



TSAS
canadian network for research on
terrorism, security and society

TERRORISM WORKSHOP

November 10, 2012

Delta Ottawa Centre Hotel

The Social Conditions and Processes of Radicalization

- 9:00 am Welcome
- 9:15 am *Panel One: Insights from Experimental Social Psychology
into the Process of Radicalization*
- 9:15 am Stephen Wright (Simon Fraser University)
The Social Psychology of Destructive Intergroup Behaviour
by Disadvantaged Groups
- 10:00 am Justin Friesen (University of Waterloo), presenting on behalf of Aaron Kay,
Duke University
The Human Need for Order and Control and the Allure of
Extreme Political and Religious Ideologies
- 10:45 am Break
- 11:00 am Richard Eibach (University of Waterloo)
Protection of Women and Children as Propaganda within
Extremist Movements
- 11:45 am Ian McGregor (York University)
Anxious Roots of Worldview Extremes
- 12:30 pm Lunch
- 1:30 pm *Panel Two: Social Conditions and Radicalization*
- 1:30 pm Aurélie Campana (Laval University)
From “Ordinary” Violence to Terrorism: The Case of
Insurgent-like Conflicts

2:15 pm Jeremy Kowalski (York University)
The Process of Extremization: Macro Social Relations and
the Case of the “Toronto 18”

3:00 pm Break

3:15 pm *Panel Three: Religion and Radicalization*

3:15 pm Lorne Dawson (University of Waterloo)
The Missing Link: Religion and the Social Ecology of Homegrown
Terrorist Radicalization

4:00 pm Ian Reader (Lancaster University)
Spiritual Rewards, Afterlives, Hells and Punishments:
Religious Doctrines and Beliefs as Factors in the Turn to Violence

4:45 pm Open Discussion

5:00 pm Closing Comments

Abstracts

Stephen Wright

The Social Psychology of Destructive Intergroup Behaviour by Disadvantaged Groups

Social psychology provides an extensive account of when and why disadvantaged group members will take actions on behalf of their group (collective action) instead of actions designed to improve their own personal position. However, this literature has less to offer in terms of predicting different forms of collective action. I will offer a model that builds on this work but seeks to explain the specific emergence of destructive (harmful/violent) intergroup behaviour (DIB). This model holds that DIB and the corresponding negative emotions are often responses to actions by the dominant group that are perceived by the disadvantaged as violations of the values and rules of the broader superordinate group. A superordinate group is the larger, more inclusive societal group that encompass both the disadvantaged and the dominant group. It is when the actions of a dominant group are seen to violate or threaten not only the smaller disadvantaged group itself but also the larger superordinate group that members of the disadvantaged group turn to DIB. These actions are seen as necessary punishments for violations of the rules of the larger society. In addition, I will draw on theory and research on moral indignation, on group norms, and on perceptions of group efficacy, to further this account of DIB.

Aaron Kay / Justin Friesen

The Human Need for Order and Control and the Allure of Extreme Political and Religious Ideologies

This talk outlines and reviews evidence for a model of compensatory control designed to shed light on how people come to develop extreme fundamentalist political and religious ideologies. It proposes that extreme ideologies of personal control (e.g., libertarianism) and external control (e.g., socialism, religious fundamentalism) are equifinal means of meeting a universal need to believe that things, in general, are under control – that is, that events do not unfold randomly or haphazardly. From this perspective, beliefs in personal control and beliefs in various external sources of control should all serve as substitutable means for guarding against the anxiety that feelings of randomness and uncertainty can engender. I use this model to explain how the relative strength of ideologies of personal and external control vary across temporal and socio-cultural contexts. The implications for the formation of deep psychological attachments to religious beliefs and political ideologies are discussed.

