Al Qaeda and vicarious victims

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Al Qaeda and vicarious victims: victimological insights into globalized terrorism[1]

Abstract

The reactions of indirect, so-called vicarious victims to Al Qaeda's mass victimization attacks in Western countries play an important, maybe even pivotal role in her strategy of provocation and means of organization. This is the central argument of this chapter. The organization has tried and succeeded to provoke both governments in the West, but its inhabitants as well. The success of this provocation is related to angry reactions of vicarious victims and the process of vicarious retribution Muslims living in Western countries have suffered as a consequence. In turn this has contributed to Al Qaeda's capability to maintain a global presence, without the necessity of direct, but thereby fragile links, with all those working under its banner.

Introduction

Due to the unprecedented scale of victimisation in the terrorist attacks of the 11th of September 2001, the scope of policies concerning terrorism at the international level has been broadened to include victims of terrorism (see Letschert, 2009, for a discussion of this development).[2] International bodies, like the United Nations, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, have developed or are in the process of developing instruments and policies that include the plight of victims of terrorism. This attention in the international legal sphere has been matched by a flurry of social scientific research into victimisation by terrorism (see Pemberton, 2009, for an overview). [3]

Although the additional attention should be welcomed, both the scope of the international legal instruments and the focus of the social scientific research may have the unintended consequence of limiting insights derived from the study of victims of terrorism. The following observations are relevant to the argument developed in this paper.

1. The development of the legal instruments specifically concerning victims of terrorism entails the risk of essentializing victimisation by terrorism. Terrorism is not a singular phenomenon. A large variety of behaviour may be classified as terrorism, as is clear from the common elements in definitions of terrorist acts (see Letschert and Staiger, 2009):[4]

- the intention of the act is to cause death or serious bodily harm and/or damage to public or private property; and

- the targets are often randomly selected persons, in particular civilians and non-combatants; and

- the purpose of such an act is to intimidate a population (or a specific segment within the population), or to compel a government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act or to attempt to destabilise governments or societies..

Most acts that are classified as terrorism only inflict small-scale property damage and are related to highly localized concerns.[5] These acts are different in many ways from the catastrophic examples of mass-victimisation, which are the driving force behind the international effort to combat terrorism.[6] The common denominator of these acts is then solely the fact that they are both seen to be terrorism, while neither the acts themselves nor the experience of victimisation

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2   Letschert, R.M. (2009). International activities focusing specifically on victims of terrorism. In Letschert, R.M., Staiger, I., Pemberton, A. & Ammerlaan, V.C. (eds.) Assistance to vicitms of terrorism. Springer, forthcoming.

3   Pemberton, A. (2009). The needs of victims of terrorism. In Letschert, R.M., Staiger, I., Pemberton, A. & Ammerlaan, V.C. (eds.) Assistance to vicitms of terrorism. Springer, forthcoming.

4   Letschert, R.M. & Staiger, I. (2009). Introduction and definitions. In Letschert, R.M., Staiger, I., Pemberton, A. & Ammerlaan, V.C. (eds.) Assistance to victims of terrorism. Springer, forthcoming.

5   The Europol Situation and Trend Report 2007 noted that of the 498 attacks that were carried out in the EU in 2006, the vast majority of them resulted only in limited material damage and were not intended to kill.

6   Many commentators have in fact expressed concern that the anxiety following Al Qaeda's attacks has been used to implement counter-terrorist policy for relatively unrelated issues, from secession movements to animal right activism. See for example Fekete, L. (2004). Anti-Muslims racism and the European Security state, Race and Class, 46(1), 3-29.; Furedi, F. (2004). The politics of fear. London. Continuum press.

by them have much in common.

This is related to an additional aspect of essentialism. It is highly questionable whether the mere fact that an act is classified as terrorism has specific consequences for its victims. The idea that the supposed incomprehensibility for victims of any terrorist act would have additional effects compared to similar criminal acts without the aspect of terrorism is often asserted, but has yet to find empirical support (for a review see Pemberton, 2009).[7] The contention, that victims of terrorism are by definition vulnerable and therefore in need of specialized treatment – as is stated in the EU Framework Decision on combating terrorism- is not born out by empirical data. The differences, if any, fall well within the realm of the individual response to victimisation (see Winkel, 1999).[8] A suitable level of protection for victims of crime therefore should suffice to meet the needs of most victims of terrorism (see also Albrecht and Kilchling, 2007).[9] Similarly the need for additional action at the international level to confront victims of domestic terrorism is questionable.[10] A review of policies aimed at victims of terrorism within the OCSE region shows that countries, like France or Spain, with a long-standing history of domestic terrorism, have already enacted policies to meet these needs (see Letschert and Pemberton, 2008; see also Letschert and Ammerlaan, 2009).[11] In most of the other OCSE countries the chance of actually suffering civilian fatalities as a consequence of domestic terrorism is negligible (see generally Mueller, 2007).[12]

The same can not be said for those victims who are confronted with the experience of mass-victimisation attacks. Here additional action in both the legal (see generally Letschert et al, 2009),[13] psycho-social and medical sphere is called for (Foa et al, 2005).[14] Criminal justice procedures (see Staiger, 2009)[15] and compensation schemes (Albrecht and Kilchling, 2005; Letschert and Ammerlaan, 2009)[16] do not reckon with the simultaneous influx of hundreds or even thousands of victims of the same act. The large scale disruption that is inherent in mass-victimisation attacks poses additional challenges for the psycho-social and medical efforts to help victims (see Foa et al, 2005; Ruzek et al, 2007).[17] Moreover, the terrorist organizations involved

7   Pemberton, 2009.
8   Winkel, F.W. (1999). Repeat victimization and trauma susceptibility: Prospective and longitudinal analyses. In: Van Dijk, J.J.M., van Kaam, R.G.H. & Wemmers, J-A.M. Caring for crime victims. Monsey, New York, Criminal Justice Press.
9   Albrecht, H.J. & Kilchling, M. (2007), Victims of Terrorism Policies: Should Victims of Terrorism be Treated differently?, European Journal of Criminal Policy and Research 13, 13-31.
10 This is not meant to imply that counterterrorist efforts against domestic terrorism does not necessitate international cooperation, see f. e. Sandler, T. (2005). Collective versus unilateral responses to terrorism. Public Choice, 124, 75-93.
11 Letschert, R.M. & Pemberton, A. (2008). Letschert, R.M. & Ammerlaan, V.C. (2009)
12 Mueller, J. (2007). Overblown: how politicians and the terrorism industry inflate national security threats and we believe them. New York. Free Press.
13 Letschert, R.M., Staiger, I., Pemberton, A. & Ammerlaan, V.C. (eds.) Assistance to victims of terrorism. Springer, forthcoming.
14 Foa, E.B., Cahill, S.P., Boscarino, J.A. et al (2005) Social, Psychological, and Psychiatric Interventions Following Terrorist Attacks: Recommendations for Practice and Research. Neuropsychopharmacology, 30, 1806–1817 .
15 Staiger, I. (2009).
16 Albrecht, H.J., & Kilchling, M., (2005). Victims of Terrorism Policies and Legislation in Europe, An Overview on Victim related Assistance and Support', Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law.
17 Foa et al (2005). Ruzek, J.I., Maguen, S. & Litz, B.T. (2007). Evidence-based interventions for survivors of terrorism. In: Bongar, B., Brown, L.M., Beutler, L.E., Breckenridge, J.N. & Zimbardo, P.G. (ed.). Psychology of Terrorism, Oxford, Oxford

in committing these acts carry out their actions on the global level, implying that even countries without a history of terrorism run a real, but small, risk of having to endure mass-victimisation attacks.

