THE CONFLUENCE OF RESEARCH TRADITIONS ON TERRORISM AND RELIGION. A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION

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RESUMEN	ABSTRACT
Los acontecimientos de septiembre de 2001 y los de Afganistán, Irak y otras partes del Medio Este ha resaltado las relaciones entre religión y terrorismo. Sin embargo, inicialmente lestos campos de investigación estvieron separadsos. ¿Cómo puede el estudio de religión, especialmente de las nuevas religiones y las religiones extremistas, ayudar al estudio de terrorismo? Este artículo intenta realizar una revisión de las relaciones de estos campos e identificar algunas perspectivas fructíferas de investigación. Ambos campos han pasado de un enfoque individual a un modelo complejo que integra factores personales, de grupo y colectivo y han pasado de una orientación completamente psicológica o sociológica a una perspectiva psicosocial, examinando las interacciones entre los niveles múltiples de causalidad. El reciente trabajo de Jerrold Post sobre las motivaciones terroristas y organizaciones, el de Catherine Wessinger sobre los tipos de creencias milenarias y el potencial violento entre nuevas religiones, así como la investigación de otros autores resaltan el cambio hacia una teoria interaccionista y contextual de la violencia.	The events in September 2001 and in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East have highlighted the overlap between religion and terrorism. Traditionally, however, the scholarly study of these areas have been separated. How can the study of religion, especially new religions and extremist religions, help inform the study of terrorism? This paper attempts to overview some of the overlap between these fields and identify some fruitful research prospects. Both fields have progressed from a focus on individuals to a complex model incorporating personal, group, and societal influences. Both fields have moved from a purely psychological or sociological orientation to a social psychological perspective and examines the interactions between multiple levels of causation. Recent work by Jerrold Post on terrorist motivations and organizations, by Catherine Wessinger on types of millenialist beliefs and the potential for violence among new religions, as well as research by other scholars highlights the move towards an interactionist and contextual theory of violence.

Key words: terrorism, religion, pychological studies, multiple levels of causation

What motivates terrorist behaviors? Many people viewed the events of September 11, 2001 as an aberrant event conducted by deranged individuals. However, the history of terrorist activity extends back at least 2000 years and repeated psychological studies have not identified any common

causative pattern of psychopathology. Many people also viewed the events of September 11th as indicative of an inherent violence in Islam or in extremist cults, but this public perception contrasts with the widespread condemnation of the attacks at the time by Muslims worldwide. Similarly, most new religions, popularly labeled as "cults" are misunderstood, and are nonviolent, even though they are often perceived otherwise. Clearly there is an intersection of religion and terrorism that may help explain the social psychology of terrorist acts. This paper will attempt to explore research on attributes of terrorists and terrorist groups that seeks to explain such actions. We must have an understanding of who commits acts of terrorism, and learn more about the role of religion in contemporary terrorism in order to be prepared for future terrorist events.

The Study of Terrorism

We must first be clear about the definition of terrorism. Bruce Hoffman (1998:43) has defined it as "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change". Leonard Weinberg and Paul Davis (1989:7) offer a similar but subtly different definition, " terrorism is politically motivated crime intended to modify the behavior of a target audience". These definitions help distinguish terrorism from warfare and allow us to view it as a particular form of political behavior or social movement. Excluded from this definition are individual acts of violent crime. Terrorism is not a solitary act; rather it is done by individuals belonging to terrorist groups. As Hoffman (1998:43) notes in his extended attempt to define terrorism, one attribute of terrorism that distinguishes it from other criminal acts that it "…must be perpetrated by some organizational entity".

Next, we must distinguish the broad categories of terrorism. Weinberg and Davis (1989) identify three dominant types: religious, political/ideological, and ethno-nationalist. They trace a long history of terrorism beginning in Judea in the first century of the Christian era, and note that early terrorism often had mixed religious and political motives. Early Jewish resistance to Roman occupation ca 70 A.D. by the Zealots involved assassinations in hopes of provoking reprisals and inflaming popular resistance. Terrorists were motivated by a belief that their activities were divinely inspired. Later Ismailis (a Shia sect) believing in a need for a purification of Islam to hasten a millenium, formed the Order of Assassins to kill members of the Sunni ruling class. Similarly, during the 11th-14th centuries, various Christian prophets appeared demanding purification of Jews and

church officials. Walter Laqueur (1999) also classifies Thuggees in India sacrificing victims to Kali as early terrorism.

