

Chapter 3

Types of Terrorists

In 1986, an invitation was extended to me by Dr. Edward Azar to join the University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CID/CM) as a 1986 visiting fellow. The attracting interest from the director was a peer-reviewed article on cultural sects in the Levant region. Interest diverted to the study of the psychology of terrorism, but more specifically the psychology of terrorists: fundamentalism and hostage situations. This fellowship resulted in a national conference sponsored by the CID/CM, the Spouses of Diplomats Auxiliary, and the Center for Victims of Trauma.

As research began in this think tank center, several influences arose. The conflict in the Middle East produced a continued supply of terrorist groups. The world became focused on this Arab region more than other locations. Many people believed that all Arabs are Muslim, not knowing that there are Jewish Arabs, Christian Arabs, and Muslim Arabs. It was apparently easier to label everyone in a small categorical box as Arab Muslims. Public opinion via media and political propaganda machines was glad to see terrorism as the inhumane vehicle of Arabs who just happened to be Muslim.

Training in clinical psychology teaches each student and supervises each intern to be open to all possibilities. Psychology imparts strategies to assist the professional to not take sides but seek the truth. It uses standardized instruments to measure intelligence, emotions, behavior, and neuropsychology, to move away from wrongful accusation in pursuit of those who actually committed the crime of terrorism. It is too easy to blame anyone based on skin color, religion, nationality, or creed—the morbid factors that lead to racial prejudice and support bias development.

Types of terrorism was a growing industry for political scientists and behavioral scientists during the 1970s and 1980s. Many scholars in the military and private groups gained momentum seeking definition and strategies for terrorism and counter-terrorism. As in any process, the work is ongoing and may never end. There

is always more to learn with each encounter. The knowledge gained in one episode will help us to know more about the next situation that could come.

In 1975, the National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals was formed by the Law Enforcement Assistant Administration in the United States. A volume was produced by the task force on disorders and terrorism; it classifies terrorism into six identifiable categories: civil disorders, political terrorism, nonpolitical terrorism, quasi-terrorism, limited political terrorism, and official or state terrorism (aka structural terrorism).

In the last decade, two more types of terrorism were added to the list above as submitted by Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman (2005): international terrorism and transitional terrorism.

The occurrences happening in the Middle East and world today all serve as examples of the types of terrorism stated above. Newspapers and news channels within the Middle East and elsewhere, such as *Al Bayan* (Dubai, United Arab Emirates), *Al Masry Al Yawm* (Cairo, Egypt), *Al Jazeera* (Doha, Qatar), BBC (UK), and the *Washington Times* (United States), are documenting what can be defined as terrorism taking place against the people. Official or state terrorism took place during the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, and is currently taking place within Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Bahrain, which are using their military forces to suppress opposition riots and protesters who are demanding political change, using weapons, tear gas, and threats to bring about their silence.

Another act that can be characterized as state terrorism took place when the U.S. government claimed to have killed the all-famous terrorist Osama bin Laden, on May 2, 2011 (*Al Jazeera & Al Shorooq*). The United States engaged in a raid on his home in Abbottabad, Pakistan, that led to his death and the death of three other civilians, an act that General Hamid Gul, former director of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), characterized as a violation of their sovereignty and security and an act of war against Pakistan (*Al Jazeera*, May 3, 2011).

In 1999, U.S. intelligence analysis (Hudson) found four typologies for terrorists: nationalist-separatist, religious fundamentalist, new religious, and social revolutionary. This will be briefly explained below and a more detailed analysis will be made in the chapters to come.

Many others were instrumental in researching, qualifying, and maybe quantifying their findings. And everyone was correct based on the information they had collected from the individuals they had met to interview or interrogate.

Rather than competition for “who knows the most” or who should be “recognized as the most,” the collaboration of information between those who shared their findings resulted in the enhancement of awareness and acceptance of assessment from which there was a gain—a new interpretation of motive, confirmation of material already learned, detection of deliberate lies and misleading information, and more reason to cooperate and not compete.

With language usage ability, although not fluent, information was best understood since the context of the words was part of the interpretative analysis and not

just words translated. Translating word for word does not allow a full understanding of the content. Interpretation allows the content to be accommodated and assimilated for cultural correctness in word usage.

With the research on terrorism, more than terrorists themselves, and direct profiling of the accused individuals, there seemed to be preference to categorize into four parts: psychopathic, ethnogeographic—political, ethnogeographic—religious, and retribitional (Figure 3.1).

Psychopathic terrorist: An individual who is hired to kill or harm, or to threaten to kill or harm, people for a terrorist group or terrorist state. This person may not know the purpose and may not care to know. They are narcissistically engaged, which complements their psychological personality disorder. They show little or no moral and ethical understanding and demonstrate no remorse of illegal and inhuman actions against others.

Ethnogeographic—religious terrorist: This individual has a cause—to uphold a particular spiritual belief or system that shares the same or similar belief of eternal righteous salvation. And whoever believes in the same, dies for the same (volunteer or hostage), or both, will gain everlasting rewards.

Ethnogeographic—political terrorist: This individual has a cause—to uphold a particular nationalistic or global socioeconomic decree or system that shares the same or similar ruling of righteous security for a country or the world. And whoever believes in the same, dies for the same (volunteer or hostage), or both will gain notoriety in history for making a better place for people to life.

