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**Course: Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security  
and Combating Nuclear Terrorism**

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## Introduction

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. It dates back to XIX century when first terrorist activities were taking place, such as of Narodnaya Volia in Russia. At the same time it is new in some sense due to its new face in the second half of the XX century. First, it became international employing new tactics of hijacking planes and simultaneously, thus, bringing attention of the international community to the phenomenon. Especially tremendous effect on the attention of the international community has had 9/11 attacks due to the attack on the symbols of the world hegemon, the US.

Second, terrorism increased significantly in terms of incidents. As Terrorism Information Centre indicates there has occurred over 20 000 terrorism incidents since 1968 (since the first hijacking of airplane) (Terrorism Information Centre, Terrorism events and activities, <http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/Terrorist-Events.asp>).

These developments inevitably raised an interest of scholars as well. Scholars started researching the phenomenon of terrorism from different angles. Basically they approached terrorism from 3 points. They are individual psychology, group psychology and political account.

This research paper takes two case studies – ETA and Al-Qaida – to test hypothesis of individual psychology, group psychology and political account. It argues that terrorism is a political phenomenon and that it should be analyzed from political level and not from individual or group level.

According to the raised goals and arguments the structure of the research paper is as follows:

First, chapter 1 to chapter 3 it reviews literature that has been done on the topic of terrorism. Chapter 1 analyzes approach to terrorism from individual psychology level, its insights and shortcomings. Chapter 2 explains group psychology approach and its deficiencies. Chapter 3 reviews political approach.

Second, chapter 4 analyzes biography and childhood of Osama bin Laden in terms of Erikson development stages to test hypothesis provided by individual psychology account.

Third, chapter 5 reviews the development of the group of ETA and Al-Qaida in order to highlight key factors influencing the formation of those groups.

Forth, chapter 6 analyzes and compares ETA with Al-Qaida to test the hypothesis of group psychology account.

Fifth, chapter 7 compares ETA and Al-Qaida to test hypothesis of political approach to terrorism.

## 1. Terrorism: individual psychology account

Post, professor of psychiatry at George Washington University and a former CIA personality profiler, applying early psychoanalytic studies, argued that terrorists suffer from partial or fragmented identity and that political violence derives from individual's search for identity (Arena & Arrigo, 2005, p. 486). Although he admitted there was no set terrorist type, he still argued that most often terrorists had 'splitting' personality (Cameron, 2005, p. 19). That means that these people have experienced psychological damage during childhood, they have a damaged self-image and never reconcile good and bad aspects of their nature, separating it into what 'is me' and what 'is not me', blaming others for their weaknesses (Cameron, 2005, p. 19). 'I am not guilty' is the way they are able to justify their actions. This kind of justification certainly makes them easier to act violently.

Shaw furthered Post's insights providing with the 'Personal Pathway Model' (Arena & Arrigo, 2005, p. 487). According to him, terrorists behaviour was the outcome of unsolved "narcissistic injuries and unexamined (and traumatic) personal setbacks" (Arena & Arrigo, 2005, p. 487). Similarly with Post, Shaw explained terrorist behaviour driven by past psychological experiences. Post and Shaw insights explaining only 'splitting' personality are unable to answer the question why these individuals choose particularly terrorists' groups and not become just criminals. At this point Erikson has a more developed answer.

Erikson developed psychosocial account in explaining terrorist behaviour where identity was a key factor. Erikson argued that in order for individual to grow up into "healthy, well adjusted adult with a fully integrated personality and positive identity the person had to successfully master *crises* within each of eight stages (red. series of childhood turning points) of psychosocial development"(Arena & Arrigo, 2005, p. 486). The failure to establish "trust, autonomy, initiative, industry" would be an obstacle to find a positive identity and might lead to stage of lost and negative identity (Cameron, 2005, p. 24). The failure to achieve goals could have an impact on individual's feeling as of self-doubt, suspicion, shame, inferiority and incompetence that would again impede their achievements. Negative identity of these individuals caused by this failure would inspire

them to search for collective identity of the extremist organizations in order to search again for purpose and meaning of their lives (Arena & Arrigo, 2005, p. 486). According to Bollinger, joining terrorist group is the last effort to establish an identity; collective identity of the group will eschew them from individual responsibilities and provide with the feeling of belonging (Cameron, 2005, p. 24.). After failure to reach goals individual will prefer to be “a bad person rather than nobody”(Cameron, 2005, p. 25). The negative identity will give an incentive, according to the explanation of individual’s psychology, to join terrorist group and act violently.

Similarly Crenshaw contended that individuals are apt to join totalitarian movements because they lack of a strong sense of identity and are offered to find one in an organization’s authoritarian dogma (Arena & Arrigo, 2005, p. 486).

