

*Luis Miguel Sordo Estella*

*Infantry Colonel (R) posted at the IHCM (Institute of Military History and Culture), Degree in Psychology, and Doctor in «International Peace and Security» (UNED – National University of Distance Education). Head of the Section of Archives. Institute of Military History and Culture*

*Email: lmsordo@hotmail.com*

## PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM: BRIEF NOTES

### Abstract

Terrorism is a global problem. No country in the world can consider itself free of the scourge of fear and terror. Geopolitical, strategic, economic, or social interests agitate the world map giving rise to conflicts among countries or among regions. In recent years, some jihadist terrorist groups or organizations have emerged and, with strong military power and uncommon violence, are causing panic, suffering, poverty, and desolation among the population in many countries. With studied media politics and defending a specific ideology, terrorist groups of different political and religious persuasion, and a strong personality among its members, were able to obtain the following of young fanatics. Many of these young fanatics were socially rootless, their conduct being subject to permanent psycho-sociological analyses. A terrorist's violent behavior is not a mental condition per se, but rather a consequence of a process of socialization that affects the mind and the behavior. A terrorist is not a psychopath, and the psychological sequels that the terror these groups cause the victims and the population that suffers has a long persistence in most cases.

### Keywords

Terrorism, fanaticism, jihadist, psychological.

## INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, international terrorism has re-emerged with more violent actions than in prior periods. The incorporation of armed groups of a jihadist nature sowing terror in towns, cities, or regions in Eastern and Western countries has led to an in-depth study of the behavior and psyche of fanatic terrorists, who have no doubts about carrying out massacres, nor feel the minimum remorse about it. The psychological consequences caused to the victims and families by the violent actions of terrorist groups or organizations are, almost always, truly harmful and irreparable. To the physical harm produced by the violent actions, one must add the psychological impression that evokes more pain and suffering in the victim's environment. The persistent feeling of fear, the social isolation, the loneliness, the constant suffering, the sorrow and anxiety due to the situation after a violent action are relevant factors in the subsequent behavioral development of the victims. Terrorism and mental health are antagonists. The rate of mental health decreases where terrorism grows. In view of the facts, psychologists and psychiatrists have a real task ahead toward the study and research in the field of terrorism.

### Terrorism: definition and origin

The Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy of the Language defines terrorism as “dominance through terror”, also as “the succession of acts of violence carried out to instill fear”, or as “the criminal performance of organized gangs who repeatedly, and in general indiscriminately, intend to cause social alarm with political purposes”. Terrorism is also defined as “the undertaking of violent actions by clandestine groups to frighten a population and/or force the will of a government or of an international organization to reach political objectives”<sup>1</sup>.

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1 ROJAS, Enrique, *The Seeds of Violence*, Barcelona, Espasa Calpe, 1995, pg.17.

According to the prestigious psychiatrist Rojas Marcos (1995), many experts describe violence as «an omnipresent and inevitable human quality». This assertion usually goes hand in hand with the thesis that «cruel aggression constitutes an instinctive and intrinsically biological strength». From a mechanistic point of view, violence is «an innate energy accumulated in an internal deposit, probably the brain, and which is liberated automatically.»

2 TORRES, Jordi, «The Increase of Jihadism in the West: A Product of the Modern Age», *Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies*, Madrid, 25 September, 2015, pg.3. According to TORRES, «The causes for the increase of Islamic Jihadism are complex and must be considered with an integral approach, analyzing economic, social, and cultural aspects, as well as historical and political ones.

3 AVILÉS Juan, SEPÚLVEDA, Isidro, *History of the current world. From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the Great Recession*, Madrid, Síntesis, 2010, pg.324.

The United Nations have not been able to reach an agreement about terrorism that includes a definition of it, and that impedes them from exercising their moral authority and unmistakably proclaiming that terrorism will never be accepted as a tactic, not even in defense of the most noble causes. In any case, the High Level Panel appointed to the United Nations Actions against Terrorism considers that the definition of terrorism must include, besides the existing norms and regulations, «Any action, other than actions already specified in the agreements and conventions currently in force regarding specific aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Convention and Resolution 1566(2004) of the Security Council, intended to cause death or serious bodily injuries to a civilian or to a non-combatant, when the purpose of such an action, due to its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or to force a government or international organization to carry out an action or to abstain from doing so». The US Administration provides another interesting definition of terrorism. In fact, the U.S. Code, Article 22, Section 2656f, affirms that terrorism is «a premeditated violence, with political motivations, perpetrated against non-combatant objectives by non-State groups or by clandestine agents».

If we approach its origins, already back in ancient Greece, both sons of Ares (the god of war), and Aphrodite (the goddess of love) were named Deimos (terror) and Phobos (fear). In the Modern Age, the word terrorism was coined during the French Revolution (1789-1799) to condemn the reign of terror or Era of terror (1793-1794) imposed by the revolutionaries against those who opposed them, whom they executed or imprisoned. The Jacobin government led by Maximilien de Robespierre considered the only method to spread the civic virtues of the new regime was the establishment of a government based on intimidation, coercion, and terror. However, already in the first century, the historian Flavious Josephus narrates that within the Jewish movement opposed to Roman domination, there were the Zealots, a feared sect called the *Sicarii*. This group was known for the mortal rule of the *sica*, a small dagger with which they slit the throats of their enemies, the Romans, and also of the traitor and apostate Jews.

These actions, considered the first terrorist actions, were inspired by religious fanaticism. As De la Corte (2006) points out, during the seventh and eighth centuries, a gang called the *assassins* appeared, which belonged to a Shiite sect of the Ishmaelites who, inebriated with hashish before their violent actions, dedicated themselves, through small and limited surprise attacks, disguised as Christians or foreigners, to assassinating with daggers, discarded weapons, or poison, their Christian or Muslim enemies from Persia and Syria. These assassinations were considered actions of religious obedience.

Some experts consider that modern terrorism started with the French Revolution, as the revolutionaries themselves were the ones who gave a first definition of the phenomenon.

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4 THE UNITED NATIONS, «United Nations Actions against Terrorism», *High Level Panel, Terrorism, Definition of Terrorism*, available at <<http://www.un.org/es/terrorism/highlevelpanel.shtml>> [last viewed: 9 February, 2016].

5 AVILÉS, Juan, *Terrorism in Spain. From ETA to Al Qaeda*, Madrid, Arco., 2010, pg.10.

6 DE LA CORTE, Luis, *The Logic of Terrorism*, Madrid, Alianza, 2006, pg. 23-26.

With the appearance of modern terrorism, the concepts of terror, terrorism, and State terrorism have gained a unique relevance. Some States have even been considered «terrorist States» when committing, tolerating, or instigating terrorist activities. An example of this was in the twentieth century in some countries in South America, such as Chile (General Pinochet), or Argentina (General Videla's Military Junta). The activities that a State carries out are considered terrorist if fear spreads throughout the population as a result of indiscriminate aggressions, detentions, kidnappings, incarcerations, executions, selective assassinations, financing of paramilitary groups, etc., regardless of the intervention of the national armed forces in terrorist activities against other countries in acts of war.

From a historical point of view, organizations and institutions have carried out systematic and prolonged terrorism, to the point of becoming one of their main activities. State and Sub-state groups have also carried out terrorism, though sporadically or ad hoc, in armed conflicts, in processes of popular insurrection, in the battlefield, in guerrillas or in urban disturbances. More specifically, attacks considered terrorist attacks have been carried out and perpetrated by criminal organizations such as mafias, drug-trafficking cartels, racist or xenophobic groups, or other groups with extremely radical political and social ideologies. Regarding socio-political repercussions of terrorism, we can add that terror has caused harm, suffering, and pain to the victims, and persecution, imprisonment, death and political failure to the killers. On few occasions have terrorist movements achieved their political or social objective, despite the repercussion sought through the media at a national or international level as a result of their violent actions, intending to support States politically, triggering, or prolonging social and political conflicts, or destabilizing political and social institutions in countries.

