

This symbolic sphere is *first* represented by the virtual character of terroristic events, which get their meaning mainly through electronic medias' footage, *second* by the fact that the main targets of terror attacks are symbols of the Western identity, and *third* by the irrevocable and unanswerable stake that perpetrators of terrorism put into play: their own death. Modernity includes no instruments to respond to this definitiveness of suicide attacks, which thus are promoted to divine sacrifices for their cause.

Postmodern argumentation further suggest that the reason for this forceful re-entry of the expelled, the diminished, lies in the hegemonic force of globalisation. While the globalisation of economy is accelerating, the universality of Western values is eroded, as it can't keep pace with the former. Moreover, fighting the perceived enemy of the West with means, which violate its very core values further undermine their universal claim.

Finally, terrorism in a postmodern view could be understood as:

*"A strategy of turning around and overturning power, not in the name of a moral or religious confrontation, nor some clash of civilizations, but as a result of the pure and simple unacceptability of that global power."*⁴³²

This notion refers to the fact that every hegemon contains its respective subaltern moment within itself; and the more powerful, the more influential, the more universal the hegemonic power gets, the more likely it gets that the subaltern will try to destroy the hegemonic force. Even if that would mean the obliteration of both.

⁴³² (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 73)

CONCLUSIONS & PROSPECT

The initial research question was *"Which postmodern alternative(s) could be opposed to the construction of the terrorist as an illegitimate actor?"*

Unfortunately, this short, on the first glimpse quite simple and definite question opened a wide field of scientific approaches from numerous disciplines. To find a possible answer to this little question, we had to examine two fundamental phenomena, which were postmodernism and terrorism. In doing so, the author broached several academic disciplines, starting with terrorism and security studies including terrorisms' history, going further to social sciences dealing with the individual, group and society level, afterwards touching oriental studies, linguistic sciences and finally even philosophy. The reader may condone the one or another academic excess, as they deliver evidence for the complexity of the discussed topic. Furthermore is the author well aware of the criticisable aspects of this endeavour.

First is the coverage of such a broad field of scientific contributions and concepts always vulnerable of lacking key considerations, which could be crucial for the topic. Nevertheless is there a glimmer of hope on the authors' part that the argumentation is at least within itself more or less consistent and comprehensible, although the educated reader will definitively stumble over several superficialities in the theoretical remarks.

Second, one of the key concepts, which gave the initial spark to this thesis, is the terrorists' conception as an illegitimate actor. The author is well aware of the widely lack of explicit proof of this conception through empirical or theoretical contributions. Nevertheless, during the preparation of the utilised literature, the author came to the impression, that this conception, strongly indicated through the concept rationality, is generally accepted and widely recited, whether implicitly or explicitly, and could therefore be seen as scientific common sense. A qualitative analysis of media footage or policy makers' statements would have doubtless been an essential contribution to underline the normative force of this conception. However, as the authors' resources were admittedly limited and the focus was to deconstruct this conception, rather than to proof it, the author suppliantly refers to the outstanding efforts, which already have taken place in this field.

Third, the remarks on Islam and Jihad are indubitably very short-handed, as the author has hardly no scientific background in oriental studies. Hence, and as it appeared to be crucial for the topic to include this discourse, the delivered argumentations are strongly based on the cited authors. Nevertheless should the remarks be sufficient to underline the main argumentation of the paper at hand.

Finally the author considered in the first place to organise this paper along the different layers of observation, which are the tactical-, strategic- and the global structure level of terrorism and the individual-, group- and social level as well as the global structure level of the terrorist, but dismissed this idea in favour of the current more narrative structure, which is supposed to be more appropriate. The author explicitly apologises for the resulting switches between the different observation levels.

After this short retrospective evaluation, we shall, for the last time, go back to the research question, as despite of several hints and reprimands throughout the paper, a final and structured answer is still pending.

THE POSTMODERN ISLAMIST TERRORIST

The original idea, formulated in the research question, was to contrapose the dominating perception of the mentally ill Islamist terrorist with an alternative postmodern construction. The first step towards this goal was to examine terrorism on its tactical and strategic level, especially towards its rationality. During this examination, it turned out that the rationality inherent in terrorism seems to be widely accepted, at least in the cited literature, which opened the door for the argumentation that the perpetrators of terrorism are rational actors as well. Again, this assumption proofed to be true according to recent scientific contributions in this field. In addition, a discussion of root causes of terrorism, as well as of the social, cultural, religious, political and economic embeddedness of perpetrators of terrorism delivered significant hints to understand the complex radicalisation process and the individuals' motivations to turn to violent action.

A first summary of these findings was delivered in the chapter "A Snapshot of the Terrorist". This résumé seems to be even under a postmodern perception very accurate, as it described several inconsistencies, breaches and recommences, which as well characterise the postmodern, decentralised subject that is steadily forced to re-invent itself due to the lack of narrative certainties. The orientation on extremist religious ideologies could be understood as the attempt to regain a consistent system of values and norms, at least within a distinguishable community and lifeworld, which consequently serves as a source for an integrated identity in a world, increasingly characterised by the ambivalences of Western hegemony and globalisation.