2. The development of legal instruments for victims of terrorism may have the unintended consequence of restricting policy attention to those who suffer the direct impact of a terrorist attack. By definition the scope of these instruments is limited. Care is taken to define the meaning of victim. A typical example is the definition of victim within the EU Framework Decision on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings: 'victim' shall mean a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering or economic loss, *directly* caused by acts or omissions that are in violation of the criminal law of a Member State.[18] However this obscures terrorism's unique feature, which lies in the fact that in terrorist acts violence is used against direct targets to threaten, frighten and otherwise influence a wider group of indirect or vicarious victims (Schmid, 1988). [19] The impact of terrorism on these so-called vicarious victims has been the subject of a number of studies into the psychological effects of terrorism, in particular after the 9/11 attacks.[20] The general gist of these studies that mass-victimisation terrorist attacks not only intend to cause damage far and beyond the direct victims, but in fact succeed in doing so (see Gerwehr & Hubbard, 2007).[21]

3. Research (and policy) acknowledging the importance of indirect, vicarious victims of terrorism is slanted. First of all, the main outcomes surveyed are the mental health implications of terrorist attacks, like the subsequent extent of post-traumatic stress disorder in the general population. In this sense it is an example of the type of research that Furedi criticised for being a part of 'Therapy Culture' (Furedi, 2004; see also Horowitz & Wakefield, 2007).[22] The definition of victimisation in therapeutic terms obscures the fact that also sub-clinical, 'normal' emotional reactions to vicarious victimisation are relevant (see Lerner et al, 2003; Huddy et al, 2005; Skitka et al, 2006).[23] Secondly the emotional reactions surveyed suffer from a victimological stereotype.

University Press.

18 See Framework Decision on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings (2001/220/JHA), 15 March 2001.

19 Schmid, A. P. Political Terrorism. A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature. Revised, expanded and updated edition under the auspices of the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. Amsterdam, North-Holland Publ. Company, 1988

20 See f.e See Cohen-Silver, R., Holman, E.A., McIntosh, D.E et al (2002). Nationwide longitudinal study of psychological responses to September 11, Journal of the American Medical Association, 288 (10), 1235-1244; Ahern, J., Galea, S., Resnick, H., Kilpatrick, D., Bucuvalas, M., Gold, J., et al. (2002). Television images and psychological symptoms after the September 11 terrorist attacks. Psychiatry, 65, 289–300; Ahern, J., Galea, S., Resnick, H. & Vlahov, D. (2004).Television Images and Probable Posttraumatic Stress Disorder After September 11 The Role of Background Characteristics, Event Exposures, and Perievent Panic, Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorder, 192, 217-226; Schuster, M.A. Stein, B.D., Jaycox, L. H. et al. (2001) A National survey of stress reactions after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, New England Journal of Medicine, 345:1507-12. Wayment, H.E. (2004). It Could Have Been Me: Vicarious Victims and Disaster-Focused Distress. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30, 515-529. Bernstein, K.T., Ahern, J., Tracy, M., Boscarino, J.A., Vlahov, D. & Galea, S. (2007). Television watching and the risk of incident probable posttraumatic stress disorder: a prospective evaluation. Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 195, 41-47.

21 Gerwehr, S. & Hubbard, K. (2007). What is terrorism? In: Bongar, B., Brown, L.M., Beutler, L.E., Breckenridge, J.N. & Zimbardo, P.G. (ed.). Psychology of Terrorism, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

22 Furedi, F. (2004). Therapy Culture. London. Routledge. Horwitz, A.V. & Wakefield, J.C (2007). The loss of sadness. How psychiatry transformed normal sorrow into a psychiatric disorder. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

23 Lerner et al (2003). Huddy et al (2005) Skitka et al (2006)

This stereotype entails defining victims in terms of their level of anxiety (see Van Dijk, 2006; Winkel, 2007).[24] This perspective confines the emotional effects to the anxious reaction to the risk of being (re)victimized, rather than the experience of injustice at the victimisation already suffered. As anger is the primary emotion relating to experiencing injustice (Miller, 2001),[25] a relevant additional victimological response is related to this emotion (see also Pemberton, Winkel & Groenhuijsen, 2007).[26] In fact, anger may well be the more prevalent response to victimisation (Ditton et al, 1999a and 1999b)[27] and anger at injustice and associated phenomena like retribution and revenge play a pivotal role in the (perceptions of legitimacy of) reactions to victimisation experiences (e.g. Wenzel et al, 2008).[28]

This brief outline of the development of legal instruments and social-science research specifically focusing on victims of terrorism sets the stage for the remainder of this paper. Instead of discussing the victimology of all types of terrorism, the topic of this paper is the mass-victimisation attacks, committed by Al Qaeda. Instead of reviewing the evidence on direct victims of terrorism, the vicarious victims of terrorism are of primary interest. And within this group attention is mainly restricted to angry, retributive reactions to victimisation. The main argument is that these anger-related reactions of vicarious victims play an important, maybe even pivotal role in Al Qaeda's strategy and means of organisation.

Al Qaeda: globalized terrorism

It is impossible to do justice fully to the phenomenon of Al Qaeda in the space of one article (see f. e. Gunaratna, 2003; Burke, 2007, Wright 2007 and Riedel, 2008 for extensive discussions of this organisation).[29] I will restrict myself to discussing the main features of the organisation that are of relevance to the victimological perspective developed in this paper. As a consequence I will forego a discussion of the operations of Al Qaeda in the Middle East (see for instance Simon, 2008; Rashid, 2008)[30] and concentrate instead on the mass-victimisation attacks on globally dispersed subjects.

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24 Van Dijk, J.J.M. (2006). The mark of Abel. Inaugural lecture Tilburg University. Nijmegen. Wolf Legal Publishers. Winkel, F.W. (2007). Posttraumatic anger. Missing link in the wheel of misfortune. Inaugural lecture Tilburg University. Nijmegen. Wolf Legal Publishers.

25 Miller, D. T. (2001). Disrespect and the experience of injustice. Annual Review of Psychology, 52, 527-553.

26 Pemberton, A. Winkel, F.W. & Groenhuijsen. M.G. (2007) Taking victims seriously in restorative justice. International Perspectives in Victimology, 3(1), 4-14.

27 Ditton, J., Bannister, J., Gilchrist, E. & Farrall, S. (1999a). Afraid or angry? Recalibrating the 'fear' of crime. International review of Victimology, 6: 83-99. And Ditton, J., Farrall, S., Bannister, J., Gilchrist, E. & Pease, K. (1999b). Reactions to victimisation. Why has anger been ignored? Crime prevention and community safety: an international journal, 1(3): 37-54.

