RELIG IOUS

DEMARCATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Johan Temmerman (ed.)

RADIC ALISM

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Demarcations and Challenges

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Preface

This volume represents the result of joint work. In January 2020, researchers from the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in Brussels presented the results of a project that had been underway for a year to colleagues in Pretoria. During those same intensive sessions, colleagues from the University of Pretoria also shared their findings on radicalization, multiculturalism and violence. The exchange was very fruitful and the resulting harvest forms the backbone of this book.

The initial religious motives and mechanisms of radicalism have been brought to the fore by the researchers who have contributed to this anthology. A growing lack of understanding of religion can be observed in secular policy bodies in the academic world in Europe as well as elsewhere in the world. That is why in this volume we approach the subject 'from within'. The contributions, each valid in their own right, are linked together through the background and experiences of the authors who are all specialists in academic theology or in ancient languages and literature. It is our intention, as experts in religious studies, to provide policy makers with workable tools and a user-friendly method to tackle religious radicalism constructively. The underlying issue is the question of the role of the rule of law in relation to the human rights of religious minorities. This collection of articles aims at an interdisciplinary approach to religious radicalism. Religious studies blend with theology and cultural criticism within it. The underlying research question – to which we present some answers in this volume – is: what instruments can be used to better understand religious experience and sacred texts in order to combat radicalization?

In Part 1, we define and describe the boundaries of religious radicalism. The first article sets out the concept of religious radicalism within the limits of modernity. The contours of radicalism from a religious perspective reveal an anti-scientific discourse. Contemporary developments indicate that this

radical discourse threatens the public debate: radicalism can readily be seen as a reaction to a sense of life encapsulated in, and circumscribed by, technology and economics. Next, Jaco Beyers investigates radicalization in the context of interreligious communication: in the specific post-apartheid context of today's South Africa, this issue needs to be framed in the colonial past. He focusses on the relationship between mission and the diverse cultural backgrounds within Africa. These initial theoretical articles are followed by two practical applications: Ravan Hasanov describes the practice of multiculturalism and religion in post-communist Azerbaijan. The author is deeply rooted in the problem; he pleads for a strong overarching educational and socio-political strategy to combat extremism and radical sects. An advanced society based on international cooperation must be able to turn the threat around, he argues. Eugene Baron tests a gendering of this problem in the specific context of Africa. As a lecturer in practical theology and missiology, he shows that radicalization very often occurs in a situation of dehumanization. He points to a loss of identity as a result of a colonial culture, perpetuated by neo-colonial corruption. He pleads for a 'grassroots narrative', a 'story from the bottom up' as a constructive answer to religious radicalization and violence. After defining the concept and exploring possible ways to combat radicalization within specific contexts, we present a third, reflective part to this volume. Here we explore general questions about the problem of religious radicalism. Elizabeta Kitanovic, professor of Human Rights in Brussels, pleads for the introduction of clear legislation on racism and discrimination: it is the duty of the constitutional state to place human rights high on the political agenda and to provide the necessary instruments for its implementation. Religion plays an opinion-forming role in this and should motivate people to be tolerant and willing to open themselves up to those who think differently. In line with this legal approach, Johann Meylahn tests a philosophical approach: based on Walter Benjamin, 'divine violence' is contradicted by forms of violence that are legitimate in the rule of law, whether state-forming or state-preserving. He argues unequivocally in favour of supplementing a purely 'policing' approach to radicalization with a politics which responds less to symbols and signification than to the poetic power of inclusive openness. The cultural-critical section concludes with an investigation into the theological foundations of violence perpetrated by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Indonesia: Jack McDonald shows that new religious rules of faith after the Reformation underpinned a policy of exclusivism. Making foreigners doctrinally and doctrinairely different appears here as a political instrument of religious radicalism.

In Part 2, Biblical and Quranic scholars are challenged by the demarcations we have formulated. Across four articles we examine a number of 'holy' texts and probe for hermeneutical methods to help deal with the tendencies of radicalization and violence that are discussed in them. In a first survey, Arjan Knop analyses the 'system' registered in the Hebrew Bible to prevent radicalization: these texts of violence serve as a stimulus not to carry out absolute judgement, which belongs to God alone. This is 'the system behind the system' or a theological prevention of radicalization and violence. Next, orientalist and Quran expert Jan Van Reeth analyses the texts treating the question of violence in the Quran. With linguistic precision, he assesses the texts in question, concluding that there are absolutely no literary arguments for reducing the texts to a call to violence. In the same vein, but with a different methodology, Jannica de Prenter discusses the violent passages in the Bible: especially in the Book of Joshua which contains a large dose of war rhetoric. Dr De Prenter tests a recontextualization of these striking texts and seeks a connection with pacifistic reinterpretations from rabbinic sources and the sermons of Origen. This ground-breaking section, in which a renewed contemplation of violence in sacred texts is tested, concludes with a theological reflection on a remarkable passage from the Book of Exodus: the elders of the people who had been led out of the desert by Moses to sit at the table with God. Harry Sinnaghel reads this text as a liturgical guide against the 'us versus them' thinking characteristic of religious radical discourse. This passage inspires us to transcend profound differences of opinion – which often occur in interreligious dialogue – around the table in a peaceful manner with a communal meal.

Above all, this collection is an invitation to dialogue. At the same time, we also ask for understanding. We are aware that in today's polarized cultural climate it is a delicate matter to ask for prejudices to be set aside. There is a tendency to think that the 'other' must trust us, and that change applies to those who think and feel differently than we do. Increasing illiteracy is both a cause and effect of religious radicalism. Those who do not feel understood and recognized, and whose identity is systematically discredited, turn against institutional powers that leave the offence unchallenged. In short, radicalism is threatening. However, for those who are completely alien to customs and backgrounds, symbols and behaviour, the unprecedented and unfamiliar are just as much of a threat. This form of radicalism, which is rapidly rising on wings of ignorance, also calls for self-criticism. Our collection aims to stimulate reflection and dialogue about this problematic.

Ongoing research into radicalization does not end with the formulation of demarcations and challenges. We have already set in place the next phase of

the academic scaffolding we are constructing. We will now go deeper into the identity-forming role of religion. Religious diversity and the post-modern cry for meaning will be brought to the fore. That vital research will form a sequel to this collection.

Demarcations of Religious Radicalization

Johan Temmerman

Abstract

Religious radicalism requires demarcation. In order to conduct an academic debate, we need to agree on a number of criteria. What is the difference between a moderate believer and a radical? Is it not the case that so-called 'holy texts' include calls for radical behaviour? In this exploratory article, which serves as an introduction to the book, we look at the hermeneutical debate on religious radicalism. We highlight five approaches: historiographic, anthropological, political, socio-psychological and theological. We also present a number of useful tables to distinguish radical religious views and conclude with a conceptualization of fundamentalism.

Introduction

Religious radicalism threatens peaceful coexistence on the planet, yet policymakers and police institutions are still in the dark about how to tackle it. The debate about radicalism shows its characteristic cultural mechanism on a regular basis: the best intentions are counter-productive. In the political world, the emphasis is on prevention and punishment. The social sector swears by aid and attributes religious radicalism to deprivation and discrimination. Neither approach takes the problems of those involved seriously.[1]

First, I cover the thorniest hermeneutic 'pain points' of the study. Religious radicalism is, first and foremost, about cultural-historical developments and the change in values and worldviews that accompanies them. For example,

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[1] An example is the reaction of President Emmanuel Macron to the beheading of Samuel Paty in March 2020. Paty, a teacher, showed his class cartoons about Muhammad in a lesson on free speech. A young Chechen man murdered him. The president of France reiterated that 'fear had to change camps' and that 'terrorists are no longer safe'. The indignation was justified although the method of conveying it could be improved upon. Criticism of Macron was expressed from a social point of view, with the president being accused of discrimination and polarization. An open debate about the fundamental problems of religious radicalism remains to this day.

there are countless statements by Jesus in which he adopts a downright radical stance according to contemporary standards. Was Jesus a radical? Or Bernardus of Clairvaux (1090-1153), who, in true jihad style, called for everything and everyone who did not agree with the holy Christian doctrine to be destroyed. Was he radicalized? This cultural-historical determination and appreciation takes place against the background of holy texts such as the Bible and the Koran. Some people want to ban these books but fortunately such iconoclasm lies behind us. Even so, observations that these texts all too often contain messages of hate and incitements to violence far beyond permissible limits are certainly legitimate. What should we do with these ancient foundations of civilization, therefore?

A second cluster of pressing questions regarding religious radicalism is formed around sociological issues and the prevailing 'blurring' of global cultures. Identities fade or shift to a multi-layered concept. We are all formed from different components, with different backgrounds each with their own particular context. World citizens want to belong somewhere, be recognizable to others and vice versa. In today's complex global structure a deep gulf exists between those who have and those who have not. Religion also operates in this area although not solely in a way that perpetuates the current situation. A completely different segment of pressing questions opens up here. Who is a radical? Someone who, during a good financial year, earns more than the national product of a small African country? Or is it someone who cannot find food for his children and relatives and joins a militia that advocates a reversal of the world order? Jurisdiction and human rights should not clash.