Richard Eibach

Protection of Women and Children as Propaganda within Extremist Movements

Throughout history the notion that women and children are inherently vulnerable and dependent on external protectors has often been invoked as a legitimizing pretext for waging extremist campaigns against ethnic and cultural outgroups. I will present a series of studies that test the hypothesis that invoking the community's duty to protect vulnerable women and children leads people to perceive ethnic and cultural outgroups as more dangerous, which thereby motivates them to support more extreme measures against these outgroups. I will review experimental research evidence that exposing

people to messages which invoke the duty to protect women and children motivates them to join extremist movements that are mobilizing to oppress seemingly dangerous outgroups. I will discuss implications of these findings for understanding how the protection of women and children functions as effective propaganda to rationalize extremism in situations of intergroup conflict. I will also discuss implications for strategies to counter the propaganda of these extremist groups.

Ian McGregor

Anxious Roots of Worldview Extremes

This talk will review general findings across thousands of studies in the experimental social psychology literature showing that various anxiety-inducing threats *cause* people to adopt extreme and jingoistic worldviews. Neuroscience evidence and Reactive Approach Motivation theory will be presented to illuminate the motivational mechanics of such anxiety-induced extremes. Three experiments will then be reviewed, showing that when people are made to feel good and certain about themselves and the meaningful groups they belong to, they become less hostile towards people whose worldview opinions offend them. Discussion will focus on the possible relevance of these insights from experimental social psychology for policies related to multiculturalism, intergroup conflict, and immigration/citizenship.

Aurélie Campana

From “Ordinary” Violence to Terrorism: The Case of Insurgent-like Conflicts

This presentation focuses on research I have done with others on the issue of terrorism in insurgent-like contexts. Based on extensive fieldwork done on the North Caucasian and Central Asian conflicts, we show how terrorism has been progressively integrated into repertoires of action in these contexts and become routinized aspects of tactics, strategy and practice. We examine the radicalisation of insurgent movements and take into consideration the incremental interplay of processes taking place at the macro, meso and micro levels. We focus on what we call the “space of radicalization” and the relational processes that imprint radicalization on the collective and individuals. We distinguish four ideal-typical relational processes: the interactions between the parties in conflict; the internal dynamics of each movement; the interactions between each party and the local political and social contexts; the relations between each party and exogenous factors (third party or external factors). We then move into analyzing the relationships of terrorism with other forms of violence (guerrilla, social violence like feud, criminal violence). In this perspective we consider how terrorism is combined with “ordinary violence” in a war context by examining the type of terrorist attacks and their temporality. We conclude with thoughts on the notion of repertoires of violence and the social and political conditions conducive to the adoption of terrorism.

Jeremy Kowalski

The Process of Extremization: Macro Social Relations and the Case of the “Toronto 18”

In the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001 a veritable cornucopia of formal, practical, and popular materials have emerged attempting to analyse, explain, and/or describe various dimensions

of Islamist extremism. Unfortunately, despite the enormous amount of analytical capital and resources expended, real advances in our knowledge, theoretical and empirical, continue to be elusive. This situation is certainly evident when one surveys the literature available that focuses on the process of Islamist extremization. The predominant, if not exclusive, focus of this important research has been on the micro social relations (e.g. individualization, kinship and peer clusters) of this process. This mode of research is valuable, but there is a danger in relying overly upon micro social relations as the explanatory frame for analyses of Islamist extremization. As demonstrated through an analysis of the case of the “Toronto 18,” macro social relations/structures (e.g. transnational, state, group) served a significant function in creating the conditions through which the process of extremization was made possible. Therefore, if a comprehensive understanding of this process is to be reached and effective counter terrorism policies developed, these relations/structures need to be given greater consideration. Ignoring these macro factors will result in the continuation of counter-productive policies which contribute to the moral oxygen of violence rather than facilitating the de-escalation of extremist activities. This presentation will not only elucidate the macro social relations/structures of extremization, but it will make recommendations for moving forward more productively in developing policies to counter extremism.