28 Wenzel, M., Okimoto, T.G., Feather, N.T. & Platow, M.J. (2008). Retributive and restorative justice. Law and Human Behavior, 32(5), 375-389.

29 Gunaratna, R. (2003) Inside Al Qaeda. London. Hurst Company. Burke, 2007; Wright, L.W. (2007) The looming tower. Al Qaeda's road to 9/11. London. Penguin Books. Riedel, B. (2008). The Search for Al Qaeda. Its leadership, Ideology and Future. Washington DC. Brookings.

30 Simon, S. (2008). Will the surge's success backfire? Foreign Affairs, 87(3), 57-77. Rashid, A. (2008). Descent into chaos. The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. London, Penguin Books.

Although most terrorist activity is still concentrated at the national level, the terrorist attacks committed by Al Qaeda and associated terrorist groups are linked to globalisation in a variety of ways. Various commentators see globalisation as a cause of the current wave of terrorist activities (Barber, 2001; Crenshaw, 2001; Cronin, 2003, Rapoport, 2001).[31] Al Qaeda functions without a clear geographical base, with permanent or semi-permanent Al-Qaeda organisations existing in 75 countries across five continents (Jordan and Boix, 2004). [32] Al Qaeda's goals are not easily described as clearly articulated national, political targets and nationality is not an important factor (Lynch, 2005 and 2006; Jordan & Boix, 2004).[33] The choice of Al Qaeda's targets is informed by the interpenetration through people and capital flows across national borders, which is emblematic of globalisation (e.g. Cha, 2000).[34] Instead of solely, directly targeting the 'near enemy', like the regimes of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Al Qaeda has sought to engage the 'far enemy', i.e. the United States, as well (Hoffman, 2004, Burke, 2007, Bergesen & Lizardo, 2003, Lynch, 2006).[35]

Three elements are of particular relevance to the perspective developed in this paper;

- The function of religion in Al Qaeda's activities(e.g. Burke, 2007);[36]
- The central role of provocation in Al Qaeda's strategy (Kydd and Walter, 2006);[37]
- Al Qaeda's organisational structure and mode of operation, which have more in common with global civil society movements than with hierarchical, military-style terrorist cells (Jordan & Boix, 2004; Mishal & Rosenthal, 2005; Lynch, 2006, Sageman, 2004). [38]

Al Qaeda and Islam: some controversies.

The religious nature of Al Qaeda is the subject of much academic and political debate. According to public opinion, but also to a highly influential line of academic scholarship the Islamic religion is implicated as a cause of the current wave of terrorist attacks (f. e. Laqueur, 1999; Mendelsohn, 2005).[39] Al Qaeda's actions are regularly framed as a part of the wider 'Clash of the Civilisations' between factions within Islamic countries and the West (most famously voiced by Lewis, 1990 or Huntington, 1993)[40]. Alternatively they may be seen as an Islam-inspired backlash against

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31 Barber, B.J. (1995). Jihad versus Mcworld. Terrorism's challenge to democracy. New York. Ballantine Books. Crenshaw, M. (2001). Why America? The Globalization of Civil War. Current History, 100, 425-432. Cronin, A.K. (2003). Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism. International Security 27(4), 30-58. Rapoport, D. (2001). The 4th Wave of Terrorism. Current History, 100, 419-424.

32 Jordan, J. & Boix, V. (2004). Al Qaeda and Western Islam. Terrorism and Political Violence, 16(1), 1-17.

33 Lynch, M. (2005). Transnational dialogue in an age of terror. Global Society, 19(1), 5-28. Lynch, M. (2006). Al Qaeda's Constructivist Turn. Praeger Security International, Jordan & Boix, 2004.

34 Cha, V. D. (2000). Globalisation and the study of International Security. Journal of Peace Research. 37(3), 391-403.

35 Hoffman, B. (2004). The Changing Face of Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 27:549–560. Burke, 2007; Bergesen, A.J. & Lizardo, O. (2004). International terrorism and the world system. Sociological Theory, 22(1), 38-52; Lynch, 2006.

36 Burke, 2007.

37 Kydd and Walter, 2006.

38 Jordan & Boix, 2004; Mishal and Rosenthal, 2005, Lynch, 2006; Sageman, M. (2004). Understanding Terror Networks.

39 Laqueur, W. (1999) The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction, New York, Oxford University Press. Mendelsohn. B. (2005). 'Sovereignty Under Attack: The International Society Meets the Al Qaeda Network', Review of International Studies, 31.

40 Lewis, B. 'The Roots of Muslims Rage', Atlantic Monthly, 266: 3 (1990), pp. 47–60. Huntington. S.J. (1993). The clash of the

modernity, democracy and secularism (the 'Jihad versus McWorld' thesis, Barber, 1995)[41], although some care is taken to discern so-called 'moderate' Islam from the distorted version employed by terrorists (e.g. Takeyh and Gvosdev, 2004).[42] The general stance is maybe most clearly summarized in a quote from former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon: 'The cultured world is under a cruel attack by radical Islam. It is an enemy composed of lunatic individuals, lunatic regimes and lunatic countries'.[43] Al Qaeda's acts, but also those of for example Hamas or Hizbollah, are then often called Islamic terrorism, the terrorism of the jihad era (Rapoport, 2001) or even 'sacred' terrorism (e.g. Cronin, 2003).[44] Features of Al Qaeda and its mode of operation, like the use of suicide terrorists (Sageman, 2004),[45] the intent to cause large numbers of casualties (Stern, 2003)[46] and its ultimate, presumed, goal of destroying Western civilisation (e.g. Cook, 2003, Takeyh and Gvosdev, 2004)[47] are then explained in religious terms and the perpetrators of the terrorist acts are often referred to as religious fanatics (see for an overview and critique, Jackson, 2007).[48]

However there is much evidence that suggests that the role of religion as a cause of the actions of Al Qaeda's terrorists has been much overstated (see f. e. Pape, 2003, 2005; Burke, 2007; Sageman, 2004; Merari, 2007).[49] The actions of terrorists are of course extreme, however this is not matched by radical or intense interest in Islam (Sageman, 2004; Burke, 2007).[50] It are not radical Muslims who join terrorist organisations; their radical stance is better understood as a *consequence* than a *cause* of becoming a part of the terrorist organisation (Sageman, 2004).[51] Suicide terrorism is, contrary to public belief, not a tactic that is restricted to or primarily committed by religiously motivated individuals, with Merari (2007) concluding that religion is neither a sufficient or a necessary cause of suicide terrorism (see also Pape, 2003, 2005).[52] Similarly, the idea that Al Qaeda terrorists are fanatics who, unrestricted by secular laws, see it fit to slaughter innocent civilians, misunderstands Al Qaeda's strategy. This, in fact, closely adheres to the type of rationality associated with asymmetric warfare (Sedgwick, 2004),[53] a point I will further develop below. Finally the primary reason for the attacks on targets outside of the Middle-

civilizations? Foreign Affairs, 72(3), 22-49.