A third cluster of questions opens the ethical-theological debate. In line with the appreciation of cultural-historical developments, progress in ethical awareness is noticeable. Over the past few years we have witnessed social movements that have made it increasingly clear that the old patriarchal Western mentality, which brought about the modern world, can no longer continue unabated and without critical assessment. Changes in the areas of equality of gender, origin, sexual orientation and faith, are absolutely necessary and legitimate. But what do we do with the remnants of the past? Today it is possible to consider 'killing in the name of God' absurd and inhumane. Rightly so, however this was not so a few hundred years ago. Science plays a major role in this ethical progression of human consciousness. That is why the major theological challenges lie precisely in this field. Should we not rethink God or Allah? Is 'salvation' today the same concept as it was in Greco-Roman Antiquity?

Paradigm change

The philosophy of science made a new start with T. Kuhn (1922-1996) and M. Foucault (1926-1984) who understood that the conditions for knowledge are historically variable. Before that, reason was still a well-defined concept, one which Kant called 'pure' in its most unchanging core. Kuhn wanted history to offer science a perspective for self-examination. Do we do good by everything we accomplish? The question seemed rhetorical. Only when one learns about the thinking of ancient writers can one understand their insights and knowledge. If we consider writers from Antiquity as a failed preliminary phase in their own time, we are guilty of self-glorification. If we do, we then regard our present-day as the pinnacle of civilization. But growth or improvement is, above all, a qualitative movement, not merely a quantitative one. The acquisition of knowledge takes place in paradigms ('textbook examples'). One learns about the broad outlines and especially the results. The long process and discussions that precede the formation of innovative knowledge are either not seen at all or, at most, as an 'image' of something that has been acquired. Just like 'the conceptual framework', 'worldview' is another term for the word paradigm. This has not changed greatly since Hellenism, however the great scientific steps taken by Galileo and Newton, for example, are the result of careful puzzling through generations of knowledge, rather than an accumulation of it. Paradigm shifts are rare.

The French philosopher Michel Foucault worked out the same conceptual framework but did so differently. He spoke of *épistémè* or mutations in the depths of the structure of knowing. He looked for core structures that often hang together as clusters and on which our human scientific knowledge is based. Foucault talks about 'the things': work, life and language. Since modernity, these *épistèmè* have shifted. He saw another shift in the late twentieth century, in which more attention was paid to *discours* or discourse.

With Kuhn and Foucault, we see humanity as we know it coming into being in modernity: an entity that distinguishes itself conceptually from nature and supernature, that distinguishes life and labour and language as ordering principles and that elevates itself to the status of subject with the power of the mind.[2] It goes without saying that this modern human being has a very hard time with religion. However, the almost complete secularization of a large part of the Western world contrasts sharply with the increasing importance

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[2]   Leezenberg, M. en de Vries, G. (2012), *Wetenschapsfilosofie voor geesteswetenschappen*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 124.

of religion in the rest of the world. This also applies to politics. Consequently, a shift in our outlook on religion is needed. Indeed, a paradigm shift is required.

In the classical thesis of the nineteenth century, one saw how an increasingly technocratic modern society had a more and more 'disenchanted' effect on the world view. Eventually religion will disappear, was the leading idea. Rational theses replaced beliefs. It was broadly agreed that religion belongs in the private sphere. However, what fits into the private sphere is by definition not religion; religion is precisely based on the distinction between 'profane' and 'sacred'. The private sphere is profane. How people organize the private sphere distinguishes itself from the public sphere. In the latter, values apply that transcend the individual and determine the conditions of society. These values form the basis of religious meaning. Anyone who restricts religion purely to the private sphere deprives it of all meaning. Religion is cohesive in its origin, as the founders of sociology were also aware. Both Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920) understood that religion is a matter of society. A human community represents the organization of the sacred.[3] A post-secular model of society was formed in Western Europe along these lines of thought, a society in which religious communities are allowed to exist with respect for traditions and in constant consultation with the rule of law.

The most recent developments show that this liberal and secular paradigm of a civilized society is a Western product. Neo-colonial mentality and white supremacy play an important role in this. It flirts with quick solutions, and dangerous living makes one both dream and makes one blind. It is from this modernism that religious radicalism emerges. We are therefore discussing a modern phenomenon here, one typical of youth culture and linked to a modern lifestyle. This worldview began when modern science took the place of Christian religion in Western culture. The American historian Richard Westfall wrote aptly: 'In 1600, Western civilization found its focus in the Christian religion, by 1700, modern natural science had displaced religion from its central position.'[4] It was only when science took over the philosophical helm of religion that resistance arose from a religious point of view. This mainly involved anti-scientific propaganda, in which religious tradition and the Bible were used as weapons at all costs. In that period, some 400 years ago, religious radicalism was born in the Western world.

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[3] Weber also warned against a new enchantment of science, expecting so-called 'science goods' from scientists. Weber, M. (1919), *2 Vorträge: Wissenschaft als Beruf + Politik als Beruf*, e-artnow, 2017. Consulted in the Dutch translation: Weber, M. (1919), *Politiek als beroep voorafgegaan door Wetenschap als beroep (vertaling en nawoord Hans Driesen)*, Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Van Tilt, 2012.

[4] Quoted by Wilson, D. B. (2002), "The Historiography of Science and Religion" in Ferngren G.B. (Ed.), *Science & Religion. A Historical Introduction, Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University, 22.*

In concrete terms, this means that it is no use talking about the Bible and Koran in contemporary terms as 'radical religious' texts. Alleged statements by saints do not fall into this category either. Religious radicalism is conducting an anti-scientific discourse in an attempt to counter progressive liberal-secular modernity.

Identity boundaries

The second level at which we must define religious radicalism lies in the anthropological sphere. How does modern humanity view itself and its position in the globalized world? Which characteristics do we use to describe ourselves? Origin? Gender? Sexual preference? Political orientation? The complex cultural situation of the global world makes humanity a question mark to itself. As a result, the question of identity is becoming more and more prominent in social debate. From the perspective of the larger frameworks of knowledge theory, we can see how religious traditions are reacting tensely to the rapid development of science, searching for arguments in Scripturally revealed principles. Of the three major categories that we distinguish in the debate between faith and science – the positions of battle, proper separation, and cohabitation – radical Scriptural argumentation occurs only in the first group. The rejection, on religious grounds, of scientific progress about the view of humanity became a wide-ranging action plan with legal complications from the end of the nineteenth century, when a growing segment of believers in the USA wanted to ban the teaching of evolution.[5] Since then, the anti-scientific argument has also had an impact on the identity debate. Someone might reject the doctrine of evolution in order to express their disagreement with the prevalent liberal secular mentality. But radical views often develop into radical behaviour. The standard by which to measure this is the danger to which one exposes other people. The belief that children should not be vaccinated can have serious consequences for the children concerned. The question, then, is why someone refuses to use modern techniques and applies archaic and very difficult rules of life instead? The biography of the individual, his or her character traits, unprocessed trauma or mental state play a role in this.

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[5] Between 1910 and 1915, the Presbyterian Church in the USA published twelve books called *The Fundamentals*, which openly fought against the 'degradation of Christianity' and 'liberal relativism'. Then, in 1922, the famous Scopes trial took place, directed against the biology teacher who violated the law against the teaching of evolution. Temmerman, J. (2019), *Geloof en wetenschap. Een godsdienst-filosofische verkenning*, Antwerpen: Garant, 29-35.

Numerous academics within the humanities have been working on the question of identity over the past few decades with a broad consensus having been formed about the multi-layered nature of modern identity. People in the global secular world can often not be placed into a clearly defined category, in terms of origin or orientation and the like. This layered identity is diametrically opposed to the image of humanity in traditional religions. Traditional folk cultures, which are usually very closely linked to religion, also find it very difficult to survive in the present-day globalized phase of culture. Change creates resistance. People see their old, familiar lifestyle disappearing and it distresses them. Fear is an important motive. In Zygmunt Bauman's (1925-2017) sociological analysis there is talk of 'fluidity' (liquid modernity), in which both institutions and individual lives are subject to change and do not follow fixed patterns.[6] The rational straitjacket in which we lock up all facets of life leads to further disintegration of the social fabric and the loss of traditions and values. This is not to say that everything is doom and gloom as a new form of power is emerging, one which is global and transgressive. Bauman's contribution to our subject is the inherent warning that a sense of fluidity does not remove the subcutaneous fear of, and overt resistance to, modernity.

Not insignificant in this debate is the Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt's (1923-2010) rare voice of understanding of radicalism. In his concept of 'multiple modernities', in which he sees the world as the constant construction and reconstruction of a multitude of cultural programs, he describes the process of modernization as a constant flow and counter-flow that transcends global institutions. Consequently, what religious radicals do is the same as what secular people do: they (re)define the world.[7] It is therefore necessary to be constantly alert to the place we assign religion to in the modern world. From a secular point of view, religious beliefs very quickly testify to radicalism, while secular relativism is misleading and false for religious frames of mind. What is more, people do not necessarily hold the same views from cradle to grave. Here, too, we must recognize a shift and plurality.

For these reasons, one speaks of 'identity boundaries' rather than 'identity' as a well-defined concept. Shifting identity boundaries are most visible when we are dealing with others who are not like us. This prompts contemporary anthropologists to remark that if all people look the same and share the same

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[6]   Bauman, Z. (2000), *Liquid Modernity, Oxford/Cambridge: Polity Press.* Consulted in the Dutch translation: Bauman, Z. (2007), *Vloeibare tijden. Leven in een eeuw van onzekerheid (vertaald door J.M.M. de Valk)*, Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Klement, 9.