Lorne Dawson

The Missing Link: Religion and the Social Ecology of Terrorist Radicalization

With a few exceptions, the study of jihadist terrorism, and especially the “homegrown” variety, displays a notable shortcoming: the causal role of religion is consistently acknowledged and then discounted. This presentation delineates and illustrates how this happens, and reflects on why it may be happening. I then argue why this practice is unjustified and detrimental to the explanation of this and some other kinds of terrorist activity. As Talcott Parsons argued long ago, the scientific study of any social phenomenon must take into consideration the systematic and differential analysis of the reciprocal effects of multiple variables. I will examine the failure to do so, with regard to religion, in the work of three of the most influential psychologists studying terrorist radicalization, Marc Sageman, Andrew Silke, and Clark McCauley. I will also explain why the standard objections raised against the religiousness of homegrown terrorists stem from a naive understanding of the nature, operation, and consequences of extreme religious commitments and some of the policy implications of failing to correct this misunderstanding.

Ian Reader

Spiritual Rewards, Afterlives, Hells and Punishments: Religious Doctrines and Beliefs as Factors in the Turn to Violence

In this paper I focus on how issues of doctrine, theology and belief – including concepts of afterlives, visions of hells and higher realms, notions of punishment and spiritual punishment, and visions of the world as an arena of conflict between good and evil -- play a significant role in explaining the readiness of some religious activists to turn to violence by convincing the protagonists of the righteousness and immutability of their cause. I will focus particularly on the Japanese religious group Aum Shinrikyo,

drawing on my research into that movement, my interviews with members and former members, extensive examination of its publications, and the sermons and teachings of its leader. I will allude as well to how the patterns evident in Aum are present in a variety of other religious contexts in which people have committed acts of violence while being convinced that they are operating in the name of truth and righteousness. The presentation will underline the importance of religious ideologies and belief systems in the process through which people become so alienated from the mores and attitudes of mainstream society that they see committing acts of violence against that society as being imbued with spiritual significance and enhancing the spiritual standing of their perpetrators.

Biographic Statements

Stephen Wright

Stephen Wright is Professor and *Canada Research Chair* in Social Psychology at Simon Fraser University. He received his PhD from McGill University and was a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz from 1991-2003. Broadly, his research investigates the psychology of intergroup relations, considering the ways that group memberships influence the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of the individual. His recent research focuses on: the psychological consequences of membership in stigmatized groups; the antecedents to collective action participation; prejudice and its reduction; and minority language and culture. His work has been published widely in scholarly volumes and major social, educational, and cross-cultural psychology journals. Professor Wright is an award winning teacher and has received numerous national and international research grants and awards. He is a Fellow of the *Association of Psychological Science*, the *Society of Experimental Social Psychology*, and the *Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues*. He has served as Associate Editor for *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* and the *British Journal of Social Psychology*, and has been on the editorial board of numerous scholarly journals.

Aaron Kay

Aaron Kay's research focuses on the relation between motivation, implicit social cognition, and social issues. He has a particular interest in how basic motivations and needs manifest as specific social and societal beliefs. These include (but are not limited to) the causes and consequences of stereotyping and system justification, religious belief, political ideology, and the attitudes people hold towards their organizations and institutions. Dr. Kay also studies processes underlying priming effects. For this research he has been awarded the Janet T. Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions from the American Psychological Society, the SAGE Young Scholar Award from the Foundation of Personality and Social Psychology (2010), the Early Career Contribution Award from the International Society of Justice Researchers (2010), the Early Researchers Award from the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation (2009), and the Dissertation Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (2006) and the Society of Experimental Social Psychology (runner-up, 2006).

Justin Friesen

Justin Friesen is a PhD student in social psychology at the University of Waterloo. He researches the psychological and motivational reasons why people support the status quo and inequality, even when such support results in material disadvantage. Recent work has focused on how the preference for hierarchy in occupational contexts is influenced by psychological needs for control and structure.