41   Barber, B.J. (1995). Jihad versus Mcworld. Terrorism's challenge to democracy. New York. Ballantine Books.

42 Takeyh, R. and Gvosdev, N. (2004). Radical Islam: The Death of an Ideology?, Middle East Policy, 11: 4

43   Quoted in Held, 2004.

44   Rapoport, 2001; Cronin, 2003.

45   Sageman, 2004.

46   Stern, J. (2003). Terror in the name of God: why religious militants kill. New York. Harper Collins.

47   Cook, D. (2003). The Recovery of Radical Islam in the Wake of the Defeat of the Taliban. Terrorism and Political Violence, 15: 1. Takeyh & Gvosdev (2004).

48   Jackson, R. (2007). Constructing enemies. 'Islamic' terrorism in academic and political discourse. Government and Opposition, 42(3), 394-426.

49   Pape, R. (2005). Dying to win. The strategic logic of suicide terrorism. New York. Random House.Merari, A. (2007). Psychological aspects of suicide terrorism. In: Bongar, B., Brown, L.M., Beutler, L.E., Breckenridge, J.N. & Zimbardo, P.G. (ed.) Psychology of Terrorism, Oxford, Oxford University Press. Sageman, 2004; Burke, 2007.

50   Sageman, 2004; Burke, 2007.

51   Sageman, 2004

52   Pape, 2003; Pape, 2005.

53   Sedgwick, M. (2004). Al-Qaeda and the Nature of Religious Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence, 16: 4 (2004), pp. 795–814.

East (the 'far enemy') is not their non-Islamic identity, but their support for governments in the Middle-East (like Saudi-Arabia, Egypt and the like, the 'near enemy') which Al Qaeda wishes to overthrow (Kydd and Walter, 2006).[54]

The misunderstanding of the role of Islamic religion has a number of unfortunate consequences. First of all it leads to the grouping of dissimilar organisations under the same heading. Organisations like Hamas and Hizbollah are mostly regarded as Islamic terrorist organisations, like Al Qaeda. However, Hamas and Hizbollah are quite unlike Al Qaeda. Both Hamas and Hizbollah are typical national 'terrorist' organisations, with clear territorial bases and objectives and a highly localized civil support with which they are well-connected (Jordan and Boix, 2004). [55]The latter factor and makes them vulnerable in a fashion that Al Qaeda is not (Pressman, 2007) and makes them more similar to organisations like the IRA, the ETA or the FARC than to Al Qaeda (see Jordan and Boix, 2004). Both the understanding of and counter-terrorist effort against Al Qaeda can be hampered by the misleading grouping with other 'Islamic' terrorist organisations.

Secondly the attribution of religious meaning to Al Qaeda's actions is part of the organisation's strategy. Lynch submits that 'granting an essentialistic Islamic quality to Al Qaeda is to grant Bin Laden his biggest victory' (Lynch, 2006). The organisation strives to present itself as truly Islamic and as the defender of all Muslims against the attack of Western crusaders. The association of Al Qaeda with Islam then strengthens Al Qaeda's position within inter-Islamic debates and allows Al Qaeda to further its own peculiar understanding of the Islamic religion (Lynch, 2006). It also allows Al Qaeda to bring forth the Muslim component of people's identity to reshape political reality. Jordan and Boix (2004) note that Al Qaeda's intention is to bring different cultures into conflict, by dividing the world in good and evil along religious fault-lines. Here Bin Laden's message shows remarkable resemblance to Lewis and Huntington's 'Clash of the Civilisations'. Religion then serves an important function as a means of communication (Mishal and Rosenthal, 2005), both to the globally dispersed pockets of potential civil support and the 'far enemy', the governments and people of Western societies, primarily the United States. According to Burke (2007) Al Qaeda's invocation of Islamic religion serves to communicate directly to possible supporters, but also indirectly through the agitation of (people in) Western societies. The very real possibility of a backlash against Muslims, which I will discuss below, could enhance support for Al Qaeda by apparently confirming Bin Laden's message of the attack on Islam.

This agitation of Western societies is linked to Al Qaeda's use of provocation as a rational strategy to achieve its ends. Again the overuse of religious explanations has obscured this more political and rational explanation for Al Qaeda's strategy. It is to this provocation strategy that I now turn.

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54 Kydd and Walter, 2006.
55 Jordan and Boix 2004.

Provoking the United States: a rational explanation of Al Qaeda strategy

Kydd and Walter (2006) offer an insightful categorization of terrorist strategies.[56] A central notion in their perspective is that, simply put, 'Terrorism often works'. This is confirmed by Pape's (2005) conclusion that between 1980 and 2003 half of all suicide terrorist campaigns were followed by substantial concessions by the target governments.[57] Terrorist strategy is then a rational method to reach goals like regime change or policy change. The shape and focus of terrorist strategy is contingent on the particular characteristics of the two main audiences that Kydd and Walter discern: the enemy government and the population that the terrorists propose to represent. Based on this Kydd and Walter suggest that most terrorist organisations use one or more of five possible strategies: attrition, spoiling, intimidation, outbidding and provocation. According to Kydd and Walter Al Qaeda's strategy includes elements both of an attrition and a provocation strategy. I will forego discussing the other strategies and restrict myself to these.

First of all an attrition strategy is designed to signal to the enemy government that the group is strong and resolute enough to inflict serious costs and damages, often over a prolonged period of time, so that the enemy will yield to the terrorist demands (Lapan and Sandler, 1993).[58] This has been the typical strategy of organisations like the IRA. This strategy is also visible within Al Qaeda as well: the magnitude of the 9/11 attacks and the attacks that preceded and followed it, show its resolve and capability to inflict serious damage. Kydd and Walter show that there are three conditions favourable to attrition. First of all the stake that the enemy government has in the disputed issue is relevant. Enemy governments will not capitulate in situations concerning vital interests. Second there are the constraints on retaliation. The more constrained an enemy government is in retaliation, the more promising an attrition strategy will be. For this reason Krueger has already shown terrorist activity to be more successful within democracies than within authoritarian regimes (Krueger, 2007).[59] An authoritarian regime may well resort to brute force in the counter-attack against terrorists and this has happened to Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan (Riedel, 2007).[60] Similarly and thirdly the extent to which the enemy government can endure costs are of relevance. Attrition will be more successful against enemies with a low threshold for inflicted costs. Again democracies seem to be less tolerant of costs, particularly casualties and fatalities of the civilian population. Bin Laden has explicitly endorsed an attrition strategy, as he aims to 'make America bleed to the point of bankruptcy' and has suggested that the US lacks resolve to fight a long war of attrition.[61]

However it is unlikely that attrition is the only or even the most important part of Al Qaeda's strategy. The geopolitical stake of the United States in the Middle East is simply too large for it to

56   See Kydd, A.H. & Walter, B.F. (2006). The strategies of terrorism. International Security, 31(1), 49-80.
57   Pape (2005).
58   Lapan, H.E. & Sandler, T. (1993). Terrorism and signalling. European Journal of Political Economy, 9(3), 383-398.
59   See Krueger, A.B. (2007). What makes a terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
60   Riedel, B. (2007). Al Qaeda strikes back. Foreign affairs, 86(3). 24-40.
61   See Bin Laden, O. (2005) Messages to the World. Verso Books.

