Tackling Terrorism's Taboo: Shame

by Matthew Kriner

Abstract

This exploratory article provides a conceptual framework for explaining how shame is used by terrorist organizations in their recruitment and radicalization strategies. Shame is a universal emotion, experienced across all cultures, and as such presents scholars with a platform for easy cross-cultural comparisons of radicalization phenomena. Terrorist use of entitative identities to divide society into adherents and apostates, particularly in the study of religious extremists like jihadist entities, provides a verdant ground of understanding how organizations move people into higher states of radicalization, and potentially enticing them to engage in terrorism. However, as an aversive emotion, shame's taboo status has, it is suggested here, led scholars to overlook its role in past studies of radicalization. This article postulates that emotions and identity are an integral aspect of the social self, and because of shame's regulatory power over social identity and norm adherence, it should be at the core of the study of radicalization processes.

Keywords: Radicalization, Recruitment, Religion, Shame, Social Identity, Terrorism

Introduction

Despite the development of a robust global counter-terrorism regime in the post-9/11 era, radicalization continues to present a clear and present danger to societies around the world. Interdisciplinary efforts have yielded promising avenues to be explored, such as the emotional and psychological mechanisms that affect the social identities of human beings.[1] Given this, and knowing that no unique biographical terrorist profile exists, there is a need to expand the radicalization literature to include more emotional mechanisms to better understand how individuals come to embrace the extreme and violent belief systems threatening societies around the world.[2]

Shame, an oft understudied emotion with powerful influence on the self, presents a compelling avenue to explore, given its near universal applicability to all cultural settings.[3] Emotions and identity, through an understanding of the social aspect of the self and shame's regulatory power on norm adherence, can provide a better understanding of radicalization processes. While modern scholarship has largely overlooked shame's role in radicalization as a mechanism used by terrorist organizations, Fyodr Dostoyevsky's *The Demons* tackles the issue directly, illustrating how deficiencies in the self, such as sexual fetishes and collectively committing a murder, can help cement a secret terrorist cell's motivation to conduct a revolution.[4] Why is it that a Russian novelist was able to pinpoint the complex emotion that drove terrorism in his day, but modern scholars often overlook the same emotion? In the many years since Dostoyevsky's classic was published, the colloquial and academic use of shame in describing emotional states has receded in favor of its hyponymic relatives, such as humiliation, guilt, and anger. According to Scheff, shame's taboo nature in our modern society may play a role in shame's decline.[5] Shame's taboo is so powerful it is often avoided as a discussion topic even on the conceptual level.[6]

This exploratory article will cast aside such concerns and attempt to peel back the complexity of shame as it relates to terrorist organizations' radicalization strategies. It will address what constitutes shame, through the emotion's associated appraisals, tendencies, and goals, and why it is a critically overlooked component in the radicalization process.[7] With both concepts established, this article will explore how radicalization and shame are related to identity formation and narrative framing, and briefly explore two cases. Finally, the article will contribute a conceptual outline of how terrorist organizations use shame-based narratives and shame's unique nature to advance a radical identity within an established in-group, a process that has become known as radicalization.

Radicalization

 Like terrorism and most other complex social science concepts, radicalization does not have a clearly agreed upon definition.[8] A general consensus has emerged that, in terms of the radicalization process, *what* individuals believe is less important than *how* they come to believe it.[9] Additionally, extant literature supports the notion that radicalization can be understood as a phenomenon that can manifest itself cognitively and behaviorally, and generally holds no set or shared profile as to who may become radicalized.[10] Understanding *how* an individual comes to a new worldview that is relationally radical to the mainstream of the society requires an examination of mechanisms.[11]