According to Bruce Hoffman (1998, 1999), while religiously motivated terrorism has long existed, it was eclipsed during 19th and most of 20th century by ideological or separatist-nationalist inspired terrorism. After the Iranian revolution in 1979, religion as a motive began to increase and by the 1990s, the most serious terrorist acts were religiously motivated (Hoffman 1998:92). Hoffman claims that religiously motivated terrorism differs from more secular terrorism in several respects:

1) violence is viewed as a sacramental act or divine duty
2) terrorists and their organizations do not seek to appeal to broader constituency
3) the goal of the act is not reform but as alienated agents of radical change.
4) terrorist perpetrators often embrace martyrdom (Hoffman 1998:94-95)

Jerrold Post uses a taxonomy of types of terrorism with some subdivisions making five categories: "nationalist–separatist, religious fundamentalist, new religions (other religious extremists, including millenarian cults), social revolutionary, and right wing" (Post et al., 2002b:73). His extensive attempt to identify characteristics of terrorists and terrorist organizations distinguishes two types of religiously motivated terrorism: fundamentalist and new religions. Among the fundamentalist category, Post includes sects within mainstream religions including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Sikh. He claims that radical elements may through a charismatic leader become violent (Post et al., 2002b:111). Post distinguishes new religions, such as Aum Shinrikyo, that are characterized as "closed cults" headed by a strong charismatic leader and filled with "religious belligerents seeking to precipitate the apocalypse" (Post et al 2002b:112). He distinguishes these two groups because, while religious fundamentalists share many characteristics of other terrorist groups, new religions, he claims, differ in their group and individual characteristics.

Who becomes a terrorist?

Just as there are many different types of terrorist groups, there are also numerous types of terrorists. One major study conducted by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress surveyed the literature on terrorist profiles and drew two major conclusions: "there does not appear to be a single terrorist personality" and "contrary to the stereotype that the terrorist is a psychopath or otherwise mentally disturbed, *the terrorist is*

actually quite sane, although deluded by an ideological or religious way of viewing the world." (Hudson, 1999:50, emphasis added). The history of terrorist studies shows a variety of perspectives used to explain why people became terrorists. Early terrorist studies emphasized the individual criminal acts and explained them in terms of deviance. Reflecting the rise of ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism, studies in the 1950s to 1970s examined the sociological and political context that gave rise to revolutionary movements. Still later studies examined the terrorist organization and its group dynamics. Most recently, studies have examined the interaction of the individual, the group, and society.

Jerrold Post and his associates note that there are three primary ways of explaining terrorism: 1) social, economic, and political conditions; 2) group dynamics promoting polarization and radicalization; and 3) predisposing psychological traits. However, they also note that these have largely been considered in isolation from each other (Post et al., 2002b:74).

The psychological explanation of terrorism emphasizes particular psychiatric pathologies or histories. A recent four volume survey of *The Psychology of Terrorism* edited by Chris Stout (2002) for the World Economic Forum contains numerous examples of the psycho-pathological perspective. Jerry Piven (2002) offers one of the most explicit psychological or psychoanalytic explanations of terrorist violence. He attributes the violence of terrorists to the abuse and neglect suffered as children. He argues that this creates a desire for revenge that may be displaced from abusive parents to become a psychosis that often is sublimated into religion to give legitimacy to violence towards God's enemies. In his analysis, the key aspect of religion is a "system of literalized beliefs designed to sanctify fantasies of merger with omnipotence, escape from death, and often, to enact immensely violent acts" (121). He further argues that one defining aspect of terrorism is "the fantasy of apocalyptic destruction and rebirth" (134).

Similarly, Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (2002) uses a psychoanalytic framework to explain the desire for rebirth as a means of redirecting aggression and transcend the individual's objective circumstances and identity through an "escape fantasy". On an individual level this occurs as a conversion, while on a societal or global level this takes the form of an eschatological event with the destruction and rebirth of the world. He claims that such images "about the destruction of the world are the consolation and the revenge of the downtrodden and the oppressed. The end of the old world is not only a cosmic victory over evil, but a response to frustration" (173). Beit-Hallahmi, like Post, emphases a closed group with a strong leader and writes, "we see an extremely narcissistic leader followed by a group of

dependent, possibly borderline individuals (186)." The triggering event in many cases is a fear of destruction of the group by outside forces such as lawsuits, or investigations.