Although Knutson argued that negative identity is not the only factor to count for in explaining terrorists’ personality (Cameron, 2005, p. 28). Instead she stated that negative identity mirrors values obtained early in life, that it reaffirms ethnic traditions and roots (Cameron, 2005, p. 28). Moreover, she found that many terrorist were “psychologically non-violent” (Cameron, 2005, p. 23). Most of terrorists, according to her, considered terrorism as the last resort, they were trying to depart from responsibility for their actions, giving blame to situation, namely political, therefore, they were not the cause, but rather an instrument (Cameron, 2005, p. 23).

Taylor and Quayle are arguing in the similar line as Knutson. They see aggression of two types: hostile and instrumental (Cameron, 2005, p. 22). Hostile aggression was a spontaneous upsurge of emotion and anger, while an instrumental aggression was in order to reach some ends by violent means, it was planned and sought specific goal (Cameron, 2005, p. 22). Most terrorists fall under the second category. (Cameron, 2005, p. 22).

The latter two explanations are able to include key factors of terrorism phenomenon arguing that violent behaviour of terrorists is instrumental. Terrorism as a phenomenon is inevitably political in its aims and motives. Thus, it is not the random violence, aggression, but rather instrument to reach some goals.

Psychological explanations of terrorists at the individuals’ level have worth insights in analysing terrorists’ childhood and they are able to indicate certain occurring

types of personality of terrorists although not typical. Therefore, it is plausible that other factors have bigger impact in individuals' involvement in terrorism.

## **2. Terrorism: Group psychology account**

Group psychology can answer questions such as how groups are functioning, what are the pressures when you belong to the group. Terrorists as a group are not an exception. Social psychology researchers have found that people will function as a cohesive group with minimal and arbitrary communality (Steinhart, 2005, p. 10). Turner explains what happens to individual in a group: “there is a depersonalization of the self – a cognitive redefinition of the self – from unique attributes and individual differences to shared social category memberships and associated stereotypes. This process transforms individual into collective behaviour as people perceive and act in terms of a shared collective conception of self”(Steinhart, 2005, p. 10). The process of depersonalization of an individual at some point is the key element in explaining violence. Terrorist, belonging to the group, accepts collective behaviour that depersonalizes him. Thus for terrorist it is easier to commit violence act since it represents collective conception and collective behaviour rather than individual. It departs the comprehension of a violent act as individual responsibility. Violence becomes collective responsibility that is no one's individually, but that of group.

The collective that is formed “top-down” by elite and authority is another plausible insight in explanation of violence. The leader of the group who is condemning individual could also explain behaviour of individual terrorist. “Individual terrorist looks like an instrument without own will, who may be sent to give up his or her own life for the aims of the terrorist leader”(Pittel & Rubbelke, 2005, p. 312). The leader of the terrorist group can enhance an individual terrorist's feeling of belongingness to the group by adjusting external circumstances (strengthening of group's beliefs by isolating individual terrorists from the larger society) and also the leader can increase the effectiveness of terrorist activities by promoting goals of the terrorist group (Pittel & Rubbelke, 2005, p.p. 313-314). Consequently, this will construct group's pressure on the individual terrorist and will limit his or her freedom of action. Terrorist will feel greater

loyalty to the group and that would mean that once he or she is asked to commit a violent act the established pressure of the group and leader would create an obstacle not to do so.

Cameron statement supports this: “The decision by an individual to use violence is not a sudden one. The progression of violence occurred only after the individual had passed a number of tests of their commitment to the group and their willingness to conform within it”(Cameron, 2005, p. 35). Crenshaw argues that the decision to resort to violence is an outcome of belonging to the group; the choice is being made between committing the violent act or leaving the group; and the latter choice is less feasible because once the terrorist joined the group he or she realizes psychological difficulty to “go back”(Cameron, 2005, p. 36).

The point here is that the decision to join extremist group, that terrorist groups are, alienates individual terrorist from the outside group society. This makes complicated to go back to the society and instead of doing so increases the feeling of belongingness to the terrorist group. In this case group thinking becomes overwhelming especially when the group is the last resort for the individual to gain an identity after unsuccessful attempts to reach personal achievements in his or her life.

Not only pressure established by the belongingness to the group forces to violent acts but also the competition within the group. Zawodny states that individuals compete for peer approval and therefore may seek to offer the greater level of violence to show the loyalty to the group (Cameron, 2005, p. 51).

Galvin argues that this competition is even stronger among women because they feel the need of approval not only as members of the group but also approval as not inferior than men; thus, they might produce even greater violence than men (Cameron, 2005, p. 51).

To test hypothesis of group psychology account collective conception, collective behaviour and collective responsibility as well as role of leadership in the groups need to be analyzed in the case study of ETA and Al-Qaida.



