THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RADICALIZATION AND TERRORISM

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The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism

This important book presents an overview of the processes involved in radicalization and terrorism, and introduces a systematic framework which captures the most crucial individual and social factors involved in determining these processes.

The authors begin by considering the role played by prejudice, economic deprivation, and discrimination, and the cognitive responses and emotions they can trigger. These responses tend to emphasize the importance of group membership, and promote intergroup differentiation and polarization, a process which is often accompanied by more pronounced and more extreme religious and ideological beliefs. The book also explores the role of cultural values and social climate in processes of radicalization, as well as personality and demographic factors like age and marital status.

As for violent terrorist action itself, this final most radical stage is elicited by a number of group factors such as groupthink, isolation, and leadership. Certain cognitive mechanisms – for example, dehumanizing the target and deflecting responsibility – can also provide excuses for violence. The book examines why some groups turn to violence and others don't, and it addresses processes of disengagement, deradicalization programs, and other methods used to inhibit the spread of radicalization and terrorism.

The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism takes a unique and systematic approach to a vital topic, integrating knowledge from diverse literatures, and using social psychology as a basis for comprehending human behaviour. It will be essential reading for students and researchers from all disciplines in search of a deeper understanding of terrorism and violent political conflict in all its forms.

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Willem Koomen and Joop van der Pligt

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Foreword

This book was almost completed when my co-author Joop van der Pligt suddenly died due to heart failure. For 28 years we were colleagues in the Department of Social Psychology of the University of Amsterdam, headed by Joop. Since my age-related formal departure from the Department, we have worked together on a number of publications. I lost my co-author, but most of all a friend. I owe him a lot and will remember him with much respect and affection.

This book presents a systematic framework in which the main determinants and backgrounds of different types of radicalization and terrorism are included. The book is based on our Dutch publication concerning the same themes, which was an outgrowth of an assignment of the Dutch Ministry of Justice. The English version has become more extensive, containing two additional chapters. We also included more recent literature (the Dutch version dates from 2011). Because that version focused on the Dutch situation and contained many Dutch illustrations, we restructured the national character of the book, deleting many of the Dutch illustrations and giving the book a more international quality.

We would like to thank Routledge for the trust shown in our work and, more specifically, its editors Michael Strang and Libby Volke for helping and supporting us in a very pleasant way. We also owe thanks to Maite François, Sarah Welling and particularly Paul Andrews, from UvA Talen, the language centre of the University of Amsterdam, for their translation of almost the whole Dutch book, which provided us with a basis to build the English version on. Finally, we are extremely grateful to Karin Couvret for her flexible accommodation of the different versions of the manuscript, her many searches for various information, her help in other ways and her comfort and support.

Willem Koomen, 2015

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1 Introduction

Terrorism is an age-old problem and takes many forms. In Western Europe in the first years of the twenty-first century, for example, the terrorist threat has come primarily from fundamentalist Islamist, or, as they are also called, Islamic fundamentalist groups. We have also seen destruction and violence perpetrated by right-wing extremists. Naturally, such activities need to be countered. And for the response to be effective, it is essential that we understand terrorism and the associated processes of radicalization. This book is an attempt to add to the body of knowledge in that field.

The long history of terrorism has been documented for at least 2000 years. One of the first reliably reported cases dates from the first century BCE, when Jewish attackers used daggers to kill their victims in broad daylight in the heart of Jerusalem, in an effort to spark an uprising against Roman rule (Cronin, 2002/2003). Today we would call that an example of nationalist/separatist terrorism, in accordance with a widely used typology that divides the phenomenon into four categories: (1) left-wing (or social revolutionary), (2) right-wing, (3) nationalist/separatist, and (4) religious (Cronin, 2002/2003; Post, 2005). Post also identifies a fifth type, single-issue terrorism. An example of this type is a radical group that carries out attacks in the name of animal rights (Carson, LaFree & Dugan, 2012). There are undoubtedly hybrid forms as well.

Well known European examples of left-wing terror groups include the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF) in Germany and the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse) in Italy, both most active in the 1970s. The RAF, also known as the Baader-Meinhof Group after its two most prominent members, carried out 'acts of resistance' against the capitalist West German state, including bank robberies and a number of assassinations of bankers, industrialists and judges. (See Chapter 7 for more information.) Inspired by a similar ideology, the Red Brigades was even more violent: in the first ten years after it was formed in 1970, the group committed some 14,000 acts of terrorism (see Shugart, 2006). This first period culminated in the kidnapping of the Italian prime minister Aldo Moro. They ambushed his car, killing his chauffeur and five policemen. When their terms for exchanging Mr. Moro

for ransom and the release of 16 brigade members were not met, the Red Brigade leader Mario Moretti allegedly shot Aldo Moro 11 times, killing him in the backseat of a car (Sundquist, 2010). As for right-wing terrorism, one notable example is the French Secret Armed Organisation (Organisation Armée Secrète, OAS). Active between 1954 and 1962, it regarded the proposed decolonization of Algeria as a violation of the integrity of the French nation. In its armed struggle, the OAS carried out numerous attacks on representatives of both the French state and the Algerian independence movement, claiming a high number of victims.

That movement, the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN), brings us to nationalist/separatist terrorism, carried out with the aim of achieving independence or greater autonomy for a particular region or population. The FLN at first avoided killing people, instead targeting buildings it regarded as symbols of colonial oppression. But because that campaign made little impact, its attacks steadily increased in brutality to the point where they were causing deaths on a massive scale. After years of guerrilla warfare, Algeria finally gained its independence in 1962 (Shugart, 2006). Other well known organizations in this part of the spectrum include the Basque separatist movement ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Homeland and Freedom) and the Irish Republican Army (Provisional IRA). The former was founded in 1959, committed to the establishment of an independent and socialist Basque state. Between 1968 and 2003, ETA killed more than 300 civilians and more than 400 police officers and soldiers. The IRA sought a united Ireland without links to the United Kingdom and carried out many acts of violence in pursuit of that goal, but in 2005 it called upon its members to end their armed struggle. (See Chapter 8 for more on both groups.)

For an example of religious terrorism, we can look further afield to India, where Hindu extremists (Hindus form the great majority of the population) have targeted Muslims and their mosques and Christians and their churches. But by far the most obvious case, of course, is Islamist terrorism, which reached its nadir – for the time being – with the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., on 11 September 2001. To its supporters, naturally, that was a high point, and they prefer to talk of a 'holy war' or a 'liberation struggle' rather than terrorism. Box 1.1 illustrates the value-laden character of the terrorism concept.

In this book, we pay considerable attention to religious radicalization and terrorism, in particular their 'Islamic' manifestations, but we also discuss right-wing radicalization and terrorism. This is because these are currently the forms giving greatest cause for concern in the Western world. Left-wing, or social revolutionary, radicalism and terrorism are also covered since they help us to understand whether the different categories can be traced back to similar roots. Nationalist/separatist movements are featured only in passing.

Box 1.1 The Suffragettes, a terrorist organization

At the end of the nineteenth century, a movement for women to have the vote arose in England. Progress in obtaining this goal was, however, very slow; most men in Parliament believed that women could not understand Parliament's methods and therefore should not have the right to vote. Due to the slow progress, militancy grew and a different movement that was more prepared to use violence, later known as the Suffragettes, was founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters. That violence started in 1905 when two members of the Suffragettes disturbed a political meeting, which resulted in their arrest and, because they refused to pay a fine, in their imprisonment. More and more extreme violence arose. The Suffragettes burned down churches because the Church of England opposed granting the right to vote to women; they broke windows in Oxford Street, vandalized golf courses, attacked politicians and firebombed their homes. Many Suffragettes went to prison, where they refused to eat. The government responded with the Cat and Mouse Act, which allowed the Suffragettes to go on hunger strikes and let them get increasingly weaker. When they were sufficiently weak, they were released from prison, but they were then too weak to take part in violent actions. Unsurprisingly, the Suffragettes became more extreme, for example, by blowing up part of the house of David Lloyd George – probably Britain's most famous politician at that time. The Great War, however, ended the violence of the Suffragettes and brought support for the government and its war effort. In 1918, the Representation of the People Act, the start of female suffrage in Great Britain, was passed by Parliament.

This description of the Suffragettes clearly fits what we regard as a terrorist organization. That some may feel reluctant to agree illustrates the value-laden character of the concept of terrorism. Terrorists often are called freedom fighters by people who share their cause.

Source: See The Suffragettes (n.d.).

As the examples already cited make clear, radicalization, terrorism and political violence are not merely facets of one simple, straightforward phenomenon. In fact, they have to be subdivided into many different types, which impedes definition. Plenty of researchers before us have come up against this problem of definition. Smelser (2007), for instance, devotes more than 20 pages of his introductory work to this issue, observing that over a hundred distinctive definitions of the word 'terrorism' appear in the

literature. In this book we choose the definition of the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which is currently the most comprehensive open-source database and includes both domestic and international terrorist attacks. This definition of terrorism is 'the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation' (Carson et al., 2012).

Terrorism does not appear out of nowhere. It is almost always preceded by a process of radicalization – a process that, because of its potentially violent outcome, has attracted a lot of academic attention. While it does not necessarily lead to terrorism, this is a phase in which much can be done to pre-empt that possibility and so is one we address at length. The present book thus pays considerable attention to the stages before individuals or groups decide to opt for illegal force and violence. Polarization of inter-group relations and radicalization will thus be addressed at length. In this context, what we mean by radicalization is the development of a belief in opinions, views and ideas that might well result in a person committing acts of terror (see also TTSRL, 2008). Each of the different forms of terror-ism identified earlier has a concomitant form of radicalism. In other words, we can distinguish among left-wing (or social revolutionary), right-wing, nationalist/separatist and religious radicalism.

To properly understand modern-day terrorism, it is helpful to have some impression of the extent and seriousness of the problem. Ben-Zur & Zeidner (2009) report that a total of 19,828 acts of terrorism and political violence were committed throughout the world between 1968 and 2004, resulting in 25,408 deaths and 61,160 injuries. Cronin (2002/2003) adds that, although the number of attacks actually fell during the 1990s, the average number of fatalities per incident increased. To give an example, 1991 saw 102 deaths in 565 acts of terrorism, whereas a total of 741 people were killed in 274 attacks in 1998. Another illustration of the scope of terrorism was presented by Kaplan (2012), who identified jihadi terror plots in the U.S. from terrorism-related indictments that occurred between 2001 and 2011. Kaplan also identified the successful attacks. Using a number of analyti-cal procedures, Kaplan estimated among others mean plot durations. His estimates suggested that, on average, there have been approximately three active jihadi plots in the U.S. at any point since 11 September 2001.

Moreover, the effects can extend far beyond the scene of the incident. People suffer indirectly, through the impact upon others, and can even be traumatized by the media coverage. In the U.S., Dougall, Hayward & Baum (2005) investigated the psychological effects of exposure to media reports about a series of attacks using letters containing anthrax spores. They found that participants who followed the coverage closely from the beginning suf-fered greater distress, were more likely to harbour thoughts on the subject that they were unable to dispel and displayed stronger avoidance responses.

The stress triggered by such events can also result in more unhealthy behaviour and an increased disregard of certain risks. Research into the aftermath of the September 11 attacks (Ben-Zur & Zeidner, 2009) discovered that residents of New York were smoking and drinking more and that alcohol-related problems had increased. Closer involvement, precipitated by the loss of a relative or friend, provoked even stronger reactions, such as serious alcohol abuse. Ben-Zur and Zeidner also mention research in Israel, which revealed a sharp increase in the incidence of fatal road traffic accidents in the wake of terrorist attacks. Morgan, Wisneski & Skitka (2011) reviewed a number of other implications of 9/11, focusing particularly on the social psychological effects. Americans appeared to respond to the attacks with more political intolerance, prejudice and discrimination and with hate crimes directed towards targets that were associated with the attackers. Interestingly, there were also more positive reactions, such as experiencing increased closeness with others, greater intentions to do nice things for friends and family, donating blood, increasing contributions of time and money to charity and flying the American flag. These positive reactions were, however, more fleeting than the negative ones (see also American Psychologist, 2011; Woods, 2011).

The Madrid bombings of 2004 and the London bombings of 2005 not only increased political intolerance and prejudice (see e.g. Echebarria-Echabe & Fernández-Guede, 2006); they also changed the tides of security policy and society's view on terrorism. Interestingly, after the bomb attacks in London in 2005, it was found that British Muslims were more upset than adherents of other faiths (Spilerman & Stecklov, 2009); doubtless, the fear of a backlash against their own community – the perpetrators were Muslims – played an important part in this response. More generally, this same study revealed that fear and concern following the attacks were more prevalent amongst people with no previous exposure to terrorism than those with past experience of it.

In discussing such responses, Spilerman and Stecklov (2009) draw a clear distinction between the chronic type of terrorism that affected Northern Ireland and still exists in Israel and the more incidental form of terrorism that has affected the U.S. and Western Europe. The less extreme sense of fear felt by people with experience of terrorism suggests that they become habituated to it. On the other side of the coin, those subject to chronic terrorism live under constant threat and so try to adapt to the risks. Behaviour that can appear rather pathological in the case of incidental terrorism, such as extreme vigilance and the avoidance of certain places and situations, is logical and sensible in the context of chronic terrorism. According to Spilerman and Stecklov, this results in a kind of new normality in which people are always on their guard and more or less permanently undergoing stress reactions.

The consequences of terrorism are serious, then, but they are not the main focus of this book. We are interested primarily in explanations and theories concerning the causes of radicalism and terrorism. Due in part to the complexity of the issue, however, convincing and comprehensive theories in this field are very thin on the ground (e.g. Bouhana & Wikström, 2008; Silke, 2008; Taylor & Horgan, 2006) Another reason is the difficulty in obtaining reliable and useful data; obviously, a lot of relevant people are hard to reach. Moreover, if they are reached, they are not likely to be keen on participating in research on this issue and may be reluctant to disclose information. Any study of terrorism is further complicated by the forest of possible definitions and the minefield of demarcation problems. For the most part, moreover, terrorist groups are far from homogeneous; in many cases, they are hierarchical in structure, usually with a variety of different individual roles (Victoroff, 2005). They require inspiring leaders but also people capable of compiling a suitable political policy and of devising and preparing attacks and still others to supply the necessary materiel. And then there are the recruiters, who find attackers and persuade them to plant bombs or to carry out suicide missions. This variety of roles makes lumping all 'terrorists' together under one heading an oversimplification. In many cases, the leaders probably come from a different background than the followers, but it is asking a lot to take all the nuances into account when conducting analyses for academic purposes.

The lack of empirical research into how individuals and groups radicalize, and especially into the processes leading them into terrorism, has left the field wide open for theoretical approaches. Unhindered by the constraints of empiricism, any number of approaches and theses have been constructed. But that makes few of them very persuasive. In compiling this book, we too have had to face up to this lack of convincing, comprehensive theories. So the picture we sketch of radicalization and terrorism, as well as their nature and their background, is built upon foundations that are not as firm as we might wish.

What distinguishes this volume from other works on the subject is that we try to arrive at a systematic synthesis that incorporates as many as possible of the likely determinants and contextual factors relating to radicalization and terrorism. This means that we have drawn upon research in a variety of fields and also that we explore determinants that have previously received scant attention in the literature, such as the role played by cultural values and emotions. Making use of social scientific and – especially – social psychological know-how, we have also tried as far as possible to specify and to elaborate relationships between relevant variables. Again, the relative prominence we give to emotions is an example of this. In our writing, we have attempted to avoid jargon and to clarify relevant scientific terminology by means of examples. As for the literature consulted, we have found

a solid basis in a number of published surveys discussing the causes and determinants of radicalization and terrorism. We also incorporate a large body of recent research data and, as already mentioned, include insights from more general social scientific and social psychological publications. The topics we cover in this way include stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, culture, social climate, group dynamics and intergroup relationships. This range is hardly surprising, of course, since human behaviour – as manifested in radicalism and terrorism as much as in any other way – has a multitude of determinants. By taking a somewhat broader approach to the behaviour associated with radicalism and terrorism than is usually the case, not only do we encounter a whole range of social psychological phenomena, but we also discuss them in general terms as well as in that specific context. As a result, this book provides an introduction to some important themes in social psychology as well as to radicalization and terrorism specifically.

The determinants and variables we have identified as shaping the path to polarization, radicalization and terrorism are summarized in a framework describing the most relevant determinants and variables associated with radicalization and terrorism, as well as some of their relationships. This framework is presented in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Figure 1.1 presents the main determinants of polarization and radicalization. We assume that groups affected by economic and social deprivation
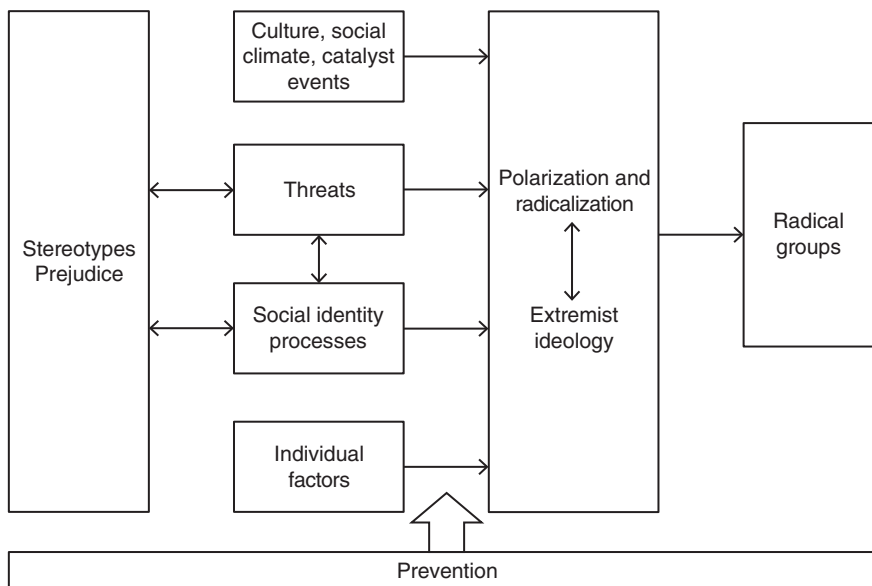
Figure 1.1 Main determinants of polarization and radicalization.
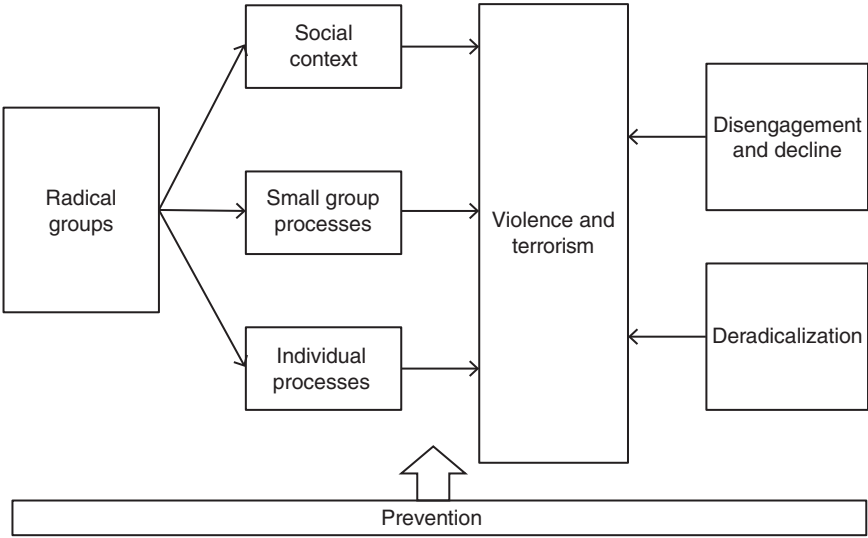
Figure 1.2 From radical groups to violence.

and by discrimination or inequality and that are faced with a government disinterested in their plight perceive these factors as threats. Such a threat can also be symbolic in nature; for example, the group's religion is not taken seriously. Social and cultural factors may influence the perception of these threats, as can individual characteristics such as the personality and demographic profile (e.g. age) of those concerned. The perceived threats engender uncertainty and a sense of injustice, combined with associated emotions such as fear and anger. We often see that threats of this kind lead people to identify more closely with their own group and to distance themselves from the community considered responsible for them. Sometimes this also gives rise to a process of religious and ideological radicalization. Throughout the book we see extremist ideology both as a consequence of polarization and radicalization and as a factor that enhances polarization and radicalization; hence the double arrow. On the right-hand side of Figure 1.1, we end with radical groups. The main factors that determine whether these groups will opt for violence and terrorism are summarized in Figure 1.2. Before the emergence of radical and potential terrorist behaviour, group processes come to the fore – processes within a small group of like-minded individuals who are radicalizing in relative isolation and who eventually decide to adopt extreme solutions. But these do not occur in total social isolation, so in this phase we still encounter facilitating factors on the roads to violence, such as rewards and social support, combined in a social context variable. Finally, at the individual level, we identify processes of justification that help to explain the persistence of the radicalization. Further, transitions to

violent action may be reduced by prevention efforts, and disengagement and de-radicalization may decrease terrorist behaviour.

We end this chapter with a short resumé of the rest of the book. The issues covered in Chapters 2 through 7 are summarized in Figure 1.1. The final three chapters are represented in Figure 1.2. These two figures summarize the main factors and their relationships. The figures do not present a causal model; we also decided not to specify all possible arrows in order to prevent an extremely complex figure as opposed to a relatively simple schematic overview. For instance, interventions with the aim to prevent violence and terrorism could be aimed at the initial stages of polarization described in the first half of the book, but prevention could also be targeted at specific radical groups or individuals. We decided to add prevention as a factor in both figures, and the single arrow links it to some elements of each of the figures, but these will be specified in the text. Let us now return to our brief overview of the remaining chapters.

In Chapter 2, we explore a number of social factors: first stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. These often lead to reduced contact between groups, social isolation and perceived deprivation on the part of minorities. Then, in Chapter 3, we investigate threats in greater detail. After first analysing the term 'threat' itself, we go into the consequences of threats. These can be cognitive, in the form of perceived injustice, negative opinions of other groups, uncertainty and the like, but they can also be emotional: fear, anger, contempt and so on. In Chapter 4, we discuss the part played by cultural determinants in fostering radicalism and terrorism, as well as the role of the economic and social climate, and we also examine so-called 'catalyzing events'. These, too, can result in polarization and radicalization. Chapter 5 looks at the role of personality traits, amongst them authoritarianism, and of demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status, age and gender. In Chapter 6, we turn our attention to social identity processes and ideology. Topics covered here include opinions and attitudes towards one's own group and others, as well as what membership of a group means to the individual. Moreover, we discuss the role of social identity and emotions. Chapter 7 focuses on the role of religion and ideology. Chapter 8 then homes in on a number of individual and group processes that can cause further radicalization and ultimately lead to terrorism. In this context, we also look at community support for and the rewards of radicalization. Processes of justification and the 'dehumanization' of members of one or more other groups are amongst the factors that can transform radicals into terrorists prepared to use violence.

Chapter 9 describes why some groups turn to violence and others don't. We also address processes of disengagement and methods used to prevent radicalization and terrorism. We discuss exit programmes that aim to help people de-radicalize and leave terrorist organizations. Such programmes have

been developed for the returning Syria Jihadists, for instance. There are also more general interventions that aim to prevent polarization between groups aimed at more general populations. We will briefly describe some examples. Finally, in Chapter 10 we summarize and discuss the findings of the various chapters.

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2 Stereotypes, prejudice, economic deprivation and discrimination

Introduction

In this chapter we describe social phenomena that play a part in the initial stages of polarization and radicalization of intergroup attitudes and behaviour. Prejudice, economic deprivation, discrimination and isolation are particularly important because they can pose a threat to the individual and/or the group he or she belongs to. These perceived threats are central to the first part of this book, and their nature and consequences are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

In the present chapter, we mainly focus on factors that can lead to polarization between groups and the radicalization of deprived and stigmatized *minority* groups. Factors with the potential to radicalize sections of the ethnic *majority* in a society, pushing them towards left-wing or right-wing extremism, are covered in the next chapter, albeit more concisely.

We will start by describing the kinds of stereotypes and prejudices that tend to affect minority groups in particular and will then go on to examine the nature of personal contacts between members of the majority and the minority. After that, we will take a more detailed look at economic deprivation amongst minorities and at discrimination against them. These factors can represent significant threats to such groups and can therefore provide fertile ground for polarization and radicalization. We will also look at contacts between minorities and the majority in general, as well as the positive role these can play in reducing prejudice. Finally, we turn to the role of socioeconomic factors in processes of polarization and radicalization.

Stereotypes, prejudice and personal contacts

In this section, we examine the nature of stereotypes and how they affect behaviour and the way information is processed. We also point out when stereotypes most commonly come into play and what purpose they serve. Next, we describe so-called metastereotypes, that is, how members of one

group perceive the stereotypes that members of another group have about them. We then explore prejudice in both its explicit and implicit forms – an implicit prejudice being one you may not even be aware of – and how it influences behaviour. We end with a description of the nature and role of personal contacts between members of minority groups and the majority.

Stereotypes

To understand the world and to cope with it effectively, people need to imbue it with a clear and meaningful structure. One of the most important tools they use in this process is categorization: the clustering of different stimuli into one category or group – 'pigeonholing', to use a colloquial term. A birch and an oak are both trees and, as such, different to other large plants such as bushes. If it is relevant in the circumstances, you can make a further distinction among, say, the American oak, the kermes oak and the cork oak. In the same way and far more importantly, people also draw a distinction between different categories or groups of people: men and women, young and old, Hindus and Muslims. And here again, further distinctions can be made and subcategories identified: retired men, for example, or housewives or Moroccan Berbers. Apart from the basic characteristics that define the category, such as gender characteristics in the case of sexual classification, other criteria can also be introduced. Historically, for instance, oaks were considered more 'sacred' than birches, and men are often viewed as more dominant than women. This additional information about the categories makes it easier for people to deal and interact more effectively with members of those groups. After all, chopping down a sacred tree could be a rather risky move. In the case of human contacts in which dominance plays a part, it can be quite useful to be in a position to assess how dominant the other person is likely to be. And knowing their sex can help in that. Men's supposed dominance is an example of a stereotype. In general, a stereotype concerning a category or a group of people is defined as a collection of characteristics assumed to typify that group or category.

Because they serve to order and structure our view of the world, stereotypes increase our grasp of it. A world of stereotypes is a predictable world: it demands less thought and so allows you to devote your mental energy to other things. Stereotypes are often applied more or less automatically, even from a very young age. And, as we shall see later, much the same applies to prejudice. Baron and Banaji (2006) show that Japanese and American children aged six to ten already harbour prejudices about each other's ethnic group, a finding backed up by Degner and Wentura (2010) in their study of children and adolescents in Germany. Interestingly, stereotyping can also be countered more or less automatically. Moskowitz and Li (2011) asked participants in their study to recall situations in which they did not regard

members of other groups as equal. This activated egalitarian thinking and led to the suppression of stereotypes about the group concerned. Moreover, participants were unaware of that suppression, meaning that it occurred more or less automatically.

Stereotypes usually serve one or more purposes. One important drawback associated with their use, however, is their inaccuracy. Take the following example. Bond, DiCandia and MacKinnon (1988) compared the treatment received by white and black Americans from white members of staff at a psychiatric hospital. Their particular focus was on two alternative means of dealing with violent patients: isolation versus the use of a straitjacket and sedatives. It was found that the latter method, the 'harder' of the two, was applied almost four (!) times more frequently to black patients than to white ones, even though there was hardly any difference between the two groups in terms of the number of violent incidents they were involved in. On average, the black patients had even been diagnosed as less violent! The difference in response undoubtedly reflected a stereotype about black men as aggressive and untreatable. In this case, fortunately, the hospital staff learnt from reality. When no difference in levels of aggression was observed at a later stage, the difference in treatment disappeared. In many situations, however, no such correction occurs because the relevant data are unclear. Moreover, even when a stereotype does more or less reflect reality – generally speaking, men are indeed stronger than women – its application to specific individuals may well be incorrect. After all, a considerable number of women are stronger than many men.

Stereotypes can have a profound impact upon the way people process information. This is apparent from the judgements and interpretations they make and from their memory of certain events. For instance, stereotypes provide a framework for interpretation that endows observed behaviour with a significance that complies with the stereotype. The more ambiguous that behaviour is, the more explanation is needed to comprehend its meaning. And this is something the stereotype can provide. If, on the other hand, the behaviour is crystal clear and open to only one interpretation, the stereotype cannot and does not affect how it is understood. To return to the example of the psychiatric hospital, it is highly probable that, in that context, aggression or violence can take a variety of forms: active or passive, physical or verbal or a mixture of any of these. Aggression can also differ in intensity, and sometimes it is not totally clear, for instance, whether we are dealing with assertive behaviour or aggression. These complexities allow the stereotype to have an effect. Stereotypes also appear to influence more complex processes, such as decision making. Take, for example, a study by Bodenhausen (1988) in which he asked the participants to play the role of jurors deciding on the guilt or innocence of a suspect in a case of armed robbery. To some of the participants, the suspect was presented as

'Carlos Ramirez', a name expected to evoke the stereotype of the aggressive Latino male, while to others he was introduced as 'Robert Johnson', a name not associated with any relevant negative stereotype by white Americans. The stereotyped suspect was more likely to be found guilty, regardless of whether the other information presented about the robbery was favourable or unfavourable to his case.

Stereotypes can also affect behaviour. Eberhardt, Davies, Purdie-Vaughns and Johnson (2006) analysed 44 cases of black men convicted of murdering white victims. Their photographs were evaluated in terms of the extent to which they fitted the American stereotype of the black male. Based on this evaluation, they were sorted into two categories: those that largely conformed to that stereotype and the rest. Even after the results were controlled for other relevant factors such as aggravating circumstances, the seriousness of the crime and previous convictions, a striking difference was found. Of those men whose photograph conformed to the stereotype, 57.5 per cent had been sentenced to death. That compared with just 24.4 per cent of the other group. Another example of how stereotypes can affect behaviour is the fatal shooting by London police officers of a Brazilian man, who was perceived as looking like a Muslim, in the wake of a series of terrorist bomb attacks in the city. (See Box 2.1.)

Box 2.1 Death of Jean Charles de Menezes

Two weeks after the London bombings of 7 July 2005, in which 52 people were killed, the London Metropolitan police were searching for four suspects in several failed suicide bombings carried out on 21 July. One of the unexploded bags used by the bombers contained a gym membership card with an address in Tulse Hill. Police put under surveillance the communal entrance to the block of flats at that address. Jean Charles de Menezes, a 27–year-old Brazilian man, lived in one of the flats with two of his cousins. He left around 9.30 a.m. after a call to fix a broken fire alarm (he was an electrician). Menezes was followed, and several plainclothes police officers boarded the bus he took. He got off at Brixton Tube Station, but that was closed due to the attempted bombings a day before. Menezes reboarded the bus, and the surveillance officers found this rather suspicious. Later they stated they were quite convinced that they had the correct man. One of the officers indicated that Menezes had 'Mongolian eyes'. Moreover, his clothing further added to their suspicions. Some witnesses said he was wearing a large winter coat; others thought he was wearing a 'bomb belt with wires coming out' (Menezes was wearing a denim jacket). Menezes travelled to the next Tube station, picked up a free newspaper

and boarded the train. He was followed by three surveillance officers, and when the specialists from Specialist Firearms Command arrived on the platform, one of them shouted 'He's here' and blocked the door. The police decided not to halt and question him about the failed terrorist attack. Menezes was not challenged but was immediately grabbed and pushed into a seat. Next, he was pinned to the ground, and two officers fired a total of eleven shots: seven shots in the head and one in the shoulder, all at close range. This all took less than a minute. One of his cousins identified him and was shocked to see he was killed from behind. In the UK, used to unarmed police officers, the shooting seemed to be a stark turning point, especially after the police admission that an innocent man had been gunned down in full public view. Some argue that the 'war on terror' and the logic of pre-emption give license to combine punitive criminal justice with military strategies to attack those seen as enemies. Unfortunately, these perceptions are also affected by fears and suspicions based on racial and religious differences (see e.g. McCulloch & Sentas, 2006). Later, two investigations of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (OPCC) were held. These did not result in disciplinary charges. On 12 December 2008, an inquest returned an open verdict.

Sources: Cowell & Van Natta (2005); Thompson, Hinsliff & Xavier (2005); Wikipedia (n.d.).

Experimental research supports this supposition. For example, Unkelbach, Forgas and Denson (2008) asked the participants of their study to a take a split-second decision on whether to shoot somebody in a computer game, based upon whether or not the person was armed. Some of the potential targets were wearing the hijab (Islamic headwear). Results showed that this had a clear influence on the participants: they were more likely to shoot. As the researchers point out, this effect was observed among Australian students who are generally thought to be relatively tolerant and liberal and so would not be expected to harbour negative stereotypes about Muslims. That makes their findings all the more remarkable.

Stereotypes are more likely to come into play under particular circumstances. Their use depends primarily upon how motivated a person is to form an accurate judgement and to draw upon the opportunities at their disposal to process information more comprehensively. When dealing with people you are not really interested in, and when you have other things on your mind, you are more likely to give free rein to stereotypes. Rather than paying much attention to what they are actually saying and doing, you apply the stereotype as an easy and economical way to form a quick impression

of them. In that sense, stereotypes are very similar to all the other kinds of shortcuts people use in order to make relatively adequate decisions with a minimum of effort [see Shah & Oppenheimer (2008) for a recent overview].

Time pressure is one of the factors that prevent a more comprehensive processing of available information and so augment the effects of stereotypes. Having to make a quick decision on whether to shoot somebody wearing an Islamic headdress is a prime example of this. Another is revealed by Dijker and Koomen (1996), in a study looking at the way time pressure affected Dutch respondents in forming a judgement about a Dutch Turkish individual who was described to them. The less time they were given, the more likely their opinions were to reflect their previously recorded emotional responses to Dutch Turkish people in general. In many contacts between members of ethnic minorities and the majority community, there is not much interest in forming a detailed opinion of the other person – not least because those concerned often have other things on their mind. This lack of interest also serves to enhance the effects of mutual stereotypes.

As stated earlier, stereotypes help to increase our grasp of the world. But that does not necessarily mean that they help us to grasp it correctly. Stereotyping – the application of stereotypes – is a tool we use in the service of our desire to organize, to understand and to predict the world we live in. But it can also serve another purpose, namely satisfying our need to maintain or restore a positive notion of our own self-worth. And this has repercussions for the use of positive and negative stereotypes. For example, past research has shown that when people feel threatened – due to, say, critical feedback about their performance – they tend to stereotype more and to stereotype more negatively. Fein and Spencer (1997) obtained that finding in three separate studies examining the extent to which Jewish and homosexual people are stereotyped. We shall return to this topic in the next chapter.

Generally, people feel more positive about themselves and gain a sense of self-worth by viewing others in a critical light. Applying negative stereotypes to other people helps to achieve this; they make you look better than them. When relationships between groups are strained or hostile, the desire to understand the other is usually suppressed in favour of promoting a positive image of oneself or one's own group. This can enhance both the formation of negative stereotypes, as well as their activation and use. In the Netherlands, the stereotypes applied to Dutch Muslims tend to be quite negative: they are often characterized as violent, dishonest and arrogant. In 2006–2007, an extensive survey of students in secondary education (Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008) polled their attitudes towards Dutch Muslims and found that these stereotypes were fairly widely upheld. Similar findings have been obtained elsewhere. Based on public opinion data, Bleich (2009) concluded that Muslims are the most disliked group in both Britain and France when compared to other religious groups.

Metastereotypes

Metastereotypes also influence intergroup relationships. These relate to what you believe others think about you and your group. In other words, metastereotypes reflect the opinions held by the members of one group concerning the stereotypes held about them by another group.

A negative metastereotype can produce negative reactions, as shown by Kamans, Gordijn, Oldenhuis and Otten (2009), who investigated this phenomenon in Dutch Moroccan teenagers. The question was how these youngsters respond when they believe that the Dutch majority regard them as criminal, aggressive or terrorists. Kamans and colleagues found that participants who thought these negative stereotypes were held about them, and also harboured a fairly strong prejudice against the Dutch majority group themselves, were more inclined to display criminal, aggressive or antisocial behaviour. Moreover, they sought to justify this conduct and also expressed greater support for Muslim extremism. In other words, a negative metastereotype about the way the Dutch perceive them was not enough in itself to produce a negative reaction; that appeared only when the subject also had a prejudice against the Dutch. In combination with prejudice, then, a negative metastereotype can sometimes generate a highly undesirable response.

A group's metastereotypes are often derived from what its members see or hear people saying about their group. Newspapers and other media such as television can also play a significant role in this respect. This holds for stereotypes too. For example, Vergeer, Lubbers and Scheepers (2000) found in a Dutch study that the readers of a newspaper that covered crime by ethnic minorities more extensively than others considered those minorities as more threatening than readers of a newspaper that paid less attention to criminal acts of minority members. This difference did not disappear if background factors such as education and social class were controlled for, suggesting that there is a clear effect of reading a specific newspaper on how people perceive ethnic minorities.

Prejudice

Prejudice differs from stereotyping primarily in the sense that it is a more general and less well defined feeling, rather than a collection of specific characteristics attributed to a group. We define it as the negative, emotional or affective component of a response to a group or category (Fiske, 1998). These can take the form of feelings, such as fear or anger, but can also include more specific evaluative judgements such as 'inferior' or 'antisocial'. Prejudice, sometimes also referred to as a negative attitude, combines a number of such elements. One means of measuring it is by means of a so-called 'feeling thermometer', whereby respondents indicate how positively

they perceive a particular group on a scale ranging from 0 to 100. Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers and Verkuyten (2008) used this technique in 2002, 2003 and 2004 to measure the attitudes of Dutch schoolchildren towards various ethnic groups. They found that the children viewed Moroccans least positively, with a score of approximately 36, and Surinamese most positively, at about 60.

Prejudice, like stereotypes, may be either *implicit* or *explicit*. Explicit prejudice can be simply determined by asking people about it. An example of a measure of explicit prejudice is the 'feeling thermometer'. To identify implicit prejudice, however, you need to employ less direct measures. These indirect measures often present participants with stimuli that are expected to activate their true impression of a particular group. Names or faces perceived as Muslim, for example, should evoke an image or opinion of Muslims. If that image is negative, then it will make further negative associations and thoughts more accessible than positive ones. The negativity or positivity of the image under investigation can thus be determined by measuring people's immediate reactions – in terms of speed of response, for instance – to other stimuli. The underlying mechanism here is the fact that people respond differently to new stimuli when earlier associations or thoughts – positive or negative – remain active. If a group is perceived negatively, for example, the negative associations it has activated will accelerate the response to subsequent negative stimuli – the word 'war', say – and slow down reactions to positive ones, like the word 'peace'. The activated negative associations pave the way, as it were, for greater receptiveness to further negative stimuli than to their positive counterparts, thus facilitating a faster response.

These automatic and often subconscious processes are what make implicit measurements interesting. It is difficult for people to regulate their responses when responding to implicit, more associative measures. Two examples of implicit measures are the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998) and Affective Priming (Fazio, 2001). In the case of explicit measures – when people are asked directly what they think of a particular group – it is easy to give a more positive answer in order to conform to social norms or to present oneself in a better light. Not surprisingly, implicit measures of opinions and attitudes concerning 'sensitive' topics are usually more pronounced than the explicit ones. For instance, Park, Felix and Lee (2007) found just such a difference between implicit and explicit attitudes towards Muslim Arabs in the U.S., with the former being considerably more negative than the latter.

Personal contacts

How do personal contacts unfold between members of the majority group and members of minorities that are stigmatized or viewed negatively by that

majority? In such interactions, many of the former are likely to experience difficulties, especially if their interaction partner is not well known to them. While they may well harbour negative stereotypes and prejudice, most people do not consider it normal to express discrimination or bigotry. As a result, they will feel discomfort, apprehension or similar emotions. Interacting with somebody you do not really feel comfortable with feels unpleasant for most people, all the more so if your stereotypical picture of them involves some degree of aggression. The social pressure not to discriminate will nevertheless encourage you to behave positively, so as not to give the other person the impression that you are discriminating against them. But this usually takes effort, not least because certain forms of behaviour – particularly of the non-verbal kind – are difficult to control, reflect negative implicit attitudes and so reveal a different inclination. Moreover, as noted by DePaulo and Friedman (1998), it is those with the greatest motivation to conceal their lies who are in fact most likely to betray themselves through their non-verbal behaviour, facial expressions included. All this only serves to further exacerbate feelings of discomfort and apprehension. Is my behaviour positive enough? Does his neutral expression means that he is annoyed but does not want to show it? How can I come across in as friendly a way as possible? These are all questions with no clear answer and therefore serve as fuel for additional discomfort. The great majority of studies into prejudice against other ethnic groups in contact situations showed a variety of psychophysiological effects – increased heart rate and electrodermal activity – pointing to discomfort and anxiety (see Guglielmi, 1999). Just how much effort it can take to make the desired unprejudiced impression and not reveal your underlying discomfort is illustrated by the results of research into the cognitive consequences of such interactions. They show that the quality of subsequent cognitive performance is reduced because participants are simply too fatigued or exhausted by what has already been asked of them (Shelton, Richeson & Vorauer, 2006).

For members of disadvantaged minority groups involved in such interactions, the difficulties experienced are probably even more severe (Dijker & Koomen, 2007). They, too, most likely harbour prejudice against and negative stereotypes concerning the other group, the majority, with all the consequences just described. Social pressure not to discriminate appears to be less important for minorities, but set against that are such factors as the metastereotypes already mentioned. Minorities are usually aware of, and even expect to experience, prejudice and negative stereotypes on the part of the majority group. In some cases, they may actually share these negative opinions of their own group.

The role played by group membership in contacts with others is often overestimated but only for others; that is, it tends to be viewed as a highly important factor in determining the behaviour of others. An example is

provided by a study of obese and non-obese students (Rodin & Slochower, 1974), in which they interacted with a friendly, unfriendly or neutral role player: obese students interpreted the behaviour of that person primarily as a response to their weight. Such additional factors only make it more difficult to interact with members of the majority group. The person you are talking to views you in a negative light, and to some extent you share that opinion. In sum, their behaviour has to be interpreted first and foremost as a response to the fact you are a member of a certain group. With this in mind, it can be hard to make an open, positive effort to establish good contact. And if you do, things can easily go wrong. Obviously, this once again adds to the discomfort and apprehension experienced. (See Box 2.2.)

Box 2.2 The threat of a stereotype

Emphasizing people's membership of a group can also leave its mark on individual performance. When people are strongly aware that they belong to a particular group that is stereotyped as, say, incompetent and poorly performing, that can result in a 'stereotype threat' (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The stereotype provides a framework for the interpretation of individual behaviour, and the people concerned fear that they will be viewed or treated on the basis of that stereotype. Moreover, they might confirm these negative stereotypes through the way they act. Numerous studies have confirmed that the presence of that threat impairs performance. Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini (2010) provide a number of examples, all pertaining to groups stereotyped as poor performers. Women, for instance, performed less well in a mathematics test when their gender was emphasized. Latinos scored lower on an intelligence test when they knew that intelligence was assessed than when they thought something else was being measured. White men did worse on an athletics task when they believed that it was related to 'natural ability'. And Asian American women gained lower marks on a mathematics test when their gender was stressed but scored higher when their ethnicity was highlighted. This last result is particularly interesting since it indicates that a positive stereotype – 'Asians are good at math' – can improve performance. Multiple mechanisms are supposed to underlie the performance-dampening effect observed in studies of this kind, such as stress and tension, mental burden, despondency and negative thoughts, laxity and reduced working memory capacity. All of these adversely affect performance. For minority groups subject to negative stereotyping, then, stereotype threat represents an additional handicap. It makes it more difficult to perform well.

In all likelihood, responses such as discomfort, anxiety and apprehension on the part of members of both majority and minority groups only reinforce one another. This can also be related to research on self-fulfilling prophecies, a phenomenon that has been found in many studies looking at stigmatized groups (Dijker & Koomen, 2007). Darley and Fazio (1980) describe a specific social interaction illustrating the sequential process involved. One person (the observer) has certain expectations concerning someone he or she is meeting. The observer assumes that the other person – a Muslim youth, let us say – will be less than friendly (step 1). The observer behaves in accordance with this assumption; that is, he or she is also less friendly (step 2). The young Muslim notices that (step 3) and so also becomes less friendly (step 4). Positive behaviour usually includes more positive behaviour, and negative behaviour more negative behaviour. The observer, believing that his or her expectations have been confirmed, thinks, 'You see, I was right' (step 5), and the vicious circle begins all over again from step 2. If people have negative feelings towards each other, or each other's group, they can thus find it all too easy to be 'proven right' by confirmed expectations. To take another example, a teacher who subscribes to the negative stereotype that 'most pupils are stupid' can easily further undermine students' classroom performance by paying less attention to them ('a waste of effort'). Negative stereotypes can thus trigger processes that result in self-fulfilling prophecies. Jussim and Harber (2005) found that American schoolteachers' lower expectations are more likely to find confirmation in the case of black students and those from lower social class backgrounds, that is, disadvantaged groups in that society.

Self-fulfilling prophecies about intergroup contacts are a product of the different assumptions people make, which can have a profound impact. Knowing that somebody with whom one is to come into contact is a member of a particular group, such as an ethnic minority, can result in a completely different perspective concerning the encounter. People are more likely to strike up a conversation with members of their own group than with representatives of other groups. The perception that they are similar makes them believe that it will be easier for them to engage with one another and that the experience will thus be more pleasurable. To an extent, this is true, but there are also suppositions concerning contacts with people from other groups that can have a needlessly obstructive effect. Shelton and Richeson (2005) examined this phenomenon and found neither white nor black Americans were averse to mutual contact, but both groups believed that the other would not appreciate it. In other studies, they found that people attributed their own failure to take the initiative to a fear of rejection, whereas they thought that in the other group it was due to a lack of interest. Assumptions of this kind were even found to predict the level of actual intergroup contact by students in their first semester at university.

Such misapprehensions thus become self-fulfilling prophecies, limiting the amount of contact between groups.

If we summarize the impact of these findings as they apply to members of stigmatized minorities, the picture that emerges is quite negative. The majority harbours negative stereotypes about the minority and prejudice towards it. These colour views of the other group not only when there is no contact between them but also in the case of superficial contacts. Because of the less than positive relationships between them, stereotyping on both sides is driven more by the yearning to see one's own group in a positive light than by a desire to understand the other group. As a result, negative stereotypes predominate. As well as holding their own negative opinions of the majority, minority groups also believe that the majority group's views of their own group are negative. That is, they subscribe to negative metastereotypes. Both groups are prejudiced, then, and that influences their behaviour. Despite social pressure to act positively and be open to others, personal contacts between the members of stigmatized minorities and the majority group are often less than harmonious. In short, the stigmatized minorities live in a wider social environment that is less than friendly and generous towards them. This situation is influenced by other phenomena: (1) economic deprivation and discrimination and (2) the nature of contacts with the majority group and social isolation. These are addressed in turn in the next two sections.

Economic deprivation and discrimination

Economic deprivation, or a weak socioeconomic position, is frequently cited as an important contributing factor to radicalization and potential terrorism (cf. Silke, 2008). As stated earlier, deprivation is significant because it normally constitutes a threat to the individual and/or the group he or she belongs to. We shall discuss how that threat influences the process of radicalization, potentially leading to terrorism, in more detail in Chapter 3. The experience of economic deprivation is decidedly highly negative. It usually means being consigned to the lowest reaches of a society, with all that that entails: poverty, poor housing in insalubrious surroundings, health problems, an insecure future and the disdain of others, especially members of other groups. Silke (2008) describes economic deprivation, educational underperformance and insufficient political representation as important elements that have elicited the political conflict in Northern Ireland and also played a role in the increasing support of catholic communities for extremism. Catholics in Northern Ireland had much to gain if they could change the Protestant-controlled government. Silke also mentions the disadvantaged position of Muslims in the United Kingdom. Compared with the population of the UK as a whole, Muslims are three times more unemployed, and a

higher concentration of Muslims are living in disadvantaged districts. There is also an educational gap between the Muslim minority and the general population.

Deprivation generally goes hand in hand with stereotypes and prejudice. Outsiders tend to regard those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder as antisocial, stupid and lacking in ambition. As we have already described, mutual contacts are bound to suffer under such preconceptions. On top of that, deprivation often goes hand in hand with discrimination, that is, the unequal treatment of individuals or groups based upon characteristics that bear no actual relevance to the situation in hand. Discrimination often follows from stereotypes and prejudice. The fact that discrimination also represents a threat that affects its victims in very negative ways, and that is in addition often perceived as being more extreme than is actually the case, is something requiring little argument.

One of the methods to investigate racial and ethnic discrimination in the field of employment is having individuals with similar educational backgrounds apply for a job and then to determine their success. The only difference between these individuals is that they belong to different racial or ethnic groups, as indicated by such cues as appearance or name. Using this method, discrimination has often been found. Widner and Chicoine (2011) give a number of examples. In one study, investigators sent similar fictitious résumés to businesses adding an African American or white-sounding name. For résumés with an African American name, there were 50 per cent fewer callbacks for an interview. In another study conducted in Sweden, Arab/Muslim applicants received 50 per cent fewer callbacks for an interview compared to applicants having a Swedish-sounding name. A different way of investigating discrimination in the field of employment is comparing the wages of the groups involved whereby differences in background factors, such as education and work experience, are considered and controlled for. In this way, discrimination has also often been found. Lindley (2002) noted that there is a general consensus in the UK that ethnic minorities suffer from employment and earnings disadvantages in the British labour market. In her study, she found a substantial disadvantage for Muslims relative to all other non-whites that could be partly seen as Islamic discrimination, or a pure 'Islamic penalty' as she calls it. This is in accordance with the earlier mentioned conclusion of Bleich (2009) that Muslims are the most disliked religious group in Britain.

Contact and social isolation

We first describe contacts between members of ethnic minorities and the majority, focusing upon the isolation of certain groups, then look at the positive role that contacts between groups can play in dispelling prejudice.

Social isolation

Stereotypes, prejudice, a weak socioeconomic position and discrimination all contribute to the social isolation and marginalization of ethnic minorities. We have already looked at the nature of personal contacts between members of minority groups and the majority, as well as the difficulties which can surround them.

Even if such contacts do occur, that does not mean that they are not open to improvement.

Dinsbach, Feij and de Vries (2007) compared the positions of ethnically Dutch employees and colleagues from ethnic minorities, mostly with a Surinamese, Turkish or Moroccan background, at a large organization in the Netherlands. One of the principal differences was that the employees who were members of minorities reported a greater prevalence of unequal treatment. Another was that, although they had few problems in their work-related contacts with Dutch colleagues, they found it comparatively difficult to make contact at a more personal level. This meant that there were fewer relationships of a personal nature, and respondents found it hard to know how they might establish these. With less informal contact between members of different groups, there was probably, as the researchers point out, less mutual trust, respect and support, which are important factors in positive intergroup relations.

Contact and prejudice

As shown by a meta-analysis of more than 500 studies by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), a large body of social psychological research emphasizes the importance of contacts between groups. In short, they reduce prejudice. Further research by Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) into this so-called contact hypothesis shows that such contacts are important in reducing perceived threat, anxiety and discomfort, as well as in fostering empathy, understanding and the ability to view situations from the other group's perspective. This confirms the role played by fear and discomfort in shaping relationships between the majority group and stigmatized minorities, as discussed earlier. The greater knowledge that resulted from contact with members of the other group has a more limited effect, once again underlining the significant part played by prejudice and emotion in defining intergroup relations. The literature reveals a more subtle distinction too: Tropp and Pettigrew (2005) found that the relationship between contact and prejudice is less marked among minorities. This difference could to some extent be related to mistrust on the part of minorities and the nature of the contacts. Crisp and Abrams (2008) also emphasize the importance of the quality of the contacts in question. Barlow and colleagues (2012), focusing on this factor, not only stressed the

difference between the effects of positive and negative contact but also reasoned that, as often has been found, negative information is more influential than its positive counterpart. In two studies – one pertaining to prejudice towards Black Australians, Muslim Australians and asylum seekers – they found that negative contact predicted increased prejudice more than positive contact predicted reduced prejudice.

Binder and colleagues (2009) found supporting evidence for a two-way process in a longitudinal study of Belgian, German and British schoolchildren: contact reduces prejudice, but prejudice also reduces contact. This research, like that by Tropp and Pettigrew (2005), also found that positive effects were practically absent amongst minorities such as Moroccan Belgians and Turkish Germans. There are various possible explanations for this, one – not mentioned before – being the higher social status of the majority. That often encourages them to try to avoid discrimination: in general, it is mostly not considered acceptable to further penalize people lower in status by discriminating against them openly. On the other hand, as stated earlier, members of the minority group are highly sensitive to discrimination by the majority and to negative stereotyping. As a result, ambiguous behaviour can often be interpreted as negative. These divergent expectations and opinions can result in the same contact situation being experienced very differently by the minority and the majority, with the latter viewing it in a more positive light than the former.

Binder and colleagues (2009) and a number of other studies have shown that the *quality* of contact is more important than the *quantity* of contacts. This supports the conclusions drawn by Crisp and Abrams (2008) already mentioned. One explanation for this finding may lie in the type of the attitude measured. In general, research on this issue relies on explicit measures: respondents are asked to state what they think of the other group. Recent research by Prestwich, Kenworthy, Wilson and Kwan-Tat (2008) into the effects of contact between, in this case, members of the white majority and members of Asian minorities, such as Indians and Pakistani, in the UK, again found that the explicit attitudes expressed by the majority correlate more closely with the quality of their contacts than with the quantity. A second and more interesting result concerned their implicit attitudes. When the respondents were not aware of what was being measured or had little or no ability to influence the measurements, the opposite applied. That is, implicit attitudes bore a direct relationship to the *amount* of contact rather than to its *quality*. In both cases, reduced anxiety and discomfort concerning the nature of the encounter had a clear impact on attitude. In this light, it seems probable that explicit attitudes are easily formed on the basis of new information and experiences, whereas the construction of positive implicit attitudes is a slower process, rooted in a greater quantity of relevant information and experiences. Or, to put it another way, the explicit attitudes proved less

susceptible to the total volume of information a person possesses, which is dependent on the number of contacts they have. They are, however, more susceptible to the 'conscious' gathering of relevant information, a process associated primarily with the quality of contacts. To bring about a complete change of attitude, then, it would seem that both types of encounter are needed.

Contacts between ethnic minorities and the majority are more likely to occur in communities with a heterogeneous racial composition. Postmes and Branscombe (2002) provide an interesting illustration of the effects of heterogeneity in a study of African Americans. Those living in highly segregated neighbourhoods had a more positive attitude towards their own group but also felt more rejected by American society in general than African Americans in unsegregated communities. As an explanation for this, Postmes and Branscombe posit the role of contact with other Americans, which can result in a more positive attitude towards them. In the Netherlands, Lancee and Dronkers (2008) found that in mixed neighbourhoods there is a decline in trust in other local residents; their finding is in accordance with those of the American sociologist Putnam (2007). Interestingly, they also concluded that having ethnically diverse *neighbours* is associated with more positive interethnic attitudes. As Lancee and Dronkers (2008) point out, this finding supports the contact hypothesis. It will come as no surprise, then, to learn that encouraging contacts between groups is widely viewed as an important means of countering radicalization and terrorism (see e.g. Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post & Victoroff, 2007). After all, that is one way to lessen the risk of experiencing isolation, marginalization and prejudice. We will return to this issue in Chapter 9 when we discuss methods to prevent radicalization and terrorism.

Economic position and relative deprivation

We begin this section with a discussion of the role played by economic position in radicalization, particularly amongst members of deprived minority groups. After that, we explore the mechanism of relative deprivation, whereby poverty and wealth are viewed not in absolute but in relative terms, that is, in comparison to the situation of others. This helps to clarify the role played by economic position.

Economic position

Our discussion so far may have given the impression that an unfavourable economic position within a society or in the world as a whole is an important factor in the process resulting in radicalization – in short, that poverty radicalizes. Under certain circumstances, which we will discuss in Chapter 3,

this is indeed the case. For a long time, the poverty factor was regularly cited as a direct cause of radicalization. But in the case of Islamic radicalism, it is actually quite difficult to find support for such an argument (see, for example, Moghaddam, 2005; Rogers et al., 2007; Smelser, 2007). Economic position cannot be regarded as a causal factor of all radicalism and terrorism: its role seems to depend upon the nature of those phenomena. It would thus be wrong to make sweeping statements about the role of economic position.

Views as to how economic position influences Islamic radicalism are based in part upon work by Krueger and Maleckova (2003). They present public opinion data obtained from Palestinians living on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. A clear majority of this population supported armed attacks on targets in Israel. But what is most relevant is that that support was greater amongst respondents with a higher level of education than amongst the less well educated. A similar correlation with education has been found in other research in the same region, polling the desirability of a dialogue with Israel. An analysis of Hezbollah fighters also indicated that poverty had a negative rather than a positive correlation to membership in the organization. Further analysis of these data incidentally indicated that this effect was reversed for individuals with high education (Kavanagh, 2011), an effect that can be explained as the result of having alternative options. In a flourishing economy, highly educated individuals have attractive options other than participation in militant activities and are more likely to refrain from those activities. This makes it more difficult for terrorist groups to select and enlist highly educated members. Another study found that Palestinian suicide bombers tended to be less poor than the population as a whole. In later research among Palestinian suicide terrorists, favourable economic conditions led to less recruitment of better educated individuals (Benmelech, Berrebi & Klor 2012), supporting the findings of Kavanagh (2011) mentioned earlier. Further, Krueger and Maleckova argue that economic circumstances may be significant in the sense that it is the more prosperous citizens of poor countries in particular who are attracted to terrorism. A survey of at least 129 nations – those for which it was possible to determine the number of internationally active terrorists they had produced – has established that higher participation in terrorism is most closely associated with a lack of civil liberties at home and that there is little correlation with average national income. This finding also suggests that an important characteristic of most democratic countries (i.e. having civil liberties) makes them less susceptible to terrorism than countries lacking that characteristic (see also Chapter 4).

Research by Fair and Shepherd (2006) into the effects of prosperity upon the populations of 14 African and South Asian countries with a Muslim majority or a large Muslim minority also failed to find evidence of poverty as a factor that incites people to terrorism. Again, the correlation was

actually the opposite: less poverty was associated with greater support for terrorism. One possible explanation is that poor people are in no position to concern themselves with matters that are not directly related to their own day-to-day survival. Further support is provided by Bhui, Warfa and Jones (2014). They carried out a large survey of men and women of Muslim heritage in two English cities (London and Bradford). Their study showed limited support for violent protests and terrorism (less than 3 per cent of their sample); sympathy was more likely for respondents under 20 and in full-time education rather than employment. Further predictors were being born in Britain and income, with high earners (more than €75,000 a year) being more sympathetic. Krueger and Maleckova (2003) posit the hypothesis that terrorism represents a form of political engagement, albeit a violent one. And it is relatively well educated people from a relatively prosperous background who are most likely to become politically active, peacefully or otherwise, not least because participation in politics requires a certain amount of knowledge and commitment – resources that are less likely to be available to people who are poorer and less well educated: terrorism is a luxury, in other words.

Relative deprivation

There is also another credible explanation for the negative correlation between poverty and an inclination to terrorism: viewing prosperity as relative or perceived, rather than as absolute, deprivation. That is, dissatisfaction with one's situation comes from applying subjective standards. When people draw conclusions about something such as their own wealth, they generally do so by making comparisons: how rich am I, compared with other people? So their judgements are relative. In other words, terms like 'big' and 'small' are not absolute; they require a validating benchmark. In general, people are inclined to compare themselves with others they regard as their equals. Comparisons with people far removed from us, in whatever way, serve less purpose. Middle-aged white professionals, say, are more likely to compare their incomes with their close colleagues – who are probably middle-aged white professionals as well – than with school dropouts, pop stars or unemployed Muslims.

