

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM AND RADICALISATION

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STAR WARS

THE STORY OF AN ORPHANED BOY WHO BECOMES RADICALIZED AFTER A MILITARY STRIKE KILLS HIS FAMILY. HE IS INDOCTRINATED INTO AN ANCIENT RELIGION, JOINS A BAND OF REBEL INSURGENTS, AND CARRIES OUT A TERRORIST ATTACK KILLING 300,000 PEOPLE.









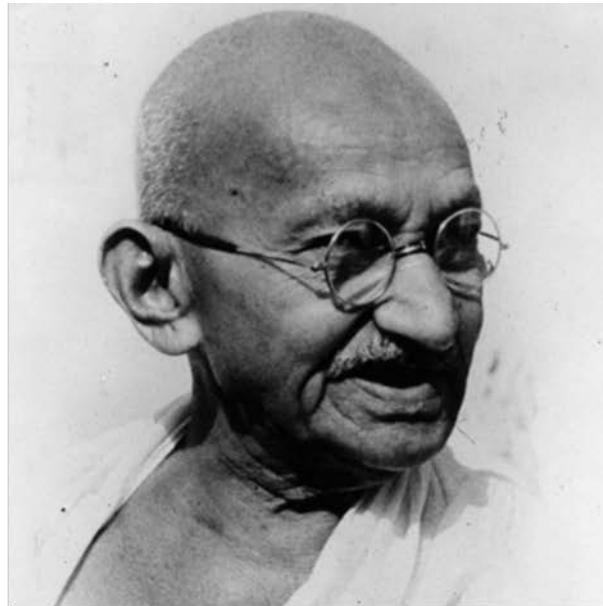








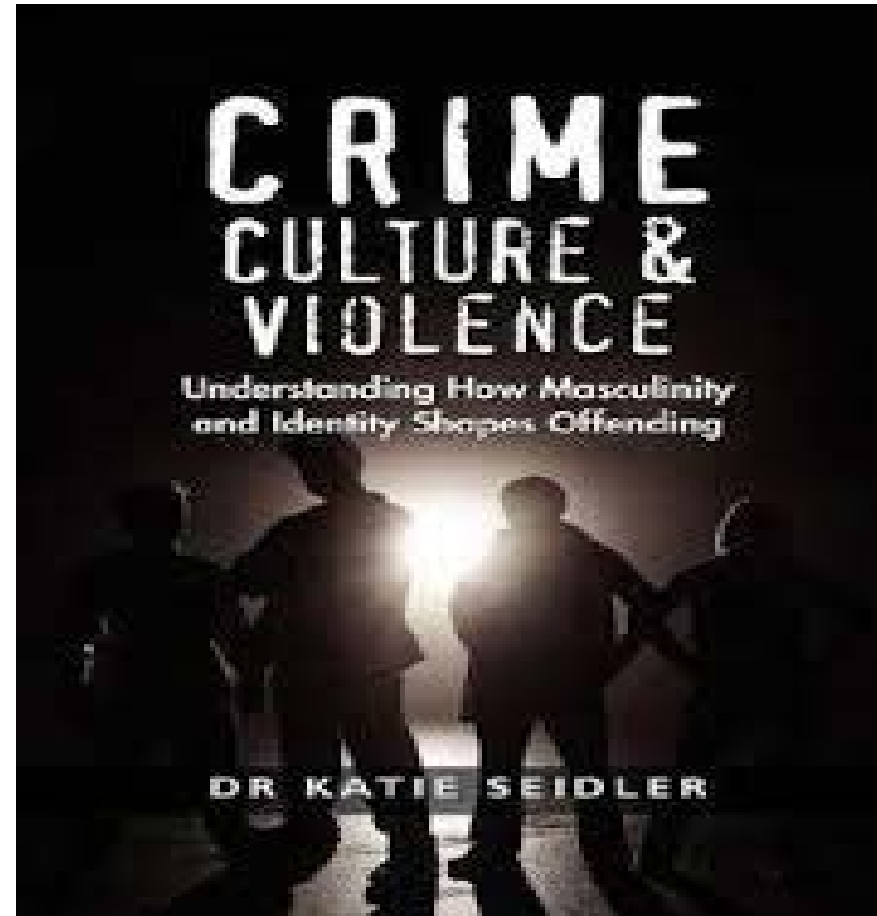
BUT....