Feeney (2002) argues that Islamic fundamentalists in particular are "characterized by what is essentially an altered state of consciousness, disconnected and out of sync with a more normal perception of reality" that he terms "entrancement" which parallels a hypnotic state (192). He argues that a closed group with a charismatic leader develops this entrancement which "among terrorists involve, if not require hypnotic dynamics and forces to sustain them" (198). As the group bonds deepen and individuals become less generally oriented and more internally focused on the group and its goals they may ultimately result in a fantasy orientation and inability to distinguish fact from fiction. This may be coupled with a belief in a divine calling to justify violent acts or even murder.

Post has written numerous articles which emphasize a complex explanation of terrorism but beginning with particular psychological predispositions. In one article, he argues that "political terrorists are driven to commit acts of violence as a consequence of psychological forces…they are psychologically compelled to commit….The principal argument of this essay is that individuals are drawn to the path of terrorism in order to commit acts of violence, and their special logic, which is grounded in their psychology and reflected in their rhetoric, becomes the justification of their violent acts" (Post 1990, 25). Post suggests that terrorists have particular personality traits including aggressiveness, action-orientation, narcissistic personalities, feelings of personal inadequacy or failure and a tend to externalize their own weaknesses. However, there is not a "serious psychopathology" common to terrorists (31). These traits do however lead to a greater willingness and need to join groups and to conform to those groups. The tendency towards aggressiveness and violence leads these people to "become terrorists in order to join terrorist groups and commit acts of terrorism" (32).

In another article, Post (1987) moves beyond the psycho-pathological approach and argues that the traits of the group and the individual interact. While there is no common personality or psychopathology, Post (1987) argues that most terrorists join terrorist groups to find like-minded people which reinforces their dualistic world view. He claims that most terrorist have a strong "need to belong coupled with an incomplete personal identity" (25). Groups use this need to build solidarity through a rhetoric which emphasizes the in-group/ out-group division. A labeling process often helps externalize the locus of control and the out-group or society becomes the

source of all problems. The group then needs to actively engage in behavior that will resolve the problems and that often means violent attacks. Failure to engage in such attacks may create internal divisiveness. In turn, attempts to repress the terrorist group may actually strengthen the group as it orients itself toward an outside enemy.

In a recent study of suicide bombers in Israel, Ami Pedahzur, Arie Perliger, and Leonard Weinberg (2003) found that there were some commonalities among suicide bombers. They found that such individuals came from a lower socio-economic status group, had lower education, had less family connections and "their future orientation is geared more towards helplessness and vagueness". They furthermore found that those individuals who successfully or unsuccessfully undertook a suicide mission combined an altruistic and fatalistic tendency, following Durkheim's analysis, in that they believed that their action would serve their group goals and allow an escape from a hopeless situation (Pedahzur et al., 2003:420). However, while the individual may have some predisposing factors, *the determining factor is the social influence exerted by the terrorist group.* As they describe the scenario, "once selected for an operation, the young man is surrounded by a team of Hamas or Islamic Jihad handlers who not only provide tactical instructions, and so forth, but also insulate him from any potential cross-pressures which might weaken his resolve" (Pedahzur et al., 2003:420). These authors thus focused more attention on the sociological rather than the psychological characteristics of individuals and emphasized the process of making decisions within the context of the group. Pynchon and Borum similarly focus on the group's influence on the individual and emphasize the importance of group norms, structure, cohesiveness, and situation on encouraging violence (1999).