Members of minority groups who are rather better educated and more prosperous than most in their group tend to compare themselves with members of the majority with – apart from that majority status – a similar background. These are the kind of people whose social position should be within their reach. Such comparisons can easily lead to a realization that, in various ways, they are not receiving all that they feel they are entitled to. This awakens a sense that they are being discriminated against, a feeling of injustice that would not have been evoked had they not made the comparison in the

first place. From this, one can construct a paradox. On the one hand, deprivation fosters radicalization. But on the other, it is actually a somewhat better socioeconomic position that makes radicalization more likely. This apparent contradiction can easily be resolved, however, by looking at which groups individuals compare themselves with. That varies as a result of educational level, and so it could well be one reason why the more advantaged are often those most likely to radicalize. The discrepancy between their own position and that of members of the majority with a similar educational background is often greater than at lower levels.

One distinction often drawn when discussing theories of relative deprivation is between different types of comparison. Runciman (1966) distinguished between 'egoistic' and 'fraternalistic' deprivation, although these are perhaps better referred to as personal and group deprivation. In the former case, one compares oneself with other similar individuals, usually members of one's own group. So a Pakistani person living in Britain, say, compares him- or herself with other Pakistanis living in Britain. The other form of comparison, group or fraternalistic, is between oneself as a member of a particular group and members of another group or between the groups as a whole. In this case, the British Pakistani compares him- or herself with the British majority, for example, or British Pakistanis in general with British people in general. In a study of Surinamese people living in Amsterdam, Koomen and Fränkel (1992) determined that perceived discrimination was associated with both personal and group deprivation. They also found support for the hypothesis that these two forms of deprivation have different effects. Greater personal deprivation showed a relationship with diminished personal satisfaction, whereas greater group deprivation was associated with enhanced militancy as a group, including more approval for various forms of protest by the Surinamese community – a predictable result given the experience of collective discrimination inherent in group deprivation. Comparatively well educated and prosperous members of a minority group are more likely to feel a sense of group deprivation, which easily translates into greater support for acts of protest. In a theoretical and meta-analytic review, Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin and Bialosiewicz (2012) stress the distinction between personal- or individual- and group-relative deprivation and add a number of specifications that define relative deprivation, such as justice-related affect that includes anger and resentment. Their meta-analysis provided support for a key prediction holding that group-relative deprivation predicts collective action, such as political protest, and attitudes towards outgroups, such as prejudice, more strongly than individual relative deprivation. On the other hand, individual-relative deprivation predicts individual behaviour, such as using drugs, and self-evaluations, such as personal satisfaction, more strongly than group-relative deprivation.

The very phenomenon of relative or perceived deprivation implies that a particular perception, experience or interpretation of reality is actually more important than the reality itself. Consequently, the amount of perceived intergroup discrimination usually exceeds actual levels of discrimination. Fortunately, the data set of Smith and colleagues (2012) contains 26 studies that allow us to disentangle the effect of subjective perception and objective reality. They compared objective with subjective deprivation effects, using income as the objective deprivation measure. Analysis of these studies showed that the subjective deprivation effects were significantly larger than the objective deprivation effects, suggesting that perception plays a more important role than reality.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have focused upon those social factors and circumstances that may engender radicalization and even terrorism amongst deprived and stigmatized minority groups in Western society, in particular Muslims. Such groups are confronted with negative stereotypes and prejudice on the part of the majority. These less favourable attitudes and behaviour of the majority towards members of the minority can also lead to discrimination. Stereotypes and prejudice may be explicit, in that people admit to them, but they can also be implicit, reflecting more or less automatic, uncontrolled feelings or attitudes. Such implicit stereotypes and prejudice are at their strongest when people lack the motivation or ability to control them. And in the case of deprived groups, they are often more negative than the concomitant explicit feelings and attitudes. The minorities, meanwhile, as well as harbouring their own negative opinions concerning the majority, also believe that the latter is antagonistic towards their groups. These negative metastereotypes are often fuelled by the media. Taken together, the upshot of all these factors is that personal contacts between the majority and members of a disadvantaged minority are often fraught with difficulty. For the minority, this creates a wider social environment that they are not comfortable with and that is not particularly obliging or friendly towards them. And, as we shall see in the next chapter, this environment can emanate certain threats that can contribute to a process of radicalization. The stigmatization of ethnic and other minority groups is also reflected in their relatively low level of participation in further and higher education, which inevitably impacts negatively upon their employment and career prospects. The combination of deprivation and an unfriendly social environment limits contacts with members of the majority, in terms of the kinds of neighbourhoods people live in, for example, and can thus lead to social isolation. In this respect, we have discussed the so-called contact hypothesis: interaction between groups can mitigate prejudice, but the frequency of contact alone is not enough to bring

about change. Quality is also an essential factor. Finally, we examined the role played by economic position in the radicalization of, in particular, disadvantaged minorities. Research shows that members of such groups who live in relatively good economic circumstances are often more supportive of radicalism and terrorism than the less well off. One explanation is that well educated individuals from a prosperous background possess the knowledge, interest and opportunity to become politically active. Another draws upon the principle of relative deprivation: comparatively highly educated members of a minority group who are also financially better off are more likely to compare themselves with majority representatives from a similar background. If that highlights an unfavourable disparity, it will often fuel a sense of disadvantage, discrimination and injustice – which can, in turn, trigger radicalization.

Figure 2.1 relates this chapter to the framework presented in the first chapter. In this chapter, we focused on the left-hand side of the framework and on the initial stages of polarization and radicalization. Stereotypes and prejudice can lead to discrimination and a number of related consequences, such as reduced contact between groups, social isolation and the experience of deprivation. These consequences are often seen as threatening, and, as we will see in the next chapter, this can lead to polarization and radicalization. In Chapter 3, we will focus on threats and their consequences. We will discuss the potential consequences of the factors and circumstances described in this chapter, as well introducing new aspects that are primarily
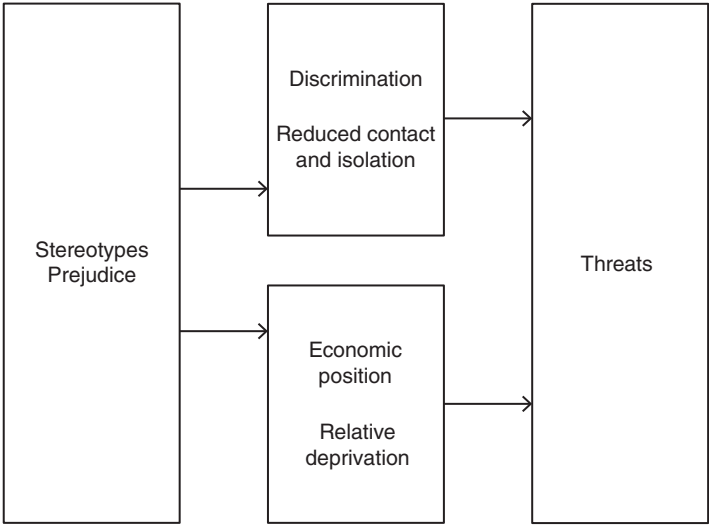

Figure 2.1 Stereotypes, prejudice and their consequences.

of relevance to terrorism and radicalization on the extreme right and left sides of the political spectrum. Throughout, we will focus on the *threats* caused by these factors.

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3   Threats and their consequences

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we described how members of ethnic minority groups often find themselves in a relatively disadvantageous social environment. Confronted with hostile stereotypes and prejudice, their contacts with the majority population are not always positive. Social deprivation can further exacerbate the situation. These circumstances do not leave them unmoved; in these situations, minorities are likely to feel under threat, with all the cognitive and emotional consequences that can have.

   In this chapter, we discuss such and other threats in greater detail. Our emphasis is on intergroup threats and political threats. Both types of threats affect ethnic minorities, but they can also be related to left- and right-wing radicalism. Threats can come from individuals from other groups, from the government, from leaders and from authority figures within society. Threats have a variety of consequences. On the *cognitive* front, we discuss injustice and negative attitudes towards groups regarded as the source of threats. In this chapter, we will explore this by focusing on majority attitudes and prejudices against minorities. As we shall see, education is one factor in driving some people towards right-wing radicalism. We then go on to look at the uncertainty caused by threats and their impact on the extremity of attitudes. Finally, we turn to the *emotional* consequences of threats, such as fear, anger, aversion and hate, as well as exploring aggression and vengeance.

Types of threat

In this section, we first describe threat in general terms and then look at some specific examples. Threat can stem from something as simple as unfulfilled expectations or a feeling of not being appreciated – or, in a different category entirely, from a confrontation with an aggressive dog or some repulsive insect. In the context of radicalization and terrorism, however, our main focus is on threats in the interpersonal and intergroup domains. Here we

distinguish between realistic, symbolic and so-called group esteem threats, and we discuss how each can affect minorities. Conversely, we also examine how the majority can feel threatened by minorities. Finally, we turn our attention to the types of threats typically regarded as causing left-wing and right-wing radicalization.

Some examples of threats

Threats or perceived threats play an important role in shaping relationships between groups (see e.g. Brewer, 1999). As we shall see in this section, threats take many forms. In general terms, we can define them as events or phenomena with the potential to affect people adversely. Examples include unexpected events, discrimination, illness, noise, personal failings, relationship problems and dismissal from work. In other words, people can experience all kinds of things as threatening – if only because it leaves their expectations unfulfilled. And, like stereotypes, expectations help make the world a more comprehensible and predictable place (see also Chapter 2). When they are not fulfilled, the world has suddenly become unpredictable. That leads to uncertainty and so makes it more difficult to respond adequately to events. Mendes, Blascovich, Hunter, Lickel and Jost (2007) asked student participants in their study to perform a series of tasks with a partner. Those partners were actors who had been instructed to play a role. Some actors had been assigned unusual and surprising characteristics, others less unexpected ones. For example, a Latino actor professing a high socioeconomic status (at odds with the prevailing expectations in the U.S.) was partnered with a Latino actor with a low socioeconomic status or with a white student actor with a high socioeconomic status (in line with expectations). Or an Asian American actor speaking with a southern U.S. accent was paired with a white student with a local accent (in this case New England; the study was carried out at Harvard University). Participants teamed up with 'atypical' partners displayed more extreme physiological reactions, apparently indicating greater stress. These stressed participants also described their partners in more negative terms and behaved less positively. In addition, they did not perform as well as the others on a number of tasks. It was shown, too, that the physiological reactions reflecting perceived threat correlated strongly with the kind of behaviours people display more or less automatically, without thinking too much about it, such as smiling, frowning or adopting a defensive posture. What is striking about this experiment is its finding that 'threats' that hardly seem serious at first sight – a person with the 'wrong' socioeconomic status or accent – can induce such negative responses. Evidently, people can sometimes be easy to fluster.

A study by Burris and Rempel (2004) shows much the same thing. Their participants read a story about one of three different insects: a dust mite that

lives in bedding, a cadaver beetle that feeds on decomposing bodies, or a bug that attacks trees. (See Box 3.1.) They then had to give their opinions of two gay men, one of whom had described himself in terms of a negative stereotype and the other in a non-stereotypical manner. As expected, it was found that the control group – those who had read about the harmless bug – expressed a preference for the 'non-stereotype' gay man. He, after all, behaves positively rather than conforming to a negative stereotype about homosexuals. Amongst the other two groups, however, that obvious preference was absent. This had been expected because people who feel under threat fall back on a known and predictable view of the world – a worldview in which a stereotypical homosexual fits in better than a non-stereotypical one. Even thinking about a dust mite in your bed, then, evokes the feeling of threat and so triggers a general defensive response that makes the world more predictable.

Holbrook, Sousa and Hahn-Holbrook (2011) propose that indications of threat result in *unconscious vigilance*, that is, increased sensitivity to affective stimuli. This vigilance evokes exaggerated responses and polarizes both pleasant and aversive stimuli. In this way, individuals confronted with

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Box 3.1 Mortality threats

Burris and Rempel (2004) included a cadaver beetle in their study in order to test the so-called terror management theory (Greenberg, Solomon & Pyszczynski, 1997). Popular in social psychology but not uncontroversial, this theory proposes that individuals who have been reminded of their own mortality express more positive attitudes towards people and ideas that support their view of the world and respond less positively when their worldview comes under threat. In this case, the findings supported the theory because the story of the beetle also referred to the reader's own death. Temporarily, at least, mortality became a greater concern for the participants. For example, they were more likely to complete unfinished words in a way that reflected its salience. So 'dea . . .' became 'dead', not 'dear' or 'deal'. That was not the case with readers of the dust mite story. Given the comparable effects of the mite and the beetle, however, it is legitimate to ask whether the two stories did not evoke a common threat. Other studies have also cast doubt on the singularity of the mortality threat condition. Fritsche, Jonas and Fankhänel (2008), for instance, argue that its salient factor is a perceived loss of control. They found evidence to support that position in their own research.

alarming, threatening cues display increased preferences for affirmations of their cultural ingroup. They also object more strongly to criticism of the norms and values of their group. These so-called worldview defences have been found in many studies. Whereas more specific theories, such as terror management and uncertainty management theories, consider these world-view defences as the result of efforts to allay the fear of death or reduce uncertainty-induced anxiety by increased adherence to their cultural values, the unconscious vigilance perspective posits that the common denominator is the evocation of exaggerated responses due to increased sensitivity to affective stimuli. Holbrook, Sousa and Hahn-Holbrook obtained support for their perspective in a number of studies. In their first two studies, for example, they demonstrated that participants primed with the threat of death made exaggerated ratings of all kinds of stimuli, such as sound and images. And in another study, they demonstrated that a subliminal threat manipulation that was unrelated to death, namely angry faces, also evoked worldview defence.

One kind of situation perceived by many people as threatening concerns negative experience with a personal edge. For example, your favourite football team loses, you fail your driving test, your annual appraisal at work takes a negative turn, your dinner guests do not like a dish you have put a lot of effort into. Such an outcome often evokes what is known as a self-serving bias, a mechanism you use to view yourself in a positive light. So the disappointing result is really the fault of the referee, the examiner, your boss or the cookbook. In positive situations, we frequently see the opposite: your successes are down to you and you alone, to your own efforts and abilities, not to others, to circumstances or to luck. Campbell and Sedikides (1999) argue that personal failure does indeed represent a threat to self-esteem. When factors exacerbating that threat were present, they found intensified self-serving bias. The situations in which this was the case included the following:

- Research participants believed that their experimental task was important.
- Participants were motivated to perform well.
- Failure was expected instead of success.
- The task was conducted in a competitive setting.
- Participants were male rather than female (we return to this in Chapter 5).
- Participants had an internal rather than an external locus of control (i.e. they felt in control of their own lives; we return to this in Chapter 4).

Such factors, also known as ego threats, can easily trigger aggression – especially in people with higher self-esteem (Baumeister, Smart & Boden, 1996).

In sum, threats can vary widely in their nature. The effects of what may, at first sight, appear trivial menaces – unfulfilled expectations, for example, or a dust mite in your bed – demonstrate that people are very sensitive to perceived threats. People's reactions to negative experiences of a more personal nature will generally be even stronger. After all, such situations dent one's own self-image or self-esteem. This is something that bothers people and will lead to attempts to repair the damage suffered. In the context of radicalization and terrorism, this means that human sensitivity to threats can easily make some of them opt for defensive and extreme behaviour with far-reaching consequences.

Social threats: an analysis

As mentioned, given our focus on radicalization and terrorism, we concentrate on threats in the interpersonal and intergroup domains. Riek, Mania and Gaertner (2006) present a classification of the most important types of threat. In the domain of intergroup relations, they make distinctions between realistic threats, symbolic threats and threats to group esteem. These can affect minority groups that feel threatened by the majority but also subgroups within the majority. In the latter case, they primarily affect groups with a low socioeconomic status, who may feel under threat from both minorities and the more 'élite' sections of society, such as the government, politicians and other authority figures. This can result in radicalization, both amongst minorities and within groups belonging to the majority. In the latter case, in recent years at least, that has mainly taken the form of right-wing radicalism. We also look at another form of perceived threat, perceived as emanating from the way societies are organized. In the case of Western societies, for example, this form is capitalist in nature, which is regarded as objectionable by some, especially by those on the extreme left of the political spectrum. For them, one possible solution is to seek the overthrow of the current system and its replacement with a new order with greater consideration for the dispossessed, for social justice, for small-scale economics and for the environment.

In their integrated threat theory, Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996) also draw a distinction between realistic and symbolic threats. Apart from the economic aspects of realistic threat (material factors such as jobs, homes and education), they also highlight physical elements related to safety and security: the extent to which people feel threatened by vandalism, aggression, crime and potential acts of terrorism. These factors receive somewhat less attention in older work on the effects of threat, but in the past decade they have very much come to fore in studies covering a number of Western countries, in particular their native majority populations (see D'Haenens & Bink, 2007). Later in this chapter, we too look at research homing in on this aspect of realistic threat.

One of the earliest analyses of threat in the interpersonal and intergroup domains was published by Sherif and Sherif (1969). Their realistic group conflict theory states that, when groups are competing for scarce resources, possible success by one group represents a threat to the other and so results in hostile attitudes on both sides. The resources in question can be material ones, such as money and income, but can also be more political in nature: power, control and the like. In cases of this kind, the groups are likely to perceive the threats as realistic, as they concern material matters and political influence.

To clarify the distinctions among the different categories, let us return to the specific forms of threat perceived by minority groups, as described in the previous chapter. One good example of a realistic threat is the socioeconomic threat experienced by some ethnic minorities. But threats can also arise out of conflicting values and attitudes. Many Muslims, for example, have an image of the West as immoral, decadent and lacking human warmth and solidarity. And some go even further, believing that the West opposes Islam and is out to destroy it. Such conflicting values, as well as the negative outlook to which they give rise, form the basis for symbolic threat.

Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) studied attitudes towards immigration in the U.S., Canada and Western Europe. Their findings showed that immigration attitudes are not strongly related to personal economic circumstances. Immigration attitudes were primarily determined by concerns about the cultural impact of the growing immigrant populations; their findings thus confirm the importance of symbolic threats in relations between groups.

Self-esteem relies heavily upon being part of a group with a positive view of itself; collective self-appreciation within the group bolsters a positive self-image on the part of individuals. This is a point we discuss in more detail in Chapter 6. For example, for many Germans, being German is closely associated with their own self-esteem. Good German performances in sport, culture or science cheer them, but bad news about Germany or their fellow countrymen is not so pleasant and can even cause hurt. For members of a minority group, it is often rather more difficult to form a good impression of their group. In many cases, it might even seem that the majority shows little respect for it.

These realistic, symbolic and group esteem threats can vary widely among groups, as well as among different minority groups. If religion is not central to a group's identity, for example, and if its religious norms are not that different from the majority's, it is less likely to become subject to a symbolic threat. So West Indians in the UK, say, who are predominantly Christian, will not perceive a symbolic religious threat as easily as Muslim Pakistanis might.

A substantial body of research has shown that people who perceive either symbolic or realistic threats emanating from other groups tend to form more

negative attitudes towards those groups. But people can also perceive threats associated with their position in society and the response to it on the part of the majority or the 'powers that be', politicians and public officials. This applies particularly to people in weaker socioeconomic positions; they are subject to negative stereotypes and frequently react with adverse responses. A lot of research in the U.S. (cf. Lott, 2002; see also Lott, 2012), for instance, indicates that members of the lowest social classes are widely regarded as having failed to seize the opportunities available to them because they lack initiative and enthusiasm. They are also viewed as dishonest, dependent, lazy, uninterested in education and promiscuous. Wider society considers the fact that they are poor as an individual problem, and as a result far more attention is paid to the behaviour of the poor than to social and economic conditions and circumstances that perpetuate poverty, inequality and exclusion. Notably, however, people who have personal contact with the poor are less likely to hold them responsible for their own lot.

As discussed earlier, stereotypes of this kind naturally colour attitudes towards individual members of lower social classes. Darley and Gross (1983) showed participants in their study a video of a young girl taking a test. By changing her clothes, providing information about her parents' jobs and other means, her apparent social class was changed for different viewer groups. Those who believed that she came from a lower social class felt that she performed less well in the test than those who thought she was from a higher social class. Lott (2002) also highlights the negative and discriminatory treatment of people in the lowest social classes; they often encounter antagonistic responses from members of higher classes. Specifically, Lott reports that they are insulted or ignored in shops, at school and in their contacts with government. She also argues that deprivation and discrimination across the fields of education, housing, healthcare, legal assistance, political representation and public policy serve only to reinforce the income disparities and associated factors, such as poor living conditions and health, burdening those in the lowest reaches of American society. It would not be going too far, we believe, to state that – on top of the stereotypes and discrimination – low incomes and all the limitations they bring with them represent a threat crossing the entire spectrum: partly realistic, partly symbolic and partly relating to group esteem. Viewed from this perspective, society, government and the political establishment do not provide enough opportunities. They have other values and priorities, which only enhance the sense that they discriminate against and look down on the poor. As Lott points out, the poor themselves attribute their situation primarily to societal factors, such as poor education, and to prejudice.

The additional threats associated with low social class, such as financial difficulties, bad housing and an unappealing living environment, poor health and an uncertain future, often bring other problems with them. Gallo,

Bogart, Vranceanu and Matthews (2005) report that men and women with a low socioeconomic status become embroiled in more interpersonal conflicts, both at home and at work, than those in higher socioeconomic groups. For women, moreover, low socioeconomic status went hand in hand with a lesser sense of control over their own lives and more tensions in their social relationships with others, with fewer positive feelings as a result. Less control among lower-class individuals is also an important theme in the integrative framework presented by Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt and Keltner (2012), which encompasses a large number of differences between social classes. Particularly relevant to our present concern are differences in personal control and vigilance to threat. Lower-class individuals will be more vigilant to threats in the environment because their environment is relatively often characterized by increased vulnerability and external threats. According to Kraus and colleagues (2012), the threats confronting lower-class individuals evoke a threat detection system that enables the organism to respond adaptively to all kinds of threats. The finding that lower-class children show elevated heart rate and blood pressure when presented with ambiguously threatening social scenarios provides some support for this hypothesis. The second difference, also supported by research, is that lower-class individuals experience less personal control, less freedom and limited influence over their lives. This difference in control also emerges out of the different life circumstances of lower- and upper-class individuals. As we shall see in Chapter 4, these perceptions of low levels of control also play a role in the context of radicalism and terrorism.

Finally, we turn to politically charged threats, particularly those associated with left-wing and right-wing radicalism. In extreme cases, these can give rise to terrorist groups or movements. Strong political opinions, whether on the left or the right, are often rooted in a system of fundamental values. In other words, one's views and attitudes concerning the way society is organized, the nature of its culture and all kinds of sociopolitical issues can be interpreted as expressions of an underlying set of personal values. One important theory in this field was developed by Schwartz (1994). He perceives human values as general goals providing us with a direction in life: to perform to the best of our ability, say, or to have as much fun as possible. By asking respondents from a wide variety of cultures and societies to state what mattered most to them, Schwartz was able to identify a number of important universal values. These, in turn, can be reduced to two basic types, or 'value dimensions'. One concerns openness to change versus conservation. The latter has characteristics such as opposing stimulation (excitement and challenges) and self-direction, with a preference for security, conformity and tradition. The other basic type contrasts 'self-transcendence' (associated with benevolence and universalism) with 'self-enhancement' (associated with power and achievement). Recently,

Schwartz and colleagues (2012) proposed a refined theory of basic individual values that distinguishes more motivational orientations and provides more heuristic and explanatory power.

People and societies all have their own preferred values. Some want to keep everything as it is or even return to some past ideal, whilst others are unhappy with the here and now and so strive for change and innovation. Similarly, attitudes towards the issue of human equality are fundamentally divided. Should the have-nots be given more help and support, or is it up to people to make the most of the hand they have been dealt? Leftist political preferences appear to be characterized by openness to change, with less interest in security, conformity and tradition, as well as by a bias in favour of equality over power and achievement. Rightist leanings, by contrast, are associated with a greater emphasis on security, conformity and tradition and on power and achievement rather than equality. Research by Evans, Heath and Lalljee (1996) in the UK supports the assumption that these factors or dimensions – material and social equality, as well as a desire for security, conformity and tradition – can accurately predict people's political party preferences.

If political radicalism – and in its wake terrorism – is partly a product of threats, then one key question has to be what constitutes a threat in the political arena? From what we have seen so far, one obvious answer is the attitudes and behaviour of political opponents, which represent both a realistic and a symbolic threat. Diametrically opposed views about the way society should be organized are often based on very different fundamental values. These different views also tend to have a whole range of material consequences, such as greater wealth and support for particular groups. Quite often symbolic aspects also play a role, such as possible restrictions on freedom of expression. And quite apart from the attitudes and behaviour of the opposing camp, of course, there is also the threat posed by established social and political structures. The left views capitalism and inequality as threats, whilst the right feels under threat from 'left-wing' achievements such as the welfare state. Moreover, right-wing radicalism in particular may be further nourished by additional threats: by a perception that the lower social classes are oppressed by the élite in society and – as discussed later in this chapter – the actual or supposed threats emanating from ethnic minorities. (See Box 3.2.)

Unfortunately, little is known about comparable threats that might induce a move into left-wing radicalism. Adverse circumstances, such as personal problems, might possibly play a part. Post (2005) describes a study of 227 German left-wing terrorists, which found that they had suffered plenty of misfortune in their lives. Twenty-five per cent had lost at least one parent by the age of 14, with the early death of a father appearing to have a particularly disruptive effect. Seventy-nine per cent reported intense social conflicts, usually with parents. A third had juvenile convictions, and there were high incidences of both school dropouts and failures in the workplace.

Box 3.2 Young right-wing radicals in Scandinavia

The right-wing radicalism of Scandinavian former neo-Nazis (Kimmel, 2007) provides a more concrete explanation of the way threats can be perceived. The majority of this group are young, male and from the lower social classes. Their perception of threat is largely a product of socioeconomic deprivation. Many of their fathers work in sectors that have suffered heavily as an effect of globalization and economic restructuring. Almost all of those who took part in Kimmel's study were 'downwardly mobile' and rarely or never in work. They found it very difficult to develop a clear class identity. A significant proportion had been bullied at school. Kimmel refers to them as 'alienated', a term that has frequently been applied to radical right-wingers, and in search of a masculine identity. Participants often described their first flirtation with Nazism as a means of expressing a growing anger and of fostering revenge fantasies. Not infrequently, they were introduced to the movement by friends or acquaintances. In this description, it is not hard to discern how deprivation, discrimination and isolation fuel perceived threats, which are both realistic (that of downward mobility) and symbolic (difficulty in sharing majority values). Group esteem threat is clearly present too. As one of the participants put it, 'Being a Nazi is probably the worst thing you can be in a country like Sweden'. The threats also resulted in greater uncertainty; many of the participants claimed to be 'in search' of something. We return to the aspects of anger and revenge later in this chapter. Interestingly, Nazi ideas of racial supremacy played only a modest role in the experience of group members. What really counted to them was an idealized vision of the man as protector of the family and the nation. Fundamentally, though, they had no clearly defined ideology.

Adverse circumstances may, of course, also feed right-wing radicalization. Ezekiel (2002) interviewed members of an American neo-Nazi group and found a gloomy picture. A large majority of the members had lost a father due to divorce or separation when they were young. Stepfathers tended to be rough and abusive. In the homes was poverty. Most of the members had left school early, had no jobs and no prospect of work. Social support was lacking. Ties to siblings, for example, tended to be weak or absent. Research by Lankford (2012) illustrates that adverse circumstances may also lead to more extreme behaviour in general. He compared suicide terrorists in the

U.S. – mostly desiring to coerce the U.S. government – and workplace, school and rampage shooters who attempted suicide during the period from 1990 to 2010 on a number of characteristics. Interestingly, the four types of offenders had prior to their attacks to a large extent similar personal problems, such as social marginalization, family problems, work or school problems and precipitating crisis events. The workplace shooters appeared most different from the other shooters; they were, for example, less involved in family problems. The similarity in personal problems suggests that these may be a root cause for all types of offenders.

Different threats can give rise to different forms of radicalism. As explained in Chapter 2, many Muslims living in the Western world experience deprivation, prejudice and discrimination, and these threats can result in religious radicalism. And in this chapter we have discussed how right-wing radicalism, too, arises in response to threats. In this case, they are associated with a perception that society and the government have no interest in the disadvantaged and so refrain from providing them with chances and opportunities. A significant added factor lies in the fact that minorities are regarded as a threat. Moreover, a weak social position is a threat in itself. For left-wing radicals, meanwhile, the threat lies in the established structure of society itself, and especially in its inherent inequality. These are all very different threats, but as we shall see in our discussion of their cognitive and emotional effects, they often have similar consequences.

Cognitive effects

In this section, we first consider perceived injustices and then look at negative attitudes and prejudices arising from realistic, symbolic and group esteem threats. At this stage, we are concerned primarily with intergroup threats emanating from minorities as experienced by the majority, as the converse form has already been covered at length in the previous chapter. We also discuss the important role played by education in shaping threats: often, there is a direct correlation between lower levels of education and greater prejudice. Finally, we turn our attention to threats associated with uncertainty. One effect of such threats can be that people's attitudes become more extreme.

Threats often have serious consequences. Concluding that one's own group is the subject of negative stereotypes or structural deprivation is a process wrought with highly evaluative judgements and feelings. To be more specific, reaching that conclusion will in itself often engender a sense of injustice, frustration, dissatisfaction and uncertainty. And in many cases these are hard to distinguish from the emotional effects. Negative stereotypes, for example, are often bound up with prejudice or negative emotions.

For this reason, we are not always able to draw a clear distinction between the two types in the following discussion.

Injustice

According to *equity theory*, how people respond to particular outcomes depends upon how just they consider these. One can speak of 'justice' when the results people experience are in equilibrium with the contributions they make or are capable of making (cf. Tyler & Smith, 1998). Obviously, what constitutes equilibrium in this sense is frequently highly subjective, with all kinds of personal and situational factors coming into play; a modest person is more likely to be satisfied with an outcome, whilst someone who has been treated less than fairly in the past will be particularly sensitive to injustice when a similar situation arises again. Injustice in this sense is linked to other factors, too, such as perceived socioeconomic discrimination; those affected feel that they are not rewarded commensurate to their efforts and achievements or that they are excluded from the labour market altogether, despite their potential. Similarly, adherents of a particular religious faith may sense injustice if their religion is subject to restrictions not imposed upon competing ones. The same applies if a group acquires a 'bad name' on grounds not related to its actual merits. These examples fall into the category known as *distributive* injustice. By contrast, *procedural* injustice relates to methods, processes and systems. In such cases, the means by which the outcome was arrived at are judged. A classic example is that if people have been given a say in a process, an outcome unfavourable to them will generally result in lower levels of dissatisfaction than in cases where they were not given a say. Organizations representing minority groups can serve a useful purpose in this regard. If consulted during a decision-making process, they can help to ensure that an unwelcome result or choice is not greeted with widespread resistance. Conversely, a lack of procedural justice can be expected to enhance the pain caused by adverse outcomes.

The principal emotions evoked by perceived injustice are anger and rage. We will go into their role at greater length later. For the time being, it is important simply to state that they are certainly not always expressed openly. After all, a public display of such feelings can provoke all kinds of counterforces, which only aggravate the situation rather than resolving it. But whether or not they are actually expressed, anger and rage can pave the way for protests and other forms of militant action.

The Moluccan terrorist attacks of the 1970s in the Netherlands could be interpreted as partly the result of a perceived lack of both distributive and procedural justice. The leader of the Free South Moluccan Youth in the Netherlands believed that her people had been abandoned and humiliated by the Dutch government. While the Netherlands was always one of the

first nations to speak out against other instances of injustice in the world, in this case it was unresponsive. The campaign against this supposed inaction began with peaceful demonstrations and petitions, but they produced no response (Rasser, 2005). This was clearly a case of a perceived lack of distributive justice but also one of a perceived lack of procedural justice. In the absence of any government engagement with the protest movement, some saw the path of violence as the only way forward. By the time the campaign of terror began, moreover, the impasse had lasted some 25 years. Some 12,500 Moluccans – former soldiers of the Dutch East Indies Army and their families – had come to Netherlands in the early 1950s after Indonesia gained its independence and now sought with the help of the Dutch to free their islands from what they regarded as Indonesian occupation of those islands. In the mid-1970s, many were still living in temporary 'reception' camps, refusing offers of permanent housing because they were still hoping to be repatriated to their homeland. There were heavy moral overtones to the situation too, with the Moluccans accusing the Dutch of breaching various ethical norms. Promises were not kept and the possibility – or otherwise – of repatriation were rarely or never discussed.

Perceived injustice, a sense of victimhood and the belief that you have been treated unfairly can have another important repercussion, one that may well have played a part in Moluccan response just described: they foster a feeling of entitlement to reparation. You have been wronged to such an extent that not only do you deserve to be compensated, you also feel you have the right to be more selfish than other people. In their research, Zitek, Jordan, Monin and Leach (2010) found widespread support for this standpoint. Participants asked to think about an event in their life that had evoked a sense of injustice become less willing to help a researcher with a simple task than those remembering a situation that had bored them. Other studies have also reported more selfish behaviour when participants are prompted into feelings of injustice. For example, they were less prepared to give blood, to do voluntary work or to save water in a drought by showering less frequently. The link between perceived injustice and selfish behaviour did not arise from anger or negative emotions in general but from a belief in entitlement to reparation. Being wronged gives you the right to demand positive outcomes or to avoid negative ones. And since you have that right, you can behave more selfishly and pay less attention to others' needs and interests. Zitek and colleagues (2010) also suggest that this process may partially explain the 'victim-to-perpetrator' cycle. If you are abused as a child, that can lead to more selfish and antisocial behaviour later in life. As far as radicalization and terrorism are concerned, it can thus be assumed that certain groups experiencing feelings of injustice come to believe that that entitles them to act more selfishly and antagonistically towards society.

Negative attitudes

Intergroup threats, whether realistic, symbolic or of the group esteem type, can be viewed as special cases of adverse events in people's lives. Such events often cause frustration and dissatisfaction, not to mention feelings of concern and anxiety. Beyond that, they can easily foster more aggressive emotions, like anger and rage, or indeed aggressive behaviour. Based on a review of the literature on this topic, Riek, Mania and Gaertner (2006) conclude that these three forms of intergroup threat reinforce hostile attitudes towards other groups. Research by McLaren (2003) illustrates this for instances of realistic and symbolic threat experienced by members of the majority group in 17 European countries, by examining their readiness to expel immigrants. He found that both realistic threats, in this particular case economic problems affecting fellow citizens, and symbolic threats, such as conflicting cultural and religious values, lay at the root of such willingness. As in the case of stereotypes just described, the hostile attitudes and aggressive feelings aroused by intergroup threats result in different and coloured perceptions of reality. (See Box 3.3.)

More recent research also addressed the consequences of realistic and symbolic threats as perceived by the majority population. Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie and Poppe (2008) surveyed a number of variables related to prejudice against Muslims, including threats, in more than 1200 ethnic Dutch secondary school pupils. More specifically, they investigated possible causes of prejudice, including past contact with Muslims, identification with the Netherlands, stereotypical attitudes towards Muslims and the extent to which their participants perceived two kinds of threat, realistic and symbolic. In addition, they analysed whether these attitudes and threats resulted in a greater degree of prejudice.

The methods used in this study provide a good example of how threats are measured. Symbolic threat was gauged by means of questions about the

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Box 3.3 Polarization, conflict and distorted reality

Other research paints a similar picture. In 1982, Israeli-backed forces massacred Palestinian civilians in refugee camps in Lebanon. Vallone, Ross and Lepper (1985) subsequently studied the responses of pro-Israel and pro-Arab viewers to the same television reports of the events. Both groups found the (identical) coverage biased but in opposite directions. Two parallel mechanisms appeared to be at work. First, both sides believed that the selection of images and choice of words used gave too much credence to the opponents' point of view. And second, both reported seeing more negative than positive information concerning their side of the story.

danger posed to Dutch identity by the presence of 'too many Muslims' and the extent to which Muslims pose a threat to Dutch standards, values and culture. To measure realistic threat, questions were put concerning difficulties experienced by the ethnic Dutch in finding jobs and homes due to the presence of Muslims and on increased unemployment.

Analysis of the data provided support for an explanatory model that we will here condense to its most important aspects. As expected, the extent of participants' identification with the Netherlands predicted the perception of symbolic threat, which in turn was associated with greater prejudice against Muslims. As the researchers pointed out, the public debate surrounding Muslims in the Netherlands tends to focus upon the supposed danger they pose to Dutch identity and culture. People who identify strongly with the Netherlands feel that Dutch beliefs and values are threatened by Islam and have therefore adopted a more hostile attitude towards its adherents. In the same public debate, Muslims are not presented so strongly as a realistic threat in the economic sense, that is, as important competitors on the labour market. In line with that observation, it was found that perceived symbolic threat was clearly experienced to a greater degree than its realistic counterpart. The more modest role played by realistic threat was also reflected in the fact that it did not correlate with prejudice against Muslims. In addition, greater contact with Muslims predicted fewer negative stereotypes, and that in turn was associated with less prejudice. In Chapter 2, we described the positive effect of contact in general terms, and this last finding confirms that in a specific context.

Van der Noll, Poppe and Verkuyten (2010) studied ethnic Dutch pupils' attitudes to Muslims living in the Netherlands. They found that youngsters who believed in a multicultural society were both more positive and more tolerant towards the latter group. These attitudes were measured by, for example, asking the children what they would think if their school appointed a Muslim teacher. This study also looked at the role played by threat, particularly that of the symbolic kind (threat posed to Dutch standards, values and culture), as well as realistic threats associated with security and safety. Pupils who had less contact with Muslims felt more threatened by them, primarily in the symbolic sense, whilst those who identified more strongly with being Dutch also perceived a heightened threat but in this case mainly to their own safety. That is, they were worried about crime, vandalism and terrorism. In both of these types of threat, there was a correlation with tolerance: respondents who felt more threatened by Muslims were less tolerant towards them.

The importance of symbolic threat is also highlighted in research by Strabac and Listhaug (2008), who analysed anti-Muslim prejudice in 30 European countries. They focused on the prevailing attitudes towards Muslims and distinguished two clusters of stereotypes. One concerns the supposed political and military threat posed by Islam to the non-Muslim world, with the other centring on Muslim culture and issues, such as the position of women and family life. On top of that, many Muslims still have very much

an immigrant status as a result of their less than successful integration into European society since the 1950s, and that also acts as a source of prejudice and discrimination. All in all, this represents plenty of fuel to feed symbolic threat. In 21 of the 30 countries surveyed, asking respondents whom they would not want as next-door neighbours revealed that prejudice against Muslims is greater than it is against immigrants in general. Education appears to be a significant determinant in this respect, especially in Western European nations: the higher the level of education of respondents, the lower the degree of prejudice they harbour with regard to Muslims.

The role of education

Hello, Scheepers and Sleegers (2006) investigated the role played by educational attainment levels in hostile attitudes and prejudice. In a study of young ethnic Dutch adults aged 18–27, they attempted to quantify the relationship between level of education and 'ethnic distance'. The latter was measured by asking respondents how they would react to varying degrees of ethnic minority representation, ranging from 'little' to 'substantial', in their neighbourhood, clubs and places of learning. Based on this and other measurements, the researchers found that young adults with higher levels of educational attainment were less inclined to keep their distance from minorities. Two factors appeared to explain this relationship: the realistic threat that the minorities were perceived to pose and authoritarianism. Respondents with higher levels of education were found to be less authoritarian and therefore less inclined to keep a distance with regard to minorities. However, perceived threat seemed to have the strongest effect. This factor also declines with higher levels of education, again leading to less distance with regard to ethnic minorities. In this respect, it should of course be realized that educational differences generally go hand in hand with other differences relating to people's living conditions and the neighbourhoods they live in. Less well off neighbourhoods often have more ethnic minority residents, making them more visible to the rest of the community, especially in the event of undesirable behaviour. Moreover, education is difficult to isolate from socioeconomic status in general. As pointed out earlier, a lower position in society is associated with a higher incidence of stressful experiences such as social conflict and financial hardship. These also represent a threat to people and can thus lead to aggression and a less positive attitude towards other groups. Consequently, poor education combined with low socioeconomic status can become a determinant of right-wing radicalism. Whereas Velasco González and colleagues (2008) found that realistic threats had no impact in this respect, Hello, Scheepers and Sleegers (2006) observed a strong effect. One possible explanation for this discrepancy may relate to the target groups concerned: it could be that ethnic minorities in general (the subject in Hello

and colleagues) engender competitive feelings more readily than do Muslims (the subject in Velasco Gonzàlez and colleagues), whose different religion and culture attract more attention than any realistic threat they might pose.

Plenty of other studies have found much the same relationship between educational attainment levels and prejudice. Wagner and Zick (1995), in research conducted in France, Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands and covering three dimensions of prejudice in relation to various ethnic groups, demonstrated that the better educated felt more positive about such minorities than those with lower levels of education. It has sometimes been asserted, however, that these are not 'real' correlations but a reflection of normative or socially desirable behaviour. The less well educated, it is argued, are less likely to be guided by such considerations and so tend to state their true personal opinions. This suggests that indirect attitude measures might result in findings different from those of direct measures. In the previous chapter, we mentioned such a measure: the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The 'bogus-pipeline' is another indirect measure. Wagner and Zick (1995) used the latter and found no support for the view that level of education was related to the tendency to provide socially desirable answers. (See Box 3.4.)

Box 3.4 The bogus pipeline

The bogus pipeline is an interesting example of a hidden tool, designed to establish what people really think. It takes the form of an impressive-looking device, which supposedly works in much the same way as a lie detector to reveal test subjects' true inner feelings. People are hooked up to it and asked about their thoughts on particular topics. And because the machine is so accurate, they are told, they have no choice but to be as truthful as possible. If you have something against West Indians, say, there is no point in hiding it because you will be unmasked as a liar. In the U.S., Carver, Glass and Katz (1978) used this device to test attitudes towards a disabled, a black and a 'normal' person. Participants not connected to it were more positive about the first two than the third. But once fitted with its 'sensors', they admitted that they viewed the black person in a more negative light than the 'normal' one. Their feelings towards the disabled person remained positive. This combination suggests that in the unconnected condition, the response to the black person was a socially desirable one; punctured once the machine came into play: their true feelings were negative. It also indicates that the original reactions to the disabled person were genuine; as a rule, there is no need to hide positive feelings.

The relationship between education and prejudice is also reflected in a difference in levels of educational attainment between people with extreme right-wing political views, who often display strong prejudices, and those on the far left of the spectrum. We will return to this topic in Chapter 5.

Threats that are perceived to emanate from minorities can thus radicalize attitudes towards those groups, particularly amongst people in the lower social classes with lower levels of educational attainment. Threats posed by wider society and the government, as described earlier, can radicalize those same people in a more general political sense. This is reflected in slogans such as 'We must turn the tide', 'Listen to the man in the street', 'Less talk, more action', 'The élite has too much power', 'Crack down on crime' and 'Aid money is wasted money'. If a country has visible ethnic minorities, these easily can find their way into this kind of radical right-wing rhetoric. The threats involved may vary, but the people concerned are to a large extent the same. Such thinking is also found in the description of the radical right provided by Rydgren (2007). Parties in this sphere, he says, are committed to the ethnic homogenization of their country and a return to traditional values. They also turn on élites, accusing them of internationalism and putting their own interests before those of the people.

Uncertainty

Probably due to a combination of threats, then, a lower socioeconomic status brings with it a feeling that you lack control over outcomes – positive or negative – associated with your work, income and living environment. And that creates uncertainty. Intergroup threats of the kind experienced by minority groups can also easily have the same effect: uncertainty about who you are, what you should believe, how to behave, what norms are appropriate and how your life will or should unfold. Reliable certainties are few and far between, and you face a multitude of choices. The experience of deprivation and discrimination raises doubts about your self-image and the course your life should take. Differences of religion and culture cause you to question your beliefs and conduct. A perceived negative image of your group feeds hesitation about your personal and group identity, as well as misgivings for the future. Research into the effects of perceived discrimination shows that they can be sweeping and fundamental; discrimination is a powerful form of threat, probably associated most closely with threats related to group esteem. Metastereotypes relating to the discriminating majority, as described in Chapter 2, are strongly negative: 'They don't like us' or even 'They hate us'. Vedder, Sam and Liebkind (2007) studied the impact of the discrimination experienced by ethnic Turkish adolescents in several northwest European countries, including Germany, France and the Netherlands. They found that discrimination limited both psychological adaptation, as

shown by the incidence of such conditions as depression, sociocultural adaptation and problems at school. However, these consequences were favourably influenced by positive attitudes towards host and native cultures alike. This echoes a frequently observed finding: in general, a bicultural identity correlates with higher levels of well-being (for a meta-analysis of this relationship, see Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind and Vedder (2001) note that the importance of ethnic identity as a defining characteristic of a group means that pressure to assimilate and the feeling of being forced to give up that identity can lead to anger, depression and sometimes violence. Immigrants who are prevented by dispersal policies from forming support networks and ethnic communities may also suffer problems as a result. (See Box 3.5.)

Box 3.5 Diversity and stereotype change

Scholars agree that diversity is endemic in modern society but disagree whether this is beneficial. Some assert that a variety of distinct cultural, social, ethnic and religious identities contributes to positive intergroup attitudes, whereas others sketch more gloomy prospects for the social cohesion of a society and the well-being of its inhabitants. Crisp and Turner (2011) offer a solution to this dilemma and present a model that can explain both effects. They assert that, for the promotion of more positive intergroup attitudes, the experience of social and cultural diversity must take a form that *provokes* stereotypical expectations; that is, people must develop doubts about their stereotypes. However, they will engage in so-called inconsistency-resolution processes only if they have sufficient motivation and ability to do so (see also Chapter 2). Motivation may be low, for example, because they are not interested in the other persons, and ability may be insufficient because of time pressure. When the frequency of diversity experiences is high, inconsistency resolution may often occur under the right conditions, and those elaborative processing experiences will result in the ability to automatically inhibit the influence of stereotypical knowledge under a variety of judgemental conditions. Crisp and Turner conclude that the experience of stereotypically challenging diversity has benefits not only for intergroup relations but also for other domains that require inconsistency resolution. They underpin this conclusion with research illustrations. It has been found, for example, that a particular aspect of multicultural experience, spending time abroad, was related to increased creativity. Probably, adaptation to a new culture leads to new modes of thinking and the resolution of new inconsistencies that foster creativity.

That intergroup threats as experienced by minority groups can easily result in uncertainty is illustrated by Staub (2011). As he notes, Muslims are an impoverished minority in the Netherlands, living in a society and culture very different from their own, exemplified by the position of women, views on homosexuality and the importance of religion. Fathers have lost their traditional authority in the family, which endangers the transmission of Muslim culture and religion. Muslims belong to a varying extent to the Muslim world but also to the challenging Dutch or Western culture. One important result of these contradictory positions is insecurity.

Experienced discrimination may also result in support for political or terrorist violence, as found by Victoroff, Adelman and Matthews (2012). In one of their studies, they included European Muslims, specifically Muslims in Great Britain, France, Germany and Spain. Participants were asked whether suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified to defend Islam. The endorsement that suicide bombing can sometimes be justified was 25 per cent. Participants were also asked about a bad experience due to race, ethnicity or religion; 2 per cent reported such a bad experience. This discrimination factor was related to increased endorsement of suicide bombing as justified.

Uncertainty has a range of effects. In respect of health and well-being, for example, a European comparative study found that greater uncertainty is related to a higher incidence of depression and more health-related complaints in general (Wardle et al., 2004). Other significant effects have also been found. Highly relevant here is Kay's compensatory control theory, a functionalist model of ideology, proposing that when people experience lack of control (which may occur in various domains), they embrace ideologies that alleviate that lack of control (Kay & Eibach, 2013). Lack of control seems to be rather similar to uncertainty. Compensatory control theory distinguishes three types of perceived control: in people's personal life, in society and in religion. These types of control are substitutable; the lack of personal control can be, at least in part, compensated by religious or societal control. An important determinant of people's use of ideologies as compensatory control is the fit between the ideology and the control problem to be solved. Kay and Eibach give the example of supernatural control that seems to be a better solution in case of natural disasters than an ideology of personal or government control. A number of studies have supported the theory.

Kay, Gaucher, Napier, Callan and Laurin (2008), for example, investigated the consequences of a perceived lack of personal control, the belief that you have lost grip on your social environment and destiny and that the world around you is chaotic and random. They posited that, out of a strong need to regain personal control and certainty, people in this lack-of-control situation increase their trust in and esteem for external systems of control, such as religion and the church, or government and the state. Doing so

allows them to compensate for their own failure to exert control; the church and state offer them security and certainty. In contrast, those with greater personal control and assurance have less need of such beneficent structures. It should be noted here, though, that to fulfil this role, a state must be one that is perceived as serving its people. A state that is ambivalent or hostile towards its subjects cannot provide them with the certainties they are looking for. The results of five separate studies offered support for this hypothesis. To take an example, in the first experiment, participants were asked to think back to a positive event in their lives, over which they either did or did not have control. That manipulation was found to clearly influence the perception of personal control. Next, they were questioned on their belief in God, as creator of both the universe and life on earth and as a controlling deity, intervening in events in this world. The most significant result to emerge from this experiment was that, compared with participants who felt they had more personal control, participants with a lower sense of personal control were one and a half times more likely to believe in a controlling God but not in a creator God. Similarly, in a later experiment, it was shown that participants with a low sense of personal control expressed more support for their government. This pattern has also been found in intercultural research. Particularly in countries with little or no corruption, lack of personal control is coupled with a desire for greater government control. In Chapter 7, we present more details and applications of Kay's compensatory control theory.

Governments can exploit this mechanism to induce fear into the population. Willer (2004) investigated the link between official terror warnings in the U.S. and the popularity of President George W. Bush in the period 2001–2004 and found it to be positive. That is, warnings increased support for the president. Even if that effect was unintentional, Bush most probably did benefit from it.

Religious fanaticism partly emerges from a strong need for personal control and certainty. If these are lacking, external systems such as religion and the church can boost people's confidence. Placing greater trust in a god or faith that offers stability and assurance is one way of dealing with feelings of uncertainty. Kay, Gaucher, McGregor and Nash (2010) mention research indicating that threatening exposure to a situation over which participants were able to exercise only limited control – specifically, a difficult statistical problem – increased their determination to live in accordance with their religious beliefs. The source of the uncertainty can thus lie in a domain quite different from that in which efforts are made to dispel it. After all, it seems surprising that the potential inability to solve a statistical problem should result in a reinvigoration of faith. Moreover, the participants in this experiment also became more prepared to belittle other religions and to push their own beliefs to the fore. Even their support for religious warfare increased.

This indicates that personal uncertainty and a lack of control can enhance people's conviction that their own religion is superior.

The role of personal uncertainty in the process of radicalization of Muslim youth has been investigated by Doosje, Loseman and van den Bos (2013). In their study among Islamic youth living in the Netherlands, they also introduced two other factors discussed earlier (perceived injustice and perceived intergroup threat), and they presented evidence that a combination of these three factors contribute to support for a radical belief system. That system contains a number of elements among which are the perceived illegitimacy of Dutch authorities and feeling alienated and disconnected from Dutch society. This belief system in turn predicts positive attitudes towards violent behaviour by other Muslims and own violent intentions.

In a similar study Doosje, van den Bos, Loseman, Feddes and Mann (2012) used the same variables but focused on the determinants of the susceptibility for adopting right-wing attitudes and behaviours. Participants were young ethnic Dutch people who categorized themselves as 'non-Muslim'. Applying a somewhat different model the investigators found that perceived injustice, perceived group threat, relative deprivation and identification with the Netherlands are important background determinants of a right-wing belief system. Personal uncertainty was not a relevant variable. Interestingly, whereas in the study among Muslim youngsters, social disconnectedness and perceived distance to other people contributed to Islam-motivated violence and own violent intentions, they did not in this study. The investigators suggest that for members of the Islamic minority group, social disconnectedness and a perceived distance from other people may be more relevant variables in their lives than for members of the Dutch majority group.

To explain terrorism Kruglanski and colleagues (2013) apply the encompassing variable *quest for significance*, a general motivational force. According to them, various other labels, such as esteem, competence, achievement or control, have been used for this variable. Individuals seek to attain and control what is important for them, and that is most often culturally determined. Kruglanski and colleagues mention a number of examples of significance loss, such as failure in an important pursuit, severe humiliation and disrespect, and 'Islamophobia' experienced by Muslim immigrants to Europe. Significance loss may arise for rather personal reasons, for example marital problems, that are unrelated to main threats to significance, such as realistic and symbolic threats. The goal of searching for and finding significance is particularly steered by a relevant ideology informing individuals what to do in order to attain significance. Religion may provide such an ideology and in this way lead to terrorism. In Chapter 7, we extensively discuss this ideology variable. Kruglanski's focus on this significance framework highlights a highly important process but pays limited attention to other important processes, such as frustration-aggression mechanisms.

Emotional effects

Having looked at the cognitive effects of threat, we now turn to the associated emotional aspects. In particular, we explore those relevant to radicalization and terrorism as well as the aggression and desire for revenge that threats can trigger. The latter are behavioural tendencies rather than emotions, but emotions such as anger and rage play a very important role in them. It is also important to keep in mind that the relationship between cognitions and emotions is a two-way street. A sense of injustice is often formed in tandem with anger, for example, and that anger can reinforce a subsequent experience of injustice. In the following sections, we will in turn look at fear, moral emotions, anger, contempt, aversion and hate, and then at the behavioural tendencies aggression and revenge.

Fear

Fear or worry is one of the emotions that can be prompted by threat. It generally results in a desire to escape a threatening situation, if at all possible, and is often accompanied by passivity. Someone who is afraid of a particular group that poses a threat would rather avoid its members than confront them. There are plenty of possible reasons for this, some of which we have mentioned or implied already. Examples are attitudes or thoughts such as 'They don't like us', 'They are different from us' and 'It's hard to make contact'. Fear can exacerbate a group's seclusion and isolation. As described in the previous chapter, personal contacts are often strained. Moreover, such isolation can be reinforced by a comparable attitude on the part of the 'threatening' group.

Moral emotions

Several authors have highlighted the role of so-called moral emotions. Some explore radicalization and terrorism as a perceived moral duty (see, for example, Hafez, 2006; Moghaddam, 2005; Post, 2005). This makes them an interesting subject in the context of radicalization. Haidt (2003) defines moral emotions as sentiments invoked either by behaviour seen as immoral or by behaviour considered morally beneficial. In the first case, we *disapprove* of a specific behaviour; the second involves behaviour we *admire* and *commend*. Moral emotions of the former kind include those associated with condemnation, in particular anger, rage, contempt and aversion. All these emotions are powerful with the potential to directly affect behaviour. They emerge not only in situations of realistic threat but also in situations involving symbolic threats of the kind discussed earlier, which often have moral aspects. These moral emotions can help to ensure that people act in accordance with ethical

values and codes, something that is of paramount importance to positive coexistence and the maintenance of a peaceful society.

Particularly in complex and heterogeneous societies, however, groups do not always share the same morality. All too often, each group believes that its own morality is better than everybody else's, which can incite fierce moral emotions in intergroup confrontations involving moral issues. In the Western world, homosexuality is one example of an issue about which Muslim minorities and many majority groups have divergent moral outlooks. In such a context, dogmatically formulated opinions on either side can trigger anger, contempt and aversion. Recent research by Cole Wright, Collum and Schwab (2008) shows that the moralization of a topic or dispute distances the two sides and erodes their tolerance of one another. In our view, it is the resulting arousal of contempt and aversion, and above all anger, that makes moralizing one's own position and that of others so influential in processes of polarization and radicalization. The message of this story is that, partly due to the emotions at play, differences of opinion on ethical issues can impair intergroup relations, opening the way to conflict.

Anger

Each of the moral emotions mentioned above deserves more attention. Anger can provoke the harm or humiliation of those deemed to have acted immorally, or to have espoused immorality (Izard, 1977), but there is more. More broadly, anger and rage triggered by the actions or opinions of another group often provoke a desire on the part of the offended group – or a section of it – to somehow damage, punish or 'get even with' the culprits. That impulse is partly a consequence of the belligerence tied up in vehement emotions; anger brings with it a tendency to behave aggressively towards those considered responsible for inducing it. A less obvious aspect of this process is that it changes the way we process information (Rydell et al., 2008). Anger generates tension and arousal, and these can distort or simplify our aggression-related interpretation of information. As a result, we see things in a superficial, less systematic way. We become less searching, less willing or able to think about the situational aspects of a confrontation, less capable of considering alternatives and less prepared to see things from the other point of view. Anger also means we are more prepared to take risks. In this state, a mental cost-benefit analysis of the conflict is likely to favour options that involve greater risk. In short, tension, arousal, superficial information processing and suppressed risk aversion often combine to escalate confrontations and conflicts and can turn anger into rage. In this book, we treat anger and rage as two different but related emotions, rage being considered a more intense form of anger. In other words, the distinction is based on a matter of degree and not on kind.

People can also be angry with their own group or community because, for example, they have the impression that people in the lower reaches of the society have a disadvantaged position that they consider undeserved. People identified as disadvantaged group can be people from minorities or people from their own national or ethnic group. This kind of situation can also induce feelings of guilt. That, at least, is the conclusion we can draw from research by Leach, Iyer and Pedersen (2006) into the effect on white Australians of realizing that they enjoy a privileged position compared with the Aboriginal population. Those conscious of that situation felt anger and guilt about the unfair treatment. Anger, especially, was linked to a willingness to take political action on the issue. From these and similar results, such as those pertaining to the inequality of African Americans, we can reasonably assume that left-wing extremism stems in part from anger and guilt about inequalities in society. Our previous observation that this form of extremism tends to be linked more closely to higher than to lower educational achievement fits that argument. A better education usually means a more privileged position in society and therefore greater inequality in relation to those at the bottom of the social ladder. Leach and colleagues did indeed find a positive correlation between respondents' level of education and their awareness of their own group's privilege.

Aggression and revenge

As already established, realistic, symbolic and group esteem threats can all result in perceived injustice, with anger as an accompanying emotion. In many cases, they also lead to frustration and negative affect or dissatisfaction. And here, too, anger is usually involved. The uncertainty associated with threats generally causes negative emotional reactions and can thus reinforce anger. An important insight into how threats can result in aggression, by way of anger and rage, is provided by Berkowitz (1990). Aversive negative events result in negative affect, which in turn activates thoughts, memories and physiological responses linked to one another in an *associative network*. Once one element in that network has been triggered, the activation spreads across its connections so that linked elements become active one after the other. In an initial phase, two types of response are activated simultaneously: 'fight', which is associated with aggressive thoughts, feelings and motor tendencies; and 'flight', associated with escape. The first of these is linked to rudimentary anger, the other to rudimentary fear. The strength of the responses will depend upon the situation and person in question. In a subsequent phase, cognitive considerations of a higher order come into play. You start to use your so-called common sense. What has happened? What are the effects? And what is the best thing to do now? Answering these questions can change the rudimentary emotional responses. However, this

second phase does not always occur. For example, the emotional responses may be so strong that the second phase is suppressed. Aggressive tendencies arising out of hostile contacts with others, say, can be further hardened by other factors (Miller, Pedersen, Earleywine & Pollock, 2003).