OVERVIEW

- Setting the Context
 - My interest in the area
 - The History of Terrorism
 - 21st Century Terrorism
 - Definition of Terrorism
 - Role of ideology
 - Radicalisation
 - Extremism
 - Relationship with Mental Illness/Health
- Psychological theories of Terrorism
 - Group vs lone Wolves
 - Difference from Violent Crime
 - Risk assessment
 - Way forward - deradicalisation vs desistance vs inclusion
 - Notes for legal practitioners
 - Case Study (if time)

MY INTEREST...





THE HISTORY OF TERRORISM

- Terrorism is not new.
- The 10th century Hashashins.
- Crusades during the Middle Ages.
- The Reign of Terror following the French Revolution.



21ST CENTURY TERRORISM

- Initially post-colonial ethno-nationalist movements.
- Moved to religious terrorism.
- Focus on Islamic fundamentalism.
- Drives the fear of the “Other”.




TERRORISM HAS CHANGED...

- More lethal,
- More destructive,
- Larger scale acts,
- Less planning and coordination,
- Role of the Internet,
- Communicated much more quickly.

DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

- Core features:
 - Involves the use of violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political, religious, ideological or social objectives. To this end the violence is instrumental and communicative.
 - Can be committed by both State and non-State actors.
 - Is designed to have an impact beyond that suffered by the direct victims or targets of the violence.
 - Are considered to be both legally and morally wrong from the viewpoint of the society in general.

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- The goals of terrorism:
 - **Tactical**: relative success of an individual attack, or series of attacks.
 - **Organisational**: outcomes of violence impacting on the group and its constituency e.g. maintaining a support base or accruing finance.
 - **Strategic**: relative success of the wider impacts of terrorism at the social, economic, and political level.
 - **Ultimate**: the ideal end-state for the group.

THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY

- An ideology is a reasonably coherent set of ideas that provide the basis for organised action.
- All ideologies:
 - a) offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a world view,
 - b) provide a model of a desired future, a vision of the 'good society,
 - c) outline how change can and should be brought about to create the desired future.



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Extreme ideology is defined from OUR viewpoint.