Although the rationality of Islamist terrorists is widely accepted in the scientific community, factual De-Individualisations and De-Legitimisations are still part of the popular discourse on these actors. This strongly suggests that the denial of their rationality actually targets the morality of their actions and not their instrumental purpose, which is measured in relation to the Western idea of morality, thus excluding the death of civilians or self-sacrifices as legitimate action patterns.

This is the point, where postmodernism could contribute a significant step forward, as it radically questions the idea of the universalism of morality, values, and Western rationality. On the individual and group level, this would mean that perpetrators of terrorism are not only profoundly rational actors, but are moreover acting according to an intrinsic moral imperative. May this imperative be religious or secular, postmodernism strongly suggests, that this morality must be understood as of the same value as the Western concept of morality, which finally falsifies the construction of the illegitimate actor and further underscores the concept of the terrorist being a political activist.

Moreover, the idea that perpetrators of terrorism symbolise a foreign threat to the West is insofar wrong, as they represent and fight for exactly those values, rationalities, norms and lifestyles, which the modernity expelled from the Western sphere. In promoting its universal values through the inexorable process of globalisation, in demarcating the line between Good and Evil, the Western hegemonic force in fact initially produced the expelled Other that it now demonises.

Thus, on a global structure level, a postmodern perspective would suggest that terrorism is the violent consequence of modernity's compulsion to impose Western values, norms, rationality and morality over each and everybody, distributed through globalisation, regardless of cultural, historical or ethnic particularities, and the consequential denial of alternative *Modi Vivendi*.

The Islamist Terrorist in this perception becomes the agent of the forceful re-entry of the suppressed and denied structural Other, fighting on the symbolic level as the ultimate reflection of a modernity, which reached the peak of its expansion and consequently inverts itself in the implosion of postmodernism.

Perpetrators of terrorism are therefore rational individuals, acting according to a distinctive moral code and mirroring all those attributes, the Western hegemony first constructed and afterwards desperately tried to expel from its entity, which locates these actors in the very heart of the Western system.

This conclusion is indeed upsetting, and its consequences are even worse. But as long as this conflict between Western hegemony and Islamist terrorists focuses on the *one* truth and on the supremacy of one over the other, instead of understanding, that the both are the two sides of the same coin, the death toll will constantly spiral upwards.

Instead, a postmodern approach would suggest that the acceptance of the pluralism of values could lead to the willingness to recognise the otherness of the others and to mutual tolerance.⁴³³

⁴³³ (Beck U. , 2010, p. 174)

*"We should try to get beyond the moral imperative of unconditional respect for human life, and conceive that one might respect, both in the other and in oneself, something other than, and more than life: a destiny, a cause, a form of pride or of sacrifice."*⁴³⁴

And once tolerance could be transformed into solidarity, the postmodern ceasefire might probably even lead to peace.

⁴³⁴ (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 68)

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ABSTRACT (GERMAN)

Spätestens seit 9/11 und den damit verbundenen Schrecken wurde islamisch motivierter Terrorismus zu einem globalen Sicherheitsthema, welches nicht nur umfangreiche mediale Präsenz erlangte, sondern auch eine breite akademische Bearbeitung erfuhr. Die konkreten nationalen und internationalen Maßnahmen, mit welchen dem internationalen Terror begegnet wird, sind jedoch im Hinblick auf ihre Effektivität und Adäquanz durchaus kritisch zu betrachten.

Abgesehen von fragwürdigen Militäreinsätzen, Lockerungen im Datenschutz und umfangreichen Beschneidungen der Bürger- und Menschenrechte hat ein Element des Diskurses das besondere Interesse des Autors erlangt: Die Konstruktion des Terroristen als Nicht-legitimer Akteur. Mit dieser Konstruktion sind zahlreiche Konsequenzen verbunden, welche vielleicht auf den ersten Blick nicht sofort ersichtlich sind. Die weitreichendste darunter ist wohl die De-Individualisierung oder die De-Humanisierung des Terroristen. Durch diesen Prozess wird dem Terroristen seine Menschlichkeit abgesprochen, wodurch ein ultimatives Feindbild für den Krieg gegen den Terror geschaffen wurde. Diese Konstruktion bewirkt, dass gewisse Terrorbekämpfungs- und Präventionsmaßnahmen bevorzugt werden, während andere aus dem Kreis der Handlungsoportunitäten vollkommen ausgeschlossen sind. Vor allem kreierte diese Herangehensweise jedoch einen blinden Fleck in der Wahrnehmung des Terroristen, welcher sozio-ökonomische, ethnische, kulturelle und regionale Kontexte nahezu vollständig in Dunkelheit hüllt und damit ein Verständnis für die komplexe Lebenswelt dieses ambivalenten Akteurs verunmöglicht.

Durch die Anwendung postmoderner Konzepte soll das mit Stereotypen behaftete Bild des Terroristen dekonstruiert und neu geformt werden, um diesen in Beziehung zu der heutigen globalisierten Gesellschaft zu setzen und zu zeigen, dass es durchaus Alternativen zu den aktuell vorherrschenden Assoziationen, Zuschreibungen und Handlungsmöglichkeiten gibt.