### The evolution of terrorism

The progress made in communications, the technological development of all kinds, and the ethnic-religious motivations of their followers have increased and improved the structures of terrorist organizations, as well as the collaboration with organizations and movements from other countries. Furthermore, they have increased their operative capability, and use of violence making their armed actions more spectacular, and provoking more panic and terror to the population<sup>7</sup>. Traditionally, terrorist groups had an ideological, religious, or patriotic motivation, an objective which is currently manifested with less relevance although it may still be used as propaganda in the communication media, and to achieve greater popular support<sup>8</sup>.

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7 DE LA CORTE, óp. cit., pg.32-33.

8 CESEDEN (*Centro Superior de Estudios de la Defensa Nacional – National Defense Studies Center*), *International organizations and the fight against terrorism*, Monographs of CESEDEN, Conclusions of the XLIII Monographic Course, Ministry de Defense, Madrid, 2005, pg.52.

Jihadist terrorism represents an extreme faction of Islamism that intends to establish a political régime based on Islam, and whose legislation is exclusively based on the Sharia law (traditional Islamic law) established by God, and that cannot be modified by men. This terrorism initially developed in the nineties, and it was aimed against Muslim countries apostate of Islam, like Algeria and Egypt. It later reached its height in the Afghan-Russian conflict, appearing among young Arabs combating in the Afghan resistance the Al Qaeda group (organization founded in 1988 by Osama Bin Laden)<sup>9</sup>. The jihadist terrorist groups, knowing the importance of the communication social media for the spread of their rhetoric, use the theories of persuasion in their radical rhetoric, «stressing especially on the emotions of the receiver of their message, and exploiting the feelings of injustice, exclusion or humiliation with the aim of initiating processes of attraction, radicalization, and recruitment»<sup>10</sup>.

Adapting to its environment is essential for a terrorist group, for its efficiency and efficacy, as well as for its own survival. However, this adaptation requires a knowledge (organizational) that will allow it to search for solutions to problems, to modify tactics and behaviors, or to move strategies forward. In a terrorist organization, learning new skills and knowledge by the individual interrelated members is more important than the capabilities of the individual members separately. Organizational learning is a process through which a terrorist group may acquire «new knowledge or technological skills that can improve making strategic decisions, tactical planning, or operating activities»<sup>11</sup>, and that will be developed in four interrelated phases: acquisition, interpretation, distribution, and storage of the information<sup>12</sup>.

## TERRORISM: THE TERRORIST AS ACTIVE AGENT

### Characteristics and profile of the terrorist

Knowing the profile of the terrorist is an essential component to carry out any anti-terrorist action; thus, it is necessary to go deeply into all the factors that have an effect on the individuals who decide to enlist in a group with these characteristics. The motivations that drive a person to approach a terrorist organization are the following: a) a

9 AVILÉS, SEPÚLVEDA, óp. cit. pg.325.

10 FANJUL, María Luisa, «The radical persuasive message: Jihadism and the social networks», *Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies*, 23 October 2015, pg.5.

11 SAMIEDO, Juan Pablo, «The structure and organization of terrorist groups from the perspective of organizational learning», *Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies.*, 2 October, 2015, pg.7.

12 Ibidem, pg.7-8.

13 FANJUL, óp. cit. pg.3.

feeling of belonging and cohesion to the group; b) the individual-group attraction; c) the values and motivation of the group; d) the prestige of the members of the group; e) the rules of the group; f) the need to communicate; g) the repercussion on the group of changes that have taken place in part of the group.

Thus it is important to analyze the emotional effects that have an effect in the process of recruitment and radicalization of an individual so that he/she assumes the values of the group, giving sense to his/her life and actions. The marginal populations and those in a state of social exclusion are the ones more prone to be seduced by the terrorist rhetoric. The persuasion of the message on the sympathizer of the jihadist terrorist group is the essential element of the process of radicalization and subsequent recruitment. The profile of the jihadist sympathizer who is susceptible of initiating a process of radicalization, and later being recruited, is that of a young person, marginalized, disoriented, and with an anti-social behavior that identifies the message of terrorist groups as a persuasive message<sup>14</sup>.

The author and journalist José María Portell (1976), assassinated by the terrorist group ETA in 1978, pointed out how the militants that the armed organization recruited in the seventies were: they came almost exclusively from the Basque Country, they ranged from skilled laborers to university students, with a marked personality, and a strong nationalist ideology. Portell argued that «ETA is not a movement that indiscriminately draws masses. It is a movement for young people radicalized in nationalist ideas»<sup>15</sup>.

The psychologist and psychiatrist Alonso-Fernández (1986) feels that among the strategic objectives of the terrorists, the following should be mentioned<sup>16</sup>: the physical or moral destruction of their adversaries; the overall intimidation of the population or a specific part of it; the establishment of political, social, or economic disorder, or the maintenance by force of an apparent socio-political order. There are two features that define terrorism: organized criminal violence, and sowing confusion, alarm, or terror. The mentality of the terrorist is based on the conviction that his/her actions are not criminal, but rather entirely justified, and are part of a socially positive or, even, heroic behavior.

Determining, for instance, the motivations of the Islamic martyrs can help us identify the specific strategies of recruitment used by terrorist organizations trying to get followers to their cause<sup>17</sup>. In 1993, two social psychologists, Karau and Williams,

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14 Ibidem, pg. 6,8.

15 PORTELL, José María, *ETA's men*, (3rd edition), Barcelona, Dopesa, 1976, pg.64.

16 ALONSO-FERNÁNDEZ, Francisco, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, Barcelona, Salvat, 1986, pg.2.

17 OLECHOWICZ, Kari, MATUSIZ, Jonathan, «The motivations of Islamic Martyrs: Applying the Collective Effort Model», *Springer Science+ Business Media*, New York, 2013, pg.339.

applied the so-called Collective Effort Model (CEM)<sup>18</sup> to the motivations of the Islamic martyrs to determine the effects of the individual effort on collective tasks<sup>19</sup>. The model identifies three factors that contribute to a full motivational strength of an individual inside the group: expectation, instrumentality, and validity of the results<sup>20</sup>. The multiplication of the three factors produces motivational force. Many sociologists, journalists, and military leaders feel that the motivation of the Islamic martyrs through the use of bombs to commit suicide responds to the following objectives: gain paradise, obtain rewards in the afterlife, compensation for the humiliation suffered, the desire for revenge, or altruism<sup>21</sup>.

## The Role of the Terrorist

The role that a terrorist represents in the different stages of an organization (such as public relations, logistics or violent actor) has a marked influence on his/her personal psychological construct<sup>22</sup>. The so-called «repertory grid» method by George Kelly to explore the personal construct of the individual provides an interesting consideration regarding how the terrorist sees his/her identity in relation with his/her implication with terrorism<sup>23</sup>. There are three stages in the process: before he/she was committed to terrorism, when he/she became actively committed, and how he/she would like to be committed. In a study carried out with three terrorists selected, and studying the different roles they played within the terrorist organization, differences in the personal construct of each of them were found, depending on the duration of their involvement in the terrorist organization. The individuals chosen were a former leader of a terrorist group, an activist who had taken part in different attacks, and another individual whose role was transporting and placing a bomb.

For the first one (the activist leader), the elements identified as key for his commitment with the group were<sup>24</sup>: his father, his brother, his wife, his brother-in-law, his

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18 People will work stronger as a group if they have close things in common with that group, or they have convinced themselves that their effort will be recognized.

19 Loc. cit.

20 Ibidem, pg.340.

21 Loc. cit.

22 CANTER, David, SARANGI, Sudhanshu, YOUNGS, Donna, «Terrorists' personal constructs and their roles: A comparison of the three Islamic terrorists», *The British Psychological Society*, 2012, p.162.

23 Ibidem, pg.162-163.

24 Ibidem, pg.166.

mentor, two friends, a Hindu leader<sup>25</sup>, and the police. For the second (the subordinate terrorist), the people identified as key included<sup>26</sup>: his father, his brother, his wife, his grandfather, the person who introduced him into the terrorist network, the person who planned the attack with bombs, and Hindu fanatics. The terrorist carrying the bomb identified as his key people the following<sup>27</sup>: his father, his wife, a female teacher, a close partner, the organizer of the attack with a bomb, and another terrorist related with it. The differences among the constructs of these three individuals provide an indication that it is the nature of the construct system that supports his commitment or not with terrorism.