Three critical definitions can provide a robust framework for conceptualizing the role of shame within radicalization. First, Hafez and Mullins argue that cognitive radicalization is more widespread than its behavioral counterpart, and is defined by "acquiring values, attitudes, and political beliefs that deviate sharply from those of mainstream society."[12] Similarly, McCauley and Moskalenko posit the radicalization process as a "change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the ingroup."[13] And Horgan defines radicalization as "the social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political or religious ideology."[14] It is critical to note that these definitions do not seek to claim that the use of violence is a necessary outcome of radicalization.[15] Acknowledging that radicalization is not a deterministic pathway to terrorism is critical for the understanding of shame as a radicalization mechanism and fits within the general consensus of radicalization as non-deterministic.[16]

Moreover, scholarly pursuits to find direct causal explanations for radicalization have largely failed.[17] Alternative approaches have reached a consensus that there are many unique pathways and mechanisms that can coalesce into necessary conditions for radicalization.[18] Importantly, radicalization mechanisms have been identified as a useful way to study how someone comes to a radical belief, which incorporates psychological, neurological, and physical stimuli.[19] Interestingly, in their mechanisms-based approach, McCauley and Moskalenko examine humiliation, anger, hate, facing personal demons, and other similar concepts related to shame in both the individual and collective, but fail to address shame directly.[20] This suggests two important factors. First, emotions are a valid and critical mechanism in the understanding of radicalization.[21] Second, shame is routinely overlooked by radicalization scholars in studying how organizations and movements recruit and radicalize.

Discursive approaches are uniquely relevant when examining the issue of radicalization through the emotional framework.[22] Critically, the discursive approach suggested by Costanza, provides a deeply contextual analysis that seeks to limit the Western bias that pervades the field of radicalization studies. Costanza argues that because individuals are embedded within society, and vice versa, our models to assess radicalization must incorporate that unique and personal dynamic. Narratives, according to Costanza, establish "a standard of conformity in which an individual must decide to either leave the group or share in the doctrinally established group narrative."[23]

Radicalization, therefore, can best be understood as a culturally contextual and highly personal experience, governed by norms, rules, and societal expectations. When radical entities seek to establish deviant norms from the majority norms, narratives used aid in forcing individuals to choose between the old and the new identity. Thus, emotions and identity, being firmly rooted in the social aspect of the self, should be at the core of the study of radicalization processes.

Shame

The first challenge in understanding shame's role within radicalization is overcoming the traditional aspects of shame that are associated with escape, aversion, and avoidance.[24] Because radicalization narratives are conventionally understood to be aimed at motivating individuals, emotions that are negatively oriented, such

as shame, are not immediately and logically connected to radicalization studies. Shame is a taboo, an often subconscious emotion, which is triggered by self-reflection.[25] That some scholars suggest shame requires self-reflection should not dismiss shame from a central focus in radicalization studies, as it may be one of the most powerful and extensive emotion humans can experience.[26] The power of shame comes from its ability to deeply challenge the core self with or without public exposure, separating it from other self-conscious emotions like humiliation and guilt, which are social reactions to an exposure of wrongdoing or failure.[27] And according to Thomaes, et al., shame can leave people feeling "strongly devalued, inferior, and exposed."[28] It is commonly associated with internal attributions for a failure of the stable self, but also with external attributions of a failure of the self. It is connected to a need to prevent public exposure, or the potential exposure, of a self-failure.[29] Shame evokes action tendencies such as "defensiveness, interpersonal separation, and distance."[30] In the context of the socialized radicalization analysis model proposed by Costanza, shame's role within the social-self interaction makes it a highly valuable emotion from which to assess radicalization processes.