### **3. Terrorism: Political approach**

Psychological approach is insufficient to explain terrorism because it is not random violence, exposure of aggression of an individual. It is very well planned, has its own strategy and tactics that are chosen in the calculus of target. Terrorism as a phenomenon is inevitably political in its aims and motives.

Knutson argued that negative identity is not the only factor to count for in explaining terrorists' personality (Cameron, 2005, p. 28). Instead she stated that negative identity mirrors values obtained early in life, that it reaffirms ethnic traditions and roots (Cameron, 2005, p. 28). Moreover, she found that many terrorist were "psychologically non-violent" (Cameron, , p. 23). Most of terrorists, according to her, considered terrorism as the last resort, they were trying to depart from responsibility for their actions, giving blame to situation, namely political, therefore, they were not the cause, but rather an instrument (Cameron, 2005, p. 23).

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All terrorist groups have their ultimate goals, its strategic goals and tactical goals (Cameron, 2005, p. 58). Terrorist employ tactics that are consonant with their overriding political objectives (Hoffman, 2006, p. 229). Thus, rationality is characteristic to terrorist activities: they choose targets correspondingly to their political objectives (at least targets are symbolic if not directly connected with political goals), they seek publicity in order to intimidate and reach their political goals. It is common for all terrorist groups try to achieve the following objectives through their violent act: attention (attract media in order to get attention on them and their cause); acknowledgment (acknowledgment in the

agenda of state or international community, support of their cause); recognition (recognition of their rights); authority (seek authority to change government or society); governance (having acquired authority, terrorists seek to consolidate their direct and complete control over state, people) (Hoffman, 2006, p. 255).

## **4. Osama bin Laden: biography and childhood**

In order to test hypothesis of individual psychology account it is essential to review biography of terrorist and analyze his childhood experiences. The following subchapters review biography of Osama bin Laden and analyze his childhood in terms of Erikson's eight development stages.

### ***4.1. Osama Bin Laden: biography\****

Osama Bin Laden was born in 1957 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. His father was a wealthy businessman who had close ties with Saudi royal family. The father had very dominating personality. He insisted to keep all his children in one premises. He had a tough discipline and observed all the children with strict religious and social code. He maintained a special daily program and obliged his children to follow. At the same time the father was entertaining with trips to the sea and desert. He dealt with his children as big men and demanded them to show confidence at young age. He was very keen not to show any difference in the treatment of his children. His father died when Osama bin Laden was 11 (in 1968). He inherited millions.

His mother divorced with Osama bin Laden's father and he grew up with a new mother's husband and 4 step siblings. Bin Laden was raised as a devout Sunni Muslim. He was an indulged child and had the best education available in Saudi Arabia. From 1968 to 1976 he attended the prestigious secular Al-Thager Model School. He graduated

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\* A Biography of Osama bin Laden, based on facts provided by:  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/bio.html>  
Richey, Warren, Bowers, Faye, Christian Science Monitor, A look inside bin Laden's web of Islamic 'warriors.' 08827729, 9/19/2001, Vol. 93, Issue 207

from King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah in 1979 with a degree in civil engineering. Other sources state that he has obtained degree in public administration in 1981.

At secondary school and university he adopted the main trend of many educated Muslims at that time, Muslim Brotherhood. There was a collection of Muslim scholars in Jeddah and Mecca at that period. There was nothing extraordinary in his personality and that trend was rather very non-confrontational. Interestingly, the 1980 raid in the Grand Mosque in Mecca was not appealing to him, neither the theology nor that group. He had two distinguished teachers in Islamic studies, which was a compulsory subject in the university. First was Abdullah Azzam who became later as one of the big names in Afghanistan and the second was Mohammed Quttub, a famous Islamic writer and philosopher.

In terms of personality, bin Laden is described as a modest, soft-spoken, mild mannered man. At the same time he is considered as a man of tremendous charisma.

#### ***4.2. Osama bin Laden: childhood***

Psychoanalytical as well as psychosocial studies refer to childhood experiences as the key factor influencing the choice to join the terrorist groups. Psychoanalytical approach points splitting personality and psychosocial approach stresses negative identity as the result of some outcome of damage experienced in childhood. Therefore, this section analyzes Osama bin Laden's childhood to identify the impact or non-impact of his childhood experiences in his choice to lead a terrorist group.