According to the studies carried out by Doctor Jeff Victoroff from the Department of Pneumology and Psychiatry at the University of Southern California School of Medicine, there are psychological theories not sufficiently contrasted empirically that have tried a rapprochement to the terrorist's mind from a psychological point of view. Several reports suggest that the modification of social and psychological factors contribute to the genesis of the terrorist's mind. The conclusions and proposals of the studies undertaken are the following<sup>28</sup>: 1) the behavior of the terrorist is determined by a combination of biological and cognitive factors, the temperament, the environment, and the dynamics of the group. The degree of influence of each one of the factors depends on the individual terrorists, individual groups, or types of group; 2) the terrorists are psychologically very heterogeneous. Every terrorist is motivated by a set of experiences and psycho-social traits; 3) the terrorists show different psychological subtypes in accordance with their behavioral tendencies or the roles within the group. Leaders and followers tend to be psychologically different; 4) four characteristic traits of terrorists who act as leaders or are followers of the group to be taken into account are: strong affection for an ideological objective, perception of oppression, humiliation or persecution, low cognitive flexibility and tolerance towards ambiguity, capacity to repress an instinctive and learned moral strength against harming innocents 5) the internal psychodynamics of a terrorist group is influenced by the specific personality of the leader as well as by the temperament of the followers; 6) preventing terrorist conduct by analyzing the interaction of psychological, cultural, economic, and political factors that bring about an attraction towards terrorism on young people; 7) experts must be willing to choose between the benefits of confidentiality, and the need to progress in the knowledge of this field; 8) experts must be willing to research about what leads them to direct contact with active terrorists, with terrorists active recently, or with those who take risks to become terrorists; 9) a major investment is required to advance in the field of the social and behavioral aspects of terrorism.

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25 The study was carried out among the Pakistani and Hindu populations.

26 Ibidem, pg.169-170.

27 Ibidem, p.171.

28 VICTOROFF, Jeff, «The Mind of a terrorist. A Review and critique of psychological approaches», *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.49 No.1 (Feb., 2005), SAGE, 2005, pg.34-36.



Along those subject matter and experimental lines, researchers Irene Rebollo-Mesa, Trinca Poderman, and Luis Moya Albiol point out the important advance that the knowledge of genetic contributions on aggressive, violent, and antisocial conduct is having in recent times; as well as the interaction that exists between genetic and environmental factors<sup>29</sup>. The aforementioned researchers affirm that there is a possibility that genetic aspects may influence biological factors such as arousal, hormone levels, and neurotransmitters which, at the same time, influence the behavior.

### Thought and personality of a terrorist

The tactic of terrorism is criminal violence, but its strategy is to spread alarm, confusion, and terror in part of the society. Its objective is the affirmation of power if it operates from within the institutionality, and the destabilization of the State or the attainment of concessions (money, liberation of prisoners, political demands, etc.) when it is a clandestine movement. The victory of terrorism can only be limited and indirect; in other words, as a consequence of a process of negotiation<sup>30</sup> because terrorism does not intend to defeat the enemy, but rather to spread the images of such a defeat. It only has the power to operate, not to win; it does not have the intellectual or human capability to manage victory.

In an article published about the November 13, 2015 Paris attacks, José Javier Rueda, writer and journalist, expressed that the main weapons to fight against Islamist terrorism are: «police and judicial cooperation, the exchange of information, the mechanisms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, the full control of the Internet, strangling financial sources, support for democratization, the solution to the Palestine conflict, and a demanding integration of immigrants»<sup>31</sup>.

Terrorists consider themselves «people who must defend themselves from implicit or explicit attacks from people against whom they aim their violent actions»<sup>32</sup>. They divide the world into two groups: *us* and *them*, being *them* those responsible for what happens to *us*. Terrorists end up believing that they defend themselves from the attacks of their victims because the victims' aim is against their racial/ethnic group, their independence,

29 REBOLLO-MESA, Irene, POLDERMAN, Tinca, MOYA-ALBIOL, Luis, «The genetics of human violence», *Neurology of Behavior, Neurology Magazine*, 2010; 50: 533-40, available at <<http://www.neurologia.com/pdf/Web/5009/bdo90533.pdf>> [last viewed: 11 February, 2016].

30 AZNAR, Federico, «An Approach to the Phenomenon of Terrorism», *Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies*, 10 March, 2015, pg.4.

31 RUEDA, José Javier, «Fewer bombs and more Intelligence», *The Analysis, Heraldo de Aragón*, 21 November, 2015, pg.2.

32 SAN MARTÍN, José, *The terrorist. How he is. How he becomes a terrorist*, Barcelona, Ariel, 2005, pg.18.

or their religious values. The terrorists firmly believe that they must act as they do, even when they die killing, because they consider martyrdom the shortest road to God and the most glorious one to efficiently combat the enemy<sup>33</sup>. Separation or distinction between their own group and that of «the others» is a characteristic of the terrorists, projecting their hate and frustration on the group of «the others». Both groups are irreconcilable because its own group considers «the others» (the victims) the ones really responsible for their frustrations, hate them and project their vengeance against them. As a result, when they attack, terrorists feel like victims, not like killers.

Political, social, personal, or other type of expectations which have not been fulfilled underlie among the terrorist's frustrations. This leads them to hatred and, consequently, to the desire for vengeance<sup>34</sup>. Education, training, socialization in general, but not nature, are factors that could turn a child into a terrorist with the passing of time. If we observe the social profile of the components and sympathizers of a terrorist group, such as Boko Haram<sup>35</sup>, it is integrated by displaced, middle class people, marginal youngsters, notable political and economic actors, and even immigrants and street children<sup>36</sup>. This goes against the stereotype image of Boko Haram that presents itself as a terrorist organization with only illiterates among its ranks.

The terrorist personality is not inherited, although there may sometimes be a family of terrorists which constitutes an intergenerational transmission of terrorism with no biological explanation, but one of socialization<sup>37</sup>. In the case of Basque terrorism, ETA sympathizers with non-Basque surnames suffered the social pressure of being considered non-Basque citizens (second-class Spanish immigrants) in their childhood and adolescence<sup>38</sup>. To avoid such frustration, and the shame of being considered of Spanish descent, those sympathizers embraced the *abertzale* (Basque national left-wing) cause, and many ended up joining ETA, thus leaving aside their Hispanicity and acquiring the condition of Basque due to their belonging to the armed group. Also, Al Qaeda terrorists in Europe have publicly manifested that they have felt considered second-class

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33 Daesh actions «are an integral part of the ideology, the provocation in how they film themselves, the commotion they look for in the spectator, the publicity they obtain» (TORRES, op cit., pg.10.).

34 SAN MARTÍN, op cit., pg.92.

35 Insurgent group of Salafist ideology operating in Nigeria, and which resorts to terrorist methods of a triple profile: social, political, and Jihadist. Currently, it is self-denominated Islamic State of the Province of West Africa.

36 NÚÑEZ, Jesús A., *Boko Haram. The delusion of the Caliphate in West Africa*, Madrid, Los Libros de la Catarata, 2015, pg.31.

37 Among families made up of terrorists, we can mention the brothers Antonio Troitiño (22 assassinations), and Domingo Troitiño (author of the *Hipercor* attack in Barcelona with 21 people killed); also the son of the latter, Jon Joseba Troitiño, all of them belonging to ETA. They are all an example of the fact that the gene of the terrorist group has spread throughout some families.

38 SANMARTÍN, op. cit., pg.97.

citizens, unwelcome and socially unintegrated migrants in the host countries (having suffered experiences of uprooting and frustration) before joining the terrorist ranks<sup>39</sup>.