Richard Eibach

Richard P. Eibach obtained his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Cornell University in 2003. He was formerly a faculty member at Yale University and Williams College and he is currently an Assistant Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Waterloo. His research examines issues of social justice perceptions, intergroup and intergenerational conflict, and social movement participation. His specific research interests include biases in perceptions of self and social change, the influence of group identities and social roles on perceptions of social conditions, the mutually reinforcing relations between gender ideologies and racial ideologies, and the influence of mental imagery on perceptions of social events. His research has been published in *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Psychological Science*, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *The Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *The Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Political Psychology*, *Sex Roles*, and *Psychology and Aging*.

Ian McGregor

Ian McGregor is a Professor in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Health, at York University, Toronto, Canada. After a BSc. in Human Biology, he completed BA, MA, and PhD degrees in Personality and Social Psychology. His research focuses on conviction, zeal, and the basic neural and motivational mechanics of extreme reactions to various anxiety-inducing threats. His research has been continuously funded since 1994 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and is currently funded by a \$249,000 SSHRC grant to develop intervention strategies to relieve the motivation for religious extremes. McGregor's research is regularly published in top psychological journals, including ten publications in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (JPSP), the highest impact journal in the field. He serves on the editorial board at JPSP and several other journals dedicated to research on social psychological and personality science.

Aurélie Campana

Aurélie Campana is Associate Professor in Political Science at Laval University, Québec and holds the Canada Research Chair in Conflicts and Terrorism. Her current research focuses on the relationships between different types of violence, including terrorism, in different contexts. She also has published on factors conducive to terrorism in separatist conflicts and on methodology in social sciences. Recent publications include a systematic review of the root causes of terrorism, published in *Terrorism and Political Violence* (co-authored with Luc Lapointe, 2012) and an article that proposes a new conceptualization of the term "terrorist safe havens", published in *Civil War* (co-authored with Benjamin Ducol, 2011). A co-edited book with Gérard Hervouet is forthcoming in 2012 with the

Presses de l'Université du Québec, *Terrorisme et insurrection. Évolution des dynamiques conflictuelles et réponses des États*.

Jeremy Kowalski

Jeremy D. Kowalski is a PhD Candidate in the Geography Department at York University. His research interests include processes of extremization, (counter) terrorism discourses and practices, and critical geopolitics. The case of the “Toronto 18” is the focus of his dissertation.

Lorne Dawson

Lorne L. Dawson is the Chair of the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo. He is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies and the Department of Religious Studies. Most of his research is in the sociology of religion, particularly the study of new religious movements. He has also published work dealing with theory and methods in the study of religion, sociological theory, religion and the Internet, charismatic authority, millennialist movements, and the failure of prophecy. He has written three books, edited three, and published over sixty academic articles and book chapters. His work on why some new religions become violent led to research on the process of radicalization in homegrown terrorist groups (e.g., “The Study of New Religious Movements and the Process of Radicalization in Home-grown Terrorist Groups,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22, 2010: 1-21), and he is currently co-editing a book on religion, radicalization, and securitization to be published by University of Toronto Press. His chapter in this book, “Making Sense of Homegrown Terrorism: The Case of the Toronto 18” is the first publication based on his ongoing study of the Toronto 18 case. He is one of the Co-Directors of TSAS and in recent years he has made numerous invited presentations on the study of the radicalization of terrorists to academic and government groups.

Ian Reader

Ian Reader has worked at higher education institutions in Japan, the UK, the USA and Denmark. He was Professor of Religious Studies at Lancaster University from 1999-2006 and Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Manchester from 2007 until October 2012. He is now a Professor in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster. He has conducted numerous fieldwork studies in Japan over the past 30 years, starting with his PhD on a contemporary Japanese Buddhist sectarian organisation, and followed by work on popular religious practices, pilgrimages, amulets, new religious movements, and the factors behind the Tokyo subway attack by Aum Shinrikyo in 1995. His research is focused on Japanese religions in the modern era, about which he has published several books and many articles. His research on Aum Shinrikyo resulted in two books (including *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyô*, 2000) and several articles and chapters on why this movement turned to violence, and how the movement’s activities have caused us to rethink the links between religion and violence. He also has published cross-cultural studies of the relationship between religion and violence.