Ted Goertzel, the professor of Sociology at Rutgers University at Camden, in the description of Osama bin Laden's childhood (based on Adam Robinson's, journalist, book *Bin Laden: Behind the mask of the terrorist*) makes the following points: "Osama bin Laden's father had 54 children, more or less, born of 10 or 11 wives. The competition for father's, Mohammed bin Laden's, attentions was fierce, and family members generally idealized him."; "By the time Osama was born, his mother, Hamida, was ostracized by the other women (red. wives of Mohammed bin Laden). They referred to her as "the slave," in reference to her resentment of her status. Osama was known by the nickname, "son of the slave.""; "Osama bin Laden was raised largely by nurses and

nannies. The label "son of a slave" never left him, and he was shy and generally rejected by his brothers.”; “The relationship with his father was probably the most important thing in Osama's life as a young boy, and he felt abandoned when his father died in a helicopter crash”; “The household was dispersed, and he was sent to live with his mother, whom he hardly knew. He felt more and more that he was the black sheep, the only victim of the dispersal of the family. His mother tried to reach out to him, but he kept his distance. Within a few months, there was almost no interaction between them.”; “He overcame his shyness and learned to make friends with young men outside the family. He was a bright child, and was eager to excel in school work, including Islamic studies and memorizing large passages from the Koran.”(Goertzel, 2002, from: <http://crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/osama.htm>).

These points might have crucial impact on Osama bin Laden’s personality and his choice but need to be considered very carefully. The very first point Goertzel makes is that Osama bin Laden has been grown up among many siblings (54) and has lacked father’s attention and care. The interpretation that Osama bin Laden felt abandoned because of this might be misleading. This interpretation might be applied in interpretation of a personality of someone from Western culture, where monogamy is institutionalized and ordinary family’s children numbers 1 to 2. The same interpretation is questionable when the case is the culture where polygamy is institutionalized and ordinary family has many children. Therefore, the conclusion might be misleading. The situation might not necessary mean that Osama bin Laden has felt abandoned.

To interpret events that happened in Osama bin Laden’s childhood Erikson’s development stages might be employed. More detailed Erikson’s psychosocial development stages are as follows: *Infant*: trust vs mistrust (needs maximum comfort with minimum uncertainty to trust himself/herself, others and the environment); *Toddler*: autonomy vs shame and doubt (works to master physical environment while maintaining self-esteem); *Preschooler*: initiative vs guilt (begins to initiate, not imitate activities; develops conscience and sexual identity); *School age child*: industry vs inferiority (tries to develop a sense of self-worth by refining skills); *Adolescent*: identity vs role confusion (tries integrating many roles such as child, sibling, student, athlete, worker, into a self image under role model and peer pressure); *Young adult*: intimacy vs isolation (learns to

make personal commitment to another as spouse, parent or partner); *Middle age adult*: generativity vs stagnation (seeks satisfaction through productivity, career, family and civic interests); *Older adult*: integrity vs despair (reviews life accomplishments, deals with loss and preparation for death) (Erikson's development stages, from: <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/erikson.htm>). Indeed, the latter two stages refers to mature age of an individual therefore are not that relevant to analyze since the formation of positive vs negative identity occurs in the childhood that refers to first 4 stages.

The comments made by Adam Robinson on Osama bin Laden's childhood basically refer to the Toddler development stage where child develops either autonomy or shame and doubt and that is dependent on the situation. Osama bin Laden was called "son of the slave" and rejected by his brothers, he also did not know his mother that well. This situation certainly might have had an impact on the formation of shame and doubt and thus on the unsuccessful so called crisis management. Although it is necessary to notice here that information is based on interviews with Osama bin Laden's family and that it might not fully reflect what has Osama bin Laden himself felt about this situation.

Despite that Osama bin Laden might have suffered shame and doubt due to the rejection of his brothers, the next stage of School age child shows positive developments. He made friends at school, he involved in the Brotherhood activities where he studied Islam. Therefore, it might be interpreted that Osama bin Laden was able to overcome shyness and develop self-worth through processing skills gained at school and the Brotherhood activities, such as good knowledge of Islam.

It is very difficult to judge whether Osama bin Laden developed a negative identity according to the criteria provided by Erikson because at some stage he seemed to have shame and in another seemed to overcome it. Therefore analysis of Osama bin Laden's childhood according to Erikson's development stages does not bring to the conclusion that he has developed negative identity. Moreover, the experiences in childhood of Osama bin Laden are described by the other parties, not by himself and this makes difficult to evaluate how he has felt really – rejected, shamed or anything else. Thus, psychological explanation of terrorism is not convincing. It is plausible that his

experiences in Afghanistan, reflections of the US policy in the Middle East have had a greater impact on his decision rather than the experiences of the childhood.

## **5. ETA and Al-Qaida: Development**

The following two subchapters analyze the formation of ETA and Al-Qaida, highlight key factors that have influenced the establishment of these terrorist groups, and also activities, goals of these groups.