Religion has been and is also a motivation or justification to join terrorist groups who, under the flag of social injustice and poverty, recruit idealist youngsters to join their ranks. That is the example of Islamist terrorism which does not believe in the nation-state. Islamists are not nationalists, they do not fight for a Nation-State, their struggle is moral (in addition to political), as a consequence of a religious commitment. The real enemy of religious terrorism is the infidel, the apostate, represented by the Western world; these are the adversaries that must be destroyed because they threaten Islam. Western values, represented by democracy, socialism, communism, united to a culture degenerated by concepts such as materialism, hedonism, homosexuality, etc., are considered an attack to the *Sharia*, a form of life based on divine law.

At the beginning of the aughts, Boko Haram set their anti-western ideology, by considering Islamic values superior to any others, and that the Western models had provoked the backwardness and subordination of the Muslim populations to foreign interests and actors<sup>40</sup>. Islamist terrorists who act in Europe form a very heterogeneous group that has been introduced to radical Islamism by Jihadist recruiters. Initially, religion was not essential in their lives, neither in their place of birth nor in their European habitat. Although a single profile does not exist, the profile that seems to dominate the Islamist terrorist is that of a young, well-educated person, with economic resources, belonging to the middle class, and who can undertake a higher education even in the West. Thus, it is not poverty, nor social injustice that leads them to violence, but rather the radical interpretation of Islam<sup>41</sup>.

Terrorists prefer being called soldiers or freedom fighters because the word terrorist is a product of the nature of a terrorist action. Due to its nature, terrorism acts in a premeditated way against the civilian population, but it also has victims among the police or the military, seeking as an end to instill terror among the civilian witnesses to the attack<sup>42</sup>. The terrorist act seeks to terrorize the audience, to intimidate the observer of the attack; it needs witnesses to its violent actions.

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39 SETAS, Carlos, What do we mean when we speak of Al Qaeda?, *Institute for Strategic Studies Magazine* N° 4, Madrid, September, 2014, pg.9.

40 NÚÑEZ, Jesús, op.cit., pg.35.

41 CANO, Miguel Ángel, «Author profiles of Islamic terrorism in Europe», *Electronic Magazine of Penal Science and Criminology*, Articles, 11-07 (2009), University of Granada, 2009, pg.9 and 13, available at <<http://criminol.ugr.es/recpc/11/recpc11-07.pdf>> [last viewed: 10 February, 2016].

The majority of the youngsters recruited by the Daesh are between 18 and 35 years old, from Muslim families or not, from cities or from rural areas, from the middle classes or from underprivileged environments, men, women, or entire families. TORRES, op. cit., pg.4.

42 According to the Foundation for the Victims of Terrorism, the terrorist organization ETA has killed 103 military personnel, 230 «Guardias Civiles», 183 National Police Officers, 30 Municipal Police Officers, and 14 Police Officers from Autonomies. See *Foundation for the Victims of Terrorism*, Statis-

According to Cooper (1978), the terrorist is someone who is seeking to instill fear or terror on other people<sup>43</sup> with a purpose. The victimology of terrorism includes all those people directly affected by its actions, as well as the part of the population that has been deprived of calm and order, including those threatened by the terrorist action, and the innocent citizens and those moved by the terrorist action. An irrational trait of terrorism is the evaluation of its results by the number of victims attained because terrorism does not protect the innocent but rather uses him<sup>44</sup>.

It is always in the interest of terrorism that their actions have an irrational and unforeseeable effect to increase its perturbing effects. In this sense, the strategy of terror is motivated by the result of a previous balance of costs and benefits (rational calculation), where the maximum score is given to the impact attained in the media, and on the population (irrational criterion). This peculiar planning of terrorism has benefitted from the technological progress of weaponry and of the media.

The Psychology Professor Enrique Baca believes that there is not a different psychopathology between the terrorists and a normal person, that the terrorists are not emotionally unstable, but rather they identify themselves with the mission, they are absolutely convinced that they are giving their life by virtue of a hypothetical benefit to humanity (their people), and they totally identify themselves with the leader<sup>45</sup>. Doctor Baca holds that the following characteristics are found in the typology of the current terrorist: a) an obsessed idea of the terrorist activity (radicalization nucleus); b) rebelling against everything (anti-system); c) rebelling against the occupied power. He defines the «circuit of the terrorist victim» with the following pattern: aggression» surprise» defenselessness» terror» relief and guilt» humiliation» intention of understanding» identification of those guilty (realistic or not, abusive or not)» hatred» vengeance» forgetfulness.

## The terrorist and his/her fanatic struggle

It is difficult to establish a psychological profile of the terrorist; his/her origin comes from all types of families and social strata, and, in most cases, the individual does not

tics, Number of deaths by Professional Groups, fundacionvt.org, available at <[http://www.fundacionvt.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=200&Itemid=99](http://www.fundacionvt.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=200&Itemid=99)> [last viewed: 10 February, 2016].

43 COOPER, H.H.A., *The terrorist and the victim*, *Victimology*, 1, 229-239, 1976, apud ALONSO-FERNÁNDEZ, 1986, pg. 119.

44 In Spain, ETA assassinated innocent victims like the two-year old Fabio Moreno, or Koro Villamudria, 17 years old. ETA also planned to attack nine school buses of the barracks in Intxaurreondo (San Sebastian). See ABASCAL, Santiago, *I will not surrender. Without fear of ETA and facing political cowardice.*, Madrid, La Esfera de los Libros, 2014, pg.101.

45 BACA, Enrique, «Radicalization from the psychopathology», *The new dimensions of global terrorism.*, Seminar on Terrorism, *the Manuel Jiménez Abad Foundation and the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEES)*, Saragossa, 18 November, 2015.

even recognize himself/herself as a terrorist. The individual psychology of the terrorists cannot be considered homogeneous; their psychological traits and personality varies and cannot be generalized<sup>46</sup>. There is no specific terrorist personality; most of their traits vary from one individual to another, but there is one that appears occasionally or permanently: that of the fanatic fighter or the passionate idealist. The fanatic fighter is partial, because it only covers an area of the personality, and throughout time fanatic phrases of passion and activity alternate with others of dissipation or withdrawal. Passion may be spontaneous or activated by external stimuli and life circumstances (coming into contact with fanatic terrorist groups or groups dedicated to other tasks).

Terrorism is an activity more common among youth because at a young age the fanatic struggles arise with greater strength among religious, social, or political ideals. Fascination for the cause grows in the fanatic to extremes, and it turns into the focal point of his personality and of his behavior. One of the growing fanaticisms is the religious one, considered more absolute and implacable than the military and political ones (the word fanatic derives from the latin *fanum* (religious temple or building)<sup>47</sup>).

The relationship between religion and fanaticism has not disappeared: a priest in mystical religions who was possessed by a deity was called a fanatic. In ancient times, those who practiced an exacerbated cult to Ceres, or Cibele, (the goddess of agriculture), in which histrionics and theatricality were mixed with brutality and cruelty, were considered fanatics. The Dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language defines a fanatic as a kind of person «who defends beliefs or opinions, particularly religious or political ones, with excessive tenacity and passion».

Tenacity and passion are precisely two characteristics that are present in the way terrorists are and act<sup>48</sup>; thus, people who absolutely and unconditionally succumb to something are considered fanatics. It is well known and acknowledged that deep religious ideals stimulate altruism and humanism, but when that meaning has not been well understood, dehumanized fanaticism has been the flag for many wars, and for institutionalized and subversive terror. In cases of collective fanaticism, the religious radical can end up making the ideal sacred, thus becoming more implacable, and that is why fanaticism can raise its degree of cruelty, intolerance, or intransigence.

Currently, in view of the serious terrorist events carried out by different terrorist groups of Islamic origin, many opinions from political analysts, from experts on terrorism, and also from society itself, have been spread about the influence that the Islamic doctrine can have on the capacity of action of terrorist elements<sup>49</sup>. Since the summer

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46 DE LA CORTE, op.cit., pg.199.

47 ALONSO-FERNÁNDEZ, op.cit., pg.297-299.

48 DE LA CORTE, op.cit., pg.214.

49 We must remember the kidnappings and killings perpetrated by Boko Haram (Nigeria, 2002). According to the last report from Amnesty International, the reign of terror of that group has left behind 5,500 civilians assassinated, about 2,000 women kidnapped, entire towns devastated, besides

of 2014, the Islamic State for Iraq and Syria, ISIS, a real terrorist army fighting in Iraq and Syria, is causing thousands of deaths and has devastated small villages and cities in the Middle East, combining religious fanaticism with military experience, and obtaining spectacular and unexpected victories over the armed forces of those countries<sup>50</sup>.

