European Expert Network on Terrorism Issues

Annual EENeT Conference 2013

in Cambridge/UK

Terrorism and Extremism:
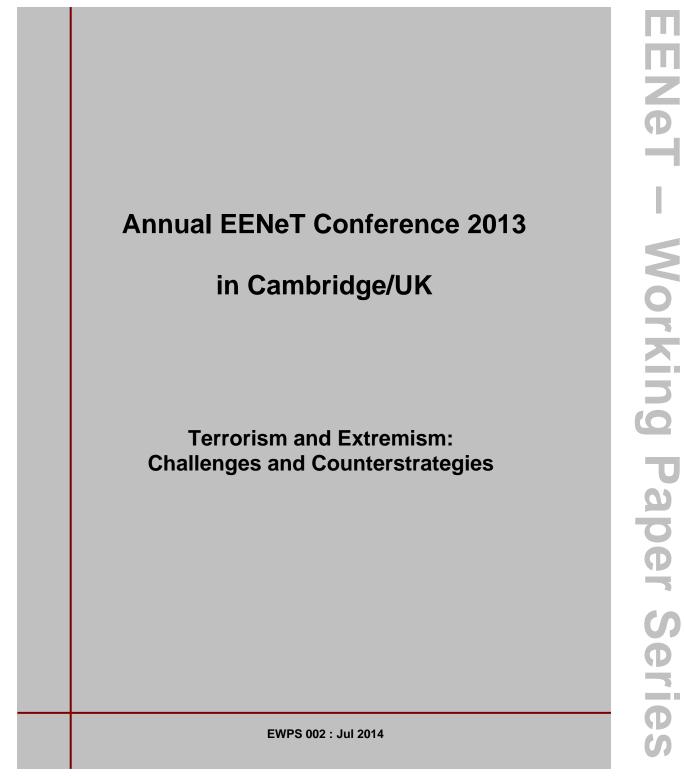### Challenges and Counterstrategies

EENeT – Working Paper Series

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About the European Expert Network on Terrorism Issues

The EENeT is an independent, non-partisan consortium of terrorism experts from European law enforcement agencies / relevant authorities and the field of science
It is dedicated to a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency analysis and research which is seen as a prerequisite to provide comprehensive insights into the complexity of the phenomenon "terrorism".

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Editorial Remarks

Dear Reader!

This 2nd volume of the EENeT-Working Paper Series (EWPS) documents some of the presentations which were held and discussed on the EENeT-conference 2013 in Cambridge. Thanks to the generous financial support of the bpb (German Federal Agency for Civic Education) and the organisational support of RAND-Europe, and thanks to the stimulus given by the EENeT-conference 2012 in Budapest, the conference in Cambridge was fully packed with a broad spectrum of multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional contributions covering a broad diversity of actual topics and issues in the field of (countering) terrorism and extremism.

We are certain that the participants of the Cambridge-Conference would agree that the presentations and discussions were thought provoking. A lot of issues were raised and stimuli were given which were fruitful to reflect on with regard of ones own practice – regardless if this practice is taking place in the domain of security institutions, academia, politics or civil society.

The papers put together here reflect the content wealth of the conference. The thematic span reaches from individual deradicalization (Daniela Pisoiu) up to questions of online deradicalization, (Harald Weilnboeck), from extremist and terrorist engagement in the real world like actually Syria (Michael Kowalski) up to the dynamics of terrorist internet forums (Manuel Torres Soriano). Methodological approaches to analyse, to map ideologies (Andreas Armborst) and to predict political violence (Miroslav Mareš) were touched, as well as gender aspects concerning political activities among Salafist women (Iris Kolman) and a theory based exploration of right-wing violent extremism (Maarten de Waele) were put onto the agenda of the conference. Moreover, the discussion about human rights violations within the realm of counter-terrorism efforts (Harald Giessmann) is picked up.

Although a couple of presentations could not be released because they were classified, this EWPS-issue reflects the multiperspectivity of the EENeT. We wish an exciting and fruitful reading.

Mechthild Hellbach – Dr. Uwe Kemmesies

Individual Deradicalization and Disengagement

Dr. Daniela PISOIU
Researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (Germany)

The presentation was initiated with several conceptual delineations: deradicalization (as a matter of change in beliefs) vs. disengagement (which refers to behavioural change only); individual vs. group disengagement and voluntary vs. involuntary disengagement. The presentation focused on theories dealing with individual voluntary disengagement. The understanding of disengagement in this context includes both a behavioural and a cognitive dimension, whereby it emphasizes the first and draws in this sense on the criminological concept of desistance. Another conceptual point was the process nature of disengagement: the continuity and change of cognitive and behavioural patterns in relation to radicalization processes, its non-unidirectional nature, and the fact that there are several phases involved, as well as possible transitions from one milieu to the other and relapses.

The presentation further argued that the approaches to individual motivations and processes of disengagement from terrorism can be traced to theories and concepts pertaining to several disciplines: psychology, sociology, criminology, and international relations. It also differentiated between types of factors which are specific to disengagement and those which are the reverse of radicalization factors. Integrating disengagement factors within the existing, broader social science literature is of both theoretical and practical relevance, given the, in the meantime, stark proliferation of empirical findings which result in an ever increasing list of possible disengagement factors. Beyond the issue of reducing complexity to core mechanisms and their application in easily implementable measures and counselling methods, there is the benefit of using existing findings on broader socio-psychological and political mechanisms in the particular case of disengagement work.

With respect to individual motivation to disengage, there are, on the one hand, factors which are specific to disengagement: first of all some which have to do with the nature of terrorist environment (exhaustion and burn-out, 'things are going too far', disillusionment with the inner workings and activities of the group), as well as factors which parallel the life-course perspective in criminology: age, career prospects and personal future, family and responsibilities. On the other hand, there are a series of disengagement

factors which mirror the radicalization ones: relative deprivation – on the reverse, the failure to achieve the stated goals, or indeed the (partial) achievement of goals; cognitive dissonance, for example, the contradiction between means and ends (whereas one also needs to consider the opposite mechanism of cognitive consistency); belonging and negative identity (the weakening of ties with the members of the group, or substitution of these referents with external ones, and identification with the 'enemy'); and positive incentives, which can be material, but most of the times immaterial (status, recognition, self-esteem), and which in the reverse occur as negative social sanctions, or loss of status and position within the group, for example.

With respect to the disengagement process mechanisms, it could be first established that there are none specific to disengagement in the literature, whereby there are a series of concepts from the criminological literature on secondary desistance which could usefully be applied to disengagement, such as: de-labelling processes, geographical relocation, personal reassessment and re-evaluation of one's past, change of explanatory self-narratives to positive and change-oriented frameworks. Two main reverse disengagement mechanisms could be outlined, namely the role of social networks and cognitive restructuring. Social networks are vital in radicalization processes, concerning the establishment and consolidation of affective ties, the adoption of radical frames, and as a source of positive reinforcement (as also outlined in the social movement and differential association theories, and the cult literature). Reverse mechanisms are the weakening of social control within the group, or the increase in salience of external social environments. Cognitive restructuring, which also occurs in radicalization processes, can work on the reverse in the form of doubt, up to questioning the frames of total institutions, as well as cognitive change pursuant to imposed behaviour.

After outlining the theoretical ramifications of motivations and processes of disengagement from terrorism, a series of research gaps were outlined: methodologically, the lack of systematic qualitative and quantitative research. Studies so far have relied on anecdotal evidence, secondary sources or single interviews. An exception to this is the currently running study carried out by Prof. John Horgan 'Pathways, Processes, Roles and Factors for Terrorist Disengagement, Re-engagement and Recidivism', at the Centre for Terrorism and Security Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, which looks at 30 interviews with former violent extremists and 90 terrorist autobiographies. Some of the theoretical gaps are: the low level of abstractness with respect to factors and mechanisms (an aspect that this

presentation and the author's broader research program have tried to address), the lack of conceptualization of disengagement by types and phases, and the still missing application of criminological theories mentioned earlier. A series of empirical aspects of disengagement are also in need of further research: non-unidirectional developments (such as relapses, transitions to other types of radicalization, transitions to and from crime, role change); the differences in exit at various stages of the radicalization process; the systematic exploration of individual motivation, and in particular silent vs. public exit, the role of the social and discursive environment, including the enemy, and comparative research more broadly.

A final dimension that was addressed in the presentation was the relevance of deradicalization and disengagement research for policy. First, the question was posed whether it is realistic and doable to aim for deradicalization, given the difficulty to measure and empirically achieve a total change in worldview, or rather settle for disengagement. An important related point here is of course the question whether the state should concern itself with the ways people think, as opposed to the ways people act. Second, the argument was made that researching on and promoting disengagement is relevant in the context of both prevention and intervention work. 'Formers' can more credibly account of the realities of the scene, as well as deconstruct ideological contents, hero images, and justifications for violence. In terms of intervention, it is well known that exit processes are marked by high potential vs. high barriers, the latter in terms of group pressure to conform, but also the difficulties to integrate back into society. Understanding the individual and contextual factors which facilitate disengagement are important for early recognition and promotion, devising adequate intervention and re-integration measures by disengagement type, phase and individual motivation, as well as producing adequate political and social action and discourse.