### ***5.1. ETA: Formation***<sup>o</sup>

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), that stands for Basque Homeland and Freedom, was established in 1952 due to the harsh regime of Francisco Franco towards Basque people during and after the Spanish Civil War.

Independent movement for Basque promoted by ETA became more radicalized (first killings took place) in 1968 as ETA experienced more pressure from Spanish authorities, particularly the police (Guardia Civil). Some people of ETA were killed by the Spanish authorities and that escalated further violence of ETA: they started targeting people of Franco regime and the ones who gave pressure on ETA. In 1973 they killed Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco who suppose to succeed Franco and continue his policy. Over the years ETA has tried to kill even the King Juan Carlos. More recently they have targeted politicians, reporters, businessmen who refused to pay their extortion demands, and increasingly, the public at large since there has been more pressure on ETA from the Spanish and French governments. It attempted bombings at the international airports in Spain, underground parking at the airport in 2001.

Although Basque was granted certain autonomy in 1978 constitution of Spain, violence of ETA continued. After Spain moved to democracy and oppression of the regime on Basque nationalism has gone, ETA lost its social support but continued

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<sup>o</sup> Dates and facts are based on:  
Shepard, W.S. (2002) The ETA: Spain fights Europe's last active terrorist group. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 54-68.

violence. Between 1998 and 1999 ETA ceased fire but after killings of some its members it ended cease-fire and started killings again in 2000: car bombs outside Madrid departments, airports.

In March, 2006, ETA announced cease-fire but it lasted only until the end of that year, in December it put a bomb in the parking place of Madrid's Barajas international airport. ETA claimed that the latter armed attack did not intend to kill someone, that it was government's fault that it did not evacuated airport. ETA in June, 2007, announced the end of the cease-fire. It put a bomb under the car of bodyguard in October, 2007.

It is worth to highlight that facts reveal that ETA violence rate has been dependent on the non-support levels by regional and federal parties in local and federal government, respectively. The greater pressure was made on ETA the greater violence it escalated. Thus, its actions have ratio calculus.

The ETA is thought to be run by a three-man executive committee. There are thought to be two hundred active ETA members and a support network of two thousand people. People who vote for Euskal Herritarok party in regional elections are considered as ETA sympathisers.

The ETA finances itself through extortion, kidnappings, and the forced payments what is called "revolutionary taxes".

The ETA strategy in its armed struggle seemed to have evolved over years. Although the oppression of Franco regime has gone, ETA still positioned itself as terrorist group carrying violence acts in and outside Basque region, but it refrains from mass murders. It is also looking for publicity.

The ETA's political goals that were declared in 1995 in their Democratic Alternative publication are: right to self-determination for Basques, amnesty for all militants, respect for the processes going on in Basque, and once these requirements fulfilled ETA has promised cease-fire.

The ETA employs tactics such as car bombings, killings (by shooting), anonymous threats, extortion, kidnappings.

## 5.2. Al-Qaida: Formation\*

Al-Qaida, that means *The Base*, is an international terror organization founded in 1988 and headed by Osama bin Laden that provides training camps, financing, planning, recruitment, and other support services for fighters seeking to strike at the United States. He established Al Qaida after his involvement in Afghanistan war in 1979. According to Post, he organized Jihad against the Soviets and at that time he was not opposing the US but he changed his opinion when he returned home due to the US interference in the affairs of the Middle East and especially about its support to Israel and opposition to Palestine question. Therefore, in the early 1990s Osama bin Laden called for guerilla attacks on the US troops in Saudi Arabia and by 1998 he radicalized the line calling for indiscriminate attacks on American civilians everywhere in the world.

Al Qaida's objectives, therefore, is to end foreign influence, namely the US, in the Middle East as well as establishment of Islamic states, capture of Jarusalem.

Structurally Al Qaida is the loosely knit organization (highly decentralized). Osama bin Laden is considered as an inspirational leader. Under him is a board of directors composed of trusted soldiers who fought with him in Afghanistan. They would number hundreds and their role is recruitment and supervision missions (cells of three people: surveillance of and intended target, making bomb, clean up). There are other soldiers who carry non decision-making assignments.

Tactics employed by Al Qaida include suicide attacks and simultaneous bombings of different targets, hijacking, kidnapping.

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\* Dates and facts based on:  
Richey, Warren, Bowers, Faye, Christian Science Monitor. A look inside bin Laden's web of Islamic 'warriors.'08827729, 9/19/2001, Vol. 93, Issue 207  
CRS Report for Congress: Al Qaeda statements and evolving ideology, 2007, retrieved from:  
[www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL32759.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL32759.pdf)



## **6. ETA and Al Qaida: Group psychology account**

Group psychology theories introduce the terms such as collective self perception, collective behaviour, collective responsibility that establish in the group while simultaneously depersonalizing an individual. This chapter analyzes how and how successful collective self perception, collective behaviour, collective responsibility are created by ETA and Al Qaida.