allow Al Qaeda to make serious headway in overcoming its so-called 'near enemies'. Moreover the possibilities for Al Qaeda to inflict sufficiently large damage on the United States to indeed ' bleed America to the point of bankruptcy' are small if not negligible. According to Krueger (2007; see also Bloom, 2006) the direct short-term effects of 9/11, the largest terrorist attack in history, amounted to no more than a loss of 1,5% of GDP, while the longer-term effects should expected to be little more than zero.[62]

Instead Al Qaeda seems to have banked on a retaliatory US-reaction that would be costly to the United States and, although potentially risky for the organisation itself, beneficial in terms of support throughout the Muslim world (e.g. Louis and Taylor, 2002)[63]. The most important part of Al Qaeda strategy, in particular concerning 9/11, is provocation. In Kydd and Walter's words, a provocation strategy aims to goad the enemy government into an overreaction that harms civilians within their home territory and thereby makes them more supportive of the terrorist organisation (see already Fromkin, 1975).[64] The disastrous overreaction of the United States government in Iraq (well summarised in the title of Ricks 'Fiasco', 2006)[65] can be considered to be a textbook example of the result of a successful provocation strategy. It has done more to further Al Qaeda's cause than anything the organisation could have undertaken itself (see Woodward, 2004 and in fact Bin Laden, 2005), in particular with regards to the notion that Islam is under attack from Western countries. The cost to the US-government has been unprecedented ('The Three Trillion Dollar War'; Stiglitz and Bilmes, 2008)[66] and has increased support for Al Qaeda's cause across the Muslim world (Riedel, 2007).

Again the level of constraints on retaliation are important in the choice for a provocation strategy. As Kydd and Walter state 'the government must be capable of middle levels of brutality'.[67] Governments that are willing to undertake genocidal campaigns would be poor targets for provocation, as they may well decide to wipe out the terrorist organisation and possible supporters. On the other end of the spectrum governments overtly committed to human rights and rule of law are unlikely to be provoked.

The Bush administration fit the bill perfectly in September 2001. The United States government has never been gun-shy (see f. e. Kinzer, 2006),[68] but the Bush administration was particularly hawkish in its foreign policy and in its attitude to the use of military power. However any US-government would have found it difficult to refrain from a severe reaction to the 9/11 attacks. A more discriminating response, targeting only those more or less directly involved, was not available to the US-government. Sufficient intelligence on Al Qaeda was lacking (see f. e. Cronin,

62 Krueger, A.B. (2007).
63 See Louis, W.R. & Taylor, D.M. (2002). Understanding the September 11 Attack on America: The Role of Intergroup Theories on Normative Influence. Analysis of Social Issues and Public Policy, 2(1), 87-100.
64 Fromkin, D. (1975). The strategy of terrorism. Foreign Affairs,53(4), 683-698.
65 Ricks, T.E. (2006). Fiasco. The American Military Adventure in Iraq. London, Penguin Books.
66 See Stiglitz, J.E. & Bilmes, L.J. (2008). The Three Trillion Dollar War: the true cost of the Iraq conflict. New York. Norton and Company.
67 Kydd and Walter, 2006.
68 Kinzer, S. (2006). Overthrow. America's century of regime change, from Hawaii to Iraq. New York. Times Books.

2003),[69] but equally important was the extreme nature of the attacks and the equally large sense of injustice associated with them, at the very least from the perspective of the victimized population of the United States.

Here a relevant parallel may be drawn with the theorizing on just wars (e.g. Walzer, 2003).[70] Held (2004) shows that it is fruitful to view terrorist actions on a continuum between more and less unjust.[71] Amongst others she notes that in just wars unintended damage is minimized, only those actors are targeted who are directly responsible for the enemy's actions and that war is used as a last resort, after other more peaceful means have failed. Moreover just wars are declared by legitimate representatives of the people and are directed at targets that have harmful intentions. While a case could be made that terrorism is inherently unjust, it should at least be apparent that Al Qaeda's mode of operation is unjust even compared to other terrorist actions.[72] And this sense of injustice necessitated a severe retributive response from the US government, not in the last part because of the support of the US-electorate for this type of action (see De Mesquita, 2007).[73] As President George W. Bush stated 'justice demands that those who helped or harbored (sic) the terrorists be punished. *The enormity of their evil demands it.'* [74]

The retributive response is not restricted to the governments of the US and the rest of the Western World but also directly applies to the population of Western countries (Skitka et al, 2006),[75] which in turn negatively effects Muslims living in these societies (see Sheridan, 2006).[76] The process through which this occurs -vicarious retribution (Lickel et al, 2006)[77]- and its consequences will be discussed at more length below. For now it is sufficient to understand that the interplay between Al Qaeda's message of Islam being under attack, the overreaction of the United States government in the Middle-East and the retributive response of inhabitants of Western societies towards their Muslim minorities has led to an increase in global civil support for Al Qaeda amongst Muslims. Moreover the combination of the heightened animosity between Muslims and non-Muslims in Western society and the explanation offered for this by both Al Qaeda itself and hawkish Western politicians and academics -summarised in the 'Clash of the Civilisations'-perspective- play a central role in the self-perpetuating, organic organisational structure that has come to define Al Qaeda's mode of operation.

Al Qaeda 2.0: the Dune organisation

As Jason Burke (2007) shows in his in depth survey of Al Qaeda's activities, the organisation has

69 Cronin, 2003.

70 Walzer, M. (2003). Just and unjust wars. 3rd edition. New York. Basic Books.

71 Held, V. (2004). Terrorism and war. The Journal of Ethics, 8, 59-75.

72 See Held (2004).

73 De Mesquita, B. (2007). Politics and the suboptimal provision of counter terror, International Organisation,61(1), 9-36.

74 See Bush, 2001; quoted in Camins, 2003.

75 Skitka, L.J., Bauman, C.W., Aramovich, N.P. & Scott-Morgan, G. (2006). Confrontational and Preventative Policy Responses to Terrorism: Anger Wants a Fight and Fear wants "Them" to Go Away. Basic and Applied Psychology, 28(4), 375-384.

76 Sheridan, L. (2006). Islamophobia pre and post September 11th 2001. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 21(3), 317–336.