A more elaborated version of this paper can be consulted in one of the chapters of the forthcoming book *Theories of Terrorism. An Introduction*, Routledge, 2014
http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415826082/

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A test of these theories on a concrete case of exit from radical Islamism can be consulted here (in German):
Individuelle Loslösung von Radikalisierungsprozessen. Stand der Forschung und eine Überprüfung bestehender Theorien anhand eines …*Ausstiegsfalls aus dem militanten Salafismus*, in: Journal EXIT-Deutschland. Zeitschrift für Deradikalisierung und demokratische Kultur, 2/2013, S. 241-274 (with Daniel Köhler).
http://journals.sfu.ca/jed/index.php/jex/article/view/33

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Jihad Travel to Syria from the Netherlands: Analysis and Response

Drs. Michael KOWALSKI
Analyst of the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (Netherlands)

The threat posed by jihadist travellers who leave the Netherlands to fight in Syria (and by their potential return) remains one of the main elements of the current threat assessment. Although not every person to return from a jihadist conflict zone poses a threat, it should be remembered that these people are not only coming back with radical ideas; they are also traumatised and fully prepared to use violence. It is important to consider that prospective jihadist travellers that have been stopped before departing can also pose a threat. Some Western jihadists have become involved in domestic conspiracies after being prevented from reaching their destination abroad. With a total of 50 to 100 jihadists having set out for Syria as of early June, it would appear that growth has stagnated. On the basis of the available intelligence, it is reasonable to conclude that the Netherlands do not differ in this respect from comparable Western countries.

Here actual summary of the 36th edition of the Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands (DTN36), June 2014

Threat level

The threat level in the Netherlands remains 'substantial', meaning that the chance of an attack is real. The jihadist threat remains the most important factor in the threat assessment. Although much remains unclear about the background of the terrorist attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels on 24 May, all information suggests that it was carried out by a jihadist who had fought in Syria. This attack illustrates the threat posed by jihadists who have fought in Syria and are now returning to Europe. This threat factor was the main reason for the NCTV to raise the threat level from 'limited' to 'substantial' in March 2013. The attack in Brussels, which was carried out by a French national, demonstrates that the threat posed by returning jihadists affects all of Europe. It also shows that returnees can carry out attacks in places outside their countries of origin. This means that all Syria 'veterans' returning to

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Europe could potentially constitute a threat to the Netherlands. It is also troubling that Dutch jihadists are still heading to Syria to join jihadist combat groups there, like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, aka ISIS) – a full two years after this phenomenon began. The military progress made by this terrorist organisation in Iraq in June 2014 is a dangerous development, in part because it could serve to draw in Western jihadists. The emergence of a new generation of European jihadist fighters in Syria and possibly Iraq, including Dutch nationals, is becoming a long-term security problem for Europe, and for that reason it will remain a key focus of the authorities in the years ahead.

The conflict in Syria and Iraq is not the only international factor contributing to the jihadist threat, however. In various countries in the Middle East and North Africa, jihadist groups are exploiting local conflicts, instability or weak governments. The deterioration of the security situation in Libya is another negative trend. Here, local and international jihadist terrorist organisations are likely to become more active and to use the country as a base of operations for activities elsewhere.

Less visible in the media, but still relevant to the terrorist threat, are the examples of non-jihadist terrorist attacks. In both the United States and the United Kingdom, there were a new number of incidents involving violent individuals on the far right. There are currently no indications for such an attack in the Netherlands.

International context of the jihadist threat
The conflict between ISIL, on the one hand, and Jabhat al Nusra (JaN) and the al Qa'ida core, on the other, continues to drag on. In early January 2014 this internecine struggle escalated when JaN took part in the armed offensive by various rebel groups against ISIL. This mounting conflict between ISIL and JaN/the al Qa'ida core is not confined to Syria; indeed, it has sparked major tensions within the international jihadist movement as a whole. It is notable that a significant proportion of individual jihadists and radical websites express support for ISIL. At the same time, there has also been a great deal of criticism of the head of the al Qa'ida core, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who some contributors to online jihadist forums believe should step down. Given that attempts at reconciliation have thus far proved unsuccessful, the global jihadist movement may be on the point of a schism. This is unlikely to have any effect on the threat to the West. Both JaN/the al Qa'ida core and ISIL are willing and able to mount terrorist attacks in the West. It is even possible that

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these groups will make more of an effort to attack the West, motivated by a desire to raise their own international profile.

International threat: Africa and Asia

In early June 2014 tensions between Sunnis and Shiites in *Iraq*, which have long been a cause for concern, began to spiral out of control. The jihadist group ISIL, in collaboration with other Sunni groups, has managed to gain control of a large part of the country. Images of atrocities committed by ISIL have led to a wave of outrage around the world. These developments could spark a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq. The advances made by ISIL also magnify its appeal to foreign jihadists. Because ISIL is also active in neighbouring Syria, there is now a large swath of territory in the Middle East under the control of jihadists. In a safe haven like this, foreign jihadists can gain combat experience and also prepare attacks to be carried out in the West even more than is now the case. Moreover, it is already clear that ISIL and its sympathisers around the world, including those in the Netherlands, are exploiting the group's military advances in jihadist propaganda and thus raising the group's status within the global jihadist movement. This could cause more Western jihadists to join ISIL than is now the case.

In *Syria* the armed struggle waged by rebels (jihadists and other insurgents) against the Syrian army and the regime's foreign allies continues unabated. The Assad regime is profiting from deep divisions within the armed opposition and the hostility of various groups to ISIL, but so far, it has been unable to deal a decisive blow to its enemies and end the conflict. In the face of mounting pressure, ISIL has been forced to withdraw deeper and deeper into north-east Syria, which remains a stronghold. For the al Qa'ida core it is strategically important that JaN has a strong position in Syria and thus function as a counterweight to ISIL. JaN and ISIL are also active in neighbouring *Lebanon.* Both groups were responsible for a number of major attacks on Hezbollah targets in the country. This is because this Shiite group from Lebanon supports the Syrian regime in its fight in Syria against the insurgents. For the time being, however, tensions between the various ethnic and religious groups in Lebanon have not escalated.

In *Egypt* the offensive undertaken by the authorities at the start of 2014 could not prevent a new series of attacks in Egypt and the Sinai. Those attacks, which mainly targeted the Egyptian army and police, were carried out both by known terrorist organisations like Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABaM) and by various new groups. The threat is directed not only at the Egyptian security apparatus and infrastructure, but also at the country's most important sources

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of income: tourism, the Suez Canal and foreign institutions in Egypt. As a result, Westerners and Western interests are also possible targets. ABaM is in possession of manpads (man-portable air-defence systems) and has the capability to use them, and this poses an ongoing risk to civil aviation in the region. In *Libya* the security situation is worsening due to the fact that there is no longer any effective functioning state authority. Against that backdrop, local and international jihadist terrorist organisations are likely to become more active in the country and/or to use Libya as a base of operations for activities elsewhere. The prominent jihadist Moktha Belmokthar is believed to be living there, possibly with a view to preparing an attack on Western targets in the region. In *Yemen* the violence perpetrated by Al Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) continues unabated, despite the many drone attacks. The threat to security authorities and Western interests in Yemen remains high.

The unremittingly brutal actions of the jihadist terrorist group Boko Haram in *Nigeria* has led to an international outcry and the involvement of the international community. So far, the group's activities have been confined to the country itself. The possible involvement of Western countries in fighting Boko Haram could cause the group to take a greater interest in Western targets in the region as a whole. Both rebel groups and jihadist groups continue to have a negative impact on the security situation in *Northern Mali*. The city of Gao has also been attacked a number of times. The Dutch contingent of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is stationed in this city. Al Shabaab's position in *Somalia* and *Kenya* remains strong. Other countries with troops in Somalia to fight al Shabaab have reason to fear retaliatory attacks by this terrorist group. The attack by al Shabaab on a French restaurant in *Djibouti* on 24 May 2014 only reaffirms this threat.

The Afghan Taliban did not succeed in disrupting the presidential election in *Afghanistan* of April and June 2014 with major attacks. However, in the preceding weeks, the group did carry out several attacks that specifically targeted foreigners and the international community in Afghanistan.

International threat: Europe and North America
The terrorist threat to Europe and North America is still clear and present. The most important component of this threat is the migration of jihadists from nearly all Western countries to Syria, and the associated risks posed by returnees. The period under review saw the first terrorist attack in Europe carried out by a returnee from Syria. The 29-year-old French national Mehdi N. is suspected of shooting several visitors to the Jewish Museum in Brussels

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on Saturday 24 May. This attack claimed the lives of four people. It is as yet unclear why the suspect specifically targeted this particular site. This is not the first time that Jewish locations have been the target of jihadist terrorist attacks. The State of Israel and the Jewish people, as alleged enemies of Islam, are an integral part of jihadist propaganda. The attack in Brussels confirms both the transnational character and the seriousness of the current jihadist threat. Not only did this man carry out an attack outside his country of origin; he also travelled through various countries on his way to Europe after leaving Syria. This suggests a strong desire on his part to remain below the radar of the European security agencies. At this point it is unclear whether the man, who French authorities claim fought with ISIL in Syria for a year, was directed to carry out the attack by a foreign group or decided himself. European security agencies have already concluded that jihadist groups in Syria are recruiting, training and tasking (Western) jihadists who can then be sent (back) to Europe to carry out attacks. In the period under review an attack in France by a returnee from Syria was thwarted by the authorities. He was arrested on 11 February in the vicinity of Cannes. A search of his flat revealed home-made explosives (IEDs), which he presumably intended to use for an attack in France.

The British Office for Security and Counter-terrorism (OSCT) reports in late 2013 that the threat posed by individual right-wing extremists in the UK has risen in the past year. There was at least one such example in the UK in during the period under review, though the authorities were able to track down the man in question in time. In May 2014 a 42-year-old British national was sentenced to 10 years in prison for planning terrorist attacks. The defendant, who held neo-Nazi and anti-Islamic sympathies, aimed to blow up mosques in the north-west of England using home-made explosives. He came to the attention of the police when he used a work computer to look up manuals on making explosives. The US, too, was once again the scene of an act of violence by an individual with far-right views. In Kansas a Vietnam veteran and known racist shot dead three people in the belief they were Jewish.

Threat to the Netherlands

Developments relating to jihadist travel to Syria remain the most important factor in the current threat assessment. The terrorist attack in Brussels demonstrates, as stated in the previous DTN, that European nationals returning from Syria can be active in places besides their country of origin. If another country were to have a higher target profile than their own, the returnees might be inclined to go there.