Furthermore, shame is strongly associated with norm regulation through the concern of how others view the self, particularly the concern that others view one as deficient due to an inability to live up to norms. [31] According to Pivetti, Camodeca, and Rapino, "shame and guilt are generally considered to be the most important adaptive moral, or social, emotions, because they tend to assure the adherence to social norms through their internalization, without requiring the use of external sanctions."[32] Based on the need to meet certain societal expectations or uphold the norms (morals and belief systems), when the total self (and not just a specific aspect of the self) fails to meet these standards, one may individually assign failure to the self or fear that public exposure will bring social pain. Internalization of shame will lead to preemptive attempts to avoid the public exposure; therefore, the overarching goal of shame is to avoid public and peer devaluation.[33]

In most cases, social pain may result in a casting out from the majority group, but in circumstances where the social norms are set by more extreme actors, it can be accompanied by physical ramifications (e.g., honor-killings in ultra-conservative Muslim communities or labeling as an apostate by radical ideological terrorist organizations). These failures are rooted in an understanding that their existence runs counter to mainstream values and beliefs.[34] Therefore, when individuals assign a failure to meet standards of a stable internal factor of the self (e.g. being a homosexual in a deeply conservative household), rather than an external factor (e.g., interference by another person) or an unstable factor of the self (e.g., a failed effort), shame will be evoked.[35] When strategically deployed, shame's inherent power over the individual can have devastating consequences. Yet, its taboo nature has led to it being drastically understudied as an organizational tool in recruitment and radicalization.

Another aspect of shame that lends promise to the study of radicalization is its long-term impact, or its emotional sentiment.[36] According to Halperin, emotional sentiments exist as a baseline state toward a "person, group, or symbol that is unrelated to any specific action or statement by this object."[37] Discrete emotional responses and long-term sentiments can take the same form, suggesting that long-term communal failures of identity can imprint and be 'spiked' by recurring events that mimic traumatic shame-incidents in a collective identity's shared history.[38] This is supported by Tracy & Robins' research, which found that individuals routinely exposed to shame, "may learn to regulate it by making external attributions."[39] Essentially, shame-prone individuals will escape the conscious acknowledgement of shame within the self, and instead will unconsciously blame others for their failure.[40]

Additionally, Tracy & Robins state that if one does not externalize the blame for failures, then they "may need to adopt a long-term strategy of behavioral modification (e.g., working toward becoming a different kind of person)."[41] The implications of shame's role as a strategically employed mechanism for radicalization by terrorist organizations is apparent in relation to ingroup-outgroup dynamics and identity formation tactics. Exploitation of this condition of shame may be best understood through theories such as: *framing theory*, which holds strong value in cognitive psychological processes; and *uncertainty-identity theory*, which suggests that when individuals are uncertain in their identity of the self, they may turn toward more extreme sources of identity to achieve closure.[42] This will be explored in the discussion section of this article. Furthermore, if

framing narratives are meant to evoke specific emotional responses in a populace toward action, and adopting a worldview, then we can also understand strategic invocations of historic shame-incidents as a means of externally applied norm regulation. Additionally, the lack of resolution for specific shame-incidents may create a festering wound in a shared identity that is free to be re-opened by radicalizers at will.

It is important to note that shame is often used interchangeably with guilt or humiliation (including within the clinical setting), and distinctions from guilt and humiliation stem from the individual appraisal of a shame-inducing event.[43] According to June Tangney, differentiation between the two emotions is delicate, but important, and when people feel shame, "they feel badly for themselves; when people feel guilt, they feel badly about a specific behavior."[44] This presents unique challenges to past research (e.g. fury studies) that utilized shame's hyponymic cousins - anger and humiliation.[45] However, while this is beyond the scope of this article, the potential of incorrect categorization of such similar emotions in past research on radicalization should be addressed in future research.

What we can infer from the assessment of shame's emotional uniqueness is that shame is an immensely powerful and formative emotion. Moreover, shame-based narratives are powerful for pushing individuals toward accepting a new worldview, particularly if the social pain derived from non-conformity is amplified with a threat to an individual's safety, stemming from moral transgressions and norm violations.[46] Second, when an individual's social value derives from an ingroup that is beset by a terrorist narrative that seeks to divide the ingroup into adherents to their worldview and those that are in a state of impropriety, conditions for the utilization of shame as a recruitment and radicalization mechanism emerge.[47]