Several other authors have emphasized the importance of group dynamics and their importance to the individual. Saul Levine (1999:343) examines terrorism from perspective that most terrorists are young and identifies "propensity of young people to feelings of alienation, demoralization, and low self-esteem." Levine and associates examined members of groups commonly labeled "cults" and identified which had violent tendencies, they found that those that "threatened or planned physical action had zealous and persuasive leaders who embodied ideologic principles and anger at targeted enemies. These leaders evinced suspiciousness and mistrust of outsiders (especially organized law enforcement), expectations of persecution, and certitude about having been wronged or harmed." He found that cults, gangs and other groups offered a sense of group identity that appealed to young people, especially young males. Another study by Dole

(2002) argues that al-Qaeda has many features similar to a religious "killer cult led by a charismatic religious psychopath [who] recruits ordinary devotees with intensive persuasion and the promise of a certain and blessed future then secures their loyalty through covert hypnosis and other mind-control techniques" (220).

Albert Bandura (1990) has examined the justifications for violence and what he terms "mechanisms of moral disengagement". He emphasizes that "the conversion of socialized people into dedicated combatants is not achieved by altering their personality structures, aggressive drives, or moral standards. Rather it is accomplished by cognitively restructuring the moral value of killing, so that the killing can be done free from self-censuring restraints" (Bandura, 1990:164). Other authors have also emphasized the socialization of terrorists. For example, Ardila (2002) argues that behavioral analysis and social language theory can help understand the socialization process that provides their motivation. He argues that most terrorists are born in marginalized groups and violence becomes a normal part of their lives and an effective means of accomplishing goals. They tend towards a dualistic view of good and evil and identify the terrorist act as accomplishing good with accompanying rewards in the present or afterlife. Finally, Goertzel argues that terrorists are rational, but "they think within belief systems that may be irrational" (98). It is their strong adherence to a rigid belief system that characterizes the terrorist.

Another group of researchers (Crenshaw, 1990, 1995; Della Porta, 1995; Merkl, 1995; Pearlstein, 1991) have emphasized the social and economic conditions that may rationalize the violence. Martha Crenshaw describes terrorism as a "political strategy" that reflects a process of logical decisions and explicitly rejects the notion that terrorism reflects some underlying psychological pathology (Crenshaw, 1990:7). She reframes the question of why people commit acts of terrorism to that of "why is terrorism attractive to some opponents of the state, but unattractive to others" (1990:10). Her answer seems to be that terrorism is a valid means of contention for weak or marginalized groups. But she also questions why such groups are weak and suggests that it may reflect unpopular ideas, a failure to mobilize widespread support, or a new movement that has not diffused. She notes that when weak groups sense an opportunity or a need for immediate action such as due to a threat to the group's existence, it may take violent action. In her analysis, the decision to take violent action results from a calculation of the costs and benefits of such action (1990:16). Using a similar approach, Donatella Della Porta (1995) examined left-wing terrorism in Italy. She found a culture of violence and a political structure that

failed to incorporate left-wing ideology to the satisfaction of leftist groups provided an environment within which groups made strategic decisions to use violence combined with circumstances that necessitated rapid access to funds to initiate a period of violent activity including bank robberies and hostage taking. She also found that individuals within groups had a typical dynamic of entry, maintenance and exit from the organization. This pattern of membership parallels Moreland and Levine's (1982) study of group dynamics. Pynchon and Borum (1999) also explicitly used Moreland and Levine's model to examine terrorist group dynamics. Peter Merkl (1995) examined the rise and fall of the Baader-Meinhof gang and West German terrorism during the 1970s. He also noted the strategic and circumstantial reasons for violence and the organizational changes that occurred as people entered and exited the movement.

Bruce Hoffman (1999) emphasizes the strategic value of terrorist tactics and views terrorism as essentially asymmetric warfare done in a way to maximize publicity. He criticizes the idea that terrorists are crazy and prefers to examine their motives. One key finding was that "all terrorists have one other trait in common: they live in the future, that distant—yet imperceptibly close—point in time when they will assuredly triumph over their enemies and attain the ultimate realization of their political destiny" (Hoffman 1999, 338). Later, "all terrorists exist and function in hope of reaching this ultimate inevitable, and triumphant end. For them, the future, rather than the present, defines their reality" (340).

Researchers such as Della Porta (1995) and Merkl (1995) have emphasized the terrorist organization as a group that recruits new members. In their studies they have noted the importance of social networks for recruiting and maintaining social groups. For example, a recent newsmagazine article (Hammer 2003) noted the importance of a soccer club in Hebron as a source of recruits for suicide bombing campaigns. Such findings seem similar to the findings in the recruitment literature from the study of new religions (Richardson, 1985, 1995; Barker, 1984).