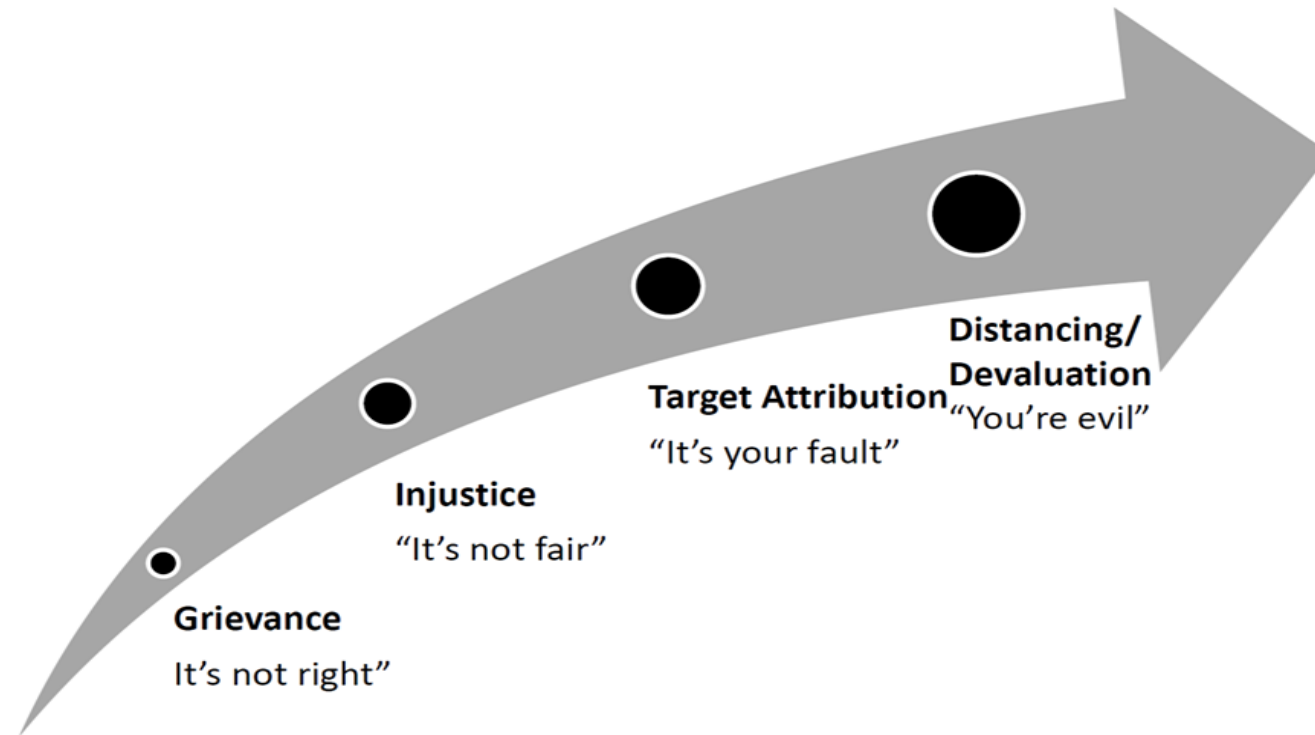


RADICALISATION

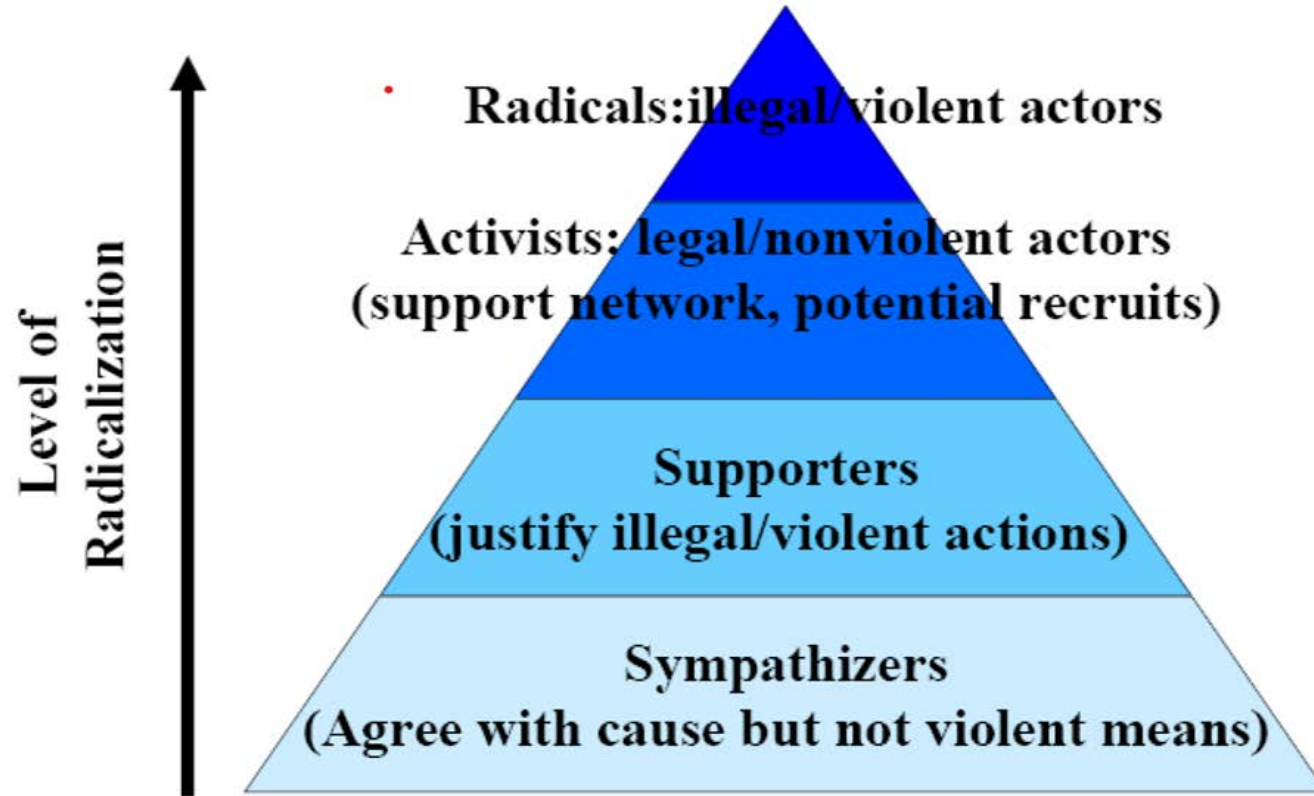
- The process of radicalisation is the psychological, social and cognitive process of taking on the ideology.
- It is the process whereby an individual is made ready to support a particular ideology.
- It can occur at an individual or group level.
- Is complex and context dependent.
- Provides a framework for living.
- Subsumes individual identity.