The Conceptual Application of Shame to Radicalization Studies

Theoretical Connection

As the study of radicalization has largely shifted from examining *what* people believe, to *how* they come to believe it, there is clear value in considering shame as an emotional mechanism within a process of incremental adoption and commitment to a radical identity and worldview.[48] Emotional mechanisms provide a strong understanding of how someone comes to believe something, and in ongoing conflicts, they can shed light on the contributing radicalization factors within an individual or within communities that go unnoticed due to their repressed taboo nature.[49] Terrorist organizations, like al-Qaeda or the Islamic State, routinely engage in use of emotion-based narratives in their recruitment and radicalization strategies.[50] For example, in an online statement released in March 2010, al-Qaeda's infamous radicalizer, Anwar al-Awlaki, posed the following question to American Muslims:

> With the American invasion of Iraq and continued U.S. aggression against Muslims, I could not reconcile between living in the U.S. and being a Muslim, and I eventually came to the conclusion that jihad against America is binding upon myself just as it is binding on every other Muslim....
>
> To the Muslims in America, I have this to say: How can your conscience allow you to live in peaceful coexistence with a nation that is responsible for the tyranny and crimes committed against your own brothers and sisters?[51]

Such questions within jihadist recruitment narratives are designed to stoke uncertainty within the dual identity nature of Muslim Americans. In referencing the conscience and juxtaposing a shared proto-Muslim worldview against the framed immorality of the host nation (in this case, America), al-Awlaki and his fellow jihadist ideologues hope to shame listeners into abandoning their attachment to the American identity and taking up arms to rectify its wrongdoings. Such pleas are supported by an internal 'awakening' by al-Awlaki who determined that his identity could not support both American and Muslim values in his total self. On the other hand, Muslim Americans who believe the teachings of al-Awlaki to be repugnant, may find it shameful to learn that there are Muslim Americans who agree with him, or that he himself was American. To resolve such painful revelations, they may distance themselves from challenging these individuals, or ignore the contentious topic

altogether.

The following discussion of how shame may play a central role in terrorist organizations' upstream recruitment and radicalization strategies is not intended to be an exhaustive exploration of the interaction between the two subjects. On the contrary, shame's near universal presence in our lives and its need for self-reflection suggest that its role within radicalization is likely present across the process as a whole, and not just in discrete applications. [52]

First, shame's ability to impact identity through peer devaluation and outgroup blame merits significant attention by scholars. Analysis of terrorist organizations' use of shame can, and should, be conducted on both the individual and group level. Individual and collective experiences of shame are easily exploitable by those seeking to affix an entitative identity onto as many recruits as possible. The nexus between shame's concern over others' perception of one's self and the role groups play in protecting the self through affiliation with an identity group that provides the individual with a positive association, suggest a widespread presence of the use of shame in individuals' pursuit of a group identity which may affirm their worldview, and the use of shame to increase the group's identity narrative in a radical context.[53]

Uncertainty-identity theory provides a strong conceptualization of the relationship between shame and "motivational underpinnings of social identity processes."[54] Because uncertainty is an aversive sentiment, it motivates one to take action at reducing uncertainty, particularly those uncertainties that relate to the self.[55] Most notably, attachment to entitative groups (a pure representation of the ingroup identity) present a clear resolution to the uncertainty of the self's categorization within the social sphere.[56] These narratives seek to dismiss those within the ingroup that would, if given the proper platform or enough power, dismantle the entitative argument of the terrorist organization.