ISIS imposed submission to its sectarianism (through its exclusive and erroneous interpretation of Islam) to Shias, Sunnis, Kurds, Alaouites, and Christians from Iraq and Syria, whom it assassinated or forced to flee if it considered them apostates, polytheists, or if they did not agree with its norms, thus applying the suicide bomber or public violence to frighten and terrorize its adversaries. Since June 10, 2014 (date on which Mosul, in the north of Iraq, was captured), and during 105 days, ISIS devastated Iraq and Syria, in spite of the armies from both countries being better equipped and more numerous. At the end of September of that year, ISIS announced the establishment of a Caliphate that reached the interior of Syria and Iraq, whose leader was Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. «For the US, the UK, and the Western powers, the emergence of ISIS and the Caliphate is the greatest disaster»<sup>51</sup>. The war fought against terrorism, on which millions of dollars have been spent, and civil liberties have been limited, has been a resounding failure.

In the case of terrorism in the Basque Country, where the religious dimension of its population is larger than in the rest of the Spanish communities, the ideals of ETA terrorist organization are a consequence of having tinged an enshrined and racist nationalism as modern socialism. The political strategy of the organization was born, to a certain extent, in the hiding of sacristies (there being some controversy regarding this origin)<sup>52</sup>. ETA's members who died in terrorist actions were honored as true heroes and martyrs in churches and streets of their towns and cities, whereas the families of ETA's victims found real difficulties to hold a simple funeral service for their dead in Basque churches.

As far as the mental condition of the terrorists, it cannot be affirmed that there are paranoid traits in their behavior. Fanaticism is not considered a mental disorder, and it

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violations, massive massacres, stoning, etc. The terrorist and criminal violence of Boko Haram has provoked 1.5 million refugees displaced to Nigerian territory and to the boundary countries Chad and Cameroun. UNICEF also alerts that 800,000 children are deprived of health, education, and social services; in other words, lacking the needed humanitarian aid. NARANJO, José, «Boko Haram's reign of terror», International, *El País*, Dakar, 14 April, 2015, Available at <[http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/04/13/actualidad/1428934482\\_032512.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/04/13/actualidad/1428934482_032512.html)> [last viewed: 10 February, 2016].

50 COCKBURN, Patrick, *ISIS. The Return of the Jihad*, Barcelona, Editorial Planeta S.A., 2015, pg.11.

51 Ibidem, pg. 47.

52 According to the Basque sociologist Javier Elzo, ETA did not emerge in a seminary, although Basque priests (critical of the lack of freedom during the Franco regime) supported the ideals of the armed group; they rejected violence. ELZO, Javier, *After the yoke of ETA. For a just and reconciled society*, Madrid, PPC, 2014, pg.165.

does not appear among the categories diagnosed in the DSM-IV<sup>53</sup>. Thus, paranoia with a psychopathological origin implies the existence of cognitive distortions, of persecution mania, along with intense fear or thoughts of being kidnapped by others; this evidence is not visible in terrorists<sup>54</sup>. Along the same lines of what was mentioned before, people with disorders of a paranoid nature are incapable of leading a normal life and having minimum control of their actions and life, which is something known in (sin el of) in terrorists.

### The fanatic fighter

The fighting and combative fanatic is known for overestimating his ideals, imposing them on others in a proselytizing or belligerent manner. Two essential psychic traits are found in him: the overestimation of an ideal or personal issue, and the struggle to spread his convictions<sup>55</sup>. The fanatic of personal issues distinguishes himself for his paranoid tendencies, where mistrust grows, and the creation of models of the self (they believe that gestures and words from others refer to them).

In the fanatic fighter, his ideals and beliefs are put into practice under struggle; his bellicose fanaticism leads him to carry out terrorism, and as subject agent induces other people who were not inclined to it (secondary or induced terrorism). The so-called primary fanaticism begins from childhood, stimulated by the deprivation of affection and the hostility from adults. This type of fanaticism chooses terrorism, whereas the secondary fanatic becomes one after having contact with a terrorist group. The primary fanatic, like the secondary fanatic, integrates into a terrorist movement or organization in a harmonious way, and they are structured through ideological indoctrination carried out by pedagogically qualified personnel.

According to Alonso-Fernández (1986)<sup>56</sup>, the mentioned indoctrination of a militant terrorist is done in four phases: 1<sup>st</sup>) voluntary social marginalization; 2<sup>nd</sup>) ideological assimilation; 3<sup>rd</sup>) technical skills gained in training fields; 4<sup>th</sup>) active integration of the individual under the orders and discipline of a command. During these phases or stages, the individual goes from the abandonment of society to the integration into a terrorist group with rights and duties, among which will be the commitment to kill defenseless people without experimenting the least sense of guilt<sup>57</sup>.

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53 The DSM IV is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Fourth Edition (American Psychiatric Association). DE LA CORTE, op. cit., pg.215.

54 Ibidem, pg.179.

55 ALONSO-FERNÁNDEZ, op.cit., pg.299.

56 Ibidem, pg.301.

57 In 51 interviews to members of ETA by the professor of Political Science, Fernando Reinares, none of those interviewed showed signs of regret for belonging to ETA and for having executed

The fighting or active fanatic is intolerant, intransigent, little inclined to dialogue and to reasoned rhetoric, disqualifies everyone who does not agree with his ideas, and considers them traitors, tyrants, or enemies. This type of fanatic deforms experiences and situations according to his convictions and ideas (a distorting process known as *catathymia*)<sup>58</sup>, and his thinking is direct and specific, incapable of developing thoughts subject to nuances and discriminations. In the terrorist, there is no place for reasoning; with fanaticism the light of reason is hidden, and irrationality appears; he does not seek truth because he feels that he possesses it. As De la Corte (2006) points out, two of the qualities of a fanatic attitude are the impermeability to all the flow of information and opinions which are incongruent with fanaticized beliefs, and the persistence of those beliefs throughout time. Consequently, fanaticism could be described as «a mental condition distinguished by a determined and prolonged adhesion to certain beliefs»<sup>59</sup>.

Regarding the characteristics of the aggressiveness in the active fanatic, his impulses for activity are regulated by the extra-punitivity, which is known for being a psychological orientation that conditions the individual to release his aggressiveness of punishment on others, making them responsible for his own wrongdoings without assuming his own responsibility and blame. That extra-punitive aggressiveness is many times irrationally aimed at individuals or entities that have nothing to do with the suffering or frustration of the fanatic. Terrorists address this behavior to the State and its servers for a rational motivation (political, to weaken and dismantle the State), or affective (satisfaction, projecting his hostility on the authority, on the power, or on the State).

For a terrorist, the actions that he carries out are justified as political self-defense against a State or a legitimate government, and his irrationality leads him to self-exclude from all blame. In modern terrorism, the so-called technological aggression has acquired a special dimension; there is no direct contact with the victim and through a technical device, the terrorist can vent his aggressiveness violently causing a slaughter, and rationalizing this action by saying he is doing his duty, and feeling no repentance whatsoever. The idealistic fighting fanatic usually has a very weak *ego*, such that if the capacity of this *ego* is weakened, his *superego*, and the *id* assume their duties and take control of the situation<sup>60</sup>.

From the scientific point of view, Professor Martín Ramírez (2006) points out that serotonin is considered an inhibitor of most forms of aggression, so that an increase of the serotonin syndrome capacity level reduces impulsiveness, whereas the reduction of that hormone provokes an increase in the frequency and intensity of the aggressive

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terrorist actions. REINARES, Fernando, *Death Patriots. Why they became members of ETA and when did they leave the group*, Madrid, Grupo Santillana de Ediciones, 6<sup>th</sup> edition expanded, 2011, pg.217.

58 According to the Psychiatry Glossary by Ildefonso Gómez Fera, *catathymia* is «the repercussion of a specific feeling about a cognitive function such as perception; that is the case of *catathymic illusions*».