A classic example of this is the so-called weapons effect. If a weapon can be seen in a particular situation, for instance in a photograph, parts of the network related to aggression will be especially stimulated. This happens because weapons are associated with aggression. The result is that merely seeing one can exacerbate aggressive behaviour. Moreover, aroused or activated aggression can be directed at targets that have nothing to do with its causes. This is known as displaced aggression, and it will be intensified if the secondary target adds to the provocation in any way. A man who has been reprimanded at work might kick the dog when he gets home, but he will kick it even harder if it blocks his way to the living room. As this phenomenon indicates, the repercussions of threat can spread well beyond its sources. An example can be found in work by Miller and Bugelski (1948), who frustrated their participants by failing to deliver a promised treat; as a result, they became more critical of Japanese and Mexicans. Berkowitz (1990) made participants sit with an outstretched, unsupported arm, causing physical discomfort. This resulted in more negative judgements of a third person. Threats (such as frustration and discomfort) can thus intensify hostility and aggression towards other groups, not just the entity or person responsible for the problem. So British Pakistanis, for instance, might become antagonistic towards West Indians or other minorities as well as the ethnic British population they view as threatening them. The greater the blame attributed to these source groups, the stronger the effect will be. Consequently, displaced aggression can further sour the overall social climate.

Similarly, acts of terrorism – a very different kind of threat – can produce behaviour and attitudes not directly related to their immediate cause and effect. Echebarria-Echabe and Fernandez-Guede (2006) showed this in a study of responses to the 2004 Madrid train bombings. Before and after the attacks, they gathered data from two sample groups on authoritarianism (a variable we will return to in Chapter 5), anti-Semitism, anti-Arab attitudes and political opinions. Given the perceived threat highlighted by the bombings, the Spanish respondents were expected to express more hostile sentiments and more defensive views in their wake. And this was indeed found to be the case. After the attacks, the Spaniards polled had become considerably more authoritarian and conservative, less liberal in their political outlook and more hostile towards Arabs and Jews. That last shift, towards greater anti-Semitism, is hard to define as a direct and logical response to the attacks, which were carried out by Islamist terrorists. Most likely, it is a clear example of displaced aggression and hence of the more general effect a perceived threat can have. As pointed out earlier, lower socioeconomic

status and the pattern of supposed threats it brings with it – from social conflict to financial constraints – can also exacerbate hostility towards other groups, even though they have nothing to do with those threats as such.

Meanwhile, the group or groups actually considered responsible will generate even stronger emotions: anger and rage and usually a concomitant desire to take revenge. In fact, revenge is often considered a primary motivating factor for potential and actual terrorists (Silke, 2008). This is not only because it channels powerful feelings of aggression but also because it serves other purposes as well. As Cota-McKinley, Woody and Bell (2001) note, revenge is seen as righting the supposed wrong, as restoring the avenger's dignity ('I'm not someone you can just walk over') and as a deterrent to future injustice ('They'll think twice before trying that again'). Such stimuli are so powerful and visceral that they can make a person go so far as to put their own integrity, good name and safety on the line. Silke (2008) describes research in which participants could make more money through deception but were fined if that was discovered. (See Box 3.6.) The 'honest' participants were always prepared to impose those penalties, even if that ate into their own earnings from the task. Cota-McKinley and colleagues investigated determinants of revenge and of vengeful feelings by presenting hypothetical scenarios likely to arouse participants, then asking them to complete a 'revenge' questionnaire. Confirming other research in this field, the responses revealed that men are more vengeful than women and that the young are more so than the old. These findings reflect the prototypical view of terrorists as mainly comprising young men. The same study also indicated that a more literal interpretation of the Old and New Testaments was associated with a more positive attitude towards revenge. Cota-McKinley and fellows interpreted this in terms of another correlation, found earlier, between the conception of God as 'master and judge' and the acceptance of revenge. Here a link can perhaps be found between religious fundamentalism in general – and more specifically Islamic fundamentalism – and the approbation of revenge and vengeful feelings.

Contempt and disgust

Contempt for another person or group can also contribute to escalating situations, especially when issues of morality are involved. From the moral high ground, it is easy to look down on others. According to Tangney, Stuewig and Mashek (2007), contempt is less likely than anger to induce corrective interventions. This difference is also stressed by Fischer and Roseman (2007). They showed that anger can be seen as an 'attack' emotion, aimed at attacking the other person in order to improve one's outcome, whereas contempt is an 'exclusion' emotion, aimed at excluding the other person from one's social relations. Anger reactions may often result in reconciliation and

Box 3.6 How useful is revenge?

Revenge, they say, is sweet. And this is probably one of the reasons people desire it: you think it will make you feel better. But that may not necessarily be the case, according to a study in the U.S. by Carlsmith, Wilson and Gilbert (2008). They organized a money-based game, set up in such a way that it looked as if one of the players was encouraging the others to work together to achieve the optimum result for all. In actual fact, though, that player was only pursuing his own gain. Some of the other participants were given the opportunity to punish him financially for his deceit – which they did. Others were not given that chance. After the game, it was found that those who had been able to take their revenge thought more about the trickster than the others, which caused negative feelings. But everyone in that group believed – wrongly, as the experiment showed – that their feelings would have been more negative had they not had the chance to avenge the deception. In short, revenge does not make you feel better – although people do not realize that. The results are shown in Figure B3.6, based upon the data reported by Carlsmith, Wilson and Gilbert (2008, p. 1322).
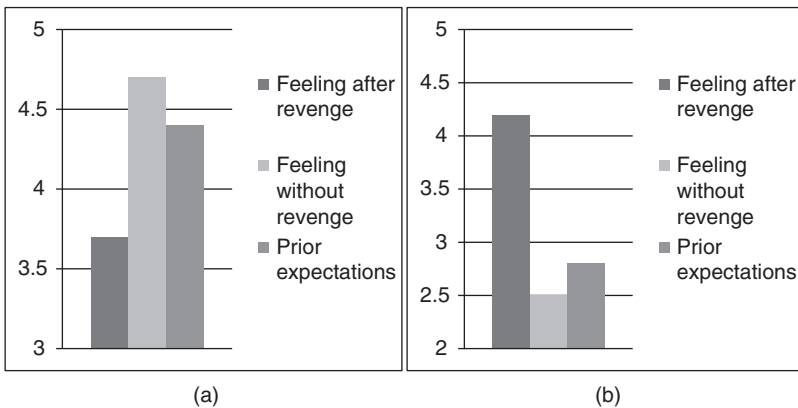
Figure B3.6 (a) Expected and actual feeling after taking or not taking revenge (1 = negative; 7 = positive); (b) how much participants thought about the subject of the revenge afterwards (1 = not at all; 7 = a lot).

improvement of the relationship, whereas contempt starts with derogation and tends to develop in long-term rejection with the goal to socially exclude the other person. Another difference, stressed by Fischer and Roseman, is that anger and contempt often have a different history with anger arising

in intimate settings, allowing some control over the other person, and contempt occurring in less intimate settings with less control and more negative beliefs about that person.

Disgust – a more extreme form of contempt levelled against an individual or group – is different from anger in a similar way as contempt; here again, moral superiority and distance are the key elements, not aggression. But these sentiments differ from contempt in that scorn is less prominent, not disparaging in nature. Miller (1997) lists a number of factors that often result in disgust, amongst them hypocrisy, betrayal and cruelty. This emotion is coupled with rejection of the object or person triggering it and is also associated with stereotyping and discrimination when invoked by particular individuals or groups (see also Chapter 6). Hodson and Costello (2007) measured receptiveness to interpersonal disgust amongst Canadian students by asking them if, for example, they would wear somebody else's clean clothes or sit in a warm seat just vacated by a person they did not know. Those respondents unwilling to do such things appeared to be primarily concerned with their own protection: as far as possible, they tried to avoid risk and danger. Consequently, they held more negative opinions about members of other groups, impelled by the notion that you never know what they have in store for you. These findings showed a correlation between disgust and more hostile attitudes towards immigrants, foreigners and groups considered 'socially deviant', such as AIDS patients and homosexuals. In short, anger, contempt and disgust serve to protect the supposedly superior standards and values espoused by one's own group, with anger in particular incorporating the potential to encourage hostility towards other groups and even attacks against them.

Hate

In addition to the preceding emotions, Loza (2007) also mentions hate. Several authors have directly associated this particular sentiment with Islamic extremism. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) state that it can play an important role in extended forms of antagonism and may result in the so-called dehumanization of the opponent (see also Chapter 7). Hate is also bound up with a conviction that the other group, as a whole, is essentially bad.

Hate – defined as lasting and intense disgust with another individual or group – plays a central role in the processes of radicalization and the path to terrorism. Indeed, it can be viewed as their catalyst and driving force. Sternberg (2003) breaks it down into three components with their own emotional associations: (1) increased distance from the hated person or group, prompted by aversion; (2) fear and anger as products of the threat believed to emanate from that individual or group; and (3) contempt for the individual or group.

Following the events of 11 September 2001, we see a growing realization that hate is also an important motivation for such terrorist attacks. It also began to gain greater coverage in the psychological literature (see e.g. Sternberg, 2004). Many of the topics covered in his book are linked to hate. Examples include effects such as increased intergroup distance (thinking in terms of 'us-and-them'), moral exclusion of other groups, the development of increasingly more extreme images of other groups. Emotions such as disgust and contempt, as well as the dehumanization of particular groups and their members, can also be related to hate. Interestingly, the same literature also highlights the important role played by threat – specifically, the belief that you are threatened by others (Baumeister & Butz, 2004; Berkowitz, 2004; Sternberg, 2004). In addition, this body of work reveals that people tend to justify their own violent behaviour by treating it first and foremost as an attempt to reinstate what is 'right' (Baumeister & Butz, 2004).

One interesting contribution in this relatively new field of research comes from the perspective of clinical psychology (Beck & Pretzer, 2004). These investigators focus upon the cognitive automatisms linked to anger and hate, which distort the perception of reality in various ways and can have an escalating effect. For example, events come to be seen from a one-sided, self-centred point of view, and the frequency and extent of the behaviour regarded as antagonistic are exaggerated. In short, a person imbued with anger and hate has a more biased view of reality. All of these mechanisms have an intensifying effect, which can contribute to radicalization.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have described the nature of threat, including some examples of the type of situations in which people feel threatened – from experiencing unfulfilled expectations to a confrontation with a repulsive insect. Research shows that people can be highly sensitive to such seemingly harmless or minor threats. We have also looked at concrete negative outcomes with a personal dimension, such as discovering that you are not as intelligent as you thought. These often motivate people to seek to enhance their self-esteem. Given their role in radicalization and terrorism, we have discussed interpersonal and intergroup threats in greater detail and distinguished realistic, symbolic and group esteem threats. We then described how these three forms of threat, when emanating from a majority group, can affect minorities. Particularly for those in a weak socioeconomic position, threats with a radicalizing effect can also come from government and the 'powers that be'. Moreover, those in the lower reaches of society are often subject to discrimination from the more comfortable majority, and they consider certain minorities threatening. In addition, we have turned our attention to threats of a political nature as they relate to radicalism on both

the left and the right. These include attitudes towards political opponents derived from fundamental values, which can entail both realistic and symbolic threats.

Threats associated with established societal structures also play an important role. Different forms of radicalism, such as Islamic and left- and right-wing radicalism, are thus engendered by threats that are very different in substance. The effects of those different threats share many characteristics, however, as is apparent from our extensive discussion of the cognitive and emotional effects of threat. One of the primary cognitive consequences of intergroup threat is perceived injustice; this applies to both distributive and procedural injustice. Failings on either front usually trigger a sense of injustice, and that can lead to a feeling of greater entitlement to a positive outcome, a feeling so great that it can feed selfish and antagonistic behaviour. Next we looked in detail at majority prejudice and hostility towards minorities as a product of intergroup threat. Education appears to be an important factor in this relationship, with low levels of educational attainment often going hand in hand with greater prejudice. One significant and widespread effect of threat is uncertainty: people are not sure what to do in the face of a perceived threat because they have too little grip on a world around them that comes across as chaotic and unpredictable. This tends to be frustrating and can awaken a deep-seated need for control and assurance. This can in turn encourage people to place greater trust in and display greater esteem for external systems of control such as the church and religion, government and the state. This makes their opinions on such matters more extreme in the process.

Finally, we explored the emotional effects of threat – fear, anger and so on. Anger, in particular, can cause aggression and detrimentally affect the way we process information. It may also kindle a desire to take revenge against the individuals or groups deemed to be the source of the threat. We also discussed so-called moral emotions, which are elicited by behaviour regarded as immoral or which promote moral conduct. These emotions include feelings associated with the judgement of others: anger, contempt and aversion are good examples. They are particularly likely to arise in the face of symbolic threats, which often have a moral dimension. The last emotion we described, hate, seems to play a particularly important role in motivating acts of terrorism.

Figure 3.1 presents a summary of the present chapter in the context of the larger framework presented in the first chapter. The different forms of threats are mentioned at the left of the figure. Threats have a number of cognitive and emotional consequences that may lead to polarization and radicalization. The experience of a threatening environment can also lead to social identity processes. These will be discussed in Chapter 6, but first we turn our attention to other factors relevant to the social context of radicalization and terrorism: culture, social climate and catalyst events.
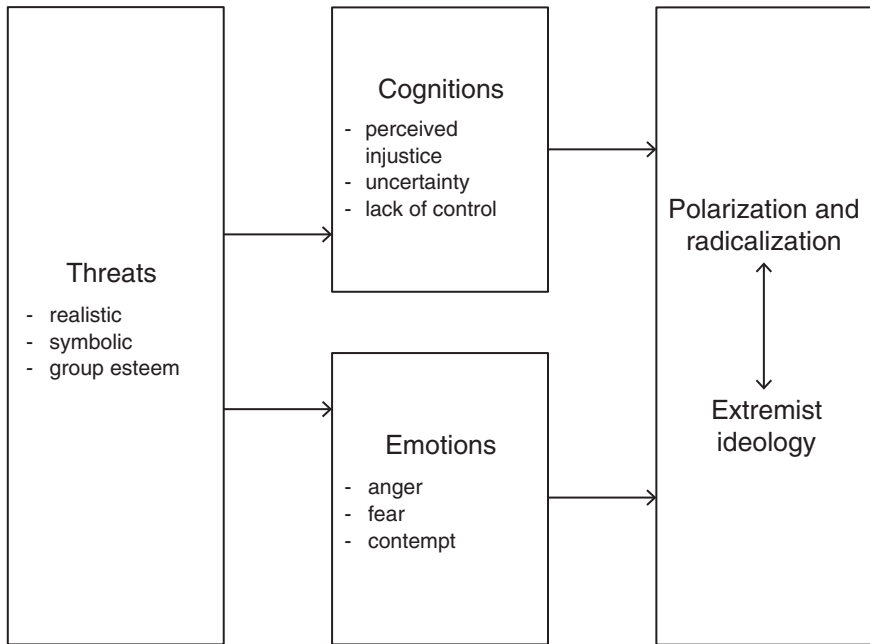
Figure 3.1 Threats and their consequences.

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4 Culture, social climate and catalyst events

Introduction

Until now we have concentrated on prejudice, deprivation and discrimination as potential radicalizing factors for affected groups. In this chapter, we explore three more aspects that may play a contributory role: culture, social climate and catalyst events. Research has shown that a person's native culture, or the cultural values and attitudes they subscribe to, can play a role in processes of radicalization. We are particularly concerned with the specific aspects of culture and cultural values that influence such processes indirectly. We discuss a variety of specific cultural values, such as the power differentials within a society. Social climate is related to economic as well as social circumstances, and it is the second factor we will discuss. Finally, we will turn our attention to catalyst or amplifying events, such as violence directed against a relative or acquaintance, which can encourage or magnify radicalization and extremism.

Culture

In this section, we examine the role of specific cultural values, such as hierarchy, fatalism, violence, honour and uncertainty avoidance, in radicalization. Next, we will examine more general, transnational political-cultural notions. The internationally held views of a political or religious ideology during a particular historical period can affect its appeal to adherents. Finally, we look at the effects of cultural variables such as language and symbols. It appears that these can influence the culture-dependent outlook of bicultural individuals, making their views more or less extreme in the process.

Cultural values

Cultural values often reflect the structural characteristics of a society, for example its perspective on hierarchy or power differentials. In societies

where there are large power differentials, these will usually be viewed by most of its members as reflecting a 'natural' state of affairs. Moreover, these kinds of structural characteristics can be found in many different spheres within society, including family life, clubs and societies, the government, education and businesses. This means that, from early childhood, people are imbued with standards and values that correspond across many areas of life.

Power asymmetry, or power distance (cf. Hofstede, 1980), is one of the most important cultural values or dimensions of a society, since it determines its attitude towards equality, inequality and hierarchy. Eastern cultures are generally more unequal than Western ones, and inequality is also valued more positively in these cultures. Evidence of this difference can be found in a study by Bond, Wan, Leong and Giacalone (1985), involving a vignette in which a boss criticized and insulted subordinates. Participants from Hong Kong found this behaviour far more acceptable than those from the United States and also formed a more positive impression of the boss. Jeffries, Hornsey, Sutton, Douglas and Bain (2012) collected data in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States on the one hand, and on the other hand in Hong Kong and Mainland China, and found similar differences. The measurement of power distance included items such as, 'People are better off not questioning the decisions of those in authority' and indicated a much higher level of power distance in the Chinese cultures than in the Western cultures.

Güss, Tuason and Teixeira (2007) emphasize the role of hierarchical values in Arab countries in relation to terrorism: these values encourage obedience to leaders in all domains, making people more susceptible to radicalization by extreme leaders. Gelfand, LaFree, Fahey and Feinberg (2013) also predicted a relationship between power distance and indicators of terrorism but did *not* find it. With questions from surveys, they assessed power distance during the period from 1970 to 2007 in 21 nations and measured the prevalence of terrorist incidents on the basis of the Global Terrorism Database. The latter is compiled by trained researchers who identify and record events from the print and electronic media. What they did find was that nations high on fatalism and low on gender egalitarianism had higher levels of terrorist incidents than nations low on fatalism and high on gender egalitarianism. The investigators argued that fatalism tends to be associated with reduced personal control and that the latter would lead to a decreased sense of personal responsibility and the use of external sources (e.g. God) as a justification for one's own behaviour. A key explanation for the relationship between terrorism and gender egalitarianism is the cultural expectation that men are tough and assertive in nations low on gender egalitarianism, which may lead more easily to grievances and aggression, which can pave the way for terrorism.

A related cultural explanation for terrorism has been proposed by Mullins and Young (2012), who note that cultures vary in the extent to which

violence occurs and is accepted. They posit that such violence can generate terrorism, which implies that more violent states and cultures show more terrorism than less violent states and cultures. To investigate this relationship, they used data from 174 countries for the period from 1970 to 1997. They assessed the presence of a culture of violence by investigating the prevalence of state violence against civilians, citizen violence (homicide rate) and experiences with war or civil war. Their analyses showed that culture of violence affected the rate of fatal terrorist events. Mullins and Young consider their 'legitimation-habituation' interpretation the best explanation of the relationship between violence and terrorism. When people experience much violence and when that violence is frequently tolerated or even sanctioned, they will personally accept violence in their views and norms and will be more likely to use it in diverse situations.

Another cultural value that can play a role in radicalization and terrorism is *honour* (cf. Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman & Orehek, 2009). In the United States, honour and respect are particularly important values in the South. Fiske, Kitayama, Markus and Nisbett (1998) provide an overview illustrating the mechanisms involved in this cultural emphasis on honour and their effects. If an insult impinges on individuals' sense of honour, for example, they feel obliged to retaliate with violence in order to restore their good name and dignity. They are easily inflamed and react accordingly. Research has found that Americans from the Southern states are more likely than Northerners to defend themselves and indeed to use violence in response to an insult. Whilst the homicide rate in connection with robberies is no higher than in the North, the number of people killed in bar fights and domestic incidents is much higher, the reason being that this kind of conflict touches deep-seated sensibilities. Experiments in which students were insulted – shoved and called 'asshole' – found that those from the South reacted more angrily and aggressively than their Northern counterparts. They were also more inclined to consider their reputation and masculinity to be under threat. Another study revealed that Southern employers approached by a bogus job applicant claiming to have killed someone following an insult displayed greater understanding and sympathy and were more willing to take the application seriously. Militant responses to terrorism are also related to these regional differences (Barnes, Brown & Osterman, 2012). Within two weeks of the event, White students from a U.S. honour Southern state reported more frequently that they wanted the persons responsible for 9/11 to be killed than students from a Northern non-honour state.

Similarly, Bergsieker, Shelton and Richeson (2010) showed that ethnic minorities in the United States, such as Blacks and Latinos, seek to be respected and to be seen as competent more than the white majority does. That majority, on the other hand, seeks to be liked and to be seen as moral in comparison with the ethnic minorities. These differences emerge from

different stereotypes – ethnic minorities being stereotyped as unintelligent and the white majority as racist and bigoted. Both groups want to disconfirm those stereotypes and use, according to Bergsieker and colleagues, divergent impression management strategies to reach their goals, that is, seeking respect versus liking. Several studies showed this pattern and confirmed that respect and honour are more prominent values for (lower-status) ethnic minorities than for the white majority. A comparable sense of honour also characterizes Arab cultures (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman & Orehek, 2009), meaning that people from this background are again more easily inflamed and insulted, more likely to view setbacks as an affront to their dignity and more likely to react aggressively. When they are not shown the respect they believe they deserve, they make sure the culprit knows about it. Deprivation and discrimination will more easily elicit antagonistic feelings and behaviour in these individuals than in individuals from a culture that does not emphasize honour.

Such differences probably also occur within cultures. Henry (2009) found that male students with a relatively low social status reported a greater urge towards aggression in response to an insult than did those in higher social brackets. That group was also less trusting of others and had a greater tendency to feel used. Henry explains this as reflecting a belief that their humble position in society does not do justice to their 'true' social worth. They seem more easily provoked and often display an aggressive response to anyone perceived as denigrating them. That restores or maintains their sense of dignity: 'nobody messes with me'. Implicit in this explanation is the idea that the aggressive compensation can be dispensed with if one's dignity is affirmed before it is triggered. And that is exactly what researchers have found. The relationship between aggressiveness and social status disappeared and less aggression was reported in the low-status group, when people were first reminded of a situation that made them feel more important or valued.

Wiedenhaefer, Dastoor, Balloun and Sosa-Fey (2007) found evidence for the effect of another cultural value identified by Hofstede (1980), namely *uncertainty avoidance*. This reflects the ability of the members of a particular culture or society to tolerate uncertain or ambiguous situations, a factor closely related to the prevalence of stress and anxiety in a culture. The researchers counted the number of terrorist incidents committed between about 1970 and 1980 by permanent residents of 51 countries. Ireland, Croatia, Uruguay and El Salvador are examples of territories where many attacks occurred, whilst Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore and India were amongst those where few to none occurred. The level of uncertainty avoidance in each country during the same period was also established, based on data from Hofstede. He used questionnaires, with a particular focus on stress, to measure the extent to which people in different nations try to steer clear of

uncertainty. The resulting analysis showed that the higher the rate of uncertainty avoidance was, the more terrorist incidents there were.

Wiedenhaefer and colleagues mention a number of features and circumstances strongly associated with uncertainty avoidance, which, in combination, may foster radicalization and even terrorism: people are unhappy with their personal situation, intolerance and aggression are widespread, autonomous individual decision making is frowned upon and many of the younger generation feel alienated. These may well be phenomena with a direct causal relationship: uncertainty avoidance and a lack of autonomous decision making probably result in intolerance, aggression and alienation. The study found no evidence that three other cultural values defined by Hofstede – power distance (as described earlier), individualism and masculinity – exert an influence in this regard. Individualism reflects the extent to which a culture extols personal achievement, whilst masculinity refers to male 'machismo', power, performance, material possessions and gender segregation. The possible radicalizing effect of power distance or hierarchy, mentioned earlier, probably works in a different way than do power differentials and hierarchy within a society as a whole. In the context of radicalization, the hierarchical thinking in question takes place amongst a minority group within a society. And in that context, the stress and anxiety, dissatisfaction, aggression and alienation that accompany uncertainty avoidance can come to be seen in terms of threats that – as discussed previously – evoke feelings of insecurity, frustration and discontent. In other words, the results obtained by Wiedenhaefer and fellows tally with our earlier descriptions and arguments concerning uncertainty and dissatisfaction.

Just as honour can intensify a person's sensitivity to threats, so too can uncertainty avoidance. For example, the associated stress and anxiety may make people more receptive to symbolic threats. They fall on fertile ground, as it were.

Finally, we describe two important values related to radicalism and terrorism: democratic and autocratic values, or, more specifically, democracy and autocracy. The relationship between democracy and terrorism seems to be rather complex and far from settled. Piazza (2008) investigated the relationship between variables measuring democracy and the degree of economic openness with the frequency of incidents of terrorism. His study covered 153 countries from 1986 to 2003 and found no relationship between variables. In his study, the experience of 'state failures' was a significant predictor of terrorism. Lafree and Ackermann (2009) showed that democratic institutions may reduce terrorism, but they may also open the door to it. It has also been observed that transitions from autocratic to democratic forms of government make terrorism flourish. In a recent review of the field, Chenoweth (2013) analysed the period between 1968 and 1997. Her analysis showed that advanced democracies did not suffer from high levels of

chronic terrorism. She also mentioned two exceptions. First, democracies that interfered in other countries' affairs through military intervention or occupation were more frequently confronted with terrorist incidents. Second, poor democracies with territorial conflict also frequently experienced domestic terrorist attacks. Interestingly, she also found that intermediately wealthy democracies that were in transition and were characterized by inconsistent institutions that failed to reduce suffering and provide legitimate good governance were more likely to be confronted with domestic terrorism than both advanced democracies and authoritarian regimes. She also argued that research on the democracy–terrorism link should focus not only on features of the state but also on state *behaviour* in order to identify what specific decisions increased or decreased the propensity for terrorism to occur. Her main conclusion is that a country's best defense against terrorism is to enhance its legitimacy through genuine democratic and liberal practices such as commitment to civil liberties, adequate political access for dispossessed minorities and stimulating nonviolent conflict resolution mechanisms.

Terrorism also occurs in dictatorships, but these do not experience terrorism to the same extent. According to Aksoy, Carter and Wright (2012), political institutional arrangements play a significant role in the explanation of variations in the occurrence of terrorism in dictatorships, particularly parties and elected legislatures. Dictatorships have often elected legislatures meeting regularly and housing multiple parties. Aksoy, Carter and Wright posit that dictatorships with active opposition political parties and no legislature are the most prone to terrorism. This is because opposition political parties in repressive regimes make collective protest more likely. Parties help mobilize discontented groups, but they are not able to obtain concessions from the dictator. Therefore mobilized opponents will more often use violence to obtain their goals; an elected legislature, however, can channel protest into a more positive attitude toward the regime. Using terrorist group data from a large number of countries in the period from 1970 to 2007, Aksoy and colleagues found support for their hypothesis that terrorist groups are most likely to emerge in dictatorships having opposition parties but no elected legislature.

Global political-cultural climate

Alongside the effect of cultural values in fostering radicalization and terrorism within a specific culture, it seems reasonable to assume that factors on a broader scale also play their part. Here we could think of a general political-religious or political-cultural climate, for instance, that transcends national borders and typifies a period in history rather than any particular country. Robison, Crenshaw and Jenkins (2006) examined the political-cultural

circumstances underlying Islamist and left-wing transnational terrorism in the years 1973–2002, concentrating upon perpetrators' countries of origin. That provides a better insight into the background to their acts than looking at where the attacks were carried out. Drawing upon an extensive database, the researchers analysed a large number of terrorist groups and their activities, ranging from bombings and kidnappings to hijacks and chemical attacks. The selected Islamist groups used their faith as the primary justification for pursuing social change; their goal was the implementation of sharia law under the theocratic administration of a group of clerics, replacing secular forms of government. Most leftist groups vindicated their revolutionary strategies in the context of Marxist or neo-Marxist theories, although some were anarchists or environmentalists seeking the destruction of global capitalism. What united them, according to Robison, Crenshaw and Jenkins, was anti-capitalism and the desire for a social revolution that would liberate exploited groups (workers, peasants and other oppressed groups and peoples), animals and the environment from the capitalist system, replacing it with a communal or collectivist economic structure.

Their study revealed that the number of instances of leftist terrorism fell sharply after the end of the Cold War in about 1990. One possible explanation is that the events surrounding the fall of the Soviet Union undermined the ideals of the militant left and stripped its legitimacy. No longer able to exploit superpower rivalry to their own ends, Marxist groups lost one of their primary means of garnering support. The traditional left–right ideological debate, Marxism versus capitalism, no longer seemed as relevant and appeared outdated. As left-wing terrorism declined, however, the number of Islamist attacks remained stable and even increased in the period 2002–2003. This revival seemed to be rooted in the social tensions created by modernization, by the competition between Islam and other religions and by the rise of secular forms of government.

Cultural symbols

Culture affords us with a set of values that tell us what is important but also how to interpret behaviour and situations. Honour and the associated codes of conduct are central to some cultures and so determine how their members interpret certain situations and behaviour. In this sense, culture provides a framework of understanding and constructing the world around us. Sometimes, however, people are part of different cultures that exert influence over them at different times. One surprising upshot of this phenomenon is that bicultural individuals, those belonging to two cultures at once, can be induced by relevant cultural symbols into allowing one or other of them to predominate.

Hong, Morris, Chiu and Benet-Martinez (2000) describe an interesting example. They asked bicultural students from Hong Kong to interpret the

behaviour of an overweight young man who breaks his diet by joining his friends for a delicious meal. Some participants had previously been shown typically American symbols, like the U.S. flag, and completed a written assignment on American culture. Others had been 'primed' in the same way, but with Chinese culture; for example, they were shown a Chinese dragon. There was also a control group, which had not been confronted with any particular culture. As predicted, those exposed to American symbols placed less emphasis upon external social factors, such as pressure from the friends, in their interpretation than did the Chinese-primed group. Members of the control group were somewhere between the two. The differences observed correspond with the assumed difference between American and Chinese cultures, there being a greater emphasis on the influence of social circumstances on behaviour in the latter.

Similar research has been conducted in the Netherlands, focusing on bicultural children of Greek parentage (Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2002). In this case, the researchers used the national flags, peoples in traditional costume and a windmill or the Acropolis as symbols. Moreover, the experiment was conducted in either Greek or Dutch. Other studies have also shown that language is an effective means of activating one particular culture in bicultural individuals. When Verkuyten and Pouliasi highlighted Greek culture, their subjects became more inclined to proffer external interpretations of behaviour, to identify strongly with friends and to value their 'Greekness' or social identity over personal characteristics. That these were cultural factors was confirmed by a finding of similar differences between monocultural Dutch and Greek children.

Such results indicate that members of bicultural ethnic minorities – who possess the culture of the country they live in to a significant extent, whilst also possessing their culture of origin (or the culture of their parents) – adapt their behaviour (temporarily or otherwise) according to the cultural context in which they find themselves. Such subtle cues as cultural symbols can then steer behaviour in more extreme directions.

Social climate

In this section, we look first at material factors that can play a part in fuelling extremism, in particular a country's standard of living and social provisions. We will also discuss the potential effects of political instability. We then examine the consequences that unfavourable social and economic conditions can have in terms of radicalization.

Material factors

Some characteristics of a society can be very important in shaping the social climate. Not least of these are material factors, and their effects can

contribute towards radicalization and terrorism. One example can be found in research by Burgoon (2006). This study analysed the impact of social provisions in more than 90 countries relative to various forms of terrorist activity, such as transnational incidents, the number of terrorist incidents occurring in a country and transnational incidents by the country where the terrorists came from. Social provisions here refer to arrangements such as welfare and unemployment benefits, as well as state-funded provisions for health and education. As predicted, better provision had a favourable, dampening effect on terrorism of all kinds, due in part to its role in reducing poverty, income inequality and religious extremism.

We have already discussed poverty and religious extremism as factors contributing to terrorism. As far as economic inequality is concerned, Burgoon (2006) argues that it can lead to discontent, political instability and violence, all of which have the potential to breed radicalism and terrorism. Even after taking into account other variables, such as the power of left-wing parties, the strength of the public administration, population size, democratic credentials and conflicts, the relationship between social provisions and terrorism was still evident. This suggests that these factors were not present to a sufficient degree or with enough strength to overturn the positive effect of social provisions. On the other hand, Burgoon also argues that such provisions may make it easier for potential terrorists to turn ideas into action. Indirectly, it facilitates access to relevant know-how and resources, provides the education needed to organize attacks and, by at least guaranteeing a basic level of subsistence, creates free time for their preparation. In support of this hypothesis, Burgoon reminds us that several of the 9/11 hijackers had previously lived on benefits in Europe, possibly giving them more time and means to plan their plot. Nonetheless, the positive net effect of social provision means that we should be prepared to put up with such incidental and limited drawbacks.

A good general standard of living – a factor not entirely unrelated to the availability of social provisions, of course – also appears to temper extremism in the political sense. Dalton (2006) analysed this relationship in more than 70 countries and found that citizens of those with a lower standard of living placed themselves closer to the extremes of the left–right political spectrum than the peoples of more prosperous nations. Moreover, there was a direct correlation between the percentages of people with more extreme views at either end of the scale. In other words, there is greater left–right polarization in poorer countries than in richer ones. According to Dalton, this suggests that political competition is more manageable in affluent nations because a well developed moderate centre provides plenty of opportunity for political discourse and cooperation. Even when extreme groups do engage in a fierce polemic fuelled by fundamental differences of opinion, the dominant middle ground abates and quells the controversies on

the national stage, preventing serious consequences from ensuing. In short, polarizing forces exacerbate political tensions in poorer countries, whereas moderating forces mitigate or prevent these in richer nations.

Left–right polarization can easily go hand in hand with political instability, with potentially disruptive consequences. Sánchez-Cuenca and De la Calle (2009) found that domestic left-wing terrorism in less stable countries caused widespread destabilization and uncertainty, which can have a radicalizing effect. Stable democratic structures provide a framework for dialogue and curtail state repression, discouraging and often even diminishing radical tendencies. Sánchez-Cuenca and De la Calle assert that the developed countries most affected by revolutionary terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s had all experienced a period of dictatorship earlier in the century. Armed left-wing groups were active in Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Greece, whilst nations with a strong democratic tradition such as the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, France and Great Britain saw little or no terrorism of this kind.

Economic and social conditions

We have already mentioned the study by Wiedenhaefer and colleagues (2007) into the effects of uncertainty avoidance. We pointed out that the associated stress and anxiety, dissatisfaction, aggression and alienation can easily be seen as perceived threats causing insecurity, frustration and discontent (see also Chapter 3). In this context, the question is whether uncertainty should be seen purely as a cultural value or whether it should also or above all be seen as reflecting a tense social climate. Whatever the case, there seems little doubt that tensions and problems within a society can have repercussions comparable to those resulting from uncertainty avoidance. Doty, Peterson and Winter (1991) examined how 'threatening' periods of economic downturn, with unfavourable economic and social conditions, influenced the popularity of authoritarian ideas in the United States. One of their findings was that fighting dogs become more popular as pets during such threatening years, whereas people prefer 'gentler' dogs in better times. And there were parallel shifts in the relative popularity of conservative and liberal politicians. Prejudice seemed to increase in periods of adversity, too, and people became more cynical and less trusting of authority. This latter result reminds us of the general distrust of authority often found amongst the most disadvantaged groups in society, as described in Chapter 3. For them, after all, there are only bad years and worse ones. The background to this wariness is almost certainly the same in both cases.

Much the same impact of economic adversity has been found in the Netherlands. Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers and Verkuyten (2008) argue that such periods can polarize and harden attitudes, thus increasing hostility

towards minority groups. When coupled with negative minority attitudes towards the majority, this can cause further polarization. Drawing upon 19 national surveys, Coenders and colleagues analysed changes in public support for ethnic discrimination between 1979 and 2002. This was measured by presenting respondents with a scenario involving the allocation of scarce resources, such as jobs and housing. The results revealed a decline in discrimination against ethnic minorities as a whole in the early 1980s, followed by an increase between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s.

In part, this evolution can be explained using the realistic group conflict theory described in Chapter 3 (Sherif & Sherif, 1969). This states that competition for scarce resources increases prejudice and discrimination on the part of the majority. So-called realistic threats have the same effect, of course, and so produce the same explanation. Coenders and fellows found that support for discrimination increased during periods with high levels of ethnic minority immigration and immediately following rises in unemployment, both factors with clear competitive implications. In addition to effects attributable to current circumstances, moreover, the investigators also observed 'legacy' attitudes from the past. People are often marked by the times they grow up in, so that in later life they maintain many of the ideas and attitudes prevalent in those formative years. Many respondents raised during waves of mass immigration or periods of high unemployment persisted in their support for ethnic discrimination.

As well as socioeconomic circumstances, such as unemployment, the social climate is also shaped by other factors. Twenge (2000) found that the degree of anxiety and neuroticism reported by American students and children increased substantially between 1950 and the early 1990s, with their levels apparently related to indicators of social cohesion, such as divorce rates, and to such threats as crime and suicide. Economic conditions were found to be a less significant factor. This suggests that social conditions have the potential to pose a greater perceived threat than the socioeconomic situation. Moreover, social conditions are also reflected in perceptions of personal control. People who fail to see their hopes or expectations fulfilled come to believe that their fate is no longer in their own hands but rather steered by chance and by forces and individuals who are more powerful than themselves. This so-called external locus of control (cf. Rotter, 1966) is strongly associated with a sense of powerlessness and exclusion. We have already described such factors in Chapter 3 in terms of threats perceived primarily by those in the lower reaches of society and consequently as potential determinants of right-wing radicalism.

However, threats of this kind also evolve in line with changing social circumstances and probably with economic ones as well. Twenge, Zhang and Im (2004) analysed the development of this control variable, examining a large number of previous studies measuring internal versus external control

in American students and children in order to determine how their values had changed over time. For students, the period covered was 1962–2002, and for children, it was 1970–1990. In both cases, there was a strong shift towards an external locus of control over these years. In other words, young Americans increasingly felt that their lives were being directed by external forces. Twenge and colleagues explain this with reference to an alienation model based on two historical trends: a greater tendency to blame misfortune on outside forces and increases in negative social indicators like divorce rates, crime and suicide. Relatedly, Twenge, Campbell and Freeman (2012) found a general decline of community feeling among American students. More specifically, younger generations viewed goals related to money, fame and image as more important and goals related to self-acceptance, affiliation and community as less important. Not surprisingly, there was also a decline in civic engagement, such as interest in social problems, political participation and action to help the environment. Together, these changes reflect the greater cynicism, scepticism and alienation of more recent generations, which the researchers also associate with more extensive media coverage of uncontrollable negative events. Constant exposure to wars, natural disasters, murders and accidents must surely colour people's view of the world. We have already observed a similar effect among newspaper readers, although on a smaller scale.

Twenge, Zhang and Im (2004) go on to state that the feeling that you have lost control can nurture a victim mentality, whereby adversity is consistently attributed to outside forces. This undermines your sense of personal responsibility, which in turn releases the brakes on antisocial behaviour. Society becomes a less friendly place. This results in alienation and, together with the externalized locus of control, it might fuel right-wing radicalism in the manner described in Chapter 3. With the growing complexity of society, there is a very good chance that a growing number of people will come to feel that they have less and less control over their own lives. This is an issue vital to the quality of our society and deserves to receive more attention.

Lack of control and the threat it poses could well engender less tolerance of other people's ideas, preferences and behaviour. Experiments have shown that threats can – albeit very temporarily – induce people to act in a 'harder', more authoritarian way. Experiments by Sales and Friend (1973) illustrate that. They led their participants to believe that they had either succeeded or failed in two tasks (in the previous chapter, we discussed failure as an example of a specific negative experience with a personal edge). Over two experiments, 61 per cent of the 'failed' participants recorded a higher authoritarianism score than before the test. By contrast, 72 per cent of 'successful' participants became less authoritarian. Moreover, the difference was even more marked between those who attributed their performance to internal factors (themselves). This indicates that a sense of personal control

probably enhances feelings of success and failure. Meanwhile, research by McGregor, Zanna, Holmes and Spencer (2001) suggests that another threat, personal uncertainty, can instigate what they call 'situational authoritarianism'. At the heart of this are hardened attitudes, a characteristic of radicalization. We have already encountered the effects of personal uncertainty in Chapter 3. McGregor and colleagues manipulated this factor by asking participants to think about a personal dilemma and then questioning them about it in a way that confronted them with inconsistencies in their goals and values. Subsequent enquiries revealed that their views on the death penalty and abortion had hardened. Conversely, another exercise designed to dispel inconsistencies eliminated the hardening of attitudes regarding those issues. One of the explanations for these findings put forward by the researchers is that personal uncertainty induces a need for 'closure', a term signifying completion, clarity and structure. To that end, people process information in a more general, less nuanced manner, making greater use of stereotypes and often putting greater trust in their own judgement.

This hypothesis is akin to the one posited by Kay, Gaucher, Napier, Callan and Laurin (2008). They posit that people lacking personal control and certainty increase their trust in and esteem for external systems of control, such as religion and the church, government and the state (see Chapter 3). These are systems with a strong and direct relevance to them, and so they have a powerful motivating force. Issues such as abortion and the death penalty are somewhat more abstract for most people, so the explanation suggested by McGregor and colleagues (2001) primarily concerns a more general motivation, born of uncertainty, to process information in a coarser, less nuanced way. In this context, information about a particular person might also be more likely to be interpreted in a stereotypical way. Later, McGregor and colleagues further developed these ideas in his 'reactive approach motivation theory' (McGregor, Prentice & Kyle, 2013). According to this theory personal uncertainty arising from motivational conflict causes anxiety. A solution for this anxiety state is finding alternative goals that enable unconflicted engagement. Going to (ideational or religious) extremes is such an engagement. In addition, inconsistent and distracting stimuli become suppressed. This seems to be rather similar to rough and oversimplified information processing, with the aim to alleviate anxiety.

These results also make it more likely that there is indeed a causal link between economic, social and other threats on the one hand and a hardening of attitudes on the other. For that matter, it is reasonable to assume that an unfavourable economic and social climate increases susceptibility to other threats.

In short, social and economic threats can change the social climate, or Zeitgeist, by encouraging various aspects of authoritarian thinking, from a desire for a return to traditional values and greater hostility towards other

groups to the attributing of greater value to power and dominance. This could also provoke a hardening of attitudes and radicalization in minority groups, both directly and indirectly. (See Box 4.1.) After all, the increasing authoritarianism of the majority is likely to encourage a minority group to close ranks and to isolate itself from the rest of society.

Box 4.1 Social climate and hard views

Although many studies have found that an unfavourable social climate hardens attitudes and behaviour, it can also be argued that such a climate can make attitudes and behaviour more liberal. Since the threats arising in such a situation tend to cause people to fall back on their core attitudes (cf. McCann, 2008), they make those who are naturally more liberally minded – admittedly, probably a minority in most societies – more liberal, as well as making conservatives more conservative. McCann investigated this hypothesis in a study of attitudes towards the death penalty and executions in more conservative-leaning and more liberal-leaning U.S. states during the period 1977–2004. He determined a state's political preference on the basis of factors such as voting behaviour and its implementation of liberal policies such as progressive taxation. To judge the social climate, he looked at factors including the murder rate and the percentage of non-white residents. The resulting analysis confirmed that, in more conservative states, the number of death sentences handed down and carried out does indeed increase in times of perceived threat, whilst the opposite is true in more liberal states, where there are fewer of each. In other words, perceived threat resulted in both a hardening and an easing of punitive behaviour. Research in which people are confronted with the idea of their own death (see Chapter 3) has also produced support for the supposition that the effects of threat are related to contextual factors present at the time of its manifestation. Being threatened with death can either harden or soften attitudes and behaviour, depending on prevailing values. Where the norm was predominantly pacifist, for example, people became even more avowedly pacifist following a threat (Jonas et al., 2008). These results suggest that threat does not necessarily harden attitudes and behaviour and may even instigate an about-face. If the majority of people in a society are fundamentally traditional, defensive and conservative, however, those values are buttressed in the face of threat. The hardening of views found in much of the literature therefore implies that key general attitudes in a society are often broadly conservative.

Catalyst events

Silke (2008) defines catalyst or amplifying events in the context of radicalization as acts of violence that are perceived as unjust, such as the brutal treatment of relatives. In addition to awakening an intense sense of injustice, incidents of this kind are also linked to extreme rage and strong desire for revenge and retribution. Güss, Tuason and Teixeira (2007) quote a report published by the International Committee of the Red Cross, detailing abuses committed by U.S. troops during arrests in Iraq. These abuses included the destruction of property, beatings and the detention of the elderly and sick. The report estimates that between 70 and 90 per cent of Iraqi detainees were wrongfully arrested. It is quite understandable that these victims and their loved ones consider such treatment as extremely unjust and that it thus provoked fierce hostility towards the U.S. forces. For some, that could pave the way to terrorism. Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman and Orehek (2009) present data on Chechen suicide bombers, obtained from people who knew them. Almost half had seen at least one relative killed in the conflict, in 23 per cent of cases, a brother. Some 80 per cent had previously been secular Muslims, with no links to fundamentalist militant groups until after this confrontation with violence directly affecting their family.

Schafer, Mullins and Box (2014) described processes of 'awakening' that lead to support extreme right-wing ideologies. They focused on individuals with an affinity for white supremacist belief systems. The authors analysed 115 accounts of individual's pathways and awakenings into radical racialist ideologies. Specific events or incidents played a major role in these processes. They ranged from confrontations with double standards at work and victimizations involving violence and/or theft but also terrorist events such as 9/11.

Such close ties to a victim are not essential, though. According to Silke (2008), many Islamist terrorists report having joined the struggle only after seeing events of this kind on television or in other media. The victims are seldom known to them, but there is a strong sense of identification because they belong to the same group, one with which they identify very strongly. This factor ('he is one of us') fuels the perception of injustice, anger and the desire for revenge and retribution. Given their effect, it is no surprise that such acts of violence frequently feature in extremist propaganda. Moreover, according to Silke, there is usually a basis of truth in the incidents shown. It seems reasonable to assume that this encourages radicalization and terrorist recruitment.

We can also add symbolic acts regarded as sacrilegious or blasphemous to the category of catalyst events. These acts are often seen as highly offensive, and are obviously particularly relevant to religious sensibilities. We will look at these in our discussion of the role of social identity and religion in Chapter 7.

Catalyst events can also occur on a much bigger scale. As Nesser (2006) points out, some international terrorism has its origins in local armed conflicts. In the same way as the specific incidents just described, these too can provoke feelings of great injustice that incite a desire for revenge and retribution, thus feeding radicalization and terrorism elsewhere. One of the more extreme examples discussed by Nesser is that of the devastating Madrid train bombings of 11 March 2004 as a product of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. According to Nesser, by their attack the terrorists wanted to punish the country's government for sending troops to Iraq. They also hoped to influence the upcoming general election, with the aim of forcing a Spanish withdrawal. Another example of such a catalyst event is the civil war in Syria.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we first looked at the role that specific cultural values, such as attitudes towards hierarchy, fatalism, violence, honour and uncertainty avoidance, can play in radicalization. In Arab countries, for example, there is an emphasis on hierarchical values. One upshot of this is a broad tradition of obedience to leaders, which can make it easier for extreme leaders to radicalize persons with an Arab cultural background. Honour is another important factor in Arab cultures, with the effect that people from this tradition can feel easily aggrieved and are more likely to respond to an affront swiftly and aggressively. Moreover, deprivation and discrimination will elicit antagonistic feelings and behaviour earlier in them than in those for whom honour is not such a prominent characteristic. Uncertainty avoidance, a value strongly associated with the amount of stress and anxiety present in a culture, also appears to bear a relationship to radicalism and terrorism: the more prevalent it is, the more attacks occur. Cultures vary also in the extent to which violence occurs and is accepted, giving it a normative character. Acceptance of violence makes its use more likely, which explains that more violent states and cultures show more terrorism than less violent states and cultures. Further, we discussed the relationship between democracy and terrorism. That relationship seems to be rather complex and far from settled. For example, it has been shown that advanced democracies do not suffer from high levels of chronic terrorism, but there are well-known exceptions. It has also been found that transition from autocratic to democratic forms of government does not immediately lead to less terrorism; it could even make it flourish. The relationship between specific characteristics of dictatorships and terrorism was also discussed.

Apart from the effects of cultural values that are more region or country specific, there are also effects resulting from the wider political-cultural climate that characterizes a particular period. It seems highly probable that the

end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union helped to bring about a general decline in left-wing terrorism in the final quarter of the twentieth century, whereas Islamic terrorism rooted in the ongoing competition between Islam and other faiths continued – and even intensified somewhat – during the same period.

Culture also influences interpretations of social reality. People who belong to two cultures can be induced to give one of them precedence in their interpretations by 'priming' them with symbols pertaining to that culture. Such a shift in a person's cultural frame may also make their attitudes more or less radical. A country's social climate is relevant to radicalization and terrorism too. One particular material factor, that of social provisions, appears to directly affect the inclination to terrorist activity: the more generous the facilities and benefits provided by the state, the less likely people are to take up arms against it and other targets. In part, that is a product of the role social provisions play in alleviating poverty, income inequality and religious extremism, three factors that play an important role in shaping a nation's social climate. Prosperity also dampens radicalization; we generally find more left-right political polarization in poorer countries. We also looked at the role of political instability; it appears that developed nations with a history of dictatorship in the past century were subsequently more likely to suffer from left-wing domestic terrorism than those with an established democratic tradition.

Economic and social conditions are central to a country's social climate. It seems that unfavourable circumstances encourage radicalization and harder, more authoritarian attitudes, resulting in less tolerance and more prejudice. In the U.S. and perhaps in other parts of the world as well, recent decades have seen a decline in people's sense of control over their own lives. Probably due to factors including worsening social conditions, they feel more and more that they live in an unpredictable, hard-to-manage world. Moreover, experimental findings back the hypothesis that a causal link exists between threats and uncertainty on the one hand and hardened attitudes on the other. This makes it plausible to suppose that there is a parallel link between socioeconomic circumstances and such attitudes.

Finally, we looked at the significance of catalyst events in paving the way to terrorism such as acts of violence against a relative or acquaintance or even targeting unknown members of your own group. Symbolic acts, such as an insult to your religion, can also trigger extremism, as can local armed conflicts.

Figure 4.1 briefly summarizes this chapter in relation to the framework presented in Chapter 1. The cultural factors we described are mentioned at the left-hand side of the figure, and all of these play a role in the processes of polarization and radicalization. Attitudes towards hierarchy, obedience, fatalism, honour and uncertainty avoidance can have a direct impact on
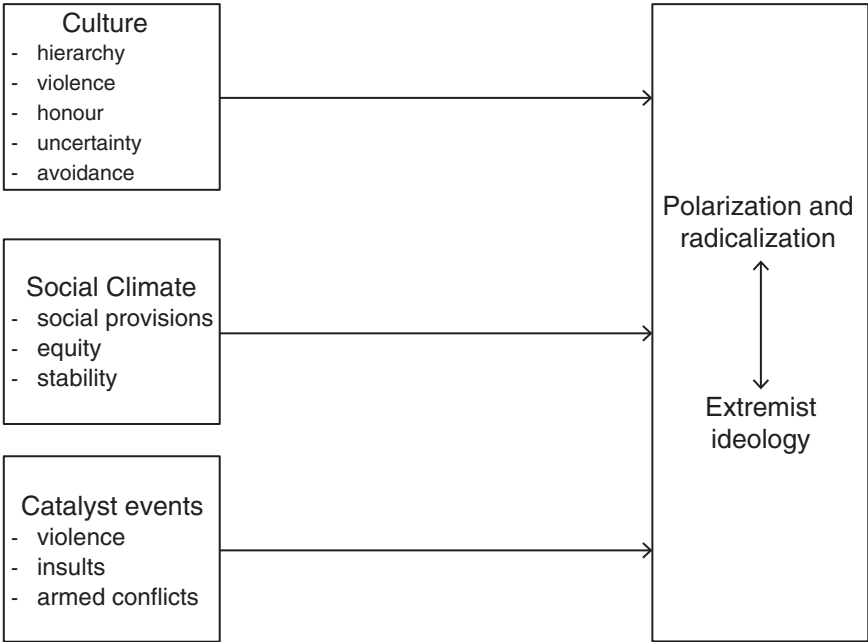
Figure 4.1 Social context and its impact on radicalization.

radicalization or affect radicalization. Obviously, ideology and religion are also likely to play an important role in this context. We relate extremist ideology (religious or not) to polarization and radicalization with a double-headed arrow. Extremist ideologies are often preceded by polarization and radicalization, but both are also more likely to be enhanced and persevere when fed by extremist ideologies. Catalyst events can also have a direct impact on radicalization and the use of violence. Especially extreme events, such as acts of violence against relatives, can trigger extreme reactions that do not require a firm ideological base. Vengeance is a strong emotion that can drive the individual to opt for violence and become a terrorist.

Having now reviewed how various social factors may contribute to radicalization and terrorism, in the next chapter we will turn our attention to the role played by individual factors.

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5 Individual factors

Personality and demographics

Introduction

In previous chapters, we have seen that radicalization and terrorism can be influenced by a variety of social factors including prejudice and deprivation, as well as by aspects related to culture and the general social climate: cultural values, economic circumstances and so on. These do not provide a full picture of all the relevant determinants, however. No two people are the same, and considering their individual differences may take us a step closer to understanding why some radicalize and others do not. As Allport (1954/1979) already stated in relation to prejudice, radicalization and terrorism have multiple causes. In this chapter, we discuss how personality and demographic characteristics – gender and age, for instance – relate to threats and to radicalization and terrorism. In the process, we will once again look at certain explanatory mechanisms that have already been introduced in previous chapters, such as perceived threat and uncertainty.

Personality

We begin this section by asking whether there are indications that extremists and terrorists have an abnormal personality. Next we will explore two important ideological orientations, authoritarianism and so-called social dominance orientation, which certainly play a significant role in prejudice. We will end by describing a number of other personality variables that may be connected with extremism and radicalization.

Abnormal personality

In the past, one common way of explaining terrorist behaviour was simply to ascribe it to an abnormal personality. As recently as 1980 or so, the scientific literature treated terrorists primarily as psychopaths (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006). Silke (2008) draws a parallel with an earlier moment in time, when Nazi leaders were tested psychologically after the Second World

War and found to be violent, hungry for power and lacking any true human feeling. Years later, when their scores were compared with those of a group of 'average' Americans, experts discovered nothing abnormal about them. In fact, they fell within the personality range considered stable and healthy. In other words, given their behaviour, terrorists and Nazi leaders must possess abnormal personalities (so the thinking goes). Not surprisingly, if (invalid) research methods allow that conclusion to be drawn, it probably will be. Later and better studies, however, have concluded that terrorists are not abnormal psychologically; indeed, they are often in better mental health and more stable than violent criminals (Loza, 2007; Rogers et al., 2007; Silke, 2008; Victoroff, 2005). Of course, as Silke acknowledges, some will have psychological problems, but in his view such individuals do not actually make good terrorists: they lack the necessary discipline, rationality and perseverance.

Authoritarianism and social dominance orientation

Naturally, it is still possible that terrorists differ from the rest of the population in other aspects of their personality. And if we assume that they have undergone a process of radicalization, this seems even more likely. That process generally includes the development of a strong prejudice against other groups, a phenomenon that is predicted fairly accurately by two important ideological orientations or specific values: one is *authoritarianism*, already mentioned in previous chapters, and the other is *social dominance orientation*. Authoritarian individuals observe traditional standards and values, respect authority and its figureheads and direct their aggression against targets sanctioned by that authority. Underlying this orientation are probably feelings of uncertainty and a sensitivity to threat – factors that, as stated earlier, can play a role in the process of radicalization and the path towards terrorism. There is an abundance of research demonstrating the positive link between authoritarianism and prejudice (see also Chapter 3). We shall mention just one more example here. In Romania, Krauss (2002) found that authoritarianism was associated with prejudice in general and with prejudice against Arabs, Hungarians and homosexuals in particular (see Dijker & Koomen, 2007, for more examples).

Social dominance orientation reflects a more general orientation regarding intergroup relations, indicating the extent to which these are preferably seen as equal or hierarchical (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 1994). Recently, it has been shown that social dominance orientation actually consists of two distinct yet strongly related subdimensions (Ho et al., 2012). One concerns dominance, the preference for some groups to dominate others. The other concerns egalitarianism, a preference for nonegalitarian intergroup relations. Pratto and colleagues (2000) investigated the relationship

between social dominance orientation and prejudice in a number of different cultures. In Canada, for instance, they found a positive correlation between social dominance orientation and ethnic prejudice and a negative correlation with support for gay rights. In Israel, they found a correlation with negative attitudes towards Jewish groups with a low social status. Moreover, that was observed in members of those low-status groups as well as amongst groups with a high social status. Much of the research into social dominance orientation is correlational rather than causal, though, and therefore does not tell us whether it results from hostility and prejudice against other groups or causes these. However, a longitudinal study by Kteily, Sidanius and Levin (2011) indicates that this orientation does lead to prejudice and discrimination.

Altemeyer (1998) revealed how authoritarianism and social dominance orientation help to explain prejudice. In an important overview of the topic, he presented research investigating the predictive value of a large number of individual variables in shaping antipathy towards black people, women and homosexuals in North America. Compared with other personality characteristics, authoritarianism and social dominance orientation proved the most valid predictors by far. By contrast, a characteristic such as 'need for structure' – meaning a desire for clarity and an inability to bear ambiguity, often regarded as a determinant of prejudice – displayed next to no predictive value. Altemeyer concluded that individuals with a strong social dominance orientation are inclined to reject the notion that all people are equal, instead finding weak minorities easy targets to dominate and exert power over. On the other side of the coin are those with a strong authoritarian orientation, who think that authority and moral values are changing so fast that civilization itself is in danger of collapse. For this reason, they believe strongly in submitting to authority and the standards it represents. As already mentioned, underlying this orientation are probably feelings of uncertainty and a sensitivity to threat.

One of these aspects, threat sensitivity, can be quantified using the so-called Belief in a Dangerous World Scale. This polls responses to such statements as, 'There are many dangerous people in our society who will attack someone out of pure meanness, for no reason at all.' Maner and colleagues (2005) found that people who regard the world as a dangerous place tend to discern greater anger in the facial expressions of African Americans but not in those of African American women and of Caucasian men and women. They also discern this greater degree of anger in the faces of Arab men. Such reactions were also observed after participants had been shown frightening film footage. This apparently confirms a finding found elsewhere on numerous occasions: that individual variables more or less chronically present in people have effects comparable with those induced in people by temporary changes in their mental state. Sometimes, as in this case, there can

be an accumulation of effects; participants who had a general tendency to see the world as dangerous and who had also seen the frightening footage reported seeing the most anger being expressed. For our purposes, we can surmise from this that greater perceived threat – whether it comes from the individual or the situation they are in – makes the world seem even more dangerous and so further enhances the experience of threat, a process that can fuel radicalization.

Threat sensitivity manifests itself in a variety of ways. An interesting illustration of this can be found in a study by Oxley and colleagues (2008). They used two different measures, skin conductance and blinking, to measure physiological responses to threat. When people are tense or aroused, they perspire slightly more, moistening the skin and so improving its ability to conduct electricity. Consequently, skin conductance is a good measure of arousal. By exposing subjects to threatening stimuli, such as an image of a large spider on the face of a frightened person, it is thus possible to determine how sensitive they are to threat. The more receptive they are, the more pronounced their arousal response and so the greater their skin conductance becomes. Similarly, how much a person blinks upon hearing a sudden loud noise betrays their shock response, another indicator of threat sensitivity. What Oxley and fellows discovered was a link to political views: higher skin conductance and more blinking, indicating greater threat sensitivity. Moreover, these reactions were also associated with factors such as patriotism, support for the death penalty and opposition to immigration, abortion and sex before marriage. As the researchers comment, this shows that individuals' physiological responsiveness to threat appears to mirror the extent to which they support policy protecting existing social structures from various forms of threat. It would seem, then, that there is a broad underlying sensitivity to threat that can manifest itself both physiologically (e.g. in terms of a response to frightening pictures and loud noises) and on the political plane (e.g. in the form of attitudes in favour of maintaining the established social order and, above all, reflecting authoritarianism). In Chapter 3, we discussed the importance of threats in fostering extremism. We have now encountered another significant dimension to their role, namely individual variations in sensitivity to them. In other words, the perceived threats described in Chapter 3 can affect different people in very different ways.