As Pedahzur et al. (2003:421) suggest, the "next step would be to understand more fully the relations between theories dealing with individual political acts of violence and group violence." Post, Ruby, and Shaw (2002a, 2002b), in their later work, have attempted an integration of the individual, group, and environment to develop "…indicators for the analysis of a radical group's risk for terrorism" (2002a, 75). They use Karl Lewin's field theory and identify four fields: 1) historical, cultural and contextual; 2) key actors; 3) group itself; 4) immediate situation. (See Appendix A for an outline of the Post et al. approach).

Post and associates (2000b) have clearly moved beyond the earlier models that emphasized the individual, group, or environment to examine the interaction of all these fields, and their work has become much more interactionist and contextual. In a follow-up study they examined five types of terrorist groups (nationalist–separatist, religious fundamentalist, new religions, social revolutionary, and right wing) and found that most of the identified indicators were important in predicting violence. Of particular note, the group characteristics emphasize the psychological problems of members and leaders and the closed, authoritarian nature of the group. They also emphasized the importance of triggering events such as criticism or attacks by outside groups or the government.

Religion and Terrorism

Several terrorism scholars have noted the connection between religion (especially new religions) and terrorism (Post et al., 2002a,b; Levine 1999; Pedahzur et al., 2003; Pivens 2002; Ellens 2002; Dole 2002). Most of these scholars have examined the role of religious belief in motivating terrorist behavior. Several of these scholars have also claimed that cult-like organizations seem highly correlated with violence (Post et al., 2002; Dole 2002). Scholars of religion and new religions have also noted the link between religion and violence (Wessinger 2000, 2001; Bromley and Melton 2002; Juergensmeyer 2000; Richardson 2001). This last section will compare and contrast the insights of these scholars with those of the terrorism researchers described above.

Wessinger (2000a, 2000b) has examined numerous cases of violence involving religious groups. In her research, there are certain types of millenialist groups which seem more likely to engage in violence. Wessinger (2000b) defines millennialism as "an expression of the human hope for the achievement of permanent well-being" (2000b:6). She notes that while all religions offer a means of transcendence or salvation, millenialist religions, "promise the overcoming of finitude to collectivities of people" (Ibid.).

Importantly, Wessinger does note that millennialism may be atheistic and that millennialism primarily refers to the notion of a transition to a state of collective well-being. As Hoffman (1999) has noted, the importance of the future and the ultimate end is common to all terrorist groups. Wessinger (2000a) has created a taxonomy to assess the potential for violence. She first distinguishes *catastrophic* and *progressive* millennialism. Catastrophic millennialism is characterized by a pessimistic outlook about human behavior and nature and predicts some form of destructive cataclysm that will usher in a new age. In contrast, progressive millennialism takes an optimis-

tic attitude toward human potential and the ability to transcend current problems through action and reforms. While progressive millennialism posits a reasonable possibility for evolutionary, slow progress, catastrophic millennialism sees the world and humanity as "so depraved that violent destruction of the old world is necessary before the millennial kingdom can be established" (Wessinger, 2000a:17). Catastrophic millennialism "inherently possesses a dualistic worldview…the world is seen as a battleground between good and evil…this radical dualism expects, and often produces, conflict…it identifies particular groups and individuals as enemies" (Ibid.) While catastrophic millennialism sets the stage for potential violence, Wessinger identifies three types of catastrophic millennial groups: fragile, assaulted, and revolutionary. An assaulted group has become subject to persecution of some form. This may be a government investigation or attack, such as the Branch Davidians, or a private organization investigating the group or publicly criticizing it. A fragile group is assaulted and, equally importantly, perceives that it is failing to achieve its ultimate concern (Wessinger, 2000a:18). An assaulted fragile group may react violently either outwardly against its identified enemies or inwardly to control dissonance.

In Wessinger's model, it is the interaction of the group with its environment that provokes the violence. Richardson (2001:106) makes this same point by noting that "the actual exercise of violence involves an exchange of sorts, and often depends on the mutual dependency of each social actor (group or individual) in relation to the other". The violence of cases such as Aum Shinrikyo, the Branch Davidians, or Heaven's Gate must be considered in their social and interactive context and not "necessarily inherent in the structure and organization of either" (122). Richardson notes the "stereotypical and historical response to new social groups" that creates a conflict between society and such groups (122). This conflict contributes to the sense of being assaulted or becoming fragile, thus potentially raising the possibility for violence.