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All Syria 'veterans' returning to Europe could potentially also pose a threat to the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Dutch nationals continue to leave the Netherlands and join up with jihadist groups in Syria. Thus far, this trend shows no sign of being slowed by the internal jihadist struggle between JaN and ISIL. It is troubling that Dutch nationals continue to make the journey to Syria, two years after the phenomenon was first identified. Ongoing jihadist propaganda and the allure of Dutch jihadist fighters in Syria continue to appeal to newly radicalised young people. These forces are generating a continuous stream of jihadist travellers, some of them women. Dutch women in Syria may not take part in combat, but after returning to the Netherlands, they can be just as committed to jihadism as their male counterparts, and thus pose a threat to this country.

Previously, there had been indications that Dutch jihadists in Syria were involved in serious violence in that country. The past six months saw the first suicide attacks carried out by Dutch nationals: one in Iraq and one in Syria.

Dutch jihadist propaganda continues to be spread mainly by Dutch jihadists via social media, and is therefore easily accessible to the public. This propaganda is meant to encourage young people to fight for the jihad in Syria and other jihadist conflict zones. In addition, the character of jihadist propaganda on Dutch-language jihadist Facebook groups is becoming increasingly violent, glorifying suicide attacks in jihadist conflicts zones. A risk of such content is that is can embolden its audience to act on their radical ideas.

Returning jihadists not only pose a threat in terms of the danger of attacks or radicalisation; some may commit criminal offences to gather funds for jihad. This is clear from the arrest of three people in the Netherlands in the first half of 2014 on suspicion of planning violent robberies in the Netherlands for the purpose of financially supporting international jihad.

Violent radicalisation and polarisation

The profound changes in the radical Islamic landscape in the Netherlands over the past two years should be seen in the context of international developments. Until around two years ago, radical Islamic groups scarcely had a platform in the Netherlands. Developments elsewhere, principally Syria, have created a favourable climate for these kinds of groups. The use of violence by jihadists in Syria is regarded as legitimate by radical Islamists in the Netherlands. By putting propagandist spin on current events, they are attracting young people to the jihadist world-view and expanding their potential following. For example, in their propaganda Dutch jihadists are

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exploiting the sectarian conflict in Syria and Iraq to demonise Shiites. For now, this propaganda does not include any specific, direct threats to Dutch Shiite individuals or organisations, though it does increase the risk of greater polarisation and possible escalation between these two branches of Islam in the Netherlands.

During the Nuclear Security Summit (held in The Hague on 24 and 25 March 2014) and in the weeks leading up to it, left-wing extremists mounted a number of 'lightweight' extremist actions. Asylum rights extremists, who are typically the most active group on the far left, engaged in a relatively small number of (unlawful) actions. However, there are no indications that the small group of hardcore asylum rights extremists intend to swear off unlawful activity for the long term. Once again, animal rights extremists have remained relatively quiet. No large-scale illegal protest activities have taken place. During the period under review, protests against gas extraction in the province of Groningen have intensified. The government's plans to modify gas extraction practices and provide compensation have not dissuaded hardcore members of the opposition from further action. Earlier this year "GroenFront!", a nationwide radical environmental group, became involved in the radical opposition to gas extraction. As a result, protest actions since January 2014 have become both more professional and uncompromising.

It has been a decade since far right activists were capable of mobilising large groups of people for their activities. Even so, various right-wing extremist groups have been trying to exploit current events for their own gain. In announcing demonstrations, the far right has sought to capitalise on social polarisation, the events in Deurne (see below) and the parole of Volkert van der Graaf (the murderer of Pim Fortuyn). All these initiatives attract media coverage, which is part of the point, but as before, they seem to have little impact on the growth of right-wing extremism as a movement. Such initiatives can, however, provoke confrontations with ethnic minorities or activists on the far left, or further exacerbate social polarisation between various segments of the population.

The polarised discussion of Islam in general and the position of the Moroccan-Dutch community in particular has flared up in recent months. In this polarised, heated climate, local incidents are being given extensive coverage in the national media and the public debate. A robbery on 28 March at a jewellery shop run by a married couple in Deurne, in which the two Moroccan-Dutch robbers were shot dead, led to heated debate on the limits of self-defence and the overrepresentation of young male ethnic Moroccans in criminal activity. During that same period, reports emerged of a possible

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assault on a woman dressed in a niqab in Eindhoven, and the mayor of The Hague, Jozias van Aartsen, publicly denounced racist violence in the seaside neighbourhood of Duindorp. Although there is no causal connection between the two incidents, many commentators have claimed there is a link, namely racism in the Netherlands. This could lead some segments of the population to believe they are being attacked. The polarised climate should therefore not simply be regarded as an innocuous outlet for emotion; it also entails risks, since certain 'trigger events' can unleash an unpredictable chain reaction of response and counter response.

Resistance

In the Netherlands there is a strong aversion to ideologically motivated violence. This also applies to the Muslim community in the Netherlands. There are, however, concerns about that community's long-term resilience. The previous DTN highlighted signals that resilience among Dutch Muslims is coming under increasing pressure due to the intimidating conduct of a small group of jihadist young people. This type of intimidation was again apparent in the run-up to the municipal elections of March 2014. Dutch jihadists vigorously protested against the participation of Muslims in the elections. These jihadists are convinced that Muslims should neither vote nor stand for office because of what the former perceive as the un-Islamic character of elections. Despite this, in the end, the targets of this intimidation were, as far as can be determined, not influenced by it and chose to participate in the elections anyway.

Online Deradicalization? –
What Can and What Cannot Be Done via Internet and Social Media

Dr. Harald WEILNBOECK
member of the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN)

Everybody demands so-called "counter narratives" for the internet. Yet, first-line practitioners claim that "one cannot deradicalize on-line, anyhow!" Indeed, various misconception are current:

Some assume counter-narratives are self-evident: some base educational material and interviews – anything goes. Others want to learn from extremists' web-activities and "counter-radicalize" through pro-democracy values – forgetting that counter-manipulation cannot be the solution. Few attempt to employ humour, even ridicule, ignoring that extremists lack humour and ridicule/mockery is a most explosive strategy. Modest approaches seek to communicate government's good-will and refute misinformation and propaganda, admitting that this won't impress extremists. Yet, others produce victims' testimonials to deter terrorism – and are unaware that radicals and hate crime perpetrators may react highly averse because they are generally victimized themselves and in strong psychological denial. Everybody seems to believe that extremists' communications need to be "countered", "contested", "combated", "dismantled" and "ideology, logic, fact" be applied – disregarding that extremists feed on being countered. Therefore, the respective cognitive-behavioural programs are largely ineffective and just produce obedience.

Empirical good-practice research in deradicalization and media underlines: What is needed is open-process, relational, and voluntary interventions. These operate in non-directional, trust-based, confidential, and exploratory ways – and are narrative, as opposed to argumentative: I.e. they engage in first-hand, co-narrative accounts of personally lived-through experiences and actions. Hence, they are dialogue which is not easily compatible with media approaches.

Moreover, so-called "extremist narratives" are not really narratives at all. In fact, recruiters avoid narrativity and/or are largely incapable to narrate personally. In turn proper narrativity is exactly what is needed. Since deradicalization comes down to building the clients' ability to articulate lived-through experiences – which then cannot be countered anyway. Hence, the

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term "counter narrative" is a most unfortunate misnomer. It needs to be replaced by "narrative interventions" or "deradicalizing narratives" – as opposed to "counter messaging" and "campaigning".

The "Deradicalizing Narratives" project (EDNA, Berlin) concluded: (1) Sustainable media approaches need to observe the principles of offline good-practice. (2) They must always be systematically embedded in an off-line intervention process. Here a 20-80 principle applies, i.e. 80% resources go into the off-line. (3) Production procedures should be designed as counselling interventions, i.e. are maximally participative. Clients get training in narrative interviewing and video/audio editing, they explore deradicalizing principles, co-produce their own tool for future offline use, become facilitators, and keep all the rights.

For more, please read

Do we really need "counter narratives"? And what would that be anyway? – The narrative approach to audio-visual media in deradicalization and prevention of violent extremism and hate crime.
http://www.cultures-interactive.de/publikationen-en.html

Prediction of Political Violence in East Central Europe

Dr. Miroslav MAREŠ
Associate Professor, Masaryk University

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present predictions of political violence. The paper was elaborated in the context of the project "Methods of Predicting Long-term Geopolitical Development in Central Europe". It is funded by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic and carried out by the Masaryk University, particularly by a team of scholars interconnected with the study program Security and strategic studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Masaryk University (the author of this paper is manager of this project). In this paper several prediction elaborated by this team are described. They are confronted with the real development in cases where is it possible.

Methodological approaches towards prediction

Methodological approaches used within the project are inspired by contemporary approaches in intelligence studies, in the basic form summarized in the Tradecraft Primer (U. S. Government 2009) and in the depth-form explained and analyzed in the publication by Heuer and Pherson "Structured Analytic Techniques for Intelligence Analysis" (Heuer, Pherson 2011). Heuer and Pherson divide analytic methods in the field of prediction into four main categories:
o   Expert judgment;
o   Structured analysis;
o   Quantitative methods using expert generated data
o   Quantitative methods using empirical data (Heuer, Pherson 2009, pp.23-24).

In the context of the above mentioned research of the Masaryk University team the first two methods were used. No data were available data for using the third and fourth methods.

The future development of political violence is only one of many issues researched within the project. A broad spectrum of internal as well as external security threats is analyzed and forecasted in a general regional perspective as well as in relation to politics of individual countries of the region. It is important to mention that all factors and issues are directly or indirectly

interconnected. Selection and certain limitations of the forecast are necessary.

The choice of methods and techniques depends on the substance of the problem researched and on the capability of the research team. Using various techniques, three specific predictions are presented in this paper. Firstly, the forecast of left-wing extremist violence in Slovakia depending on expert judgment (and confronted with later expert analysis) , secondly the forecast of the impact of Breivik´s terror act on possible successors in East Central Europe, using the analysis of competing hypotheses, and, thirdly, the activities of the Caucasus emirate on Central European territory using Team A/Team B technique.