59 DE LA CORTE, op.cit., pg.218.

60 ALONSO-FERNÁNDEZ, op.cit., pg.304-305.



and anti-social reactions<sup>61</sup>. It seems that serotonin is implied in certain aspects of behavior such as depression, anxiety, violence, aggression, addiction, suicide, impulsiveness, compulsiveness, cooperativeness, shyness, and social dominance.

The psychiatrist Fuertes Rocañín believes that «terrorist fanaticism is linked to a psychiatric disorder, a delirium with strong emotional associations which develop in the long term and creates extremely dangerous individuals»<sup>62</sup>. Dr. Fuertes continues by stating that fanaticism «are thoughts that do not follow the rules of logic and reason, and are impregnated with a strong emotional burden». This leads fanatic terrorists to die killing. To despise one's own existence and to overcome the instinct of survival, there must be a psychiatric pathology, «by which the mind of the patient is filled with a series of false, absurd, disproportionate beliefs, at the very least, built in a pathologic and unhealthy manner»<sup>63</sup>.

The delirious fanatic stops thinking and reasoning in a logical manner, going on to consider himself a chosen one, someone who is capable of «having understood what the real importance is, a message or idea extremely overvalued». This leads him to distort his understanding of reality, his suspicion increases, and the feeling of being persecuted is present everywhere. His reasoning is the sole absolute truth, and anything that does not support them is no longer considered valid. In this context, the individual presents high intolerance to frustration, «and, immediately after, the capacity to kill is directly proportional with the insignificance of his own existence within the context of defending the deified idea»<sup>64</sup>.

## Reactions of fear and terror of the terrorist impact

The Paris attacks in January, 2015 against the French satirical weekly magazine Charlie Hebdo, an industrial warehouse, and a Jewish supermarket left behind 20 people dead (3 of them Jihadist terrorists), and 12 people wounded after 54 hours of terror in the French capital. Months later, on November 13<sup>th</sup>, Paris was witness to another brutal terrorist attack perpetrated in several places in the city (three restaurants and a music hall) with the staggering number of 130 dead and 350 wounded. These attacks have caused a high emotional response on the European population, which is perfectly understandable in the civilian population. However, the political authorities must

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61 MARTÍN RAMÍREZ, José, «Brain neuroregulators of aggression. Psychopharmacology of aggressive behavior», *Metode*, University of Valencia, 2006, available at <<http://metode.cat/es/Revistas/Monografics/Una-historia-de-violencia/Neuroreguladors-cerebrals-de-l-agressio>> [last viewed: 1 April, 2015].

62 FUERTES ROCAÑÍN, José Carlos, «Fanaticism and Psychiatry», the Jihadist Threat, *Tribuna, Heraldo de Aragón*, 17 November, 2015, pg.22.

63 Loc.cit.

64 Loc.cit.

keep their heads cool when terrorist actions take place, because facing terrorism requires, among other strategic measures, a great deal of composure<sup>65</sup>.

Overestimating the terrorist threat is a highly delicate issue. The obsession for security could result in the terrorists dominating the security agenda, as they intend, and produce a reaction out of proportion by the authorities who, at the same time, could generate more recruitment of terrorists<sup>66</sup>. To spread its strategy of terror, terrorism takes advantage of the media and its immediacy<sup>67</sup>.

According to the Global Terrorism Index 2014, the worry for the current increase in terrorism and its form of violence is small if we compare it with the 437,000 people who died, for example, due to homicides in 2012<sup>68</sup>. According to the study cited, in the US, a person has a 64 times greater probability of dying due to homicide than to terrorism. We should not forget other problems underlying the use of violence, such as poverty, inequality, dignity, deprivation of rights and liberties, and social injustice; in other words, issues that affect millions of people in the world<sup>69</sup>.

The increase of international terrorism with suicide attacks of great impact on the civil population in the Middle East and Africa should not only be fought with military power (not always efficient), but also with the development of a well-studied mass media and teaching strategy coherent with the rhetoric one intends to oppose. It should be remembered that conflicts are not always of a military nature, and the answer from the entire democratic society should be adjusted to international law, and to human rights. An exercise of deep reflection should also be made upon observing how the activity and the number of terrorist groups in the world have increased currently, in spite of the strict measures taken regarding terrorist security after the events in New York, Madrid, Tokyo, Afghanistan, Iraq, or more recently, in Paris<sup>70</sup>.

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65 JIMÉNEZ, Javier, «Terrorism: fear, communication, and consensus», Observatory PS and D, *Peace, Security and Defense Chair*, University of Saragossa-Ministry of Defense, 20 February, 2015, available at <<http://catedrapsyd.unizar.es/observatorio-psyd/opina/terrorismo-miedo-comunicacion-y-consenso.html>> [last viewed: 10 February, 2016].

66 The 11/13 attack in Paris provoked the decree of state of emergency in France during three months at the possibility of new attacks.

67 Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, or Tumbir are the main social network platforms used by the Jihadist groups to share their propaganda. LEJARZA, Eguskiñe, «Islamic Terrorism on the Internet – the Electronic Jihad», *Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies*, 15 September, 2015, pg.2.

68 Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2014*, USA, 2014, pg.44, available at <[http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%20Report%202014\\_0.pdf](http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%20Report%202014_0.pdf)> [last viewed: 10 February, 2016].

69 According to Oxfam Intermón (may-2015), presently, there are over 51 million refugees in the world due to existing conflicts, particularly intensified in Syria, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

70 An in-depth study carried out by the firm «Periscopic» based on the report from the National Consortium for the State about Terrorism and the Responses to Terrorism depending from the University of Maryland (USA), and of the Global Terrorism Database, the IS (Islamic State) was the

## The importance of the media in the spread of terror

Let us not forget that the objective of terrorism is to spread terror among the population. This is a key component of terrorism: the propagation of fear and terror to the maximum amount of the civilian population is the best propaganda for a terrorist<sup>71</sup>, further than the death sought with the perpetrated attack. The observation of terror is more important than death itself, violence must be spread not only to those murdered but also to those who watch the crime. The use of information about terrorist actions is currently called into question because it serves the aim of terrorism: to shed light on the terrorist action and its consequences to spread fear and horror to the society. Thus, information and propaganda must be combined, always respecting an issue that seems essential: the integrity of the victims with the specific duty of informing.

Rogelio Alonso, professor at the University «Rey Juan Carlos», establishes the purpose that the «terrorist logic» seeks in the media: it pursues being front page news, becoming social vanguard, mobilization, creating fracture between public opinion and the readers, questioning objective versions of its violence, showing the importance of its challenge to the State, becoming a subject of negotiation<sup>72</sup>. Alonso feels that the responsibility of the media in the face of the terrorist phenomenon is to not give positive advertising to terrorism, not underestimate the criminal nature of terrorism, not confuse or distort or simplify causes and consequences of terrorism, not reproduce terrorist propaganda, not legitimize terrorism, and work against the subculture of violence.

«The expansion of the Internet has drastically changed the actions and development of the threat of global Islamic terrorism<sup>73</sup>». With the emergence of social networks, the message from Jihadist terrorism can be broadcast directly, disseminate its attacks, let itself be known, promote fear, or recruit followers. Through the mentioned networks, they transmit brutality (beheadings, and burning people alive) to show their supremacy and cause terror, victimize its followers and the Islamic community, as well

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terrorist organization (among the 25 most active ones) that headed the global list of terrorist actions carried out between 1970 and 2013, with over 8,000 assassinations and 19,000 wounded in its 17 years of existence. *Europa Press*, National, Madrid, 1 February, 2015, available at <<http://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-eta-ya-mas-vieja-3000-bandas-terroristas-existent-mundo-delante-farc-eln-20150201121248.html>> [last viewed: 10 February, 2016].

71 «The Internet is, without a doubt, a place for socializing toward a new radical Islamic identity, and it also shows its strength in the western technological world» (TORRES, op. cit., pg.14).