This is remarkably like the action tendencies of shame, which seek to reduce uncertainty over the potential publicization of moral transgressions and the effect that may have on one's social standing.[57] Because shame is a cognitive emotion that requires self-reflection, when narratives that seek to force a dichotomous identity upon an ingroup emerge from terrorist organizations, an unconscious or conscious questioning of an individual's sense of attachment to the shared identity will occur, particularly if they center on morality and norm violation.[58] In such circumstances, when one perceives the ingroup as having positive moral value, adopting those values may provide an avenue to resolve the uncertainty the moral shaming instigated. However, complete avoidance of the shame will likely occur among those that are more concerned with their social image rather than the violation of the moral norm.[59]

Shame Narratives

Additionally, radicalization narratives are not only meant to attract people who are already sympathetic to a terrorist cause but are also meant to divide populations into two groups: sympathizers (and thus potential recruits) and apostates. Apostates, or those who reject the moral identity of the entitative group, thus serve the terrorist agenda by providing a foil against which organizations can attach a negative image to that which threatens the entitative identity they promote. The goal of shame, to distance one's self from social pain, thus presents terrorist organizations with a strong tool of societal division, particularly when attached to an entitative narrative.[60] Once the societal division has been established, norm violation narratives become an even more effective tool, particularly if the entitative group utilizes previously shared identity factors like a shared religious or nationalist outlook. In situations where identity is multifaceted, such as religio-nationalist or ethno-nationalist, the effectiveness of shame-based entitative group narratives may be particularly pronounced.

In addition to shame's ingroup role in identification with entitative groups, its relation to norm regulation exposes how radical narratives may find footholds in otherwise 'normal' individuals and inoculate communities. The method by which terrorist organizations can utilize shame for norm regulation depends on how the narrative is framed within societies.[61] Examples of these types of narratives exist in *jihadist* framings of conflicts wherein the concept of the global *ummah* is evoked as a blanket identity for all Muslims, whereby anyone who

does not seek to act in its protection against aggressors are considered inferior Muslims and possibly apostates. Such narratives may evoke a sense of failure of the self within recipients of the message because much of the narrative is rooted in an already shared worldview via vessels like Quranic texts, shame's typical goals of distancing become difficult if not impossible to achieve without also rejecting the stable self. Thus, it is entirely possible that an acceptance of the radical narrative becomes easier than rejecting the stable aspects of the self that is deemed to be a failure, thus fulfilling the action tendencies of shame through an unexpected pathway.

Importantly, the application of entitative, or vanguard, narratives to encourage popular support of a more radical identity is not confined to the Islamic world's internal *jihadist* challenge to the Muslim identity. Like shame itself, entitative and vanguard narratives are found across most forms of social movements and extremist entities. For example, extreme Israeli settler factions have long utilized a similar narrative that seeks to diminish the majority of the Israeli populace who do not support a stronger adherence to the Greater Land of Israel ideology. Shame is applied in their invocation of narratives that the Government of Israel will at times act as a Nazi-esque regime bent on preventing the 'true' Jewish nation from emerging.[62]

Additionally, in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, various shame-incidents are routinely evoked by both sides in their cultural framing of the necessity for in-group adherence and promotion. From the Palestinian side, the Nakba (the great tragedy and failure to stop expulsion of Arabs at the hands of the Zionists) continues to justify a strong ingroup defense against the 'other' (Israeli Zionists) which subjected the ingroup to a shameful status.[63] The shame in this instance is a failure to be strong enough to stop the tragedy that befell those who shared the ingroup identity. Radicalizing narratives thus attempt to capitalize on this open sore by stating that a stronger, more self-sufficient Palestinian effort is required to atone for this past failure. Most importantly, anyone who disagree with this approach can be shamed as 'collaborators' or 'sympathizers' with the Israelis.

On the other side of the conflict, Israeli settlers use similar narrative ploys to exploit nearly identical shame-incidents. In Hebron, the 1929 massacre continues to serve as a recruitment and radicalization agent for individuals to justify aggressive activities that fit a minimal definition of radical behavior.[64] What we can infer from the actions taken is that these individuals have accepted the worldviews on both sides that they must act to atone for past failures of the collective self to prevent an incident from occurring. Failure to have been prepared for the event is a failure internally and collectively, and, as suggested by Tracy & Robins, the shame of the event is shifted almost simultaneously into an anger at an outgroup.[65] While studies have examined these types of incidents and grievances from the perspective of a humiliation motivation, there is a need to look deeper as these types of events. This suggests a longer impact on the individual(s) and thus constitutes an emotional sentiment rather than a discrete emotional response to a specific event or recurring events.[66]