Prediction of political violence in Slovakia

Paper „Contemporary situation and perspectives of left wing extremism" by Miroslav Mareš was presented on 30 September 2011 at the conference „Extremism" in Košice, organized by Police corps of the Slovak Republic. In its final part the future development of left wing extremism in Slovakia was forecasted. Expert judgement based on an analysis of contemporary development trends was used as the only approach.

In relation to political violence, the following events and trends were forecasted:

o Propagandist support of far-left terrorism, threatening and possible attacks against "capitalist representatives";
o Violent actions labelled as fascists;
o Mass violent protests interconnected with economic crisis;
o Support for Roma-protests, including violent activities;
o Eco-sabotages and violent actions against people labelled as "enemies of nature or animals" (vivisectors, hunters, circus owners etc.)(Mareš 2011).

In the course of more than two years after the presentation of this prediction it can be compared with the real development. Propagandist support for far left terrorism was relatively limited, with the exception of support for imprisoned anarchist militants in Greece (demonstrations, campaigns) and one sabotage arson attack against toll gate generator – as a symbol of capitalist infrastructure (Mareš, Výborný 2013, pp. 33-34). Violent actions against right-wing extremists were carried out, including street attacks or arson against their private cars. Mass violent protests in 2012 were caused not dominantly by economic crisis, but due to a corruption affair of the previous government. Left wing extremists participated in these mass demonstrations (including violent demonstrations), partially interconnected with the Anonymous movement. However, they were not the dominant part of the participants and

militants (Mareš 2013, pp. 74-75). Left-wing extremist support for Roma protests was relatively limited. One serious case of animal rights terrorism was reported from Eastern Slovakia. On 28 December 2012 perpetrator Ladislav K. posed a bomb in McDonalds restaurant in Košice. Nobody was injured, however, the explosion was very dangerous. The same perpetrator threatened vivisectors several months before (Húska 2012). Two from five events and trends were in a short-time perspective confirmed, two only partially and one in a very limited form.

Prediction of Breivik´s successors in East Central Europe

The study „Analysis competing hypotheses" written by Miroslav Mareš and Petra Vejvodová from 2011 includes also prediction of possible successors of Anders Breivik in East Central Europe (using this technique, of course). On the base of „A Tradecraft Primer" (U.S. Government 2009, p. 14-17) several hypotheses and arguments for its support were discussed. The following four hypotheses were selected for the final analysis:

H1: Breivik will have a mass number of successors in the ideological way as well as in the form of the attack;

H2: Breivik will have a limited number of successors in the ideological way as well as in the form of the attack;

H3: Breivik will not have successors;

H4: Breivik will have successors in the form of the attack (mass murder shooters), but they will not be familiar with Breivik´s whole ideological legacy.

Arguments included in the following table were discussed in relation to all hypotheses:

Arguments for support of selected hypotheses

	H1	H2	H3	H4
Breivik's manifest is too long for potential successors	--	--	+	?
Worsening of economic crisis can support such acts	+	-	-	+
Declared successors were not ideologically entrenched	-	+	?	+
No traditions of such form of terrorism	-	-	+	?
Breivik´s act will be assessed as non-effective by potential successors	-	-	+	?
Breivik´s act caused massive media attention	+	+	-	++

Source. Mareš, Vejvodová, 2011, p. 18

The hypothesis that Breivik´s successors can be similar in the form of the attacks, however, without clear ideological affiliation, was identified as the most likely (40%). The hypothesis that no successor will be active in Central Europe ranked second. The third and fourth hypotheses about small or mass number of successors finished in the third, respectively fourth places (15%).

The current development in East Central Europe supports the outlined tendencies. Several psychopathological individuals were inspired by Breivik (all were detected before they carried out the planned acts). The so called "Polish Breivik" intended – according to published information – to attack Polish politicians, but not because of "cultural Marxism" or "Islamization" as Breivik (Janků, Mareš 2013). However, growing Islamophobic militancy in East Central Europe can be a warning signal for a change of the previous development (Mareš 2014).

Prediction of the impact of the Caucasus Emirate on Central Europe

The impact of the most important Caucasian jihadist Group – the Caucasus Emirate – was in 2013 researched, using Team A/Team B technique (U. S. Government 2009: 19-21). Members of both teams were PhD. or Master study program students. They were focused on research of terrorism or Caucasus or post-Soviet studies or Middle Eastern studies. The jury consisted of academic and former intelligence experts.

Team A defended the statement that the Caucasus emirate will carry out terrorist activities in Central Europe, mostly against Russian diaspora, however, also against targets symbolically affiliated directly with Central European countries. Logistical rear will be established in this area and the interconnection with global Jihadism will be typical of the Caucasus emirate. Team B defended the statement that no direct terrorist attacks will be carried out in Central Europe by the Caucasus Emirate, only supporting networks of organized crime with clan´s connection to terrorist networks will be active in this area. The jury declared support for the arguments of Team B (Mareš et all. 2013, p. 89-91). Current development shows that the Caucasus Emirate focuses on targets in Russia and Caucasus (Šmíd 2013). However, the interval for valuable evaluation of the effectiveness of this prediction is too short.

Conclusion

Research on prediction of political violence can be carried out by various methodological ways. Experience from forecasting in East Central Europe by the team of the MU is useful for a precise identification of factors for the

expert judgment and for a possible use of analysis of competing hypotheses in relation to the terrorist motives. Team A/Team B discussion can generate interesting arguments for a careful assessment of the future interconnection between two geopolitical regions from the point of view of spread of terrorist activities.

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Mapping Ideologies.
Structuring the Information of Radical Ideologies

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Credibility, coherence and plausibility of an ideology are prerequisites for mobilizing support and legitimizing political violence. The jihadi movement has understood this lesson better than any other terrorist movement nowadays. An essential part of Strategic Counterterrorism Communication therefore is to identify weak spots in the argumentation of ideologues in order to debunk the cognitive premises under which individuals resort to political violence and terrorism.

The workshop held at the EENeT conference in Cambridge introduced an easy-to-use analytical tool for mapping the thematic structure of radical ideologies. It presented a typology by which different topics in jihadi (or other radical) media can be classified. These categories discriminate on five hierarchical levels between abstract and concrete information in the propaganda. (These levels are: discourse, frame, narrative, theme and issue). On each hierarchical level a sub-set of substantial categories represent the various grievances, claims, positions, and sentiments, which taken together stipulate the ideology of a social movement. 95 different categories represent, in a nutshell, the complex thematic structure of jihadi ideology. It illustrates that al-Qaida has created a complex worldview that touches upon a plethora of theological and political issues.

Using these informational units an analyst can perform a wide range of quantitative and qualitative assessments such as:
o   how much space is dedicated to which topic in the media?
o   how does the accentuation of certain topics change over time; between different splinter groups; and in regard to a certain country/region?
o   Which positions, claims and grievances are backed up by theological evidence and/or factual evidence?
o   how is a single issue embedded in the wider thematic structure of the ideology?
o   Single topics can be isolated from the media and scrutinized for special investigative purposes.

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o If necessary, categories can be collapsed, modified, extended or deleted by the researcher.

o Minor changes in claims, grievance and positions as well as fundamental ideological shifts can be identified (e.g. before and after the Arab spring).

o Through relational content analysis it is possible to obtain more generic information about the content of ideologies: which narratives, themes, and issues are interrelated to what degree (strength of correlation), and what is the interrelating content about? These "meta-themes" and their latent pattern are not visible by just reading the manifest content of the media without the aid of content analysis software.

Knowledge about these questions provides the intellectual ground to counter radical ideologies and to strip them of their plausibility and credibility.

For more information, see:

Armborst, Andreas (2013): Jihadi Violence – A study of Al-Qaeda's Media. Criminological Research Report 159 of the Max-Planck-Institute for foreign and international criminal law.

http://www.mpicc.de/ww/de/pub/forschung/publikationen/krim/k_159.html

Explaining Right-wing Violent Extremism: Exploring the Role of Perceived Injustice and Propensity to Violent Extremism (Flanders/Belgium)

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The events of 9/11 gave rise to a huge increase in studies on political violence and terrorism. Horgan (2005) and Bouhana & Wikström (2008) postulated that the increase in studies has not led to an increase in the understanding of political violence. Horgan argues that theoretical cloudiness around the concepts of extremism and terrorism impedes our understanding of the phenomenon and its causes. However, some scholars have attempted to integrate this fragmented knowledge in a theoretical framework. In the present inquiry we build upon insights derived from Sampson and Laub's theory of cumulative disadvantage, Tyler's model of procedural justice and Wikstrom's recently developed Situational Action Theory. Following SAT, we define political violence as acts of moral rule-breaking stated in law and distinguish between 'causes' and 'causes of the causes' of political violence. The present study focuses exclusively on the antecedents and consequences of propensity to violent extremism. Propensity to violent extremism is a consequence of moral support for violent extremism and low self-control. The present inquiry highlights three main aspects. First, it analyses the effect of distal and more direct causes of moral attitudes that are relevant to the explanation of self-reported political violence. Second, we analyse the impact of moral support for right-wing extremism on both self-reported political violence and self-reported political vandalism. Finally, this contribution also focuses on the processes that support one to become a member of a disruptive group. The analyses are based on a large-scale web survey among adolescents and young adults in Flanders, Belgium.

For more information, please read

"Right-wing extremism and the use of violence: What is the role of perceived injustice and moral support?" by Drs. Maarten De Waele and Prof. Dr. Lieven Pauwels**,** paper presented at the Update in de Criminologie VII, 20/03/2014.

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Other work in progress:

De Waele, M. (in progress). *Moral support for right-wing extremism among Flemish adolescents.* GERN Summer School Series, 2.

De Waele, M. (in progress). *Youth involvement in political violence. Why do social bonds, perceived legitimacy and perceived discrimination matter?* International Journal of Conflict and Violence.