Al Qaida sees itself as the representative of all Muslims who in its view constitute one indivisible entity (Schweitzer & Ferber, 2005, p. 16). This is one of the components of the collective identity of the group. It can be said that religion as an identity is a powerful tool that creates collective among numbers of people.

ETA in this regard can be reasonably said has less powerful tool because it appeals to Basque people who are much less in numbers than identity appeal to all Muslims.

Another point to analyze is to see how depersonalization process occurs in the case of ETA and in Al Qaida. The unifying ideology of Al Qaida's members has been developed during the Afghanistan war, even before the organization was established. The unifying idea was the concept of jihad in the path of Allah against the enemy, it was considered that Christian empire attempted to conquer Muslim lands with its inhabitants (Schweitzer & Ferber, 2005, p. 25). The same idea to defend Muslims around the world from the interference, particularly the US, was developed in Al Qaida group. Another ideological concept which is very important to Al Qaida group is istishhad that means sacrifice of one's life in the name of Allah. Jihad and Islamic martyrdom are two concepts of this group that stands as faith to the group (Schweitzer & Ferber, 2005, p. 26). These two concepts that form faith to the group are depersonalization tools of an individual, respectively. Thus Al Qaida has powerful religious tools to create collective identity and depersonalize an individual.

Whereas ETA lacks deep ideological concepts to produce deep faith to the group and, thus depersonalization. It is a secular group that seeks independence of Basque country. Secular tools of the faith to the group is less powerful that religious ones as it is the case with Al Qaida. This is reflected by the tactics employed by ETA group. This

group does not use suicide bombing that requires sacrifice of an individual. It is not seeking mass destruction. Therefore it is less able in comparison with Al Qaida to establish deep faith to the group, very strong collective identity, etc.

Bruce Hoffman, a professor at Georgetown University, Senior Fellow at US Military Academy, Corporate Chair in Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency and director of the RAND Corporation's Washington, D.C. office, states that religious and secular terrorists have very different perception of themselves and their violent acts, the former sees themselves not as the part of the system worth preserving but as 'outsiders' seeking fundamental changes in the existing order, while the latter regard its violence as means to change the flaw in the system but still operates in this system (Hoffman, 2006, p. 89). In this regard, ETA's acts are directed to change the deficiencies of the system while operating within it (separation of Basque country from the rest of Spain) and crucial is that once these deficiencies are corrected the group will cease to exist. Its justification of actions and objectives are secular, political. While Al Qaida forms religious justification for action and has political goals. In the latter case religious justification makes members of the group outsiders of the system and that has an influence not only to the collective identity but also to the perception of individual-collective responsibility.

In general, all terrorist do not call themselves as terrorist and that shows that they try to depart from individual responsibility for their actions. Terrorist see themselves as reluctant warriors, driven by desperation and lacking any viable alternative to violence against a repressive state, a predatory rival ethnic or nationalistic group, or an unresolved international order (Hoffman, 2006, p. 22). In this regards, ETA terrorists see themselves as fighters for the independence of Basque country and against oppressive and unfair regime of Spanish authorities towards Basque people, especially during the Franco rule. ETA terrorist treating himself as fighter for Basque people departs his actions from individual responsibility to collective one as that of group and for the sake of all Basque people, as well as putting blame to Spanish authorities that they do not leave another option. Similarly Al Qaida members consider themselves as representatives of all Muslim people and fighters for them against the West, particularly the US that interferes into affairs of Muslim people. Thus, the members of the group also do not take individual

responsibility, rather the collective one as the group fighting for all Muslim people. Additionally, religious justification prevailing Al Qaida's ideology enables terrorist also to depart from individual responsibility. All the actions of terrorists are justified in the name of the God Allah: "worst enemies of Allah and Allah's religion, Islam" (Schweitzer & Ferber, 2005, p. 68). Al Qaida terrorists are able to depart from individual responsibility even more than ETA terrorists because of formed stronger collective responsibility. This consequently might lead to the greater level of violence of Al Qaida group since the collective responsibility is stronger than in ETA case.