72 ALONSO, Rogelio, «Propaganda or information. The role of the media». The new dimensions of global terrorism, Seminar on Terrorism, The *Manuel Jiménez Abad Foundation and the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies*, Saragossa, 18 November, 2015.

73 TAPIA, M<sup>a</sup> Eugenia, «Analysis of the communication strategy of Jihadist terrorism: The role of social networks». *Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies*, Madrid, 4 January, 2016, pg.4.

as the propaganda of their daily activities (training, military material, army, clothes) to attract new members<sup>74</sup>.

Currently, the Jihadist threat hovers also over Europe<sup>75</sup> (Spain is targeted by Islamic terrorism) although the terrorist actions take priority in areas of Pakistan, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, or several African countries where collective attacks, and indiscriminate massacres of the civilian population (including women and children) reach the media headlines, and provoke massive exoduses of refugees to other countries, creating a situation of real emergency in view of the need for international aid of all types: food, water, medicines, housing, field hospitals, etc.

In that context, the spread of terror and the anxiety due to an anticipated attack must be avoided, as much as possible, by the State authorities and the media by helping the victims and managing the emotional response of the people's environment. In our most immediate environment, according to the information provided by the Ministry of the Interior at the summit about radicalization and terrorism held in the city of Niamey (May 2015), Spain has detained 568 Jihadists in the last 10 years, as a consequence of 124 anti-terrorist operations<sup>76</sup>.

General Ballesteros Martin considers the global threat that the terrorist group Daesh means, and affirms that this organization has momentarily divided the Jihadists; its strategy reinforces Jihadism; the international community must defeat it, and an efficient counterterrorist strategy is needed. He also points out that the Arab participation in the fight against Daesh is essential, that the Muslim communities must take action; that we must fight against the radicalization of Muslim countries, and that military intervention within the legal framework must be analyzed<sup>77</sup>.

Faced by the exodus of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, or Somalia, many dissenting voices have been raised because of the risk of terrorist infiltration, and which has increased with the 11/13 attacks in Paris. This unproven affirmation, should it be internalized, «could end up producing fear, rejection, or violence on the part of some sectors of host communities»<sup>78</sup>. The problem could become more serious if the

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74 Ibidem., pg.4-9.

75 The last 11/13 attacks in Paris by terrorist members of Daesh, and the information of the presence of that Jihadist group in Brussels have provoked raising considerably the level of risk of attacks in France, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, and even in Spain.

76 ORTEGA, S., «Spain has detained 568 jihadists in 124 anti-terrorist operations in the last 10 years», Mundo, *Heraldo de Aragón*, Saragossa, (15 May, 2015), pg.40.

77 BALLESTEROS, Miguel Ángel, «Global terrorism as a foreign threat to Spain», The new dimensions of global terrorism. Seminar on Terrorism, *The Jiménez Abad Foundation and the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEES)*, Saragossa, 18 November, 2015.

78 COHEN, Jessica, «Social effects of Terrorism. Refugee crisis and flawed arguments», *Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies*, 16 October, 2015, pg.2.

authorities project this vision without initiating the necessary policies to confront the situation, and provide solutions to the problem.

### Terrorism and its sequels on the population

The events that took place in New York on 9/11, caused a psychological disorder on its population of such dimensions that its sequels still remain in many New Yorkers<sup>79</sup>. As a result of the terrorist attack on 9/11, the people of New York began to have sleeping difficulties, nightmares, agitation, anxiety, and rage<sup>80</sup>. The collapse of the Twin Towers was interpreted by many citizens, including non-believers, as an apocalyptic religious phenomenon (the end of the world or the Final Judgment). The attack left behind nearly 3,000 victims and a constant feeling in its population of being a permanent target of terror.

According to the Psychopathology Professor from the Universidad Complutense, and from San Diego State University, Carmelo Vázquez, there are scientific studies that reveal that «the clinical effects apply almost totally to people who have been directly affected by the attacks (victims, families, emergency response teams, and volunteers)»<sup>81</sup>. The negative clinical effects Post-traumatic Stress Disorders – PTSD) are increasingly fading from what is considered Ground Zero to more distant areas.

The state of alert due to the suspicion of new terrorist attacks from the Middle East during the following days and weeks, produced exacerbated fear and terror on the population, and the American citizens avoided visiting high-risk places such as large supermarkets and department stores, cinemas, tunnels, high-rise buildings, or airplanes. Currently, something similar has happened after the Jihadist attacks in Paris in November, and in Brussels, a city that was paralyzed for days.

79 Al Qaeda, the organization that perpetrated the 9/11 attacks, became world famous due to those attacks. In 1998, Al Qaeda carried out two terrorist attacks against American Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, thus coming out of its anonymity. SETAS, op. cit., pg.3.

80 CÁRCAMO, Jaime, SÁNCHEZ-LACAY, Arturo, LEWIS-FERNÁNDEZ, Roberto, «The psychological impact of the 9/11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the city of New York: the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and the recovery of a traumatized city», *Revista chilena de Neuropsiquiatría (Chilean Magazine of Neuropsychiatry)*, 40 (Supplement 2):86-96, Santiago (Chile), November, 2002, available at <[http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0717-92272002000600008](http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0717-92272002000600008)> [last viewed: 9 February, 2016].

81 VÁZQUEZ, Carmelo, «The psychological effects of terror: scientific evidence and political uses», *El País*, 30 March, 2004, available at <[http://elpais.com/diario/2004/03/30/espana/1080597622\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2004/03/30/espana/1080597622_850215.html)> [viewed: 9 February, 2016]. See, by the same author, «Stress reactions in the general population after the 9/11, 2001 attacks (USA), and on 3/11, 2004 (Madrid, Spain): Myths and realities», *Universidad Complutense*, Madrid, 2005, available at <[http://institucional.us.es/apcs/doc/APCS\\_I\\_esp\\_9-25.pdf](http://institucional.us.es/apcs/doc/APCS_I_esp_9-25.pdf)> [last viewed: 9 February, 2016].

After 9/11, President Bush and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani felt the need to address the population on radio and television to request calm and the gradual return to the daily activities of the citizens. The Prime Minister of the French Republic, François Holland, did the same hours after the 11/13 attacks, also stating that France was at war.

Several studies have revealed that the people who directly experienced the terrorist attacks to the Twin Towers in New York continue developing psychological disorders, such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, alcoholism, and drug addiction<sup>82</sup>. These people can furthermore develop other symptoms, such as avoiding the traumatic memory, numbness, and generalized psychological isolation, or generalized physiological arousal.

As Cárcamo and col. (2002)<sup>83</sup> point out, the prevalence studies of PTSD in the United States before 9/11 showed rates of 10.4% among women, and 5% among men. However, five/six weeks after the attacks, the rates increased up to 20% in the adult population in areas close to the attacks. The PTSD symptoms may appear immediately after the traumatic experience, but also days, weeks, months, or years later. The beginning of PTSD may also influence the recovery process, so that those people who suffered the disorder in the first two weeks after the trauma (early beginning) had a better recovery after three months, compared with those who developed acute symptoms between two to six weeks after the trauma.

## The globalization of fear

According to the researcher Leonardo Ordóñez (School of Human Sciences – University of Rosario, Colombia, 2002), in the current process of globalization the feeling of fear hounds world inhabitants with greater strength<sup>84</sup>. The notable increase of terrorism, the constant environmental threats, the risks derived from the development of new technologies, and the political instability that exists in some countries or regions have resulted in a growing spread of fear.

The globalization of fear may be considered a complex phenomenon where three main factors intervene<sup>85</sup>: 1) lack of understanding and the horizontal spread of new forms of terrorism; 2) invasive presence of the media in the lives of people throughout

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82 MAS, Blanca, «Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder», *Manual for Behavioral Therapy. Volume I*, Vallejo Pareja (coord.), Madrid, Dykinson, 2012, pg.565.

83 Idem. citation 80.

84 ORDÓÑEZ, Leonardo, «The globalization of fear», Conclusions, *Revista de Asuntos Sociales (Magazine of Social Affairs) n° 25*, PDF Document, Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of the Andes, Colombia, 2002, pg.95, available at <<http://res.uniandes.edu.co/view.php/284/view.php>> [las viewed: 9 February, 2016].