Women Activism from a Non-Normative Perspective –
A Case Study of Social and Political Activism Among Salafist Women

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Historically, the appropriate role of women and their position in society has been a strategic terrain in the battle between secularists and Islamists "for the soul of Tunisia" (Haugbølle & Cavatorta 2012: 23). Both Bourguiba and Ben Ali instrumentalized "the Tunisian woman" to legitimize their regime, to stifle dissent and, foremost, to show that Tunisia was heading in a modern, secular, and democratic direction. For the suppressed Islamists, on the other hand, an important aspect of reclaiming their "lost" Arab Muslim identity was to restore the "ideal" identity of Islamic women. Consequently, women organizations were often caught in the middle of political and/or social forces – generally Western/secular versus traditional/Islamist – competing for state power and control (Othman 2006; Grami 2008; Cavatorta & Haugbølle 2012; Haugbølle & Cavatorta 2012). In the current social and political context, where seculars, Islamists, and Salafists are fighting for political and religious legitimacy, it is unsurprising that "the Muslim women question" has once again become a prominent topic of debate (Dalmasso & Cavatorta 2012); a debate in which women from all ideological backgrounds actively engage.

The legitimate acknowledgement of Islamic practices and movements and the rising tide of conservatism since the ousting of Ben Ali have created renewed and heightened concerns among non-Islamist women that their active participation in both private and public life may be challenged, harming the comparatively good civic status they currently enjoy. At the same time, a voluntary and self-imposed faith-based conservatism is clearly emerging among Tunisian women as well (Tchaïcha & Arfaoui 2012: 215-217). Notably, an increasing number of women have become socially and/or politically active within a Salafist framework. Women's active support for Islamist movements is often considered a paradox, since Islamists not only have a dubious track record when it comes to supporting women's rights but, from a liberal perspective, their social agenda also seems at odds with the gender roles that women should theoretically favour (Dalmasso & Cavatorta 2012). However, if we wish to increase our knowledge of women activism in all its

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aspects, it is necessary to go beyond the "seemingly natural" Western liberal conceptions of gender and religion.

There is in fact little knowledge of how women who are active within strict Islamic frameworks conceive of "the Muslim women question". Women activism within a Salafist framework poses a conceptual challenge to secular-liberal thought, and feminist theory in particular, because it goes against the liberal notion of human agency that focuses on the political and moral autonomy of the subject. From this perspective agency equals the capacity of an individual "to realize one's own interests against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles (whether individual or collective)" (Mahmood 2012: 7-8). As such, women should be naturally opposed to the practices and commands as embodied by Islamist movements as they sustain principles of female subordination. Thus, in liberal and feminist thought, individual agency is conceptualized in terms of subordination and subversion, making obsolete forms of activism whose ethical and political status do not follow the logic of repression and resistance (Mahmood 2012: 2,14). Be that as it may, not all forms of women activism can be framed within liberal, leftist, or feminist emancipatory projects. There are different definitions of feminism and, more importantly, different assumptions about how to best approach the goal of emancipating individuals from patriarchal structures (Halverson & Way 2011: 506). This is particularly the case when analyzing activism with a religious character.

Little to no research has been done on what actually motivates women to engage in strict Islamic associations or parties. In general, studies of why people support conservative strands of Islam deal with the preferences and beliefs of Muslim men, while Muslim women may base their choice for a certain belief system on a different set of constraints and incentives (Blaydes & Linzer 2008: 586). It is known, however, that more conservative or fundamentalist Islamic groups often target women – their rights and status in the family and society as well as the female body – in their strive to Islamize society through the collective enforcement of moral codes. These groups wish to re-organize how citizens practice their social life, including their family life, through the implementation of what they consider to be "truly Islamic" or "authentic Islamic values." As such, the control of women, their social roles, movements and sexuality form the core of Islamic fundamentalists' view of gender roles and relations in the "pristine Islamic society and state" which they seek to establish (Ohtman 2006:341). Since many contemporary Muslim women actively engage in the politics of cultural identity and authenticity, it is

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not surprising that they may support, accept, and promote traditional views about women and gender relations (Ohtman 2006: 343).

The findings of a three months fieldwork trip in Tunis indicate that Salafist women activism may in fact not be so different from the activism in which women from different ideological persuasions are engaged. At the same time, the analysis of individual understandings of Salafist women indicates that there is also a great variety among them. This variety comes from the diversity of attitudes towards personal religiosity in combination with the diversity in issues they wish to address through their social and/or political activism. In the end, it is a combination of many interrelated factors that influence what kind of associations women decide to join. From a Western liberal perspective it is difficult to understand why women would join movements or parties that promote traditional gender roles, because the women who decide to become active in conservative frameworks have a different conception of gender, religion, equality, and women's rights. These varying conceptions, in turn, result in alternative forms of gender consciousness, diverging approaches to women empowerment, and different ways of emancipating women from patriarchal structures. Most importantly, Salafist women do not wish to break free from religion to become politically and morally autonomous. Instead, they believe Islam protects women's interests and that their liberation is within Islamic faith. For these women Islam is clearly a way of life, which means they would consider it a restriction of their personal freedom if Islam were relegated to the private space of individualized belief.

For the Salafist women who participated in this particular study, activism in a strict Islamic framework is empowering in three ways: (1) within this framework they can live by the Islamic principles and values they wish to live by; (2) it gives them the opportunity to promote an Islamic state that is organized according to puritanical Islamic values and a strict interpretation of sharia. In this future state their conception of women's rights will be respected; and (3) their participation unintentionally challenges the patriarchal structures on which these movements are based. For these women it is not contradictory to join conservative associations that promote traditional gender roles, because their needs and interests are informed by the same conservative belief system. This group of women does not seem to feel restricted in their possibilities; they clearly consider themselves active participants in shaping their definition of need. Another interesting point is that all Salafist women who participated in this research are very much removed from the idea of embracing violence to obtain their goals. It is quite the

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contrary, these women are determined to show their environment, both domestic and international, that "true Islam" actually leads to peace, social justice, and women's rights.

In this context it is important to note that the findings presented in this short article are extracted from a broader research on women activism in Tunisia and thus based on a limited number of participant observations and personal interviews undertaken in a relatively short period of time. Nevertheless, the findings do indicate some interesting trends with regard to gender activism within Salafism. In addition, it confirms that if we wish to increase our knowledge of women activism in all its aspects, it is paramount to ground this understanding on the actual perceptions of these women and to go beyond the "seemingly natural" Western liberal conceptions of gender and religion. In other words, it is important to study gender without assigning superiority or supremacy to the Western construction of gender. The study of women agency in religious contexts is generally locked in a binary framework of "religious versus secular", "modern versus traditional" and "moderate versus extremist." Because this approach is insensitive to the ambiguity and fluidity of identity, varying strategies of engagement, and the alternative framing of ideas, it lacks explanatory power when it comes to the varying forms of individual agency in different social and political contexts (Tadros 2011).

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The Dynamics of Terrorist Internet Forums

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The present article aims to contribute to the debate on the organizational nature of the threat posed by jihadi terrorism. Quantitative and qualitative data are provided on the dynamics explaining the creation, evolution and disappearance of the main jihadi Internet forums during the period 2008-2012. The article argues that, far from taking the form of a horizontal structure in which the main actors are a network of followers, the terrorist presence on the Internet is in fact a hierarchical organization in which intervention by formal terrorist organizations plays a crucial role. This conclusion is reached after an analysis of the origins and functions of the forums, their links with terrorist organizations, their internal structure and the processes accounting for their stability in cyberspace.

The jihadi forum universe is a clearly hierarchical one. At the top of the pyramid are a small number that stands apart from the rest in that its members receive materials directly from organizations that perpetrate acts of terrorism and from reputed ideologists. This privileged status makes such forums a point of reference for others, which merely replicate the content originally appearing in these top-level websites.

Cooperation ties with terrorist organizations are sufficient reason in themselves to explain the success or failure of the platforms. Forums benefiting from "patronage" can attract considerably more Internet users than can others. Supporters of the jihadi message on the Internet generally choose to participate in virtual communities that can demonstrate that they are trusted by the mujahideen. Admission and growth rate dynamics can be explained by Metcalfe's law[1], according to which the usefulness of a network increases at an accelerating rate as each new user is added. Endorsement from a formal organization allows swift and sustained growth in the number of registered users.

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[1] A principle coined by Bob Metcalfe, the inventor of the Ethernet protocol that wires together computers.

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Forums that do not distribute jihadi propaganda exclusively find it extremely difficult to offer a differentiated "product" which is attractive to radical Internet users. Despite replicating considerable volumes of materials from other sites, some websites are unable to attain the minimum threshold of users required for a virtuous circle.

Links between formal terrorist organizations and the Internet forums are based on relationships of mutual trust. Due to the risk that some of the virtual communities have been infiltrated by intelligence agencies or other actors with hostile intentions, jihadi groups are constantly suspicious and few forums succeed, therefore, in forging collaborative ties. The links between forums and organizations tend to arise in three different ways.

First, the administrator or administrators can have formal links with the terrorist group and operate the forum as part of their activities within the organization. The forum is not the group's official website, however. Rather it is a self-appointed initiative in support of all mujahideen.

Secondly, the forum members can be individuals who, although not formally part of terrorist organizations, have a network of social relations that facilitate contact. Such cases include individuals who travel to scenarios where jihadi groups operate openly and visibly (e.g. Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc) but who fail in their bid to join the armed struggle. However, their credibility and network of contacts mean that their on-line activism is endorsed by the collaboration received from formal groups.

Finally, the forum operates initially without collaboration from terrorist groups yet, over time, acquires credibility which attracts interest from formal groups, who take the initiative to offer their collaboration.

For more, please read
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http://www.ijcv.org/earlyview/270.pdf

Counterterrorism vs. Human Rights: A discussion of implications in non-international armed conflicts.