[7]   Eisenstadt, S. (1999), *Fundamentalism, Sectarism and Revolutions: the Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, London/New York: Cambridge University Press.

opinion, then there would be no question of identity.[8] Boundaries do not have to be purely physical; food laws and clothing are also identity boundaries. From a religious perspective, an important identity boundary is the symbolic belief system. This system is usually accompanied by external signs. Whoever wears the signs and adheres to the system separates themselves from others. These boundaries, through which a smaller group sets itself apart from a larger whole, reflect the inner or the 'true' self. The small group thereby considers itself better than the larger whole; they are the lifeline of the 'true' people. There is no outside world to which these symbols point. It can be to purity, to more insight and more thorough knowledge, or to a firmer conviction and a more honest life practice. That is why these religious beliefs can lead to radicalism, because the substantive rules and standards are increasingly strict or are applied more strictly. It can lead to the glorification of 'radicalism', as a kind of badge of honour.

In other words, in the socio-cultural field, and particularly in the identity debate, we should always keep an eye on the plurality of global modernity. This is particularly important in terms of the use of language and appreciation, while the content of religious discourse will have to take account of changeability.

Systemic gaps

On the legal-political level, radicalization is given full range by a number of political mechanisms present in both religious and secular systems. In the Western liberal-democratic system, the rule of law defines violence and anger. By means of democratically approved legislation, only the state is allowed to use violence. The rule of law can be maintained as long as the majority of the population has equal access to the benefits and riches offered by the system. However, the state must constantly account for inequality. When systemic deprivation and discrimination come into play, the accountability of the rule of law based on a democratic majority and an independent judiciary becomes less and less credible. Settlements can be obtained through money and more can be achieved through government with political support. The critical boundary is crossed when the political system tolerates exploitation and discrimination or is itself guilty of these. It is then that resistance becomes 'doing the right thing'. When states operating under the rule of law attack other countries and peoples on the basis of economic interests, they also legitimize violence. It is here that

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8   Bowie, F. (2000), *The Anthropology of Religion. An Introduction,* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 64.

the key to a better understanding of the waves of religious radicalism emerging in the western world and beyond in the twenty-first century can be found.

The American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (°1947) observed a shift in political values and actions as the twenty-first century approached. The use of violence, both state and religious, increased noticeably. This forms a line of demarcation for radicalism at the political level. Nussbaum notes that the three most successful upheavals in the twentieth century were non-violent. She talks about Indian decolonization under the leadership of Gandhi, the American civil rights movement with Martin Luther King as its mouthpiece, and Nelson Mandela's South African anti-apartheid struggle. The remarkable thing about Nussbaum's argument is that she rightly notes that Gandhi and M. L. King used religion to instigate non-violence but fell short of the philosophical questions. As a result, they met with fierce resistance from within their own ranks, which led to more violence. It was Mandela who, despite the approval of the limited use of violence, did manage to bring about an all-encompassing zeal for the establishment of a diverse South Africa. She speaks in this context of the 'strange generosity' that characterized Mandela's path to freedom.[9] Nussbaum analyses Mandela's method and considers his characteristic generosity as resulting from his 'conversations with myself', which gave him a greater degree of understanding of others. In the case of Martha Nussbaum, and in order to demarcate religious radicalism, it is important not to exclude a legitimate struggle for freedom or resistance to the system a priori, and not to dismiss immediately as 'radical' any criticism of government politics or generally accepted values. There is indeed both a need and room for revolutionary justice, according to Nussbaum. Two elements separate religious radicalism from legitimate struggle:

1. Radicals focus on personal gain, prestige, and effect in their actions instead of on inner development.
2. Radicalism demotivates the development of the quality to understand how others think.

This means working to understand why people are angry and frustrated within the framework of prevailing political and legal norms, while at the same time learning to understand why others discriminate and repress. Religious

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[9]   Nussbaum, M. C. (2016), *Anger and Forgiveness. Resentment, Generosity, Justice*, New York: Oxford University Press, 226.

radicalism arises from the illegitimate, skewed relationship between power and powerlessness in society.

Religious systems, which were formed within cultural developments, also show violent systemic errors. A not unimportant theme in this respect is one based on the gap that Durkheim created between profane and sacred. Religion has to do with the divine, the sacred. The systemic error occurs when the sacred is profaned. As long as everyone has respect for what the group considers to be divine, there is no problem. As soon as a sacred object is knocked down and people take offence at such 'godlessness,' radicalization and violence loom. It is therefore not unwise to take note of the anthropological findings concerning religion and its perception. The French anthropologist Pascal Boyer investigated the evolutionary roots of religion and quite convincingly made firewood from a number of generally accepted concepts of religion and radicalism, for example, 'theological correctness'. Divergent theological views are common in all religions throughout history; 'heresy' is rampant even when established institutions heavy-handedly impose a certain doctrine through political power. Boyer speaks in this context of the 'tragedy of the theologian' and points to the fact that people are thinking beings, not absorbing facts literally like a database, and will therefore always distort texts and opinions. In fact, the only way to prevent this from happening is to turn faith into a barren and lifeless doctrine, rather than one which stimulates the imagination and encourages changes or improvements.[10] It is therefore high time for theologians to make a number of clarifications in terms of the conceptualization of faith. I mention three that I have distilled from anthropological studies on religion:

1. There is no such thing as a specific domain (the sacred) which can only be considered as part of the sphere of religion.
2. There are no different religions or different religious experiences.
3. Religion has first and foremost a social purpose.

In the first remark it must be made clear that sacred objects do exist and that they differ according to different traditions. Theologians from all traditions would do well to let go of their reticence, explain the mythological meaning of these objects and set them against the concrete reality of that same object. Baptism is a symbolic act, one which provides an image of what 'should be' and not of 'what is'. This requires courage, but just as with political systemic errors,

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[10]   Boyer, P. (2001), *Religion Explained. The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thoughts*, New York: Basis Books, 283-285.

a critical self-conversation within one's own tradition helps to understand other religions and beliefs. The third point can be interpreted more sociologically than anthropologically. Here the distinction between facts and norms, between mythological references and concrete reality, plays a role. 'Heaven' is not just above us as in fact an expanding universe is unfolding above us which is entirely energetically equilibrial.

The errors within political and religious systems should not tempt us to fight religious radicalism with a similar fanaticism. Some secular philosophers consider radicalism as having to do with 'too much' faith. They accuse radicals of 'superstition', with which they resort to violence as blinded 'warriors of God'. Others look at social structures and notice that religion has an intrinsically good core, but that politics abuses and corrupts that system of meaning. The theological boundary that we must always keep clear is the distinction between norms and facts, as indicated above.

Religion vetted

It is a curious experience to notice that religions all hold unity and peace in high esteem but that, more than non-religious associations, they are subject to schisms and conflicts. All human error is found in religion. Indeed, anthropologists of religion have known this for a long time. Although schisms and ecclesiastical conflicts are usually described on the basis of theological differences of opinion, in his study *The Social Sources of Denomination* (1929) the American historical theologian H. Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962), convincingly demonstrated that the many (Christian) denominations are the product of class differences. With the work of Durkheim and Weber in the background, and on the basis of a refined historical analysis, Niebuhr showed that the less fortunate masses are often the driving force behind religious movements that oppose more established institutions. A religious movement that secedes will be successful if it is integrated by the middle classes, thus creating reasons for new secessions. Consequently, there is a dialectical process, in which established churches continually give birth to new movements that are more and more radical until they end up becoming part of the broad middle stream, after which new sects take their place and so on. Niebuhr's work on the social sources of denominations has remained a standard work in the sociology of religion, indeed Stark and Bainbridge based their high-profile *Rational Choice Theory* on it. They found that radicalization which leads to division is the result of the search for religious compensation. Stark and Bainbridge noted that if people's desires are not met quickly and easily, they are satisfied with

compensation. This mechanism is particularly important for religious desires. These compensations are then seen as rewards or graces. In the context of radicalization, Stark and Bainbridge nuance Niebuhr's original theory by pointing out that it is not so much social class as the general concept of power that plays a decisive role.[11] They observed that people who start a new radical movement from within the classical church or mosque often have no position or authority in the outside world, while people with a certain social standing who join a more radical movement, often opt for a modest role in it. This shows that the pursuit of power is an important factor in radicalization, more than theological disputes or class conflict.

A certain degree of tension, whether large or small, often exists between a religious group and the outside world. A person who has joined an institutional church with a low degree of tension, and who is dissatisfied with the state of the world and its direction of travel, will soon leave again. Those who are socially dissatisfied want this dissatisfaction to be confirmed within the framework provided by their religious experience. Radical groups create high levels of tension with the outside world thereby offering dissatisfied people attractive compensation.

These observations are supported by neurology. Our brains are a continuously working machinery of neurons and synapses and the engine room of our brain has many chambers, with each part being responsible for a specific function. Neurologists speak of inference systems that arrange data in templates. Religion works as a meaning template. This is the same for all people because this is how the brain works.[12] We are all looking for meaning and connection but we all do this in our own way and according to character and social needs. In religious radical groups, a high degree of tension is the result of dissatisfaction with social living conditions. In order to confirm and nourish this dissatisfaction, radicalized preachers - who, as has been said, are more interested in power than in theology - employ the image of an ideal mythological past. In this paradisiacal past, believers experienced every good value in a spontaneous way. Radicalization from a religious point of view is therefore a reaction against a global culture in which greed pays, ungodliness is a good thing, and sins are not punished. Radical believers raise the price of sin very high through public confession of guilt and even penance.