Moreover, these group-based expressions of shame run parallel to individual capabilities to experience shame over the same issues, and both act as norm regulators by rejecting individual failure to adhere to the belief as incompatible with what constitutes a proper Palestinian or Israeli outlook. Additionally, these narratives serve as bulwarks against perceived threats against the ingroup's identity and thus against the norms and values to which they adhere.[67] For those who identify as Israeli, rejection by other Israelis for not supporting the idea that Jews should live in Biblical Jewish lands can lead to the appraisal that they will experience social pain should that opinion be made public. Equally, Palestinians who do not share the belief in the so-called "right to return" may asses that the social pain associated with publicization of their disagreement will be met with ostracization. Ultimately, both sides may find that agreeing with the narrative, or saying nothing at all, is easier than attempting to debate the topic internally, which may bring down social repercussions. While these cases are not the same in terms of degree to terrorist organizational uses of shame, they demonstrate how communal beliefs can justify adoption of more extreme narratives.

Shame as a Terrorist Tool

In further exploring the social devaluation aspect of shame, we can look at efforts like *jihadist's da'wa* recruitment. In the United Kingdom, the al-Muhajiroun network's (and its successors') street *da'wa* recruitment efforts offer a unique opportunity to examine the application of shame in recruitment and radicalization efforts. Al-Muhajiroun embraces a stringent entitative narrative of ingroup-outgroup conflict between Islam and the West. [68] The commitment to the identity extends beyond words through physical appearances which signify a 'true' Muslim, such as traditional Islamic garb, beards, and other items which essentially create an easily identifiable uniform of the adherent Muslim. Furthermore, according to al-Muhajiroun, true Islam is incompatible with secular nationalism, and thus any Muslim that claims to be British cannot also be a true Muslim, and thus is inferior to the al-Muhajiroun's members. Such a challenge to the stable self will drive uncertainty, and even the slightest uncertainty can cognitively open the recipients to doubts about their own worldview.[69]

The organization's action repertoire utilizes a street-level peer-to-peer advocacy for their radical worldview and identity.[70] By challenging people in the streets with their bullhorn style of proselytizing, al-Muhajiroun's agents thrust the exposed individual into a reflection of the self. Peer devaluation and social pain is not a potential in these circumstances, but is instead immediate and unavoidable given the intimacy of the encounters, decreasing options to achieve shame's goal orientations such as distancing, removal and avoidance.[71]

As evidenced by watching the al-Muhajiroun network's online *da'wa* videos, most targets of the network's proselytizing will slide by and avoid any confrontation, clearly uncomfortable with the brazen display of radical perceptions which deeply contradict British norms and values. For those passersby who are Muslim and identify more strongly with a pluralistic British-Muslim identity, perceptions of how most British citizens view al-Muhajiroun's representation of Muslims may evoke a sense of shame for being associated with such perverted understandings of what constitutes a 'true' Muslim, and may lead to disengagement and unwillingness to challenge the al-Muhajiroun activists. In contemporary thinking of radicalization wherein the narrative failed to attract support, this would preclude the street *da'wa* as a success. However, when we consider that shame can act as a mechanism to both attract and push away people, such brazen and aggressive narratives actually benefit the organizational needs of groups like al-Muhajiroun. Essentially, if such efforts by al-Muhajiroun yield one recruit out of every 50 people that walk by, they have also created 49 individuals who aren't actively banding together against their narrative to the product al-Muhajiroun's members are selling.[72] This is a crucial victory for entitative groups, as overcoming their relative weakness as a minority status is their greatest challenge.