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Abstract

Common understanding exists that terrorism is a threat to fundamental human rights. Counter-terrorism per se, however, is not the silver bullet answer to countering this threat. A worldwide discussion about human rights violations under the flag of countering terrorism is reflecting this asymmetry. The need for protecting freedom from becoming securitized reminds of the fact, that not everything what seems to be functionally justified is legal, and not everything what seems to be legitimate is acceptable in ethical terms. Against this background this paper reflects on the political implications of Non-International Armed Conflicts on the human rights of affected people, combatants and non-combatants alike. It sheds light on the consequences of blurring boundaries between these two types of actors for the protection of human rights. And it will discuss some preliminary conclusions for protecting human rights in counterterrorism efforts.

Dilemmas of Terms

Governments who face 'power contenders' or rule challengers on their territory tend to impose the terrorist label on challengers who pick up arms to support their case. There is no difference of attitude whether or not those governments are based on democratic or autocratic rule. We can find this approach in many countries, from Spain to Turkey, from Mali to the Philippines, from Sri Lanka to China. The self-declared global alliance against terrorism that had formed after 9/11 seemed to unify very diverse state actors by just levelling the difference between all kinds of resistance against state rule, from rebellion against autocratic regimes to the fight for secessionism because of flagrant violation of minority rights, from violence based on religious or ethno-political fanaticism to the use of terrorist means for political or criminal purposes.

Ironically, in doing so governments could refer to the system of International Humanitarian Law (in the following also IHL), which pays a premium on States as subjects to International Law, i.e. being as such sovereign and therefore legitimate actors according to the international law and owners of the monopoly on the use of force. The legal quality and a legitimacy of insurgents (or what is called Armed Non-State Actors/ANSA according to the Geneva Convention) is largely dependent on the determination and recognition by other members of the international community. Here is where the problems start. Being armed is not the crucial feature of power contenders in an asymmetric conflict between a governing authority and a political opposition. The terminus 'armed' only refers to specific forms of the interaction between the conflicting parties, i.e. essentially the use of force by using arms. Most asymmetric conflicts, however, are characterised by different forms of interaction with using arms only being one of which. In the language of International Humanitarian Law the notion of Armed Non-State Actors serves to distinguish between combatants and 'non-combatants', i.e. civilians. Yet what may make sense in legal terms to differentiate actors from each other may blur the dividing lines between legitimate and illegitimate actions and actors in a social and political conflict. That is why a closer look at the distinct political and social character[s] of the manifold power contenders is necessary.

The scope of 'rule-challengers' or 'power contenders'[2] may range from defected or dissident units of statutory forces to resistance and liberation movements, from terrorist organizations to warlords and criminal gangs. As stated before, after 9/11 'terrorists' has become an often used catch-all phrase for these very different types of actors. Since the term is also used in the legal language of the International Humanitarian Law a flat transfer from the language of a politically loaded practice is highly problematic. The question must be asked if stigmatised non-state groups can be considered against such background per se less legitimate than the 'state actors' that they rebel against, particularly if these groups use armed means for legitimate self-defence against an oppressive regime. The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights has referred to the responsibility of all conflict actors by stating: "ANSAs are not the only ones to violate humanitarian norms. In many armed conflicts, states violate the most fundamental rules of human rights and humanitarian law" but the report also

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[2] Power contenders or rule challengers contend the power of a ruling regime or government and seek regime change. They enjoy the support of the majority of their ethnic or social constituency, are formally organized and understand the use of force as a legitimate tool of resistance. They are ready to respect the Rule of Law once the political change they strive for has been attained. In: Dudouet, Véronique, Hans J Giessmann, Katrin Planta (eds.) (2012), Post War Transitions. Participatory Peacebuilding after Asymmetric Conflicts, London: Routledge, p. 4)

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stipulates at the same time: "… there is a particular problem with ANSAs respecting international norms offering protection to civilians in armed conflict. Concern over a lack of compliance by certain ANSAs with respect to particular norms has been widely raised by states and international organizations."[3]

While the analysis rightly concedes that armed oppositions may not be alone in violating human rights, it still considers them in comparison to states to be the bigger challenge in the context of international law. It fails to reflect on the distinct character of the very different asymmetric violent conflicts, especially in comparison to other armed conflicts, and on their various root causes and drivers. It also fails to distinguish between political guerrilla and nihilist terrorism. And it blurs the boundaries between different social and political actors by focussing on the mode of action instead on the motivation of actors. The causes of many protracted asymmetric violent conflicts are rooted in social, economic and political conditions, in a lack of justice for large sections of the population, in the fragility of state institutions, in a weakly (if at all) implemented rule of law and – more often than not – in the permanent violation of human rights by state authorities. It is this environment which usually brings about despair amongst those who are oppressed and which may eventually transform into violent unrest and sometimes into open insurgency. Addressing the protection of human rights in asymmetric violent conflicts is more than just a legal challenge. If the formally ruling actors of a state do not bind themselves voluntarily to constructive contributions to resolving social and political conflicts but are instead as such an intrinsic part of the problem, the responses to these conflicts must tackle their underlying causes and must be inclusive and collaborative. This may include political support and if necessary even armed protection by the international community, in full compliance with the UN Charta and the international covenants on human rights, as fleshed out in the recent UN policy under the framework of R2P (responsibility to protect).

A general conclusion to be drawn is that the equation of armed resistance against a state rule and terrorism is too simplistic to capture the problems of human rights violation in non-international armed conflict. It seems to be misleading to search for an ultimate legal answer for what is essentially a political problem. The legal language of the International Humanitarian Law as it was established as a response to the World Wars in the last century and adjusted at the heights of the Cold War may not be sufficient to frame a

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[3] Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (2011), *Rules of Engagement. Protecting Civilians through Dialogue with Armed Non-State Actors*, Geneva, p. 7.

sound framework for (nonviolent) political and social transformation of conflicts within fragile states. It is therefore of utmost importance to understand the dominant political nature of non-international armed conflicts before drafting and implementing sound counter-insurgency and/or counter-terrorism strategies.

Asymmetric Violent Conflicts and the Typology of Actors

Asymmetric violent (and at least partially armed) conflicts between governmental authorities and insurgents are, of course, not a new phenomenon. The legal focus on violent conflicts has been, however, most often on a more narrow definition of 'armed' conflicts. According to a study by the Danish Institute of International Affairs, asymmetric armed conflicts share the following common features:

o   The combat is fought by armed non-state actors against the authorities of the state, and by the government authorities against those actors as well as against ethnic or religious groups residing on the territory of the state;

o   Armed campaigns are fought between statutory forces and pockets of regulars, irregulars or local warlords with only few decisive battles and no clear-cut outcomes (low-intensity warfare);

o   A clear distinction between the state, the non-statutory armed units and the civilian population dissolves, because all conflict parties rely on support from (different) parts of the same population. Thereby, civilians often become targeted because they are labelled by the conflicting actors combatants or collaborators merely by virtue of their collective identity;

o   Since the distinction between combatants and civilians becomes blurred or is indistinct, the brunt of suffering in asymmetric armed conflicts is borne by civilians.[4]

Political opposition actors tend to firmly reject any labelling such as terrorists, armed or non-state actors because they consider such terms to be imposed on them for simple power-related reasons in order to denounce their political ambitions. Ironically, in strict legal terms, the use of labels such as "terrorists" by governments in order to stigmatise non-state insurgents may even be in full compliance with the rules enshrined in International Human Rights Law, in as much as sustained insurgent activities are considered to be simply expressions of "internal disturbances" and are not qualified and recognised as 'armed conflicts' according to international law. In short, asymmetric

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[4] Danish Institute of International Affairs (1999), Humanitarian Intervention. Legal and Political Aspects, Copenhagen, p. 32.

conflicts are not only expressions of clashes of interests, but may also be battles over the use of terms.

Looking at the different actors who challenge the state's rule by eroding the monopoly on the use of force, three major categories can be identified: (1) Actors with clear political objectives (regime change, secession etc.) who are ready to take on political responsibility and who are ready to renounce the use of force if nonviolent alternatives become equally or more viable. Power-sharing is considered a political option as are fair and democratic elections. Rule challengers that fit into this scheme are for example ELN in Colombia, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Free Syrian Army, the MLNA in Mali, and the PKK in Turkey and Iraq. (2) Actors who also have declared political objectives but who openly refuse to alternative power-sharing models, who want to install an autocratic regime of their own or who seek secession at any cost. The Islamic State (IS/ISIS/ISIL) is an example for that, also al-Shabaab militias in Somalia, the Taliban in Afghanistan, Abu Sayyaf in the Southern Philippines or Jemah Islamiya in parts of Indonesia can be considered representative examples for this type of actors. Also the pro-Russian separatists may fall into this category. However the separatists do not fight for an own and independent rule but they hope to access the scattered territories under their control in the Eastern Ukraine to the neighbouring Russia. (3) Actors who are politically interested in controlling certain territories or pass routes for reasons of economic profit, social welfare and influence. The M-23 rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo, AQIM in the Maghreb and also some loosely knit groups in Algeria, Mauretania, Mali, Yemen or Colombia can be mentioned in this context.

Occasionally the boundaries between these categories are not always crystal-clear and the lack of coherence that can be observed in many cases may assign smaller factions of them to other categories as well. More importantly, the conflict dynamics may contribute to shift organizations from one category to the other dependent on achievements or the failure of strategies. Different from criminal organizations the resistance and liberation movements seem to be united primarily by their opposition to a present rule or by their objective of simply challenging the authority of the state over parts of its territory. But their aims about how to organize society, let alone to run the state by themselves, are often very diverse and are not yet developed during the insurgency. More often than not these organizations seek to get support for their political ambitions and their willingness or reluctance to use force seems to be dependent on the support they are able to attain.