77See Lickel, B. Miller, N., Stenstrom, D.M. et al (2006). Vicarious Retribution: The Role of Collective Blame in Intergroup Aggression. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10, 372-390.

developed through three phases, all related to different meanings of the phrase Al Qaeda.[78] The first meaning, the vanguard, defines the perception of Al Qaeda operatives in the period 1989 through 1996, where they saw themselves as enlightening and leading the masses into victory against the enemy, here still predominantly the governments of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The second meaning, the base, describes Al Qaeda during the regime of the Taliban in Afghanistan, where Al Qaeda had an unprecedented infrastructure ('a base') for carrying out its military and terrorist operations. This infrastructure has been largely destroyed in the post 9/11 war in Afghanistan. In the current phase, from 2001 onwards, al Qaeda is no longer a vanguard or a base, but a maxim, a rule, a precept, a way of seeing the world. As Burke states: 'You are a member of Al Qaeda, if you say you are'. Some commentators (Adel, 2004; Lynch, 2006) extend this to suggest that Al Qaeda has ceased to be an organization in a literal sense and has now become an 'idea moving across borders'.[79] This is partly an overstatement. Within the Middle East, and particularly within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, Al Qaeda still functions as an organisation in the traditional sense , with its central leadership highly involved in the planning of high-impact plots (see Riedel, 2007; Hoffman, 2008).[80]

However outside of the Middle East, terrorism identified as 'Al Qaeda' is more often than not carried out by independent groups inspired by Al Qaeda's message and actions, rather than by a centrally directed organisation. Mishal and Rosenthal (2005) have dubbed Al Qaeda the 'Dune Organisation' in that it resembles the dunes in the desert in their unpredictable and random movement and emergence.[81] Mishal and Rosenthal show Al Qaeda to be extremely flexible in its actions, lacking affiliation with any explicit territorial rational; no overt institutional presence and command and communication chains that may be waived, fragmented or severed at any time. Bin Laden's grand vision is the main mode of organisation. Similarly, others have likened Al Qaeda's organisational structure an open-source mechanism, with Bergen coining the term Al Qaeda 2.0 (Bergen, 2002; Caruso and Locatelli, 2007).[82] Al Qaeda would then be similar to Linux in the absence of a hierarchical structure, the decentralized organization and the possibilities for self-initiative. Internet and other global means of communication play a pivotal role in the flexibility of Al Qaeda. It could be conjectured that an organisation functioning like Al Qaeda is only possible in the web-based era, with Internet playing a pivotal role in the communication of Al Qaeda's message and the possibilities it offers for potential 'home-grown' terrorists to copy Al Qaeda's modes of executing terrorist acts without ever coming in direct contact with members of the organisation (e.g. Leiken, 2005).[83]

But it is not only the communication by Al Qaeda itself that is a driving force in keeping the organisation vital. In the next section I shall develop the argument that it is also the reaction of

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78 Burke, 2007.
79 Adel, 2004; Lynch, 2006.
80 Riedel, 2007; Hoffman, 2008.
81 Mishal & Rosenthal, 2005.
82 Bergen, 2002; Caruso and Locatelli, 2007.
83 Leiken, R. (2005). Europe's Angry Muslims. Foreign Affairs. 84(4),120-127.

the victimized populations themselves to Muslims that live within Western society that serves to perpetuate Al Qaeda as a virtual organisation.

Vicarious victims and retribution

Acknowledging the vicarious dimension of terrorism

The fact that terrorists use violence against direct targets to threaten, frighten and otherwise influence a wider group of indirect or vicarious victims, implies that the audience of the crime transcends the direct victims (Schmid, 1988).[84] This has been particularly evident in the aftermath of the Al Qaeda's mass-victimisation attacks. After 9/11 between 7.5% and 11% of the inhabitants of New York developed post-traumatic stress disorder. Although the chances of developing PTSD are related to exposure level, with those directly exposed, i.e. being either directly victimised or witnessing the attack, having much elevated levels of PTSD compared to those only indirectly exposed,[85] the latter nevertheless showed elevated levels of PTSD as a consequence of 9/11. In fact across the United States people not present on-site or with a direct relationship to those who were directly victimised showed stress reactions to the attack (Schuster et al, 2001).[86] Galea, Vlahov and colleagues expanded their initial survey to the five boroughs of NYC and the New York metropolitan area.[87] Their results show that, in absolute terms, the number of indirectly exposed New Yorkers that developed PTSD as a result of the attacks equalled the number that were directly exposed. Similar results were shown in Madrid. Miguel-Tobal and colleagues show that the net burden of psychopathology in the aftermath of a terrorist event in a densely populated urban area may be as high among persons who are not directly affected by the disaster as amongst those who are.[88] The increased levels of fear in the general public may result in various other behavioural reactions, from lower levels of tourist activity,[89] to decreased use of public transport systems.[90] and the occurrence of 'worrying well', the phenomenon that people unexposed to chemical/ biological agents present with symptoms resembling exposure. An example is the Anthrax scare in 2001 and 2002. [91]

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84 Schmid, 1988.
85   See Galea et al (2002).
86   See Schuster et al (2001).
87 Galea, S., Vlahov, D., Resnick, H., Ahern, J., Susser, E., Gold, J., et al. (2003). Trends of probable post-traumatic stress disorder in New York City after the September 11 terrorist attacks. American Journal of Epidemiology, 158, 514–524.
88   Miguel-Tobal et al (2006).
89   See Frey et al (2007).
90 See Gigerenzer, G. (2004). Dread risk, September 11, and fatal traffic accidents. Psychological Science, 15, 286–287. Gigerenzer, G. (2006). Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire: Behavioral Reactions to Terrorist Attacks. Risk Analysis, 26(2), 347-351.
91 Hyams, K.C., Murphy, F.M. & Wessely, S. (2002). Responding to Chemical, Biological, or Nuclear Terrorism: The Indirect and Long-Term Health Effects May Present the Greatest Challenge. Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law, 27: 273–91.

The importance of anger as a reaction to terrorism

Anger is a common reaction to injustice,[92] and thereby to victimisation[93]. Although most research into victims' emotions concentrates on anxiety and fear, anger may be, at least in prevalence, the more important emotion. In the instances in which anger has been included in victimological research, more victims said they were angry than frightened due to their victimisation (e.g. Ditton, Bannister, Gilchrist, & Farrall, 1999; Ditton, Farrall, Bannister, Gilchrist, & Pease, 1999).[94] Anger was also the most prevalent reaction of the American public to 9/11. According to Smith et al (2001) 65% of Americans and 73% of New Yorkers reported being angry in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.[95] A year on anger was still the most prevalent reaction, although percentages dropped to 43% and 42% respectively.[96]

Anger, however, is not always acknowledged as an important reaction to terrorism. Most definitions of terrorism tend to explicitly emphasize the public's fear or associated processes, like intimidation but not anger (see Letschert and Staiger, 2009). Including anger is important for a variety of reasons. Apart from the more general connection of anger to retribution (Vidmar, 2001; Miller, 2001)[97,] people with a heightened sense of anger after terrorism are more supportive of going to war (Stitka et al, 2004).[98] Lerner and Keltner show that anger is related to a more optimistic assessment of risks, while fear is associated with more pessimistic appraisals. In addition, anger rather than fear appears to be related to more optimistic accounts of the country's relative military capability (Lerner et al, 2001; Lerner et al, 2003).[99] This assessment influences preferred government action in the aftermath of terrorism. Skitka et al make this apparent in the title of their article '…anger wants a fight. Fear wants them to go away.'[100] And although reducing fear in the population may well coincide with reducing anger, preferred policies for fear- and anxiety-reduction may well have the unintended consequence of stimulating angry reactions (see more extensively Pemberton, 2009).[101]

The previous discussion of Al Qaeda's provocation strategy makes anger and retribution even

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92 For a review see Miller, D. T. (2001). Disrespect and the experience of injustice. Annual Review of Psychology, 52, 527-553.

