

START



The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism

DHS S&T 2009 University Programs Summit

Data Needs for Radicalization Studies: Partnering Challenges

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March 17, 2009

The Problem

- (Research on terrorism) “exists on a diet of fast-food...: quick, cheap, ready-to-hand and nutritionally dubious.” –Andrew Silke
- Objective scientific data especially hard to come by in an area that is particularly susceptible to emotional over reaction.

HFD and START

**“Human Factors/
Behavioral Sciences** will apply the social and behavioral sciences to improve detection, analysis, and the understanding of threats posed by individuals, groups, and radical movements.”

~ HF/BSD Mission Statement



START conducts basic research on the human causes and consequences of terrorism, using theories, methods, and concepts of the social and behavioral sciences.

~ START Mission

BROAD RESEARCH AREA

RESEARCH FOCUS

RESEARCH CLUSTERS

Terrorism Group Formation & Recruitment

▶ Radicalization

- ▶ Within the United States
- ▶ International Processes
- ▶ Comparative Studies

Terrorism Group Persistence & Dynamics

▶ Terrorism Operations & Interventions

- ▶ Operational Decisions
- ▶ Counterterrorism Strategies
- ▶ Measuring Counterterrorism Efficacy

Societal Impact of Terrorism

▶ Community Resilience

- ▶ Civil Society & Community Capacity
- ▶ Institutional Preparedness & Response Capability

Integrative Research

▶ Cross-Cutting Projects

- ▶ Event-Level Data Collection & Analysis
- ▶ Actor-Level Data Collection & Analysis

START Data Collection

- Global Databases
- National Databases
- International Surveys
- National Surveys
- Strategic Case Studies and Field Work
- Data Archives

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Sample START Research
Related to Radicalization

Twelve mechanisms of radicalization

INDIVIDUAL RADICALIZATION

- personal grievance
- group grievance
- personal ties
- slippery slope

GROUP RADICALIZATION

- extremity shift in likeminded group
- dynamics of isolation and threat
- intragroup competition
- intergroup competition
- condensation from larger movement

