Models for Conflict and Terrorism - Psychological / Sociological

This knowledge map illustrates the variety of social, organizational, and psychological models that have been suggested to explain terrorist behavior. It begins by highlighting the tendency for terrorists to blow themselves and others up after being coerced by leadership and trained in relatively short amount of time.

Organizational models

Political organization. Strategic planning to create organizations that sustain political legitimacy through acts of social service, stability, order, and defense of a segment of the population. Includes:
- Leadership
- Ideology and preaching
- Large scale (or adequate) funding
- Blinding military, social service and psychological components of organization

Tactics of terrorism carried out by very careful manipulation of status, rewards, and identity. In effect, an authority (e.g. heaven) Family cash payments (social rewards) Status. Sacred master status Wall size pictures: Family honored Honor and pride at making a major contribution to their people’s cause (psychological rewards)

Strategy includes inflicting so much suffering on adversary that they will stop what they are doing (i.e. occupation)

Social-psychological models

Organizations with charismatic leaders who can make revenge, terrorism, and rewards in heaven sound reasonable.
- sufficient financial resources
- and that provide interpretation of traditions to give meaning to current events, history, and personal situations

Feelings of empowerment for many people who no longer believe they can do anything to relieve their humiliation and improve their conditions.

Many persons that perceive lack of alternative social, religious, and ideological choices

Multi generational trauma transmission models

Anger, beating, and other abuse committed on children by previously abused adults

Retreat into what stories, myths passed from family to children

Large-scale movement from rural villages to cities

Rapid disruptive social change models

Farther into collapse and modernization (the time-honored tradition)

Rapid disruptive social change models

Encounter with many urban sexual temptations / threats

Large-scale population movement from rural villages to cities

Religion models

Our people are special and better than most

Demands for justice, freedom, democracy

Political repression models

Failure to create modern legal governmental, and commercial institutions

Rapid increase in population

Implementation of minimal public health measures

Biopsychological models (Evolutionary psychology models)

Adolescence is a period with high risk adventure - excitement tolerances (especially for boys)

Humans evolved in small extended family size groups in a dangerous environment in which the young men evolved into the projectors of the group

"Bonding" in battle is very strong. People fight and die for their friends and buddies

Affiliation factor (the need to belong) often very strong in adolescence but (perhaps) biologically evolved in a tight communal species

Early childhood trauma models

Large number of grown ups who have been
- abused or
- neglected or
- traumatized (by war, occupation, etc.)
- deprived of satisfactory attachment object (e.g. parent absent, large family, etc.)
- socialized to blame
- punished for errors (error aversive environment)
- authoritarian family dynamics

Large number of grown ups who have been abused or neglected or traumatized (by war, occupation, etc.)
- deprived of satisfactory attachment object (e.g. parent absent, large family, etc.)
- socialized to blame
- punished for errors (error aversive environment)
- authoritarian family dynamics

Psychodynamic models

Strong attraction to sexual objects and sexual freedom
- contradiction with deep religious beliefs

Strong repression of sexual impulses
- support of repression by action against culture which displays and sanctions sexual attractions

Support of repression by action against culture which displays and sanctions sexual attractions
- and that provide interpretation of traditions to give meaning to current events, history, and personal situations

Experience of injury or death of loved one

Major traumatic alteration of the amygdala

Experience of post traumatic stress (PTS) syndrome (nightmares, terrifying fantasies and memories, etc.)

Victim models

Experience of “our” group identity

Failure of societal, nationalistic, and socialist attempts at economic-political governance

Experience of “our” policed order and decline of identity group or religion

Psychosocial dynamics of trauma models

Support of repression by action against culture which displays and sanctions sexual attractions

Experience of post traumatic stress (PTS) syndrome (nightmares, terrifying fantasies and memories, etc.)

Support of repression by action against culture which displays and sanctions sexual attractions

Experience of injury or death of loved one

Major traumatic alteration of the amygdala

Experience of post traumatic stress (PTS) syndrome (nightmares, terrifying fantasies and memories, etc.)

Victim models

Evidence of “our” group identity

Failure of societal, nationalistic, and socialist attempts at economic-political governance

Experience of “our” policed order and decline of identity group or religion

Biological models