93 Winkel, 2007.

94 Ditton, J., Bannister, J., Gilchrist, E. & Farrall, S. (1999a). Afraid or angry? Recalibrating the 'fear' of crime. International review of Victimology, 6: 83-99. And Ditton, J., Farrall, S., Bannister, J., Gilchrist, E. & Pease, K. (1999b). Reactions to victimisation. Why has anger been ignored? Crime prevention and community safety: an international journal, 1(3): 37-54.

95 Smith, T.W., Rasinski, K.A. & Toce, M. (2001). America rebounds. A national study of public response to the September 11th terrorist attacks. Chicago, NORC.

96 See Rasinksi, K.A. Berktold, J. Smith, T.W. et al (2002). America recovers. Chicago, NORC.

97 Vidmar, N. (2001). Retribution and revenge. In: Sanders, J. and Hamilton, V.L. (ed.) Handbook of Justice Research in Law, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers; Miller, 2001.

98 See Skitka, L. J., Bauman, C. W., Mullen, E. (2004). Political tolerance and coming to psychological closure following September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks: An integrative approach. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin , 30 , 743–756.

99 Lerner, J. S., & Keltner, D. (2001). Fear, anger, and risk. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81, 146–159. See also Lerner, J. S., Gonzalez, R. M., Small, D. A., & Fischhoff, B. (2003). Effects of fear and anger on perceived risks of terrorism: A national field experiment. Psychological Science, 14, 144–150.

100 Skitka, L.J., Bauman, C.W., Aramovich, N.P. & Scott-Morgan, G. (2006). Confrontational and Preventative Policy Responses to Terrorism: Anger Wants a Fight and Fear wants "Them" to Go Away. Basic and Applied Psychology, 28(4), 375-384. Huddy, L Feldman, S. & Cassese, E. (2007). On the Distinct Political Effects of Anxiety and Anger. In: Crigler, A et al (eds.) The Political Dynamics of Feeling and Thinking. University of Chicago Press.

101 Pemberton, 2009.

more relevant. We have already seen that Al Qaeda's terrorist acts were successful in provoking the United States into a war in Iraq, which has done much to further Al Qaeda's position. The following discussion of the process of vicarious retribution will show that Al Qaeda's provocation strategy also implicates the relationships between non-Muslims and Muslims living in Western Countries.

Vicarious retribution

In a recent review article Lickel and colleagues describe the phenomenon of vicarious retribution.[102] This refers to the situation where a member of a group commits an act of aggression toward members of an out-group for an assault or provocation that had no personal consequences for him or her and was not personally committed by that member of the out-group. The concept of vicarious retribution is relevant for the understanding of escalation and spreading of conflict and intergenerational and intractable rights. In the context of Al Qaeda's acts it is relevant for the understanding of the support for war in the Middle East and the increased hostility towards Muslim inhabitants of Western countries.

Lickel and colleagues model vicarious retribution as a chain of four cognitive-affective processes. First is the initial event construal. In this the vicarious victim considers what has happened, whether it is relevant for him or her, and who is to blame for what happened. First of all the event has to be construed as the act of an out-group member toward an in-group member. This entails applying possible out-group-in-group relationships to the event. In certain situations this division has gained chronic salience, where there is a pattern of ongoing violence, like in Israel and Palestine or formerly in Northern Ireland. But also when this pattern is lacking people may construe the event along group lines. This is dependent on the context (i.e. white versus black crime) or on the nature of the incident. The latter is the case when the act of violence is directed against an iconic figure of the in-group, like the US-flag or the White House. Of relevance is furthermore the intention of the person who committed the act. If prior experiences or expectations are linked to intergroup hostility, it is likely the act will be construed along these lines. Of course this is even more evident when the intergroup connection is either stated or directly related to the act. Finally the vicarious victim may question whether the in-group has in some way provoked the out-group aggression and that this provocation may be sufficient justification for the out-group reaction.

All of this is evidenced in the attacks by Al Qaeda in Europe and the United States. Most of its actions target iconic, large urban infrastructures and are mostly accompanied by communication suggesting their intentions; in addition, previous experiences with this terrorist organisation will suggest the relevance of the intergroup context. Moreover, the research into terror management theory shows that large-scale incidents with sufficient reminders of death, will automatically make

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102 Lickel, B. Miller, N., Stenstrom, D.M. et al (2006). Vicarious Retribution: The Role of Collective Blame in Intergroup Aggression. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10, 372-390.

cultural divides more salient and therefore enhance the possibility that events will be construed along the lines of group identification (Pyszczynski et al (2003))[103]. The magnitude of the attacks in itself then serves the purpose of deepening cultural divides. Moreover the methods employed by Al Qaeda prevents the targeted population from primarily attributing them to the in-groups' own actions. Even in the attacks on Madrid and London in which large parts of the British and Spanish population saw the attacks as a reaction to the Iraq war, Al Qaeda's mode of operation left little room for justification. Instead the organisation seems adamant to be seen as evil in the eyes of Western populations.[104]

The second step in the Lickel et al (2006) model is in-group identification, which is linked to anger and aggressive tendencies after harm to in-group members. Feelings of group pride and group member empathy, with emphasis placed on the common humanity of group members strengthen the links with the direct in-group victims (Yzerbyt et al, 2001, Demoulin et al 2004).[105] These processes coincide with two linked tendencies that support retaliation against out-group members. First of all the chances of being punished by in-group members after retaliating are small. Second, those who do not retaliate or concur with retaliatory ideas may be considered deviant. The reaction to the Al Qaeda attacks of 9/11 are clear examples of both processes. Both patriotism and nationalism received a boost after the attacks (see Hetherington and Nelson, 2003) and dissent was not tolerated (Landau, Pyszczynski, Greenberg & Solomon, 2004). [106]

Third, a process of out-group entitativity takes place. Entitativity refers to the perception that a group is a united and coherent whole. The higher out-group entitativity is perceived to be, the more likely any member of the out-group will be blamed for the event. Suicide terrorism poses an additional opportunity for this process, as the perpetrator himself is no longer available, others like him may well be blamed. According to Lickel et al out-group entitativity proceeds by a process of infra-humanisation.[107] In the perception of the in-group, out-group members 'lose' secondary human emotions (guilt, love, admiration, etc.) and are left with primary, not-exclusively human emotions. This process leaves the out-group at once more similar (similar lack of emotions) and more cohesive as the primary emotions left allow attribution of a similar sense of purpose to the out-group. Where the in-group is seen as more commonly human, the out-group is seen as less human. In addition, entitativity is accompanied with causal inferences about

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103 See Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S. & Greenberg, J. (2003). In the wake of 9/11: the psychology of terror. Washington DC, APA.

104 Compare Baumeister, R. (1997). Evil: inside human cruelty. New York. Henry Holt. discussion of The Myth of Pure evil with Al Qaeda's mode of operation and communication with the West. On all counts Al Qaeda meets the criteria for Pure Evil, suggesting that this may be a conscious attempt to be seen as such.