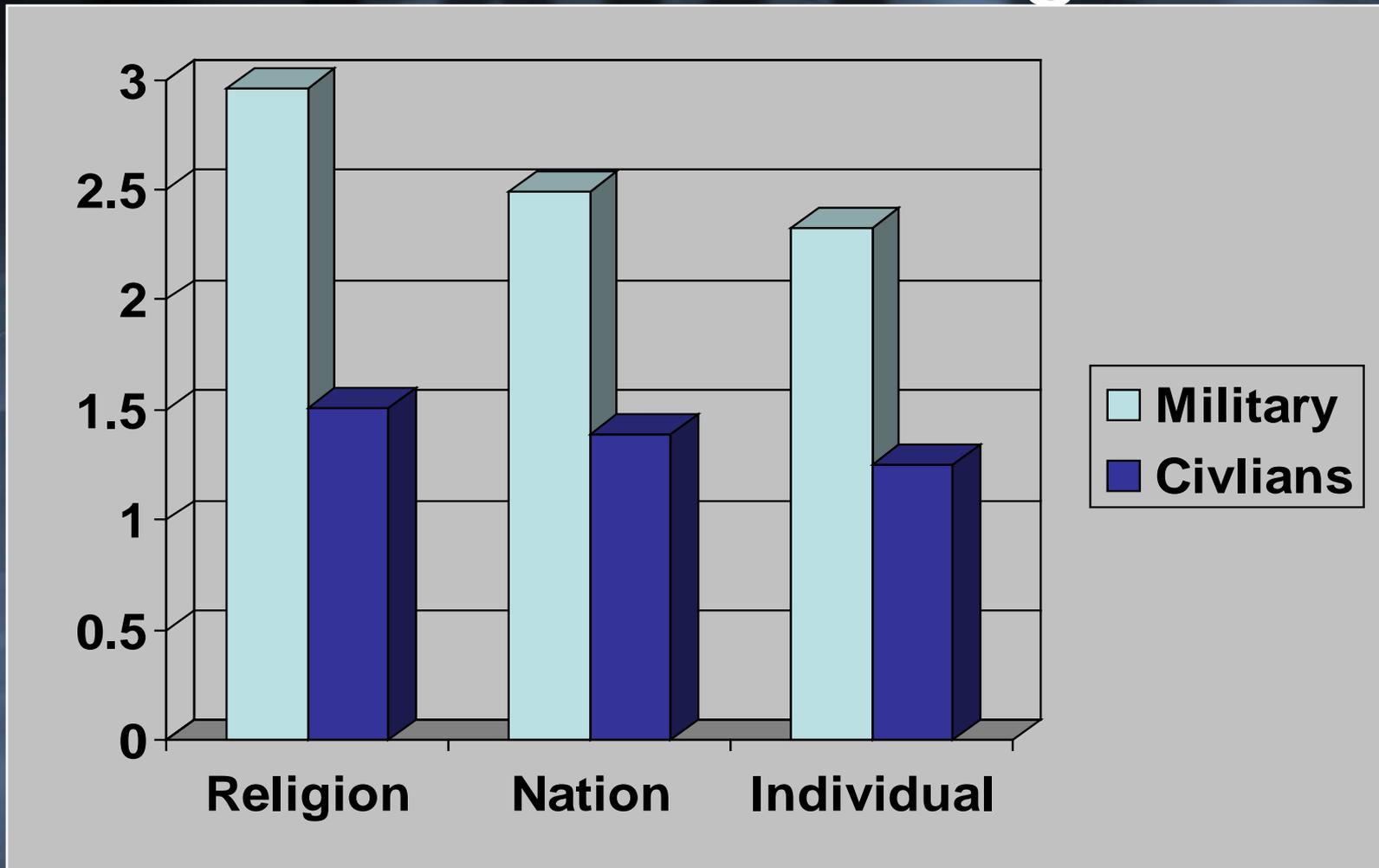
MASS RADICALIZATION

- jujitsu politics
- hate
- martyrdom

Research led by Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko



Identity and Support for Attacks: Nationalism or Religion?



Research led by Arie Kruglanski

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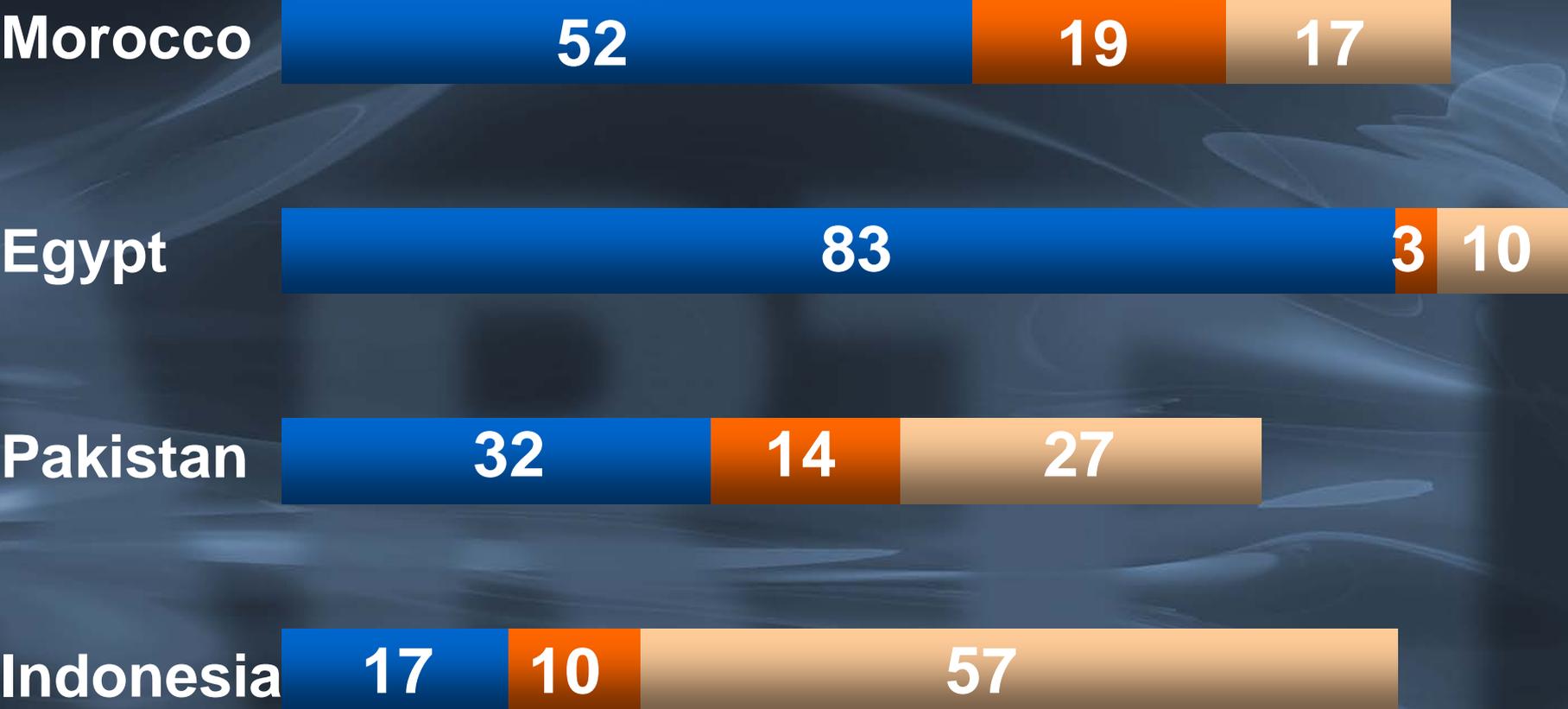
Support for Attacks on Civilians