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Master of Arts in political science;

Emphasis in international affairs, political theory & terrorism

Bachelor in sociology;

Emphasis in media, communication & cultural studies;

Basic studies in economy.

Vienna, Wednesday, January 18, 2012

STUDIES

Since September 2009	Studies in Political Sciences at the University of Vienna; emphasis in international relationships, political theory and terrorism Graduation: MA
March 2007 – July 2008	Study exchange in Bale with the Erasmus – exchange program Studies in Media Sciences at the Institute for Media sciences; University of Bale
October 2005 – June 2009	Studies in Sociology at the University of Vienna and the University of Bale Graduation: Bakk. phil.
October 2003 – July 2005	Studies in socio-economics at the Vienna University of Business and Economics

School

September 2002 – March 2004	School leaving examination at the AHS Hegelgasse 1010 Vienna
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Occupations

September 2010 – February 2011	Internship at the Austrian Institute for Foreign Affairs (oiip) <u>Responsibilities:</u> Assistance of Prof. Höll Drafting of reports and summaries Contribution to oiip's campaign Assistance with event organization Enquiry of relevant literature Maintenance of the homepage Assistance with journey organisation Library attendance Support of the administrative staff
July/August 2009	Volunteer for the Alternative Information Center (AIC) in Beit Sahour, Palestine <u>Responsibilities:</u> Participant at a fact finding tour through Israel and the Occupied Territories, After that, journalist for the AIC

Since August 2008	Employee at the Sportstätten Köö GesmbH <u>Responsibilities:</u> Bar chef at the branch 1st district Vienna: personnel management, correspondence with event-managers, sponsors & promoters. Organization and presentation of an intern study to estimate the overall guest-structure of five branches. Head of the research team, which consisted of eight graduated researchers with a background in the field of social sciences
March 2008 – May 2008	Internship at the NFS sesam at the University of Bale <u>Responsibilities:</u> Evaluation and translation (E, F) of the scientific instruments, correspondence with authors and publishers, teleformatting, database-management
September 2007 – August 2008	Scientific Assistant at the Institute of Media Sciences, University of Bale <u>Responsibilities:</u> Tutor for Media Sociology and Communication Sciences

SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

June 2010	Participant at the 27. summer-academy of the Austrian Study Center For Peace And Conflict Resolution (ASPR) »Vergessene Kriege« zwischen Schatten und Licht oder das Duell im Morgengrauen um Ökonomie, Medien und Politik
February – Mai 2010	Seminars in rhetoric, body language and team leadership & motivation at the Bildungsforum Wien

PUBLICATIONS

Journalistic Articles:

Another Day Sleeping Under the Sky: The Situation in Sheikh Jarrah

(www.alternativenews.info; & University Press Canada; 06 August 2009)

Friday Demonstration in Bil'in Was Attacked With Tear Gas and "Chara"

(www.alternativenews.info; 17th August 2009)

Interview with Dr. Uri Davis, newly elected member of Fatah Revolutionary Council

(www.alternativenews.info; 26th August 2009)

Books:

Raab, Willenegger, Brunazzi: Bravo Gala! – Partyportale im Horizont von internationalem Starkult.

In Neumann-Braun, Klaus (Hrsg.) & Astheimer, Jörg: Doku-Glamour im Web 2.0. Party-Portale und ihre Bilderwelten. Nomos. Baden – Baden. 2010.

Conference Reports:

Revealing al-Qa'ida - Indoctrination Appeal by Pictures
Statement given by Nico Prucha at the Conference
„Studying Jihadism“

4 February, 2011

http://www.oiiip.ac.at/fileadmin/Unterlagen/Dateien/Summaries/PPT/Aspects_of_pictures_from_the_online_sphere.pdf

Concepts of Comprehensive Security

Statement given by Otmar Höll (oiiip) at the Conference
„Studying Jihadism“

4 February, 2011

http://www.oiiip.ac.at/fileadmin/Unterlagen/Dateien/Summaries/Concepts_of_Comprehensive_Security.pdf

Nuklearwaffenfreie Zone Nahost? Workshop über die Möglichkeiten sicherheitspolitischer Friedensziele im Nahen und Mittleren Osten. 29.11.2010

http://www.oiiip.ac.at/fileadmin/Unterlagen/Dateien/Summaries/Summary_NAHOST.pdf

Lateinamerika im globalen Machtgefüge - Zur geopolitischen Bedeutung des latein-amerikanischen Kontinents. 15.11.2010

http://www.oiiip.ac.at/fileadmin/Unterlagen/Dateien/Summaries/Summary_Geopolitik_Lateinamerika.pdf

Europas Energiesicherheit und die Rolle der Türkei als Energiebrücke.

Eine Diskussionsveranstaltung über die Außen- und Energiepolitik der Türkei und deren Auswirkungen auf Europas und Österreichs Energiesicherheit. 27.09.2010

http://www.oiiip.ac.at/fileadmin/Unterlagen/Dateien/Summaries/Zusammenfassung_tuerkei.pdf