Religious radicalism therefore presents an additional hermeneutical problem. Depending on the position of the person concerned, he or she will consider

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[11] Stark, R. and Bainbridge W. S. (1987), *A Theory of Religion*, New Brunswick/New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 121-123.
[12] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 40-45.

the professed faith as correct and good. A moderate churchgoer, for example, who attends a traditional Sunday worship service, does not experience their faith and the community as lukewarm or hypocritical because fellow believers do not give everything away to the poor and follow Jesus. In the same way, a radicalized Evangelical Christian, who rejects others because of their sexual orientation, does not experience the inhumanity of his faith, rather he thinks he is doing God a service with his firmness of principle (biblical beliefs). Homophobia is commonplace in radical circles. The radical religious believe that God is just as dissatisfied with the state of affairs in society as they themselves are. Consequently, when delineating radical religion, we must be attentive to the stratification of, and shifts within, the modern concept of identity, and by paying particular attention to the hermeneutic problem that resolutely reverses valuation. That is why I suggest three perspectives which the individual can go through in terms of religious experience and vision according to positioning. Radicalization then describes the arc of tension which evolves from 'white/black' over 'pink' to 'red'.

WHITE/BLACK

DISCIPLINE	RELIGION	RADICAL RELIGION
general	binding	divorcing
psychological	calming	restlessness
political	unifying	polarizing
philosophical	inclusiveness	exclusiveness
theological	critical	dogmatic
hermeneutical	contextual	literal
sociological	group dynamics	individualistic
general	cohesion	sectarian

PINK

DISCIPINE	RELIGION	RADICAL RELIGION
general	connects believers	fights unbelievers
psychological	brings calmness within	brings restlessness within
political	just war	only peace for believers
philosophical	limited inclusiveness	unlimited exclusiveness
theological	uncertainty	certainty
hermeneutical	changeable	constant
sociological	socially inclusive	diminishing the 'self'
general	fluid	new beginnings

RED

DISCIPLINE	RELIGION	RADICAL RELIGION
general	distrust	trust
psychological	consuming energy	giving energy
political	in conflict with tradition	in unity with tradition
philosophical	inconsequential	consequential
theological	sinful	pure
hermeneutical	tolerant	unyielding
sociological	unethical	ethical
general	unbelieving	believing

From this overview we can conclude that people's religious experience radicalizes when they want to escape 'fifty shades of pink' and then turn everything red. Classical churches, mosques and synagogues may already connect believers, but their reaction against non-believers is considered too weak. This form of faith is the 'white/black' paradigm that most theologians and religious scientists in the West use: religion is good, radical religion is bad. This white/black paradigm spontaneously shifts to pink hues when philosophers and human scientists evaluate religion. At best, believers are 'naïve', at worst reprehensible. Modern believers are critical of classical phenomena such as holy war or archaic attire and rituals. They are very tolerant of the precepts. As a result, they mix shades of pink with the white/black religious experience. In order to escape from this, radicals resolutely turn against these 'lukewarm' (pink) believers because they believe that tolerance is the devil. The psychological pink hue often places modern believers in a dispersed position. They preach and practice a peaceful way of life, but often find themselves in conflict with modernist customs and morals. A radical experience of religion creates a beneficent peace of mind through clear disapproval and even worldly avoidance. In the same way, a radicalized attitude escapes the slavery of evil. All too often one must endure injustice or is treated unfairly by the judiciary. A radical belief legitimizes the fight against the unjust. In the theological field, radicalism dispels the many shades of pink or lukewarm attitudes by resolutely eliminating all doubt. Creation happened in six days, period. This is a certainty, according to radicals. A radical religious experience knows no tension between scientific findings and religious beliefs, because the former are resolutely rejected as demonic and evil. The ultimate goal of a radicalized believer is to save the world from this evil and to establish a new beginning for humanity, united under the same religious banner. In the future it will

therefore be important for scientific theology to integrate the evolutionary development of religion, which has shifted from fire red to pink to white/black. This means ascribing greater religious value to the adaptation of sacred texts and precepts than occurred in their archaic, preliminary stages.[13]

Legal demarcations

The legal part of this issue has two dimensions. First of all, there is the field of law and order. In addition, there is the problem of the implementation of human rights within the religious worldview. As indicated in the preface to this book, prevention and punishment dominate the legal framework used to combat radicalism in a modern secular context. Normative discourse and the scientific literature focus mainly on the question of how an individual gradually evolves into a radical extremist. How does a normal young person become a murderous terrorist? Contemporary authors such as Arun Kundnani point out that researchers often use the process of a young person assuming extreme thought as *pars pro toto* to considering a religious community as 'suspicious'. With this approach in the background, they designed the so-called 'pyramid' or 'step model', which indicates the steps an individual takes to evolve from being 'normal' to being 'radical'. These steps show a gradual development on three different and interchangeable levels: the micro level of individual feelings, the meso level of social connections, and the macro level of political-cultural circumstances.[14]

These three levels form an essential context in which fundamental shifts or crises become catalysts for radicalization. A young man who, for example, is at loggerheads with himself about existential choices and who, on top of that, is dealing with problematic friendships, and furthermore does not feel appreciated in society, is susceptible to making urgent and decisive behavioural changes on the basis of 'ultimate' goals. Given that most scientific literature focuses on a single level – usually removing social and structural deprivation (the third level) – the analysis of radicalization remains fragmentary, making prevention and jurisdiction partial. Hence, advancing insight into the context of becoming radical must increasingly focus on the coherence of the

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[13]   With thanks to Susanne Wigorts Yngvesson, Professor of Ethics and Political Philosophy at the Theological Faculty in Stockholm for initiating this and the next analysis, through her contribution made during a conference in Lisbon in June 2019.

[14]   Ravn, S., Coolsaet, R.,and Sauer, T. (2019), 'Rethinking radicalisation: Adressing the lack of a contextual perspective in the dominant narratives on radicalisation' in Clycq, N., Timmerman, C., Vanheule, D., Van Caudenberg, R. and Ravn, S. (Eds.), *Radicalisation. A Marginal Phenomenon or a Mirror to Society?*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 21-46.

three levels, and on looking for incentives or triggers of radical thinking and acting. We speak of 'trigger factor models'.[15] The model makes it possible to identify nuances and to indicate how factors from the three levels influence each other. It is possible, for example, that problems at school might trigger a group dynamic of solidarity among friends, after which a sense of not having anyone within the group with the achievements of others in society triggers the group to carry out petty crime which, due to structural exclusion at macro level, can result in violent 'resistance' or terror.

We find that these scientific nuances in radicalization research have little or no influence on the legal approach, one that is often stuck in the dominant narrative. This dominant narrative has been strongly incited since the destructive terrorism of the early twenty-first century, which in turn was a reaction to geopolitical developments since the end of the Cold War. In their overview and analysis of the dominant image of Islamic radicalism, Ravn, Coolsaet and Sauer point to the so-called 'elite-driven popular construction of perceived causation',[16] with which political and legal frames of thought worldwide immediately seize on a discourse about the danger of Islamic terrorism to explain the causes of attacks. As a result, the amount of time and resources used to monitor Muslim communities is disproportionate to the threat they pose. In 2020 the discussions about the return of two Belgian women and their children who had resided in the ISIS caliphate illustrates this elite-driven popular construction. Because prejudices are very difficult to eliminate from popular discourse, it is therefore necessary to clearly map out the legal boundaries. Thanks to my colleague Susanne Yngvesson, the self-explanatory representations below alleviate the problems of legislation and radicalism.
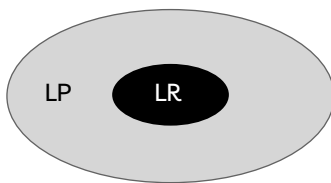
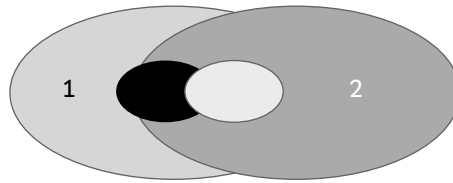LP: legally permitted
LR: legally required
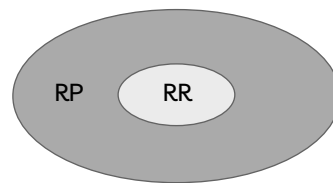
RP: religiously permitted
RR: religiously required

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15   Feddes, A., Nickolson, L. & Doosje, B. (2015), *Triggerfactoren in het Radicaliseringsproces,* Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam (Expertise-unit Sociale Stabiliteit).
16   Ravn, Coolsaet & Sauer, 'Rethinking radicalisation', 24.

The legal boundaries of religious radicalism start from two overlapping spheres: legislation and religion. Both spheres can be subdivided into what is permitted and what is obligatory. It is clear that these spheres do not fit together seamlessly. Secular legislation, for instance, allows many things that religious precepts forbid and vice versa. Two examples of what is allowed by law but forbidden by religion are abortion and euthanasia (1). Conversely, it is a legal requirement to comply with traffic rules even though religious precepts say nothing about them (2).

In the same way, we can indicate all overlapping areas. For example, it is legally and religiously permitted to smoke in private areas (where (1) and (2) coincide), just as it is legally and religiously forbidden to beat another person to death (where LR and RR overlap). Vaccinations are required by law but religiously prohibited (3), while taxes are required by law and religiously permitted (4). Jewish circumcision is legally permitted and religiously required (5), while unanaesthetised slaughter is legally prohibited and religiously required (6).
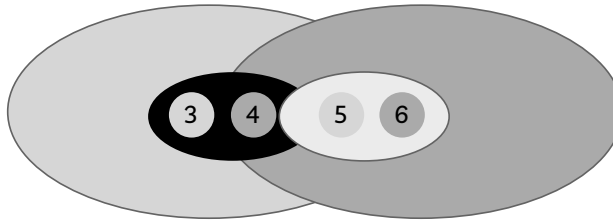
In order to complete the diagram of legal demarcations of radicalism, we are obliged to include human rights.