Framing Shame

To understand how to analyze shame within the radicalization process, it is important to understand the benefit of emotions-based narrative framing. Hafez's case study highlights the use of emotional narratives within Iraq to mobilize recruits into conducting suicide bombings on behalf of terrorist organizations.[73] Hitting the nail on the head, Hafez explains how these narratives "exaggerate mistreatment of women and appeal to the masculinity of men" to shame them into action.[74] Suicide bombers, were given an elevated status of "extraordinary moral beings who make the ultimate sacrifice" on behalf of the greater in-group identity, the Muslim nation.[75]

The organizations Hafez highlighted in his study used narratives like global persecution of Muslims by Western "crusaders," failures of Muslim governments to protect against these persecutions (as well as their complicity in the persecutions), and the promotion of the martyrdom of Muslims that have fought and sacrificed themselves to protect the ingroup identity.[76] The purpose is to "weave together these three narratives to suggest a deleterious condition that requires immediate action, offer an explanation of the causes of this persistent condition, and present the necessary solution to overcome the problem."[77] Hafez argues that "humiliation is at the heart of the mobilizing narratives of insurgents" due to imagery that highlights violations of Iraqi and Muslim norms (i.e., deaths of their women and children, the fall of the Iraqi government, military targeting of mosques during prayers, U.S. soldiers shooting or denigrating Iraqi insurgents by stepping on their backs,

and more).[78] Furthermore, Hafez asserts that these images are designed to "personalize the suffering and heighten the sense of powerlessness and indignations that many Muslims feel."[79] Such narratives are the gold standard in understanding how uncertainty over one's status quo can be pushed toward radical worldviews through shame-inducing imagery and framings.

What Hafez describes is a clear attempt to manipulate the emotional sentiment of shame within the Iraqi and broader Muslim identity. Moreover, Hafez highlights a specific hymn that is chanted in insurgent videos which states:

> With the Sharp Weapon of Truth
>
> We will liberate the lands of the free
>
> And bring back purity to the land of Jerusalem
>
> After the humiliation and shame. [80]

What is abundantly clear from this passage and the study conducted by Hafez on the role that framing plays in radicalization efforts by terrorist organizations, is the direct and intentional use of shame as a mobilizing and radicalizing agent. The study also highlights the use of entitative narratives which promote ingroup divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims, and labels Iraqi security forces as "collaborators" of the American forces.[81]

Shame's Role in Justifying Violence

Lastly, in tackling the potential link between shame and the justification for violence, scholarly efforts should turn to theories such as the *shame-rage spiral* for explanation.[82] Through its combination with framing narratives, this theory may shed light on how terrorist organizations can condition an ingroup to be accepting of violent actions to alleviate or preempt the social pain that could emerge in an 'other'-imposed shame incident. Doojse et al. assert that virtually all ingroups perceive themselves as morally superior and when threats manifest against that superiority, it could provoke a feeling of shame, making it easier to cognitively accept violence to forcibly reject the perceived threat.[83]

Additionally, long-term collective shame sentiments framed by terrorist organizations, such as the ineptness of Muslim regimes in protecting their land against Western invasions, present particularly rich mines of emotive sentiment to draw upon for mobilizing individuals towards radical states and a willingness to justify violence. Failures that are transformed into external blame may become a source of anger that is prompted by an effort to internally escape the necessary self-reflection to process the shame event that is occurring.[84] Prolonged exposure to shame may lead to shame proneness within affected communities and increased "anger arousal, irritability, and indirect hostility."[85] As of yet, there remains no indication that this shamed into anger state of mind may lead to direct aggression, though it does suggest that individuals suffering from a shame-anger emotional state could be more susceptible to narratives which help direct blame of negative events to external targets.

In terms of jihadist radicalization, narratives that seek to establish a defensive jihad justification may declare the need to deploy violent tactics or intimidation tactics in preemption of another Western effort that could bring shame upon Islam or Muslims globally. By asking the global *ummah* to mobilize, these narratives seek to cast those who do not act as complicit in perpetuating shame upon the collective Muslim identity. The connection between the long-term stable self's failure to adhere to expected norms of collective defense of the broader ingroup identity and the entitative identity narrative provide terrorist organizations with an immensely influential tool. This may also explain why previous radicalization models portray the increasing assumption of the entitative identity and actions in its defense as a deterministic pathway to terror.