How justified are attacks on civilians that are carried out in order to achieve political goals?



Support for Attacks on U.S. Troops Based in the Persian Gulf

Approve **Mixed feelings** **Disapprove**



Willingness to Use Terror: An Experimental Analysis

- Willingness to use terror is rare
 - Only 10% of experiment participants express willingness
- Willingness to use terror is *not* directly influenced by individuals' level of grievance (in the form of past and ongoing discrimination and oppression).
- Willingness to use terror is related to individuals' level of Social Dominance Orientation
 - SDO = a general desire for group-based dominance and hierarchy rather than equality
 - Those who are higher on SDO who *do* support action are 14% more likely to choose terror (rather than protest).
- An individual's *justification* of the use of terrorism by others is 16% more likely with higher grievance.

Research led by Jon Wilkenfeld, Victor Asal, and Anthony Lemieux

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Studies of Specific Groups: Hizbut Tahrir

- Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia is significantly larger than previously estimated
 - at least 13,000 trained cadre
 - 50,000 members
 - 1300 weekly halaqa meetings
- HT-Indonesia is the fourth most active Islamic web site in Indonesia and is the most influential among Salafi leaning Muslims.



Strategic Case Studies and Field Work

- Cell Groups, *Halaqa*, and the Internet in Indonesia — *McLeod and Hairgrove (Univ of Wisconsin)*
- Suicide Bombers in Iraq — *Hafez (UMKC)*
- Understanding “Londonistan” — *Bale (MIIS)*
- “Dual identity” of LTTE and Hamas: Service Providers and Terrorists — *Flanigan (SDSU)*
- Self-Centered Rhetoric of the German Right-Wing — *della Porta (European University Institute)*
- Reality or Myth? Hizb ut-Tahrir and Non-Violent Radical Islam — *Karagiannis (Univ of Macedonia)*

Radicalization: New START Works in Progress

Focus on improving understanding of dynamics of Muslim-American communities.

Nationwide Field Work

- Focus groups and interviews around the country
- Include communities with small and large Muslim populations
- Team working in 6 regions in the United States
- Sponsored by HF/BS Division

Research led by Akbar Ahmed

Large-scale survey of Muslim-Americans

- Expand on 2007 Pew survey
- Generate insights into social networks and links between behaviors and actions

Research led by Paul Harwood

Islamic Radicalization in Europe and North America: Parallels and Divergence

- Collecting detailed information about radicalized actors
 - Primary-source data (structured interviews with current and former radicals)
 - Secondary source data
 - Surveys in Muslim communities
- Methods
 - Literature Review
 - Interviews
 - Comparative Case Studies