Human Rights
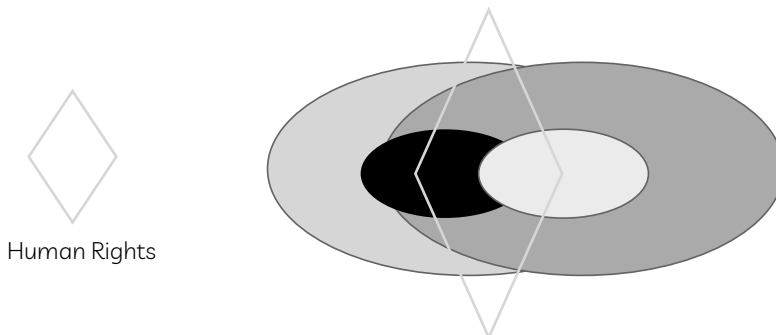
With these legal demarcations in the background, it should be possible to order the diversity of religious expressions objectively and to distinguish radicalism from legitimate perceptions of meaning. It should be possible not to confuse populism and hate speech with identity markers. For example, the free choice of religion and attire is not an expression of radicalization, but is a human right. Having considered and outlined these demarcations we will revisit the problem of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism

In the first paragraphs of this article, religious radicalism was referred to as a consequence of, and reaction to, secular-liberal modernism. The radicalism that we see in religious circles today is directed against a worldview in which a human being is the measure of all things, ethical principles are changeable and subjective, and where a largely white elite has reaped the benefits of globalization and minority groups are threatened with the prospect of poverty and exclusion. At the same time, however, we have found that the legal approach of the rule of law, which initially focused on prevention and punishment, has mainly resulted in social deprivation and the maintenance of law and order. A nuanced approach is urgently needed. This includes an approach to the increasing alienation of new generations of young people in the suburbs of Western cities. They are confronted with a worldview and way of life that is far removed from them. The classical experience of traditional religions is one bathed in an atmosphere of authenticity and purity, facets that have all but disappeared in our post-modern culture. In order to complete our overview of the demarcations of religious radicalism, we are also forced to take a look at the contextual and content-related elements that stimulate an extreme experience of religion. To indicate the contextual demarcation of religious radicalism within religious thought, we speak of 'fundamentalism'.

The second half of the 1970s marked a reversal in research into modernity and religion. Until then it was generally assumed that an advancing secularization heralded the end of religion in the West. However, in the late 1970s a turn of events took place. A conservative pope took the helm of the Roman Catholic Church and propagated a 'new evangelization' of Europe. In the same period in Iran the Western Shah was expelled and replaced by a religious regime. Furthermore, increasing waves of migration strengthened Arab people's sense of identity based on religion. Evangelical Protestantism also grew in the US, in line with the various charismatic movements in Latin America. In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, and Eastern Europe and Russia also saw

a strong increase in the importance of the Orthodox Church. September 11, 2001 marked a turning point in terms of a realisation that religion was back at the forefront of global societies. At the same time a new form of belonging to a religious ideology was emerging, for we are witnessing, on a large scale and across different continents, the increase of generally conservative forms of faith and religion. What we call 'fundamentalism' today is therefore a fairly recent religious phenomenon that appeared after the Second World War together with increasing globalization.[17] The Israeli scholar Lawrence Kaplan has provided an apt definition:

> Fundamentalism can be described as a world view that highlights specific essential 'truths' of traditional faiths and applies them with earnestness and fervour to twentieth-century realities.[18]

We therefore speak of fundamentalism as a religious reaction pattern which one contrasts with modern globalized reality. Most sociologists interpret a number of causes, which we can divide into three groups:

1. Structural factors: the contextual long-term conditions and changes in which movements of recovery from the past arise.
2. Contingent factors: predictable factors that act as catalysts, such as invasion by a foreign power.
3. Human factors: choices made about politics and leadership.[19]

This shows that the origin and development of a certain movement is strongly contextual and can therefore be approached in different ways. This observation also means, however, that the global growth of fundamentalist movements in almost all world cultures since the late 1970s points to a specific evolution in modern times. On the one hand, there is a continuous economic increase in scale due to globalisation, while on the other hand a similar loss of confidence can be observed. In this late-modern climate, not only has the gap between rich and poor widened, but dependence on fossil fuels has increased, causing a proliferation of uncertainties as a result of a pressing ecological problem. Religion has taken on a different role in this atmosphere. It has become an

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[17] At the beginning of the twentieth century resistance to Darwinism, the historical-critical method, and liberal theology arose in American Christian circles. See footnote 4 above.

[18] Kaplan, L. (ed.) (1992), *Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective,* Amhurst: University of Massachusetts Press.

[19] Davie, G. (2007), *The Sociology of Religion*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, 183-187.

outlet for unease. As indicated above, religious unease was already noticeable in America in the early twentieth century, but simultaneously the changes accelerated by globalization have caused this sense of unease to spread very rapidly throughout the world. What is striking here is the contradictory pressures from the economic and cultural spheres.

To indicate this amalgam of psychological, cultural and religious factors, the aforementioned Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt speaks of the 'crystallization of modernity'.[20] The crystallization within modern fundamentalism to which Eisenstadt refers are the values of the Enlightenment and the great revolutions that heralded modern times. However paradoxical this may sound, modern fundamentalists are concerned with freedom of belief and opinion, while at the same time striving for an anti-modern utopia and wanting to achieve this through a rigid social system. In this sense Eisenstadt sees fundamentalism as being representative of the tensions inherent in modernity, between a Jacobin, totalising tendency on the one hand, and a modern constitutive pluralism on the other. Eisenstadt also makes the remarkable observation that fundamentalism is virtually absent in some modern societies giving Japan and Western Europe as examples. It is true that we are familiar with Islamic fundamentalism, but the original Christian form is virtually absent here. For the sociologist of religion, the explanation of this absence must be as significant as that of its presence. That is why the last word on this issue has not yet been spoken. In the context of Eisenstadt's work this points to the plurality of modernity. In the continuing debate on radicalism we must therefore take into account that an underlying tendency towards change in the sense of more justice, equality and leadership stimulates a return to the pure or authentic experience of religion. In this brief overview we hope to have indicated the demarcations of religious radicalism.

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[20]   Eisenstadt (1999), *Fundamentalism, Sectarism and Revolutions: the Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, 39.

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Radicalization: A Perspective from Mission and Inter-Culturalism

Jaco Beyers

Abstract

In the discussion on inter-religious communication, the notion of radicalization is considered a threat. Religiously motivated violence may be the result of intolerant communities. Discussing the relation between mission and inter-culturalism, three main concepts need expounding: what do mission, culture, and religion signify. These three concepts will be discussed within the framework of colonization, theology and post-modernism. Three immanent features of the relation between mission and inter-culturalism are identified and discussed, namely inculturation, syncretism and secularization. As a possible solution to the challenges faced by the relation between mission and inter-culturalism, the concept of 'konivenz' is suggested as means to peaceful co-existence and establishing 'shalom' in the world.

Introduction

Embedded in any conversation about inter-cultural conversation, the notion of radicalization becomes a concern. How can religions interact in a way that is mutually accepted as being responsible? How can the Christian message be communicated with integrity while remaining culturally sensitive? This reflection is concerned with the question of what do we need to know about mission and inter-culturalism?

Three concepts are important: mission, culture, and religion. These concepts will be framed within the confines of colonization, theology and post-modernism. These three concepts can be arranged as concentric circles; all are relevant, but some are more central in the discussion. I would like to add three more concepts, which may eventually prove useful in addressing the core of the problem: inculturation, syncretism and secularization.

We start on the periphery of the concentric circles and work our way inwards toward the centre.

What is mission?

Definitions of mission abound. The definition by James Scherer[1] emphasizes the spreading and inviting dimensions of Christian witnessing. Mission is the obedient response of the church to the command of God to spread the message of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:29; Luke 24:20). The emphasis is on God who sends His followers into the world to spread the message through whatever means. The content of the message is the love of God as shown through Jesus Christ. The danger is that a maximal definition of mission can be vague and can result one that is obscure and meaningless. The mission historian, Stephen Neill[2] warns that if everything is considered mission then nothing is mission. This warning will guide our understanding of what constitutes mission.