Models of radicalisation

FBI Four Phases (Borum, 2011)



Pyramid (McCauley 2007)





EXTREMISM

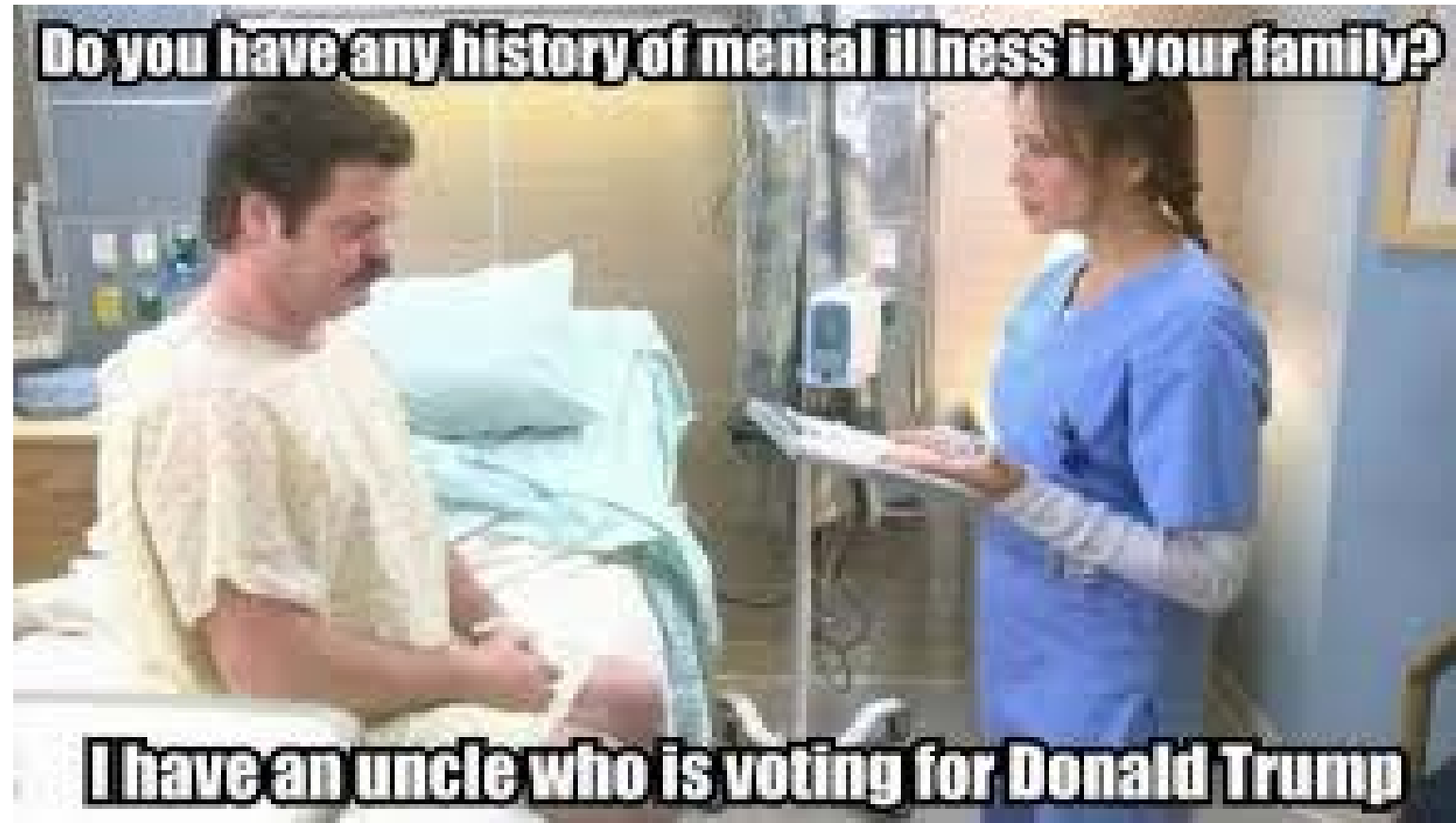
- A fundamental precursor to terrorism.
- Is defined in reference to the ordinary.
- The label and interpretation depends on the values, politics, morality and experiences of the observer, who is usually in a position of power in the mainstream.
- The definition changes as norms change.



RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

- Has the following characteristics:
 - A claim to absolute truth,
 - Expected blind obedience to the word of God,
 - The belief that the end justifies the means,
 - The divine sanction of violence, and
 - Holy war and apocalyptic narratives.

RELATIONSHIP TO MENTAL ILLNESS



MONAGHAN PREDISPOSING FACTORS

- 1) Some emotional vulnerability,
- 2) Dissatisfaction with current life circumstances in sociopolitical terms with an associated perception that conventional means of protest don't work or are unavailable,
- 3) Identification with victims - either in real or perceived terms,
- 4) An ideology or belief structure that justifies the use of violence to achieve sociopolitical ends, which we have already discussed,
- 5) Some perceived sense of reward from the action,
- 6) Having kinship or close social ties within the broader terrorist network.



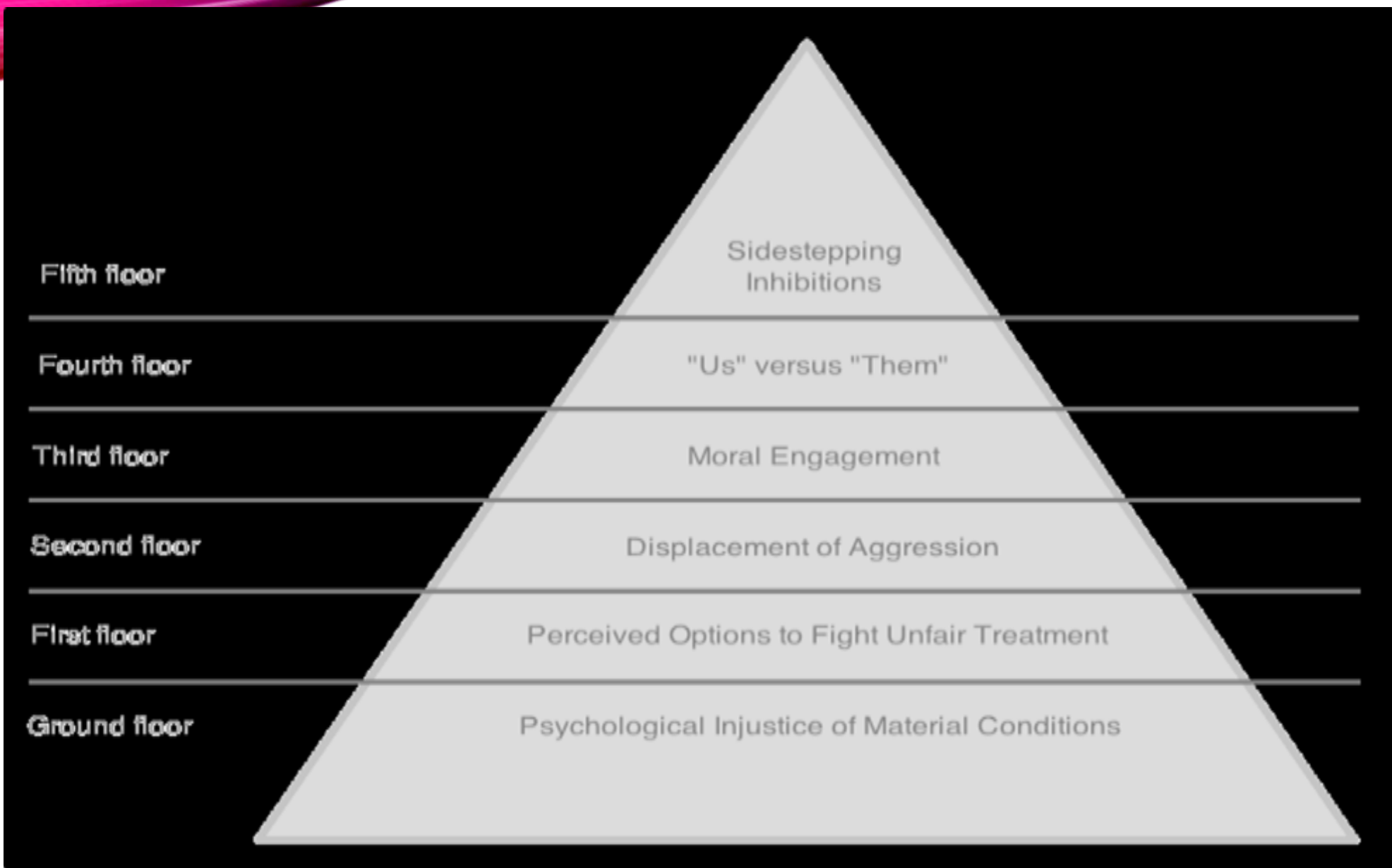
VICTOROFF FOUR TRAITS:

- 1) They are particularly emotionally charged in relation to an ideological issue,
- 2) They have a perceived personal stake in this issue (e.g., glory, need for identity, etc),
- 3) They are people who are rigid and inflexible thinkers, who like things to be clear, ordered and logical,
- 4) They have the capacity to avoid instinctive and moral barriers associated with harming innocent people.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF TERRORISM

Moghaddam Staircase Theory

" a...staircase leading to the terrorist act at the top of a building. The staircase leads to higher and higher floors, and whether someone remains on a particular floor *depends on the doors and spaces the person imagines to be open to her or him on that floor.*" Moghaddam, F. (2005). *The Staircase to Terrorism*, p.161.



BARTLETT AND MILLER...

Those who act....

- 1) Have a strong emotional pull to act in the face of injustice.
- 2) Have a strong sense of thrill, excitement and "coolness" associated with action.
- 3) Have a sense of status, along with an internal code of honour.
- 4) Have been affected by honour.

GROUP BASED VS LONE WOLVES





DIFFERENT FROM VIOLENT CRIME

- Violent offenders are not motivated by their ideological commitment.
- Terrorists are not antisocial in personality structure.
- Some violent offenders are attracted to violent groups because of the legitimacy of violence.
- There are real benefits for some for becoming involved in extremist groups.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- Risk assessment is difficult due to a lack of consensus.
- This has mostly been explored by law enforcement personnel – e.g., the TRAP-18.