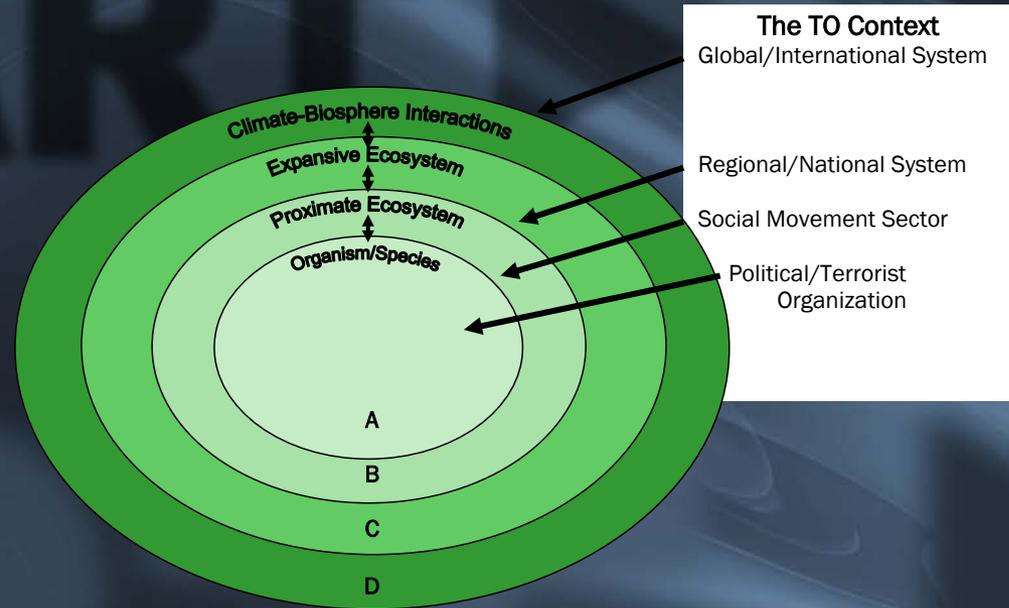
International Research Team: U.S., U.K., Sweden

The Ecology of Terrorist Organizations

NSF Human Social Dynamics Program



- START
- CIDCM
- UMIACS



Contextual analyses of the behavior of terrorist organizations, facilitated by new data on

- 450 violent and non-violent organizations in the Middle East and Western Europe
- All organizations engaged in terrorism between 2004 and 2008

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Partnering Challenges: Data

Data Issues in Radicalization Research

- Researchers have a rigorous scientific toolkit but it requires comprehensive, reliable data.
- Open sources are useful and provide tremendous amounts of information but are limited in some domains to what journalists report on, radicals publicize and lawyers ask.
- Both research and policy would benefit from greater access to more detailed data.
- Such data is often collected by operational elements (overtly or covertly)
 - Law enforcement investigations
 - Intelligence operations
 - Interrogations / Depositions

Radicalization Data

Examples Where Researchers Do Well	Examples Where Partners Are Needed
Opinion surveys of general populations	Internal group opinion
Incident data	Plot data
Interviews with non-violent radicals	Interviews with violent radicals
Life histories	Case histories

Obstacles

- Barriers to accessing this data
 - **Security** (ongoing investigations / operations; sources and methods, etc.)
 - **Legal** (privacy; constitutionality; civil liberties)
- Operational entities do not focus on basic research
 - Not their job
 - Even when it is easy to do so, might not ask the questions or record the information most relevant to researchers
 - Don't have incentives or resources to devote to sanitizing data for scientific research
- Academics need confidence in provenance and reliability of data.
- Cross-national partnering compounds all of this

(Partial) Solutions

- Better understanding of each others' needs
 - Researchers don't always need the sensitive parts of government-held data (e.g. don't necessarily need to know names of individuals to do good social science).
 - Government needs to be confident that research is treated judiciously where this is required.
- Dedicated resources and institutional structure for transitioning data to scientists and cutting through bureaucratic boundaries.
- Researchers need to educate data collectors about
 - What they need
 - Why it is important

More START Research

- Panels (Mar 17)
 - **11:15 am:** Understanding the Dynamics that Drive IEDs (Gary LaFree)
 - **1:45 pm:** The Global Terrorism Database: An Expanded and Revised Resource for Understanding Trends in Terrorism
 - **1:45 pm:** Student Research on Social Network Analysis of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
 - **3:30 pm:** Dissent, Extremism, and Terrorism: Understanding the Range of Actors
- Student Posters:
 - “Guerilla Marketing Gone Bad: A Centering Resonance Analysis of Online and Traditional Media Coverage of the 2007 ‘Boston Bomb Scare’” - Hamilton Bean
 - “Delving Further Into State Fragility and Terrorism: The Importance of War” - Susan Fahey
 - “Terrorist Attacks Against the Police” - Jennifer Gibbs
 - “Ideologically-Motivated (IM) Homicide in the U.S., 1990-2007: A Comparison of Far-Right and Bias Homicide Events” - Jeffrey Gruenewald
 - “Patterns of Decline among Terrorist Organizations” - Erin Miller
 - “Competition in the Political Market for Terrorist Violence” - John Sawyer

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