Cohrs and Ibler (2009) investigated the impact of threat on prejudice in Germany. As we saw in Chapter 3, threat is associated with greater prejudice and less tolerance. We also discovered, from the study by Echebarria-Echabe and Fernandez-Guede (2006) following the Madrid train bombing, that it can promote conservatism. And in Chapter 4, we discussed research by Sales and Friend (1973), which indicated that people behave in a more authoritarian manner in the wake of failure, a situation perceived as threatening.

Cohrs and Ibler found that disseminating threat-arousing information about another group had a direct effect in increasing prejudice against it but *only* amongst people who were already more authoritarian in nature. The reason was that they tended to interpret the information in a more extreme manner. In a second experiment, the same researchers showed that the 'threatening' group – in this case Germans of Turkish origin – evoked fewer positive emotions and more negative ones in the more authoritarian participants in their study. In both cases, then, authoritarian individuals displayed greater threat sensitivity.

Given this threat-based aspect, authoritarianism is very different as a source of prejudice and other reactions from social dominance orientation, which primarily reflects an attitude towards human equality. The nature of the prejudice directed at any particular group of people can thus vary in its underlying basis. Authoritarianism generates hostility towards groups perceived as a threat, a potential danger to the prevailing social order, and – as described in Chapter 3 – is therefore an important factor in right-wing radicalism. Social dominance orientation, on the other hand, produces prejudice against deprived groups or those with a low social status. Research by Duckitt (2006) supports this hypothesis. He found that hostility towards the likes of drug dealers was associated with authoritarianism but not social dominance orientation, whereas the opposite was true in the case of negative attitudes towards the disabled and recipients of unemployment benefits. As indicated earlier, it is possible that a low social dominance orientation – that is, a preference for equality – is an underlying factor in left-wing radicalism. Thomsen, Green and Sidanius (2008) followed a similar approach.

Participants in their study were presented with a description of a member of an ethnic minority group who was unwilling to assimilate with the majority culture of the host nation. The researchers assumed that this stance would be interpreted by authoritarian individuals as a symbolic threat and so generate negative reactions. Those with a stronger social dominance orientation, on the other hand, would regard a readiness to assimilate as a threat, since it implies wanting to join and become part of the established social order. As predicted, the authoritarians responded with hostility to unwillingness to adapt, to the extent of supporting persecution of the minority concerned and in some cases even violence against it. By contrast, a social dominance orientation predicted greater antipathy towards those who were prepared to adapt. All this puts immigrants in a difficult position: you cannot please everyone. If you are ready to abandon your native culture and fit into your new homeland, that will be applauded by the authoritarian-minded but not by people with a strong social dominance orientation. The latter are likely to respond negatively to you and your group. (See Box 5.1.)

Box 5.1 Individual differences in generic prejudice

As Allport (1954/1979) noted, people's prejudices tend to follow a generalized pattern. Someone who harbours a fair degree of antipathy towards one specific group is also likely to be prejudiced against others to a similar extent. For example, a relationship has been found between attitudes towards the obese, amputees, convicted thieves, AIDS patients, schizophrenics and homosexuals. Some people were found to demonstrate considerable prejudice against all of these groups, whereas others were found to be relatively free of prejudice across the board. In the light of the distinction between authoritarianism and social dominance orientation, this difference becomes easier to explain. People differ in these two orientations, which in turn underlie their attitudes towards various groups. In fact, since each reflects a very different motivation, we can go a step further than Allport and state that there is one generic pattern of prejudice against groups seen as posing a threat, which is displayed by authoritarians, and another, the province of the social dominance oriented, which targets the deprived and socially disadvantaged. In other words, we see two internally consistent subpatterns rather than one general pattern shared by all those with an inclination towards prejudice (cf. Dijker & Koomen, 2007).

Authoritarianism and social dominance orientation do not just have an impact on prejudice. Heaven and Connors (2001), for instance, found relationships with a variety of goals and values. Authoritarianism was associated with support for national power and domestic order, 'decent' clothing and manners, religiosity, secure and satisfying relationships and honesty. Social dominance orientation, on the other hand, reflected limited backing for international harmony and equality, limited honesty and religiosity and the desire to 'get ahead'. A number of items in both lists, including national power, secure relationships and limited support for international harmony and equality, can be seen in right-wing radicalism. Van Hiel, Pandelaere and Duriez (2004) found that authoritarianism is closely related to cultural conservatism, with its emphasis upon traditional standards and values, and social dominance orientation to an economic conservatism giving prominence to a capitalist ideology.

Both orientations have a distinctly conservative streak, then. We have already mentioned the study by Cohrs and Ibler (2009) into authoritarianism, its effect upon perceptions of the threat posed by minority groups and the emotions evoked in the process. They also found that conservatism is strongly associated with an inclination to discriminate against other groups,

particularly in a threatening situation. Following a major hurricane, the more conservative American participants in their study were less likely to ascribe typical human qualities such as 'concern', 'grief', 'shame' and 'horror' to a family bearing the name Fernandez than to one called Conolly. They were also less willing to offer psychological help to the Fernandez family, Spanish-speaking immigrants. A failure to attribute human qualities to other people is known as infrahumanization or dehumanization and is a subject we look at in detail in Chapter 8, where we shall see that it is often linked to estrangement from and a lack of contact with other groups and may be used as justification for not coming to their aid when needed or even for violence against them.

Drawing on studies such as Van Hiel, Pandelaere and Duriez (2004), it is easy to find links between political radicalism, on the left and the right, and both authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. So the connection is not through prejudice alone. Moreover, the same applies to the two cultural value dimensions identified by Schwartz (1994) and discussed in Chapter 3. One of these contrasts openness to change with conservation and stability, pitting stimulation and self-direction against security, conformity and tradition. There is a close relationship here with authoritarianism. The other dimension, self-transcendence versus self-enhancement, places benevolence and universalism against power and achievement. It is not difficult to discern a strong link between this and social dominance orientation. If you view the world as threatening and dangerous and highly competitive, making it vital that you seek power, status and success, then that will be reflected in the levels of authoritarianism and social dominance orientation you display. A study of students in New Zealand by Sibley, Wilson and Duckitt (2007) confirms this. Over five months, the degree of both orientations exhibited by the participants evolved in a manner that could be predicted on the basis of their initial perceptions of the world in terms of danger and competitiveness (elsewhere we already described the Belief in a Dangerous World Scale). Those who viewed the world as fairly dangerous or competitive at the beginning of the five months displayed a greater tendency towards authoritarianism or social dominance orientation later on. In the former case, there was also an inverse relationship: stronger authoritarianism at the outset predicted a subsequent view of the world as relatively dangerous. (See also Box 5.2.)

More generally, viewing the social world as a dangerous place has often been found to be associated with authoritarianism, whereas viewing the world as competitive is rather strongly associated with social dominance orientation, as shown in a meta-analysis by Perry, Sibley and Duckitt (2013). In contrast, the opposing associations between a dangerous worldview and social dominance orientation, as well as between a competitive worldview and authoritarianism, were small in size, demonstrating the distinctive character of the former associations.

Box 5.2 Leaders of right-wing movements

People who combine a high degree of authoritarianism with a strong social dominance orientation form a rather unique group. Altemeyer (2004) looked at Canadians with both orientations and concluded that they display the worst characteristics of each. Their social dominance orientation means that they are very committed to the pursuit of power, have little time for notions of human equality, are manipulative by nature and more or less lack a moral compass, whilst their authoritarian side does little or nothing to rein in these features. This is not what you might expect, given the fact that authoritarians tend to behave rather submissively and to celebrate traditional values. In their religious observances, members of the dual-orientation group are ethnocentric and dogmatic, typically authoritarian characteristics that do not seem to be restrained by the manipulative and amoral aspects of their social dominance orientation. Given the ties between both characteristics and prejudice, it is hardly surprising that this group is more prejudiced than any other.

   Altemeyer claims that such individuals are ideally suited to head right-wing political movements. Rallying the rather dependent authoritarians who have a preference for such groups would be easy for them. Moreover, they almost certainly share the same right-wing views, prejudices and religious beliefs. In short, they make the perfect leaders for the authoritarian followers of right-wing movements.

Links with political opinions have also been identified in respect of personality variables, which are often associated with ideological orientation and values. A German study by Zettler and Hilbig (2010) found a fairly strong correlation between altruism, one of those variables, and leftist political views. In a later study (Zettler, Hilbig & Haubrich, 2011), altruism also predicted voting behaviour; more altruistic individuals reported more preference for left-wing parties in hypothetical and real voting behaviour. Altruism is defined as a readiness to help others, even at personal costs to yourself – by donating money or blood to benefit people you do not know, for instance, or doing voluntary work. This trait is also related to a preference for social equality, an important aspect of left-wing politics, which is what the researchers take as explaining the overlap between altruism and such views. In addition, they point out the irreconcilability of certain attributes displayed by altruistic individuals, such as 'soft-heartedness', with those regarded as typifying people on the political right, notably 'toughness' and a focus on power. Benevolence has opposite relationships with altruism

and social dominance orientation, an affinity with the former and an antipathy with the latter.

Let us return to the link between authoritarianism and terrorism. Henry, Sidanius, Levin, and Pratto (2005) found that people in Lebanon with a high authoritarianism score supported acts of terrorism against the United States more strongly than those with a low score. There was a comparable link, albeit not as strong, between authoritarianism and aggressive attitudes in the U.S. as well, although there they were channelled into backing for tough antiterror policies. As far as social dominance orientation was concerned, in the U.S., high levels were associated with support for a tough line against terrorism, whereas in Lebanon, weakness in this respect coincided with greater support for attacks on America. The researchers explain this by pointing out that Arab violence against the West is often viewed in the Middle East as the weak hitting back at the strong. They therefore hypothesize that people with a lesser social dominance orientation and hence a greater preference for human equality and more empathy with others sympathize strongly with what they regard as the weaker group and consequently support its acts of violence.

According to data reported by Tesser (1993), authoritarianism and social dominance orientation appear to have a hereditary component. But that does not mean that they are not also influenced by social conditions, as shown by Sibley, Wilson and Duckitt (2007), whose study we discussed earlier. Poteat, Espelage and Green (2007) revealed much the same in the case of social dominance orientation, with groups of student friends found to vary systematically in the strength of this characteristic. Since this was a longitudinal study, with measurements taken over an extended period of time, it was possible to distinguish between processes of self-selection (people choose friends with a similar level of social dominance orientation) and group influence (people adapt their own level to the norm within the group). Both mechanisms were found, and both resulted in more homogeneous groups.

Other personality traits

Another factor sometimes broached as possibly playing a part in radicalism and terrorism is a tendency to dichotomous, or 'black-and-white', thinking, the idea that things are either 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong', with no middle ground (cf. Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006; Victoroff, 2005). Whilst this seems quite plausible, there is hardly any relevant research on the topic. Another personality trait that could possibly be a distinguishing factor in terrorists, mentioned by Kruglanski and Fishman (2006), Victoroff (2005) and others, is 'sensation-seeking' or 'novelty-seeking'. This is an aspect of personality that has been studied extensively, and there is no doubt

that terrorism involves plenty of sensation, excitement and risk. Victoroff provides quotes by terrorists that confirm this and argues that, as a trait that is to an extent characteristic of adolescents and young adults in general, sensation seeking can give the pursuit of violence a particular appeal to some at this stage in life. As a permanent feature in certain individuals, he adds, it is also plausible that there is a more general link with terrorism. As far as we are aware, though, no research exists showing that people with a strong inclination to seek sensation have a greater propensity for terrorism. (See Box 5.3.)

To sum up, there is no evidence that terrorists have abnormal personalities. But as far as more specific aspects of personality are concerned, there is some support for the idea that authoritarianism and social dominance orientation play a part in the process of radicalization leading to terrorism. And sensation seeking may do as well, although very little research has been conducted into its role. A recent review with the aim to develop a risk assessment model for the purpose of counterterrorism intelligence gathering confirms this conclusion. Kebbell and Porter (2012) concluded that there is no sufficient evidence to create a profile or risk assessment model to predict

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Box 5.3 The idiosyncratic nature of radicalization

Ilardi (2013) conducted a qualitative study in which he relied on in-depth interviews with seven Canadian radicals. The main conclusion of his study was that the process of radicalization is far from straightforward and relies on a variety of motivations, emotions and decision-making processes with substantial individual differences. The individuals he interviewed got involved in extremist movements for a variety of very different reasons. Moreover, random events and encounters played a major role in these processes. Deliberative decisions and choices seemed to play a modest role. Accidental meetings, unplanned visits and other events that happened to meet individual needs happened to be more important than the existence of grievances accompanied by specific beliefs and emotions. Moreover, the relative importance of the various causes tended to vary over time. Ilardi's main conclusion was that the extremely idiosyncratic and temporally unstable nature of the radicalization processes in his small sample cast serious doubts on attempts to define clear profiles of potential extremists that could help to anticipate violent individuals and groups. The main similarity between the various individuals was that their lives prior to their conversion were marred by personal struggles ranging from criminal behaviour to addictions to drugs and alcohol.

who is likely to commit violent extremism and distinguish them from those who are less likely to develop such a commitment. In their view, attitudinal factors, in combination with the conviction that retaliation is justified, are more predictive of the decision to opt for violence. They also mention isolation and the tendency to access violent materials. All these aspects will be discussed in later chapters of this book.

Demographics

Demographic features are generally easier to quantify than personality traits and can be quantified with greater reliability. Consequently, it is often possible to draw clearer conclusions concerning the role they play. In this section, we concentrate on those aspects of demographics most prominent in the literature on radicalization and terrorism, namely socioeconomic status, age, gender and marital status.

Socioeconomic status

We have already discussed the relationship between socioeconomic position and radicalism in some detail – with reference to Islamic radicalism in particular but also to the right-wing variant. Here we endeavour to complete the picture, drawing upon additional research data. The literature often identifies education, profession and income as primary indicators of socioeconomic status. Because of the usually strong relationship between these factors, in this context we often treat them as interchangeable. Sometimes, for example, we use the term 'socioeconomic status' instead of 'education'.

In Chapter 2, we described that research on Islamic terrorism has shown that Muslim people who live in relatively decent economic circumstances are often more supportive of radicalism and terrorism than the less well off. There are, however, divergent results.

Research into Palestinian suicide bombers in the 1980s revealed that most had a low socioeconomic status. Post (2005) paints a picture of naïve young men told by recruiters that their prospects were grim, that they had the chance to do something important, which would earn them admiration; moreover, their families would be rewarded financially. In such a situation, a good education probably presents a barrier to recruitment, and the ideological component of the support is not as strongly developed as in other cases. Comparable circumstances have been found amongst Turks living in Germany (Simon & Ruhs, 2008): those with a lower standard of education are more likely to support radical Turkish organizations and to accept a greater degree of political violence. As an explanation, Simon and Ruhs report a relatively low level of Turkish political participation in Germany, which may result in better educated Turks being less inclined to compare themselves

with Germans. Their community is possibly more inward-looking and so makes its comparisons internally. This might lessen the perception of relative deprivation compared to the majority group, which can, as we have seen in Chapter 2, be a driver of radicalization. That said, a negative correlation has been found between socioeconomic status and other forms of radicalism and terrorism. Burgoon (2006) mentions research in Northern Ireland in the 1960s, which found greater support for political violence and terrorism amongst poor, unemployed and less skilled and educated respondents. To summarize, Islamic radicalism can be associated with either a higher or a lower socioeconomic status, but as yet it is unclear what the conditions are in which each applies.

As far as political radicalism is concerned, Victoroff (2005) elucidates the relationship with socioeconomic position through an analysis of FBI interviews with leftist and rightist terrorists active in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. A much larger proportion of those on the left than on the right had a college education (68 versus 19 per cent), whereas blue-collar occupations were more prevalent amongst the right-wingers (75 versus 24 per cent). In both groups, however, incomes were generally average to low. Smelser (2007) depicts a similar situation. Members of the left-wing Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF) in Germany and Weather Underground in the U.S. had predominantly middle-class backgrounds, whilst the right-wing Ku Klux Klan drew most of its members from the working class. We have already described the relationship between right-wing radicalism and lower socioeconomic status or educational attainment in Chapter 3. Hello, Scheepers and Sleegers (2006) showed that young adults with a relatively poor education tend to keep their distance from ethnic minorities. In part, that disposition is linked to the trait of authoritarianism previously described. Research shows that people with lower levels of educational attainment are generally more authoritarian in nature (cf. Altemeyer, 1998) and so prefer not to associate with minorities. We also referred to other threats, such as a low income, felt most acutely by people who are poorly educated – discrimination, for example, and lack of opportunity. These, too, make people susceptible to radical right-wing thinking. In this case, then, low social class is associated with greater support for views on the extreme right of the spectrum. (See Box 5.4.)

As far as education is concerned, another way of explaining the differences is that higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to be accompanied by a willingness to accept change and innovation and by a desire to avoid conservatism (cf. Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1998). Intelligence can play an important role in this respect. In the UK, Deary, Batty and Gale (2008) investigated the relationship between people's IQ, measured at the age of 10, and how they scored at the age of 30 on liberal attitudes such

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Box 5.4 Class and giving

As described previously, belonging to a lower social class can have a number of less than positive effects. Poverty and a lack of education, for example, produce stress and lessen the feeling of control over one's own life. And we often see more prejudice too. But this picture is somewhat one-sided. Piff, Kraus, Cote, Cheng and Keltner (2010) have shown that people with a lower socioeconomic status may have less but actually give more. In an experimental game, players who indicated that they came from a lower social class proved more generous and altruistic than those in higher classes. In another study, participants were given the impression that they belonged to either a relatively low class or a relatively high one. Members of the first group were prepared to set aside a larger proportion of their income for charity than members of the second. And dividing the participants along income lines produced a comparable result. Subsequent research found a possible explanation for this behaviour in terms of a difference in values, with lower class participants more concerned with the welfare of others. In a parallel finding, it has been shown that, in contacts with people they did not know, people from higher social classes paid less attention to those people. Members of lower social classes, by contrast, paid more attention when interacting with unknown people, smiling and nodding more, for example. That said, members of the higher classes do more voluntary work and are more environmentally aware. Piff and colleagues explain this as indicating that giving has a relational basis for people in lower classes, rooted in a concern for the well-being of others and a desire to forge social relationships. It is possible, therefore, that they are more likely to give in situations of this kind.

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as being anti-racist, trust in politicians, less of an emphasis on obedience to authority and a positive disposition towards working women. The findings revealed a fairly strong positive correlation between intelligence and liberal views on these subjects. In part, that was brought about by education: the more intelligent people are, the more schooling they tend to receive, and so the more likely they are to develop liberal attitudes.

Relatedly, Hodson and Busseri (2012) focused on the relationship between intelligence and racism in the UK. In their analysis of two large data sets, they found that lower general intelligence in childhood predicted greater racism in adulthood. This effect was largely mediated through the

endorsement of right-wing ideologies and independent of education and socioeconomic status. The investigators suggest that individuals with lower cognitive ability may be more responsive to right-wing ideologies that promote stability and order, and because of the emphasis on the maintenance of the status quo, these ideologies may entail greater outgroup prejudice. It is not clear why education was not a significant factor in this study. Anyhow, the study underscores again the important role intelligence may play in people's endorsement of liberal attitudes (and not right-wing ideologies).

Age

According to an overview presented by Victoroff (2005), terrorists tend to be relatively young. His data put their average age at about 25, which corresponds with findings reported by Fair and Shepherd (2006) from a population study of 14 African and South Asian countries with a Muslim majority or a large Muslim minority: older respondents were less supportive of terrorism than the young. In their research into Turkish people living in Germany, Simon and Ruhs (2008) also discovered greater support for radical Turkish organizations and acceptance of political violence amongst the young than amongst the old. Silke (2008) sees a possible explanation in the fact that young males are most often responsible for violent crime – a phenomenon that is remarkably constant across all cultures and regions and that dissipates rapidly with age. It is likely that rising levels of the male hormone testosterone, reaching a peak between the ages of 20 and 25, cause this spike in aggression and violence. (See Box 5.5.)

Young men are also heavily involved in criminal behaviour in general. According to Silke (2008), that is primarily a product of impulsiveness, self-confidence, risk taking and a desire for status – all factors that probably also determine a lot of youthful male behaviour and, alongside aggression, may well add significantly to the appeal that terrorism holds for them.

Another explanation for the role of age can be found in a number of aspects already mentioned as potential contributors to radicalization and terrorism, namely uncertainty, discontent and perceived injustice. Such cognitions and the associated emotions are probably stronger in the young than in their elders. They are still shaping their lives and their impression of the world around them, a process that subjects them to strong and contradictory value pressures. The young most likely experience discrimination and deprivation more acutely too because they are keener to gain full access to society than the older generation. For Islamic and political radicalism alike, then, uncertainty and a desire to shape one's life and the world probably help to explain the age effect.

Box 5.5 Testosterone and social status

A high level of testosterone makes people more dominant and aggressive and can trigger excessive behaviour. In a study of more than 4400 U.S. military veterans, Dabbs and Morris (1990) found that those with high levels reported more antisocial behaviour, use of cannabis and hard drugs, alcohol abuse, unauthorized absences from work and sexual partners than those with an average level. Interestingly, when the respondents were classified by socioeconomic status, the differences in behaviour all but disappeared within the higher-status group. Only cannabis use remained higher in those with a high level of testosterone. In the lower-status groups, by contrast, a high testosterone level continued to indicate all the activities under investigation: the more of the hormone they had in their bodies, the more likely the subjects were to display excessive and antisocial behaviour. To explain this, Dabbs and Morris suggest that the better education that goes with higher socioeconomic status helps people to suppress antisocial tendencies. Indeed, there was less excessive behaviour in the higher-status group. Even though more testosterone encourages antisocial tendencies, the intellectual trappings of high status enabled them to be kept in check. A comparable pattern seems quite plausible in the domain of radicalism and terrorism, with testosterone particularly inciting extreme behaviour amongst lower-status groups.

Gender

It is well known that the great majority of terrorists are men. To a large extent, this is explained by the general disparity between the sexes in terms of aggressiveness. A comprehensive quantification of these differences (Archer, 2004) has confirmed that men display more aggressive behaviour than women – not only in the physical sense but also verbally. Moreover, this difference has been found across all cultures, even in 2-year-old children. A peak in the discrepancy has been found to lie between the ages of 20 and 30. Indirect forms of aggression, however, such as social exclusion and ostracization, are sometimes more predominant in females, particularly during late childhood and adolescence. No significant sexual differences have been found in the emotions anger and rage. Archer concludes that the overall pattern of his findings suggests that men use more costly methods of aggression rather than having a lower anger threshold. In other words, the sexes weigh up the costs and benefits of exhibiting aggression in different

ways, with women apparently more apprehensive of the possible conse-
quences and so able to restrain themselves longer.

Gender differences can also be found in the motives for carrying out ter-
rorist attacks. Jacques and Taylor (2008) compared the biographical details
of 30 male and 30 female suicide bombers, mostly from the Middle East,
and found that the men were more likely to have been influenced by reli-
gious and nationalistic factors than the women, whose motivations tended
to lie in the personal sphere – for example, a conflict in the family, a divorce
or an unhappy life. The investigators also mention other research indicat-
ing that women join terrorist groups for personal reasons. To explain the
religious-nationalistic gender differences, it is suggested that social groups
and the associated collective identities are more important to men than to
women. This appears to be confirmed by other research (cf. Gabriel & Gard-
ner, 1999), showing that men are strongly focused upon the group aspects of
social relationships, whereas women are more interested in personal interac-
tion. Men are also more likely than women to describe themselves in terms
of group membership. From an early age, boys are active in larger groups
and maintain more extensive social networks. Girls, on the other hand, tend
to form pairs and view intimacy as an important aspect in the formation of
relationships.

When it comes to aggression, too, men seem to be more group-oriented
than women. As Van Vugt, Cremer and Janssen (2007) note, intergroup
rivalries are very much a male preserve. Countless examples can be cited,
from warfare to civil conflict, criminal gangs to team sports, for which
the researchers provide a speculative evolutionary explanation: intergroup
rivalry offers men reproductive benefits, such as access to women and stat-
ure, which outweigh the potential drawbacks. Male warriors in traditional
societies do indeed seem to have more sexual partners and to enjoy greater
prestige than other men. As far as the male competitive focus on groups is
concerned, Van Vugt and colleagues found that men contributed more to
their group if it was competing with others than if there was no competition.
For women, by contrast, intergroup competition made very little difference.
Consistent with all these results is the assertion that aggression-related gen-
der differences depend not only upon the type of aggression concerned, direct
or indirect, but also upon the domain in which it is expressed. As pointed out
by Baumeister and Sommer (1997), the differences in aggression between
men and women are far less pronounced in the field of personal relation-
ships; there is little difference in marital aggression, for example. There
are now also refuges for battered men. In some studies, women also report
greater use of physical violence, such as kicking and punching, against dates
than men do.

These gender differences in competitiveness and aggression corre-
spond with those frequently observed in the personality domain. Costa,

Terracciano and McCrae (2001), in an analysis of data from 26 cultures, found that women consistently outscored men on such traits as warmth, trust and altruism, whereas men were found to be more assertive. In general, they also scored lower for social dominance orientation, the variable described in detail earlier in this chapter as indicating a preference for hierarchical over equal intergroup relationships. This may explain the differences between sexes in their prejudice scores: men are more likely than women to be biased against stigmatized groups. Research by Whitley (1999) into gender differences in attitudes towards African Americans and homosexuals revealed that women's lesser prejudice against these groups is largely attributable to their lower social dominance orientation. In Chapter 3, we discussed Schwartz's theory about the structure of values. Schwartz and Rubel (2005) focused on gender differences, and their findings are similar to those on competitiveness and aggression reported previously. Findings from 127 samples in 70 countries show that the largest gender differences in values indicate that men attribute more importance than women to self-enhancement values (particularly power) and that women attribute more importance to the opposing self-transcendence values, particularly benevolence. (See Box 5.6.)

All things considered, male aggression, competitiveness in intergroup relationships and social dominance orientation help to explain the gender disparity in radicalization and terrorism. Interestingly, radical movements vary often in their sexual composition. In his study of political terrorists in the United States, Victoroff (2005) uncovered a marked difference: the left-wing groups had a far higher proportion of female members than the right-wing ones (46 versus 11 per cent). The most likely explanation lies in their differing objectives. As stated in Chapter 3, leftist movements are more interested in equality and less in attacking minorities than rightist ones. And since women have a lower social dominance orientation, they too are more equality oriented and, by extension, less prejudiced. So the aims of movements on the left are more likely to tie in with their personal preferences. This makes left-wing extremism more attractive to them that the right-wing version.

Other explanations for gender differences in radicalism and terrorism echo those posited for age differences. Men are generally more involved in criminal activity than women, and underlying factors such as impulsiveness and risk taking can enhance the appeal of extremism. In a quantitative analysis, Byrnes, Miller and Schafer (1999) found that men usually take more risks than women. To this can be added the observation that terrorist behaviour corresponds more closely with traditional male roles – characterized by initiative taking and assertiveness spilling over into aggression – than with female ones. This makes men more easily tempted into terrorist activity and more likely to be accepted by the groups involved.

Box 5.6 'Lone wolf' homicides: gender, age and mental health

Gruenewald, Chermak and Freilich (2013) studied far-right lone wolf homicides in the United States. All in all, Gruenewald and his colleagues looked at nearly 100 ideological far-right homicide events. They distinguished three types of far-right terrorism that are not perpetrated by formal terrorist organizations.: 'loners', 'lone wolves', and 'wolf packs'. These three types differ in terms of two factors. *Far-right loners* operate individually and do not belong to or have evident affiliations with far-right organizations. Loners generally do adhere to and justify their violence with far-right ideology. Loners could be radicalized through propaganda and Internet websites. *Lone wolf* far-right terrorists operate individually but differ from loners by affiliating with other extremists; that is, they belong to one or more formal or informal far-right groups. *Wolf pack* members differ from loners and lone wolves because they do not operate individually. They do affiliate with other extremists from far-right groups and tend to operate in small groups.

Their main conclusions concerning possible individual characteristics of the offender can be summarized as follows. First, suspects were overwhelmingly white males (only a single far-right loner terrorist was non-white). Far-right terrorist loners tended to be older (in their late thirties), while suspects operating within lone wolf packs (such as neo-Nazis or Skinheads) were much younger and averaged 21 years of age. Interestingly, the far-right loners in particular had prior arrests (over 60 per cent) and focused on ideological issues such as ethnicity, abortion and sexual orientations. One of the most important findings of their study concerned differences in mental health; around 40 per cent of loners and lone wolves experienced mental health problems in their lives; this was only 3 per cent for lone wolf pack members.

Spaaij (2010) reaches a similar conclusion and states that rates of psychological disturbances and social ineptitude are quite high among all three types of lone wolf terrorists. He argues that lone wolves tend to create their own ideologies that combine personal frustration and anger with broader social, political or religious aims.

Marital status

Silke (2008) observes that the vast majority of the members of extreme Islamist groups are married and that most of them have children. But he

also notes, drawing upon data from the United Kingdom, that that applies to Western Muslims in general. The prevalence of this marital status amongst extremists may therefore simply reflect the norm in their wider community. The 'protective' role that marriage is sometimes observed to play with regard to criminal behaviour does not apply so much in the case of terrorist behaviour, according to Silke, because the subject's spouse and family often share their extremist goals. Moreover, wedlock is not a characteristic shared by terrorists in general. The study of Palestinian suicide bombers mentioned earlier (Post, 2005) found that most were unmarried. In short, it is not yet clear whether the marital status of terrorists is a significant factor or, if it is, what role it plays in radicalization and the path to terrorism.

Conclusions

We began this chapter by asking whether extremists and terrorists have abnormal personalities and found that, despite past assertions, there is absolutely no evidence to support that idea. Next we described two important ideological orientations, authoritarianism and social dominance orientation, which can predict prejudice – a factor highly relevant to radicalism – to a significant degree. Authoritarian individuals have a traditional and conservative frame of mind, comply with authority and focus their aggression against sanctioned targets, probably due to their underlying uncertainty and threat sensitivity. Again, as we have seen before, these factors can foster radicalism and terrorism. Social dominance orientation reflects a belief in human inequality, and this, too, usually reinforces radical tendencies. Prejudice and hostile attitudes towards particular groups can thus be rooted in either authoritarianism or social dominance orientation; which of the two is determined primarily by the nature of the subject group itself. Authoritarianism, for instance, results in a bias against those regarded as threatening society and endangering the established social order. Given the conservatism and traditionalism inherent in this trait, it is one particularly associated with Islamic and right-wing radicalism.

The belief in human inequality that characterizes people with a strong social dominance orientation may also drive them towards the extreme right. On the other hand, a weak social dominance orientation entails a preference for equality and so makes left-wing activism more appealing. As far as other personality variables are concerned, we have found that sensation seeking may play a part, albeit possibly a modest one, in the process of radicalization culminating in terrorism, although this aspect has yet to be investigated in any great detail.

We then discussed a number of demographic factors that may play a role in cases of radicalism and terrorism. Islamic radicalism is sometimes associated with a higher socioeconomic status, but in other situations the opposite
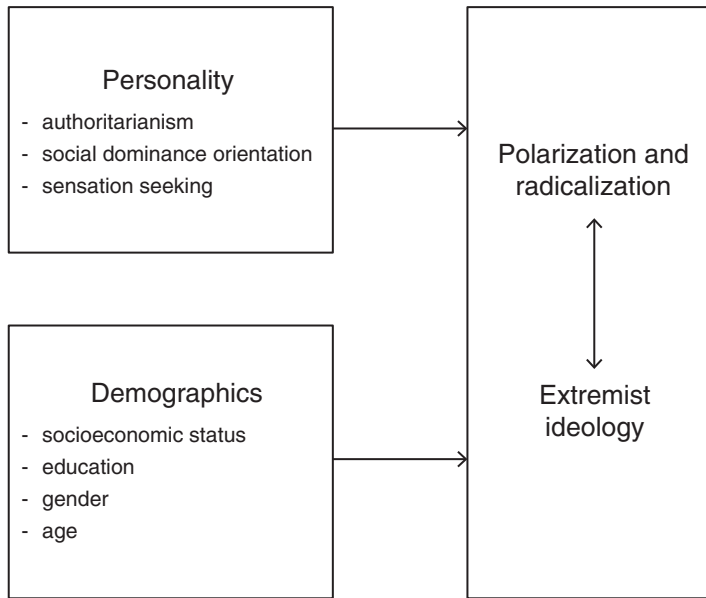
Figure 5.1 Individual factors and their impact on radicalization.

applies. So far, no convincing explanation has been put forward as to why this is. Meanwhile, both a poor education and a lower socioeconomic status often go hand in hand with greater support for extreme right-wing ideas. Authoritarianism is a significant factor in this correlation, as are various perceived threats experienced by the lower social classes. Left-wing terrorism, by contrast, is more frequently coupled with better schooling or a higher socioeconomic background. Terrorists across the board tend to be youthful and male, with one explanation being the greater aggressiveness of young men in general. Lastly, it remains unclear whether marital status is a distinguishing characteristic of terrorists.

To sum up, in this chapter we have described the effects of personality and demographic characteristics in shaping the way people react to threats and whether they choose radical or even violent solutions. In the previous chapters, we looked at the role of social factors. Figure 5.1 presents a summary of the major individual factors that play a role in processes of polarization and radicalization. Authoritarianism and social dominance orientation have an impact on how people react to threats. Sensation seeking has been also linked to terrorism but is certainly not a strong predictor. Demographic factors that play a role are related to 'sensation seeking'; that is, terrorists tend to be young and male. The role of socioeconomic status and educational background tends to vary for different kinds of terrorism (right- versus left-wing extremism, religious fundamentalism). Threats and how we respond to

them affect a variety of what we call 'social identity processes'. These will form the subject of the next chapter.

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6 Social identity, polarization and collective action

Introduction

People derive their sense of dignity or self-esteem not just from their own personal characteristics and achievements but also from their membership of a particular group. Such groups can be defined by nationality, ethnicity or gender or on the basis of a particular profession, club affiliation or school. The relationships between groups are not like those between individuals. One important difference is that intergroup competitiveness, rivalry or even hostility can be far more intense and extreme than its interpersonal equivalent. Researchers have dubbed this the 'discontinuity effect' (Insko et al., 1998; Wildschut & Insko, 2007).

In this chapter, we explore the effects of belonging to a group, in terms of what is known as social identity. We show that an affiliation of this kind can play an important role in how people view and interact with one another. For one thing, it allows them to take pride not only in their own accomplishments but also in the fact that they belong to a particular group. They can take pride in the fact that they are English or Pakistani, that they support a cup-winning team or that they are a member of Greenpeace. There are two key aspects to social identity (see e.g. Leach et al., 2008); the first is how much people *value* the group they belong to; the second concerns the *importance* they attach to forming part of it. In general, people make an effort to ensure that their group stands out from others in some positive way. This 'shine' then rubs off on them – and the more important the group is to them, the greater that knock-on effect. As we shall also see, the more important it is to people to belong to a group, the more important it becomes to them that their group has a positive image compared to other groups.

Research into social, as opposed to individual, identity began with the work of the psychologist Henri Tajfel (1981, 1982). His research focused on how people feel about the fact that they are part of a particular group and how they derive their self-esteem from that affiliation. The self-categorization theory formulated by Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell (1987) describes the processes at work here. Self-categorization is

flexible (Mussweiler, Gabriel & Bodenhausen, 2000); a German woman may sometimes see herself as German but on other occasions primarily as a woman, white, a city dweller or a skating fan. Which of these predominates depends upon multiple factors, one being context. In a male-dominated environment, she will primarily think of herself as a woman, while at an airport in Tokyo she may see herself primarily as a white European or a German. Motivational factors can also play a part. If we perform worse than others in one area, we are likely to emphasize other aspects of our identity in order to maintain our self-esteem. When fans are embarrassed by their team's performance on the field, that part of their social identity becomes less important than it would be if the club had just won the championship. Just how flexible these processes of identification can be is revealed by research by Vadher and Barrett (2009), based on interviews with British citizens with an Indian or Pakistani background. At home, their ethnic and religious identity was dominant, in the pub and on holiday they felt primarily British, but when confronted with racism from white Britons their Indian or Pakistani persona came to the fore. So in some cases they identified with India or Pakistan, in others with Britain.

In this chapter, we discuss these processes of social categorization and how social identity influences the way people view themselves, fellow members of their 'ingroup' and members of other groups, known as 'outgroups'. In particular, we focus on those aspects that can accentuate intergroup differences and enhance what we term us-and-them thinking. Van Boven, Judd and Sherman (2012) showed this for political attitudes. Their findings revealed a projection of polarization, that is, a tendency that others either share one's partisan political attitudes or have extreme attitudes on the other end of the spectrum. Disparities of culture, education, income and status all have the potential to polarize relations between groups. But by no means do they always do so. Whether or not they do have that effect is dependent upon factors that include the opportunities available to members of a particular group.

We start with a brief discussion of social identity in general; it can instigate a number of processes that affect our perception of reality and also invoke emotions. When you feel threatened, the ingroup offers a safe haven; it offers greater safety and helps you face up to the threatening situation. In such circumstances, we often see the ingroup increasing in importance, which can lead to us-and-them thinking. There are other potential consequences, too, such as a tendency to consider the ingroup as superior to and more diverse than the outgroup. That produces a perception of the outgroup as homogeneous; its members become stereotyped and seen as 'all the same'. Understandably, minorities feel more easily threatened than majorities, and they are also more sensitive to injustice and deprivation. But there are significant similarities, as well, in how minorities and majorities respond to threat.

Us-and-them thinking and supposed ingroup superiority can cause people to view outgroup members in terms of a limited number of basic characteristics and even to believe that certain fundamental human qualities are not present to the same extent in that group as they are in their own ingroup. This effect of 'dehumanization' further distances groups from one another and so creates a fertile breeding ground for greater polarization. Emotions are a key factor here, with fear and anger being the two that have received most attention in research into social identity processes. Both can push groups apart. As we shall see, accentuating intergroup differences can lead to polarization and eventually conflict, which in turn have the potential to cause radicalization and finally terrorism. People can treat relations between their own group and others in many different ways. This is addressed in the final section of this chapter, where we look at how and when minorities and majorities are able to coexist without mutual estrangement occurring. For the time being, we will focus primarily on polarization and the first stages in the process towards radicalization, although with some broader excursions. In the next chapter, we home in on social identity, religion and ideology and also address violence and terrorism.

Social identity, self-esteem and belongingness

Social identity plays an important role in sustaining one's self-esteem. People like to see themselves in a positive light and naturally prefer it if their membership of a particular group reflects positively on themselves. This attitude is a motivating factor in 'ingroup bias' (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament, 1971), the notion that people usually think of their group as better than others. One means of justifying this view is to emphasize those areas in which the ingroup is objectively better than most or all other groups.

Self-esteem

One proof of the importance of self-esteem – a positive view of yourself – can be found in the fact that, when a group is on the defensive for any reason, its members will often use any psychological means at their disposal to restore or maintain their own sense of self-worth and that of the group as a whole. Dijker and Koomen (2007) describe efforts of this kind in minority groups with a lower status than the majority. Members might seek to increase their self-esteem by, for example, shifting their focus to new or different group qualities ('Money is not that important, what matters are happiness and good relationships with other people'), ascribing its situation to discrimination ('We simply aren't given a fair chance to prove ourselves') or making specific social comparisons ('Romanians are at least as criminal as we are'). By approaching their disadvantage in this way, minorities can

actually end up displaying a higher level of self-esteem than the dominant majorities.

Verkuyten and Reijerse (2008) found that Dutch citizens with a Turkish background not only identify more with their Turkishness than their Dutchness, they also identify more with Turkish culture than the ethnic Dutch majority does with Dutch culture. They were also found to be more positive about their own group than the ethnic Dutch about theirs. Another example showing how important self-esteem can be is provided by groups on the radical right. Sitzer and Heitmeyer (2008) investigated violent incidents perpetrated by young right-wing extremists in Germany. Their number grew rapidly in the wake of reunification in 1991 and continued to do so into the twenty-first century. The groups involved share an abhorrence of immigrants and others they consider 'different', which the authors in part put down to the effects of such attitudes on their view of themselves: seeing others in a negative light creates an illusion of their own superiority.

People usually consider members of their own group also as more 'human' than those belonging to outgroups. This is shown by, for instance, the fact that they are less likely to attribute 'secondary' emotions such as nostalgia, admiration, shame and regret to members of other groups. These emotions – also referred to as 'higher emotions' – are associated with aspects such as rationality, civilization and refinement, all qualities considered unique to the human species (see Haslam, Loughnan, Kashima & Bain, 2008). So not only is the ingroup thought of in more positive terms, then, it is also believed to be superior to and more 'human' than rival groups. (See Box 6.1.)

Box 6.1 Dehumanization and the media

Esses, Mediana and Lawson (2013) investigated the role of the media in promoting the dehumanization of immigrants and refugees. Participants in their study were asked to read an online article reviewing a biography of the actor Steve Martin and to answer some questions about it. On the bottom right-hand side of the page was an editorial cartoon. This cartoon was not the focal issue of the task and was thus viewed incidentally. The cartoon showed an immigrant arriving at an Immigration Canada booth carrying several suitcases. In one condition, the immigrant was also carrying displayed labels for various diseases (e.g. AIDS, SARS). In the other condition, no labels were present. Next, participants answered questions about the online article that was the purported focus of the study, followed by a set of unrelated additional questions, including questions about immigrants. Interestingly, this subtle manipulation already resulted in an increased

tendency to associate immigrants as spreaders of diseases. They were also seen as less 'human', and participants tended to feel more contempt for them. In the same article, the authors also reported a study in which participants read an article about refugees. In one condition, they were described as immoral bogus queue-jumpers; the other neutral article simply referred to Canada's costly refugee programmes.

Results (displayed in Figure B6.1) show increased dehumanization, more contempt and more negative attitudes for participants who read the bogus queue-jumper version of the article.

High (+)
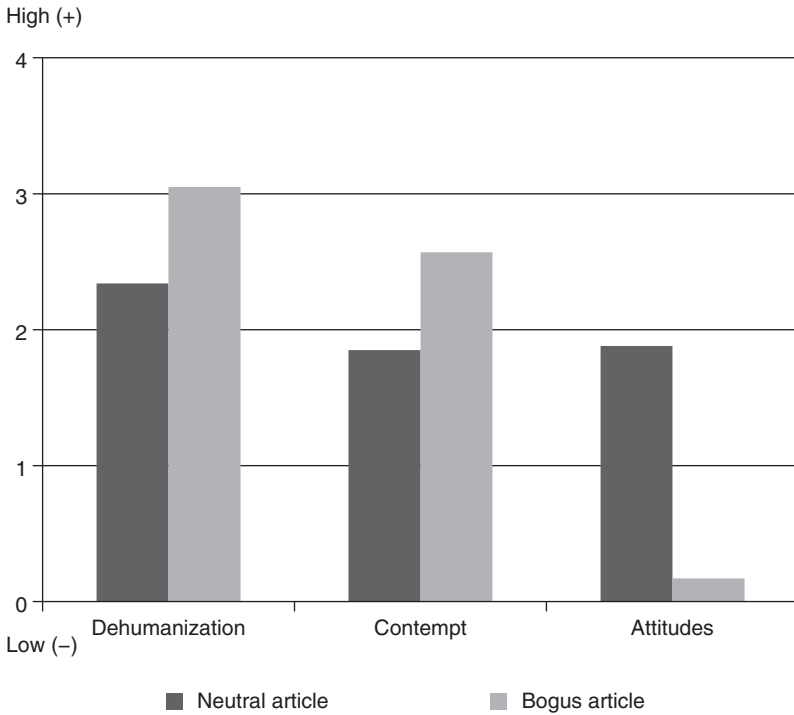
Figure B6.1 Effect of bogus refugee versus neutral article on dehumanization, emotions and attitudes towards refugees.

Source: Based on Esses, Mediana and Lawson (2013).

Viewing the ingroup in a positive light is a fairly universal phenomenon and is, of course, reflected in behaviour. When people hand out favours, for instance, they are almost always most generous to their own group (Otten & Mummendey, 2000). Research has shown that they are even prepared to disadvantage the ingroup, just as long as that still leaves it better off than the

outgroup; when Tajfel, Billig, Bundy and Flament (1971) allowed players of an experimental game to choose between giving 17 points to both their own and another group or giving their own group 11 points and the other 7, they found that many preferred the latter option. Favouring the ingroup is commonplace; Greenwald and Pettigrew (2014) argued that favouritism towards ingroups is responsible for much discrimination. Impeding or even ill-treating others goes a step further; it involves a hostility that requires the presence of threat or conflict. The desire to disadvantage the outgroup in such situations, on top of the more universal wish to benefit the ingroup, has also been clearly identified in the literature.

Various studies show that people can be very versatile in the strategies they use to try to maintain their self-esteem and that these strategies are frequently successful. For example, a meta-analysis of 192 studies on the effect of social exclusion (Blackhart, Nelson, Knowles & Baumeister, 2009) found that it reduces the sense of solidarity and security derived from group membership as well as denting self-esteem. Exclusion is unpleasant, then, and must surely affect the state of mind of its victims. By contrast, being accepted by others has a positive effect upon both self-esteem and mood. Despite this, the analysis showed that the level of self-esteem in people who had suffered social exclusion was not significantly different from the norm. The authors conclude that this indicates that people possess good defensive mechanisms, capable of nullifying the potential impact of incidental exclusion upon their self-confidence. Knowles, Lucas, Molden and Dean (2010) focused on the effect of social exclusion on a person's self-confidence and also showed that that is something they are keen to restore as quickly as possible. The most interesting point about their study is that it reveals how important it is to 'belong' somewhere. That, the authors conclude, is often more important than being good at something.

Belongingness

The importance of belongingness is illustrated by the fact that rejection by people you do not even know can also be a particularly unpleasant experience. Gunther Moor, Crone and van der Molen (2010) found clear physiological effects – a deceleration in heart rate – in participants who were told that a person they had only seen in a photograph did not like them, when they expected the opposite to be true (as we usually do). The deceleration was more marked after social rejection than following feedback that the participant had performed badly in a specific task, namely guessing the age of the person in the photograph. It also took longer for their heart rhythm to return to normal in the previous case. This always happens when people are confronted with negative information – the threat of punishment, for

instance – or if it suddenly turns out that their expectations are not going to be fulfilled. In Chapter 3, we formulated that response in terms of threat. The suppressed heart rate observed by Gunther Moor and colleagues is thus linked to pain, sorrow and disappointment. The significance of exclusion is underlined by the fact that people are even upset when they are rejected by groups they hate (Gonsalkorale & Williams, 2007). The exclusion of minorities by the majority is one of the factors that distances groups one from the other and so can result in the radicalization of rejected minorities. (See Box 6.2.)

Studies of social identity processes indicate that the importance of group membership and of efforts to distinguish that group in a positive manner increase when people believe that their self-esteem is threatened or under pressure (see e.g. Dovidio, Gaertner & Saguy, 2007). Such augmented ingroup identification in circumstances of this kind is both easy to understand and highly functional: the group offers safety, security and a shared interpretation of reality. Research appears to confirm this supposition: Mallett and Swim (2009) investigated how people cope with discrimination and found that those African Americans who identified themselves as such – as members of a distinct racial group – were better prepared for it, better able

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Box 6.2 On being rejected

Gerber and Wheeler (2009) conducted a series of meta-analyses of experimental research on rejection. Their analyses included 88 studies with a total of N ranging from 547 to 3692 respondents. They focused on three internal states following rejection: mood, arousal and self-esteem. They also assessed the impact of rejection on three basic needs: belonging, control and meaningful existence. Their analysis revealed moderate effects of rejection on mood and self-esteem. People generally feel worse after being rejected. Ostracism is often considered a severe form of rejection, and the findings of this meta-analysis provide some support; it had a slightly larger effect on arousal and self-esteem than milder forms of rejection. Ostracism had a clear effect on both arousal and self-esteem, suggesting a state of alertness to environmental threat and a readiness for action. Gerber and Wheeler also investigated the type of action aroused by rejection. Results showed that rejection resulted in needs for belonging and control as indicated by both self-reports and behavioural actions. Aggressive responses to rejection were aimed at requiring control over the situation, confirming earlier findings linking lack of control with aggression.

to anticipate it and better at dealing with it. The authors further concluded that persons who use this form of 'coping style' also gain more from their interaction with the majority; they are better at preventing discrimination, are more accepted and have greater success in job applications. However, augmented ingroup identification can also give rise to more negative opinions of outgroups and a desire to emphasize group differences and to minimize similarities (see e.g. Fischer, Gretemeyer, Omay & Frey, 2007).

In Chapter 3, we described various forms of threat, including so-called symbolic threats that can be experienced in encounters with outgroups with different standards and values. The power of symbolic threat has been observed amongst majorities and minorities alike, in all kinds of situations. Van Rijswijk, Hopkins and Johnston (2009) showed that opposition to an influx of Polish migrant workers amongst Protestants in Northern Ireland increased when they were reminded that the members of the former group are, by and large, Catholic. This effect was due in part to a perception that the Poles' Catholicism threatened their own Protestant identity. When people feel threatened, that can – to a greater or lesser extent – cause fear.

The principal reason for emphasizing one's own social identity is the support it provides in threatening situations. As argued before, threat makes the ingroup more important because it can offer safety and security in a hostile environment. In this book, we present a lot of examples from Europe, but the same also applies in other parts of the world. Research into the native Mapuche people of Chile reveals that discrimination by the white majority caused them to emphasize the importance of their own group and its social identity, which made the experience of prejudice more acceptable to them (Mellor, Merino, Saiz & Quilaqueo, 2009).

Outgroup homogeneity

In this section, we consider how people view their own group in relation to others, addressing how *diverse* they perceive their own group to be compared with other groups. As group identification increases, a number of processes appear to come into play simultaneously. First, membership of the group exerts a greater influence over perceptions of oneself and others; people see more similarities between themselves personally and the ingroup in general, are more easily dissatisfied with their position in relation to other groups (Tropp & Wright, 1999) and are more prepared to defend it (Tropp & Brown, 2004). According to Frey and Tropp (2006), those who identify strongly with a group not only define themselves primarily as members, they also assume that others do as well. They expect outsiders, especially, to see them less as individuals with their own personal characteristics than as representatives of a particular ethnicity or other group. Moreover, that is often coupled with an expectation that others will apply negative stereotypes

to them, which in turn leads to a more negative view of those outsiders (see e.g. Livingston, Brewer & Alexander, 2004). In Chapter 2, we already discussed this effect in terms of metastereotypes. In all these processes, the extent to which a person feels threatened is an important factor; the greater the perceived threat, the greater the role played by these processes.

When intergroup tensions or conflicts arise, it is common for each group to come to view the other as 'entitative' – all the same. The outgroup is seen as uniform and homogeneous. Indeed, there is a substantial body of research showing that the tendency to homogenize outgroups, whilst regarding the ingroup as diverse and heterogeneous, is quite strong even in normal times. The English think that all Germans are much the same, more so than the English themselves, and vice versa. Such attitudes are also related to our outgroup stereotypes, of course; especially when we do not know the other group well, there is a greater chance we will think of it as homogeneous.

Naturally, people believe they have a lot in common with the group they belong to. A study by Allen and Wilder (1979) illustrates this. They divided students into groups according to their *supposed* artistic preferences. Not only did participants immediately assume that the other members of their group would indeed share their preferences, they also thought that they would have much else in common as well: hobbies, interests and even personality traits. Interestingly, it has been shown that this tendency is greater when a person is a member of a minority (Simon & Brown, 1987); this is a point we return to later. In addition to the similarities, though, we are also more aware of the many differences within our group. This is no more than logical, as we know more people from the group we belong to ourselves. In other words, whilst we recognize the common factors uniting all members of the ingroup, ourselves included, we can also see that it is diverse and that individuals have a variety of characteristics not directly related to this group identity. That latter insight, especially, is something we do not tend to perceive in the case of outgroups, which is why we view them as rather homogeneous and limited in diversity. This occurs partly because we are simply less familiar with them, but that is not the only reason. The manner in which we interact with non-members of our own group is also different; especially at first, we are more cautious and stand-offish in our contacts with them than we are with fellow ingroupers (cf. Chapter 2; see also Johnson, Olson & Fazio, 2009). This contributes to our perception that the ingroup is more varied.

A great deal of research supports the 'outgroup homogeneity effect'. Music lovers discern more variety in fans of their own favourite genre than in those of other styles; students believe that the student body at their own university is more diverse than those elsewhere; men think that women are all quite similar – and women think the same about men. Yzerbyt, Rogier and Fiske (1998) and Yzerbyt, Corneille and Estrada (2001) went

in search of the links between 'entitativity' and 'essentialism', pointing out that assuming and then looking for supposed essential characteristics of a group inevitably results in exaggerating the similarities among its members. This tendency in turn spawns stereotyping. The more people believe that members of a particular group share certain essential characteristics, the more will they stereotype those members. Recognizing differences between individual members remains possible, of course, but when it comes to the 'essential characteristics' of the group, behaviour inconsistent with these characteristics will often be reinterpreted in such a way that it falls into line with the established stereotypes.

Emphasizing outgroup homogeneity can thus go hand in hand with essentialism. By this we mean the notion that a group possesses certain unique essential characteristics that ensure the immutability of its members' identity. As such, essentialism fixes group boundaries and makes them impenetrable. Some researchers illustrate this with reference to the way many people think about the genetic modification of animals: the taxonomy of species is perceived as a 'natural order' with which man should not interfere (Wagner, Kronberger, Nagata & Sen, 2007). In an investigation of German radical right-wing websites, examining almost 5000 forum posts, Holtz and Wagner (2009) found that threats to German identity were a prominent theme. Two minorities that attracted a lot of invective in this respect were Africans and Jews, with both being ascribed essential and immutable characteristics that made them 'different' and so rendered it impossible for their members ever to become 'German'. In the case of Jews, those characteristics included 'cunning', 'suspicion' and 'power'; for Africans, they were 'stupidity' and 'laziness', to name just a few examples.

Stenstrom, Lickel, Denson & Miller (2008) argue convincingly that the outgroup homogeneity effect is stronger for individuals who identify closely with their ingroup. This study also finds backing for the hypothesis that an entitative outgroup as a whole is easily targeted in retaliation for negative behaviour, regardless of whether the particular members at the receiving end were involved or not. After all, 'they' are all the same.

This factor, in particular, can play a role in inciting radicalization and terrorism. As an example, let us take a conflict between a majority group and a minority. Minorities, as we have seen, often identify especially strongly with their own group. In the face of hostile actions from within the ranks of the majority, a threatened minority with a strong sense of ingroup identity may well view even 'innocent' members of the majority as legitimate targets for reprisals; simply belonging to the majority is enough. In Chapter 8, we explore in greater detail the processes that can result in such 'innocent' outsiders being held jointly responsible for the ingroup's situation. Moreover, hostile actions on the part of the minority will produce a similar response in the majority: a tendency to categorize all members of the minority group as the same.

Social identity and emotions

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the discontinuity effect (see Wildschut & Insko, 2007, for a recent review), describing the widely observed phenomenon that intergroup relations are usually more competitive than interpersonal ones. Naturally, such competitiveness goes hand in hand with a negative opinion of the outgroup. In their recent attempt to explain this, Wildschut and Insko refer to two fundamental but contradictory mechanisms. One is greed – the desire to have more of something and in any case more than the outgroup – and the other fear, specifically the fear that the outgroup is not to be trusted and so might become or remain dominant. The workings of greed and fear have been investigated extensively, using games in which players can assign points to themselves and others or to their own and rival groups. It seems that these two basic mechanisms better explain the wealth of results obtained through such studies than do other, more cognitive mechanisms that emphasize the role of discussion and negotiation within the group. Not surprisingly fear also plays a key role in intergroup conflicts. Earlier we described a study by Van Rijswijk, Hopkins, and Johnston (2009) relating opposition to Polish immigrant workers to fear.

Fear and anger thus play an important role in conflicts between groups. In Chapter 3, we also briefly discussed fear and anger in the context of threats. When behaviour transgresses accepted norms, we generally see two responses in those affected: anger and fear. For example, both of these were apparent after the 9/11 attacks in New York (see also Chapter 3). There, the anger was coupled with contempt for the perpetrators and a decline in tolerance of Americans with an Arab background (Lerner, Gonzales, Small & Fischhoff, 2003). It also fuelled support for expansion of the U.S. War on Terror (Skitka, Bauman, Aramovich & Morgan, 2006). Anger is also an emotion that can result from social exclusion, with statements and acts by the individuals or groups deemed responsible for this exclusion often being interpreted as hostile (DeWall, Twenge, Gitter & Baumeister, 2009). As such, anger is an emotion prompted in particular by aggressive and excessively hostile treatment of members of the ingroup (Batson, Chao & Givens, 2009). And, as we shall see in Chapter 8, anger and other emotions of this kind play a role that cannot be underestimated in both conflict escalation and the justification of extreme actions against members of a rival group.

Emotions such as fear can also be the consequence of a person's membership in a particular group. In other words, people can experience certain emotions as a result of belonging to a particular group and the relationships that group has with other groups. Smith (1993) was the first researcher in this field to combine insights gained from studies of relative deprivation (Runciman, 1966; see also Chapter 2), social identity theory developed by

Tajfel (1981, 1982) and the subsequently developed self-categorization theory (Turner, Hoggs, Oakes, Reicher & Whetherell, 1987).

This literature distinguishes between two types of emotion at the group level. The first refers to emotions evoked by specific events affecting group members or by actions on their part. The person experiencing the emotion does not necessarily have to have experienced the situation that evoked that emotion. For example, you may be upset by the way other people have been treated by members of your group; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears and Manstead (1998) found that a sense of collective guilt can be evoked in Dutch people regarding the injustices perpetrated during their colonial past. And Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer and Leach (2004) showed that simply reminding students that they were attending a particular university intensified their emotional response to past injustices, actual or perceived, against fellow students of that institution.

The second form of group emotion is more general in nature, not the result of a specific occurrence. Smith, Seger and Mackie (2007) refer to this type as 'chronic' emotions. This could be a state of permanent anger or irritation with your group's position in society or the way it is treated by others. Or a sense of pride in it, although far more research has been conducted into the negative emotions associated with group membership than the positive ones. Smith and colleagues also found that these chronic emotions do not necessarily coincide with emotions experienced at the individual level. Their intensity and diversity increase in line with the degree to which people identify with their group. The term 'group emotions' here refers to emotions that are shared with most of the other members of the group in question. As well as influencing attitudes towards the ingroup and outgroup in general, they also affect behaviour towards individual outgroup members. Seger, Smith and Mackie (2009) show that even a subtle reminder of group identity – hearing your national anthem, say – prompts people to report the same emotions as are reported by the majority of the other members of the group.

Miller, Smith and Mackie (2004) found that emotions play an important role in clarifying prejudice. Indeed, they found that the effects of contact with a minority group (in this case, African Americans) on preconceived ideas about that group could be explained entirely by the emotions evoked by the group. Both positive and negative emotions played a role in this process. Negative emotions investigated in this study were fear, anger and irritation; the positive emotions included pride, sympathy and hope.