The revolutionary catastrophic millennialists, to use Wessinger's category, believe in the necessity of active behavior to promote the eschaton. David Cook's study of jihad and suicide attacks outlines how the Islamic idea of jihad was transformed from an inner psychological and spiritual struggle to an outward revolutionary struggle "in which either Islam is ruling the world righteously, or is being oppressed and ultimately will be annihilated from the face of the earth" (Cook, 2002:16). Cook claims that this transformation can be traced to a sense of humiliation arising from political setbacks (13). This sets the stage for the rise of suicide attacks and "mar-

tyrs" to achieve the desired millennium. In their study of suicide attacks in Israel, Pedahzur et al (2003) similarly note the importance of an altruistic motive for the achievement of the Palestinian state and the triumph of Islam in motivating individuals to participate in suicide attacks.

Hall (2004) notes that "apocalyptic war is thus not conventional war, it tends to play out as an extreme form of terrorism" (4). He argues that Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization "seeks a postapocalyptic restoration of the Islamic caliphate…the path to that restoration requires a holy war"(6). He argues that as such, violence becomes a strategic choice, but also a sacred and symbolic one (8). To overemphasize the logical and strategic may result in inappropriate actions or reactions by states.

Wessinger's thorough analysis of violence associated with religious groups has led her to a number of observations, some of which expand on or run contrary to those of terrorism research. For example, she notes that "while the psychological health or dysfunction of a religious leader is pertinent, it is a serious mistake to rely solely on psychological diagnosis of the leader when attempting to understand a religious group and the actions it might take. Analysis of the group's theology and social dynamics are crucially important" (271). This she rejects the "myth of the omniscient leader," and focuses on contextual factors, as well as ideological ones, and examines how such factors interact with each other. She particularly notes the importance of triggering events and the sense of persecution felt by millennial groups as they may try to bring "the date for the end closer" (272).

One area which seems to contradict the more psycho-pathologically oriented studies of terrorism concerns the voluntary nature of membership and the role of the leader. In particular, Wessinger notes "Social indoctrination processes are more effective when they are undertaken voluntarily, and coercive indoctrination procedures do not produce believers" (273), "There is no need to have a charismatic leader for a group to be potentially violent" (273), and "The charismatic leader of a group may not be as all powerful as outsiders assume" (273). Finally, she says, "A charismatic leader cannot become a totalitarian leader without the agency and complicity of willing followers" (273). Wessinger's approach is cognizant of the immense literature from the study of new and minority religions that reveals the voluntaristic nature of participation in newer religions (Richardson, 1985, 1995; Anthony, 1990; Barker, 1984). Such findings seems quite relevant to understanding contemporary terrorism, which also seems characterized by considerable voluntarism on the part of participants, even if that voluntarism occurs most frequently within certain contexts.

In her analysis, Wessinger (2000a), identifies a set of contextual and inter-actionist characteristics that parallel those of Post et al (2002b) predicting violence. Wessinger's concerning traits are:

- Catastrophic millennial beliefs combined with belief in reincarnation and with the members' conviction that the group is being persecuted" (276).

-The theological conviction that one's home is not on this planet, combined with social alienation due to a sense of persecution and lack of social acceptance" (276).

-A sense of persecution that is expressed in a belief in conspiracy theories" (277).

- Catastrophic millennial beliefs that are related to a radical dualistic view of good versus evil that dehumanizes other people" (277).

- Catastrophic millennial and dualistic beliefs that expect and perhaps promote conflict" (277).

-The group's resistance to investigation and withdrawal to an isolated refuge and/or a very aggressive battle against its enemies" (278).

-Followers dependent on a charismatic leader as the sole means to achieve the ultimate concern" (278).

-The charismatic leader who sets impossible goals for the group" (278).

-A catastrophic millennial group that gives up on proselytizing to gain converts and turns inwards to preserve salvation for its members alone" (279).

- Membership in a group that demands high exit costs in terms of personal identity, associations, and livelihood' (279).