105 See Yzerbyt, V., Corneille, O., & Estrada, C. (2001). The interplay of subjective essentialism and entitativity in the formation of stereotypes. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 5, 141-15. and Demoulin, S., Leyens, J. Ph., Paladino, M. P., Rodriguez, R. T., Rodriguez, A. P., & Dovidio, J. F. (2004). Dimensions of "uniquely" and "non-uniquely" human emotions. Cognition and Emotion, 18, 71-96.

106 Hetherington, M.J. & Nelson, M. (2003). Anatomy of a rally effect: George W. Bush and the War on Terrorism. PS: Political Science and Politics, 37-42. Landau, M. J. Solomon. S. Greenberg. J. et al (2004). Deliver us from evil : The Effects of Mortality Salience and Reminders of 9/11 on Support for President George W. Bush, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Vol. 30, 9, 1136-1150.

107 See also Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: an integrative review. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10(3), 252-264.

commission (the other out-group members helped commit the act) and omission (where they did not directly support they definitely did not do anything to prevent it from happening).[108] Finally these heuristics are linked to dispositional inferences about the out-group members. 'Fundamentalist Muslims are always angry' would be a relevant example. The causal connection of Al Qaeda to Islam and the associated lines of thought are not so much examples of the phenomenon of out-group entitativity, but together form an extreme case. Here the assessment is not only made by individuals or groups of vicarious victims, but also by a highly influential group of academics and policy-makers (like Lewis, 1990 and Huntington, 1993). Moreover, as Jackson (2007) shows, it draws on a long tradition of cultural stereotypes and deeply hostile media representations and depictions of Islam and Muslims (see also Poole and Richardson, 2006).[109]

This leads, in the final step, to vicarious retribution in which in-group members retaliate against out-group members who were not personally responsible for the actions that led to the initial event. We have already seen that the US-government did respond to Al Qaeda's acts by waging war against an unrelated country (Iraq). Most of the hundreds of thousands of people who have died in Iraq, suffered the consequences of vicarious retribution. There is also increasing evidence of hostility towards Muslims in the west. In the direct aftermath of 9/11 there were various instances of anti-Muslim attacks (see Pyszczynski et al, 2003). After 9/11 the general opinion in the US towards immigrants and immigration took a downward turn.[110] Furthermore, members of minority groups have been the target of retaliation and are regularly called on to explain the behaviour or apologise.[111] Across Europe and particularly in the United Kingdom Islamophobia has increased since the Al Qaeda attacks. A study by Sherridan (2006) in a sample of British Muslims showed an 83% increase in perceived implicit discrimination and a 76% increase in overt discrimination.[112] Allen and Nielsen (2002) show increases in experienced hostility in particular for those easily identifiable as Muslims. The results from the studies into the London 7 July bombings show being Muslim to be a strong indicator of substantial stress in a survey of the general public.[113] In sum: the process of vicarious retribution is clearly visible after the Al Qaeda attacks and has had real effects for the Muslim population of Western countries.

It is not hard to fathom that the effects of vicarious retribution can enhance support for Al Qaeda in the Muslim population living in the West. As Louis and Taylor (2002) already noted in the direct

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108 See Lickel, B., Schmader, T., & Hamilton, D. L. (2003). A case of collective responsibility: Who else was to blame for the Columbine High School shootings? Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29, 194-204.

109 Poole, E. & Richardson, J. (2006). Muslims and the News Media. London, I.B. Tauris.

110 See Esses, V. M., Dovidio, J. F., & Hodson, G. (2002). Public attitudes toward immigration in the United States and Canada in response to the September 11, 2001 'Attack on America'. Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 2(1), 69-85.

111 See also the report 'Policies on Integration and Diversity in some OSCE Participating States' - An Explanatory Study prepared by the Migration Policy Group, regarding all countries, the conclusion was drawn that the 'war on terror' mainly affected Muslim immigrants, problematising their ability to integrate into liberal Western societies.'

112 Sherridan, L. (2006). Islamophobia Pre- and Post September 11th, 2001. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 21(3), 317-336.

113 Rubin, G.J., Brewin, C.R., Greenberg, N. et al (2005). Psychological and behavioural reactions to the bombings in London on 7 July 2005: cross sectional survey of a representative sample of Londoners, British Medical Journal, BMJ, doi:10.1136/bmj.38583.728484.3A

aftermath of 9/11 'the victimization of non-terrorist Muslims may lead moderate Muslims to the perception that the terrorists were correct in their perception that America and the West constitute implacable enemies of Islam'.[114] Western reactions, both governmental and by the populations themselves, go a long way to provide a retrospective justification for Al Qaeda's attacks. Moreover they offer the organisation pockets of support and potential recruits that were not previously available.

Conclusion

The main argument of this article is that victimological reactions to the terrorist attacks committed by Al Qaeda play an important role in its strategy and organisation. Where attention to victims of terrorism tends to be restricted to the anxious reactions of direct victims, this paper has shown angry reactions of those only indirectly harmed by terrorist activities, the so-called vicarious victims, to be of interest.

The most important component of Al Qaeda's strategy is provocation. The mass-victimisation attacks on civilians in Western countries are specifically designed to provoke a severe retributive response, which harms civilians and thereby increases support for the organisation. It is clear that the US-led war in Iraq is a perfect example of the result of successful provocation.

Not only the US and other Western governments have been provoked. This response is visible in the inhabitants of Western countries as well. The scale and method of Al Qaeda's attacks implicated a large a number of vicarious victims across Western societies. These vicarious victims were not necessarily anxious or afraid after Al Qaeda's attacks, with most victims displaying anger at the attacks rather than fear for future attacks. Through the association of anger with retribution and the process of vicarious retribution, this has led to increased discrimination of and hostility against Muslims living in Western societies.

Both the retributive tendencies of Western governments and that of the inhabitants of Western societies contribute to the capability of Al Qaeda to maintain a global presence, without the necessity of direct, but thereby fragile links, with all those working under its banner. Al Qaeda uses technologies associated with globalisation, like the Internet and satellite television, to get its message across to dispersed pockets of support all over the world and similarly to provide guidance and instruments for the undertaking of terrorist acts themselves. But these activities are highly augmented by the fact that Muslims living in the West can see supporting evidence for Bin Laden's message of the attack on Islam every time they turn on television or open a newspaper. Many experience discrimination due to their Islamic identity on a regular basis. The combination of its own use of communication technology and the reaction of its enemies have enabled Al Qaeda to become a virtual organisation on a global scale, an 'idea moving across borders' in

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114 Louis and Taylor, 2002.

addition to its 'real' organizational presence in the Middle East.

It bears noting that the (over) use of religion as a causal explanation for Al Qaeda's activities is a necessary condition for Al Qaeda's strategy and organisation. The implication of a religious divide between Muslims and others in Al Qaeda's acts, summarised in the perspective of the Clash of the Civilisations and similar theories, signifies the fault-line through which vicarious victims should evaluate intergroup hostility and eventually the targets for their retributive response. This may well end up becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy, with home-grown terrorists taking up arms in a reaction to their discrimination as a Muslim.

And so victimisation reactions are highly important in granting Bin Laden his biggest victory. These reactions have provided a retrospective justification for Al Qaeda's actions and has vastly improved the chance of Al Qaeda's perspective gaining mainstream support across Islamic nations.