In a stark example of how shame-based activities and narratives can influence individual actions, al-Mahjiroun was linked ideologically to the murderers of British soldier Lee Rigby. Both attackers, Michael Adebowale and Michael Adebolajo, had attended al-Mahjiroun rallies and demonstrations.[86] Adebolajo, it was later revealed, received direct tutoring from Omar Bakri Mohammad, the founder of al-Muhjiroun.[87] One of the issues that motivated the recent convert to Islam, according to Bakri Mohammad, was the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by American-led Western forces.[88] Narrative calls to defend against the West's invasion of those two countries are in no short supply, and there is a strong likelihood that the oft-angered Adebolajo was struggling with the shame surrounding the injustices he perceived associated with those invasions. Many others like Adebolajo exist, and not just in the context of jihadism. Shame is a universal emotion and its study within radicalization should extend to other radicalization case studies, especially those that can be described as attitudinal radicalization, wherein justification of violence is accepted, but the use of violence has not yet materialized.[89]

Conclusion

This search for a hidden underlying factor that may predispose some individuals and communities to radicalization narratives has identified shame, a self-conscious emotion which manifests itself unconsciously at times, as a potential missing link in more upstream aspects of process-based radicalization models.

In addition, it is distinctly possible that individuals and communities routinely exposed to compelling shame narratives and events may carry with them an emotional sentiment of shame that exists more persistently than the discrete emotional experiences a single event may evoke. This persistent emotional predisposition can be kindling for terrorist organizations keen on exploiting cultural, religious and political shifts. For example, in looking beyond the case of al-Muhajiroun to other circumstances of recent domestic radicalization challenges, long-term shame sentiments may play a role in understanding the phenomena of second and third generation extremism in European countries such as France and Belgium, two countries recently beset by waves of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Muslims with an immigration background in their families. To uncover the impact of long-term shame narratives on radicalization, future research should employ empirical assessments of outlets like al Qaeda's *Inspire* and the Islamic State's *Dabiq* magazines to assess how shame is situated and exploited in the texts. Additionally, examinations of prominent radicalizers like Anwar al-Awlaki's statements for shame narratives could provide more robust support to the theoretical connections suggested in this article.

Most critically, future research should not shy away from expanding the role of shame beyond the immediate threats posed by *jihadist* terrorist organizations, as shame's universal presence suggests a broader role in political extremism for this taboo emotion. The rise of right-wing nationalist groups and political parties expressing their own distinct identity as a justification for expelling or maligning those they deem unfit to be part of the community and therefore generally acceptable, should place shame firmly in the exploration of emotional mechanisms which attract, mobilize and then exploit people through radicalization. In addition, future research should also examine, in tandem, shame's paired emotion – pride. Perceptions of ingroup superiority should not be separated from perceptions of shame. If at one end of a pendular spectrum exists the complete withdrawal from a shared identity due to shame, the other end logically would be the complete attachment to a collective identity due to pride. The two should be explored together and in their interactions.

In conclusion, some terrorist organizations have knowingly, and others perhaps unknowingly, utilized this extremely powerful emotional taboo to exploit societal schisms and drive recruitment and radicalization. Shame gives these organizations a lever to cognitively break into their self and open them up for their radical narrative. Framing conflicts or an 'other' as a perpetrator of routine and historic injustices against the society can create a sense of failure of the stable self for not doing more to protect the in-group image and allow for externalization of blame and anger. Moreover, targeted messaging and personal interactions are heightened in their narrative ploys when shame is deployed via peer devaluation, the core tenet of shame's aversion tendency. In sum, shame deserves a more central place in explanations of both individual and collective radicalization.

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Notes

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[74] Ibid.

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