The literature on intergroup relations displays a growing interest in emotions people experience with regard to their own group and other groups, as well as emotions that are indicative of the relations between their group and other groups. Research into intergroup relationships (Smith, 1993; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus & Gordijn, 2003), in particular, pays considerable attention to the latter category of emotions. An early example can be found

in Runciman (1966), with his assertion that it is disappointment and dissatisfaction with the relative disadvantage of the *group* people belong to – and not so much with their own personal position – that determine whether they are prepared to take action to rectify the situation (see also Chapter 2). (See Box 6.3.)

Mummendey, Kessler, Kink and Mielke (1999) and Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer and Leach (2004) investigated the emotions associated with relative deprivation. Looking at negative feelings in members of a deprived group, former East Germans in the newly reunified Germany of the 1990s,

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Box 6.3 Responses to others' emotions: the importance of group membership

There is a fairly significant body of research demonstrating that expressions of emotion automatically trigger similar feelings in other people. If you see someone else laugh, you are inclined to do the same. If they are obviously scared, you feel less at ease. We see this most especially in people who know each other well and have a lot in common. Weisbuch and Ambady (2008) found direct evidence that group membership plays an important part in determining how people respond to others' emotions. A display of fear, for example, actually aroused positive rather than negative feelings in outgroup observers. Specifically, white Americans reacted negatively to a white face expressing fear but positively to a black one showing the same emotion. On the assumption that group membership is an important factor for sports fans, too, Weisbuch and Ambady also investigated the emotional responses amongst supporters of two rival baseball teams to a scenario, read aloud, about a fan who was either happy or scared. Independent judges evaluated the positivity of the reader's voice. The voices sounded more positive when describing a happy fan of their own team and more negative when describing a scared fan of that team than when it concerned a fan of the rival team. Apparently, then, people's automatic evaluative responses to others depend upon their group membership. Fear is a sign of weakness; in somebody from an adversary group, it is good for the ingroup as far as intergroup relations are concerned and therefore a reason to feel positive. A happy outgroup member, on the other hand, may well be reflecting success and power that are not beneficial for your group, thus triggering negative emotion. Conversely, you will easily take over positive or negative feelings expressed by fellow members of your group.

Mummendey and colleagues developed a model in which one emotion in particular, irritation or annoyance, was an important factor in determining how members of this group faced up to their situation. This emotion was also included in a later refinement of the model; moreover, they added anger (Kessler & Mummendey, 2002). The relevant emotions were identified by investigating how just and fair group members considered the position of their group, to what extent they found it possible to be absorbed into the outgroup (West Germans) and so on. One interesting finding was a direct correlation between ingroup identification and the emotions previously mentioned: the more 'East German' people felt, the more intense was their sense of irritation or annoyance.

Naturally, much of the research on emotions in the domain of intergroup relations has homed in on their behavioural influence. In this respect, there is a connection with so-called appraisal theories, which link emotions to specific traits and behaviours, or action tendencies. Anger is an emotion that often prompts attempts to tackle its cause; fear, on the other hand, frequently induces passivity and a retreat from the threat. In many situations of 'remote conflict', anger prevails. But when people encounter real violence, both emotions are generally present. Mackie, DeVos and Smith (2000) found that fear and anger can also play a part in intergroup relationships and that, when they do, they are significant determinants of behaviour towards the outgroup. The results of this research suggest that anger leads to confrontation but the effects of fear are less clear-cut. In a study of white Americans and Spanish-speaking immigrants, however, Plant, Butz and Tartakovksy (2008) showed that both emotions result in contact avoidance, with each group laying the blame for this situation on the other. (See Box 6.4.)

As indicated by these examples, irritation, displeasure and anger are amongst the emotions that arise when people object to the way their group is being treated. If the ingroup is impeded in an unjust manner, the anger aroused can increase the risk of confrontation with the outgroup (see Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer & Leach, 2004; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus & Gordijn, 2003). Other emotions result in different behaviour: for example, shame at what your own group is doing or has done to another may result in your avoiding contact with the 'victim' group (see Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarniet & Ames, 2005). Guilt over past treatment of an outgroup is also one of the emotions that features in the literature on intergroup relations, as we saw earlier in the case of the Dutch experience of collective guilt for their nation's colonial past; this emotion usually results in a desire to make amends with the group affected (see e.g. Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier & Ames, 2005). Contempt is another emotion that can play a role in intergroup relations. Louis, Esses and Lalonde (2013) found that threat and identification predicted hostility to

Box 6.4 Anger

Feelings of anger can be aroused when you are thwarted in some way, when you feel you have been treated unjustly or when certain boundaries are crossed. Forming part of the human brain's fight-or-flight response to immediate danger, anger is the reaction associated with a split-second decision to do something about the source of the threat and can be expressed in many different ways. These include facial expressions and physiological responses (accelerated heart rate, higher blood pressure), as well as behavioural ones such as verbal aggression (shouting, swearing) and physical violence (hitting out or even the use of weapons). Perceived threat thus induces a reaction, which in its turn can be perceived as threatening and can escalate into violence. The form in which anger manifests itself depends in part upon the nature of the threat, with individual state of mind and personality also playing a role.

An angry person can express this emotion impulsively, wildly and without focus, but may also deliberately engage in conflict with the specific intention to eliminate the threat or obstacle. We often see this latter response in reaction to injustice, negligence or aggression. But people can also articulate anger while ostensibly avoiding conflict – what is known as passive-aggressive behaviour. In many cases, anger makes people less cautious and risk-aware. Fischhoff, González, Lerner and Small (2005) found that people in this state of mind believed there was less chance of future terrorist attacks on the United States than did those who were not angry and those who were afraid. Finally, anger increases hostility and prejudice towards other groups and makes people less empathetic and more distrustful.

immigrants in Australia and Canada. Contempt played an important role in hostile reactions to immigrants.

However, it is anger that has probably received the most attention in studies looking at the role played by emotions in intergroup relationships. Leach, Iyer and Pederson (2006, 2007) found that many white Australians were convinced that they were worse off than the country's Aboriginals because that group enjoyed 'too many' free state benefits. In other words, they felt their own group was being disadvantaged. That kindled anger, which was channelled into political action including resistance to a government initiative to compensate the Aboriginal population for the suffering it had endured over the past two centuries. Conversely, as already outlined in

Chapter 3, in those Australians who believed that the Aboriginals had been treated unfairly, anger impelled them to back the government's policy.

The greater the degree to which members identify with a disadvantaged group, the stronger the feelings of anger and fear these people will experience in response to deprivation and conflict. Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus and Gordijn (2003) found that unfair treatment of a group produces more anger in people when that group is regarded as part of a larger group that they belong to and also identify with. Mackie, Silver and Smith (2004) found that Americans who identify strongly with their country report greater levels of both anger and fear about possible future terrorist attacks. Interestingly, this emotional intensification is less unequivocal in the case of guilt about the ingroup's unjust treatment of others; perhaps the need to retain a positive group self-image is more of a priority here. We also see the opposite: members of actually or supposedly socially deprived groups who have the personal drawbacks of that situation pointed out to them experience more intense emotions as a result. Pennekamp, Doosje, Zebel and Fischer (2007) found this in a group of Surinamese students in the Netherlands.

In this section, we have focused upon a small number of emotions that can be evoked by the actions of others, be they members of the ingroup or an outgroup. We have also discussed the emotions arising out of membership of a particular group and their behavioural effect. Fear and anger were discussed as two negative emotions that frequently play a role in conflict-heavy intergroup relationships, but others also play a major part in polarization, radicalization and terrorism: hate, contempt, disgust and so on. We will return to them in Chapter 8 when we examine the processes of justification at work within extremist groups.

Majorities, minorities and social identity

Threat has a significant impact on how people perceive their own group in relation to other groups. We discussed threats before, in Chapter 3, but here our principal interest is on the effects of threats on social identity. Minority groups are often more sensitive to perceived threats than majorities and, as a rule, more mistrustful as well. This is not due to the personal characteristics of their members but is a structural feature of a minority position. People in this situation are more likely to believe that their group interests would be undermined were the group to be subsumed into the majority. This is a defensive stance we see in all aspects of life, including mergers between a larger and a smaller company, club or organization. Gleibs, Noack and Mummendey (2010) show that the extent of ingroup identification plays an important part in such a union; the smaller party is consistently less positive about it than the larger, dominant one, and a more positive perception of the ingroup is a significant predictor of views about the exercise. Their

particular study, investigating the merger of two educational institutions, found that the people associated with the smaller one did indeed feel threatened. Other research shows that, when two groups amalgamate, the larger one is inclined to emphasize the similarities between the majority and the minority. This is because it tends to feel less threatened. On the other hand, the minority has a tendency to highlight its unique characteristics and differences from the majority.

Wohl, Branscombe and Reysen (2010) show the effects of threat in a different context. Amongst French-speaking Canadians and Jewish students in Canada, they found that situations perceived as endangering the ingroup and its culture triggered anxiety in members of that group concerning the group's continued existence. This anxiety in turn prompted efforts to improve the group's position. Gonzàles and Brown (2006) found direct evidence in support of the assumption that minority groups play up their own identity when afraid that they might be subsumed into a larger entity and that that identity might be lost. Interestingly, they also identify circumstances in which that threat is not as marked – most notably, when there is space for both a common identity and an individual group one and when those affected believe that their group's particular characteristics will contribute towards the common identity.

Many studies have investigated social identities, as well as the processes associated with them, in minority groups with less power and status than the majority. In such cases, the minority generally has little interest in assimilation and would prefer not to be absorbed into the majority, the reason being that it fears that both its own characteristics and its contribution to society as a whole will be entirely lost or in any case no longer recognized and acknowledged. This is what Worrell and Gardner-Kitt (2006) found in their study of African Americans. It is an attitude that is understandable: after all, the minority has less influence than the majority, and the smaller a group is, the less likely it is to exert any meaningful sway over the dominant larger one and the greater is the risk that its own identity will be lost.

We encounter the same phenomenon amongst various ethnic minorities in Europe. Studies by Van Oudenhoven, Prins and Buunk (1998) and Verkuyten and Reijerse (2008) show that such minorities often prefer a multicultural solution (integration with maintenance of their own identity) over assimilation. In the latter case, people are worried about losing their separate identity. The processes through which ingroup identity is fostered are thus understandable and explicable. Of course, how exactly they unfold depends on such factors as the size of the minority, its reasons for settling in a new country and the position it and its individual members have managed to secure in the host society.

Social identity processes also play a role in polarization and radicalization, with two aspects having a particularly significant effect: *deprivation*

and *threat*. Minorities in general, and certainly those weaker and less influential than the majority, frequently attach great importance to their own cultural and group identity and so tend to be inward-looking. They are often critical of the injustice inherent in the position they find themselves in and pessimistic about the chances of their own advancement. People who experience structural deprivation and who perceive their own group as under threat tend to emphasize intergroup differences. And if these also involve fundamental norms and values, that emphasis can be pushed to the point of exaggeration (see e.g. Chambers, Baron & Inman, 2006). Wright, Cullum and Schwab (2008) found that tolerance declines and the gulf between groups widens when standards and values are at stake. Such polarization is the first step down the road to radicalization.

Threat and social identity

Threats of any kind affect the way members of a minority view the dominant majority (see also Chapter 3). They will also have an effect on the attitudes of members of the minority group towards their own group. Threats can be realistic (for example, reflected in such things as poor job opportunities). Threats can also be symbolic (for example, a book or film ridiculing the group's religious and cultural values). Such threats often enhance group cohesion or identification by making people feel a greater sense of attraction to and engagement with their own group and may also increase respect for its leaders and the opposite for those who flout its norms (see e.g. McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

Threat, values and polarization

In actual fact, minorities and majorities respond in much the same way to intergroup conflict and perceived threat. This was apparent in the general reaction in the United States to the attacks of 11 September 2001. As Moskalenko, McCauley and Rozin (2006) note, there was a sharp increase in patriotism and in respect and support for the president and for government agencies, as well as a revival of 'typical' American values. However, we do see differences in intensity; as a rule, threats are actually more menacing for minorities than for majorities. Nonetheless, their effects can be comparable for both. Strong group cohesion and respect for powerful leaders is something we also see in right-wing extremist groups, for example. Even though they form part of the majority, they believe that one or more minorities are undermining majority standards and values and so pose a threat to it. This perception not only strengthens group cohesion and esteem for its leaders, it also affects how the outgroup is viewed. Hogg and Adelman (2013) confirm this relationship between threat, uncertainty and support for leadership.

Moreover, they found not only increased support for leadership per se but for authoritarian leadership in particular. Not surprisingly, they showed that what they called 'self-uncertainty' may lead to various forms of group and societal extremism, including support for more extreme groups and violent action.

Groups that feel threatened tend to turn in on themselves and to increase their distance from the group from which the threat is thought to emanate. Threat is also associated with the dehumanization of the outgroup. In other words, its members are considered less human than the ingroup's. Together, threat and dehumanization can produce a desire for revenge, punishment and retribution. Maoz and McCauley (2008), for instance, found that the extent of Israeli public support for retaliation following Palestinian attacks was largely determined by how threatened the respondents felt personally and how much they were inclined to dehumanize Palestinians. This study is summarized in Box 6.5.

Box 6.5　Threat, dehumanization and aggression

Maoz and McCauley (2008) investigated public support in Israel for aggressive retaliatory actions against Palestinians. In a survey of just over 500 Jewish Israelis, asking about Palestinian attacks, the threat they pose and how to resolve the situation, they found that perceived threat and the extent to which respondents dehumanized Palestinians were significant predictors of support for their deportation from the occupied territories. And, as shown in Figure B6.5, there was a strong correlation between perceived threat and dehumanization.
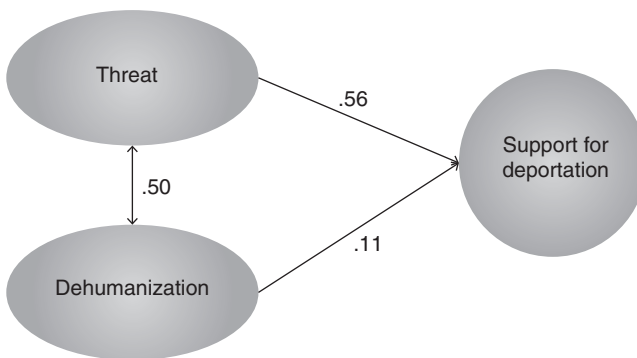
Figure B6.5　The impact of threat and dehumanization on support for deportation.

Note: The values refer to the standardized values of the coefficients.

Source: Based on Maoz and McCauley (2008, p. 103).

It is interesting to note that minority groups are often regarded as relatively homogeneous by their own members as well as by the majority (Brown & Smith, 1989; Simon & Brown, 1987). This contradicts the often obtained tendency to view the ingroup as less homogeneous than outgroups. To explain this discrepancy, some authors claim that power differences play a part. Guinote, Judd and Brauer (2002) found that groups with less power behave in a more uniform manner. The fact that group membership is more important to minorities than to the majority may also encourage more homogeneous behaviour among minorities, thus increasing uniformity in their attitudes and conduct (Mullen, 1991; Simon & Hamilton, 1994). The more important the ingroup becomes, the more people see it in terms of a unified whole. Deprivation and disparities in status cause people not only to look at their own minority and the outgroup in a different ways but also to evoke different emotions about them (Fiske, 2002).

Our focus so far in this chapter has been on the role played by social identity processes in polarizing and possibly radicalizing groups when they feel threatened and unjustly treated. Much of the research in this field looks at situations where a minority perceives itself to be under threat from a majority with a higher status. In such circumstances, we often see the threatened minority wanting to react against its supposed oppressor (see also Ellemers, Spears & Doosje 2002). The literature discusses a variety of strategies the minority can use in doing this, not all of them necessarily associated with polarization and conflict.

Threat and social action

Mummendey, Kessler, Klink and Mielke (1999) and Kessler and Mummendey (2002) mention several such strategies. In many cases, the members of minorities have a dual social identity: they feel part of their own ethnic community but also part of the wider national group. At the individual level, persons in this situation can more or less choose which group they primarily see themselves as belonging to. So Turkish Germans can consider themselves Turkish first or German first. In setting out these strategies, Mummendey and others in this tradition, such as Ellemers, Spears and Doosje (1999), point out that important factors here are group mobility (to what extent is it possible to belong to the other group?) and the stability and immutability of the current situation in which the groups concerned find themselves. If people believe that they are disadvantaged and see no prospect of that situation changing, that is more likely to lead to conflict than when movement is expected in the relative positions of their groups. Those who see a chance of becoming fully accepted members of the wider community will take one course of action, and those who think it will never happen another.

Mummendey and her colleagues refer to *social competition as one course of action* to overcome the difference in economic well-being. This can include

working harder and so improving one's competitive position in the labour market, in the hope of moving out of deprivation. This is a course people will choose if they believe that their efforts can actually achieve something. Often, though, we also see them simply accepting their lot. One explanation for that response is provided by the so-called system justification theory, which states that, as a rule, people seek to vindicate the status quo – even if that is a state of deprivation. According to the theory, this is a more or less automatic process and in many cases results in a disadvantaged minority viewing itself as somehow 'inferior' to the majority. Jost, Banaji and Nosek (2004) reviewed past research in this field (see also Brandt, 2013).

There are other possible courses of action, though. One is engaging in social action to change the situation; people mobilize themselves to bring about change by political means, in the hope that it will reduce or eliminate the disadvantage affecting their group. Social identity theory addresses the determining factors for such collective action. Van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears (2008) introduced a model combining social identity with the subjective injustice of the situation and – echoing Klandermans (1984) – the expected effectiveness of the action under consideration. This showed that 'felt' injustices (which also involve emotions), combined with a belief in the effectiveness of political action, are most prevalent in individuals who identify with political groups (and not just their own ethnic or equivalent group); they choose collective action to improve the position of their own group. In a recent overview of his Social Identity Model of Collective Action, Van Zomeren (2013) integrated four core motivations, which include *group efficacy beliefs* and *group identification*. Felt unfairness underlies the third motive (*group-based anger*), and the extent to which people think that *moral standards* are *violated* constitutes a fourth motive. These four motives thus determine people's willingness to undertake collective action in order to promote or defend the interests of a particular group.

Collective action is then one option to change a situation that is perceived as unfair. The two remaining actions are illegal: crime and terrorism. Crime represents an attempt to resolve disadvantage by reducing economic deprivation through unlawful means and is a regular recourse for dispossessed groups, as widespread problems in the most deprived neighbourhoods of American and French cities demonstrate, for example. In Chapter 8, we shall see how the groups responsible defend their behaviour as a justified solution to their situation. The same applies to the most extreme way of seeking to resolve a realistic conflict: terrorism. When disadvantage is regarded as both unjust and immutable, violence is one possible last resort. Tausch et al. (2011) applied the model of collective action proposed by Van Zomeren and colleagues (2008) to more extreme, non-normative actions such as violence. They found that people tend to resort more often to these more extreme actions when they experience a sense of low efficacy. Moreover, their findings showed that contempt, not anger, predicted non-normative action. Contempt, like anger,

entails psychological distancing and a lack of reconciliatory intentions. Contempt is an emotion we will also discuss in Chapter 8.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have seen that social identity serves a variety of functions. It can help to define a positive self-image and provide shared characteristics and preferences by which to forge solidarity and mutual security with other people. Social identity processes help to explain why we regard our own group as more diverse than others and why people in group conflict situations display a growing tendency to view the rival group as homogeneous. Emphasizing one's own social identity can also estrange and polarize groups. Moreover, social identity processes generally become more important when a group comes under threat.

Emotions play a not inconsiderable role in all this. We discussed especially powerful ones, such as fear and anger. But group polarization can also arouse other feelings, including contempt – an emotion associated with outgroup dehumanization. In Chapter 8, we will examine a number of these emotions in greater detail, with particular reference to their role in 'justifying' radicalization and terrorism.
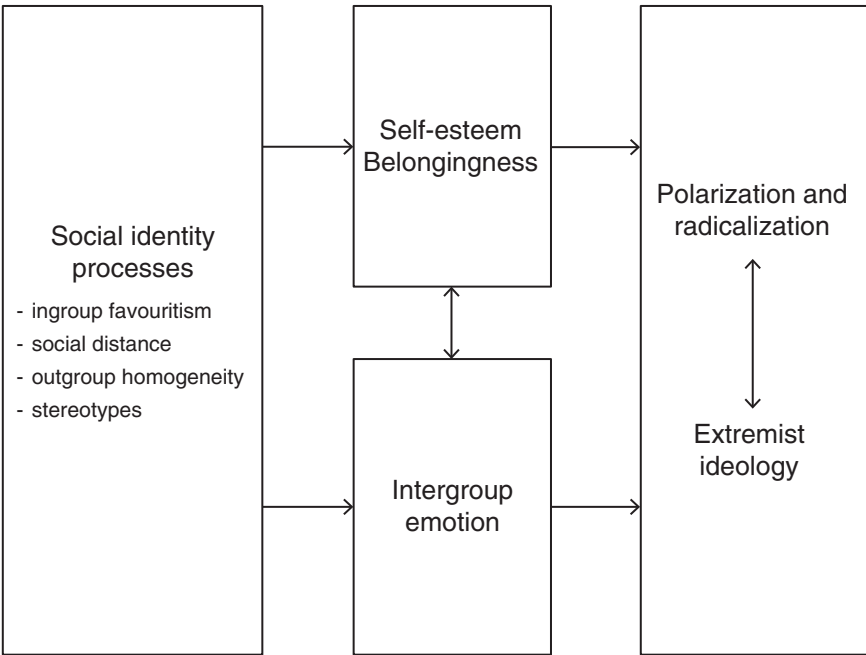
Figure 6.1 Social identity processes, polarization and radicalization.

Figure 6.1 relates this chapter to our overall framework. Social identity processes can result in ingroup favouritism and increased distance to the group that is seen as posing a threat. The latter group is also seen as homogeneous, which is likely to lead to stereotypes about the members of that group. These social identity processes serve two important functions; they help to define a positive self-image and a sense of belongingness. The latter two factors can be quite beneficial for members of the group. They help groups to develop courses of collective action to change their situation. Radicalization can also lead to extremist ideology and to other courses of action such as crime or violence against the group that is seen as a threat. In these cases, emotions are likely to play an important role, hence their mention at the bottom of the figure.

Minorities respond to conflict in the same way as majorities, but the threats involved are usually more acute for them. This is due to the simple fact that minorities often have less power and status than the majority. Under such circumstances, it is understandable that minorities in particular fear losing their own individual and group identities and seeing them 'swallowed up' by the cultural and moral outlook of the majority. Consequently, they often cherish their group identity more than is the case for the majority group. Polarization can take on extreme forms if us-and-them thinking results in the outgroup being viewed as a homogeneous mass of interchangeable individuals who are not only different but also inferior. This, combined with dehumanization, poses a serious threat to any society.

Throughout this chapter, we described differences and similarities in the reactions of majorities and minorities. In the second half of the chapter, we looked at these differences in more detail and discussed the impact of threats on social identity processes. We ended this chapter with a brief overview of research into the strategies minorities can employ to merge into a majority without conflict and without a loss of identity, exacting social change in the process. One crucial precondition is open intergroup boundaries. In other words, it must actually be possible for the minority to become part of the majority. If that possibility does exist, then one can try to make a concerted effort to, say, reduce or eliminate economic discrepancies. Of course, this is only a realistic option if the situation giving rise to the disadvantage is not immutable. In the most straightforward scenario in which this is possible, the group concerned does not believe it is being treated unjustly and so sees a chance that its efforts will be rewarded. If that is not the case, people may resort to collective action to try to improve the lot of their own group. But if that proves impossible or ineffective, in some cases we will see a more extreme response to majority–minority conflicts, with unlawful means being adopted to achieve the desired changes.

Viewing your own situation as unfair and immutable or at least very difficult to change, with the majority being responsible for it, can serve as vindication for criminal behaviour. Criminals may perceive themselves as

compensating for their socioeconomic deprivation in an illegal manner. Terrorists are more group-minded, opting to try to eliminate their group's disadvantage through violence. Increased radicalization and terrorism thus focus on changing the situation for one or more specific groups. This focus on differences between groups often has an ideological component. We will look at the role of ideology in the next chapter.

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7 Social identity, ideology and religion

Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter 6, being part of a group and deriving part of your identity from it also offer solidarity and security. And this sense of 'belonging together' also offers security inasmuch as the group you belong to provides a collective framework of interpretation to help you understand and explain the world around you. Imagine that you are a member of and identify strongly with a political party or a religious movement: this imbues you with a social identity founded in a sense of group belonging; in addition, the political party or movement also helps you to interpret reality. People who partly derive their sense of identity from their support for a football club will tend to feel solidarity with their fellow fans, and their own self-esteem will tend to grow when their team does well. In this case, however, the interpretative framework, although still present, plays less of an important role than in the case of a political party or religious movement. It might manifest itself by inciting a general view in the stands that the referee is not entirely impartial, say, or that an opposing player was offside when he scored a crucial goal, but that is about as far as it goes. The frameworks offered by a political party or religious movement, on the other hand, have a much wider application that extends beyond, in this case, the stadium and that can help to elucidate social reality in a general sense.

In the present chapter, we also address these identity processes but now with an emphasis on the role of *ideology* and *religion* in the transition from conflict to radicalization and terrorism. Social identity theory does not explicitly address 'extremism'; it does describe conditions under which intergroup relations can become overtly competitive and assertive such that a lower-status group can 'rise up' against the dominant group if the status quo is unstable and susceptible to change, if the status position of the dominant group is seen as illegitimate and if there are realistic and practical ways to overturn the status quo (see e.g. Ellemers, 1993; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008).

First we discuss the impact of uncertainty and threats on people's preference for more extreme ideologies. Next we discuss the moral component of ideologies and the consequences of moral convictions on attitudes and intergroup behaviour. This is followed by a discussion of both right- and left-wing ideology and extremism. Then we move to the role of religious ideologies in radicalization and terrorism.

Ideology, uncertainty and support for extremes

Smelser (2007) states that ideology can assist in forming a coherent world-view and can also both generate and justify particular goals. He draws no distinction between secular and religious ideologies as foundations for terrorism, instead emphasizing the similarities and shared characteristics. One thing they all share is a diagnosis that something is seriously wrong with society, something fundamental that is responsible for injustice and oppression. But not only does the ideology provide a clear cause, it also presents a well defined image of what the world *should* look like. In many cases, this ideal world harks back to an archetype that once was or should have been. Other features common to all terrorist ideologies are stereotyping of the 'enemy', a tendency towards polarization and thinking in terms of 'good' versus 'evil'. Finally, Smelser mentions the demonization and even dehumanization of those who do not support the ideology (see also Chapters 6 and 8).

In his analysis of the role of ideology, Smelser (2007) also refers to the anthropological literature and to research showing that oppressed groups are inclined to synthesize religion and ideology into a form of wishful thinking always characterized by the disappearance of the oppressing force. We see early examples in the colonial past and the conquest of new worlds; Smelser specifically mentions the 'nativism' of the Sioux people in nineteenth-century North America. Other examples are the Maoris of New Zealand about 1930 and the Javanese at the end of the nineteenth century. The wishful thinking in all of these cases consisted of a belief that white domination would be brought to an abrupt end through an act of punishment by a supreme deity, perhaps in the form of a natural disaster. This would then allow the threatened group's own culture to thrive once again in all its glory. Traces of this synthesis of ideology and religion can also be seen in more contemporary ideologies.

Ideologies thus combat important threats in the lives of people; they can diminish uncertainty. According to 'uncertainty-identity' theory (Hogg, 2000), feelings of uncertainty are aversive because these feelings make it difficult to anticipate, plan and predict future events and actions. Uncertainty can be experienced as a threat (see also Chapter 3). One way to reduce uncertainty is group identification. As we have seen in Chapter 6, this is because it provides

both guiding principles for one's own behaviour and an interpretative framework for the behaviour of others. Under elevated and prolonged uncertainty, people – according to Hogg – prefer to identify with, or to identify more strongly with, groups that are high in entitativity; that is, closely knit, homogeneous groups have a clear internal structure, common goals and possibly even a common fate. Hogg and Adelman (2013) argue that this framework may be extrapolated to help explain extremism and the use of violence. Extremist or radical groups are often high in entitativity, and prolonged and extreme uncertainty, in combination with felt injustice and without a clear prospect of changing the status quo, might make radical groups more attractive.

Ideology and religion can help to create groups that are high in entitativity. Ideology and religion can also induce groups to adopt a more radical course of action to enhance the welfare of its members and thus help to reduce what Hogg (2000) called self-uncertainty. Others emphasize similar psychological needs that ideologies might fulfil. Doosje, Looseman and van den Bos (2013) focus on the need to manage uncertainty. Heine, Proulx and Vohs (2006) focus on the need to maintain meaning, and Greenberg, Solomon and Pyszczynski (1997) emphasize the need to cope with existential anxieties regarding mortality.

Hogg, Meehan and Farquharson (2010) found that, when key standards and values are threatened, the associated uncertainty results in a greater tendency to identify with radical groups than with moderate ones. Their study was conducted in Australia, where there is general preference for social and political moderation. When uncertainty was induced in their participants and the norms important to them were called into doubt, their identification with radical movements increased. Hogg and colleagues believe that this is because such groups are more homogeneous, have a clear structure, offer greater order and security than their moderate counterparts and are also more willing to take action.

This tendency for uncertainty to reduce identification with moderate groups was further confirmed by studies conducted by Hogg, Farquharson, Parsons and Svensson (2012) and McGregor, Prentice and Nash (2013). The latter introduced a variety of threats to the participants in their studies; examples are agentic threats related to power and status, communal threats for a particular group and mortality threats by reminding people of their mortality. The resulting uncertainty and anxiety drew their participants to extremes. Box 7.1 describes one of their studies.

Box 7.1 Anxious uncertainty and support for extremes

Research on reactive approach motivation (RAM) theory is guided by knowledge about the behavioural inhibition system (BIS). We share the BIS with other vertebrate animals; it regulates motivational processes

when goal progress is threatened by goal conflict or impedance or by confusing, novel or obstructed terrain (cf. McGregor, Prentice & Nash, 2013). The BIS initiates anxious vigilance that continues until a tenable alternative goal or the original goal can be approached again. Evidence suggests that ideological goals may be particularly attractive as vehicles for relief from anxiety, possibly due to their nature (often pure, straightforward, simple). In one of their studies, the researchers first activated an achievement goal for half of the participants (students). Next they made all participants feel uncertain about their achievements (in this case in statistics). Then they were allowed to let their minds wander for some three minutes and asked to record the topics that came to mind. This was followed by a request to answer a scale assessing religious extremism. Results are summarized in Figure B7.1. Results showed increased religious extremism after achievement threat, but only for those participants who were primed with achievement (i.e. for whom achievement was relatively salient at that moment in time).
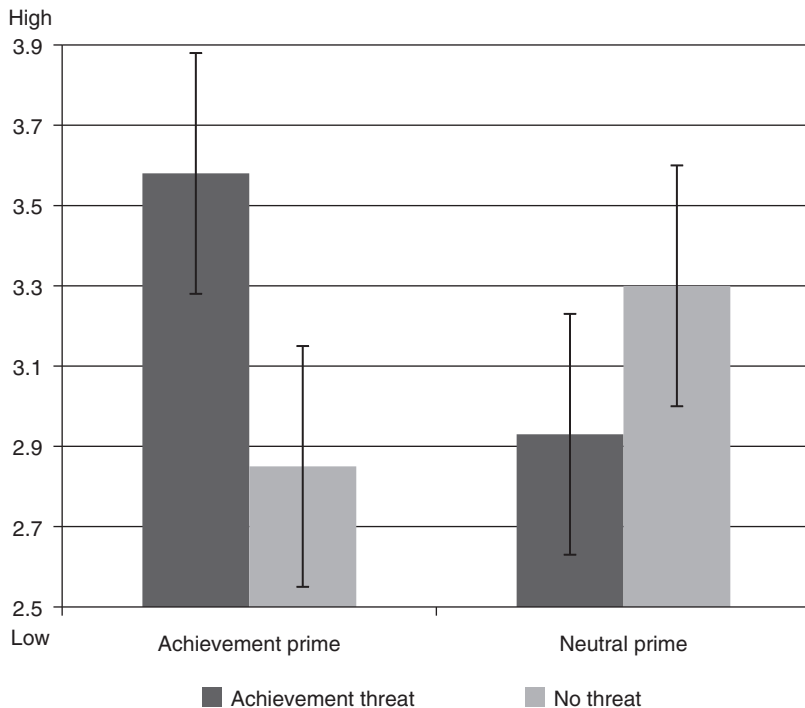
Figure B7.1 Idealistic religious extremism as a function of goal prime and threat.

Source: From McGregor, Prentice & Nash (2013, p. 544).

What makes extreme ideologies popular? We have already stated that an ideology can provide an interpretative framework that brings order to a complex world, transforming uncertainty and ambiguity into certainty and structure. But according to Smelser (2007), it can offer more: a frame for emotions such as fear, desperation and irritation, as well as for the likes of hope. In his analysis, Smelser states that this package of assorted cognitions (the interpretative framework) and affect (the various emotions) provides extreme ideologies with some of their magnetic appeal.

Ideology and morality

More extreme and more enduring uncertainty due to controversies and conflicts often have a moral component. This is the case when one or both sides see the issue in a moral light and in terms of self-evident and fundamental truths about what is 'moral' and 'good' as opposed to what is 'immoral', 'bad' and 'evil'. As argued by Skitka and colleagues (Skitka, 2010; Skitka, Bauman & Mullen, 2008), issues that one or more of the parties involved see in a moral light are less likely to be solved by compromise. Attitudes and beliefs based on moral conviction are often experienced as absolutes, as universal standards of truth that others should share. They are 'objective properties' or simple facts about the world. According to the integrated theory of moral conviction proposed by Skitka, Bauman and Mullen, moral convictions are often experienced with relatively intense emotions, not least the so-called moral emotions such as outrage, contempt and disgust (Haidt, 2003). In sum, moral conviction has important consequences, including increased intolerance of dissimilar others, difficulties in the resolution of controversies and conflicts and the acceptance of violent means to achieve one's goals.

Moreover, as argued by Skitka (2010), moral conviction can also lead to ignoring the usual pressures to obey authorities and provide inoculation against obeying the law and conforming to the beliefs and preferences of the majority. Moral conviction can provide people with the courage and motivation to actively try to achieve specific aims such as improving the lot of others and helping to end injustice. Unfortunately, history also reveals an abundance of atrocities that were justified by invoking the highest moral principles. Moreover, the victims of those atrocities were also convinced of their moral superiority.

Both ideology and religion are generally firmly grounded in moral beliefs, and both have resulted in constructive and destructive forms of action. Not surprisingly, ideology and religion have also been related to radicalization and terrorism. In his book on the social and psychological dimensions of terrorism, Smelser (2007) discusses the ideological anchoring of identity

processes at length. As an aspect of personal and group identity, ideological outlook can be regarded as a value orientation – one that naturally has a substantial influence on political preferences and opinions about other groups. In uncertain and threatening circumstances, where conflicting thoughts and feelings may be at play, ideology can provide clarity, definition and certainty (see Demant, Slootman, Buijs & Tillie, 2008). In fact, it offers a framework for the interpretation of reality (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). But ideological differences can also result in polarization and conflict. Jost (2006), and others (for example, Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008) have observed an increase in the number of ideologically driven conflicts in recent decades. (See Box 7.2.)

Box 7.2 Compensatory control and ideological extremism

Kay and Eibach (2013) attempted to shed light on the content and strength of extreme ideologies. They discuss ideologies of *personal* control such as libertarianism as well as ideologies of *external* control (e.g. socialism, nationalism, religious fundamentalism). Extreme ideologies of external control can thus be secular or religious. As we have seen in Chapter 3, Aaron Kay's compensatory control theory (CCT) proposes that people embrace ideologies that emphasize personal, societal or religious control in order to alleviate the anxieties they experience due to the perceived disorder and randomness in their lives. CCT stresses the common theme of control in a variety of otherwise distinct ideologies. Kay and Eibach argue, for instance, that different varieties of right-wing populist ideologies within the American Tea Party seem to emphasize different sources of control ranging from extreme ideologies of personal control (the libertarian camp), via a more nationalistic branch emphasizing control by a strong government, to a right-wing religious camp stressing supernatural control. Their approach relates people's choice for a specific control ideology to be a function of cognitive accessibility and functional fit. Cognitive accessibility is partly determined by societal context and culture; that is, some cultures emphasize personal control and self-reliance, others governmental control or a religious control ideology. Functional fit refers to the presumed efficacy of an ideology to alleviate the cause of one's anxiety. For instance, anxieties about future income and the ability to raise one's kids are less likely to lead to increased support for governmental control if the latter is seen as incompetent, corrupt and untrustworthy. CCT helps to explain why

some turn to right-wing extremism emphasizing governmental control and strong leaders, while individuals who live in sociocultural contexts that limit personal control and in which people also have limited confidence in the power of government are more likely to opt for religious ideologies.

This viewpoint can be related to the work of Klein and Kruglanski (2013); they also argue that prolonged high degrees of uncertainty tend to augment commitment to the general goal of uncertainty reduction. Moreover, this commitment increases the appeal of extreme alternatives as effective tools to reduce uncertainty. Klein and Kruglanski thus emphasize the links among uncertainty, extreme and polarized views and a preference for extreme solutions that might even deviate from existing norms.

Source: Various articles from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Spiegel Online*, *Bild*.

Next we turn to two different political ideologies, right-wing and left-wing extremism.

Right-wing ideology and extremism

Right-wing extremism in Europe and in the U.S. is not a homogeneous entity in terms of ideology. It contains different elements of nationalistic, racist and anti-Semitic ideology, resulting in different objectives. For the majority of right-wing extremists, anti-Semitism and historical revisionism are crucial elements of their ideology. This ideology thus shows many examples of prejudice and discrimination against Jews as a national, ethnic or religious group. The tendency to interpret historical events in such a way that they appear in less or more of a favourable light is another element shared by many groups on the right. One of the more extreme examples of historical revisionism is denial of the holocaust. Over the last decade, Islamophobia has become increasingly important in right-wing extremism. A main difference between European and American right-wing extremism is the role of Christianity; religious fundamentalism plays a far less important role in right-wing extremism in Europe. This does not mean that right-wing extremism in Europe is less violent than in the U.S., as illustrated by the recent history of the National Socialist Underground in Germany. (See Box 7.3.)

Box 7.3 Beate Zschaepe and the National Socialist Underground

In November 2011, German authorities detected a previously unknown right-wing terrorist group calling itself Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (NSU, National Socialist Underground). This group deliberately killed ten individuals mainly of Turkish descent over a period of 13 years. No link was ever made between the group and the killings, despite a vast covert intelligence network. The group was supported by a loose network of neo-Nazis who dreamed of a Fourth Reich. The group hoped that the randomness of the murders would strike fear in the immigrant population and that immigrants would ultimately leave Germany en masse. The group went underground in 1998 and lived off bank robberies across the country. The authorities assumed that a single racist maniac – dubbed the Döner Kebab Killer because so many victims ran fast-food outlets – was responsible for the assassinations. Two members of the group (Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Boenhardt) botched a bank raid in November 2011; later both were found in a caravan after a double suicide. Beate Zschaepe, the sole survivor of the neo-Nazi terrorist cell, has been charged with the murder of nine people. She turned herself in after blowing up the group's hideout. The blast and subsequent fire failed to destroy a vast amount of evidence (more than 6000 pieces), including videotapes in which the three allegedly boasted about their assassinations. Beate Zschaepe remained silent during the trial of the NSU.

Blee and Creasap (2010) investigated right-wing movements in the U.S. and their ideologies. Their review showed considerable differences between these movements. There are also similarities. Most are viciously white supremacist and anti-Semitic. Quite often Jews and non-whites are seen as inferior, destructive and to be feared. Quite a few regard whites as under attack and are strongly in favour of the isolation or extermination of non-whites and Jews. Others are anti-elitist and populist. Examples of conservative movements in the U.S. are the New Right (NR), which emerged in the 1970s, a time when the right had limited electoral or cultural influence. This movement attracted many different groups and rapidly became a force in American political life. The New Christian Right conservative movement is another example. This movement focused on issues such as abortion, stem cell research and the regulation of pornography and abstinence-based sex education in schools.

These movements attempted to gain influence via grassroots activists, providing support for like-minded candidates for election, lobbying and the organization of rallies and protests. Other movements on the right went further and opted for violence. These include the long-standing racist movement, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), neo-Nazis and white power skinhead groups. These movements generally embrace racism, anti-Semitism and/or xenophobia. Since 9/11, xenophobia turned into islamophobia. Interestingly it is often argued that Islam is inherently violent and Christianity inherently peaceful, but there has been more terrorist activity in the U.S. from the far right than from Muslims. The most destructive attack was the Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh in 1995; 168 people were killed, and more than 600 were injured. Other examples are murders on abortion providers such as Dr. John Britton (murdered in 1994) and Dr. George Tiller (murdered in 2009). (See Box 7.4.)

Post-9/11 America also witnessed increased xenophobia; one example is the Wisconsin Sikh Temple massacre in which six people were killed by Wade Michael Page, who was connected to the white supremacist movement. Sikhs are not Muslims, but to some a bearded Sikh looks like a Muslim. One conclusion of research on right-wing terrorism is that there are considerable differences in terms of their ideological roots. Next, we turn to the role of ideology in left-wing extremism.

Box 7.4 In the aftermath of Breivik and the NSU

Anders Behring Breivik, a Norwegian far-right extremist, killed 77 people in a bombing in downtown Oslo, followed by a shooting spree on Utoya Island in July 2011. Breivik idealized Zschaepe and advised her to use her trial (that started in 2013) to spread 'right-wing propaganda'. The trial also resulted in an indictment against the German law enforcement establishment. The latter was accused of underestimating the danger of far-right extremism. Thereafter, the German intelligence agency warned that extreme-right groups were planning an anti-immigration campaign around the European Parliament elections in May 2014. In early 2014, police in Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland raided homes, offices and jail cells in an action against a right-wing group called Werewolf. The French police arrested a Norwegian heavy metal musician suspected of preparing a large attack. The two incidents thus resulted in increased attention from intelligence agencies and the police. Germany also knows an organization (EXIT) that helps people who want to get away from the far right scene. In Chapter 9, we will describe such programmes in more detail.

Left-wing ideology and extremism

The West German Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF) is an example of a terrorist group with an extreme left-wing ideology. The history of the RAF spans nearly three decades. Between 14 May 1970, when the RAF was officially formed, and 20 April 1998, when the group announced its dissolution, it was responsible for the death of more than 30 people. The Red Army Faction developed out of the student protest movement and the so-called extra-parliamentary opposition (APO) of the late 1960s. It included activists disillusioned by the war in Vietnam and the perceived exploitation and suppression of 'Third World' countries by industrialized nations such as the U.S. and most of its allies in Western Europe. Western consumerism was also criticized. The so-called Grand Coalition between Social Democrats and Conservatives in 1966 also played a role (see Moghadam, 2012). This coalition controlled 95 per cent of the German parliament and further restricted oppositional politics within the Bundestag. This situation helped to create a situation in which the APO became the main vehicle for students to voice their dissent.

At least two incidents also helped trigger the formation of the Red Army Faction. One important incident occurred in June 1967, when Benno Ohnesorg, a student protester, was fatally shot by a German police officer during a demonstration. Another important incident was the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke, the charismatic and highly popular leader of the APO. He was shot by a German right-wing extremist in April 1968. Following the attempt on Dutschke's life, Gudrun Ensslin, who later co-founded the RAF together with Andreas Baader, was quoted saying that '[t]his fascist state intends to kill all of us. We must organize resistance. Violence can only be answered with violence. This is the generation of Auschwitz, you cannot argue with them' (Pflieger, 2004, p. 15). The perception of the German government's authoritarian nature was also fuelled by the belief that former members of the Nazi party and the Waffen SS still played a role in the German state apparatus.

The RAF saw itself as a political and military organization that focused on direct action with the aim to support the freedom struggles of 'Third World' nations, while influencing the potentially revolutionary elements of the German population. It hoped to incite the general population towards a people's war (*Volkskrieg*). The ideology of the RAF was not strictly defined. According to many of its members, action was more important than doctrine and 'bombs spoke louder than words'. Fetscher and Rohrmoser (1981) concluded that the ideology of the RAF was 'inimical to theory'; not surprisingly, RAF leaders were very critical about the 'endless and senseless' theoretical discussions in many leftist groups.

As argued by Moghadam (2012), the RAF was ideologically quite eclectic, borrowing elements from Marx, Mao and Marcuse that they believed supported their hatred of the system. The ideological lack of clarity was particularly evident following the imprisonment of the majority of the first

generation. At that point, the content of the group members' writings shifted to their situation in prison, including the effects of solitary confinement. (See Box 7.5.)

Box 7.5 Ideology, dehumanization and violence

Orsini (2012) published an extensive study of left-wing terrorism in Italy. The Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse) figure prominently in his work. During the 1960s and 1970s, Italy underwent major changes but also struggled with its role in World War II and the 'burden of fascism'. According to the Red Brigades, these transformations 'vomited up a new magma' (Fiore, 2007), and revolution was more or less inevitable. This revolution meant that some categories of people (representing evil) needed to be exterminated. Orsini argues that ideology was not enough to kill. Killing required tools such as money, weapons, false documents but also the right psychological state. Interviews with Red Brigades members showed that the reduction of victims into symbols was a necessary condition for accepting the idea of killing. Victims were seen as 'symbols'. They were enemies, and enemies were seen as a category, not as people. One Red Brigades member (Enrico Baglioni) considered it 'a moral responsibility to permit the value of life to be ousted by ideology'. Another said that 'human life didn't count for anything'; victims were not seen as real people – as mothers, fathers or married people. An anonymous terrorist stated:

> Then you arrive and what makes the difference is the punishment, that is, what punishment should I give to this person guilty of these things? . . . So he isn't even that person any longer, that person is emptied, and he's blamed for other crimes, has other responsibilities. . . . He becomes another person, another thing . . . a small cog in the monstrous machine that is destroying us all. . . . When you reach that point, you can't help being totally involved, you can't feel any emotion . . .
>
> (Orsini, 2012, p. 677)

One of the more prominent Red Brigades members, Raffaele Fiore (Grandi, 2007), argued that in order to kill, you have to degrade the relationship between people to that between 'animals'. Interestingly, political enemies were often described in animalistic terms. Orsini lists examples such as 'filthy worms', 'swine', 'pigs', 'rabid dogs', 'drudges', and 'wretches'. All these examples perfectly fit what Haslam (2006) calls animalistic dehumanization, that is, seeing others as subhuman.

Orsini (2012) investigated left-wing extremism in Italy and particularly the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse). He interviewed various members of this terrorist group and also addressed the role of ideology. He described ideology as a *relational* process, a process that is experienced daily and part of a social system characterized by the interdependence of a group of like-minded individuals. He objects to an analysis of ideology in terms of in-depth knowledge of, say, the works of Marx. In his view, ideology is not a set of books but a dynamic set of shared ideas, goals, guidelines and an interpretative framework that has a profound influence on the individuals that have developed the ideas as a group. In his view, ideology is 'a social bond and not a pile of books' (p. 674). Individual actions in interaction with other members of the group thus define ideology. Orsini argued that it is quite possible to be a fanatical Marxist without having read Marx, just as it is possible to be a violent Islamic terrorist without knowing the Koran in any detail. He thus argues that the conception of ideology as a relational process provides a better understanding of the role of ideology and the way individual group members behave. He stated that a left-wing terrorist is 'not a man who spends his life reading: he is a man who is tenaciously fighting to affirm a system of ideas he considers infallible' (p. 673). To sum up, research on both left-wing and right-wing terrorism shows that ideology plays a definite role but also that it is premature to conclude that a specific ideology as written up in books is the prime cause and instigator of extremism and terrorist movements. In the next section, we turn to religious ideologies and their role in radicalization and terrorism.

Religion, identity and ideology

People belong to particular groups, and these groups shape their interpretation of the world and help them to react to a range of circumstances. This is the central tenet of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) previously discussed. Religion and religious groups can serve an extraordinarily powerful function in shaping these processes. As argued by Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman (2010), religious identification offers 'a distinctive "sacred" worldview and "eternal" group membership, unmatched by identification with other social groups' (p. 60). In their view, religiosity might be partly explained by the important cognitive and emotional value that membership of a religious group provides. Religious belief systems generally provide certainty. Not surprisingly, religion is generally associated with improved well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999; Ivtzan, Chan, Gardner & Prashar, 2013). As mentioned earlier, religion also has a bonding effect. It increases loyalty to the group, it has important social functions, and it can make people feel better about themselves. In general, religious people are happier than non-believers – partly because faith alleviates threat

and uncertainty and partly because adherents feel part of a community that shares important values (Graham & Haidt, 2010).

Hogg, Adelman and Blagg (2010) also argue that religions have attributes that make them well suited to reduce feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. According to their so-called uncertainty-identity theory also discussed in Chapter 6, people are motivated to reduce feelings of uncertainty about themselves, and identification with groups is a very effective way to reduce this uncertainty. Religious groups are not only entitative; they also address the nature of our existence and are often accompanied by one or more sacred entities and various rituals. Religion also provides a moral compass and rules for living that make them particularly attractive in uncertain times. Hogg, Adelman and Blagg (2010) and others have shown that when religious ideologies and moral principles are grounded in highly structured groups, they can gain substantial power and significance and even assume the status of undeniable truths that apply to all people and cannot be changed (see also Durkheim, 1912/1954; Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003).

Recent literature on the way people form a new identity following migration has highlighted the importance of religion in this process. The past 25 years have seen a substantial rise in new immigrants in many Western countries. Muslims form one of the main groups of immigrants, and an important common characteristic is that they form a minority in all the nations concerned. According to Duderija (2007), these minorities – and especially their children, often referred to as the second generation – are attaching a growing importance to religion. For them, faith has come to play an important role in finding their own identity. As Duderija notes, the role played by religion in the context of a society with a dominant non-Muslim majority is different to its role in a society with a Muslim majority. There has been a religious revival among the younger generations, although the forms that this religious engagement takes vary from what he calls neo-traditional Salafism (a relatively fundamentalist strand) to progressive forms of Islamic ideology.

As we have seen, social exclusion can be considered a threat and also tends to increase uncertainty. Aydin, Fischer and Frey (2010) investigated whether social exclusion leads to *increased religiousness*. In their first study, they compared Turkish immigrants in Germany (who feel relatively excluded in German society; cf. Sauer, 2006) with a comparable sample of Turkish people who lived in Turkey. Results showed that the former group was more religious than the latter. Moreover, additional analyses within the former group revealed that higher levels of self-reported social exclusion were associated with increased religiousness. In another study, they also found support for the stress-buffering function of religiousness. The latter was observed in both Christian and Muslim samples, providing further support for the view that religion can be a powerful coping response when dealing with social rejection.

A more extensive study of Turkish immigrants in six countries (Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and Sweden) and Moroccan immigrants in four countries (Germany, France, Netherlands and Austria) also addressed that issue. The study (Koopmans, 2013) showed that almost half of the Muslim participants (more than 9000) agreed with the statements that 'there is only one interpretation of the Koran', that 'Muslims should return to the roots of the Islam' and that 'religious rules are more important than secular laws'. The response to these three items showed more religious 'fundamentalism' among Muslims than among Christians. For the latter groups, the equivalent questions were supported by only between 10 and 20 per cent of the participants. It needs to be added that quite a few scholars would disagree with labelling people as fundamentalist on the basis of endorsing the three items previously listed. Nonetheless, similar percentages of Muslim participants endorsed statements expressing the view that the West intends to destroy the Islam.

Approaching the topic from a different research tradition, Friedman and Rholes (2007) found support for these ideas. They, too, state that ideology – in this case, the Christian faith – provides a buffer against uncertainty, unpredictability and the accompanying emotions. Faith offers a predictable, meaningful and stable world. Friedman and Rholes compared two groups of believers: moderate and more fundamentalist Christians. When the latter were presented with an essay stating that the Bible contains contradictions and inconsistencies, that immediately prompted existential uncertainty and concern about the transience of their own existence. This effect was not observed in the more moderate group. For its more fundamentalist adherents, then, faith acts as a buffer and offers a predictable, orderly and meaningful world.

Religious belief systems thus provide a buffer against uncertainty and ambiguity. One reason is that these systems are also imbued with morality and help people to decide about 'good' and 'evil'. The latter has obvious positive consequences and helps to create an orderly society. Unfortunately, this emphasis on morality may also have profound negative impacts; for instance, when religious identity is threatened by other groups. Hogg, Adelman and Blagg (2010) argue that self-uncertainty can trigger the transformation from religiousness into zealotry and also radicalization and extreme behaviour, including violence. In sum, societal uncertainty can foster religious extremism. Quite a few authors make a similar point (e.g. Herriot, 2007; Lewis, 2004). Kimball put it as follows: 'The need for fixed stars, for certainty in the midst of our tenuous lives on a dangerously unpredictable planet, is real and understandable. Religious leaders who can package and deliver absolute truths find receptive audiences' (Kimball, 2002, p. 67).

Religion, like moral conviction discussed earlier, can thus facilitate a clear and stark dichotomy between right and wrong and serve as a framework

for understanding the world people live in and serve as a basis for rewarding the 'righteous' and punishing the 'immoral' (see also Silberman, 2005). Unfortunately, this dichotomy can also lead to extreme behaviours such as intolerance, domination and violence. Non-believers and outsiders are cast as evil and morally bankrupt, ultimately as less than human (Haslam, 2006). This brings us to the relation between religion and a preference for extreme, more radical solutions to solve conflicts between groups.

Fundamentalism and radicalization

Silberman, Higgins and Dweck (2005) argue that religion bears a number of characteristics that can lead to polarization and violence. They refer to a classic paper by Allport (1966), naming three elements common to many religions and with the ability both to arouse a (misplaced) sense of ingroup superiority and to legitimize violence. The first is the insistence that the faith represents the sole absolute truth, the second is the tenet that its believers have been 'chosen' by a supreme being and the third is the conviction that divinely inspired religious law outranks secular law. The notion of sacrilege too – the desecration of the faith's holiest places, for instance – can trigger violence and aggression. For all these reasons, there is a case to be made that religious ideologies are capable of provoking more extremism than secular ones.

Religious fundamentalism often goes hand in hand with ever more extreme preconceptions about rival groups. Brandt and Reyna (2010) found that fundamentalists – and, indeed, mainstream believers to some extent – are often more dogmatic and less able to cope with doubt, ambiguity and inconsistency than non-believers. The fact that fundamentalism often flourishes in times of uncertainty (see e.g. Salzman, 2008) elucidates its function, that is, to provide certitude and stability. It differs from other means of dealing with instability and uncertainty in that it is usually based upon what are conceived of as unshakeable, absolute truths. Brandt and Reyna show that prejudice and discrimination on the part of fundamentalists are caused in part by their 'black-and-white' thinking and their craving for order and predictability.

In his analysis of religious fundamentalism, Herriot (2007) emphasizes the importance of an ideological anchorage. He regards that as an essential factor in both the creation and the continuity of movements of this kind, be they Protestant Christian, Muslim, Jewish or other, and also points out the similarities between these various forms and the role ideology plays in them. In his view, ideology helps people to convert uncertainties about themselves and the world into incontrovertible truths free of any doubt, and it acts as a mental framework guiding, explaining and legitimizing their own behaviour. He then goes on to identify a number of factors differentiating

religious fundamentalism from mainstream faith movements. The first and most important of these is a conviction that the religion is under threat. And, of course, as we have already seen earlier in Chapters 3 and 6, threat also plays a clear role in social identity processes; together with supposed unjust discrimination, perceived threat is possibly the most significant precondition for polarization, radicalization and potential terrorism. The other factors mentioned by Herriot are an unwavering belief in one or more holy scriptures, a sometimes unconventional interpretation of those texts and the certainty that one day the world will return to a sublime state in which the true, unadulterated doctrine of the faith will prevail once more. This utopian longing also appears in the analysis by Smelser (2007), previously discussed.

Herriot's analysis goes on to mention several elements closely related to the social identity processes that are the main theme of this chapter. Threat leads to feelings of enmity directed at the dominant group. Both it and the ingroup are regarded as relatively homogeneous, with great importance attached to the religiously defined social identity causing even fellow members of the group to be viewed primarily in terms of that adherence, effectively 'de-individualizing' them. The personal benefits imparted by fundamentalist ideologies are numerous, according to Herriot. The most important are the high degree of order afforded by a fundamentalist social identity, the interpretative framework it provides and its ability to create and maintain a positive self-image. These benefits are in part products of the belief that one has been 'called' to the true faith and the moral superiority that that engenders, certainly in comparison with 'unbelievers'.

Several studies have focused on the role of religious fundamentalism in group polarization and radicalization. Rock (2004) shows that it often results in less tolerance of other groups. Schwartz, Dunkel and Waterman (2009) conclude that religion is an important contributing factor in radicalization, pointing out how its 'absolutist' forms draw an unqualified distinction between believers and non-believers, with the latter depicted as threatening and inferior. What these authors call absolutism is very similar to what others refer to as fundamentalism. They also acknowledge that, whilst radical differentiation between believers and non-believers is today primarily the preserve of Muslim movements, in the past various other religions have done much the same. In this respect, they concur with Herriot, who adopts a very similar position. Rogers and colleagues (2007) argue that religious components form an important part of the value systems championed by groups propagating terrorism, but they conclude that in itself religious fundamentalism is by no means a sufficient precondition for terrorism.

Pratt (2010) argues that religious fundamentalism can be found in most, if not all, major religions. He presents a paradigm of religious fundamentalism that describes the ideological development from initial forms of

fundamentalism that are relatively 'benign' to more extreme forms including terrorism. He describes three stages of fundamentalism, starting with passive fundamentalism, developing into what he calls assertive fundamentalism and ultimately 'impositional fundamentalism'. Examples of the second, more hard-line and assertive form of fundamentalism are sectarian movements such as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Moonies (see Pratt, 2010, p. 443). An example of fundamentalism that is expressly and intentionally impositional is the Taliban. Pratt also mentions the Exclusive Brethren sectarian church in Australia and New Zealand and the North American Christian Identity movement, a highly racist, right-wing and socially conservative Protestant Christianity. The Phineas Priesthood is another example; they are considered terrorists by American authorities for acts such as the planning and/or execution of the bombing of FBI buildings and abortion clinic attacks. All these groups demonstrated an ideological shift from assertive to impositional phases of fundamentalism. Their aim is to impose or to impinge in some way or another upon the wider society.

Religion and terrorism

The term 'religious terrorism' refers to terrorism carried out based on motivations that have a religious character or influence. Morgan (2004) and Weinberg, Pedahzur and Hirsch-Hoefler (2004) argue that the present wave of terrorism has been dominated by religious concerns, especially Islamist ones. They also argue that immediate motivations of terror are often found in religious ideologies. Quite often, Islam is singled out as a religion that breeds violence. (See Box 7.6.)

Box 7.6 The role of religion in radicalization: a case study

Aly and Striegher (2012) conducted a case study of Australia's first convicted terrorist, Jack Roche. The latter was born into a military family in the United Kingdom, travelled throughout Europe, moved to Sidney and, after a downward spiral into alcoholism, he converted to Islam in his search for ontological security. He spent several years in Indonesia; later, he travelled to Afghanistan where he met with senior Al Qaeda leaders and received military training. He went through a prolonged period of dedication to Islamic studies and became increasingly isolated from his old friends and family. He got more and more involved with the JI (Jemaah Islameeah) group and their more extreme religious and ideological views. After some time, he disengaged from JI. Two years later (November 2002), he was arrested on suspicion of conspiring to bomb the Israeli embassy in Canberra in 2000. In 2004,

he was convicted and sentenced to nine years in prison. He served his full term and was released on 7 May 2007.