- The groups leader giving new identities to the followers, perhaps including new names, and drastically rearranging the members' family and marriage relationships (279).

- Living in an isolated situation where information about the outside world is controlled by the leader, so that the members are not exposed to alternative interpretations of reality" (280).

- Relatively small acts of violence repeated in a ritualistic manner so that the scale and intensity of the violence increases" (280).

Thus the confluence and overlap of the two research traditions seems overdue, and important to pursue.

Conclusions: The Confluence of Studies of Deviant Religious Groups and Terrorism

The two fields of terrorism research and religion research have many overlaps but some differences. The terrorist research generally has empha-

sized the psychological problems of most terrorists and their leaders in particular. The studies of religious extremism described above deemphasize such personality disorders and are more contextual and interactionist in orientation. Several of the more psychological approaches to terrorism emphasize coercive socialization of individual participants. As Wessinger, supported by research on participation in minority faiths, notes, such coercion is relatively ineffective. Terrorism research reveals several approaches to the use of violence ranging from rational choice to pathological. Most studies of religious violence see it as a strategic choice with sometimes an element of sacred duty. Both religion scholars and terrorism researchers emphasize the notion of a desire for an ultimate concern and often a millennial transformation. However, not all religions are millenialist, while all terrorist groups seem to have a perspective that might be characterized as catastrophic millenialist, to use Wessinger's term.

Here are a few tentative conclusions drawn from this review of these two usually divergent areas of research:

- Terrorist and minority religious organizations typically are both small groups, even if they might have some connections with larger networks.
- People in small groups become involved through a process of conversion and socialization that is mostly voluntaristic in nature.
- People who become terrorists or religious have no determining personality traits: neither terrorists nor religious adherents are necessarily psychotic.
- Most terrorists and religious adherents seek something beyond themselves, an ultimate goal that they share with fellow group members.
- Most terrorists are millenialists, some are religious ("Millenialism is an expression of the human hope for the achievement of permanent well-being" (Wessinger, 2000:6)
- All millenialists desire an ultimate state; some use violence as a means to achieve this goal
- Some millenialists are persecuted, or perceive persecution, and some of those react violently.
- Charismatic leaders are not necessary for violence, which is often contextual and interactionist. Authoritarian leaders can only arise through voluntary complicity of their followers.

Appendix A
Post, Ruby, and Shaw (2002)
Four Fields Affecting Group Terrorism Potential

I Historical, Cultural, and Contextual features:
- culture of violence: tolerance of violence and acceptance of use
- communal conflict between groups: ethnic, religious, socioeconomic class, access to resources, political power
- political, economic, social instability

II Key Actors affecting the group:
- opponents: regime, other opponents (including critics)
- constituents and supporters:
- rival groups with similar goals

III Group Characteristics and processes:
- Group ideology and goals: necessity of radical change, legitimacy of violence, specified targets, expansion of targets to general population; historical grievances against target; dualistic perception of members as righteous
- Group experience with violence historically and recruitment of violent individuals
- Leadership personality: narcissistic, paranoid, sociopathic, malignant narcissism
- Leadership style: charismatic leader and uncritical followers (p 87); authoritarian or centrally organized decisionmaking, communities of belief (no central organization, shared beliefs through books, programs, idealized leaders, internet.
- Factionalization
- Closed groups lacking communication with outside or restricting exit
- organizational processes
  - recruitment from subgroups with violent tendencies or radicalized
  - screening and selection emphasizing anomic individuals, individuals with particular skills
  - socialization emphasizing obedience
  - training in known terrorist sites and emphasizing operational terrorist skills
  - assignment and promotion tied to violence
  - attrition due to disagreement over radicalization or violence
- groupthink and polarization
- psychological progression towards terrorism:
  - experience of humiliation, stigmatization or isolation from society
  - sense of threat and immediacy of threat
  - negative characterization of target group and delegitimation (Sprinzak)
  - type of support: receiving significant monetary or military support
- behavioral indicators
  - sense of efficacy of violence increases
  - formation of fighting units
  - negative actions toward target groups
  - final preparations for violence including weapons acquisition and preparation to go underground

IV The Immediate situation
- triggering event: attack, death of prominent figure, denial of access to politics or media, anniversary of event

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