Retribitional terrorist: This individual seeks revenge against the person, group, or nation that took away their family, community, or personal way of life.

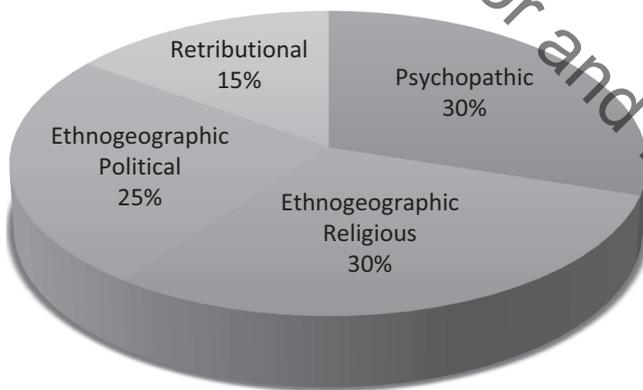


Figure 3.1 Categories by percentage of accused individuals assessed. The percentage breakdown of the four types of terrorists is as follows: 30% psychopathic; 25% ethnogeographic–political, 30% ethnogeographic–religious, and 15% retribitional.

Their respective history shows no indication of psychological disorder, and they do not adhere to any political or religious ideology.

These four types of terrorists are discussed further in the next three chapters.

Note that the terminology is interchangeable. *Antisocial personality disorder* is a clinical term, while the term *psychopath* is the forensic word choice. By clinical definition, psychopathology is any mental disorder, but in forensics the same word is perceived as antisocial or narcissistic personality disorder.

During the year long study there, it was recognized that not all terrorists are psychopathic or had any extremist conditioning at home or in their environment, but they may have suffered significant loss, politically driving them to acts of unwarranted and unjustified violence. These are retribitional terrorists, only seeking to strike the designated perpetrator who took away loved ones by murder (direct or bystander) and/or destroyed the physical community, job potential, education opportunities, and freedom of human rights.

Neuropsychological explanations are applicable for some. For those who are diagnosed as having antisocial personality disorder, it is possible that tumors in brain areas provoke aggression and negative characteristics.

What may be evident is the brain plasticity during or following a critical event, and certainly probable earlier in the planning stages of a terror act. But this would be premorbid or likely to show on a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which measures brain activity by detecting changes associated with blood flow (European Magnetic Resonance Forum, 2014). This technique relies on the fact that cerebral blood flow and neuronal activation are coupled. When an area of the brain is in use, blood flow to that region also increases (Logothetis, 2001).

Neuroplasticity—or brain plasticity—is the ability of the brain to modify its connections or rewire itself (<http://theconversation.com/what-is-brain-plasticity-and-why-is-it-so-important-55967>). As understood, every thought, feeling, behavior, and intervention (audio, visual) will influence these changes in the brain wiring.

Therefore, such investigations of brain structure may not be reliable as an indicator of terrorism or terrorist character, although the measure is valid. The instrument does measure brain activity, but the total analysis may not be applicable for ethnogeographic religious or political and retribitional terrorists.

There is research showing that people of conservative and liberal attribution are different in personality preferences. Yet these virtues don't constitute labeling as terrorist.

Also presumed was that the leaders of terror cells have attributes of narcissistic entitlement syndrome (NES). Upon analyzing all the psychological facts involved with the different types of terrorists, we found that there is one characteristic that is consistent. Individuals who choose terrorism as a means to declare their loathing of this world demonstrate the characteristic of narcissism.

Narcissism is a personality trait that involves egotism and selfishness, and if it is applied to a group, it can also involve elitism or indifference to others. The term

was originally coined by Ovid, a Greek poet, who narrated a story of an individual named Narcissus who fell in love with his own reflection. Though a healthy amount of self-love is required to develop in a psychologically healthy way, narcissism is an extreme measure of self-love.

When a person joins a group similar to a cult, they tend to take extreme measures to become one of them and lose the balance between themselves and others, reaching a sense of loss of identity.

A major understanding of members of terrorist cells is NES. Terrorists who experience NES often very quickly find themselves out of sync with the other cell members, whether they quit, are ostracized, or simply move among the leaders to deal with the disorder and its delusions of grandeur.

Those having the characteristics noted were preoccupied with fantasies of limitless brilliance, power, and success, and had an embellished sense of self-importance that was not commensurate with their actual level of achievement. They had no empathy and were not able to identify with the needs of others. They were envious of those with advantages that they did not have and believed that others were jealous of them. They needed a great deal of appreciation and constant approval from those who followed them.

Notation

This makes them so much harder to profile. The accused may become genderless, ageless, and without national limits during imprisonment for long periods of time.

Successful profiling is best sought when professionals seek the truth about the accused and from the accused through a holistic picture fashion.

If we are looking at the complete person, we must take everything into consideration, be it cognitive, emotional, behavioral, physical, or even the environmental factors that surround the person in question.

Although we humanly disapprove of the acts of violence and terror, as professionals we must set aside our opinions, biases, and prejudices to be able to perceive the truth. Stained lenses may only see the color of one's own lenses, not the actual paint of the other.

*Even when there is an explanation,
there is never an excuse.*

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