This definition of mission is framed by the understanding of *missio Dei*. Georg Vicedom popularized the concept of *missio Dei*, emphasizing the true acting subject of mission as the tri-une God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who sends the church just as God the Father sent his Son and the Holy Spirit. The aim of mission as formulated by the Protestant theologian Gijsbertius Voetius is important: the conversion of 'heathens' and the establishment of the church are important actions in mission, but these only contribute to the main goal of mission, namely the glorification of God.[3]

The irony is that within this preliminary analysis of the meaning of mission, the seeds of radicalization and potential violence are already lurking. The definition is placed within a discourse that reflects the image of a military leader commanding his followers to conquer the world. Wherever the messengers come they must establish outposts, marking his reign among all those submitting to the rule of God. Christian mission is characterized by the jargon typical of colonialism.[4] In this regard Stefan Paas refers to the concept of Christendom where mission is understood as the geographical expansion of the world ruled by Christian leaders.[5] Mission during the eighteenth and early

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1   Scherer, J.A. (1987), *Gospel, Church and the Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology,* Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 37.
2   Neill, S. (1959), *Creative Tension,* London: Edinburgh House Press, 81.
3   Voetius, *De plantationes ecclesiarum in Selectae Disputationes Theologicae,* 1648–1669.
4   For a comparison see Bosch, D.J., (1991), *Transforming Mission: Paradigm shifts in the Theology of Mission*, New York: Orbis Books, 262.
5   Paas, S. (2011), 'Post-Christian, Post-Christendom, and Post-Modern Europe: Towards the interaction of Missiology and the Social Sciences,' in *Mission Studies* 28, 12.

nineteenth century has been equated to spreading the Western civilization.[6] The assumption during this period was that the world could be divided into two ways of believing, a Christian way–, which was considered to be superior and dominant – and a pagan or inferior way. Although it is suggested by Paas[7] that the concept of Christendom had ended during the eighteenth century, there is evidence of it still existing today. Consider the attitude of missionaries who believe they are doing people a favour by introducing them to a (European) culture by converting them to Christianity. Christian values and principles in African countries still seem to permeate official government policies on how people in society should be treated.

David Hesselgrave introduced a different perspective on mission when he placed mission within 'the Kingdom of God and the establishment of shalom in the world'.[8] The emphasis on *shalom* is important for our discussion of radicalization. We should understand *shalom* as being embedded in the understanding of the kingdom of God. *Shalom* is the outcome of the mission of God, as the aim of mission is to 'establish shalom'.[9] God reigns through 'peace, integrity, community, harmony and justice'.[10] Nicholas Wolterstorff states, 'We are workers in God's cause, his peace-workers.'[11]

The use of *shalom* in the Old and the New Testament is comprehensive as it refers to wholeness, abundant life, completeness, peace, well-being, and salvation. *Shalom* defines the way in which the world ought to exist – a state of peace where no one lacks anything. Communities are characterized by peaceful, just, and harmonious relationships within and among other communities, with God and with creation. *Shalom* implies and envisions a new community where barriers of language, economy, race, gender, and nationality are removed. All exist for the benefit of the Other.

The church is constantly called upon to speak out against injustice and marginalization.[12] This is motivated by the call for all to be equal as humans. Many people around the world face political instability, rising religious

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6   Paas, 'Post-Christian', 12.
7   Paas, 'Post-Christian', 12.
8   Hesselgrave, D.J. (2016), 'Saving the future of evangelical missions', in R.C. Scheuermann and E.L. Smither, *Controversies in mission, Kindle edition,* Pasadena: William Carey Library, loc 5090.
9   Gelsviken. T. (2003), 'Missio dei: The understanding and misunderstanding of a theological concept in European churches and missiology', in *International Review of Mission*, XCII:367, 489.
10   McIntosh, J.A. (2000), 'Missio dei', in Moreau, A.S. (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of World Mission,* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 632.
11   Wolterstorff, N. (1983), *Until justice and peace embrace,* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 72.
12   Compare with Tveit, O.F. (2018), 'Perspectives on Migration: Displacement and Marginalisation, Inclusion and justice, an Ecumenical vision', World Council of Churches (www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/perspectives-on-migration-displacement-and-marginalization-inclusion-and-justice-an-ecumenical-vision). Accessed 27/03/2020.

fundamentalism, religious persecution, and socio-economic difficulties. These phenomena are influenced by the global imbalance of wealth and power. To restore harmony and peace, the church wants to continue with mission work while still being culturally sensitive.

So, what is the problem? When is mission truly mission and when is mission conveying a culture or, formulated differently, when does mission work become religious colonialization? More directly: what is meant by the radicalization of mission? During the period of colonialization in the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries, mission work consisted of transferring one culture onto another. Christianization was not much different to the westernization of the known world. This is a subtle form of violence. Colonialization is the history of the subjugation of people through the introduction of a new faith.

At times, this violent spread of Christianity did take on forms of physical violence. Compare how Bosch discusses the theological background to the forceful conversion of non-Christians.[13] Violent conversion was based on an understanding of Luke 14:23 that all should be compelled to believe. 'Compel' was interpreted rather more literally than subtle encouragement or a friendly suggestion of a new belief.

There are opposing opinions about whether religion is responsible for violence per se. Karen Armstrong suggests that religions are 'inherently violent' especially monotheistic religions.[14] The belief in one God leaves no space for divergent ideas and opposing beliefs. Power lies in God. The Bible becomes an instrument legitimizing power and violence to compel others to believe in God. One ought to agree with and submit to the one and only God.

The Dutch philosopher Hans Achterhuis, however, believes that religion is not the cause of violence.[15] Violence, according to him, is inherent to human nature. Humans are capable of acts of violence. It cannot be denied that religion can be the fuse leading to violence, but religion does not necessarily cause violence.

An assessment of the way in which other religions are theologically perceived can assist us in trying to make sense of the perceived violent nature of mission.

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[13]   Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 219.
[14]   Armstrong, K. (2014), *Fields of blood: Religion and the History of Violence,* New York/Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 7.
[15]   Achterhuis, H. (2010), *Met alle geweld,* Rotterdam: Lemniscaat, 52.

Theology of religions

The continuation of the violent nature of mission is exacerbated by the way in which Christians perceive the existence of other religions (referred to as a theology of religions – *theologia religionum*).

When engaging with other religions, or people with no religion, one has a particular understanding (implicitly or explicitly) of how non-Christian religions are viewed and relate to Christianity. Traditionally there are three models of understanding the existence of other religions.[16] I will not enter into the detail of each model here, rather, I want to emphasize the inadequacy of these models and indicate how the models can contribute to radicalization:

- Exclusivism refers to the understanding that all religions are in fact evil (idolatrous) and can bring no salvation. Salvation is possible only through God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Other religions cannot present any knowledge of God. Salvation is exclusively to be found in Christianity. The result is that believers of other religions are viewed pejoratively as 'heathens' or 'gentiles' in need of deliverance which only Christianity can bring about.
- Inclusivism is the understanding that God wants to save all people. God reveals Himself in different ways to people from different cultures. Other religions can therefore contribute accumulatively to the knowledge of God. Salvation is, however, to be found in Christianity alone. All religions need to be fulfilled in Christianity. The result is a masked form of Exclusivism paraded as one where all religions are included in God's salvific plan, although in fact salvation lies exclusively in Christianity.
- Pluralism is the understanding that knowledge of the divine, as well as salvation, exists in other religions. The divine does not work only in one religion. The one divine power is worshipped in different cultural expressions and known by many different names. The result is respect for the autonomy of religions and agreement that knowledge of the divine is accumulated through joined contributions by all religions.

Jenny Daggers has presented a different model from the post-colonial theology of religions, one that emphasizes giving a voice to religions which were marginalized during colonialism.[17] George Lindbeck presented an alternative

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[16] See Knitter, P.F. (2005), *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, New York: Orbis Books and D'Costa, G. (1986), *Theology and Religious Pluralism*. Oxford/New York: Basil Blackwell.

[17] Daggers, J. (2013), *Postcolonial theology of religions: Particularity and pluralism in world Christianity,* London Routledge.

to these models when he discussed inter-religious relations from the perspective of Post-foundational Theology.[18]

Lindbeck considers religions from a cultural-linguistic perspective as different idiomatic expressions of reality.[19] This leads to the question of truth. Lindbeck distinguishes between different types of truth, whether propositional (that which one confesses to be true) or ontological (how one expresses what one believes).[20] Propositional truths can only be divided into true or false propositions, no degrees of variation exist. Religions can, however, contain a mixture of true and false statements.[21] Religions may be compared in the way in which they are effectively able to represent and communicate the inner experience of the divine. All religions can function truly in a symbolic sense, but religions differ in the way in which they effectively express their belief.[22] For example, a religion may express their particular belief in God, but their belief about God may differ from that of other religions that also believe in God.[23] The belief in God is then true for all, but the beliefs about God can be true for some and false for others.

Lindbeck uses the image of a map to illustrate the way in which religions differ in terms of beliefs.[24] Whether the map is a true representation of reality is not the question, rather how the map is followed in order to provide guidance is important. Some maps may be lacking in terms of accuracy and completeness, some may be clear at the beginning of the journey and become vague.[25] The point is how the map is used. A good map in the hands of ignorant people is useless. A vague map in the hands of devoted seekers may be useful.

Religions can therefore learn from one another and relate to one another on many different levels. Dialogue between religions does not need to have the conversion of the other as end goal. There are many possible reasons for dialogue.[26] Dialogue might have the goal of encouraging other religions to be the best they can be and to make a contribution to society in the best way they can.[27] Dialogue can include encouraging religions to convey better expressions of their particular experience.[28]

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[18]   Lindbeck, G.A. (1984), *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.*
[19]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 47.
[20]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 47.
[21]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 47.
[22]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 47.
[23]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 51.
[24]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 52.
[25]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 52.
[26]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 54.
[27]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 54.
[28]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 61.

Based on Lindbeck's considerations, Paul Knitter formulated a model which he refers to as the Acceptance Model.[29] In short, the Acceptance Model refers to recognizing the absolute autonomy of religions, emphasizing that religions have nothing in common and have nothing to talk about except matters of mutual concern, which mostly results in conversation about ethics and social concerns.[30] Interaction between cultures and religions is reduced to nothing more than the sort of polite conversations good neighbours would have.[31]

Based on this analysis of theology of religions it appears that we end up with two extremes on a continuum interpreting inter-religious relations. At one end is exclusivism, where the dominance of Christianity is emphasized, and at the other is the Acceptance Model, based on post-foundationalism, propounding multiple truths, autonomy, and peaceful co-existence of all religions.