The analysis of Aly and Striegher indicates that in Roche's case religious, familial and social deprivation all played a role as catalysts that drove him in the direction of radicalization. He described his (moderate) Indonesian Muslim friends and colleagues in the early stages of his radicalization as 'the first people I felt that genuinely cared about me'. Roche admitted that his second divorce triggered a new direction in his life that would eventually lead him to Afghanistan.

The authors concluded that religion was not the primary motivation for Roche to join an extremist group. Initially Islam and later the more radical ideologies of JI seemed to have served an ontological and social function. Aly and Striegher regarded membership of a violent extremist group and sustained exposure to extreme ideologies to be the key triggers for his radicalization.

An alternative view is that religion per se is generally not the cause of conflict but that it adds a dimension to existing disagreements or conflicts. That is precisely the point made by Satana, Inman and Birnir (2013); religion is often used in combination with other factors, sometimes as a primary motivation, sometimes as a justification.

Earlier in this chapter, we presented an analysis of Orsini (2012) indicating that the role of ideology is often overestimated, especially if ideology is seen as a set of documents. The same can be said about the role of religion. Terrorist groups often portray their causes in religious and cultural terms, but this is also done to conceal other goals or to generate public support and/or to silence the opposition. Pape (2005) showed that there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism or any other religion. He studied 315 suicide attacks carried out between 1980 and 2003 and concluded that most cases stem from political conflict, not religion. Others also argue that 'religious' terrorism is often geopolitical. Bergen and Pandey (2005) examined the educational background of nearly 80 terrorists behind Muslim attacks against Westerners. A majority of the terrorists had college education in subjects like engineering. Just over 10 per cent attended Muslim religious schools (madrassas), and all of those played a role in one specific attack – the Bali bombings that occurred in 2005 at two sites (Jimbaran Beach Resort and Kuta) in the south of the island. The attacks claimed the lives of 20 people and injured more than 100 others. The three bombers also died in these attacks.

Silke's (2008) investigation of the psychological processes underlying Jihadi radicalization confirms this. He also argues that religion lies at the

heart of Islamist terrorism, but only to a degree. The global Salafi jihad indeed advocates the defeat of Western powers that prevent the establishment of a true Islamist state stretching from Morocco to the Philippines (cf. Sageman, 2004). On the other hand, the religious background of the people who join the jihad is very mixed. Sageman (2004) found that less than 20 per cent of the Islamist extremists have had a religious primary or secondary education. This modest percentage goes against the view that Islamist extremism is the result of systematic brainwashing by teachers in the religious schools. Interestingly, 99 of Sageman's sample of extremists were described as very religious prior to joining. Thus religion plays an important role, but it is too simple to conclude that this religiousness was the result of a religious primary or secondary education. A strong desire for companionship most likely also played a role [see also the story of Jack Roche (Box 7.6)]. This need for belongingness was provided by the mosque. It is no coincidence that many individuals in the West were recruited at a time when they were living away from their family home and friends. Quite often these recruits were living in a foreign country and quite isolated. Silke (2008) also adds that only a minority of Salafist Muslims support the global jihad; thus it is premature to limit the mind-set of Islamist terrorism to this doctrine. There are other driving factors, as discussed in several chapters of this book.

All this does not mean that religion is not important in the context of terrorism. It could well be the inspiration of what Orsini calls 'terrorists of the first hour'. Religion, just as secular ideologies, can motivate terrorists and can also be used to justify their actions. (See Box 7.7.) Some interpretations of religious and secular ideologies play an important role in radicalization and terrorism. This does not mean, however, that violence and terrorism are prime characteristics of any mainstream religion or ideology.

Box 7.7 When God sanctions violence

History has seen a lot of examples of religiously inspired aggression. The Crusades, for instance, were military campaigns with the aim to free the Holy Land from 'Mohammedan tyranny'. The original crusaders saw themselves as undertaking an armed mission, or pilgrimage, and the 'taking of the crux' to Jerusalem symbolized their solemn vow to liberate Jerusalem and other holy places. Other examples are the Ottoman wars and the Spanish Reconquista. Examples on a smaller scale are the attacks of Christian right-wing extremist Timothy McVeigh in Oklahoma, the attack on the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron

by Jewish fundamentalist Baruch Goldstein and attacks by Islamist groups inspired by the principle of the jihad.

Bushman, Ridge, Das, Key and Busath (2007) investigated intergroup aggression and focused on the role of justification of aggressive acts by religion. Participants in their study generally believed in God and the Bible and played a game in which the winner could blast the loser with loud noise through headphones. Their findings showed that aggression increased when participants had read a violent passage that supposedly came from the Bible (as opposed to from an ancient scroll). In a second study, they showed that aggression increased when the passage explicitly mentioned God, especially among participants who believed in God and the Bible. Figure B7.7 summarizes the outcomes of the second study.
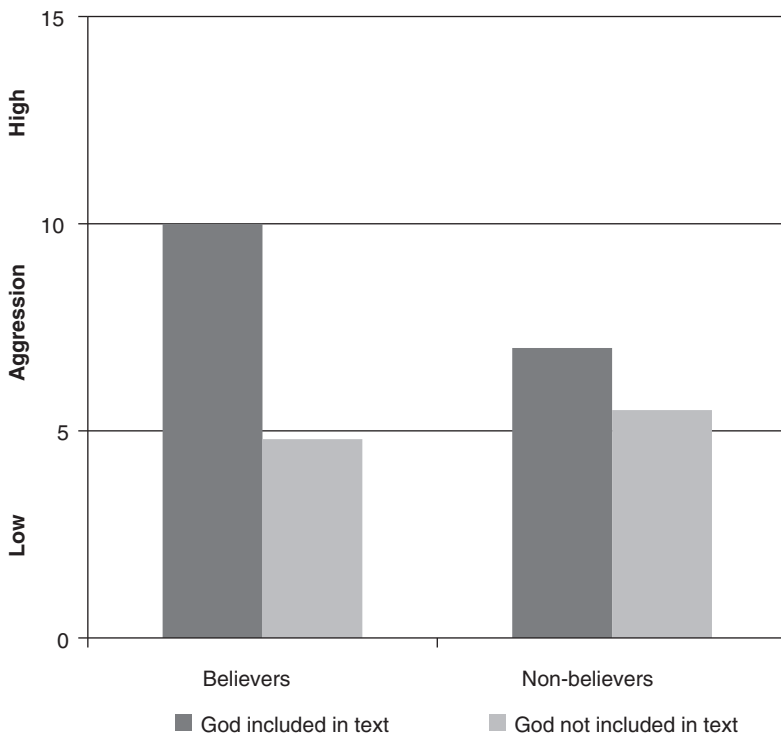
Figure B7.7 Effects of reading a passage in which God either sanctioned violence or was not mentioned to believers versus non-believers.

Source: Adapted from Bushman et al. (2007, p. 206).

Note: Number of trials (total was 25) on which participants delivered highest possible noise levels to their partners.

Smelser claims that the ideology underlying present-day Islamist terrorism is based in part on a particular interpretation of the Koran and partly on related radical worldviews such as that espoused by Sayyid Qutb and Saudi Wahhabism (see Smelser, 2007; Williams, 2004). As in most of the ideologies mentioned in this chapter, its basic aim is the disappearance or extermination of the 'oppressor', followed by a return to a society founded on 'pure' principles.

Satana, Inman and Birnir (2013) also investigated the role of religion in terrorism. They investigated ethnic minority party inclusion in government coalitions and tested whether extremist fractions of an excluded group tend to be more likely to opt for violence and carry out terrorist attacks when the excluded group belongs to a different religion or a different denomination or sect of a religion than the majority. They tested this hypothesis for the period 1990–2004 by looking at the ethnic background of perpetrators listed in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Their findings indeed showed that lack of access to government positions increases the likelihood that groups will opt for violence and terrorism when they also differ from the majority group in terms of religion. Moreover, banning groups for a prolonged period of time tends to increase the probability of violence. Banning minority parties and excluding them is thus likely to further enhance violence and terrorism. In their analyses, Satana and colleagues mention the Srilankan Tamils and the Catholics in Northern Ireland; both had been excluded for decades, and both groups had notoriously active terrorist wings. The researchers conclude that religious distance is often not the strongest minority motivator; they do show, however, that, where religious differences exist between a minority and the majority, the likelihood of extremist violence – under conditions of political exclusion – is augmented.

Focusing on radicalization and terrorism in the Middle East, Loza (2007) found the same ideological foundation as described earlier in this section and also pointed out its religious grounding. Güss, Tuason and Teixeira (2007) stress the role of religion, too, quoting a number of terrorists who have stated that their primary motivation is Islam, followed by the desire to become a martyr and only after that their nationality. These authors, however, also cite examples showing that a religious fundament is by no means a necessary precondition for terrorism – amongst them the RAF in Germany. Ginges, Hansen and Norenzayan (2009) show that the relationship between religion and terrorism is a complex one and dependent on the type of religious behaviour. Their study, conducted in a number of countries, revealed that frequency of mosque attendance shows a positive correlation with support for suicide attacks but that intensity of faith – measured by how often respondents pray – does not. This finding underlines the important role played by social identity processes: visiting a mosque, a public expression of faith in the form of a collective group activity, reinforces that

identity, which in turn encourages radicalization. The same does not apply to a private act of faith like prayer.

Martyrdom and suicide tactics

Ideological commitment has been related not just to radicalization and increased willingness to use violence. Kruglanski and Fishman (2006) report evidence suggesting that commitment to ideologically touted causes also reduces death anxiety. In other words, ideological commitment could also be related to suicide terrorism. This seems especially the case with some religious ideologies in which martyrdom is generously rewarded in after life. (See Box 7.8.)

Box 7.8 Martyrdom, jihad and socialization

Post (2009) describes the evolution of the notion of 'martyrdom' in Islamic culture in an analysis that highlights the importance of understanding an ideology that glorifies this concept. The Koran forbids suicide, but suicide bombers do not define their attacks as suicide. The latter is seen as a weak, egotistical and abnormal act, but their own deaths are *istisha'ad* (martyrdom, or self-sacrifice, for Allah). Hassan Salama, a Palestinian convicted of ordering several suicide attacks, called this the highest form of jihad. Post argues that the term 'jihad' originally had little to do with violence and that the widely used translation 'holy war' is erroneous. The so-called inner or greater jihad is in fact a personal quest to lead a life free of evil and to fight temptation and the ego, whilst the lesser jihad – the jihad of the sword – is the obligation to take up arms in defence of those who are suffering. According to many, this term refers to a defensive struggle.

Hafez (2006) writes that Islamists see suicide attacks as a punishment for the enemy, in accordance with the will of God to fight injustice, but also as a privilege and a reward for true believers. To be chosen to carry one out is the ultimate seal of approval, then, underlining the high moral character and dedication of the person concerned. According to Post, instilling these views of martyrdom and jihad is an important part of the socialization process in Palestine. That begins at a very early age, at home, at school and in the mosque. Many regard the interpretation of jihad as a divine mission to wage war against non-believers in the West as threatening. Post hopes that paying more attention to moderate interpretations of jihad and martyrdom will help to break the spiral of violence in various parts of the world.

Other research has uncovered a link between religion and support for suicide attacks. Its role is most apparent in studies of 'martyrdom' because it provides a form of reward. In some interpretations of the Koran, the ultimate self-sacrifice through one's own death in battle guarantees God's forgiveness and rewards in the hereafter (Hafez, 2006). This perspective is controversial, however, with certain authors claiming that religion can sometimes appear to be used as an excuse to trivialize the social causes of radicalization and terrorism (see Rogers et al., 2007). Silke (2008), too, asserts, as stated earlier, that religion's role as the driving force behind Islamist terrorism is overstated. He admits that its aim is to drive out 'evil' and to re-establish a great and glorious Islamic empire but also points out that only a tiny minority of the individuals involved have enjoyed a formal Muslim religious education. There is only very limited factual evidence supporting the idea that pupils at special religious schools are being brainwashed into becoming terrorists.

Instead, Silke focuses upon the importance of the group and of identification processes within relatively small groups. Most radicalization, he claims, occurs within such small groups of people who are in intensive contact with one another over an extended period of time. This encourages the development of a shared social identity, which brings with it the risk that the group will eventually collectively adopt the beliefs of its most extreme members (see also Chapter 8, where we discuss group polarization in more detail). The process can also be accompanied by social isolation, which exacerbates the members' mutual dependence. In such a context, both religion and group loyalty gain in importance.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we showed that ideology can help individuals in forming a coherent worldview. The role of ideologies becomes especially important when people are confronted with injustice and oppression. Ideology can help in the diagnosis of what is wrong in society and also present a clear image of what it should look like. Several studies showed that uncertainty and threats can lead to a greater tendency to identify with more extreme ideologies. Religion and ideology are generally firmly grounded in moral beliefs and thus help to decide about 'good' and 'bad'. Moreover, people who believe in a religion or ideology may also have the conviction that they have been 'called' to the faith and are therefore morally superior, certainly by comparison with 'unbelievers', which in turn further accentuates us-and-them thinking, thus making a further contribution to polarization and conflict. We presented a brief history of right-wing terrorism and left-wing terrorism, noting the role of anti-Semitism, historical revisionism and islamophobia in the context of right-wing terrorism.

Many authors assert that the current brand of Islamist terrorism derives from an extreme interpretation of the Koran. Apart from that, however, this extremist ideology differs little from others of its kind: all offer certainty and structure, and all systematize the emotions people feel. Radical left-wing groups, such as the Red Army Faction in Germany, were not grounded in a religion, but they did have an ideology and believed that many, if not all, social and economic problems were attributable to the dominance of a capitalist ruling class. Radical right-wing groups, in common with their left-ist and fundamentalist religious counterparts, have a polarized worldview in which the ruling élite poses a direct threat and stands for values they do not share. Of course, there are also differences, obviously on the (dis)con-tent of the ideologies. Left-wing terrorism focused on the economic aspects of the capitalist ruling class, while right-wing group focus on the cultural values of the ruling élite. It needs to be added that these ideologies are best seen as a dynamic set of shared ideas, goals, guidelines and interpretative framework, not as a pile of books (cf. Orsini, 2012). All of these ideologies offer adherents order and clarity in a menacing world, often combined with preconceptions concerning the 'powers that be' and very little tolerance of those who do not agree with them. They also share a utopian longing for a romanticized society that once was or should be.

Figure 7.1 summarizes this chapter in relation to our overall framework. Threats may lead to a preference for more extreme ideologies (religious or secular), and these may assist to form a coherent and orderly worldview. Extreme ideologies provide structure and certainty. These ideologies often have a strong moral component and help to differentiate between 'good' and 'bad'. Especially extremist ideologies are often characterized by moral
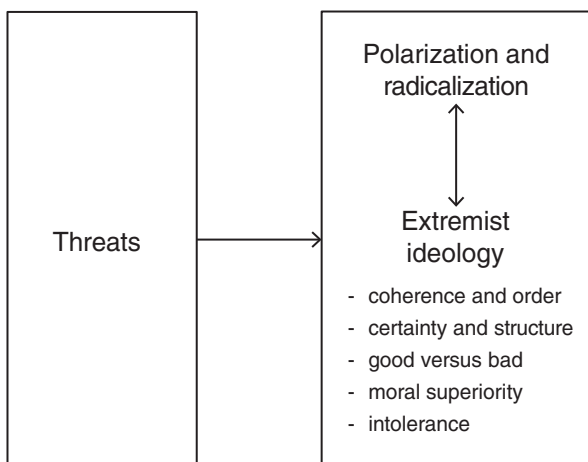
Figure 7.1 Characteristics of extremist ideologies.

superiority over non-believers and increased intolerance for others with different views. Moral superiority and intolerance are important characteristics of more radical worldviews; they are likely to increase the distance between groups and also tend to reduce tolerance for people with values and preferences that differ from one's own worldview.

In sum, a common factor of the ideologies described in this chapter is that they attribute all or at least the great majority of extant social and economic problems to the dominance of the prevailing power. Naturally, this is accompanied by the polarization of different groups and radicalization. In particular, the importance attached to the elimination of the oppressor, as the cause of all evil, acts as a catalyst inflaming existing discontent.

Religious fundamentalism, like other extremist ideologies, is thus associated with strongly preconceived ideas about other groups, intolerance and black-and-white thinking. One difference from other forms of extremism is a belief, often absolute, that its worldview is utterly sacrosanct. After all, it is God's own worldview. Fundamentalism plays an important role in the processes of radicalization on the road to terrorism, but it would be rash to conclude that it alone can bring about such violence. Social causes also play a significant part in the process, often one that appears to be more important than religion's. Consequently, a number of authors assert that the role of religion as a driving force behind Islamist terrorism has been overstated. Others dispute that, though.

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8 From extremism to violence

Small group processes, social support and justification

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, we discussed group membership in terms of fairly general categories such as ethnicity, nationality or religion. We did not look at processes in relation to membership of smaller groups of like-minded people. In this chapter, we will turn to this aspect by focusing on the effects of small groups on their individual members. Many researchers investigating radicalization and terrorism place a greater emphasis upon these group processes than upon individual factors (see e.g. Victoroff, 2005). Sageman (2004) states that they play a far more important role in radicalizing people to the point that they become terrorists than the personal traits of those concerned. He also believes that profiling the 'typical' terrorist is much less productive an exercise than unravelling the group processes that result in people becoming radicalized and engaging in terrorism. In the first part of this chapter, we look at a number of those processes and how they can lead to radicalization and ultimately violence. We will first look at polarization of opinions, then at the phenomenon known as 'groupthink'. In the process, we will also discuss other factors including group isolation, the influence of the Internet and the role of leaders.

We will also look at the wider context in which the group operates. Radicalization and terrorism often attract social support within a community. That can be moral backing, but it may also take the form of financial and other rewards. And the level of support can be so great that it effectively creates social pressure to carry out attacks in revenge for perceived past injustices. Finally, we examine the processes of justification at play in the transition from 'peaceful' radicalization to terrorism, such as denying responsibility for the situation and dehumanizing the 'enemy', and also explore the accompanying emotions.

Group polarization

In earlier chapters, we used the term 'polarization' to describe how differences *between* groups can be accentuated and magnified, and in that context

we discussed the so-called discontinuity effect: time and again, research has found that intergroup relationships are generally more competitive than interpersonal ones. As a matter of course, this competitiveness is accompanied by negative attitudes towards the rival group. In this chapter, we describe group characteristics and associated processes that can exacerbate that effect.

The term 'group polarization', as used in this section, refers to instances in which the views *within* a group become more extreme. Several processes can play a part in this, and a number of these processes may occur even when there is no threat to the group. Tesser (1978) showed that group polarization can occur simply as the result of sharing information. Exchanging information can in itself be sufficient to reduce the number of 'doubters' and to make members' opinions more clear-cut and somewhat more extreme. Other studies have looked at a phenomenon known as 'risky shift', a tendency for groups to take more radical decisions than individuals. The long tradition of research into this phenomenon (see e.g. Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969) reveals that like-minded groups, especially, can have a polarizing effect upon their individual members' opinions, preferences and decisions.

Group polarization of this kind is most often observed when a majority of the members of a specific group shares a particular view and adopts a clear-cut stance. If this is the case, the 'average' opinion within the group is likely to move towards the extreme espoused by the majority. Sharing information tends to encourage this process because, as a rule, the majority outlook receives more 'airtime' than any alternatives, is backed by more arguments and is expressed more confidently (see e.g. Smith & Mackie, 2007). In addition, processes of social comparison can foster further polarization; when group members compare themselves with each other, research has shown that those with more outspoken opinions often exert greater influence. These effects are only augmented when a threat is present, since that increases group cohesion and so enhances mutual internal influence. Within radical movements, we frequently see that it is the most radical members who acquire the highest status. As we shall see later in this chapter, leaders can even radicalize a relatively moderate group. Collier and Horowitz (1989) found evidence to support the hypothesis that extreme members gain greater status and influence from their analysis of the Weather Underground, an extremist left-wing movement active in the U.S. in the 1970s.

Group polarization also features regularly in more recent studies of radicalization and terrorism (see e.g. Victoroff, 2005). Sageman (2004) claims that the most significant group processes involved are those that radicalize individuals who are victims of deprivation and injustice or who feel that they are. Their impact is greater when the group largely cuts itself off from mainstream society and operates in isolation. We discuss those factors in greater detail later in this chapter. McCauley and Segal (1987) also mention the importance of group polarization in their assertion that the radicalization of opinions and

behaviour often occurs in stages. Views within the group become more and more homogeneous, with escalation occurring by way of a gradual, step-by-step process in which attitudes become increasingly hardened. Loza (2007) is another researcher who emphasizes the role of the group, stating that obedience to the group norm and allowing the interests of the group to prevail over personal ones play a significant role in extremism and the path to terrorism.

McCormick (2003) and authors such as Post (1990) and Crenshaw (2000) point out the part played by dynamic group processes in radicalization and the transition to terrorism. Della Porta (1995) describes the radicalization process in a detailed case study. Her findings show that the decision to take up arms was the result of a gradual evolution in interaction with the group. We often see that group opinions and behaviour become gradually more extreme in stages. New information is sought out in a selective manner, with each 'fact' gathered pushing the group one small step further along the path of extremism. The longer this process goes on, the harder it becomes to stop. In short, small and tight-knit groups are easily seduced into radicalization and a preference for extreme and even violent solutions. To an extent, these are autonomous processes found mainly in homogeneous groups with a shared worldview and a high degree of internal agreement about what actions to take. As we shall discover later, group isolation can be a significant catalyst in this context.

Groupthink

Group cohesion plays an important triggering role in polarization and radicalization; the more cohesive the group, the greater the pressure for everyone to agree – a pressure that only increases in the face of a perceived external threat. The term 'groupthink' was introduced by Irving Janis in 1972 and refers to a situation in which unanimity becomes so important that it undermines the quality of the process of opinion formation. Within the group, it is considered so essential for everyone to think the same about matters vital to the group that no dissent is tolerated. Despite the threats it faces or the hostility of the outside world, the group eventually comes to view itself as relatively invulnerable, a self-image that may be expressed through trivialization of threats or even their denial. Such attitudes are the product of an extreme faith in one's own ability, pressurizing those with deviant opinions and the selective, subjective processing of information. People engaged in groupthink are looking primarily for support for their own ideas and preferences; they have little or no interest in alternatives.

The literature indicates that these processes are more likely to occur in relatively homogeneous groups with members who share a strong sense of mutual solidarity and that exist in relative isolation. That keeps them shielded from dissonant information, alternative opinions and criticism. Strong, commanding leadership only reinforces those processes. Tsintsadze-Maass and Maass (2014) related elements of groupthink to terrorist radicalization. They

focused on the Weather Underground, the American terrorist group from the late 1960s that was responsible for six years of bombings against the U.S. government. The Weather Underground was a left-wing extremist group that emerged in 1969 from the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) movement. SDS had up to 100,000 members at its peak and was critical of U.S. foreign policy, racial discrimination and excessive income differences. A dispute within SDS resulted in the formation of the Weatherman. The group's primary goal was the creation of a mass revolutionary movement with the aim to overthrow the U.S. government. The latter was seen as the main source of atrocities worldwide. Tsintsadze-Maass and Maass relied on a wide variety of sources such as newspaper articles, books, U.S. Senate reports and interviews with the group's leaders.

Box 8.1 Weather Underground: a brief history

As mentioned in the text, a dispute within the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) movement resulted in the decision to form a new group: the Weatherman. This name was inspired by Bob Dylan's song 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'. The song includes the line 'you don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows'. Later, the group changed its name to Weather Underground; feminist members of the group found the term 'Weather*man*' sexist. The main aim was to overthrow the U.S. government. Quite early in its existence, the group alienated most other leftist organizations. A few months after the birth of the group, it planned a large-scale national action to 'retake' Chicago from the police. Extensive recruitment efforts had limited effect, and the so-called Days of Rage was attended by only a few hundred followers. These created havoc in several city blocks, resulting in a public response that was described as a mix of 'bewilderment and disgust'. Despite the failure of this attempt, the leaders of the group organized a War Council in December 1969 with the aim to launch a violent campaign against the U.S. By that time, total membership was well below one hundred. On 6 March 1970, five group members were assembling bombs when an accidental explosion killed three of them and destroyed their Greenwich Village house. The group again declared war on the U.S. government and bombed several police stations, courthouses and government offices over the next six years. All these efforts did not bring the mass revolution any nearer. Group members were frequently arrested and became more and more disillusioned. By the end of the 1970s, their most prominent leaders had turned themselves in.

Source: Based on Tsintsadze-Maass and Maass (2014).

The brief history of the Weather Underground is described in Box 8.1, and the fact that the history of this terrorist organization is relatively well documented allowed Tsintsadze-Maass and Maass (2014) to illustrate the workings of groupthink and how it can lead to radicalization and extremism. In accordance with the work of Janis (1972), they describe a number of antecedent conditions and a number of symptoms of groupthink. The most important ones are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

External threat tends to increase stress and increases the urgency of consensus, simply because the consequences of dissenters betraying the group are quite severe. The Weather Underground developed in a period defined by political violence (the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the Vietnam War). Soon after the Days of Rage, Weatherman became a primary target of U.S. intelligence agencies. The group felt they were 'in a war zone'. This also resulted in *isolation* of the group from outside influences. Isolation can effect the quality of information search and the adequate assessment of alternative options. It also often leads to more extreme opinions and preferences. Members of the Weatherman went underground in 1970 and cut themselves off from their families, friends and partners.

Weather Underground members had a similar background: they were young, white, dropped-out students from affluent families, and they shared an interest in Marxist ideology and the need for mass revolution. The group was not only homogeneous in terms of background and values; another characteristic of the group was *strong, authoritarian leadership*. An example is provided by Stern (1975), as described by Tsintsadze-Maass and Maass (2014, p. 9).

> He [J.J.] was so loud and persistent that no one could interrupt him. He refused to let anyone else talk until he finished, and his tone was at once so commanding, and contentious that everybody in the room was more or less intimidated into silence.

Stern (1975) also refers to leaders who describe themselves as 'monomaniacal' and that eventually nearly all personal decisions of their followers were subject to the approval of the leadership. Not surprisingly, the thoughts and actions of the group displayed most symptoms of groupthink. Adversaries were seen in terms of *extreme stereotypes*; the U.S. government and capitalism in general were seen as the main cause of expression. All government agents were seen as imperialists and racists. Interestingly, these extreme stereotypes also resulted in the dehumanization of adversaries. Policemen were called 'pigs'. All in all, the group adopted an extreme form of us–versus-them thinking, and this was also extended to innocent citizens. Eventually all Americans were seen as legitimate targets of attacks. The

group also showed signs of their *inherent morality*, a phenomenon we also discussed in Chapter 7 when we focused on ideology and identity processes. In an interview, one group member admitted that hate was cherished as a 'badge of moral superiority'. Another indicated that they felt great contempt for people who were not prepared to do what they were willing to do. The group was also extremely optimistic about the effectiveness of their strategies. This *illusion of invulnerability* led them to persist with inadequate policies such as their continued failure to attract new recruits. Finally, adverse events were interpreted and served as *rationalizations* for their chosen path; self-imposed and mutually enforced censorship helped to maintain these rationalizations.

All these symptoms obviously affect group decision making, resulting in enhanced extremity of decisions and a tendency to persevere even when there is an abundance of evidence suggesting that there are alternative and better options. Moreover, the convictions of moral superiority, in combination with extreme forms of us-versus-them thinking helps to legitimize violence against all adversaries, including innocent citizens. In sum, groupthink combines a sense of invulnerability with a readiness to take risk, plus an overriding need to reach a consensus. In his analysis of the decision-making processes within terrorist groups, McCormick (2003) also points out several factors that may induce groupthink. Because its activities are illegal, the group is forced to lead a clandestine existence that increases the importance of internal solidarity. It is vital that everyone agrees on most, if not all, possible issues. Doubt and criticism are not appreciated. Reaching and maintaining a consensus become so essential that they can adversely affect the quality of the decisions taken.

Both Sageman (2004) and Wiktorowicz (2004) stress the power of small groups to create shared worlds of meaning that shape perceptions, preferences and actions. Social bonding within small peer groups can facilitate the adaptation of more extreme worldviews. Neumann and Rogers (2007) and Wiktorowicz (2004) used social movement theory to study radicalization processes and interviewed individuals close to or part of groups that support violent extremism. Their findings also illustrate the importance of phenomena we described under the heading of 'groupthink'. They emphasize how the group provides its members with the feeling of being important and even with a sense of superiority and mission. They also describe how social pressures apply to the members of the group and how this increases group conformity over time (Neumann & Rogers, 2007).

Groups sometimes go to extreme lengths to uphold unanimity within their ranks, impelled in part by a fear of being betrayed by disloyal members with dissenting views. In Japan, the United Red Army (Rengo Sekigun), a terrorist movement, killed a third of its own members between December 1971 and February 1972. The Palestinian movement headed by Abu Nidal

also executed a significant proportion of its own membership (see McCormick, 2003). Groupthink is also associated with sect-like groups, which can give the impression that these are very similar to terrorist organizations in a certain way. A number of researchers do indeed see certain similarities (see e.g. Hudson, 1999).

Isolation and superiority

One key aspect shared by almost all the cases cited in the previous section is the relative isolation of the group concerned. To a large extent, this was self-sought; an external threat caused huge pressure to 'close ranks', with little or no tolerance of alternative points of view. Isolation thus reduces to an absolute minimum the chance of doubts arising about the chosen path.

Small groups that are under threat or feel they are display greater internal solidarity and cohesion, are more polarized and less tolerant of discordant voices, impose more stringent sanctions on dissenters and are more inclined to idealize their own values. Such attitudes can easily bring with them an absolute belief in their own moral superiority and a desire to isolate themselves from the rest of the world. This isolation is in part a consequence of the group processes just described but also acts as a trigger for these processes. In their isolation, members of the group become more dependent on one another. In his study of the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion) in Germany, Billig (1985) notes that its members received support only from one another. And such support is important in that it provides a counterpart to the influence of the 'evil' outside world. Several authors have highlighted the significance of isolation, also pointing out that it is often a position deliberately chosen in order to exert greater influence over individual members of the group (see e.g. Güss, Tuason & Teixeira, 2007; Post, 2005). (See Box 8.2.)

Moghaddam (2005) states that new members are bonded with the group and its ideals by a gradual process in which isolation, secrecy and fear play an important role. Individuality and personal needs have to be curtailed in the interests of the collective mission (see also Kruglanski & Golec, 2004). McCormick (2003) also shows how the need to go underground isolates the group from society. The more successful it is, in fact, the more it needs to cut itself off. This automatically means that the information available to it is selective, and the organization becomes more inward-looking, with more extreme views, so that deviating from the chosen path becomes increasingly difficult. Under these conditions, it is also easier to create your own reality. Some authors even go so far as to claim that terrorists are playing out their own 'fantasy war' (Ferracuti, 1990, in his analysis of Italian terror groups). Isolation can, after all, distort your view of society and make you unaware of changes. We regularly encounter examples of terrorist movements whose

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Box 8.2 Terrorism, vocation and isolation

Orsini (2013) interviewed a militant of the Italian Red Brigades who had been released after spending nearly 32 years in prison. Orsini described him as a 'vocational' terrorist; someone who gives up family, children and friendship and who voluntarily severs any contact with his former life. He was part of the Red Brigades' leadership during the most violent years of Italian terrorism (former prime minister Aldo Moro was kidnapped in Rome on 16 March 1978 and killed eight weeks later). This interview illustrates the isolation of terrorist cells quite convincingly, as illustrated by the following quotes:

> Abandoning all my nearest and dearest was a painful decision, but I felt I had a mission to accomplish. . . . [To] destroy the injustices of bourgeois society was more important than my life itself. When you join the Red Brigades, you start a new life and you have to give up many things. . . . The little things that used to fill up your life were no longer possible. Leaving behind all my loved ones was painful but I've never regretted it because sacrificing yourself for the revolution was the right thing to do. . . . I made that decision because I felt it was right to take that direction. A direction I've never stopped believing in.
>
> (Orsini, 2013, p. 675)

And:

> I always hung around with the same people. I only saw the comrades from the column. Very often, the life of a militant living underground comes down to talking with three or four companions at the most, to whom you are forbidden to reveal your real name. We all knew each other by our *noms de guerre*. What's more, you couldn't tell them anything about your past life or your loved ones. If a comrade was arrested, maybe even tortured, he might pass on what you'd told him to the police . . .
>
> (Orsini, 2013, p. 677)

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members appear to have lost touch with their original objectives and who no longer realize what degree of popular support, if any, they enjoy. Turk (2004) mentions La Violencia in Colombia in this respect, but movements like ETA and the IRA also lost most of their support base long before their members seemed to become aware of that.

Research on social identification processes addresses one mechanism that might lead to increased isolation of extremists groups. Becker, Tausch, Spears and Christ (2011) showed that participation in radical, extreme initiatives can result in disidentification from the broader ingroup. The perception of a lack of solidarity and lack of commitment to the cause by the broader ingroup partly determined this estrangement. In sum, radical action, especially when non-normative, can ironically also lead to disidentification from the group on whose behalf the action is taken in the first place. Quite a few cases illustrate this process. Examples are the reduced support by the broader ingroup for nationalist radical separatist movements as the provisional IRA (Irish Republican Army) and more recently the ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna). This was partly due to reduced identification with and knowledge about the broader ingroup. The ETA waged a bloody campaign for independence for the seven regions in northern Spain and south-west France that were claimed by Basque separatists. The Basque country today enjoys more autonomy than any other region in Spain, but the ETA remained determined to push for full independence. Its campaign resulted in more than 800 deaths over the past 50 years, but since the murder of a 29-year-old local councillor for the ruling Popular Party in the Basque region in 1997, public opinion changed. The councillor (Miquel Angel Blanco) was shot twice in the head, and this horrified many people, resulting in marches of more than 6 million people across Spain demanding an end to ETA violence. Some of ETA's own supporters publicly condemned the killing. By 2009, there was still a minority of around 15 per cent who felt attracted to the ETA, but public opinion on both left and right generally denied that there was a 'Basque conflict'. In October 2011, the ETA announced the end of its four-decade-long campaign of violence.

In sum, opting for more radical solutions can result in estrangement from the broader ingroup, and this can result in further radicalization. The latter is partly due to the relative isolation of the more radical (sub)group, and that is exactly what seemed to have happened with ETA. Isolation can also result in increased usage of dedicated websites and forums, and these can also play a significant role in radicalization and the use of violence.

The Internet and isolation

A lot of research into the role played by group processes in radicalization focuses on factors at work in small groups with face-to-face contact. In the past couple of decades, however, we have seen how young people, especially, are increasingly active in online group environments. And social interaction on the Internet is quite different from face-to-face contact. In the digital world, for example, it is relatively easy to avoid unwelcome information and individuals. The interesting paradox here is that, whilst the Internet

has made available a huge diversity of information, opinions and ideas, it also offers simple means to shut out unwanted or inconvenient material and so select only information that fits your own worldview. In other words, the Internet has actually made it easier for individuals and groups to isolate themselves from other ideas and preferences.

The Internet not only plays a role in fulfilling a sense of belongingness for individuals or groups that feel threatened by the majority in their social environment. Koster and Houtman (2008) interviewed right-wing extremists who called their virtual community a 'second home'. The Internet also plays a role in the recruitment of new group members and their radicalization. Kruglanski and Fishman (2009) quote an intelligence source stating that the Internet is the single most important venue for the radicalization of Islamic youth. They estimated a total of 5000 active jihadi sites spreading messages and videos. Interestingly, the Internet can provide a window to different worldviews, but it can also help to reduce contact with viewers emanating from the larger society and create an extremely restricted social reality that continuously provides support for the ideological premises of the group. The role of virtual communities as a tool for recruitment and increased involvement can also be seen in sites of right-wing extremists (see e.g. Bowman-Grieve, 2013). According to Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post and Victoroff (2007), many experts believe that the Internet is now a significant factor in radicalizing and recruiting new members of terrorist movements. Once it has had this initial effect, group processes of the kind described earlier in this chapter can take hold.

In this manner, the Internet can play an important part in forming networks and groups of like-minded individuals. And that role is not confined to the initial stages of their formation. On its dark side, the Internet offers plenty of ways to encourage violence and to dehumanize others. That is precisely the effect of repeated exposure to the films of terrorist beheadings circulating online. (See Box 8.3.)

Box 8.3 Internet, extremism and 'self-starters'

Kirby (2007) mentioned the emergence of 'self-starters', an important development in the post-9/11 era. The term 'self-starters' refers to autonomous groups that share an ideological affinity with al-Qaeda but were not formally recruited or trained. Examples are the Madrid bombers (2004) and the Hofstad Group in the Netherlands; the latter was responsible for the assassination of Theo van Gogh in 2004. In his article, Kirby described the London Bombers (responsible for the bombings in the London underground in 2005) in more detail. His argument is that the reliance – implicit or explicit – on organizational

models are not likely to provide a clear understanding of the drivers of these groups. A crucial characteristic of these groups is their autonomy; they do not need to connect to a larger, more organized network. They are 'self-organizing', 'self-radicalizing', and 'self-activating'. The London Bombers were all British: Mohammed Sidique Kahn, Shezad Tanweer, Habib Hussain (all of Pakistani descent) and Germaine Lindsay (a Jamaican immigrant who had converted to Islam some years before). Kahn was significantly older (30) than the other three who were, respectively, 22, 18 and 19 years old. Kahn, Hussain and Tanweer had known each other for some time; their friendship began to intensify when the younger men more frequently attended a mosque near Khan's home. They also spent quite a lot of time at Igra Islamic bookshop, which also sold 'under-the-counter-stuff' such as videos of events in Bosnia, Chechnya and Iraq. The four frequently met at Hamara Healthy Living Centre. They would gather at each other's homes to watch graphic videos on the Internet, followed by physically rigorous warlike games.

All of these activities that were taking place stood in sharp contrast to the operating assumption of the intelligence and security agencies. Their analyses focused on 'extensive support structures', 'networks behind the bombers', 'al-Qaeda links', 'mastermind', 'training camps' and so on. When Kahn's video testimony surfaced in September 2005, the initial focus was on whether it would provide evidence of a direct link to al-Qaeda. In the tape, Kahn explains that civilians are targets because they all bear responsibility for their government's actions. It took until May 2006 (ten months after the attacks) for the Home Office to release its official assessment of the 7 July attacks. It confirmed the absence of any evidence of a 'mastermind' and estimated that the entire operation (including overseas travel to Pakistan, bomb-making equipment and car rentals) cost less than £8,000. The conclusion was that '[t]he London attacks were a modest, simple affair by four seemingly normal men using the internet'. Much later, internal al-Qaeda documents surfaced, providing details that British subject and al-Qaeda operative Rashid Rauf planned the 2005 London bombings.

Kohlmann (2008) noted that so-called home-grown terrorists often possess a remarkable shared connection through reliance on al-Qaeda's online knowledge base, including training manuals and video recordings.

It needs to be added that the counterterrorist response on the Internet has become both more sophisticated and more effective. Security and intelligence agencies are now much more capable of monitoring, infiltrating and

undermining jihadist networks, and this has eroded the trust of those networks on the Internet. As argued by Torres Soriano (2012), networks that rely heavily on the Internet now often encounter difficulties in their efforts to retain visibility and operate efficiently.

Leaders

We highlighted a number of group processes with a potentially radicalizing effect and briefly addressed the influence of leaders when describing the Weather Underground earlier in this chapter. A look back at the history of radical movements teaches us that charismatic figureheads are a regular feature, in many cases actively pushing groups towards extremes. Examples range from Andreas Baader of the RAF to Malcolm X of the Black Panthers and Osama bin Laden of al-Qaeda. Stern (2004) also mentions the role played by leaders. And, as we saw earlier, the literature on groupthink frequently refers to the influence of strong, commanding leadership.

Other leaders can also be important in shaping terrorist violence. Kruglanski and Fishman (2009) described the role played by Sayid Muhammad Husayn Fadlalla in Hezbollah's decision to use suicide bombings. Fadlalla was the informal leader of the Shi'ite clerics associated with the Hezbollah movement. He was an important spiritual leader, and his endorsement of suicide bombing provided a spiritual and moral 'seal of approval'. In 1983, Hezbollah was the first organization to employ suicidal tactics. Since then, suicide tactics have been widely used by other terrorist groups. Some religious authorities refer to them as 'martyrdom operations' and a noble form of resilience.

Recent work has homed on leadership as a factor in radicalization and the creation of terrorist groups. Moghaddam (2005) cites several of its characteristics in his analysis of the psychological processes that can result in terrorism. Post, Sprinzak and Denny (2003) interviewed 35 convicted terrorists, who described the strongly hierarchical relationships within their groups and a general reluctance to question the orders handed down by their leaders.

Hudson (1999) published a very extensive analysis of factors with the potential to radicalize groups and eventually lead them to adopt violence. Studying a range of terrorist groups in Europe, Asia, South America and the Middle East, at both ends of the political spectrum, and looking at both male and female members, he found that strong, opportunistic, action-driven 'doers' are associated with many such movements. As well as Andreas Baader, they include Akira Nihei of the United Red Army in Japan and, more recently, the leaders of several fundamentalist groups in the Middle East. Bandura (1990) used the term 'moral disengagement' to define the method by which the group is desensitized to the effect of the violence it

uses, describing several techniques deployed in this process. The first is to make members see themselves as heroes in the struggle against evil; the second is to deny or minimize the suffering endured by victims, and the third is for the leaders to assume responsibility. For Bandura, then, leaders play a clear role in justifying the use of violence. The fourth technique he lists is dehumanizing the victims, a theme we will return to later in this chapter.

In this and the previous sections, we have examined several group processes that can exacerbate intergroup polarization, causing greater radicalization and ultimately resulting in terrorist behaviour. None of these occur in isolation, so in the next section we look at a number of social processes with the potential to radicalize and to breed terrorism – specifically, social support and the influence of imitation and role models.

Social support, rewards and role models

Terrorist groups exist within a larger society. The worldviews of society at large and terrorist groups overlap, and the support provided by the larger society varies considerably. Overlap and support were minimal for terrorist groups such as the Rote Armee Fraktion in Germany, the Brigate Rosse (Red Brigades) in Italy and the Weather Underground in the U.S. In all these cases, the perspectives, values and major objectives held by the terrorist group differed greatly from the prevailing views in society at large. On the other hand, the Palestinian support for violence against the Israelis tends to be substantial. The importance of community support for terrorism and violence is also illustrated by the changing prevalence of specific tactics. Public support for suicide bombings rose from 20 per cent in 1996 to 70–80 per cent in 2002. In roughly the same period, the number of suicide bombings rose from fewer than five per year to more than 36.

Social support for radical groups can exist at many levels, from wide popular backing to endorsement by just a few like-minded individuals. And its form can vary from active material assistance – providing the group with income – to more symbolic support in the shape of social status or sharing goals and resources.

Social support

McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) use a pyramid model to describe terrorist movements, with the base consisting of all those who sympathize with its aims. This support varies considerably between movements and can also change over time. The final decades of the twentieth century, for instance, saw substantial fluctuations in public backing for the IRA and ETA. In response, it was not uncommon for these movements to adjust their policy

in an effort to reverse a decline in popularity. At various times, both groups made strategic decisions to change their modus operandi (a greater emphasis upon military targets, for example) or to issue advance warnings of attacks in order to minimize civilian casualties (see McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). The more support there is at the base of the pyramid, the greater the chance that members of the population concerned will radicalize. It is hardly surprising, then, that both the number of radical groups and individuals and the extent of popular backing for them are higher in the occupied territories on the West Bank than in, say, northern Spain, where the number of civilians killed by ETA has severely undermined support for the group. Both social support in the broad sense and the backing from a movement's immediate social environment are important. Individual processes of radicalization with a primarily political motivation are rare, and they also take a long time. The case of the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, and more recently Anders Behring Breivik, are two examples.

Research carried out in Lebanon by Levin, Henry, Pratto and Sidanius (2003) showed that social support for violence is highest amongst those who identify strongly with Arab culture and is fairly general in nature, applying to various terrorist movements. Support for the attacks of 11 September 2001 was also highest in this group, although this correlation was not as strong. However, there was no link between identification with specifically Lebanese culture and support for either terrorist movements in general or 9/11 in particular.

Grassroots support is important for many terrorist groups, so they need to be able to gauge their own popularity with some degree of accuracy. When there is only limited public endorsement of violence, it makes little sense to engage in activities that cause civilian casualties. But when the population itself is radicalized and so backs militant action, groups can be less discriminating in the selection of their targets. We see this in regions such as Palestine. The extreme conditions in which most Palestinians live and the apparent hopelessness of their situation have a radicalizing effect upon the entire population, thus fuelling social support for violent resistance. High levels of support can also lead to escalation. Sánchez-Cuenza and De la Calle (2009) argue that the overwhelming support for Hamas and similar movements in the Middle East may well be encouraging them to compete amongst themselves to be the most aggressive. (See Box 8.4.)

There is general consensus that competition among terrorist groups increases the level of violence used by the groups that compete with one another. As argued by Nemeth (2014), this has become a powerful and persuasive idea in the literature. The line of argument is that increased levels of violence serve to demonstrate the commitment and capability of each group

Box 8.4 Social support in society at large

Krueger and Malĕcková (2009) looked at the relation between public opinion in one country towards another country and the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by people or groups from the former country against targets in the latter country. They focused on Middle Eastern and North African countries and looked at what the general public thought about the leaders of nine world powers. For each of the nine target countries, they split up their sample of 19 countries in the Middle East and North Africa in four levels of disapproval of the leadership of the target country. Disapproval of leadership scores was based on the Gallup World Poll, and the number of terrorist attacks was based on the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS). The findings are summarized in Figure B8.4.

The results show a clear relationship between disapproval and the number of attacks. In total, the authors investigated 143 country pairs, and 111 terrorist attacks were perpetrated by the origin countries against the target countries. These findings suggest that public sentiment does play a role in the frequency of terrorist attacks. Krueger and Malĕcková mention two reasons for the relation between public opinion and terrorism: (1) greater disapproval of other countries' leaders could increase the number of people in a society who provide material support and encouragement; (2) greater disapproval could increase the number of people willing to join terrorist movements and opt for violence.
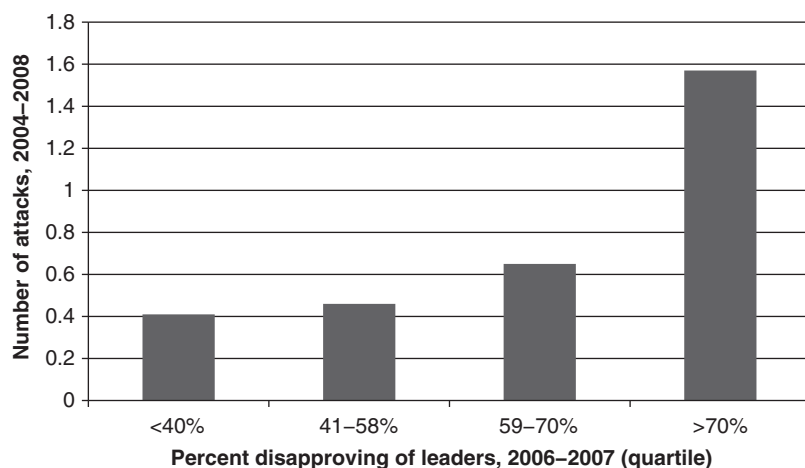
Figure B8.4 Disapproval of leadership and terrorist attacks.

relative to their competitors. Potentially, this process could have a dramatic impact on the affected states when increased levels of violence become the currency for terrorist organizations. The latter could help to legitimize and encourage more and more extreme levels of violence (see e.g. Crenshaw, 1985; Nemeth, 2014).

Findley and Young (2012) also investigated the relation between competition and the extremity of violence. They focus on suicide terrorism and investigate Bloom's (2005) observation that competition for public support is likely to provide incentives for groups to jump on the 'suicide band wagon' in order to distinguish themselves from competitors. Findley and Young conducted a global analysis of terrorism from 1970 to 2004 based on the data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). They found limited support for the relation between competition and increased reliance on suicide tactics. Moreover, they also note the possibility that the limited support they found might be an artefact because, statistically, a higher number of terrorist groups in a specific country is likely to be associated with an increased number of tactics including that of suicide terrorism.

Crenshaw (2007) analysed social support for suicide bombers and concluded that the tactics a group uses can affect both its popularity and the support it actually receives. She asserts that suicide terrorism usually occurs either with widespread public backing or when it is completely absent; in the latter case, it is perhaps seen as the only way of drawing attention to a cause, whereas in the former, the circumstances are such that escalation and extreme radicalization are unavoidable, probably due to the way in which the population concerned is treated.

Findley and Young (2012) also looked at the relationship between the *number* of opposition groups and the likelihood of terrorist acts. Obviously, the statistical argument presented previously also applies to this relationship. They failed to find strong evidence for a relation between the number of groups and the number of terrorist attacks in general. All in all, these findings provide hardly any support for the outbidding-terrorism link. They concluded that the outbidding logic, which is often mentioned in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, might be specific to that case. Bloom's (2005) theory is at the base of the outbidding idea and has its roots in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the increased use of suicide terrorism we have seen over the last few decades. According to Bloom, outbidding is most likely to occur in an environment of large-scale support for options that entail a commitment to extreme violence. This was certainly the case in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict; public support for suicide terrorism in the Palestinian community rose to 85 per cent in the early years of this century. Bloom mentions one other example: the Tamils in Sri Lanka. That

group also had a long history of conflict with the majority government with no clear results, leading to an atmosphere of frustration, anger and hopelessness.

Nemeth (2014) also investigated whether competition leads to more terrorism; he used data included in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and focused on domestic (as opposed to international) terrorism. His main dependent variable was the yearly count of the number of domestic attacks committed by each terrorist organization. He focused on the years 1970–1997, thus relying on a different time span than Findley and Young (2012), whose study we described previously. He did find support for the prediction that competition leads to more terrorism and also qualified his findings. He found that nationalist and religious terrorist groups responded to competition with more terrorism, while left-wing organizations responded with less terrorism.

So far we have focused on support of the general public, but social support can also be provided by friends and relations. The latter also play a role in recruitment. A family relationship or friendship is often a factor in admission to an extremist movement, too. Della Porta (2009) collected data on this topic in relation to members of a number of Italian left-wing terror groups of differing sizes active in the 1970s, the best known being the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse). In 70 per cent of cases, a new recruit had a personal connection with at least one existing member. And in 42 per cent of those cases, there were links with more than seven members. These were often associations involving a number of different activities; for instance, neighbours working in the same factory or school friends who took holidays together. The intensity of the relationships concerned is also reflected in the number of family connections: in 25 per cent of cases, at least one close relative was already a member of the group. For the most part, that was either a spouse or a sibling. Della Porta puts forward three explanations for the importance of personal links: solidarity with friends, the role of political information and risks for the organization. Supporting friends and not letting them down was an important value for those concerned, and their personal social network was their primary source of political information, with external sources counting for little. Moreover, trust is absolutely vital for this kind of organization; admitting people completely unknown to them represents a clear risk.

As far as contemporary Islamist terrorism is concerned, plenty of research has focused on the role of social support. Grimland, Apter and Kerkhof (2006), Güss, Tuason and Teixeira (2007), Horgan (2008), McCauley and Moskalenko (2008), Smelser (2007) and Victoroff (2005) all mention the importance of direct social backing, with immediate family often playing a particularly important part (Sageman, 2004). (See Box 8.5.)

Box 8.5 Black widows: from social support to social pressure

The dividing line between social support and social pressure is sometimes a very narrow one. The last decades have seen a growing role of women in terrorism. The Chechen wars with Russia resulted in increased involvement of women in terrorism. Thousands of Chechen civilians died, and Chechen fighters were forced to abandon their ruined capital and escape to the sheltering Caucasus Mountains to wage a guerrilla/terror campaign. The Russians occupied Chechnya and began to carry out notorious 'cleansing operations'. In this context, Chechens began to deploy what the Russians called 'living bombs'. The very first suicide bombing in Russia was carried out by two young Chechen women named Khava Barayeva and Luiza Magomedova. They drove a truck packed with explosives into a Russian special forces base in Alkhan Yurt, levelling it and killing 27 troops on 7 June 2000. Russia coined the term 'Black Widows' because many of these female suicide attacks were carried out by women who were widows of men killed by the Russian forces in Chechnya.

Their most famous attack was the involvement of 19 Chechen women terrorists in the seizure of the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow during the performance of a play in 2002. In January 2011, a Black Widow killed 35 people at an airport in Moscow, and in 2013 a bus and a train station in Volgograd were attacked by Black Widows. A total of 22 people were killed. Why do these women become suicide bombers? Some argue that the prime motive is revenge.

Jusik (2004) visited the families of the Black Widows, their friends and acquaintances. She learned that the female suicide bombers fell into two classes. One group are women between 30 and 40 years of age who have endured tragedies and losses – their husbands, their children, their homes. These women are easy for the recruiters to find. The women want to avenge a personal loss and to redeem the family name. In many instances, the women are seeking revenge. Another group is young, primarily 17-year-old girls. They do not seem to have a personal motive for sacrificing themselves, even though there is hardly a Chechen family that has not suffered a loss in the wars. The girls often come from Wahhabi families. When the father is killed, it is a question of honour for the brothers to sacrifice the girls. According to Jusik (2004), these young women do not have anything to say about it; they just have to obey. They do not want to die, but they are not asked.

According to Jusik, these so-called Allah's Brides are systematically prepared for death. They are torn from their surroundings, and

recruiters begin to break their spirits, sometimes using sexual violence. Others (e.g. Kurz & Bartles, 2007) regard Jusik as a pro-Russian government journalist (although her book is not available in Russia) and argue that most women are given no training at all in preparation for the suicides as no weapon skill is needed to strap on the explosives. Many are blown up by remote control. They argue that the prime motives of these women are revenge, despair and their drive for an independent state.

McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) state that incidents in one's own social environment can also play an important role in inciting action. They cite examples of suicide terrorists from countries including Russia, Sri Lanka and Palestine, who decided to sacrifice themselves as a result of extreme experiences suffered by people close to them. Despite such examples of very sudden individual radicalization, however, as a rule it is a gradual and group process – and one in which others, such as family and friends, may play a part. McAdam (1986) is one of those to highlight the role of friendship in projects that may entail substantial risk and high personal cost, although in a very different case: the campaign to register black voters in the American South in 1964. He found that volunteers who had signed up for the project but did not go through with participation were far more likely to have a best friend who did the same than they were to act alone, and vice versa: those who did stay on tended to have a close friend who stayed as well.

Social and material rewards

Membership in a radical group can sometimes deliver direct rewards, financial or otherwise. Palestinian youths joining the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades in the Gaza Strip in 2008–2009 were paid a full salary if they were not in work or a supplementary wage if they did have a job – attractive incentives in a territory where the unemployment rate is almost 50 per cent. Other forms of reward include assistance for relatives of fighters killed in action (see Bouhana & Wikström, 2008); in the Middle East, Palestinian families receive financial support and also a new house if theirs is destroyed in an act of retaliation (Post, Sprinzak & Denny, 2003). In his study of Palestinian suicide bombers, Moghadam (2003) reports payments to their heirs ranging from a thousand to several thousand U.S. dollars, as well as new homes. A different form of reward mentioned by several authors is the status and respect that come from being part of a terrorist movement. Post and Denny (2002) found this in the Palestinian case, in particular; membership in a group like Hamas or Fatah bestows prestige upon the young

men concerned, who consider 'freedom fighters' or 'the resistance' the best terms to describe themselves and their movement. Plenty of other research backs up this status-enhancing function, including that by Victoroff (2005) and by McCauley and Moskalenko (2008). Silke (2008) highlights the role of such non-material rewards, too, and – quoting research amongst former IRA volunteers (Collins & McGovern, 1997) – also refers to the excitement and danger associated with membership in such an organization as factors that can appeal to young men, especially. This is a point we have already discussed in Chapter 5.

Ferrero (2006) and Iannaconne and Berman (2006) point out that a willingness to choose martyrdom can provide access to certain goods and services. And for religiously inspired suicide attackers, there is often the promise of a reward in the hereafter. This is by no means always the case, but research into the effect of faith upon terrorists' readiness to sacrifice themselves for the cause does indicate that it is sometimes a factor.

Pedhazur and Perlinger (2006) contend that suicide bombings by Palestinians are *not* generally the result of strategic decisions high up in the organization but are more frequently autonomous initiatives by local cells. And rational factors can contribute even towards this most extreme of choices. People may opt for self-sacrifice because they believe that, ultimately, their act will benefit the community; in such cases, the reward is improvement of the group's situation. In short, there is a fairly substantial body of evidence that the decision to join a radical movement or even to choose martyrdom is the product of a sort of reasoned cost-benefit analysis, with social support and both direct and more indirect social rewards amongst the factors considered. Other factors might include role models and imitation, which are the subject of the next section.

Role models and imitation

For Smelser (2007), it is an unwritten law that media success for one act or campaign of terrorism will inspire imitators. For example, he claims that the high-profile activities of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the 1970s encouraged radical leftist movements in Western Europe, most notably West Germany, France and Italy, to engage in greater violence. Victoroff (2005) states that people, especially young people, who are exposed regularly to terrorist action may come to imitate it, also under the influence of the apparent 'glorification' of such actions in such countries. He points to the posters of martyrs on display in Palestinian refugee camps and to popular songs praising specific IRA attacks as examples. Role models are also created through instructions and examples distributed on tape and over the Internet.

In a quantitative study of the spread of international terrorism, Midlarsky, Crenshaw and Yoshida (1980) concluded that such behaviour is not only

easy to imitate, it actually is imitated on a regular basis. In one pattern they found in South America, terrorist incidents spread out from countries with high diplomatic status – an indicator of power and prestige – to the rest of the continent. They also identified an 'inverted hierarchy' in the Europe of the 1970s, with terrorists there 'borrowing' ideologies, rhetoric and methods from their counterparts in the Third World. It is in ways like this that actual or potential terrorists are both 'infected' by ideological ideas and instructed on how they might act in practice. Inspiring and successful examples can thus exert considerable influence, by reinforcing radicalization, by facilitating the formation of groups and eventually by stimulating actual acts of violence. (See Box 8.6.)

In addition to the social factors discussed in this section, other aspects also play their part in upholding the radical views that can help to sustain and promote terrorist activities. For example, processes of justification may assist in creating and maintaining acceptance of a radical ideology, especially the pursuit of violence in its name. Sykes and Matza (1957) referred to these as 'neutralization techniques'; we discuss the most important of them in the next section.

Box 8.6 Copy-cat terrorism: imitation and escalation

Processes of imitation play a role in a variety of violent behaviours. For instance, Robertz (2007) reports that perpetrators of school shootings frequently want to 'outnumber' their predecessors. Imitation has also been mentioned in the context of lone wolf terrorism. The stabbing of Lee Rigby in Woolwich, London, in May 2013 was followed by a similar stabbing in Paris. In both cases, the victim was a soldier in uniform, and both stabbings were in broad daylight. The second incident took place three days after the first.

Another example is Mehdi Nemmouche who shot three people at point-blank range at a Jewish museum in Brussels in May 2014. His attack shows similarities to the case of Mohamed Merah, who killed three French soldiers and four Jewish civilians (including three children) in Toulouse and Montauban in March 2012. Nemmouche and Merah had similar backgrounds, had engaged in petty crime and had become radicalized in prison. Merah filmed his shootings with the same camera used by Nemmouche (a GoPro camera). There are other examples. A few weeks after the 2005 London Bombings, a group of terrorists attempted to launch a similar series of attacks. These attacks failed, and the search for the attackers led to the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes (see Box 2.1).