Non-International Armed Conflict and Human Rights in Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism

The protection of human rights permanently is characterised by a tension between a legal norm (*de lege ferenda*) and the implementation of the norm in reality (*de lege lata*). Normativity in reality is confronted with the uncertainty in the international system, namely the balance of power and diplomacy. Much evidence has been given over the course of history that shows how states have tended to obey only those legal norms which they consider to be beneficial to them, while they have more often than not readily circumvented the same norms if they were disadvantageous to them. Counterterrorism is an example of this practice. Either the legal framework was changed for reasons of functional efficiency or an excessive interpretation of legality became implicitly accepted due to 'justified' reasons.

The optional derogation of a full compliance with international human rights law[5] in cases of 'public emergency', which is declared by the sanctioning state itself, is only one example of many. The tension between existing norms and the reality materialises on different levels of interaction between the ruling authorities of states and opposing social and/or ethnic groups on its territory. Some of the apparent contradiction in this context will be revealed and discussed in the following section.

International and National Legal Orders

In the international arena, legal norms, in order to be effective and lasting, rest on the consensus and recognition amongst the members of the community of states. A legal norm as such may evolve either from customary law – i.e. applies to all states in the same way – or it is codified by treaty law – which means that it establishes a rule of behaviour for all signatories to the legal act. In a nutshell the international legal order is a self-help construct for sovereign states that depends on the willingness of the states to enforce this order to mutual benefit.

On the national level, however, the legal order is not a comparably cooperative venture but rather imposed by a ruling majority either through autocratic measures or based on democratic decision-taking. Authorities that are run or mandated by the state are responsible for enforcing the law. Under

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[5] According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 4.1., see United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2011), *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed*

such circumstances the state can be expected to tolerate a certain degree of injustice as part of its rule (at least as long as it does not affect its own constituency). If tensions within society deepen and injustice increases, the difference between the legal norm and reality becomes sharpened and the legitimacy of state rule will decrease.

Combatants vs. Non-Combatants

Civilians in 'armed conflicts' enjoy a privileged status of protection according to the provisions of IHL but despite this it is increasingly civilians who bear the brunt of suffering in such conflicts, as has recently been the case in, for example, Chechnya, Congo, Sudan, Libya or Syria. One of the reasons is that in asymmetric violent conflicts the boundaries between civilians and combatants vanish, another reason is the fact that civilians are often intentionally targeted by a party to the conflict. Armed attacks can be carried out by uniformed or civilian persons. But there are also examples for blurred boundaries on the side of statutory forces. More often than not war crimes committed by own soldiers seem to be tolerated by some governments. For example, war crimes against civilians such as mass rapes or ethnic cleansing have been used by the Yugoslav Army to intimidate and debase the enemy in Bosnia and Croatia.

Ironically in most cases of violent conflict it is rather the insurgent side which is eager to maintain a visible distinction between the civilian and the military spheres. The nominally inferior protesters or insurgents use primarily hit-and-run tactics and thus their civilian constituency is often left un-protected against revenge attacks on behalf of the state. Drawing a legal or at least politically recognised demarcation line between the military and civilian parts of resistance intends to avoid arbitrary sanctions against one's own constituencies by the military or by the state police and seeks to prevent more or less open acts of collective punishment by the government.[6]

A more visible line between civilians and 'combatants' would help the insurgent combat units gain recognition as legitimate 'armed actors'. The Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols to the Conventions (in the following: PI and PII), in order to provide incentives to armed combatants to comply with the rules of Humanitarian Law, extended the privileges provided to regular forces also to other types of 'armed actors', namely to

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Conflict, New York and Geneva, in: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_in_armed_conflict.pdf, pp. 47. (Accessed 11 March 2013) (in the following: OCHCR 2011).
[6] Collective punishment is a war crime according to the GC (GCIV Art. 28 and 49, PI Art. 51.7).

members of "all organized armed forces, groups and units which are under a command of a party for the conduct of its subordinates" (PI Art. 43.2[7]). But being granted privileges also means accepting obligations. As discussed earlier, according to the common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and, where applicable also PII[8], International Humanitarian Law related to non-international armed conflicts applies to all 'armed actors' and parties to such a conflict, whether state or non-state. Moreover, customary rules such as distinction and proportionality have also become widely accepted as applicable to all kind of armed actors (OHCHR 2011: 24).

Finally, a demarcation line between military and political action may also give greater flexibility to the opposition for using both violent and nonviolent options of pressure vis-à-vis the government. This said, however, a caveat must be made. Inferior armed units, both statutory and non-statutory, have frequently also tried to use 'civilian shields' to hide and protect their military installations against mortar, airborne or missile attacks. This became visible in the two Iraqi wars (1990/91 and 2003) and has also been practiced occasionally by Hamas in the Gaza strip and by Gaddafi's forces in Libya. Such acts are clearly labelled as war crimes, as stipulated in the Geneva Conventions (GCIV Articles 28 and 49; PI Art. 51.7).

State vs. Non-state Armed Actors

As I have argued before, from a governmental perspective 'non-state armed actors' are often considered a challenge to legitimate rule. There are examples, however, especially in fragile states and in states with divided power over territories, where these 'non-state' actors seek to carry out control on behalf of the state (or its activities are at least tolerated by the state) and where these actors use force against dissident parts of the population. Some of the atrocities that have been carried out in Syria during the last couple of years were apparently conducted by 'non-state' paramilitary forces but with the consent and support of the ruling regime. Such forces are seemingly mandated to use all brutality while the government denies all legal responsibility. In legal terms any activities undertaken and crimes committed under the direct direction and with the knowledge of the state can be attributed to the state's responsibility.[9] In reality, however, a clear order by the government is often difficult to prove.

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[7] At the same time it was stated that compliance with IHL was a prerequisite to recognition. By that the lawmakers tried to separate legitimate armed resistance from anarchic or criminal uses of violence.

[8] PII is more restrictive than the GC by addressing only "organized armed groups".

[9] *Yearbook of the International Law Commission (ILC Yearbook) (2001)* Vol. II, Part II, Geneva and New York: United Nations, p. 26 (in the following ILC Yearbook).

The two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions stipulate that civilians may lose the privilege of protection under IHL in armed hostilities only 'for the duration of their direct participation' (PI, Art. 51.3, PII, Art. 13.3.). 'Direct' participation, however, has always been a vague term and the two Protocols have not eliminated the difficulties in clearly distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants in non-international conflicts. Is the armed opposition in Syria protected under IHL? The governmental authorities claim to represent the population as a whole and therefore justify any oppressive acts against opposing ethnic or religious society groups by pointing to the state's raison d'être and to their natural rights and derived duties of "restoring" the overall public order (ordre public) or national security. The use of force against opposing constituencies such as those in Homs or Hula seems to have been intentionally random in order to intimidate and punish the constituencies of the insurgents although collective punishment is strictly prohibited according to international law (PI Art. 75.2 and PII Art. 4.2.). But as long as the unrest is not recognised as armed conflict under IHL, the government in Damascus is legally able to claim its right to counter-insurgency. The growing international recognition of the rebels as the only legal representation of the Syrian people has changed the rules, but has also made the rebels accountable for any atrocities carried out in their name or under their protection.

Non-international Armed Conflicts vs. Internal Disturbances

The term 'armed conflict' is as disputed as the term 'armed actors'. The Geneva Conventions have not explicitly defined the term 'non-international' armed conflict. It is widely assumed, however, that the term refers to armed confrontations between the armed forces of a state and the armed forces of non-governmental armed groups, or amongst armed groups other than forces of a state (ICRC 2008, PII Art. 1). But often the latter type of actors cannot be clearly captured by definitions nor can organizational structures be identified. Networks and cells illustrate the fluid nature of combat units and a military defeat of such units may not bring an end to the use force, because new cells become recruited steadily.

The Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols use the term 'armed conflict' instead of 'war' in order to capture violent conflicts in which other actors than state actors are involved. But it is used for only two categories, international and non-international conflict. The Geneva Conventions seek to restrict primarily the means and methods of warfare and to limit the effects of

armed conflict and thus do not apply to internal disturbances or to random acts of violence.[10]

It is widely assumed that most customary rules of IHL are applicable to any use of arms in conflict. But this is where the problems start: many states consider that IHL, except for basic humanitarian rules, is not applicable to armed conflicts within states with 'non-state' actors as long as these conflicts are confined to 'internal disturbances'. It is assumed that an 'armed conflict' can be distinguished from 'disturbance' by applying indicators such as the number of deaths through warfare in a determined time-span or the grade of organization of combatants. But different statistics work with different indicators and a common understanding on universal validity has not been achieved. Much reference is made to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, which has defined an 'armed conflict' as a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory, in which the use of armed force is between two parties, one of which is the government of a state, resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths within the time-span of one year (Wallensteen & Sollenberg 2001).[11] The ICRC has stipulated that, apart from a minimum intensity of organization, non-governmental groups involved in the conflict must be considered as 'parties to the conflict' (ICRC 2008).

However, there is no authority with special responsibility for determining whether an armed conflict is taking place or not (OHCHR 2011: 39). At the end of the day it is the responsibility of states, respectively the UN Security Council (which also consists of states) to call armed disturbances such as bloody riots, armed unrest, small-scale insurgencies or even massacres armed conflicts under IHL; otherwise they remain subject (only) to International Human Rights Law.

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[10] The two categories are composed of four types of armed conflict with different rules to be applied: (a) international armed conflicts to which the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Additional Protocol I of 1977, the Hague rules and other legal principles apply, (b) international armed conflicts in the form of wars for national liberation, as defined by Additional Protocol I 1977, (c) non-international armed conflicts according to the regulation of Article 3 Common to the four Geneva Conventions and to customary norms; and (4) non-international armed conflicts as defined by PII; ICRC (2008), How is the term 'armed conflict' defined in international humanitarian law?, Opinion Paper, Geneva (in the following ICRC 2008); see also OCHCR 2011: 33 – 40.

[11] See for details: Wallensteen, Peter & Margareta Sollenberg (2001), 'Armed Conflict 1989–2000', Journal of Peace Research, Oslo: PRIO, vol. 38 no. 5: 629–644.