This continuum is populated with varied levels of interaction between religions, each variation resulting in a degree of violence or radicalization. Now that we have discussed mission and theology of religions, one last important element remains to be considered, that of culture.

Theology of culture

The debate on what constitutes culture is still a lively one because of the 'multiplicity of its referents' as well as the 'studied vagueness' of the concept.[32] There is, however, no shortage of definitions for culture: Max Weber theorized that humans are animals suspended in webs of significance spun by themselves; E.B. Tylor described culture vaguely as a 'most complex whole'; Kluckhohn elaborated in a twenty-seven page-long definition on what culture is; Goodenough included 'heart and mind' as the location of culture.[33] The main elements as to what culture is must be understood as the result of a long line of research culminating in a wide variety of perspectives. Clifford Geertz defines culture as follows:

Culture denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.[34]

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[29] Knitter, P.F. (2005), *Introducing Theologies of Religions*. New York: Orbis Books, 173-237.
[30] Knitter, *Introducing Theologies,* 181.
[31] Knitter, *Introducing Theologies,* 183.
[32] Geertz, C. (1973), *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays,* New York: Basis Books, 89.
[33] Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures,* 4, 5, 11.
[34] Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures,* 89.

For Geertz, culture indeed reflects the webs Weber referred to.[35] Studying culture, however, not only involve the description of these webs, rather it involves a search for meaning.

Our question concerns: the relation between culture and religion and the way in which mission relates to inter-culturalism.

Religion as identity marker

Linda Woodhead differentiates between religion as belief and religion as identity marker.[36] Religion as belief refers to a religious interest in dogmas, doctrines, and propositions. Religion as identity marker refers to religion as a source of identity, either socially or as personal choice. Based on Woodhead's differentiation, Kilp indicates how religion is currently excelling at being a cultural identity marker, increasingly so in Europe.[37] As so many different factors are at play in determining identity, cultural identity must, however, be seen as being in flux.[38] The result is that people become alienated from traditional religious beliefs and practices and turn to cultural-religious identities, which do not necessarily include religious beliefs. One is then identified as member of a group based on religion which overlaps with culture. There is no longer separation between religion and culture, although religion is considered as only one form of expression of culture. Christianity, for one, cannot exist except in a cultural form.[39] In such instances where religion becomes a cultural identity marker it becomes possible that we may end up in a scenario Huntington described as the 'clash of civilizations'.[40] It is not only religions that encounter one another, but also monolithic blocks of cultures that meet.

Challenges in the relation between mission and inter-culturalism

The culture-religion relation presents three challenges: inculturation, secularization and syncretism.

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[35]   Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures*, 5.
[36]   Woodhead, L. (2011), 'Five concepts of religion', *International Review of Sociology* 1, 119.
[37]   Kilp, A. (2011), 'Religion in the construction of the cultural "self" and "other"', ENDC Proceedings 14, 212.
[38]   Vroom, H. (1996), *Religie als ziel van cultuur:Religieus pluralism als uitdaging*: Zoetermeer: Meinema, 118.
[39]   Shorter, A. (1995), *Toward a Theology of Inculturation,* New York: Orbis Books, 12.
[40]   Huntington, S.P. (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of world order,* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Inculturation

Inculturation refers to the theological process of presenting the gospel as a culture in terms that are relevant, or as Shorter defines it: 'the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture or cultures'.[41] This implies that the gospel crosses the borders of cultures. The gospel needs to be transposed into a culture.[42] Inculturation should be distinguished from acculturation which refers to 'the communication between cultures on a footing of mutual respect and tolerance'.[43] Acculturation refers to a sociological process, whereas inculturation is a theological concept.[44] The concept of inculturation has a Roman Catholic origin, with the equivalent terms 'indigenization' and 'contextualization' having a Protestant background. Preceding Vatican II, where the use of the concept of inculturation was consolidated, the concepts of 'accommodation' and 'adaptation' were more commonly used.[45]

Schineller adds a different perspective to inculturation when he defines it as 'the incarnation of Christian life and the Christian message in a particular cultural context … transforming and remaking it (culture) so as to bring about a new creation.'[46] In sharing the gospel with the world, Christians must make Jesus Christ incarnated, become flesh, in each culture. The argument is that cultures differ, each with their own questions and challenges and that Jesus Christ must become incarnated in each and every particular context, in each particular time and place. This is a never-ending process.[47]

During the 1990s there appears to have been a vibrant debate on the matter of the relation between gospel and culture. This debate seems to have dissipated and has only now recently become necessary and vibrant once again.

What is important to realize concerning the debate about introducing the gospel to cultures, is that the debate is based on the views and understandings of a theology of religions. For example, the concept of the gospel being incarnate in cultures is based on a fulfilment theology.

This becomes clear when Schineller indicates that responsible inculturation takes into account the fact that God has already been working among all cultures.[48] God has been preparing the ground for the Christian seed. These signs of God's presence in cultures need to be acknowledged, sought out, and

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41   Shorter, *Toward a Theology*, 4.
42   Shorter, *Toward a Theology*, 13.
43   Shorter, *Toward a Theology*, 8.
44   Shorter, *Toward a Theology*, 10.
45   Shorter, *Toward a Theology*, 11.
46   Schineller, P. (1990), *A Handbook on Inculturation,* New York: Paulist Press, 6.
47   Schineller, *Handbook on Inculturation,* 8.
48   Schineller, *Handbook on Inculturation,* 12.

connected to the gospel. The gospel can never be a finished, complete parcel only to be delivered and accepted to each new culture. The gospel cannot only exist in Western European categories and thought patterns as that would reflect a radicalized position in relation to missionary work. Rather, local communities should be allowed to develop the teaching, liturgy and practice of the local church in such a way that it becomes familiar to the local culture.[49]

I believe the debate on inculturation needs to be taken up again in order to counter radicalized mission work. The gospel needs to be communicated in a culturally non-threatening way.

Secularization

A lot has been written over the past half century on the phenomenon of secularization. Compare the works by Steve Bruce, Craig Calhoun, Mark Jurgensmeyer and Jonathan van Antwerpen and Charles Taylor.[50] Stefan Paas differentiates between the missiologists and the social scientists reflecting on secularization.[51] Both the perspectives of missiologists and social scientists are important in understanding the phenomenon.

From the onset it is clear that a differentiation between secularism and secularization is necessary. Secularism, according to Jose Casanova, is a worldview or ideology which takes on many forms, for instance the differentiation between state and religion, between science and philosophy or theology, and the differentiation between law and morality.[52] The meaning of secularization is varied. Some refer to secularization as individual piety as opposed to those who link secularization to the demise of religion in society.[53] Secularization describes a social process.[54] It refers to the changes made in the relationship between the institutional spheres of the religious and secular. In the process of secularization Casanova indicates that over time two distinct theories developed, namely that religion will decline, and that religion will be privatized.[55] This brings Casanova to define secularization as 'a process of differentiation

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49 Schineller, *Handbook on Inculturation,* 18.
50 Bruce, S. (2002), *God is dead: Secularization in the West*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; Bruce, S. (2011), *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Calhoun, C. Juergensmeyer, M. and Van Antwerpen, J., (Ed.) (2011), *Rethinking Secularism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Taylor, C. (2007), *A Secular Age*, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
51 Paas, 'Post-Christian', 6.
52 Casanova, J. (2011), 'The Secular, Secularisations and Secularisms', in Calhoun, C., Juergensmeyer, M. and Van Antwerpen, J. (Eds.), *Rethinking Secularism, 54,55.*
53 Dobbelaere, K., 2011, 'The Meaning and Scope of Secularization', in Clarke, P.B., (Ed.), 2011, *The Oxford Handbook of The Sociology of Religion,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 599.
54 Casanova, 'The Secular', 54.
55 Casanova, 'The Secular', 55.

and liberation of the secular from the religious'.[56] From the existing material on the matter of secularization, four main theories as to the origin can be formulated.

(i) *Demystification of the world through a process of rationalization*

One of the first enemies of religion is the human tendency to rationalize. This theory, presented by Max Weber, seems to form the core of the traditional theory of secularization. Rationalization takes place as intellectual and economic activity.

Weber differentiates between different classes in society. One of the strata in society he identifies are the intellectuals.[57] The intellectuals tend to seek through rational ways meaning in reality.[58] This exercise in rationalism suppresses the belief in magic and causes the world to become disenchanted or demystified.[59] That which has been regarded as mysterious in the world is explained rationally, leaving the world devoid of mystery and secrets. Weber called this the 'world-fleeing intellectualist religion'.[60] Through rationalism there is no more room left for the transcendental to operate in the immanent reality. Every mysterious event now has a logical, rational explanation. Religion has become obsolete.

According to Weber's analysis, the Protestant strand of Christianity seems to be more prone to economic rationalism.[61] Wealth and worldly prosperity have been interpreted by Protestant groups to indicate the blessing and grace God has bestowed upon them.[62] This particularly Protestant love of material and worldly possessions will eventually distract attention from religion and therefore lead to secularization.[63] Weber concludes by indicating that Calvinism, a Protestant stream within Christianity, is the seedbed of a capitalistic economy.[64] Thus, through rationalism and materialism, Protestants will bring about secularization which will lead to the demise of religion or the changed function of religion in society.