Justification processes

Focusing mainly upon the Middle East, Loza (2007) describes several ways in which radicalization and terrorism are justified by those responsible. The first is a form of political justification, based upon the perceived need to overthrow infidel regimes and replace them with a government guided by the 'authentic' laws, rules and values of Islam. Others are derived from specific socioeconomic circumstances, such as poverty and the income gap between rich and poor. Loza believes that the baby booms experienced by the Middle East and North Africa since the 1970s have exacerbated these problems, with the poor earnings and limited prospects of an increasingly well educated population causing ever greater frustration amongst the younger generation.

For our purposes, though, the psychological justification processes identified by Loza are most relevant. These seek to legitimize behaviour that transgresses certain norms, such as injuring or killing 'innocent' others. Victoroff (2005) quotes research showing how difficult people find it to kill others, particularly when they pose no direct physical threat. So they need to find a very good reason in their own minds to warrant such action. The literature mentions several such justifications. The first is to deem the victims jointly responsible for whatever suffering is being avenged. Another is their 'dehumanization', seeing humans as non-humans or animals, a mechanism associated with many acts of extreme violence, from genocide (the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, the recent events in Darfur) to the humiliation meted out by U.S. troops in the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. In other cases, the very seriousness of the situation and the injustice supposedly suffered is seen as justification in itself, with responsibility effectively shifted to the party on the receiving end of the violence. Alternatively, that responsibility is transferred to a higher power – the leader or a religious authority. Research shows that such processes of attribution are regularly used to justify radical or terrorist behaviour. As well as blaming the victims, then, violence can be justified by claiming to be following orders from above or by arguing that the system simply makes it inevitable (Thackrah, 2004). Another option is to see it as fulfilling a supreme moral duty or an assignment from God. These mechanisms are discussed in more detail later in the chapter; we look first at dehumanization, then at the reattribution of responsibility for acts of terrorism.

Dehumanization

We briefly discussed dehumanization in earlier chapters. The significance of dehumanization is highlighted by Sitzer and Heitmeyer (2008) in their research on young right-wing extremists in Germany. The ideology they

espouse emphasizes group differences, with the apparent aim being to bolster their own self-worth by viewing others as inferior because of their race or colour. Dehumanization entails the conviction that a particular person or group either lacks certain essential human characteristics or possesses non-human ones, or both. One means of expressing it is to liken the targeted group to animals. The Third Reich consistently referred to Jews as 'rats', and 'pig' is another such term we have seen used in more recent times. The Koran also uses animal metaphors to describe non-believers. In 2009, the then president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called Israelis 'dogs'.

Saucier, Akers, Shen-Miller, Knezevic and Stankov (2009) have shown that the idea that 'our enemies are more like animals than people' is a common feature of extremist thinking. Other examples can be seen in the genocide in Rwanda, where hundreds of thousands of Tutsis were slaughtered by Hutus. The Tutsis were described as 'cockroaches' in the media in the period before the genocide. In their analysis of suicide terrorists, Kruglanski and Golec (2004) note the use of words like 'devils' and 'demons' to describe the enemy, as well as designations such as 'sons of dogs and monkeys'. As these examples show, language provides people with plenty of assistance in despising and deprecating other groups, thus contributing towards a situation in which the idealized ingroup has every right to offer resistance to a dehumanized enemy. In such extreme circumstances, the end almost always justifies any means; sacrifices become essential and atrocities unavoidable. We also encounter dehumanization in analyses of the conflict in Chechnya (see Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006), where local extremists claimed that the savagery of the occupying Russian forces had rendered them 'less than human'.

Research by Motyl, Hart and Pyszczysnki (2010) indicates that highly authoritarian individuals have a particular tendency to dehumanize others and are also more likely to back military intervention to subdue such groups (cf. Chapter 5). Another interesting finding of this study is that when these authoritarians were reminded that violence is in fact a simple, instinctive reaction, their support for aggressive and military action declined. In other words, dehumanizing violence itself can also make people less violent.

Dehumanization was also a feature of the European left-wing terror movements of the 1970s previously discussed. Both the Red Army Faction in West Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy regarded any civilian victims of their attacks as 'part of the [enemy] system, or pigs'. From that perspective, ordinary civilians are mere puppets, inferior compared to the terrorist's own group. Bandura, Underwood and Fromson (1975) long ago highlighted dehumanization's role in fostering aggression; participants in their study were asked to punish members of another group as they saw fit, and the extremity of those punishments increased when the recipients were described in dehumanizing terms (as an 'animalistic, rotten bunch', for

instance). The results of a second experiment by the same authors also provides food for thought; if the punished group's behaviour did not change, the punishers reconsidered their approach if the group had not been described in negative terms. As we have just seen, though, their aggression increased when the group was described negatively. Kelman (1973) looked at dehumanization as a factor in genocide (as in World War II) and in massacres (as in the Vietnam War) and then later (Kelman, 2005) turned to its role in justifying torture.

The tendency to 'objectify' others is also associated with dehumanization. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant first coined the term 'objectification' in the context of gender relationships, and the theme now plays an important role in feminist theory. Kant stated that objectifying others leads to their being regarded as less human. Building on this foundation, Nussbaum (1995) identified several specific consequences of such objectification and also pointed out the tendency to view the subject in instrumental terms: 'how can they be of use to me?' Loughnan and colleagues (2010) have gone on to show that objectification results in preconceptions as to whether the subject possesses certain important human traits; objectified others tend to be considered more stupid, less competent and less moral. Participants in this study also found it less necessary to treat them in a correct manner and were less concerned if they suffered pain.

We can thus regard dehumanization as a reaction to people or groups that are regarded as different in some way. That difference may lie in their appearance and customs or in their core standards and values. And dehumanization is also associated with emotions. Haslam (2006) draws a distinction between two forms. In the first, groups or individuals are thought to lack certain unique human characteristics, such as moral sensitivity, rationality and refinement, so that they are deemed morally inferior and sometimes likened to animals or assigned animalistic features. This form is very similar to what Leyens and colleagues (2003) call 'infrahumanization', crucial to which is so-called essentialism, a conviction that *every* member of the outgroup shares certain essential traits and that they are inevitable and immutable (see also Zagefka, Pehrson, Mole & Chan, 2009). The most negative emotions linked to this kind of dehumanization are disgust, aversion and contempt (see also Chapter 3). They have been studied in depth by Rozin and his colleagues (see Rozin, 1999; Rozin, Haidt & McCauley, 2000). The behaviours associated with these emotions are seeking distance and, if deemed necessary, the application of sanctions or even aggressive measures to alter the conduct of the person or group concerned.

The second form of dehumanization described by Haslam (2006) is more 'mechanical' in nature and also less extreme. It is the form frequently referred to by critics of providers of healthcare and elderly care, when the latter are seen to adopt an aloof attitude towards their charges which is seen

as dehumanizing them. In such cases, those responsible are often described as 'cold', 'mechanical', 'lacking empathy' and 'indifferent'. We are interested mainly in the first type, however, with its connection to more extreme emotions: disgust, aversion, contempt and so on. The primary response to these is to distance oneself from their cause. But they can also incite other, even more extreme behavioural tendencies, ranging from the humiliation of others all the way to systematic genocide – both of which are found in the literature on dehumanization. Haslam mentions the excesses at Abu Ghraib as an example, whilst others include forced confessions and ritual beheadings by terrorists.

Bandura (1990) and Sprinzak (1990) both state that radicalization can cause people to let go of the norms that regulate aggression and violence towards others. Alienation from society and dehumanization of the 'enemy' play a crucial role in this process. Dehumanization need not result directly in contempt or even disgust, but it is certainly coupled with a loss of empathy for the individual or group affected. In their analysis of Islamic terrorism and martyrdom, Güss, Tuason and Teixeira (2007) mention suppressing empathy as a mechanism that helps to justify one's own acts.

Dehumanization thus goes hand in hand with highly negative opinions about the dehumanized group, with greater distance and with less tolerance. One expression of the desire for more distance is support for a stricter national immigration policy. Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson and Mihic (2008) found that Canadians who dehumanized asylum seekers were also more contemptuous of immigrants in general and believed that their country's immigration policy was too lax. And the authors showed that media coverage of asylum issues played an important role in shaping these views. Reports about asylum seekers as economic refugees fraudulently trying to exploit social provision in their host nation triggered contempt, which in turn fuelled backing for a stricter immigration policy. In recent years, dehumanization has also been studied in the Middle Eastern context. Investigating its role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Maoz and McCauley (2008) discovered that Israelis who dehumanized Palestinians were highly likely to support reprisal attacks as well. Kliman and Llerena-Quinn (2002) looked at responses in the U.S. to 9/11 from a therapeutic perspective and found that polarization had a dehumanizing effect.

Attribution of responsibility

Responsibility plays an interesting role in justification processes. Both denying one's own personal culpability and shifting the blame onto large groups of people have often been used as a means of justifying violence.

Bandura, Underwood and Fromson (1975) showed that, alongside dehumanization, the abrogation of personal responsibility results in a more

aggressive attitude towards others. And the classic experiments by Milgram (1963), in which participants were ordered to apply electric shocks to failing 'students', revealed that people are prepared to go much further in meting out punishment when a legitimate authority or leader assumes responsibility for any consequences. More recently, Bandura (1999) concluded that individuals display greater cruelty when their group takes collective responsibility than when held personally accountable for their actions.

As well as attributing responsibility for your own deeds to a higher power, then, you can also stress your group's collective responsibility. Some authors claim that such an emphasis on the collective can lead as far as a disavowal of any personal responsibility (see e.g. Post, Sprinzak & Denny, 2003). Such an effect was previously observed in studies of mass behaviour and of the effects of anonymity and so-called deindividuation on group behaviour. Research on this topic goes all the way back to the classic work by Le Bon (1908) on human behaviour in 'the crowd'. When people act primarily as members of a group, the group norms prevail, and so they behave accordingly (for a meta-analysis, see Postmes & Spears, 1998).

McCormick (2003) quotes several other authors as stating that terrorists often claim to be acting out of necessity and self-defence. They are fighting for a threatened group or community (see e.g. Gurr, 1990) and in that sense deny having personal responsibility for their actions. In this scenario, both actual and supposed government measures are used to justify what they do. In his analysis of Palestinian terrorism, Moghadam (2003) shows that the West in general and the U.S. and Israel in particular are widely viewed as instigators of an anti-Islamic conspiracy that is out to annihilate the Muslim faith. The jihad is then seen purely as self-defence: legitimate resistance against a violent enemy.

Post, Sprinzak and Denny (2003) also encountered this widespread denial of responsibility in their interviews with 35 convicted terrorists from movements including Hamas, Hezbollah and Fatah. They regarded suicide attacks as the highest form of martyrdom and in no way viewed the perpetrators as murderers. 'I am not a murderer. A murderer is someone with a psychological problem; armed actions have a goal.' 'Even if civilians are killed, it is not because we like it or are bloodthirsty. It is a fact of life in a people's struggle; the group doesn't do it because it wants to kill civilians, but because the jihad must go on' (Post, Sprinzak & Denny, p. 179).

The attribution to external forces as primarily responsible for violent action can also be seen in Muhammed Khan's video testimony for the London Bombings of 7 July 2005. In this tape, he explains that civilians are targets because they bear responsibility for their government's action. Moreover, he rejected his national (British) identity in favour of the global community of 'Muslim brothers and sisters'. He framed his actions as inherently defensive with the aim to protect a global community under attack (see

Kirby, 2007). Kahn's statement stresses his social duty and obligation to act as he did. Kruglanski and Fishman (2009) also refer to this motivational category as pertinent to suicidal attacks (see also Gambetta, 2005).

Naturally, the issue of responsibility also has a lot to do with the question of guilt. In discussing the literature on dehumanization, we have already looked at research showing that people are prepared to punish those they perceive in a dehumanized way more severely (Bandura, Underwood & Fromson, 1975). In part, this is because it is easier to blame them for undesirable situations or outcomes; that makes them wretched figures, for whom a firm and aggressive approach is the best remedy. In a later study, Bandura (1999) provides several examples illustrating people's greater readiness to punish aggressively when the object of their castigation is deemed inferior and culpable for the situation. In short, they asked for it, and the chosen sanction is simply their inevitable lot. McCormick (2003) applied these ideas to terrorism and also argued that one way of avoiding responsibility for the outcomes of terrorist acts is to shift the blame onto the enemy.

Conclusions

We began this chapter by identifying a number of group characteristics that can push views within a group to extremes. Polarization is a phenomenon we tend to see when a majority within the group shares a particular idea or frame of mind. The road to more extreme opinions is one often taken one step at a time, but without changes to the group's situation, it can eventually end with radicalization and the pursuit of militant and even violent solutions.

Groupthink occurs when a group closes ranks to form a united front against a threatening but inferior world and is frequently associated with commanding leadership. We also looked separately at the role of isolation and charismatic leadership, since both feature in the literature on radicalization and terrorism. One interesting point is that the Internet may actually contribute to the isolation of an individual or group since it provides an easy way to deal with information selectively; alternative opinions and ideas can simply be avoided, so that support for one's own standpoint appears greater than it really is. Extremist websites, in particular, can help push back boundaries, encouraging and justifying the transition to violence. The Internet is known to play a part in recruitment, too. And other research shows that it can provide a 'second home', a safe environment populated only by those of like mind.

Because of the 'airtime' afforded to the majority point of view, the internal polarization of small groups can also be brought about by strong, commanding leadership. Several prominent terrorist movements in recent history have been headed by powerful leaders. If they also assume responsibility for the group's activities, that can render it insensitive to the consequences of the

violence it employs. The literature further shows that the dominant members of a small group – and a strong leader, above all – determine how the group perceives its own situation and the actions of the majority outgroup. Several authors also point to the importance of role models. In the late twentieth century, for instance, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) inspired a number of radical left-wing movements in Western Europe to intensify their campaigns of violence. Members of the Red Army Faction (RAF) in West Germany even trained with Palestinian fighters.

Social support also plays its part in radicalization and terrorism. Some of the literature describes a pyramid model, with the base consisting of all those who sympathize with a movement's objectives. The greater this base of support is, the higher the chance is that individual members of the group will radicalize. We saw this in the last century with ETA and the IRA, and it is still the case in the occupied Palestinian territories. Conversely, the more limited the support at the base of the pyramid, the more circumspect the movement above needs to be in its activities. Without grassroots backing, it will eventually lose its strength, not least because its supply of new recruits stagnates. Family relationships and friendships definitely play a role in recruitment – especially in the case of suicide terrorism. It has also been observed that the dividing line between social support and social pressure is sometimes a very narrow one. Finally, material rewards play a part in recruitment, too, especially if the economic situation in the region concerned is bleak and offers no hope of improvement.

In this chapter, we have also described a number of mechanisms that help to sustain behaviour that crosses normal moral boundaries by providing it with justification. The most important of these is *dehumanization*, whereby a rival group or individual is deemed deficient in certain essentially human traits or lacking them altogether. In its most extreme form, which often precedes extremist behaviour towards the other person or group – terrorist attacks or even genocides of the kind we have seen in recent years in Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur – dehumanization involves the attribution of animalistic characteristics to people. This process also arouses strong sentiments, those most associated with dehumanization being moral emotions like disgust, aversion and contempt.

A second means used to justify extremely hostile behaviour, violence included, is to transfer responsibility elsewhere. In some cases, that is to an authority or a leader. In others, the blame is put on the situation in which the group to which the terrorists belong finds itself and which is deemed to make violence unavoidable. Finally, the victim may be held responsible for their own suffering; this is a mechanism again often seen in combination with intense moral emotions, such as disgust and aversion, which can serve to vindicate acts of violence.
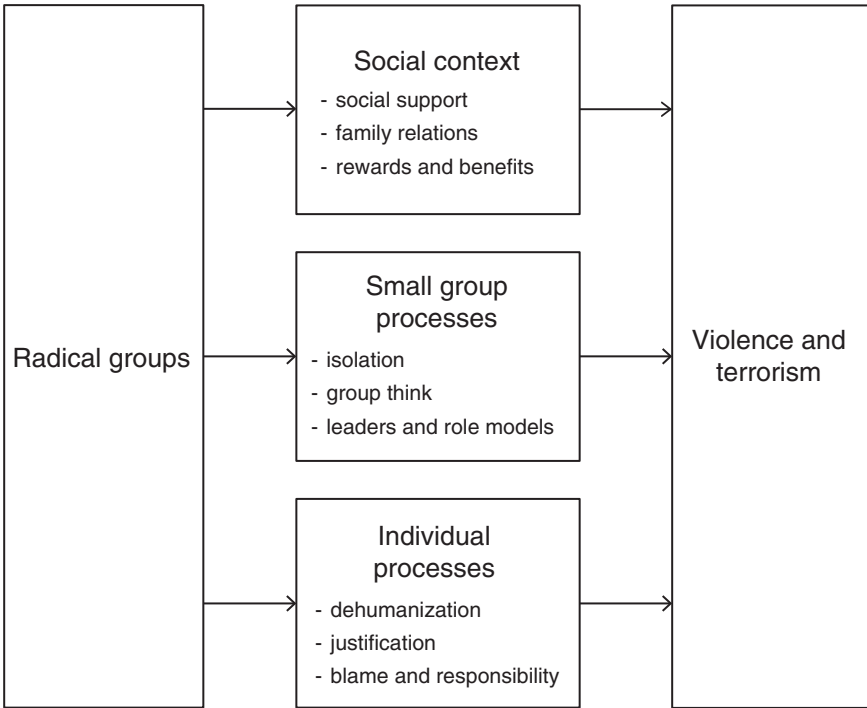
Figure 8.1 Social context, small-group processes and individual processes in moving from radical to violence.

Figure 8.1 includes the factors discussed in this chapter in the context of the framework presented earlier in the book. Radical groups can become more radical and turn to violence due to social factors such as support from the larger group and family relations. Rewards and benefits can also play a significant role. In the middle of Figure 8.1, we refer to small group processes such as groupthink and the role of leaders. The isolated position of cells or small groups of extremists might also stimulate increased radicalization and the decision to opt for violence. Finally, we describe a number of individual processes that help to justify the decision to opt for violence and also to come to terms with the material and personal consequences for the victims of that violence.

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9 Paths to and from violent extremism

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have reviewed various processes with the potential to foster radicalization and violence, amongst them group polarization, the dynamics of leadership, social support and, finally, a number of ways of justifying violence. All can help perpetuate radical solutions and accelerate the transition to terrorism. In the present chapter, we describe another factor of particular relevance to that latter process, the use of violent means: group performance or success and failure of the group. We also look at a small number of studies that have taken a different route, that is, comparing violent and non-violent groups on a number of characteristics in order to gain a better understanding of the whys and wherefores of radicalization and terrorism. Next, we will present a comparative analysis of certain selected groups, some of which did eventually take up arms and some of which did not. After all, as already stated in the introduction, not every radical movement makes the transition to terrorism; they may well find other means to achieve their goals. But when there seems to be no other way, violent action can represent the final phase in a process of radicalization. Next we will turn to research on how terrorism ends. What factors determine the end of a terrorist movement? What factors make people leave terrorist movements? Finally, we will turn to prevention and de-radicalization. What factors can help to prevent radicalization and are there programmes that can prevent further radicalization or help people to de-radicalize?

Group performance and violence

According to Smelser (2007), a potential catalyst of violence is a particular instance of striking success or failure. Reverses or setbacks can trigger a feeling that the group is under pressure and close to defeat, making more radical methods essential. As an example, Smelser cites the case of the RAF in West Germany. One of its cathartic moments was the formation of a grand coalition government by the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in

1970, which was widely viewed on the far left as a signal that even the parliamentary left could no longer be trusted (see also Chapter 8). Reasoning along the same lines, Sánchez-Cuenca and De la Calle (2009) argue that it is not uncommon for terrorist groups to form when a corresponding broader social movement enters a phase of decline. The new group emerges as an attempt to compensate for the loss of social support with acts of violence. Internal splits dividing those in favour of reform or peaceful protest from supporters of more offensive action can also unleash more violence, says Smelser: the latter group is no longer held in check by the moderates and so is easily radicalized. And a desire to stand out from the more peaceful faction can accelerate that process.

Success, too, can engender violence. Hope and joy have a tendency to stimulate riskier, more aggressive behaviour. One of the examples mentioned by Smelser is the success of the 9/11 attacks, which demonstrated to fundamentalist militants that terrorism is the best weapon to use against America and the West. Obviously, though, to be able to use violence, you have to have access to the necessary resources (Smelser, 2007). One of the most important of these is money, which can be obtained in a whole variety of ways. Examples include contributions from supporters or sympathetic governments, theft, extortion and ransoms. Naturally, weapons are another essential resource.

Violent versus non-violent groups

The ultimate step, to violence itself, is one that is, in many cases, not taken at all. In an interesting study, Mumford et al. (2008) looked for factors that might predict whether radical groups would take up arms. They examined 80 groups in total, classified on the basis of whether they were ideologically driven and whether they had engaged in violent activity. This resulted in four categories: non-violent ideological, violent ideological, non-violent non-ideological and violent non-ideological groups. Another precondition for selection was extensive coverage in the literature. To give an idea of the range covered, amongst the violent ideological groups were the ETA, the IRA, the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) in Peru and al-Qaeda, whilst the non-violent ideological category included the Solidarity (Solidarność) movement in Poland, the Salvation Army and the U.S. National Rifle Association. From assessments of the available descriptions, a large number of predictive and other factors were identified for each group, together with the associated values. Those factors related to such aspects as the characteristics of the leaders, the group and the environments.

Analysis of all this data revealed that what distinguishes violent ideological groups from the rest is a context dominated by major social conflicts and disruption. Such conflicts also appear to impede changes to the prevailing

conditions that could be very helpful in easing intergroup tensions. More-over, violent ideological groups were found to be greatly concerned with the indoctrination of their ideology. And at the group level, they displayed a strong ideological righteousness: 'we are superior and our deeds are more than justified'. Their leaders, too, were ideological extremists. Interestingly, the violent non-ideological groups in the study – such as the Hell's Angels and various American urban gangs – were just as vehement in claiming that their use of violence was legitimate. Overall, the predictive factors for violence identified by Mumford and colleagues correspond with those previously described by us.

Similar findings were obtained by Danzell (2011), who investigated when and why some types of political movements opt for terrorist tactics to achieve their objectives. A number of structural factors might induce political parties to form terrorist wings. First, the type of regime and electoral system are likely to create grievances for individuals who belong to marginalized political organizations, and these grievances may cause them to ally with or create wings that engage in terrorist activities (see also Chapter 2 and Crenshaw, 1981). Another example of a structural factor is the existence of domestic and/or external conflicts. Danzell also discusses the role of the political ideology of the ruling political parties. He studied panel data from 29 countries covering the period from 1965 to 2003 and found that governments with leaders or ruling cabinets with a classical right-wing ideology generally triggered more political parties that turn to terror. This finding provides further indirect support for the role of governmental factors; right-wing governments are more likely to foster differences between groups (e.g. in terms of income and power) and to restrict influence and protests by particular groups (Danzell, 2011).

Smith (2008) investigated whether there were any discernible differences between the documents emanating from terrorist groups and those produced by similarly extreme but non-violent groups from the same region and with the same objectives. She also looked at documents dating from the period before the terrorist groups resorted to violence. The aim of this exercise was to survey possible implicit motives for taking up arms. In respect of 'affiliation' – the need for positive relationships with others – Smith discovered that the terrorist organizations were always more positive about themselves and less so about their rivals, even during their non-violent period. This, she claims, suggests that such groups are more interested in tightening their own internal bonds than the non-violent groups with which she compared them; they seek to mitigate differences between the ingroup and the outgroup. For terrorist groups, then, the us-and-them dichotomy is starker. As far as power was concerned, the other motive addressed by her study, Smith found that a stronger power motivation often predicts aggressive behaviour and violence. As she points out,

this link had also been identified in previous research. It seems that the power motive was more evident in the documents from active terrorist groups, although the difference compared with their non-violent period was not very marked.

Apparently, terrorist groups differ in their use of violence and in its extremity. Generalizing somewhat, Cronin (2002/2003) asserts that left-wing terror organizations have revolutionary, anti-authoritarian and anti-materialistic goals. Accordingly, they frequently engage in brutal and criminal activities – kidnap, murder, bombing and arson – aimed at élite targets symbolizing the ruling class. Since their aim is to change society fundamentally, attacking those in power is a good start. However, their difficulty in establishing concrete long-term goals means that they are not destined to survive for long. Right-wing terrorism appears to be a more fragmented phenomenon and more random in its violence (see also Chapter 7). Targets are often selected on the grounds of ethnicity; opportunistic arson attacks on asylum centres are a typical example. Society does not need fundamental change, only to excise certain undesirable elements. Compared with offensive left-wing radicalism, then, the right-wing version is more defensive. Leftist ideologies also appear to be more developed than rightist ones, a fact also reflected in the differences between the two groups in terms of educational attainment. (See Box 9.1.)

Saucier, Akers, Shen-Miller, Knezevic and Stankov (2009) used a method similar to that adopted by Mumford and colleagues (2008) to investigate the ideologies of 13 militant extremist groups and individuals. These were from different parts of the world and varied widely in their political and religious orientation. The IRA and ETA from Europe were included, as was the communist Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) from South America. For each selected group, information was collected that was generated by the group itself, from propaganda material to interviews with members. Sixteen themes were then identified within this material, each of which was common to at least three of the groups. The three most frequently recurring themes were (1) the need for unusual and extreme measures; (2) military terminology, especially a tendency to extend its use to descriptions of all kinds of political, religious and more mundane matters; and (3) utopian thinking – the future will be glorious and even bring paradise. Saucier and colleagues also found that groups often revelled in an illustrious past, one destroyed by illegitimate authorities, past or present, to make way for today's disastrous situation. The recurrent reasoning was that this injustice screamed out for revenge and that the longed-for return to the past ideal could be achieved only through violence. In short, evil had to be destroyed in order to regain paradise. These are themes we have already encountered in our earlier discussion of the role of ideology and religion in Chapter 7.

Box 9.1 Degrees of violence

In this chapter, we describe research on possible causes of why some political groups or movements become violent and others not. Some researchers address the *magnitude* of the violence used by different terrorist groups. Cronin (2002/2003) focused on the comparison between left-wing and right-wing terrorism. Cook and Lounsbery (2011) investigated a total of 176 terrorist organizations in existence between 1990 and 1994, including well known groups such as al-Qaeda and ETA and those that are relatively unknown (e.g. the Extraditables, Venceremos). Characteristics of these groups were related to four dependent variables assessed in a second time period (1995–1999). These were *number of attacks, number of civilian attacks, number of fatalities* and the *average number of fatalities* over all attacks by each group between 1995 and 1999. The terrorist groups included in their sample committed a total of 653 attacks from 1995 to 1999. The majority of these attacks were bombings, kidnappings and armed attacks, respectively. Results showed that the number of attacks was partly determined by the group's area of operations but also by its age and size. Groups that operate within states (as opposed to specific regions) that are larger in size and older in age tend to make more attacks. The *number of civilian attacks* confirmed the role of these factors, but religious ideology was an added predictor. Religious and older groups were also more deadly; that is, they had higher scores on the third dependent variable (*number of fatalities*). The largest impact factor on *average* fatality figures was group size, with larger groups being associated with increased number of fatalities. Two other findings are worth mentioning. First, the presence of a democratic regime had some effect but less than would be expected on the basis of the literature. Second, single-issue terrorist groups (e.g. animal rights groups) tend to kill fewer people than groups driven by other ideologies. This might explain the fact that existing counterterrorism measures have less frequently been utilized against such groups (see e.g. Monaghan, 2013).

Bartlett and Miller (2012) compared the backgrounds, ideologies, behaviours and attitudes of a sample of 'violent radicals' with both radical and 'mainstream' non-violent samples in Canada and Europe. They focused on radical Muslims. The first data set consisted of 61 in-depth profiles of 'home-grown' terrorists. All these participants were convicted of a variety of terrorism-related offenses. The second data set consisted of 28 radicals who

expressed significant dissent from prevailing norms; the third group focused on Muslim communities more generally and consisted of 70 interviews with young Canadian Muslims. Their findings show considerable similarities among the groups. What were the differences? The first difference can be related to the small-group processes discussed in Chapter 8. Violent radicals more often routinely watched violent films in small groups, and these groups were also more focused on ideological literature. Interestingly, Bartlett and Miller also stress that, especially in the case of home-grown terrorists, the decision to opt for violence is not necessarily, or wholly, a 'religious, intellectual, or rational decision' (Bartlett & Miller, 2012, p. 17). They refer to the impact of the *emotional pull* to radicalization, the role of status and the association some make between terrorist violence and excitement, sensation and thrills and coolness. The importance of these factors provides further support for the role of small-group processes (they also refer to factors such as peer pressure). Moreover, the impact of the emotional pull also illustrates how difficult it is to describe the route from radicalization to violence in terms of a set of discrete stages.

In another research exercise, Saucier and colleagues (2009) surveyed groups of non-extremist Americans and Serbians on a gamut of opinions. A number of these were quite radical, reflecting extremist thinking. For example, 'our enemies are more like animals than people' and 'extreme measures are needed to restore virtue and justice to this world'. Surprisingly, although on average the answers from both respondent groups were around the middle of the scale, they distanced themselves less from the extreme statements than Saucier and colleagues had expected. As the authors note, this may mean that adherents of extremist movements do not need to be brainwashed or indoctrinated to any great extent; a germ of the extreme opinions they espouse is already present in many people.

Another approach that could provide some insight into how and why people take up violence is to look at the motives behind suicide terrorism. There is a relatively extensive body of work on this topic. We already discussed suicide terrorism earlier when we pointed to the social pressure experienced by female suicide bombers in Russia. Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman and Orehek (2009) attempted to find out what motivates suicide bombers by studying the reasons cited in their farewell videos and by their relatives. Their conclusion was that finding or restoring a sense of personal 'dignity and significance' was often a key factor. Martyrdom brings status and respect and can restore lost honour. In many cases, those concerned had suffered a personal trauma, such as the violent death of a partner, relatives or friends. Other forms of trauma can also play their part; Kruglanski and colleagues mention cases of female suicide bombers in Pakistan seeking to regain the face lost as a result of infertility, a divorce or suspected adultery. Ideologies that approve of or encourage

terrorism can also push people over the edge, in order to improve the lot of their family or the community as a whole. A third factor is social pressure, as discussed in Chapter 8.

Process models

Even in a situation where most or even all of the possible contributing factors for radicalization are present, as a rule the great majority of young people do not follow this path. Moreover, the literature provides no precise answer as to why some do and others do not. A better understanding of the processes involved would require more research with a long-term perspective and a larger cohort. And that would certainly be logistically complex, primarily because subjects would very probably quit such a longitudinal study as they radicalized. Nevertheless, in recent years we have seen a growing call for more research into the processes involved (Taylor & Horgan, 2006). At present, though, the bulk of the literature in this domain presents theoretical reflections, one-off measurements of relevant variables or reports of interviews with people looking back at their own radical or terrorist past. All these studies are interesting and provide useful insights, but they give us only a general picture of the underlying processes.

An example is Moghaddam's (2005) Staircase to Terrorism, a model that combines current psychological knowledge to help describe how people move from dissent to radicalization and violence. His model has intuitive appeal and is presented in Figure 9.1.

The theories and processes linked to Moghaddam's model have all been discussed in this book. In previous chapters, we discussed the first four steps. The first stage focuses on interpretations of material conditions and more general feelings about society (see also Chapter 2). If these are negative and also result in the experience of injustice, the individual could move to the next stage. This second stage involves perceived opportunities for personal mobility to improve quality of life and the experience of being treated in a fair and just manner. If these opportunities are not present and people also feel ill-treated, they are likely to move to stage three, in which anger and frustration are directed towards an external enemy who is held responsible for the poor situation (see Chapters 2, 3 and 6). In stage four, the individual enters an extremist group that disengages from society. In this stage, we see the group processes described in Chapter 8. Moghaddam refers to isolation, attachment, secrecy and fear. At this stage, we also see the start of disengagement from inhibitory mechanisms. Stage five contains increased polarization between us and them and the conviction that violence and terrorism are legitimate. Indoctrination can also be relevant at this stage. The final stage concerns further training and preparations for one or more terrorist attacks.

Stage 6
Acts of violence and
further discrimination

→ Further
dehumanization
and rationalisation
processes

Stage 5
Categorical thinking
legitimacy of means
and goals

→ Small-group processes

Stage 4
Moral engagement

→ Disengagement and
engagement processes

Stage 3
Displacement of
aggression

→ Enhancing commitment
(isolation, support,
secrecy, fears)

Stage 2
Perceived options to
combat unfair treatment

→ Perceived mobility,
perceived justice, in
societal decision making

Stage 1
Psychological
interpretation of material
conditions

→ Relative deprivation
perceived fairness

Figure 9.1 A summary of Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism with relevant mechanisms/processes at each stage.

Moghaddam argues that under certain conditions some individuals go through all these stages. He also acknowledges that certain individuals are more likely than others to become terrorists but also stresses the difficulties in identifying profiles of likely terrorists. In his view, reforming conditions described in the first stages constitute the best way to end terrorism. Obviously, this also implies that prevention is a long-term solution. There have been quite a few attempts to describe the process from radicalization to the use of violence in terms of discrete stages that individuals go through. For instance, Bartlett and Miller (2012) describe a similar but simpler model suggested by the New York Police Department.

Lygre, Eid, Larsson and Ranstorp (2011) did an extensive literature search in an attempt to assess empirical support for the six stages described in Moghaddam's work (2005, 2006). They screened more than 2500 publications. Their

findings indicated considerable support for the processes described in this book. A total of 38 articles in their review allowed Lygre and colleagues to assess support for the proposed *transitions* between the different stages. Their findings did *not* provide strong support for the linear stepwise model suggested by Moghaddam (2005) and suggest that there are different routes leading to terrorism. Rutjens, van Harreveld, van der Pligt, Kreemers and Noordewier (2013) show that we often have a general preference for stage theories because they seem to provide order and predictability. Unfortunately, in many cases, continuum theories provide more adequate explanations of reality than stage theories, and that thus also seems to apply to Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism.

Disengagement and exit from terrorism

A considerable amount of research on terrorism focuses on the *causes* of terrorism and, as we have seen in earlier chapters, addresses individual factors, the wider societal context as well as small-group processes. Recent years have seen an increase in research on the question why and how individuals withdraw from terrorism, as well as how terrorist groups subside. In this section, we first address research on individual withdrawal from terrorism and disengagement. Second, we take a look at structural and organizational factors that may affect the decline of terrorist groups. Obviously, causal factors that lead to radicalization and terrorism are generally similar but opposite to the factors leading away from radicalization and terrorism. Much social support, for example, may contribute to terrorism, whereas little support may undermine it.

As previously argued, the question why terrorists disengage is far less explored than the question why they engage in the first place. Most research, however, tends to focus on case studies. For instance, Horgan's (2009) *Walking Away from Terrorism* presents light extensive interviews with individuals. These reveal different patterns of disillusionment in which the actual experience of perpetrating violence has a clear impact on individuals and can also lead to disaffection and withdrawal.

Moghadam (2012) studied disengagement at the individual level and also related it to the decline of the group as a whole. He focussed on the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF). The first generation of RAF members was active between 1970 and 1972, and the decline of this group was caused by the arrest of the vast majority of the RAF members in 1972. Quite a few died in combat or committed suicide in prison. Only a handful of members of the first generation quit the organization mainly because of disagreements with the authoritarian leadership of the group and the pressures of life in 'the underground'. The second generation (1972–1982) also declined as a consequence of imprisonment. Many were arrested, and quite a

few were killed while resisting arrest. Some members left after a failed bank robbery in which an innocent woman was killed; others also left because of the violence that they could not justify and the tension between the goals of the RAF and the means employed to reach these goals. A total of eight members of the RAF moved to communist East Germany and were given new identities and employment. The second generation had a much higher percentage of dropouts than the first. Moghadam (2012) finds it remarkable that many members stayed loyal to the group given the increasingly negative views of the general public on the group's activities; their isolation and lack of contact with that public may be part of the explanation. The main reason for the decline of the first two generations was the success of the German police. In both periods, the arrest of the majority combined with decreased public support, and reduced recruitment weakened the organization. As previously described, individual and organizational factors further reduced the number of active members.

The reasons given by members who actually left the RAF focused on differences on tactical and strategic issues related to how to reach the goals of the group, in combination with feelings of guilt. Another factor, also mentioned in the context of the first generation, concerned interpersonal dynamics. Finally, some gave up because they stopped believing in the mission or simply because of the pressures and fears of terrorist life. Disagreements within the group about strategic issues and the collapse of communist regimes in Europe and the reunification of Germany also added to the demise of the group. On 20 April 1998, the last remaining members of the RAF sent a letter to Reuters news agency declaring the group's dissolution.

Several researchers studied why and how members of ETA decided to leave that organization. ETA was formed in 1959 in the context of the Franco dictatorship and aimed for an independent Basque region. The group claimed its first killing in 1968, and their total death toll was more than 850. Reinares (2011) interviewed 35 individuals who abandoned the ETA in the period between 1970 and 2000. He distinguished between disengagement and de-radicalization. Disengagement refers to leaving a terrorist group and thus refraining from terrorist violence. De-radicalization refers to changing radical attitudes and the worldview that accompanies those attitudes. In the latter case, the individual no longer condones terrorism, objects to the use of violence to reach the goals of the organization, and possibly also does not support the goals anymore. Reinares focuses on three main groups of factors that influence individual decisions to disengage from terrorist organization: structural, organizational and personal. In the case of the ETA, the *structural* factors all refer to the political and social changes in Spain. The end of Franco's regime, increased decentralization and changes in public support all played a role in decisions to break with the terrorist organization.

The second group of factors deals with *organizational* aspects of the ETA. Some members developed negative attitudes toward the actions of ETA's leaders and the strict rules that its members were forced to follow. The latter also applied to imprisoned members, and some of that group voiced resentment over the strict system of controls. The final group of factors refers to more *personal* aspects. Some people gave up because they decided to have done enough for the movement and that others should take over. Interestingly, this group illustrates that disengagement does not always imply de-radicalization. They largely stuck to their attitudes and political views but decided that they had given the organization enough and that it was time for a less dangerous and hectic way of life. Alonso (2011) investigated why some members of the ETA abandoned terrorism while others decided to continue the use of violence. Alonso mentions the limited effectiveness of acts of violence, the high costs and decreasing social support as factors that made individuals decide to leave the movement. He also stresses the importance of political and social changes mentioned earlier but also argues that the continued willingness of Basque nationalist parties to negotiate with the ETA helped the latter to survive. The ETA was an organization in decline, and continued negotiations in the beginning of this century helped to group and to recover and reorganize. The latter brings us to processes that play a role in the decline of terrorist groups. Cronin (2009) also discussed when negotiations lead to the end of a terrorist movement. Alonso's analysis suggests that in the case of the ETA, negotiations continued its existence as opposed to bringing the end of the group any nearer. (See Box 9.2.)

Bjørgo and Horgan (2009) published an edited volume on processes of disengagement incorporating case studies from Colombia, various European countries, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. They also stress the need to distinguish between behavioural and attitudinal aspects. Some individuals distance themselves from the extremist group but retain their radical attitudes and views on society. Their disengagement does not necessarily bring with it de-radicalization. Similarly, de-radicalization is not always accompanied by disengagement. They argue that attempts to actively persuade people to disengage from terrorism should pay attention to changing both behaviour of the individual and their attitudes and ideological values. Similarly, emphasis should be on both changing the relationship with the group as well as on repairing the social ties with family members and friends.

The decline and end of terrorist groups

Cronin (2006, 2009) argued that past experience with the decline of terrorist organizations is vital in dealing with violent extremism. In her view, counterterrorist policies seem to be determined in a haphazard way with

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Box 9.2 Out of terrorism: disengagement and re-engagement

Altier, Leonard, Thouroughgood and Horgan (2013) analysed the dis-engagement processes of terrorists. They focused on the impact of 'push factors' versus 'pull factors'. Their research was based on a rela-tively large sample of 87 autobiographies. Results indicated that push factors seem to play a more prominent role in decisions to disengage than pull factors. Quite a few of these are mentioned in other research described in this chapter: disagreements with group leaders or with other group members, different views on strategic issues or action plans, as well as disillusionment with the day-to-day tasks and hassles, were all frequently mentioned. Interestingly, these factors were more often mentioned than a loss of faith in the ideology of the group or movement. This finding thus confirms the need to distinguish between behavioural change (exiting a terrorist group, disengagement) and a change of attitudes and beliefs (de-radicalization). Interestingly, Altier and colleagues also argue that their findings suggest a much higher rate of re-engagement in the terrorist population than that reported in the Guantanamo Bay detainees or in 'de-radicalization' programmes. Apart from that, the authors conclude that de-radicalization and the severing of ties with those still involved in terrorism significantly reduce the likelihood of re-engagement.

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little or no awareness or scrutiny of the assumptions underlying these policies. Some policies focus on the capture or death of the leaders of terrorist organizations, others on the root causes of terrorism. Some focus on the financial sources of the organization, others opt for a long-term approach and focus on public support and separating the organization from its constituency. Some allow for negotiations, others regard nego-tiations a dead end due to the unreliability of the organization and the extreme, unrealistic and sometimes even apocalyptic demands. Cronin describes a number of broad explanations for the decline and ending of terrorist organizations.

The first is the *capture or killing* of the leader. An example is the cap-ture of Guzmán, the leader of Peru's Shining Path. After his arrest in 1992, he asked his followers to lay down their arms, which had a profound impact on the group's membership. The capture or killing of a terrorist leader can also backfire. The most famous example is Che Guevara, who was captured and killed in 1967 and who became a martyr and inspired

many leftist and separatist groups in Latin America and elsewhere. For instance, the Weather Underground (see also Chapter 8) organized massive protests on the anniversary of Che Guevara's death. Cronin (2006) notes that the impact of the capture of a group's leader is likely to be enhanced if communication with the group is cut off and his or her credibility is undermined.

A second factor mentioned by Cronin that can cause the demise of a terrorist group is the *failure to transition to the next generation*. There are many examples in which failure to pass the legacy to a new generation causes the decline of the group. The Weather Underground and the Red Brigades in Italy are two of the examples mentioned by Cronin. A third factor that may cause the decline or the end of a terrorist group is the *fulfilment of the original objective* of the group. A recent example is the African National Congress (ANC), whose leader Nelson Mandela was elected as president after the apartheid regime ended. A fourth factor is the *transition to a legitimate political process.* An example is the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA). The opening of negotiations with the British and Irish government were the start of a change from a terrorist organization to a political movement.

It needs to be noted that negotiations can also lead to splinter groups, and these can be more violent than the original mother organization. This possible drawback of negotiations is more likely when the organization is less hierarchical and does not have a strong authoritarian leadership. Cronin (2006, 2009) also mentions the importance of clear and concrete negotiable aims. The likelihood of such aims tends to be larger in case of territorial conflicts than ideological or religious conflicts. *Reduced public support* is a fifth factor. Public support (passive or active) is essential for the survival of terrorist groups. Support from the wider population can be financial or logistic and is also strongly related to the ease with which new members can be recruited. Fear of strong repressive measures can lead to reduced public support. The availability of better alternatives than joining a terrorist group is also likely to reduce public support and the recruitment of new members (see also Chapter 4). In Chapter 8, we discussed how public support for the ETA was reduced due to political and social changes in Spain and public revulsion after the murder of Miquel Angel Blanco.

Dutter (2012) studied Quebec separatism in Canada in order to shed light on the conditions that influence whether a group uses violence or terrorism in the pursuit of political goals. His findings also stress the importance of public support and the possible effects of revulsion due to the use of extreme violence. The separatist movement was facing a situation that could easily have led to a decision to use violence: they were denied access

to the political arena; group members had limited economic opportunities and were also confronted with immediate physical threats. Dutter's analysis echoes the points we made at the end of Chapter 6. Initially, central government reacted with repression. The Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) started with violence in 1963 and set off some 200 bombs between 1963 and 1972. Two kidnappings in 1970 formed the apotheosis of the FLQ. First, James Cross (Britain's trade representative in Quebec) was kidnapped. In the same period, Pierre Laporte (provincial minister of labour and immigration) was kidnapped. Pierre Laporte was murdered, and this resulted in public revulsion. Cross was released, and his abductors were allowed to leave the country. This episode led to a substantial decline in public support and the further use of repression. Some 450 people were interned under the special powers granted to the government by the War Measures Act. Accommodation has been the long-term strategy, however, and this played an important role in preventing further violence. Access to the political arena and the possibility of change for the minority group were the keys and resulted in lack of support for extremism and violence by the Quebec community.

Cronin (2006, 2009) mentions *military force and repression* as a sixth factor. A successful example is the Shining Path in Peru. It needs to be added that the use of repressive military force can also serve as a catalyst and increase terrorism. The Russian involvement in the Chechen wars has increased terrorist activities with more emphasis on suicide terrorism and has also resulted in the spread of violence and terrorism to neighbouring areas. Other evidence also suggests that repression and deterrence can result in a backlash effect and increase the likelihood of terrorist action. Lafree, Dugan and Korte (2009) studied the impact of counterterrorist strategies in Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1992. Their findings stress the importance of the perceived legitimacy of operations. Low legitimacy and hence reduced public support tended to result in an increased likelihood of terrorist attacks. Their analysis also suggests that repressive action does not necessarily need to be violent to have an effect. Operation Motorman was repressive but not particularly violent. Operation Motorman took place in the early hours of 31 July 1972 with the aim of retaking 'no-go areas' that had been established in quite a few towns in Northern Ireland. It was a massive operation in which more than 20.000 soldiers were involved and tanks were brought into action. The number of casualties was low (four people were shot, two of them were killed), but the scale of the operation increased the awareness that terrorist action would have severe consequences. A final and seventh factor that can cause the decline of a terrorist group is a transition to other forms of violence. An example is the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Phillipines. (See Box 9.3.)

Box 9.3 From crime to terror and back

O'Brien (2012) studied fluctuations between crime and terror. His research focused on the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines. The ASG is a group with a couple of decades of experience, and its history helps us to understand how terrorism and criminal activity intersect. The movement was founded to achieve specific political objectives but also developed a proclivity for kidnapping for ransom. Their history showed considerable fluctuations in the frequency of terrorist activities versus organized criminal activities. The ASG has a loose-knit, decentralized structure, and this is one reason for the fluctuation over time of their criminal activities. According to the analysis of O'Brien, the ASG cells tended to focus more on criminal activities when there was no strong leader stressing the importance of ideological adherence. Moreover, in periods with increased kidnapping activity, the membership of the cells tended to be rather young and less ideological. These members were more keen on 'cashing in' on the group's criminal successes. Not surprisingly, in periods of increased kidnapping, the movement also had more prominent links with other criminal actors in the Philippines.

The history of the ASG also shows how continued criminal activity may transform a group from one type of entity into another: in this particular case, from an ideological movement with objectives that are shared by a larger group into a criminal group where the pursuit of profit seems to have become the primary objective. This resulted in a situation in which ASG members were more often labelled as 'bandits' as opposed to 'terrorists' or 'freedom fighters'. Obviously, this has clear effects on social support and illustrates the importance of ideological legitimacy for continued support from the communities or groups they once 'served'.

The most interesting part of Cronin's (2006, 2009) analysis is when she confronts the lessons learned from past experiences with terrorist groups to U.S. counterterrorism policy. First, she notes that al-Qaeda will not end with the killing of Osama bin Laden given its mutable structure with a strong emphasis on small cells and local initiative. Similarly, the failure to transition to a new generation does not apply to al-Qaeda; the time that that factor could have played a role is long passed. Cronin is also pessimistic about the third and fourth factors (achievement of the group's aims and transition to a legitimate political role). Al-Qaeda's aims are extreme and require a totally new social, political and economic order. Cronin also doubts whether a concentration on the so-called roots of terrorism will result in reduced public support and the decline of al-Qaeda. She sees timing as the main problem.

Support for terrorism is most strongly present in populations whose history has led to deprivation, anger, frustration and a sense of humiliation. Democracy is not going to change that in a few months; it takes considerably more time to develop a civic society with democratic and strong political institutions. Moreover, democracy does not preclude radicalization and the use of violence, as illustrated by left-wing terrorism in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s and the more recent increase of right-wing terrorism. A number of recent al-Qaeda attacks (e.g. the bombings in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005, respectively) were carried out by individuals born in democratic countries. Cronin sees two opportunities to cut the links between al-Qaeda and its supporters. First, by countering its messages spread via the Internet. She notes considerable differences between the images spread via the traditional media and the Internet by Western countries and supporters of al-Qaeda. In her view, more should be done to capitalize on the finding that many of al-Qaeda's constituents have been repulsed by attacks such as those in Madrid and London.

This repulsion illustrates a growing international norm against killing innocent civilians. This norm is also present in many predominantly Muslim states, and sharing this norm could be a first important step in finding common goals and reduced support for al-Qaeda. Box 9.4 shows that concerns about extremism are quite high in Muslim countries. Moreover, support for extremist groups is quite low. Most support was found in areas with a history that has led to deprivation, anger, frustration and a sense of humiliation such as Gaza.

According to Cronin (2006, 2009), it is important to take advantage of extreme, repulsive actions and their consequences. Recent examples are the treatment of Iraq's Yazidi minority by Islamic State militants (ISIS, also called IS). There are also examples in which al-Qaeda–related groups provide these images, and these show that the issue might be more complicated than suggested by Cronin. Extreme images such as beheadings and the recent mass executions by ISIS seem to lead to repulsion for the large majority of the viewers but may also lead to new recruitments. Finally, Cronin finds it difficult to draw firm conclusions concerning the efficiency of military repression, notwithstanding the impressive ability to track down and capture or kill senior operatives. This success has also resulted in increased public support for violence due to the number of innocent civilians killed in these actions (e.g. drone attacks).

Box 9.4 Concerns about extremism in the Middle East

A Pew Research Report published in 2014 shows that concerns about Islamic extremism are high among countries with substantial Muslim populations. Results are summarized in Figure B9.4 and show that
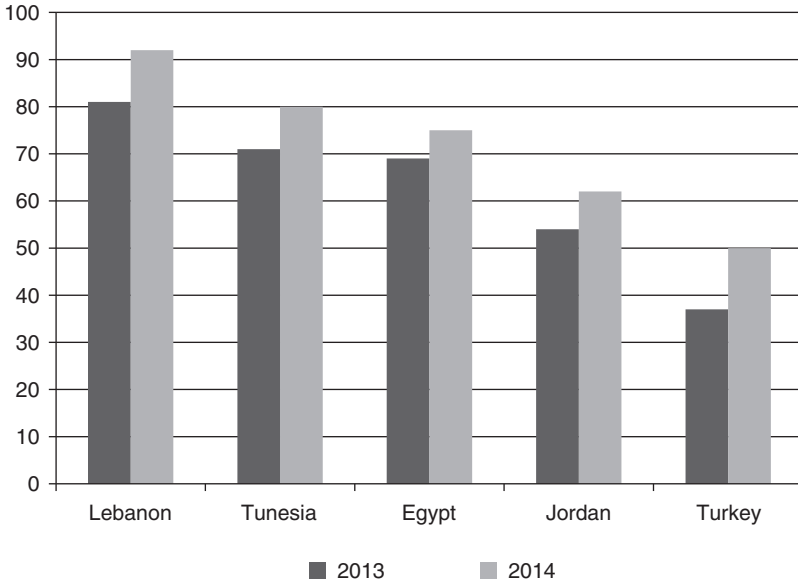
Figure B9.4 Percentage of population very/somewhat concerned about extremism
in the Middle East.

Source: Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project (2014).

Lebanese, Tunisians, Egyptians, Jordanians and Turks are all more
worried about the extremist threat than they were a year ago.

Moreover, the various populations all hold very negative opinions
of extremist groups such as al-Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah.

In Nigeria, the vast majority of respondents (Muslims and Chris-
tians alike) have an unfavourable view of Boko Haram, and a majority
of the Pakistanis have an unfavourable view of the Taliban. Moreover,
few Muslims in most of the countries surveyed support suicide bomb-
ings against civilian targets in order to defend Islam from its enemies.
Exceptions are the Palestinian territories (most notably Gaza, with
62 per cent supporting suicide bombing). A total of 14,244 respon-
dents in 14 countries with significant Muslim populations participated
in this research. The survey was conducted between 10 April and
25 May 2014, that is, before the takeover of Mosul and other areas of
Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in June–July 2014
and the Gaza emergency in July–August 2014.

Source: Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project (2014).

Interventions to combat radicalism and terrorism

Horgan and Braddock (2010) refer to the growing research on how and why terrorism ends and note that insights obtained in that research are also used in the development of so-called de-radicalization programmes. Several countries have developed exit programmes; some of these programmes target specific groups such as Islamist extremists or right-wing extremists. For instance, Germany, Norway and Sweden witnessed a peak in right-wing extremist activities in the 1990s and developed programmes to facilitate the exit from extremist groups. These programmes tend to focus on practical and economic assistance in connection with psychological counselling and the formation of new social ties outside the group. Some focus on behavioural disengagement (staying away from crime and violence and staying away from the group); others also address ideological issues. In Chapter 7, we discussed the impact of ideology and religion and showed that the role of ideology tends to differ between terrorist movements. Not surprisingly, programmes focusing on Islamist extremism put more emphasis on ideological and religious aspects. Some programmes include go-betweens, such as religious scholars and repentant terrorists, who are expected to be better qualified to exert influence on the potential exits. Some programmes put special emphasis on trust building and opt for a constructive and benevolent approach as opposed to a more accusatory approach. (See Box 9.5.)

Isolation can play an important role in groups that have already radicalized, by eliminating any scope for the correction of polarizing and even hate-inducing ideas. Governments want to check the dissemination of such opinions. As this book has shown, to do that, it is essential to break down the isolation if at all possible. Other important elements are the monitoring and, where possible, tackling of social support for radical, violent solutions. De-radicalization and rehabilitation programmes, in prisons and elsewhere, can play a part in this process. Several predominantly Muslim countries, amongst them Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have recently launched initiatives of this kind for detainees suspected of terrorist offences and for young people who have strayed into radicalism or are thought to be at risk of doing so (Kruglanski , Crenshaw, Post & Victoroff, 2007). In one project in Saudi Arabia, for instance, Muslim clerics gain access to extremist websites and Internet forums so that they can interact with other users in an effort to make them moderate their radical opinions or even renounce them altogether. In so doing, they draw upon know-how from the social sciences. In Singapore, a de-radicalization programme for detainees has been designed with a focus not just upon their extreme views but also upon underlying factors such as emotions and frustrations.

Box 9.5 De-radicalization: the role of personal relationships

Ilardi (2013) interviewed seven Canadian Islamitic radicals to gain more insight into the motives, emotions and decision-making processes that played a role in their journeys into radicalization and their disengagement from extremism. His findings stress the importance of positive contact with others with different backgrounds and ideas. Although the intensity and strength of the men's belief in the legitimacy of violent action were undeniable, none of them took that step. All interviewees indicated that access to ideas, situations and close relationships helped them to question the glamour of jihad. Ilardy concluded that personal relationships are not only extremely important in the process of radicalization; they are also a prime cause of the tendency to reassess the ideological and behavioural choices made earlier. The importance of personal relationships in processes of disengagement provides indirect support for intensive programmes that emphasize social networks and personal relationships, with the aim to de-radicalize individuals. Not surprisingly, rehabilitation programmes in Indonesia, Singapore and Saudi Arabia also stress the importance of family relationships. There is general consensus that some of the most successful elements of these programmes concern those that reinforce (former) family obligations (Cragin, 2014).

The prisoners' families are drawn in, too, with help provided for their children's education and the professional training of their wives, all in the hope and expectation that such efforts will dispel the extremists' frustration and so moderate their outlook on life. As Chapter 7 makes clear, such programmes also need to address emotions, the tendency to dehumanize other groups and the processes commonly used to justify radical and terrorist action.

Mentoring is a strategy to prevent radicalization of individuals at risk or to help de-radicalize individuals. Research on the actual effects of mentoring is limited, and, as is the case with mentoring in other fields, such as criminal behaviour or drug/alcohol addiction, there is no single best solution. Research by Spalek and Davies (2012) studied a mentoring scheme in the West Midlands, UK. The intervention provided one-to-one support to people assessed to be at risk of violent extremism. Results indicated that mentoring around violent extremism has distinctive features apart from the

generic elements such as the capability to build a relationship and to create a situation characterized by confidentiality and trust. Other important elements concern enhancing self-esteem and confidence, as well as help with issues such as housing, jobs or training. The distinctive features include knowledge about the Islam and the various ideologies used by extremist movements. Denmark also has a counter-radicalization action plan in which mentoring plays an important role. Research by Lindekilde (2012) shows that these programmes also met with scepticism and may even yield adverse effects. The perceived legitimacy of the programme plays a crucial role in its effectiveness. (For a different approach to designing interventions see Box 9.6.)

Box 9.6 Designing interventions: beliefs that propel groups to conflict

Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) attempted to identify the major factors that induce groups to engage in violent conflict. They describe a number of belief systems of individuals that can be quite functional but also pose problems. In their view, a limited number of key distortions can hamper adjustment and lead to impairment and restriction in the individual's day-to-day functioning. In their analysis, they relate a total of five core beliefs of individuals to collective worldviews of groups that are likely to have an impact on violent conflict. The first concerns *superiority* – a shared conviction of moral superiority, being chosen, entitlement and special destiny. The second concerns the group's conviction that it has significant and legitimate grievances against another group; that is, the group has been the victim of unfair treatment, and this *injustice* requires action. The third concerns the *vulnerability* of the group due to real or perceived threats posed by another group. The fourth group-level worldview concerns the belief that outgroups tend to be untrustworthy and harbour malign intentions towards the ingroup. The final core belief concerns *helplessness* and is likely to constrain organized political mobilization due to the conviction that the likelihood of success is limited. This belief is thus likely to prevent or postpone violent conflict. Eidelson and Eidelson argue that these five core belief systems can help to increase our understanding of the psychological dynamics that underlie the onset, escalation and resolution of violent conflicts. They also hope that this increased insight might help to design interventions aiming to reconciliate groups in conflict.

As argued by Dalgaard-Nielsen (2013), it is difficult to draw strong conclusions about the effectiveness of the different approaches. She mentions some research indicating the modest success of some North European programmes aiming to persuade and convince people to stay away from right-wing extremist groups. Research on the outcomes of other programmes is scarce, and for that reason Horgan and Braddock (2010) argue for more research on the effectiveness of these programmes. They also note that data surrounding even the most basic facts about these programmes remains limited.

Prevention and resilience

The fact that a number of terrorist attacks in Spain, France and the UK were carried out by home-grown terrorists has resulted in quite a few programmes with the aim to increase resilience to violent extremism. These projects vary from programmes developed for schools to those aimed at individuals deemed at risk of succumbing to the allure of violent terrorism. Some focus on Islamist radicalization, others on right-wing extremism.

For instance, Denmark developed a programme with a strong emphasis on prevention including a monitoring scheme, the use of role models and the promotion of tolerance in schools. This programme also involved parents and focused on right-wing extremism. The Prevent programme in the UK attempts to counter violent extremism by combining an ideological thrust based on British values combined with a sense of social welfare. The programme is part of CONTEST, a counterterrorism strategy that aims to cover all forms of terrorism. It attempts to identify individuals who expressed support for violence and terrorism, possessed extremist literature, contributed to or accessed extremist websites or possessed materials concerning weapons or the production of explosives. The programme relied on a variety of social services such as local authorities, youth offending services, social workers and housing authorities. The Prevent programme has been accused of covert spying on people or communities. This was followed by a commitment to building trust, but similar allegations of spying by the latest version of Prevent have followed (see Combes, 2013). Prevent also consists of an awareness campaign to help the public to identify extremism in their neighbourhood. The programme covered issues such as the history of terrorism, the process of radicalization and factors that could make individuals more vulnerable to join an extremist movement. Some other examples are the Beyond Bali programme, a five-module programme for schools designed to build resilience to violent extremism. That programme focuses on moral disengagement as an underlying mechanism of violent extremism (Aly, Taylor & Karnovsky, 2014). Another example is the SAFIRE project, which aimed to help develop practical interventions to prevent, halt or even reverse

the process of violent radicalization and extremism in Europe. That project was carried out in six EU countries (Marret, Feddes, Mann, Doosje & Griffioen-Young, 2013).

