

## The Roots of Extremism: The Moral Anger and Guided Hatred

The phenomenon of extremism with regard to individuals is linked to complications of inadaptability with the surrounding political, social and economic environment which hinder their response to the continuous variables in their environment though the human community poses problems, leading to despair and anger.



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The extremist organizations polarize those individuals through encouraging tendencies and trends that fill their frustrated and angry minds. Notably, human beings tend to search for external factors to shape their life then bear the world the responsibility of their failure. The frustrated are the majority of the new followers of extremist movements which they voluntarily joined. Despair is enough to generate most of the characteristics of the extremist who is ready to sacrifice himself in the pursuit of the sacred cause.

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In addition, extremist organizations stoke personal anger and tie it to moral anger via adopting people's pain and suffer in conflicts, wars and catastrophes areas as well as portraying the case as part of the moral deterioration around the globe. They use religious ideologies backed by holy texts and adopt extreme thoughts to provide justifications to stop the society deterioration through committing violence<sup>1</sup>.

" The feeling of oppression shakes the individual's beliefs and thoughts, while the ensuing crucial events constitute the basis for extremism"



The feeling of injustice deepens despair and contributes to shaking the individual beliefs and thoughts, paving the way to accept opinions from discussion forums and the social media which reinforce his feeling of injustice<sup>2</sup>.

The critical events that leave a deep feeling of injustice represent a base for extremism. So, the extremists' ideologies build a channel to dump

<sup>1</sup> Lydia Alfaro and others 2015, *Lone wolf terrorists*, Georgetown University, P21,

<http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/NCITF-Final-Paper.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Lydia Alfaro and others 2015, P 19

personal frustrations on other members of the society. On the contrary, the frustration from the political circumstances could enhance the extremism ideology. For instance, Nidal Malik Hassan<sup>3</sup> became increasingly angry of what he thought was an American foreign policy aims at killing his Muslim brothers in the Middle East. The individual who suffered a shock would wish to be detached from his identity and adopt alternative international views to compensate his loss. These extremist ideologies often concentrate on beliefs that give a sense of pain while providing the adopter with a new identity and a feeling of appreciation<sup>4</sup>.

Besides the feeling of injustice due to the personal shock, the other sufferings sometimes push the extremist to act. The researcher in Jihadist movements, Scott Atran said: "The humiliated people do not usually take the path of violence, but rather those who seek revenge for people they care for like the sons of immigrants of the 2nd and 3rd generations who have personal anger towards police officers, culture of the majority that they are skeptical about them and failure to find a suitable work even if they were well educated. They suffer humiliation day in, day out by the bureaucrats who treat their elders as foolish kids"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> He opened fire at Fort Hood Base killing 13 soldiers and injuring more than 30 other

<sup>4</sup> Same Source, P20

<sup>5</sup> Atran, Scott, 2015, Talking to the Enemy: Religion, Brotherhood, and the (Un) Making of Terrorists, translated by Tahiir Libasi, Jadawil for publication and translation, Beirut, P58

## Hatred stoking anger:

**" If directed, personal and moral anger, changes to strong, overwhelming hatred, making the individual yearn and itch to unite with similar elements, forming a highly incendiary public "**

If directed, personal and moral anger takes the form of extreme hatred detaching the individual from his own self and his surroundings. Losing his identity, he yearns to join identical parts, forming a highly incendiary group. Collective hatred could unify conflicting and inconsistent elements<sup>6</sup>. Also, passionate, vehement hatred may give a hollow life some meaning and solace. So, people leading abject life search for a new substance for their lives. But rather than embracing a decent cause they prefer extremist issues offered by extremist organizations to achieve their objectives<sup>7</sup>.

Strong hatred is a succinctly unifying factor since the extremist organizations could not foment their message without believing in the Satan resembled by the Crusaders, the oppressors, the awakening movements, the unbelievers and hypocrites ... etc.