85 Ibidem, pg.102.

the world; and 3) the strategic use of fear by the political-economic powers of global capitalism. Understanding the globalization of fear in a proper manner requires an investigation of the articulation of these three factors, although the power to arouse fear depends, greatly, on the tensions and risks proper to late modernity.

After the 9/11 attacks and the reactions of the United States and its allies, as well as the threat of Jihadist terrorism in the world, global society lives in a state of permanent fear. The combination of three factors makes this possible: technology, communication, and politics<sup>86</sup>. According to Camila Rueda (2015), fear haunts the world more thanks to globalization, environmental threats, economic crises, and new technologies<sup>87</sup>. Fear is nothing new; it exists since the origins of man, and it is a collateral effect of the integration of human societies; the sense of fear has spread just like culture or politics, and mainly terrorism.

According to Ordóñez (2002), the globalization of fear cannot be considered an irreversible process, as globalization itself may be. The state of permanent fear is not an inevitable consequence, but rather «it constitutes a challenge waiting for an intelligent response»<sup>88</sup>. Fear can be overcome by not being seduced by the hope for security, which does not imply resignation and passiveness. Fear is a companion of human beings, but that does not mean that we must resign ourselves to living haunted by fear, but rather it is necessary to deactivate the media and psychological magnification of fear, and not ignore the social conditions that perpetuate it<sup>89</sup>.

Admitting the globalization of fear as an emerging product triggered by the globalization of communications does not mean we must forget the local scenarios that constitute fear. Fear is globalized by the media, but the latter only globalize fears that have been previously produced. The production of fear is not only a response to the fanaticism of radical groups. It is also a response to the global dynamics that make it possible, and multiply its resonance, prompting fear to feed itself back without stopping.

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86 «The Taliban used the alias@alemarahweb, to upload tweets on the network with amazing frequency: sometimes they have uploaded one per hour». LEJARZA, op.cit., pg.3.

87 RUEDA, Camila, «The globalization of fear», *Prezi*, 22 April, 2015, available at <[https://prezi.com/95k8i8gby2y\\_/la-globalizacion-del-miedo/](https://prezi.com/95k8i8gby2y_/la-globalizacion-del-miedo/)> [last viewed: 9 February, 2016].

88 ORDÓÑEZ, op.cit., pg.102.

89 Fear to say you are afraid. This is what the young Basque politician Santiago Abascal (2014) tells in his book «When ETA killed Santiago Oleaga, his colleagues at the *El Diario Vasco* (*The Basque Journal*), to protest; they posed for a photograph with their backs to the readers so they would not be recognized. Others who did not dare [to show their faces] were the truck drivers from Berriozar when the Town Hall erected a monument to the victims of terrorism, and a transportation contractor from Cantabria had to carry the stones». ABASCAL, op. cit., pg.61.

For Pérez-Sales, P., Vázquez, C., and Arnosó, M., (2009) from the Spanish Association of Neuropsychiatry – Madrid<sup>90</sup>, in light of attacks of a specific nature, citizens do not change their idea regarding their vision of the world, beliefs, or trust in human beings, but they do so regarding personal security, the perception of risk, or political decisions. In situations of State terrorism, one can perceive changes regarding the vision of the world; there can also be situations of habit or anesthesia with regard to violence, mainly when it has a wide media outreach, and less impact on the daily lives of the people (for example, in the Basque Country one cannot perceive that terrorism is the main problem for the majority of the population).

In the face of terrorist actions, specific behavior or emotional states may appear, as well as positive attitudes of a different sign, but that shows no evidence that there may be a «post-traumatic growth» in the long term, as Pérez-Sales and col. (2009)<sup>91</sup> point out. Short-term effects may be differentiated, though, characterized by supportive and altruist behavior, of support to the victims or of participation in tributes or demonstrations in favor of them. These effects would be of a transitory nature (one or two months), and dependent of the context, mainly of the performance of the media in support of invitations, in the news regarding exemplary testimonials, or in the transmission of messages calling for mobilization, all of them under three principles: 1) that something must be done; 2) that it must be done urgently; and 3) that a change must be made, it is possible, and you are a part of it.

There would also be medium-term effects, considered collective feeling of guilt in part of the group considered the aggressor and that, under specific circumstances, could lead to remedial attitudes. It would have to be weighed with the decrease of the capacity to forgive that may appear after committing a terrorist action, and that is inevitably linked to the perception of the damage caused, and to the possibility that a feeling of mutual trust may develop.

Finally, the long-term effects could be mentioned, characterized by the selective forgetfulness of violence, its justification, and consequences of collective traumatic events by the society, minimized by the winners, which have fed the victimhood of the group, and minimized the damage done unto others<sup>92</sup>. Despite the existence of collective organizations for the resistance to violence, it is necessary to study the com-

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90 PÉREZ-SALES, P., VÁZQUEZ, C., ARNOSO, M., «Individual and Collective Post-Traumatic Learning in situations of terrorism and collective violence: Data for a debate», Conclusions. In MÁRKEZ, I., FERNANDEZ-LIRIA, A. and PÉREZ-SALES, P. (eds.), *Violence and mental health*, Spanish Association of Neuropsychiatry, Madrid, 2009, pgs.20-22,

available at <[http://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/psisalud/carmelo/PUBLICACIONES\\_pdf/2009-Aprendizaje\\_Postrumatico\\_%20oy\\_Terrorismo\\_%28AEN%29.pdf](http://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/psisalud/carmelo/PUBLICACIONES_pdf/2009-Aprendizaje_Postrumatico_%20oy_Terrorismo_%28AEN%29.pdf)> [last viewed: 9 February, 2016].

91 Ibidem, pg.20.

92 An example could be found in Basque terrorism. On 27 September, 2013, ETA issued a comunicado for the celebration of the *Gudari Eguna* («Day of the Warrior») in which it warned the *abertzale* left (nationalist patriotic left) party not to cross specific red lines: the delegitimization of ETA's terrorist past. R. AIZPEOLEA, Luis, *The intricacies of the end of ETA*, Madrid, Catarata, 2013, pg.161.



ponents of violence, the conditions that favor its emergence and maintenance, its negative effects, and ways to offset them.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of violent actions carried out by terrorist organizations or groups is to provoke the maximum terror and panic to society. Technology, at the service of information and the social media, is the ideal and efficient vehicle for the «live» transmission of an act of violence. In this context, the consequences of violent actions that are projected on the behavior of the victims and their families are difficult for specialists (psychiatrists and psychologists) to redirect. Social isolation, the absence of the real world, and several mental disorders provoke in the subject-victim the need to separate from the world through drug addiction, alcoholism, or, in many cases, suicide.

It must be assimilated that the terrorist is not born a terrorist, he becomes one; thus, most of them are not affected by serious personality or mental disorders. On the contrary, they are a consequence of a process of socialization to which they have been subjected and that have ended up shaping their mind and their behavior. The terrorist is not a psychopath either, which does not exclude some from being so. The terrorist behaves like a psychopath, and lacks remorse when behaving with violence. The psychopath is born a psychopath, the terrorist becomes one. Along this line, there are diverse environmental and social factors that modulate the behavior of the terrorist and turn him into a fanatic to extremes, without originating in his thinking the least bit of feeling of guilt for the violent actions committed.

From this perspective, we can assert that the immense majority of terrorists are not psychopaths, nor psychotics. They are normal people that have abandoned certain moral standards (such as, not killing his fellow man) without perceiving any remorse whatsoever. In other words, they have suffered a process of «moral disconnection», a modification of their cognitive structure. Thus, the terrorist modifies his way of thinking and of perceiving the world. Therefore, he is free of any moral, social, or religious standard that leads him to violent behavior. Consequently, the fact that a person becomes a terrorist must be analyzed as a process of group dynamics, where cohesion, dependence, and the satisfaction of personal needs become relevant within the group.

All violent behavior that provokes terror and fear on the individual or social group leaves long-lasting effects on the victims that often remain and become more serious with the passing of time, and difficult for specialists to eradicate.

Madrid, 11 February, 2016

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