The SAFIRE project stresses the root causes of radicalization and terrorism. Other examples of projects doing this are the UK Prevent strategy already discussed, Australia's Resilience approach and the United States' Diminish programme. Aly (2013) argues that general programmes that encourage and promote social harmony, equality and active participation of all citizens could help to prevent radicalization and home-grown terrorism. She also admits that further research is needed to assess their effectiveness and help develop successful 'soft' counterterrorism programmes. In her view, these programmes are an important and necessary element of any comprehensive counterterrorism strategy.

As pointed out earlier, the problem of deprivation is a key variable. Education and associated work are effective solutions to this problem but not always easy to implement consistently at the policy level. How can the educational participation of various different groups be improved, in terms of both quantity and quality? The most important relevant factors need to be identified and assessed in order to design appropriate interventions. In recent years, the issues of truancy and early school dropping out have begun to receive more attention. The research described in this book supports this, as measures aimed at tackling these can help to eliminate the very first steps towards polarization and radicalization. Reducing perceived disadvantage and threat, as well as promoting equal opportunities, can also help prevent polarization. But since measures of this kind are often regarded as unjust by radical right-wing groups, a mixture of 'hard' and 'soft' tactics is preferable to a one-sided strategy employing only these soft ones. Hard measures might include enforcing school attendance, agreeing and upholding behavioural rules and zero tolerance of discrimination. Countering crime and vandalism also fall into this category.

In general terms, however, we do also see a lot of attention focused on young people. The aim of this is to increase their resilience and self-worth (see Box 9.7) and to strengthen their ties with the rest of society. That is important to everyone, including those groups and individuals that are potentially receptive to polarization and radicalization. In Chapter 6, we stated that, in cases of intergroup conflict, differences among the groups – particularly as regards core values – are often overstated, as is social support on the part of the ingroup. Both of these are factors that can encourage radicalization. It is therefore useful to correct misconceptions about values and to clarify the true positions of both groups. Emphasizing their similarities rather than their differences can narrow the gap between them and increase cohesion. Dispelling misperceptions concerning ingroup support for particular standpoints is certainly beneficial too. Obviously, another option here

is to tackle the issue head-on by breaking down support for more extreme standpoints through attitude change. Here again, we need to strike a balance. Additionally, it is essential to make clear that an open, pluralistic society in which different religions and lifestyles coexist has no place for extremist groups that reject that pluriformity.

Box 9.7 Increasing the self-worth of threatened youth

According to self-affirmation theory, as described by Sherman (2013), individuals possess a flexible self-system, enabling them to respond to threats in one domain of life by affirming self-worth in other domains. Self-affirmation theory proposes that people are motivated to maintain a global perception of adequacy rather than their perceived worth in specific domains. Threatening or stressful information, for example failing on a important exam, which often harms perceptions of global adequacy, focuses attention and evokes physiological and psychological resources to combat those perceptions and to repair the global perception of adequacy. For example, by thinking of an explanation of the threat that is favourable for the self or explaining away the threatening information, people can attempt to restore their global perception of adequacy. But these are often defensive solutions, related to the specific threat that remains in focus. Attention to self-worth in different domains may be more helpful. A self-affirmation is a demonstration of a person's adequacy that has various manifestations. Other people may, for instance, praise one's performances. Most research has focused on values affirmations; people write about central values such as relationships with important others or complete questionnaires on central values such as religion or social values. Many salutary effects of values affirmations have been found, such as reducing defensiveness in response to threats to individuals' health and improved academic performance among individuals experiencing threats due to membership of stigmatized groups. According to Sherman, an important mechanism for the effects of self-affirmations is the boosting of self-resources. Values affirmation makes positive core aspects of the self salient and introduces self-resources in the form of important positive self-domains that enable the individual to reduce his or her focus and attention on threatening events and thus to better cope with threats.

Effects of values affirmations may be very important, for example for students from disadvantaged groups with a threatened identity. In a study by Sherman and colleagues (2013), Latino American and European American students from a middle school completed multiple

self-affirmation (or control) activities as part of their regular class assignments. These activities reduced the achievement gap between the Latino American and European American students. Latino American students, the identity-threatened group, earned higher grades in the affirmation than control condition, whereas white students were unaffected. For many students, these effects persisted into high school. More generally, insofar as radicalization and terrorism result from threats and harmed self-esteem, values affirmations may be used as a highly relevant intervention.

General interventions

A number of general interventions can also be used in the domain of radicalism and terrorism as specific parts or building blocks of more encompassing interventions. These interventions are general because they can be applied in many different domains. Interventions to reduce anger in people, for example, can be applied among others to marriage, organizations and schools, but they can also be used as a building block in radicalism and terrorism interventions. We present here some interventions with that general character, namely anger management, prejudice reduction, cooperative learning and intergroup contact

On several occasions, we have discussed emotions that can contribute towards radicalization. Examples are anger and rage. They, too, can be influenced. The anger bound up in expressions of hostility towards other people might be assuaged by knowledge and alternative ideas, perhaps introduced through group interventions that could also serve as a foundation for more comprehensive approaches. A review of results obtained in this way (DiGiuseppe & Tafrate, 2003) indicates some improvement but with only a modest overall effect. Oskamp (2000b) states that fear arising out of the perceived threat posed by another group can often be countered by role models who refute that such a threat exists.

To some extent, both the expression of emotions like anger and the associated aggression are normative in character. If people themselves consider that certain behaviour is unacceptable, they are less likely to display it. By changing the normative nature of hostility towards a particular group, then, it should be possible to reduce aggression against it. Amjad and Wood (2009) followed this line in two studies of Pakistani students, looking at their readiness to become members of an anti-Semitic group. Those who had just attended a lecture on the Prophet Muhammad's sympathetic attitude to the Jewish people and the exchange of knowledge between Jewish and Muslim scholars were 16 times less likely to want to join than those

who had been at a lecture on an unrelated subject. According to the authors, this finding suggests that the subjects' original attitudes towards Jews were not particularly aggressive. This implies that interventions will usually have more impact under such circumstances, when they can raise an effective barrier to interest in extreme groups.

An important means to dispel prejudice is the dissemination of information that counters stereotypes or presents the victim's point of view in a sympathetic fashion. As shown by Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000), understanding their perspective can mitigate stereotyped responses. If people put themselves 'in the shoes' of an older person, for instance, their empathy with the elderly increases, and they behave more respectfully towards them. In social psychology, there is a relatively extensive body of work devoted to mitigating stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination (Oskamp, 2000a).

Another much investigated means of reducing prejudice and discrimination is cooperative learning, a method known best from the so-called jigsaw technique (Aronson & Osherow, 1980), whereby schoolchildren teach each other and so learn from each other. Each pupil in turn is given part of a lesson to teach to the rest of their small group, so that the 'pieces' come together to form a whole 'picture'. One of the explanatory mechanisms behind the success of this approach is empathy. Quantitative assessments of its effects reveal positive results, including better interpersonal relationships and greater helpfulness (Paluck & Green, 2009). These authors report that 79 per cent of all elementary schools in the United States were using the technique in the early 1990s.

As we have seen in previous chapters, prejudice and conflict are two factors that could result in polarization of groups, radicalization, and ultimately the use of violence. One way to prevent and resolve the prejudice and conflict is the stimulation of intergroup contact. Intergroup contact theory (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 1998), as described in Chapter 2, holds that people who engage in intergroup contact are less likely to be prejudiced towards outgroup members than are those who do not have these experiences, which has been confirmed on a large scale in research. Al Ramiah and Hewstone (2013) discussed the potential of intergroup contact as a tool for reducing, resolving and preventing intergroup conflict. In their analysis, they also describe a number of successful interventions such as in Israel, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. Interventions in these conflict zones increased willingness to reconcile and fostered feelings of trust, forgiveness and empathy. Obviously, intergroup contract is not the magic solution that will make conflict disappear overnight, but ideologies and policies that promote integration could help to prevent or reduce conflict. Both the prevention and the reduction of conflict require contact, whether that contact is between policy makers from different groups, between the élites from both groups, or between members of the general public. Al Ramiah and

Hewstone (2013) conclude that intergroup contact interventions can be cost-effective and efficacious and can help to both prevent prejudice and conflict and reduce prejudice and conflict.

It needs to be added that applications of contact theory can fail or even have unfortunate consequences. Negative experiences are likely to increase prejudice and intergroup polarization. That is exactly what Paolini, Harwood and Rubin (2010) found. Al Ramiah and Hewstone (2013) argued that the effect of contact is weaker for members of minority groups (see also Chapter 2). When dealing with groups of different sizes, it is important to carefully structure intergroup contact and interventions. A number of mechanisms mediate the effect of contact on prejudice. Successful interventions reduce intergroup *anxiety* and also reduce the extent to which the other group is seen as posing a *threat* for the ingroup. Such interventions also increase the *knowledge* about the other group and *empathy*.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we looked at factors that help perpetuate radical solutions and accelerate the transition to violence. One of these factors is the success or failure of the group. Failure can activate a feeling that the group is under pressure, leading to more radical methods. Sensational and successful terrorist attacks can make it easier to recruit new members and also to increase the likelihood of further terrorist attacks.

Next we focused on a series of studies in which violent and non-violent groups were compared with one another in order to detect differences and possible antecedents of the transition to violence. Violent groups tend to be more concerned with their ideology and more often combine their ideological righteousness with feelings of superiority. The latter was confirmed by a study comparing the documents emanating from non-violent and violent groups that did not differ in extremity. Most studies also point out the importance of social context, such as the existence of domestic and/or external conflicts. Some studies also point to other differences and to the less rational pull factors of terrorism such as status, sensation and thrills, and 'coolness' We also looked briefly at the motives inspiring suicide attackers. Specific traumatic events, a belief in a fundamentalist ideology that glorifies martyrdom and social pressure turn out to be key factors that may persuade people to take up this ultimate form of terrorism. Ideological expressions of militant extremist groups were found to underline three key themes: (1) the necessity of action, (2) the use of military terminology to clarify the state of the world, and (3) utopian thinking – the belief in a glorious future, for their own group at least.

We also briefly discussed process models describing the stages people go through when moving from dissent to radicalization and beyond.

Moghaddam's (2005) Staircase to Terrorism is probably the best known example of this type of model. Most of the determinants he mentions are also discussed in this book, but it seems premature to conclude that his linear, stepwise model presents a general route to terrorism. Research shows that there are more and different routes.

Next we moved to disengagement and exit from terrorism. This research tends to be based on autobiographical materials or in-depth interviews with ex-terrorists. Individual motives are often related to interpersonal dynamics as well as to differences on tactical and strategic issues. Structural factors such as political and social changes that were in accordance with the goals of the movement frequently made individual members decide to leave their organization. Such changes can also lead to the demise and end of a terrorist organization, for instance because the movement decided to opt for legitimate political solutions and became a political movement. Other factors that can cause the demise of a terrorist group described by Cronin (2006, 2009) include the capture or killing of the leader, reduced public support, military force and regression.

Finally, we described several intervention programmes that aim to de-radicalize individuals and/or foster disengagement. First, this literature stresses the importance to distinguish between behavioural change (disengagement) and change in attitudes and beliefs (de-radicalization). The latter reduces the likelihood of re-engagement. Over the past years, many different programmes were developed, but we do not know much about their effectiveness. Further research is needed with the aim to help develop successful interventions that serve to reduce the likelihood of radical individuals becoming terrorists and that help to rehabilitate ex-terrorists, such as home-grown terrorists and terrorist fighters returning from countries such as Syria. We also paid attention to a number of programmes with the aim to increase resilience to radicalism and violent extremism. In the last section, we looked briefly at a few 'soft' counterterrorism programmes that aim to prevent prejudice, intergroup polarization and conflict.

Figure 9.2 summarizes this chapter in relation to the general framework used throughout this book. Both social factors (the presence of violent conflicts in society, the type of regime), as well as group and individual factors (the importance and type of ideology and the presence of strong leaders), may lead radical groups to opt for violence in order to reach their goal. We briefly discussed programmes with the aim to increase resilience and prevent further radicalization such as Prevent, as well as programmes aiming to de-radicalize individuals. Most of the programmes have been developed over the last few years, and future research should help to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, we discussed factors that make individuals decide to leave terrorist groups. These include disagreements within the group or with the group leader, societal changes that reduce the need for
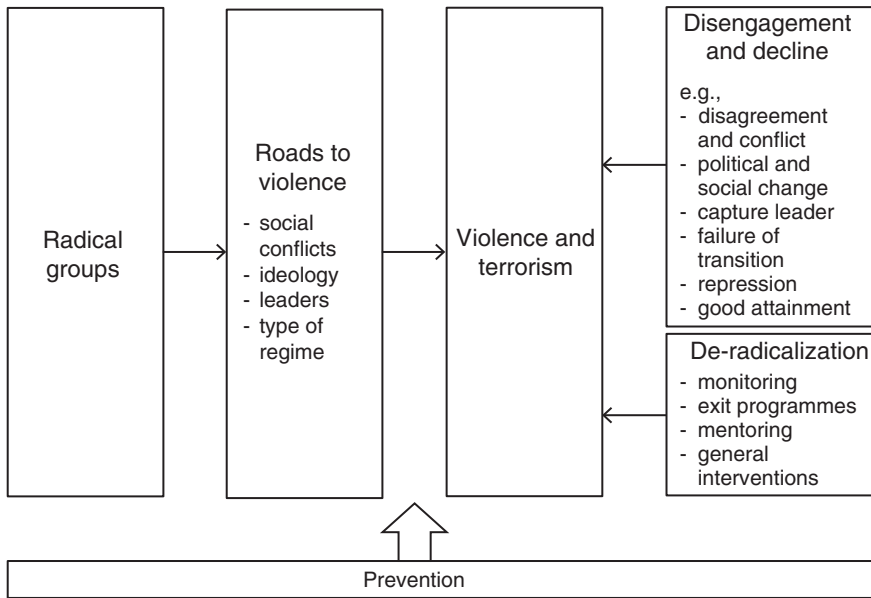
Figure 9.2 Rise and decline of violent extremism.

violent action and the decision that it is now up to others to face the dangers of terrorist life. We ended with a brief mention of factors that play a role in the decline of terrorist groups. In this chapter, we also briefly discussed more general interventions that aim to prevent radicalization and violent terrorism. Some of these focus on specific groups of radical individuals and jihadi fighters returning from Syria and Iraq; others focus on more general groups such as schoolchildren.

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10 Summary and conclusions

Introduction

In this book, we have provided an overview of factors that play a role in polarization, radicalization and terrorism. Some of the literature we discussed is theoretical in nature and based upon past empirical research into intragroup and intergroup processes. Silke (2008) noted that only 1 per cent of publications in this field make use of systematic interviews with radicalized individuals. This has changed since then, but the percentage is still quite low. Only a few studies involve interviews, and they usually focus upon small samples of convicted terrorists (see e.g. Orsinsi 2013; Post, Sprinzak & Denny, 2003; Stern, 2004). Others, for instance Sageman (2004), draw upon public sources such as court records and media reports. Nonetheless, we can draw a number of conclusions from the extant literature. They are presented in this final chapter, after which we briefly discuss the importance of understanding the processes involved when developing possible interventions. In this chapter, we also attempt to assess where we stand regarding terrorism, where this field of research stands and where we need to go in future research. Finally, we touch on the relation between the struggle against terrorism and civil rights.

Summary

We will start by placing the factors associated with radicalization and terrorism discussed in the previous chapters in our framework and relate them to different manifestations of the phenomenon: Islamic radicalism, left-wing radicalism and right-wing radicalism.

Threats as a starting point

The starting point and core of our framework is the confrontation with threat. But *what* constitutes threat varies in each of the three forms of radicalization.

In the case of Islamic radicalism, it is a combination of deprivation, prejudice, negative stereotypes and metastereotypes, discrimination and unsatisfactory contacts with the majority community. Deprivation is reflected in lower levels of educational attainment and the associated limited career prospects and low employment rates, which in themselves are perceived as disagreeable and threatening. Deprived minority groups in general and Islamic ones in particular also face negative stereotypes and prejudice on the part of the majority, and these can also result in discrimination. Moreover, such minorities tend to harbour negative metastereotypes: they believe that the majority group sees them in a negative light. To an extent, these views are fuelled by the media. Taken together, these factors discourage personal contacts between members of minorities and the majority and negatively affect those that do take place. Deprivation, prejudice, negative stereotypes and metastereotypes, discrimination and less than positive contacts with the majority all tend to leave the minority feeling surrounded by a wider society it does not really trust and does not consider obliging or friendly: in other words, a threatening society. This analysis can be applied to specific communities, to countries as a whole, but also to the world at large, and to relations between countries and regions that differ in religious beliefs and or ethnicity.

To right-wing radicals, the threat lies in the supposed lack of opportunity afforded to 'ordinary' people by a society and a system with priorities and values at odds with those of the group they see as their own. The government and the élite are perceived as having no interest in their own nation and people, embracing internationalism instead, for example. In other respects, too, the state is seen to put its own interests first. On top of that, there are politically charged threats, including the views of political opponents with their weakness for a liberal and overgenerous welfare state. For right-wing radicals, ethnic minorities represent a particularly serious threat. Finally, low social status is a common feature of this group – not only a threat in itself but one frequently coupled with discrimination.

The principal threat perceived by the radical left is the inequality inherent in today's society. The less fortunate deserve more support and resources so that they can lead fulfilling lives. As on the extreme right, there are also political threats, such as the views espoused by political opponents who advocate inequality in certain respects. As reported in Chapter 4, the left-wing groups described by Robison, Crenshaw and Jenkins (2006) shared a strong anti-capitalist bias and a desire for a social revolution that would free exploited humanity – workers, peasants and other oppressed groups and peoples – in particular, from capitalism.

Particularly in the case of Islamic radicalism, the combination of deprivation and an unfriendly social environment limits contacts with members of the majority, for instance in terms of the kinds of neighbourhood people live

in, and can thus lead to social isolation. In this respect, we have discussed the so-called contact hypothesis: interaction between groups can mitigate prejudice, but frequency of contact alone is not enough to bring about change. Research shows that members of such groups who live in relatively good economic circumstances are often more supportive of radicalism and terrorism than the less well off. In that case, the principle of relative deprivation applies: comparatively highly educated members of a minority group who are also financially better off are more likely to compare themselves with majority representatives from a similar background. If that highlights an unfavourable disparity, it will often fuel a sense of disadvantage, discrimination and injustice – which can, in turn, trigger radicalization.

In Chapter 3, we discussed interpersonal and intergroup threats in greater detail and distinguished realistic, symbolic and group esteem threats. We then described how these three forms of threat, when emanating from a majority, can affect minorities. Particularly for those in a weak socioeconomic position, threats with a radicalizing effect can also come from the government and the 'powers that be'. Moreover, as we have seen in the case of right-wing radicalization, those in a weak socioeconomic position are often subject to discrimination from the more comfortable majority, and they also consider certain minorities threatening. In addition, we have turned our attention to threats of a political nature as they relate to radicalism on both the left and the right. These include attitudes to political opponents based on (perceived) differences in fundamental values, which can entail both realistic and symbolic threats.

Threats associated with established societal structures also play an important role. Different forms of radicalism, such as Islamic and left- and right-wing radicalism, are thus engendered by threats that are very different in substance. One of the primary cognitive consequences of intergroup threat is perceived injustice; this applies to both distributive and procedural injustice – outcomes that are seen as unjust or procedures used to arrive at outcomes that are seen as unjust. Failings on either front usually trigger a sense of injustice, and that can lead to a feeling of greater entitlement to a positive outcome, a feeling so great that it can feed selfish and antagonistic behaviour. Next we looked in detail at majority prejudice and hostility towards minorities as a product of intergroup threat. One significant and widespread effect of threat is uncertainty: people are not sure what to do in the face of a perceived threat because they have too little grip on a world around them that comes across as chaotic and unpredictable. This can in turn encourage people to place greater trust in and display greater esteem for external systems of control such as the church and religion, government and the state. This makes their opinions on such matters more extreme in the process.

Anger, in particular, can cause aggression and detrimentally affect the way we process information. It may also kindle a desire to take revenge

against the individuals or groups deemed to be the source of the threat. We also discussed so-called moral emotions, which are elicited by behaviour regarded as immoral or promote moral conduct. These emotions include feelings associated with the judgement of others: anger, contempt and aversion are good examples. They are particularly likely to arise in the face of symbolic threats, which often have a moral dimension. The last emotion we described, hate, seems to play a particularly important role in motivating acts of terrorism.

Threats: cultural and personal factors

All the forms of threat just described, whether they apply to Islamic, left-wing or right-wing radicalism, are subject to influences related to the cultural context and to socioeconomic conditions. Hierarchies and inequalities within a culture can represent a threat to all three types of radicalization. Indeed, the literature reveals that individuals in a situation where inequality is an important aspect of the prevailing culture are more quickly and easily swayed by radical leaders.

Honour and uncertainty avoidance are also cultural characteristics thought to increase people's receptiveness to threats. In an honour-based culture, people are particularly sensitive to assaults on their dignity and will therefore experience threats as greater and stronger. Uncertainty avoidance, a trait closely associated with the amount of stress and fear in a culture, probably also increases susceptibility to threat as well as counting as a threat in its own right. In much the same way, an unfavourable social and economic climate is both a threat in itself and a contributing factor to heightened threat receptiveness.

Catalyst events can temporarily or permanently exacerbate existing threats, turning more or less dormant intergroup conflicts into clear and present dangers requiring an immediate response. Examples of such events range from public ridicule of a group's faith to the death of a member at (or allegedly at) the hands of a rival group. The international political, cultural or religious climate can also affect the various forms of radicalism in a number of ways. The radical left declined in significance following the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, for instance, whereas Islamism prospered in that same period, apparently benefiting from the competition between Islam and other faiths.

The threats people experience also seem to be influenced by individual factors, such as their personalities. Authoritarians are often traditional and conservative by nature, bowing to authority and preferring to direct their aggression against sanctioned targets. Underlying this attitude are probably a general uncertainty and susceptibility to threat, regardless of the form it takes. And because of its inherent conservatism and traditionalism,

authoritarianism appears to align most easily with Islamic and right-wing radicalism. It also tends to go hand in hand with a preference for human inequality over equality. It is that phenomenon, known as social dominance orientation, which tends to push authoritarians towards the far right. Conversely, a weak social dominance orientation, corresponding with altruism or a bias towards equality, can provide fertile ground for left-wing radicalization.

As far as demographic characteristics are concerned, in the case of Islamic radicalism, the relationship with income and education tends to vary. On the left–right spectrum, by contrast, it is quite clear-cut: on average, extreme right-wingers are less well educated and have a lower socioeconomic status than left-wing radicals.

The young – young men especially – are overrepresented in all radical ranks. Hormonal factors associated with impulsiveness most likely play a part in this, not least because the parallels with other impulsive behaviours, including criminal activity and reckless driving, are very marked. Others stress that this particular age group is more likely to be affected by the glamourizing of violence in war films and computer games (see Box 10.1). It is also reasonable to assume that there is a relationship between age and perceived threat; young people face the challenge of making something of their lives, which can be a menacing prospect in itself. Others mention that the quest for significance typical for that age group might also play a role in this context (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009). Gender differences are apparent in all three forms of radicalism, with a disproportionately high male representation. Plausible explanations for this can be found in men's greater aggressiveness, their tendency to focus on competitive intergroup relationships and their higher social dominance orientation. Moreover, women's generally lower social dominance orientation may well explain why the gender 'gap' is somewhat less pronounced among left-wing terrorists than on the right; the left's struggle for equality makes it more appealing to women.

Whether relevant to Islamic or political radicalism, or both, the threats outlined earlier can thus be influenced by cultural context, socioeconomic circumstances and aspects of personality. The principal effect of these variables is to alter people's receptiveness to threat. Factors such as an honour-based culture, uncertainty avoidance, an unfavourable social and economic climate and an authoritarian personality will probably increase this receptiveness, meaning that the presence of one or more of them makes people more likely to feel threatened or to perceive 'everyday' threats as more serious than perhaps they really are. Ultimately, then, this is a mechanism that can encourage polarization and radicalism.

Cultural and other factors can exert an influence of a different kind, too, in that they foster additional threat. As stated earlier, this can arise due to

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Box 10.1 Beyond religious fundamentalism: the glamour of violence

Several authors argue that it is too simple to blame religious fundamentalism alone for the fact that thousands of men joined ISIS. Obviously, religion is important (see also Chapter 7), but other factors also play a role. Arie Kruglanski and colleagues refer to what they call 'quest for significance'. In Chapter 3, we briefly discussed individual factors such as 'sensation seeking'. Groups such as ISIS use professional videos to persuade people to join them, and some argue that their persuasiveness can also be related to the glamourization of violence in some male subcultures. In these subcultures, war might be seen as a rite of passage for young men, combat an exciting prospect and fighting an exhilaration. Indirect support for the role of this factor is provided by disappointed jihadis who desperately wanted to return because they 'make me do the washing up' or because they have 'done hardly anything but hand out clothes and food' (Lichfield, 2014).

According to Joanne Bourke (2014) in *The Guardian*, this glamourizing of violence is bolstered by both war films and computer games. Some of the most popular games are set in the Middle East. These games are packed with exciting battles in exotic environments. She mentions that these war games are seen as such an important recruiter for radical terrorist groups that Hezbollah has developed its own games. Joanne Bourke acknowledges the importance of cultural alienation and religion but also stresses the importance of wider cultural forces that valorize and even glamourize violence. Her analysis was inspired by the story of two young British men, Reyaad Kahn and Nasser Muthana, who were seen in an ISIS film urging British Muslims to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq. All in all, some 500 British men are believed to have joined ISIS.

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hierarchy or inequality or indeed in an unfavourable social and economic climate. Moreover, even when dissociated from threat, factors of this kind can still nourish radicalism on material and ideological grounds. For example, the conservative aspect of an authoritarian personality can help drive a person towards the radical right. Similarly, the wider politico-cultural or politico-religious climate may bolster or weaken certain forms of extremism.

In all three types of radicalism, we see more or less the same cognitive and emotional effects of threat. Perceived injustice is one of more important cognitive repercussions, usually arising in the presence of deprivation and discrimination, a government with other priorities, minorities that are perceived

as a threat to a person's own majority culture and social inequality – all threats featuring to a greater or lesser extent in at least one of our three contexts: Islamic, left-wing and right-wing radicalization. Prejudice and negative stereotypes can also result from threat, appearing most commonly in association with its intergroup manifestation, although somewhat less so in the case of left-wing radicalism than the other two forms.

Injustice and prejudice feed radicalization mainly by instilling a desire to rectify the injustice and through the resulting intergroup polarization. Another important and fairly universal product of threat is uncertainty; those affected do not know how to respond and lack a sufficient grasp of their surroundings and the world, which thus come across as chaotic and unpredictable. That in turn gives rise to a strong need for personal control and certainty, which can lead people to increase their esteem for and trust in external systems of control such as religion and religious institutions, government and the state. In such situations, ideologies can provide a firm footing.

Ideologies characterized by a utopian longing for fundamental change and a better system are an important factor in some people's decision to opt for violence as a means to reshape the established political order. They can also choose to pursue this aim through legal means, by exerting political influence, but if and when that proves impossible (which is often the case when the change sought is radical in nature), for some a violent alternative becomes acceptable. Ideology provides collective action with a goal and a justification, and ideologies vary in the extent to which they regard violence as a permissible means of effecting change.

Threats have emotional consequences, too. Due in part to the frustration they invoke, they are often associated with anger and aggression or with fear and concern. Once these sentiments enter the picture, they often hinder receptiveness to information and so can foster radicalism and extremism.

Social identity, ideology and radicalization

Social identity has a range of functions. Perhaps the most important is to provide a positive self-image. Sharing traits and preferences with others also offers solidarity, security and structure. And the relevance of social identity processes increases in the face of threat. Socioeconomic deprivation and limited respect for a group's culture, for instance, are threats that reinforce group cohesion and identification in order to promote self-esteem. But they also often result in us-and-them thinking, widening the gap between groups. And these effects are particularly enhanced if the ingroup's situation is regarded as unfair and unjust.

Research into social identity processes reveals the mechanisms at work in intergroup polarization. People striving to forge a positive group identity

not only consider their own group to be better than its rivals but also more diverse. Outgroups are viewed as relatively homogeneous. Moreover, these tendencies can be amplified in the event of threats, power differences and/or a minority position. Greater emphasis on ingroup identity and culture, scepticism about its socioeconomic prospects and holding the majority responsible for its disadvantage are all factors that can create fertile ground for polarization and radicalization. Emotions such as fear, anger and contempt play a significant role in this process.

Group polarization can have a variety of negative consequences, but in itself it is not a sufficient basis for radicalization, never mind terrorism. Nor is deprivation, although that can certainly provide a solid grounding when it is structural in nature and perceived as unjust. In such circumstances, however, ideology – religious or otherwise – may become a crucial factor. Religion and ideology can function as important determinants of human social identity and may to a large extent shape the way people see other groups. They provide a framework for the interpretation of reality, offering a consistent and coherent worldview, and can also form and justify particular goals. As a rule, the ideologies of the extreme right and left are not religious. The right-wing variant seeks a return to a world that once was: a safer world free of immigrants and group conflict, in which historical standards and values will prevail once again. Leftist extremism is even more utopian: the pursuit of equality and fraternity, with the rejection of capitalism. Islamic extremism is religious and fundamentalist.

For their adherents, the benefits of fundamentalist ideologies are wide-ranging. One is the clear social identity they provide, which can impart and sustain self-esteem in a highly effective manner. A product of the belief that one has been 'called' to the faith, with all the moral superiority that entails, especially compared to non-believers, this further encourages 'us-and-them' thinking and may well intensify intergroup conflict. Religious fundamentalism is sometimes a factor in radicalization and terrorism but, again, not a sufficient basis in itself. The role of social disparities is at least as important.

What does social identity theory say about how groups, especially minorities, deal with deprivation and discrimination? In many cases, people simply accept the situation. The ingroup offers security and support, and that is enough for them – particularly if the deprivation and discrimination experienced are relatively mild. If people believe that they can do something to overcome the situation through their own efforts, that is often the path they choose – by working harder to lift themselves out of poverty, for example. But this is only worthwhile if they see a reasonable chance that their efforts will be rewarded. Another option is to endeavour to improve the social position of the group as a whole. This is more likely if that position is perceived as unjust and if there is strong identification with the group itself and, above

all, with social, political or religious groups advocating its interests. Crucial here is a belief in the effectiveness of collective action within the law. Without that, people may well decide to pursue the change they regard as essential through unlawful means. One choice at this point is for 'ordinary' criminal activity, a largely non-ideological solution with improvement of one's own socioeconomic status as its principal goal. The other is ideologically driven action, either secular (political radicalism, leftist or rightist) or religious (as with Islamic radicalism): using illegal means to impose pressure for change, with violence as the most extreme variant.

From radicalization to violent groups

The role of ideologies becomes especially important when people are confronted with injustice and oppression. Ideology can help in the diagnosis of what is wrong in society and can also present a clear image of what it should look like. Religion and ideology are generally firmly grounded in moral beliefs and thus help to decide about 'good' and 'bad'. Moreover, religion and ideology can also help to convince people that they have been 'called' to the faith and are therefore morally superior, certainly by comparison with 'unbelievers'. This in turn further accentuates us-and-them thinking, thus making a further contribution to polarization and conflict.

   Many authors assert that the current brand of Islamist terrorism derives from an extreme interpretation of the Koran. Apart from that, however, this extremist ideology differs little from others of its kind: all offer certainty and structure, and all systematize the emotions people feel. Radical left-wing groups such as the Red Army Faction in Germany were not grounded in a religion, but they did have an ideology and believed that many, if not all, social and economic problems were attributable to the dominance of a capitalist ruling class. Radical right-wing groups, in common with their leftist and fundamentalist religious counterparts, have a polarized worldview in which the ruling élite poses a direct threat and stands for values they do not share. These ideologies are best seen as a dynamic set of shared ideas, goals, guidelines and interpretative framework, not as a pile of books; they offer adherents order and clarity in a menacing world, often combined with preconceptions concerning the 'powers that be' and very little tolerance of those who do not agree with them.

   In sum, a common factor of the ideologies described in this book is that they attribute all or at least the great majority of extant social and economic problems to the dominance of the prevailing power. Naturally, this is accompanied by the polarization of different groups and radicalization. In particular, the importance attached to the elimination of the oppressor, as the cause of all evil, acts as a catalyst inflaming existing discontent. We see this not

only in various extremist groups in the Middle East but also in the ideology espoused by some lone wolves who have turned to terrorism

One difference between religious fundamentalism and other forms of extremism is a belief, often absolute, that its worldview is utterly sacrosanct. After all, it is God's own worldview. Fundamentalism plays an important role in processes of radicalization on the road to terrorism, but it would be rash to conclude that it alone can bring about such violence.

Box 10.2 Syria as a terrorist incubator

The Syrian conflict that started in 2011 with public protests gradually turned into a full-scale civil war. Syria is seen as a dangerous place for radicalization given the nature of the conflict and the emergence of the Al-Nusra Front, a group that declared its allegiance to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. The conflict became a magnet for Europeans looking to engage in jihad. Hundreds of fighters from Western countries joined the fights in Syria, with security services attempting to monitor fighters who return from Syria. In the autumn of 2013, British security services intercepted an alleged serious plot by jihadists returning from Syria. They were said to be planning a Mumbai-style attack on civilians in a crowded place.

European fears of spillover from the Syrian war were amplified in June 2013 after the arrest of Mehdi Nemmouche in Marseille. He spent five years in jail in France on robbery charges and possibly converted to radical Islam in that period (he lost all contact with his family in that period). In December 2012, three weeks after his release from prison, he headed to Syria and joined the jihadist fighters. He returned to Europe in early 2014 via Malaysia and Singapore. He was arrested in connection with the killing of four people in the Jewish Museum in Brussels. Two Israeli tourists, a French and a Belgian volunteer working for the Jewish museum were shot at point-blank range. Nemmouche tried to record the actual shooting, but the camera did not work. The voice recorder did and contained the message that the attack was 'against the Jews and [threatened to] set Belgium on fire'. Nemmouche's bag contained a Kalashnikov and .38-calibre revolver wrapped in a white sheet scrawled with the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), an extremist group fighting in Syria. The group, also called ISIS, produces films to urge Muslims from other countries to join them. An estimated 15,000 fighters from at least 50 countries were in Syria in 2014.

Obviously this poses serious problems for quite a few countries, including decisions concerning not only the surveillance of Muslim

communities but also the monitoring of jihadists returning from Iraq and Syria and the question as to whether they should be forced to attend de-radicalization programmes.

In September 2014, David Cameron announced that terror suspects placed under a Terrorisms Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs) will be forced to participate in the UK government's Prevent programme (see also Chapter 4). This general programme contains several subprograms, such as the so-called Al Furqan programme, run in prisons and relying on imams to challenge religious radicalism. The Healthy Identities intervention relies on an analysis, with the help of psychotherapists, of what triggered individuals to become radicalized and opt for violence.

Sources: Sky News (2014); Whitehead (2014).

Ideology plays an important role in the transition from group polarization to radicalism and terrorism. But it is still not a sufficient basis in itself. Such transitions often occur within small groups, and the social context also needs to comply with certain criteria. Violent ideological groups are found most frequently against a backdrop of major social conflict and disruption; in circumstances of this kind, they also engage actively in indoctrination of their beliefs. In short, ideologically inspired violence and the groups responsible for such acts are primarily a feature of the planet's conflict zones – places with a history of extreme injustice, deprivation and discrimination. Recent years have shown that these zones now also attract people from elsewhere, creating a variety of new problems in the fight against terrorism (see Box 10.2).

Social support plays its part too. Some of the literature describes a pyramid model, with the base consisting of all those who sympathize with a movement's objectives. The greater this base of support, the higher the chance that individual members of the group will radicalize. This is something we see clearly in the occupied Palestinian territories, for example. The more limited the support at the base of the pyramid, the more circumspect the movement above it needs to be in its activities. Without grassroots backing, it will eventually lose its strength – not least because its supply of new recruits will dry up.

A number of internal group processes can push opinions towards extremes. In many cases, this is a gradual movement, with the group radicalizing one step at a time – sometimes up to a point where it embraces militant and even violent solutions. These processes are more important than the individual personality traits of potential terrorists, and the group's relative isolation is frequently a crucial aspect as well. That factor is also

relevant to 'groupthink', a mechanism that is often a key driving force behind the polarization of opinions within small groups; come what may, they are determined to present a united front against an outside world seen as threatening but inferior. Another factor associated with this phenomenon is strong, commanding leadership. The group increasingly distances itself from rivals, feeling superior to them and becoming highly intolerant of alternative views.

Both isolation and strong, charismatic leadership feature regularly in the literature on radicalization and terrorism. The Internet can also contribute to a group's isolation by providing a 'second home': a safe environment populated only by like-minded people. This fosters radicalization, since it is easy to shield the group from dissenting opinions and ideas. Extremist websites can help push back boundaries, encouraging and justifying the transition to violence. Like personal and family trauma, the Internet plays its part in recruitment as well. The role of the Internet is constantly changing, as illustrated in Box 10.3.

Several prominent terrorist movements in recent history have been headed by powerful leaders. The dominant members of a small, isolated group – and a strong leader, above all – often determine how it responds to its situation. If they also assume responsibility for the group's activities, that can render its members insensitive to the consequences of the violence it employs. Role models are also important. In the late twentieth century, for instance, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) inspired a number of radical left-wing movements in Western Europe to intensify their campaigns of violence.

Box 10.3 The Internet and terrorism revisited

In Chapter 8, we discussed the role of the Internet in processes of radicalization and terrorism. We referred to research showing that for some the Internet provides a second home. We also mentioned Kruglanski and Fishman (2009), who cited an intelligence source stating that the Internet is the single most important venue for the radicalization of Islamic youth. It plays a role in the recruitment of new group members and their radicalization. It also encourages violence and dehumanizes others by repeated exposure to videos of beheadings. The Internet also provided bomb-making instructions and guidelines on how to make bomb vests. The emergence of ISIS has widened the scope of how the Internet is being used. First, there seems to be an increase of gruesome videos of mass executions of 'non-believers'. By the end of 2014, the killings of a total of five foreigners (three American and two British citizens) were filmed and released on the Internet by ISIS.

In November 2014, ISIS released a video appearing to show the British terrorist known as Jihadi John standing over a severed head of U.S. aid worker Peter Kassig. Jihadi John was also involved in earlier beheadings released on the Internet. This particular footage also showed the beheadings of 17 captured Syrian soldiers. These videos mark a turning point in how the Internet is being used. Production values are much higher than in the past, and executions are accompanied by haunting music. The videos also aim to arouse fear in regions of Iraq and Syria and emphasize the relentless approach of ISIS. Moreover, since the initial announcement of the caliphate, videos have been more prominent about pushing out recruitment materials to non-Arabs. Gordon Meek (2014) of ABS News quotes Suron Zelin from the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, who stated to have seen videos in French, German, and English to draw Westerners to wage jihad in the Middle East and East Africa. There have been several examples of armoured truck bombs driven by foreign fighters eager for martyrdom.

Two further processes can help people make the final step from radicalism to terrorism, both serving as justification for the use of violence. One is dehumanization, whereby members from other groups are deemed deficient in certain uniquely human traits. This judgement often arouses strong sentiments, those most associated with dehumanization being moral emotions like disgust, aversion and contempt. The second justification process involves denying responsibility for the adoption of violence. In some cases, the group's own situation is seen as so desperate that the use of arms is considered the only possible solution. Another option is that the group attributes the blame for its course of action squarely to its opponents. Shifting responsibility to the victims of terrorism is a mechanism that is again often combined with moral emotions such as aversion and contempt.

We briefly looked at social context again and confirmed the conclusions of Chapter 2 that more totalitarian forms of government are more likely to be confronted with terrorism, especially when the repressive machinery of these regimes begins to crack. Syria is a recent example of this mechanism. Sensational and successful terrorist attacks can make it easier to recruit new members and also increase the likelihood of further terrorist attacks.

Violent and non-violent groups were compared with each other in order to detect differences and possible antecedents of the transition to violence. Violent groups tend to be more concerned with their ideology and more often combine their ideological righteousness with feelings of superiority. Most studies also point out the importance of social context, such as the existence

of domestic and/or external conflicts. Some studies also point at other differences, as well as less rational pull factors of terrorism such as status, sensation and thrills, and 'coolness'. We also looked briefly at the motives inspiring suicide attackers. Specific traumatic events, a belief in a fundamentalist ideology that glorifies martyrdom and social pressure turn out to be key factors that may persuade people to take up this ultimate form of terrorism.

Ideologically inspired militant groups are found most often in situations characterized by major social conflicts and disruption, and it seems that they often regard themselves as superior and their acts as more than justified. Three key themes are found to recur in their ideological expressions: (1) the necessity of action, (2) the use of military terminology to clarify the state of the world and (3) utopian thinking – the belief in a glorious future, for their own group at least.

Next we moved to disengagement and exit of terrorism. Individual motives are often related to interpersonal dynamics, as well as to differences on tactical and strategic issues. Structural factors, such as political and social changes, that were in accordance with the goals of the movement also made people decide to leave their organization. Such changes can also lead to the demise and end of a terrorist organization, for instance because the movement decides to opt for legitimate political solutions and become a political movement.

In Chapter 9, we briefly discussed intervention programmes that aim to de-radicalize individuals and/or foster disengagement. This literature stresses the importance of distinguishing between behavioural change (disengagement) and changes in attitudes and beliefs (de-radicalization). Over the past years, many different programmes were developed, but we do not know much about their effectiveness. Further research is needed with the aim to help develop successful interventions that help to reduce the likelihood of radical individuals to become terrorists and help to rehabilitate ex-terrorists such as home-grown terrorists and terrorist fighters returning from countries such as Syria. Finally, we looked briefly at a few 'soft' counterterrorism programmes that aim to prevent prejudice, intergroup polarization and conflict.

Three forms of radicalism and terrorism

In the detailed descriptions provided throughout this book, we have been guided primarily by research and examples in the domains of Islamic radicalism and right-wing terrorism, with some attention also paid to left-wing extremism. This was partly done in order to illustrate the relative universality of our general framework. Nonetheless, it is also clear that these three forms of radicalism differ in the nature of the threat they are responding to and also, as previously indicated, in some of their associated personality factors and demographic characteristics. Naturally, the precise role and intensity

of each of the factors included will vary from case to case, according to the type of radicalization and movement concerned. As we have already seen, for instance, catalyst events appear to be a relative weak factor in right-wing radicalism but extremely important for Palestinian radicals and terrorists. Catalyst events also played an important role in the spreading of terrorism in Chechnya (see, for instance, Box 8.5 on black widows).

De-radicalization programmes

In this book, we have seen that, for individuals who have already radicalized, isolation can play an important role by eliminating any scope for the correction of polarizing, radicalizing and even hate-inducing ideas. Governments want to check the dissemination of such opinions. As this book has shown, in order to do that, it is essential to break down the isolation if at all possible. Other important elements are the monitoring and, where possible, tackling of social support for radical, violent solutions. De-radicalization and rehabilitation programmes, in prisons and elsewhere, can play a part in this process. Several predominantly Muslim countries, amongst them Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have recently launched initiatives of this kind for detainees suspected of terrorist offences and for young people who have strayed into radicalism or who are thought to be at risk of doing so (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009). In one project in Saudi Arabia, for instance, Muslim clerics gain access to extremist websites and Internet forums so that they can interact with other users in an effort to make them moderate their radical opinions or even renounce them altogether. In so doing, they draw upon know-how from the social sciences. In Singapore, a de-radicalization programme for detainees has been designed with a focus not just upon their extreme views but also upon underlying factors such as emotions and frustrations. The prisoners' families are drawn in, too, with help provided for their children's education and the professional training of their wives, all in the hope and expectation that such efforts will dispel the extremists' frustration and so moderate their outlook on life. As Chapter 7 makes clear, such programmes also need to address emotions, the tendency to dehumanize other groups and the processes commonly used to justify radical and terrorist action.

   In Western countries, we also see a growing number of de-radicalization programmes. Some are quite general such as parts of the German programme EXIT; others focus on specific groups at risk or jihadi fighters returning from Syria (e.g. the UK government's *Prevent* programme).

Where do we stand?

The Global Terrorism Index (2014) recorded almost 18,000 deaths due to terrorism in 2013, an increase of about 60 per cent over the previous years.

Most of these were the responsibility of four groups: Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Taliban in Afghanistan and al-Qaeda in various parts of the world. A substantial part of these attacks concerned domestic terrorism; the latter generally poses a greater threat in terms of life and property. Moreover, there is also a tendency for domestic terrorism to spill over into transnational terrorism. That is what we have seen in Afghanistan and Chechnya, where Islamist terrorist co-opted the cause as part of a global jihad. The same happened in Syria and Iraq where some 15,000 foreign fighters from more than 50 countries joined the Islamic State and similar extremist groups.

Figure 10.1 shows that over 80 per cent of the deaths from terrorist incidents in 2013 were recorded in just five countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria and Syria), but terrorism has also grown in intensity and breadth outside these five countries. Of the total of 107,000 terrorist fatalities since 2000, around 5 per cent occurred in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries that describe themselves as committed to democracy and the market economy. In the year 2013, OECD countries that recorded deaths from terrorism included Turkey, the U.S. and the UK.

Terrorist groups seem to become more successful both in recruiting new members and in finding new sources of income. As described in Box 10.3, production values of videos distributed via the Internet are much higher than in the past, but the Internet is not used just to recruit new members by glorifying participation in the fight against non-believers and the
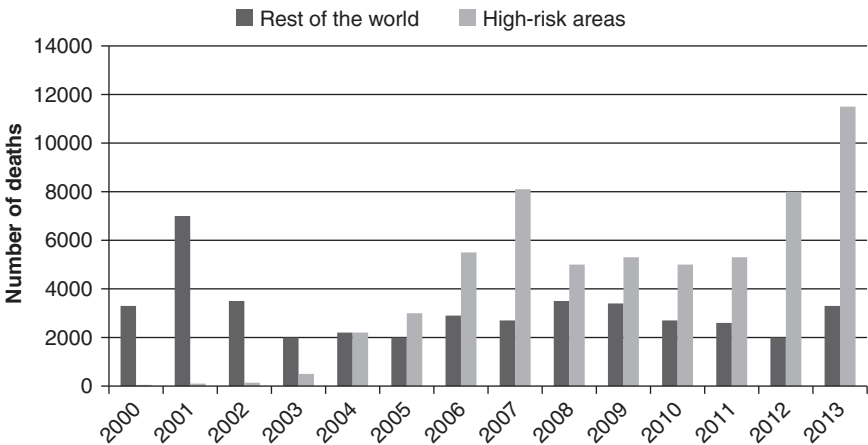
Figure 10.1 Total number of deaths from terrorist attacks 2000–2013.

Note: 'High-risk areas' refers to Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria and Syria.

Source: Adapted from Global Terrorism Index (2014).

establishment of a caliphate in Syria, Iraq and beyond. The Internet is also used to scare people in non-occupied territories in Iraq and Syria. Younger members are recruited by mocked-up trailers based on very popular and very violent computer games. In 2014, ISIS released a mocked-up Grand Theft Auto–style trailer with virtual fighters shouting 'Allahu Akbars!' as they attack U.S. troops. According to ISIS, the video aims to 'raise the morale of the mujahidin and to train children and youth how to battle the West and to strike terror into the hearts of those who oppose the Islamic State' (Hoft, 2014).

In Box 9.3, we discussed the considerable fluctuations in the frequency of terrorist activities versus organized criminal activities of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines. Callimachi (2014), writing about these practices, argued that kidnapping Europeans for ransom has become a global business for al-Qaeda. An investigation by *The New York Times* found that al-Qaeda and its direct affiliates have taken at least $125 million in revenue from kidnapping between 2008 and 2014. Total earnings in 2013 were estimated to be $66 million. Payments were made almost exclusively by European governments, who funnelled the money through a network of proxies, sometimes masking it as development aid, according to Callimachi.

In the same article, David Cohen of the US Treasury Department was quoted as saying that 'kidnapping for ransom has become today's most significant source of terrorist financing'. Quite often the seizing of hostages is outsourced to criminal groups. They take a reported 10 per cent of the ransom. One of the consequences is that the number of beheadings and killings have drastically come down compared to the previous decade when militants unreservedly slaughtered their detainees. American and British individuals, who were once primary targets, are no longer the aim of the Islamists as both countries have a policy of non-negotiation with extremists. Instead, nationals of France, Italy, Austria and Spain are besieged as these European governments do settle on a deal with the kidnappers, although indirectly. The governments have not officially admitted to paying any ransom to the militants. Vicky Huddleston, the former US Deputy Assistant of Defence for African Affairs, described European policy as 'completely two-faced'. Moreover, 'it makes all citizens of countries that have resisted paying more vulnerable'. This is illustrated by a kidnapping in May 2009; four tourists in Mali were kidnapped: a German woman, a Swiss couple and a British man named Edwin Dyer. The Swiss and German nationals were released after their governments paid a ransom, but Dyer was killed on 31 May by his kidnappers, al-Qaeda of the Islamic Mahgreb. Mr. Dyer's grieving brother said his citizenship had cost him his life. 'A UK passport is essentially a death certificate', he said.

Aspects of terrorism research

Wrong questions

In 2014, Marc Sageman wrote an assessment of research on terrorism. He argued that a decade of massive government funding and many, many new-comers to the field of terrorist research have not provided a satisfactory answer to the question what leads a person to turn to political violence? This limited progress contrasts with the increase of terrorist attacks and terrorist fatalities, as described in the previous paragraphs. The question what leads a person to turn to political violence? was asked by several journalists in the wake of the Boston bombing incident, in which two bombs exploded during the Boston marathon on 15 April 2013. Sageman realized that neither the academic nor the intelligence community could provide an adequate answer. Initially, research tended to focus on personal dispositions of those opting for violence. Given the very limited empirical support for explanations in terms of personality and pathology, later research tended to concentrate on process theories of becoming a terrorist. In Sageman's view, the research agenda after 9/11 tended to be set by non-experts with a clear political agenda. He argues that the funding of research often reflected policy makers' narrow concerns based on lay assumptions and misunderstandings. Research questions such as 'Why do they hate us?' led to a wide variety of research efforts focusing on the origin of this hatred in the religious ideology of terrorists. Sageman argues that the underlying assumption seemed to be that everything could be blamed on Islam; indoctrination and/or brainwashing turned naïve youngsters into religious fanatics and remorseless killers. Next, the focus was on recruitment but was still based on the assumption that cunning sophisticated leaders lured innocent naïve people into terrorist movements. As we have also seen in this book, joining a terrorist movement is often based on pre-existing friendships and kinship and is much less formal than a terrorist cell with a clear hierarchy and clear divisions of responsibility. The latter is also supported by the London Bombings in 2005, as described in Chapter 8. The group responsible for the attacks in London was far less formal and hierarchical than initially assumed by the intelligence community. It was a very small, relatively autonomous group of friends, nothing more, nothing less. McCauley and Moskalenko (2014) support this and also argue that there are cases in which factors such as personal grievance and family ties play a crucial role in people's decisions to opt for political violence.

Incidentally, one could focus terrorism questions and research more on knowledge to predict behaviour, the focus of intelligence, or on knowledge to be used in preventive interventions to reduce radicalism and terrorism. Globally, similar knowledge will be involved. On the other hand, there will be partly different questions and research. It is an open question whether the two outputs differ in their efficiency to combat radicalism and terrorism.

Initial versus later stages of radicalization

As illustrated in this book, we know much more about the initial processes of polarization between groups and the radicalization of individuals than about the processes that make individuals opt for political violence. The literature on the impact of threats and social identity processes on polarization is substantial, and these processes have been studied for decades by a variety of disciplines and with a variety of methods ranging from laboratory experiments to field research and large-scale survey research. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have been used.

The number of factors directly and indirectly related to polarization and radicalization already indicates that we are dealing with a complicated issue with a variety of possible antecedents at the societal level, the more immediate social context, and at the individual level. It is not a coincidence that the chapters on stereotyping and prejudice (Chapter 2) and on social identity processes (Chapters 6 and 7) are longer than the other chapters. The processes in the initial stages of polarization and radicalization have been studied in the context of simulated or imagined threats and forms of prejudice and discrimination. Most have been investigated at an individual level with a focus on relatively mild conflicts.

That does not mean that every individual process leading to radicalization and eventually to the decision to opt for political violence is a complex one. Some are complex; some may well be utterly simple and based on a whim as opposed to extensive elaboration of a specific ideology. These differences make it difficult to predict *who* is more likely to opt for violence in order to achieve political aims. We know that the wider social context can also affect the extent to which polarization leads to radicalization and the likelihood that people will opt for political violence. We also know that personality factors play only a modest role in most forms of terrorism. We do know, however, that lone wolves tend to have a history of psychological and/or social problems. Even this knowledge, however, does not make it much easier to predict *who* is likely to become a lone wolf. The self-radicalization processes of lone wolves tend to take place in isolation, and even non-violent ideologies can make them opt for violent solutions. (See Box 10.4.)

As argued by Sageman (2004), the academic community often has no access to primary source material obtained by the intelligence community. Sageman goes even further and states that 'we have a system of terrorism research in which intelligence analysts know everything but understand nothing, while academics understand everything but know nothing' (p. 12). As argued by Taylor (2014), academics and intelligence analysts do have a different task. The intelligence community primarily wants to prevent and control terrorism. If Sageman's assertion that the question what leads a person to political violence? refers to the prevention and control of terrorism, then terrorism research has not been very successful given the simple fact

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Box 10.4 Lone wolves, self-radicalization and violence

Berntzen and Sandberg (2014) analysed the Manifesto that Anders Behring Breivik distributed a few hours before he detonated a car bomb in the centre of Oslo and his mass shooting at a holiday camp of the political organization, Labour Youth. They compared his 1518-page manifesto to the ideology of the anti-Islamic movement in Norway. According to Berntzen and Sandberg, all solutions suggested by the anti-Islamic movement in Norway are democratic and non-violent. Interestingly, in interviews and pamphlets, members often use war metaphors such as 'invasion', 'fights', and 'sacrifice our lives as our best men did between 1940 and 1945'. This kind of language is mainly used in what Berntzen and Sandberg call 'motivational framing', that is, texts with the aim to rationalize and legitimize opposition and mobilize supporters.

In his Manifesto, Breivik tends to opt for more extreme versions of the interpretations and statements made by the Norwegian anti-Islamic movement. He describes islamization as 'starting with the demand for hallal food and ending with genocide'. He amplifies the threats described by the movement, and as the Manifesto progresses, he increasingly opts for violent options. In the first two books of the Manifesto, violent solutions are outnumbered by peaceful solutions (approximately 45 mentions versus just over 20). In the third book, he mentions violent solutions on more than 150 pages and ends more or less with scenarios where violent resistance, warfare and terrorism are the only viable options.

The main point of the analysis by Berntzen and Sandberg (2014) is that an ideology explicitly opting for democratic and non-violent solutions but that is also ambiguous due to the prevalence of specific metaphors can lead to extreme viewpoints and extremist acts.

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that the problem seems to be growing rather than receding; that is, the terrorist threat has grown since 9/11 and not declined. But, as noted by Taylor, science has also not been particularly successful at controlling other forms of violent and/or criminal behaviour. This all goes back to the distinction between explanation versus prediction.

Explanation versus prediction

With hindsight, it often seems easy to explain why an individual has turned to political violence. That also applies to explaining why an individual

becomes involved in crime or becomes a famous football player (to give two very different examples). There is, however, a major difference between retrospective *explanations* of behaviour and the *prediction* of future behaviour. Our ability to predict human behaviour is limited because we are always dealing with complex processes in which individual, social and societal factors interact with one another. Sageman's question (2014) what leads a person to turn to political violence? is an extremely broad question, and some argue that it is not only broad but also unanswerable (e.g. Schmid, 2014; Schanzer, 2014). The literature since 9/11 has certainly increased our *understanding* of people who turn to political violence and terrorism, but it remains difficult to *predict* who will turn to violence and terrorism – and when.

In sum, our understanding has increased, but this does not mean that we can offer an adequate diagnostic tool to predict *who* will turn to violence and *when* or that we can identify a fixed number of antecedents affecting an individual decision to opt for violence or a fixed number of stages that people go through when they decide to turn to political violence. It seems unrealistic to try to find a universal model to predict the decision to opt for political violence.

Terrorism, hysteria and civil rights

It is inevitable that we discuss the issue of the limitation of civil rights in this final chapter. There are large numbers of radicalized individuals, but only a very small fraction is likely to turn to violence. As argued by Sageman (2014), the intelligence community displays an inevitable bias, resulting in a substantial number of false positives. This focus on (even remotely) possible terrorist plots is not likely to offer much help in distinguishing the extremely limited number of true (violent) positives from the vast majority of those who talk violence but do nothing. Sageman calls this 'terrorism hysteria' and also notes that many young men are being convicted after having been provoked to do things that result in convictions of terrorism.

There are two sides to what Sageman calls terrorism hysteria. On the one hand, this bias most likely helped to detect several serious terrorists' attempts in the West over the past decade and must have saved hundreds of casualties. On the other hand, this bias has also resulted in practices that are in conflict with existing civil rights. Sageman (2014) argues that governments are likely to exaggerate the number of terrorist plots that have been prevented and that this more or less precluded a serious discussion about the delicate balance between security and civil rights (see also Wilkinson, 2014). A further drawback of the many false positives is that quite a few individuals are convicted on the basis of limited evidence and/or actions that were provoked. It might well be that some of these convicted men radicalize

in jail and pose a more serious risk to society than before they went to jail (see e.g. Jones, 2014; Mulcahy, Merrington & Bell, 2013; Silke, 2014).

Conclusions

As argued in this book, explanations for political violence tend to vary greatly, but we are now more aware of a number of generalizable concepts that help to understand the processes of radicalization and should also help to design efforts to prevent people with radical views to opt for violence. We also know more about societal factors that increase the likelihood of terrorism. As indicated in the Global Terrorism Index (2014) mentioned earlier in this chapter, *political climate* and *intergroup cohesion* are prime determinants of the level of terrorism within a country. Not surprisingly, the role of intergroup polarization, political climate and perceived legitimacy of the state, as well as perceived justice, has been discussed at length in this book.

We now have a better understanding of *why* and *how* terrorism develops, and that applies to both the rise and decline of specific movements. Obviously, this knowledge should eventually also help to reduce the likelihood of terrorism and help to increase the likelihood of people opting for non-violent solutions. That, however, is not the same as providing a diagnostic tool to identify individuals with 'terrorist potential'. Predicting extremely rare events is difficult, even in circumstances when all data are available and shared. Where does this leave us? Of course, counterterrorism efforts remain of crucial importance; intelligence gathering, policing, and military force can help to contain the problem (and often do), but they are not going to solve the problem of terrorism. The perspective presented in our framework does not offer short-term solutions. Acknowledging the processes described in this book and an increased awareness of the perspective of both majorities and minorities should help to reduce the likelihood of polarization and radicalization and help to prevent people from opting for violent solutions in order to achieve their aims.

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