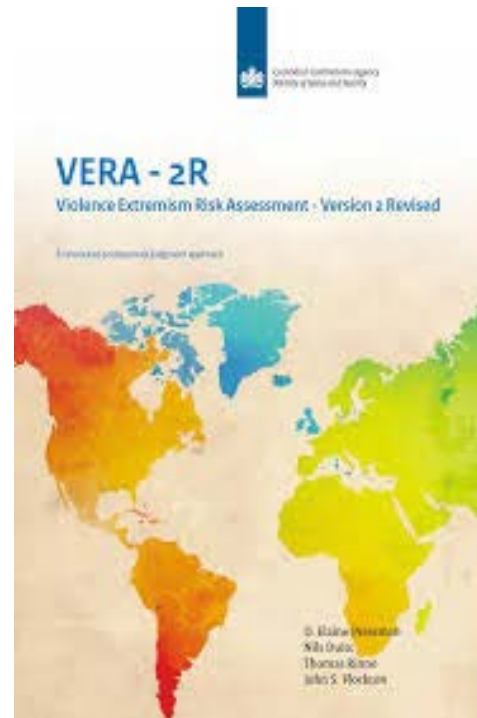


VERA-2R

1) Beliefs, Attitudes and Ideology

2) Social Context and Intention

3) History, Action and Capacity



4) Commitment and Motivation

5) Protective/Risk Mitigating Factors

6) Additional Indicators

WAY FORWARD

Deradicalisation involves changing the thinking



Is this appropriate ethically?

Move to desistance....
This is about changing the identity.



COMMUNITY INCLUSION IS THE ANSWER



NOTES FOR LEGAL PRACTITIONERS...

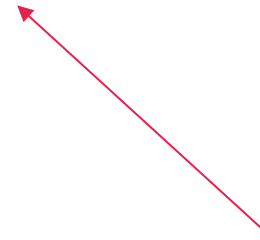
- 1) Seek relevant advice – psychologists, intelligence operatives, religious advisors etc,
- 2) Do not assume people are the same and have the same motivations for the same behaviour even if their charges are the same,
- 3) Expect mistrust and skepticism,
- 4) Seek to understand and listen to their stories and understand the motivation to their actions,
- 5) Appreciate that this client group may be less willing to work with you than others,

CONTINUED...

- 6) Understand that there may be different cultural norms within some groups – e.g., not being willing to shake hands with a female,
- 7) Expect that there may be a disrespect for the Court and legal process,
- 8) Seek to get an understanding of the risk the person poses,
- 9) Try and distinguish whether you are working with an ideologue or a violent criminal who is attracted to violent ideology,
- 10) Appreciate that the individual may be motivated by the group needs and goals rather than those of the individual,
- 11) Appreciate there will probably be different world views and even language.

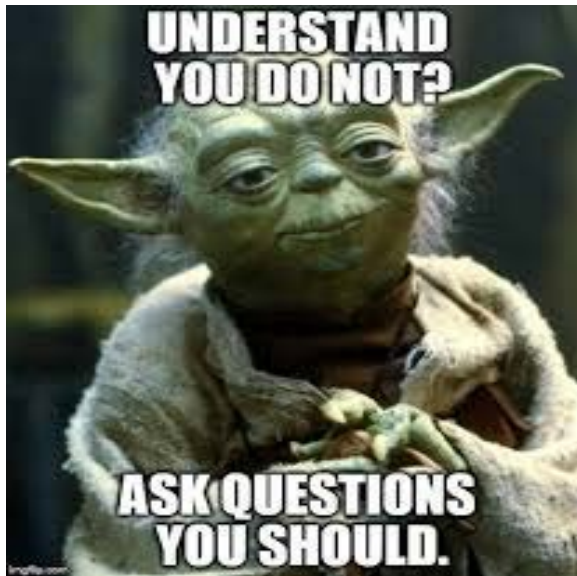
CASE STUDY (IF TIME)

Mr. Breaching Man



This is obviously not him...

QUESTIONS?



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