Another key element in groups is their leaders. According to the "top-down" theory leaders are the ones who push individual terrorist to commit violence. In Al Qaida case from one hand the very effective role of the leadership is diminished because of the structure itself. Al Qaida is a loosely knit type organization or in other words highly decentralized. Thus, the structure of Al Qaida neglects that the leader is the most influential factor forcing an individual terrorist to act violently. Al Qaida installed supremacy of the concept of istishhad above the leadership itself, including that of Osama bin Laden (Schweitzer & Ferber, 2005, p. 85). From the other hand, although Osama bin Laden cannot be considered as "top-down" model leader, he is still very active in strengthening the ideology of Al Qaida, namely concept of jihad and istishhad, through which individual terrorists are obliged to go for violent acts. In the recruitment they have to show alignment to the ideology, and the board of directors who are straight under Osama bin Laden have to show personal loyalty (Schweitzer & Ferber, 2005, p. 39). In other words, although it is an indirect process of leadership, it might be reasonably said that leadership is an important factor in Al Qaida.

In ETA case "top-down" type leadership might work because it is more centralized than in the case of Al Qaida. ETA is thought to be run by a three-man executive committee. Since it has been little known about the leaders of ETA it would be misleading to draw generalizations about the influence of leadership in ETA terrorist organization.

Concluding the section on terrorism in regard of group psychology there might be said that this approach is more convincing than explanation of individual psychology because it involves the greater level of observable data and, thus, greater level of

evidence. Nevertheless, group psychology account leaves a question ‘why do individuals join terrorist groups’ open because group psychology enables to explain impact on individuals when they within the group and not the decision itself to join the terrorist group.

## **7. ETA and Al Qaida: Political approach**

As it was indicated before the ETA’s political goals are: right to self-determination for Basques, amnesty for all militants, respect for the processes going on in Basque, and once these requirements fulfilled ETA has promised cease-fire.

The ETA strategy is to carry out violence acts in and outside Basque region, seek publicity to the case, but it refrains from mass murders.

The ETA employs tactics such as car bombings, killings (by shooting), anonymous threats, extortion, kidnappings.

The ETA targets are partially symbolic: in most of the cases targets are Spanish authority as the symbol of oppression, but over the years ETA also targeted non-symbolic targets – other civilians – in order to attract publicity to the case.

Al Qaida’s objectives are to end foreign influence, namely the US, in the Middle East as well as establishment of Islamic states, capture of Jerusalem as the Muslim city.

Osama bin Laden called for guerilla attacks on the US troops in Saudi Arabia and by 1998 he radicalized the line calling for indiscriminate attacks on American civilians everywhere in the world.

Tactics employed by Al Qaida include suicide attacks and simultaneous bombings of different targets, hijacking, kidnapping.

Both ETA and Al Qaida have political objectives. Despite the fact that Al Qaida involves religious justification for the violent acts its goals are obviously political. In comparison with ETA, Al Qaida has more ambitious goals: it is to remove Western influence from the Middle East, while ETA seeks only independence for the Basque country. This affects crucially their strategy and tactics. ETA needs attention of Spain, Al Qaida needs throughout the world. ETA carries out violent acts within the boundaries of Spain, while Al Qaida attacks around the world. Consequently strategical objectives

affect their tactics: the more ambitious strategy the more ambitious tactics. ETA in this regard is less ambitious than Al Qaida, it refrains from mass murders causing tactics because it needs attention within Spain. Whereas, Al Qaida, having strategic objective to attract attention of international community and affect policy of authorities of Western countries, namely the US, is apt to use tactics to be able to reach strategic objectives. Thus, it employs more destructive tactics such as suicide bombings, hijacking. Tactics that would cause low scale casualties or would be less intimidating would not attract attention of media of the world and therefore the terrorist group would not be able to achieve its objectives.

It is clear from the two case studies that terrorist groups have political objectives and according to them form their strategy. They employ tactics that is in the accordance with strategy. Rationality and instrumentality is characteristic to all the process and interaction among the level of overall objectives, strategy and tactics.

## Conclusion

This research paper reviewed three major approaches to terrorism: individual psychology, group psychology and political account. It also tested hypothesis raised by these three approaches in analysis of the case study – ETA and Al-Qaida. Based on this review and analysis it has drawn the following conclusion.

Individual psychology account that argues terrorists have mental deficiencies appeared not convincing. One of the reasons is its inability to answer the question why individuals involve in terrorist activities and not become simply just criminals-killers. Although arguments based on Erikson's eight development stages explained why individuals involve into terrorism and not become just killers – search for collective identity in order to give meaning for their life.

The analysis of biography and childhood of Osama bin Laden in terms of Erikson's development stages did not prove firmly that he developed negative identity in his childhood and that this led to his choice to join terrorist group. Rather the formation of Al-Qaida highlighted other factors that might have had greater influence in his decision such as his experiences in Afghanistan war.

Another reason why individual psychology account is not convincing is that there is no common type of terrorist. Even researchers in this area such as Post admit that there is no typical terrorist type.