Conclusions

A formal legal recognition of insurgents as legitimate 'armed actors' (combatants) according to IHL would provide a leverage to the international community to hold both non-state armed organizations and individuals accountable for any violations of human rights on the territories under their control.[12] It would also strengthen the legal basis for counterterrorism and serve the accountability of all affected conflict actors. But such a formal recognition, for example of the legality of an organized armed resistance, would also be a delicate political and diplomatic move for any government, because it enhances the formal legal status of the non-state actors in another country while at the same time weakening the legal status of a sovereign state. The effects of it can be seen in Libya and Syria where some of the insurgents that have been recognised internationally resort to illegal forms of using arms, including terrorist acts against civilians.

A formal recognition may help insurgents to topple a regime and to manage the transition of power to them without knowing if these rebels-turned governments will obey the rule of law; for instance, they may start taking revenge or establishing an authoritarian regime of their own. Poignantly phrased, the international community must respond to the question of whether there were discriminate forms of temporary human rights abuses in asymmetric conflicts which could be "tolerable", dependent on a justifying case.

Can, for example, lynch justice be tolerated against this backdrop, as happened in the case of Muammar al-Gaddafi, because the target of murder was assumed guilty? A sceptical assessment is advised because opening the door and tolerating abuses of human rights will most likely become a slippery slope. The international community, notably the ICC, has not picked up this case in the aftermath of regime change in Libya. Are guerrilla attacks against civilians who have participated in brutal human rights violations tolerable or acts of terrorism? If states ally with rebels against dictators they must take the burden of responsibility for those whom they helped to come to power. This may be another reason why states usually tend to be cautious or sometimes even reluctant to take immediate action when human rights issues interfere

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[12] The ICC Statute offers the opportunity to prosecute any individual responsibility for international crimes such as murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, torture, rape, enforced disappearance, apartheid etc. without any reference to the status of organization. (OCHCR 2011: 76pp.)

with issues of regional security, with sovereignty, and with the territorial integrity of states.

A number of further challenges related to interventions for human rights reasons are obvious. Firstly, very often flagrant violations of human rights that may even escalate into armed clashes are simply neglected by international stakeholders. Since the UN does not have a military structure of its own it is dependent on states that accept mandates on behalf of the United Nations Security Council. This may happen – or not. When Rwanda imploded the international community turned a blind eye to the mass murder. Even crimes against humanity are not a guarantee that the international community will intervene to protect the weaker against the stronger. However, on the reverse side of this challenge, it must also be noted that evidence of crimes committed and the responsibility of individual perpetrators is often not easy to attain, for example in cases of flash-mobs. Sometimes it is also difficult to separate legitimate resistance from intentional provocation and criminal activities. And often both states and state challengers refuse to accept offers by the other side and by third parties to negotiate and rather continue fighting because they hope to get more out of the situation for their own benefit or by morally forcing other states to intervene on their behalf.

A second challenge relates to the question of whether states should comply with international norms strictly and in all cases of non-international armed conflict, even if the same legal norms they are obliged to obey are apparently to their disadvantage and to the advantage of 'terrorists' or other 'illegitimate combatants'. The UN Security Council has stated repeatedly that international terrorism is a threat to international peace and security but the boundaries between terrorism and legitimate resistance have become blurred since states have begun to brand every form of armed rebellion as 'terrorism'. The Chinese government, for example, has frequently claimed it is combating terrorism in the autonomous province of Xinjiang as does the Indian Government in India's Northeast. After 9/11 a number of states have tried to get free tickets to crush resistance movements on their territories just by disguising their attacks as counterterrorism. A state that is legally bound to the Rule of Law may have less flexibility to react to domestic power contenders than those who assume that they need not care about these restrictions for themselves. Should the international community under such circumstances tolerate governments temporarily abstaining or derogating from the norms of international law, as conceded by International Human Rights Law, because of an apparent situation of public emergency, in which their motivation is to protect the life of their people and to prevent public

security being destroyed by terrorist attacks or other forms of direct violence? The heavily criticised treatment of detained Muslim prisoners in some US military camps has become a follow-up indicator of this problem since many of the detainees have been held for more than ten years without being accused of any crime, let alone given a trial. Is the use of military drones and other remotely-guided weapons by the US military against localities in western Pakistan a legitimate action according to Article 51 of the UN Charter because plotters and alleged terrorists have their hide-outs there – on the territory of another state – even if the government of Pakistan considers these attacks illegal? Pakistan has frequently protested against the U.S. attacks, but this has neither had any political impact nor has the U.S. stopped its airborne raids against alleged 'terrorist' hide-outs.

A third challenge relates to the principal legitimacy of a 'humanitarian intervention', even if one of the conflicting parties calls for one. There are two aspects that must be taken into account – the risk of the potential abuse of solidarity by calling for assistance from abroad without legitimate reasons, and the lack of an independent authority to prove the case. Last, but not least, the international community must ask itself and reflect on how to qualify and improve international collaboration, including the enhancement of respect for International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, in order to strengthen the international order and to make its tools more effective.

Most violations of human rights in asymmetric conflicts take place or at least start below the threshold of armed confrontation. The legal distinction between combatants and non-combatants is important in order to protect civilians from the effects of war during armed conflicts. But as this analysis reveals, the distinction becomes counterproductive where the boundaries between civilians and armed actors is blurred. This is a particular challenge for so-called "internal disturbances" which might achieve an intensity which is similar to an armed conflict but which is not recognised to be subject to the rules of international law. In order to strengthen the preventive tools of conflict transformation, the solution for the problem seems to be less in the realm of improving legal norms. The issue is rather about all actors – state and societal, international and also human rights defenders – accepting the political responsibility to tackle threats to human rights proactively and with all nonviolent means.

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List of used Documents and Treaties:

o *Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (GCI)*
o *Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick, and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (GCII)*
o *Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (GCIII)*
o *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War (GCIV)*
o *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, June 8, 1977 (PI)*
o *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Conflicts, June 8, 1977 (PII)*

All quotes from documents in this paper are from the ICRC IHL database (http://www.icrc.org/ihl)
and from the Customary Law database (http://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/home). (Accessed 14 June 2013)

Principles of Good Practice in Deradicalization and Hate Crime Rehabilitation – Including Gender Approaches

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Good practice approaches in deradicalization and hate crime rehabilitation

o … are open-process interventions that do not follow a fixed curriculum or session plan. Open-process work is by definition maximally participatory, exploratory and self-directed by the clients; they require methodological flexibility on the part of the facilitators.

o … are voluntary while clients may be motivated beforehand through interviews (not so much by incentives) and join on the basis of incremental buy-in (dropout must not have any consequences for the client)

o … are narrative, i.e. they facilitate processes of personal story-telling which relate personally lived-through experience and subjectively perceived actions. Narrative approaches steer away from (counter-)arguments, rational discussion and ideological debates.

o … are always based on face-to-face relationship building and are thus predicated on mutual trust, confidence, and personal commitment – and on confidentiality.

o Such interventions are ideally facilitated by external, non-governmental practitioners who have license to act independently within and across statutory institutions. They are part of an inter-agency framework and are supported by governmental staff and state-of-the-art quality-assurance measures. They thus may combine accepting and confrontational modes of intervention.

o … focus on social skills and emotional intelligence – in particular in areas of conflict, anger, shame, and anxiety.

o … . Therefore, good-practice interventions prefer (social) group settings as much as possible (accompanied by one-on-one settings if needed).

o … . Open-process and narrative (group-)work generally leads up to accounts of the clients' actual life-world context, biography, family, and topics around victimization, gender, power and violence, experiences of extremist recruitment; it will also look at personal resources and capacities – and then may eventually be developed towards in-depth

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> violent act narratives in which perpetrators narrate instances of hatred and acts of hate crimes.
>
> o … . Among these topics, gender issues are of particular importance. It has often proven to be more effective to focus on personal concepts of manliness or femininity and foreground issues of sexism and homophobia than engage ideological or religious debates. Hence, European practitioners' experiences throughout the RAN working group on deradicalization (Radicalization Awareness Network) as well as from the Women in Extremism Network (cf. WomEx[13]) and similar national initiatives have taught us …
>
> o (i) that not only men but also women play a crucial role in violent extremism as perpetrators, ideologues and supporters – which requires the need to adopt a gender systemic perspective,
>
> o (ii) that there is hardly any violent extremist, terrorist, or hate crime offender that does not also hold sexist and homophobic attitudes, i.e. manifests highly conflictive gender issues,
>
> o (iii) and that these conflictive gender issues do not only coincide with violent extremist behaviours and hate crimes but are also key psychological driving forces behind them – which requires the development and employment of gender focused methods.
>
> o … . Furthermore, good-practice intervention will and should also touch upon political and religious issues – as well as on personal and social grievances, without however fostering too much argumentative discussion or ideological debate. This may also bring up certain media narratives/films, fictional or documentary, which can be used in the intervention.
>
> o … . Hence, open-process group-work of this sort is supported and encouraged by state-of-the-art group facilitation and elements of civic education and …
>
> o … may include representatives of family, community and civil society that are invited into the intervention from outside at certain instances.

For more, please read

The Narrative Principle: Good Practice in Anti-Hate Crime Interventions, within the Radicalization Awareness Network. In: Right-Wing Extremism in Europe Country analyses, counter-strategies and labour-market oriented exit-strategies. Ed. by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation 2013, p. 379-408.

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[13] Implemented by Cultures Interactive (NGO), Berlin: http://www.cultures-interactive.de/womex.html.

in German:

Das narrative Prinzip: Good Practice-Interventionen im Kontext des Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN). In: Rechtsextremismus in Europa Länderanalysen, Gegenstrategien und arbeitsmarktorientierte Ausstiegsarbeit.
Hg. von der Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2013, p. 397-428.

Why should deradicalization and prevention interventions be attentive to gender issues? In: http://www.cultures-interactive.de/tl_files/publikationen/engl/2014_Weilnboeck_Deradicalization-Prevention-Intervention.pdf