The strength of the organizations could usually be measured by the extent of their success in finding and embodying that Satan. The

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<sup>6</sup> Hover, Erik 2010, previous source, P148

<sup>7</sup> Hover, Erik 2010, previous source, P154

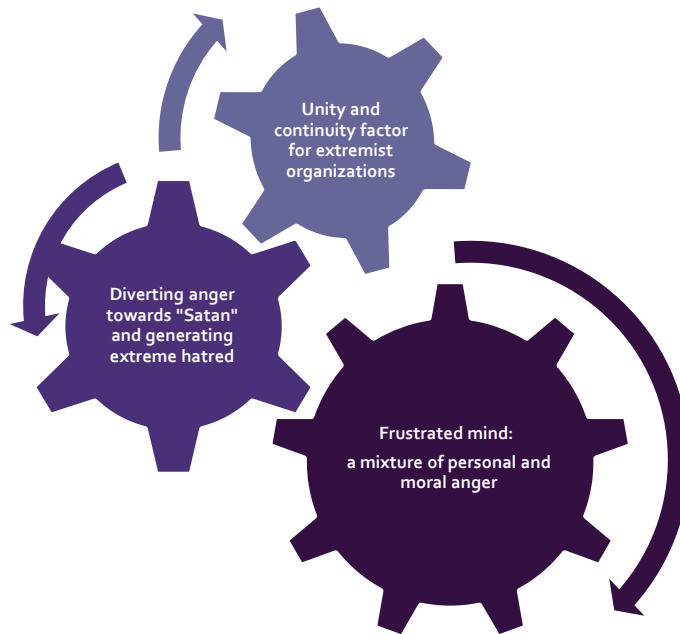
ingenuity of the person who is able to launch an organization and contribute to the spreading of its ideas could be gleaned from how he selects a suitable enemy and appropriate dogma, working out a program for implementation<sup>8</sup>. Paradoxically, the followers of Heavenly religions suffer from a feeling of guilt as a result of the widening gap between the teachings of their religion and the sinful reality. When extremism sticks out its head, the feeling of guilt takes the form of utter hatred<sup>9</sup>. The more extremist are the followers of a certain ideology the more they are overwhelmed by the feeling of hatred. In the United States the religious motive was cited for 43% of the lone wolf terrorists' attacks<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Same source, P147

<sup>9</sup> Same source P152

<sup>10</sup> Lydia Alfaro and others 2015, P48



The revenge and justice seekers who regard themselves as part of the oppressed Muslim group suppressed by the west and autocratic regimes believe they are obliged to avenge the victims<sup>11</sup>. They include Anees Al-Aamiri the perpetrator of the car crash operation in Berlin on 23-12-2016 and Mohammad Riyadh who was responsible for the stabbing incidents on the Treuchtlingen - Würzburg train, in Bavaria, Germany on 18-7-2016 and Michael Zehaf Bibeau the gunman who perpetrated the shooting incident at the Canadian Parliament on 23-10-2014.

<sup>11</sup> Why Join ISIS? How Fighters Respond When You Ask Them:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/why-people-join-isis/419685/>

### **Containment factors:**

Confronting extremism and terrorism require understanding its structure and roots, namely seething personal anger mixed with moral anger.

Social and cultural risks, including extremism require forging real, strong partnerships between effective parties within the society, including governments, the civil society organizations, the private sector, the academic centers and institutions, and the media<sup>12</sup>.

The emphasis should be laid on the childhood and adolescent stages since the early confrontation of extremism and terrorism leads to better containment of violence.

Early measures also include family and school interference, allowing continuous interaction between parents and their children to help shape the values of peace and accept the other. Such interaction will have a good impact on future adolescent behavior. It will also help them adapt to the surrounding environment. This will in turn help to control the motives of personal and moral anger, channeling them towards constructive attitudes such as arts and sports. The schools could also attempt to improve the adolescent's ability to take wise decisions in their response to the surrounding environment, forging a link between education and behavior.

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<sup>12</sup> Kandil, Amani 2013, The Arab Civil Society Confronting Social Risks, The Arab Network of NGOs, Cairo, the 11<sup>th</sup> report, P20.