Moreover it is worth to highlight other shortcomings of psychological explanation of terrorism. There are two major problems that raise in proving explanation based on individual psychology. First, lack of information on the childhood experiences of terrorists. There is a very limited access to such kind of information. Material of databases and internet provide with very little information on terrorists' childhood. Several attempts to find information on the childhood of ETA terrorist and also some other very prominent Al-Qaida terrorists such as Ayman al-Zawahiri (who is considered second person after Osama bin Laden) has failed. At best, there were few sentences about ETA terrorists' biography in English as well as in Spanish. Therefore, it was impossible to test hypothesis based on experiences in childhood analysing childhood of other terrorists and draw more general conclusion. Other researchers willing to analyze

terrorism from individual psychology point of view will face the same problem of lack of information. It seems that this information is accessible only to people working in secret intelligence agencies (Post is one of them. He worked as a personality profiler in CIA and developed a theory that terrorists suffer from splitting personality) whereas majority of other researchers are unable to test hypothesis due to the lack of information.

Second, big problem proving explanation based on individual psychology is secondary sources on childhood experiences of terrorists. If there was information (although very limited) on some childhood experiences of terrorists this information was based on the interpretation of other people from surrounding circles of particular terrorist. This implies another deficiency in explaining terrorism based on individual psychology because adequate evaluation of the hypothesis can be made only analysing experiences of particular terrorist (which is not available basically) rather than analyzing interpretations of these experiences.

Analysis of Osama bin Laden's childhood was based on the secondary sources. Therefore, it might have had influence on the conclusion. Thus, it might be not fully adequate.

Group psychology account appeared more convincing than individual psychology account because it involved the greater level of observable data and, thus, greater level of evidence. The objects had been analyzed were collective self perception, collective behaviour, collective responsibility and leadership in the groups of ETA and Al-Qaida. Al-Qaida proved to have stronger tools in operating collective self perception, collective behaviour, collective responsibility and leadership than in the case of ETA. Al-Qaida involved religious base in forming collective identity, collective behaviour, collective responsibility and leadership which was considered widely as a very strong background of every individual. Whereas the ETA used only secular tools in creating pressures in the group.

Despite the fact that group psychology account provides worth insights it still leaves a question 'why do individuals join terrorist groups' open because group psychology enables to explain impact on individuals when they are within the group and not the decision itself to join the terrorist group. Political approach to terrorism has an answer to this question.

Terrorist groups are formed in certain places of the world and not in every country. If hypothesis of individual psychology and group psychology accounts would be valid, terrorist groups suppose to be more spread because the same trend of individuals with features of splitting personality searching for collective identity or pressures of the group would apply everywhere. But as empirical world reveals it does not apply everywhere.

Terrorist groups are formed in certain political circumstances. In the case of ETA these circumstances were pressure on Basque people during the Franco regime in Spain. In the case of Al-Qaida these circumstances where the US interference into the politics of Middle East.

Moreover, terrorism is clearly political in its aims and motives. Both groups, ETA and Al-Qaida, have political objectives. The ETA seeks independence to Basque country. Al-Qaida seeks to remove the US influence from Middle East.

Terrorism is not a random act, simple expose of aggression. The violent act is directed to attack symbolic targets that are in the connection with the goals. ETA attacks representatives of Spain government. Al-Qaida attacks mostly Americans, or symbols of the US.

As the analysis of objectives, strategy, tactics and targets of ETA and Al-Qaida reveals there is a very close interaction between these levels. The more 'ambitious' objectives the more 'ambitious' strategy and tactics and targeting respectively. ETA in this regard has less 'ambitious' goals and, therefore, its strategy, tactics and targeting are less 'ambitious'. Whereas Al-Qaida has more 'ambitious' objectives and, therefore, its strategy, tactics and targeting are more 'ambitious'.

Thus, terrorism has clear political features and should be approached from this point.

This conclusion is crucial in the sense of counterterrorism that needs to be revised. This point was not a focus of this research paper but few points need to be highlighted for the future studies of the topic of terrorism. One point is definition of terrorism. There have been over 109 definitions of terrorism (Hoffman, 2006, p. 34). Some of those definitions include such elements as extranormality, random character, group, movement, organization as perpetrator, incalculability, unpredictability,



unexpectedness of occurrence of violence. These elements are clearly outcome of individual psychology and group psychology approach that emphasize abnormal behaviour or group pressures. The latter two approaches appeared not convincing. Therefore, the definition of terrorism should be revised and put emphasis on political features of the phenomenon.

Automatically, approach as well as definition of terrorism have implications in counterterrorism that is very topical in the meantime. Contemporary counterterrorism strategies involve tactics that fight terrorism in terms of strengthening security measures and not including very important political factor of terrorism (why this group is attacking? What are the objectives of this group?) that needs to be considered in fighting terrorism if one wants to have an effect in the long run.

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