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[56]   Casanova, 'The Secular', 55.
[57]   Weber, M. (1966), *The Sociology of Religion (translated by Ephraim Fischoff)*, London: Methuen and Co, 124; Weber, M. (1958), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (translated by Talcott Parsons)*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 35.
[58]   Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 125.
[59]   Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 105; Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 125.
[60]   Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 125.
[61]   Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 40.
[62]   Weber, *The Sociology of Religion,* 108, 148.
[63]   Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 40, 42.
[64]   Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 43.

The historic process of spreading Christianity through mission must also be viewed through the perspective of the need to increase the economic base in order to increase opportunities for commerce. In this sense Christianity has acted in a radical way by enforcing conversion upon others as means to a selfish, materialistic end.

Weber is correct in the sense that a world explained rationally has no need for the mysterious workings of the transcendental. Where human beings are so in control (economically and politically) there is no need for supernatural assistance or intervention. In a world of material abundance where every commodity is readily available, man has no need for supernatural provision. As for the future of the human soul, the possibility of an existence after this life of superlative luxury provides comfort. Weber is therefore correct in assuming that rationality and capitalism have made this world devoid of the transcendental, stimulating the process of secularization.

(ii) *Stadial Consciousness Theory*

Humans have overcome the irrationality of belief. Underlying this statement is Casanova's Stadial Consciousness Theory, describing the evolutionary development of humans from primitive to modern.[65] The term 'primitive' denotes the religious notion of humans, while being 'modern' describes the secular notion. Humans develop from the stadium of the primitive, irrational, metaphysical religion to that of a modern, rational, post-metaphysical secular consciousness.[66] For Casanova the Stadial Consciousness Theory has contributed the most to secularization.[67] In societies where the Stadial Consciousness is absent, secularization also seems to be absent, although religious revival seems strong in such communities.

The Stadial Consciousness Theory views religion as being intolerant and quite often responsible for creating conflict.[68] In this discourse, references are often to the religion of others or the religion that someone decided to leave behind. To be secular, then, presents a condition where one is free from religion, thus free from intolerance.

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[65]   Casanova, 'The Secular', 59.
[66]   Casanova, 'The Secular', 58.
[67]   Casanova, 'The Secular', 59.
[68]   Casanova, 'The Secular', 69.

Durkheim, after analysing the social order of his time, came to the conclusion that religion is on the decline or in regression.[69] This was not only true of traditional religion, but also of Christianity.[70]

For Durkheim the organic nature of religion enabled it to be born, to grow, and eventually die. This process was inevitable as it was endless. Durkheim's understanding of what is now referred to as secularization falls under two separate headings: the changing of religion altogether, and the change or decline of religion within society.[71] Regarding the latter, Durkheim acknowledged both the process of religion dying out yet simultaneously acknowledging it's perseverance. This reflects Durkheim's description of the situation in his own time but also his understanding of the normative role of religion.

The implication of Durkheim's theory is that the more primitive a society, the more influence religion has on it.[72] The opposite of course being that the less influence religion has on society, the more modern it has become. This is one of the peculiarities of Durkheim, his suggestion that a society becomes more religious when it regresses to its original form. For Durkheim regression would then be positive as it denotes a return to religious dominance in society.

The decline of religious influence in society is not something new for Durkheim.[73] From the first communities where religion was dominant, societies have slowly evolved where religion plays a lesser role. This contention is opposed by Robert Bellah's theory that religion does change by way of evolution.[74] Change does not eradicate religion, rather it results in different forms or functions of religion in society. Indeed, Durkheim proclaimed that religion would play a diminishing role in social life.[75] As time passes, social institutions such as politics, economics and science will free themselves from religion, growing into a situation where individual freedom is increased.[76]

(iii) Subtraction Theory

Secularism is what remains when religion is removed from society. The secular is considered to be the substratum which remains when religion as

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[69] Pickering, W.S.F. (1984), *Durkheim's Sociology of Religion: Themes and Theories,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 442.
[70] Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology,* 442.
[71] Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology,* 442.
[72] Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology,* 443.
[73] Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology,* 445.
[74] Bellah, R. (2011), *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age,* London: Harvard University Press.
[75] Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology,* 446.
[76] Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology,* 446.

superstructure is removed.[77] For Taylor modern unbelief does not, however, equal the absence of belief or even indifference.[78]

For Peter Berger secularization refers to 'the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols'.[79] Berger's theory makes more sense in light of Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane which characterizes the world humans exist in.[80] The purpose of Berger's analysis was to evaluate the way in which society understands its own position in the world, the worldview and the position of humanity when not seen from a religious perspective. Durkheim's distinction, namely the strict separation between the sacred and profane, is disappearing. For some members of society, a number of elements might still be considered to belong to the profane, whereas for other members of society, the same elements might be considered to belong to the sacred. Sundermeier attests to this when he indicates how religion in society went through a process which he calls the 'erosion of religion', which not only affected institutional religion, but also the role religion plays in popular culture.[81]

The description by Berger makes both the subjective and objective side of secularism clear. Berger professed that the objective side of secularization would be enabled by the loss of organized religion's influence.[82] The influence of religion on the public domain would become less visible. Religion would exert less influence on the arts, philosophy and even literature. Sundermeier describes a society where religious influence on social institutions like marriage and education has disappeared entirely.[83] Knowledge of religious symbols has dissipated. On the other hand, a subjective side to secularization is to be noted.[84] Individuals in society no longer exhibit the need for the concept of the transcendental. The understanding of the world, humanity, and ethics are no longer determined by religion. People affiliate less with formal religious institutions, falling back instead on a subjective, constructed universe filled with selected religious elements.

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[77] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* 530.
[78] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* 269.
[79] Berger, P.L. (1967), *The sacred canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion,* New York: Anchor Books, 107.
[80] Durkheim, E. (1912), *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (translated by Carol Cosman),* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 36.
[81] Sundermeier, T. (1999), *Was ist Religion: Religionswissenschaft im theologischen Kontext,* Kaiser Verlag, 12.
[82] Berger, *The sacred canopy,* 15.
[83] Sundermeier, *Was ist Religion,* 12.
[84] Berger, *The sacred canopy,* 15, 16.

This is what Berger refers to as the 'privatization of religion'.[85] Religion is no longer a public matter, but a personal matter. Sundermeier attests to this by indicating how this emphasis on the profane instead of the sacred, does not necessarily mean the end of religion.[86] The growth of new religious movements, and the resurgence of both fundamentalism and esotericism, merely prove that religion seeks new ways of expression; it is no longer expression in an institutional way, but in a private manner.[87]

(iiii) Disappearance Theory

The disappearance theory is based on tendencies of decline of religious activities and participation within religious communities, resulting in the dying out of religion. Steve Bruce is an exponent of this view. For Bruce, the Protestant Reformation was the starting point of the large-scale eradication of religion. The Reformation, according to Bruce, contributed significantly to individualism.[88] The Reformation eroded rationalism. To believe in something is different to being convinced it is true according to Bruce.[89]

For Bruce, religion becomes an individual matter. Religion has become a subjective, selective, 'pick-and-mix' of elements preferred by the individual.[90] He argues that the social relevance of religion is on the decline and will eventually disappear.[91] For Bruce, Christianity exhibits a clear line of gradual regression from congregation to denomination, leading to cult and ultimately to irrelevance. This effect of secularization will remain permanent says Bruce.[92]

The demise of religion is, however, not due to lack of supply, rather to a decline in the demand for religion. Charles Taylor explains the disappearance of religion being due to a change of frame, the 'immanent frame' within which modern man exists but does not make provision for the existence of the transcendental.[93] All meaning is retained in an immanent world, causing reality to be devoid of higher values and meaning. The gods have disappeared. Berger referred to the sacred canopy that no longer functions in the way it was intended to.[94] Due to this view religion cannot but die out and disappear.

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[85]   Berger, *The sacred canopy*, 133.
[86]   Sundermeier, *Was ist Religion*, 12.
[87]   Sundermeier, *Was ist Religion*, 13.
[88]   Bruce, S. (1996), *Religion in the Modern World: from cathedrals to cults,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5, 230.
[89]   Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World*, 230.
[90]   Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World*, 233.
[91]   Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World*, 133.
[92]   Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World*, 262.
[93]   Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 542.
[94]   Berger, *The sacred canopy*.

Faith is only one of many other possible options.[95] Faith is no longer a logical reaction, rather it becomes another possible way of assigning meaning to reality. Religion is, like so many other possibilities, a hermeneutical key in interpreting reality.

Under a post-modern paradigm with a relative understanding of truth, the implication is that what you believe may be true for you, but it does not mean that it is the only possible option. Indeed, it may be just as valid an option to have no religion at all. This requires a Copernican shift: belief in God is no longer society's logical, rational, obvious assumption. Belief in God becomes just one more possible option.

Schleiermacher accused intellectuals of rationalizing religion to such an extent that all that remained was a consideration of metaphysics and morality.[96] God was replaced with wisdom of the sages and poets, humanism and nationalism, art and science.[97] This world has become focused only on the immanent, the material, the corporeal world.[98] Humans believe they are capable of satisfying their own spiritual needs by reading, rationalizing and contemplating this worldly wisdom. Humans have become self-reliant without the need for spiritual reality anymore. Humans have created a separate universe by filling their reality with self-created and earthly things.[99] Taylor refers to this as the 'buffered self', human beings that are no longer in need of religion.[100]

To be without religion, to be secular, can be considered in a radical way as being superior to those still stuck in a 'primitive' stage of human development and prone to being 'religious'. The 'educated' and 'enlightened' can consider themselves free from the limitations and restrictions of religious prescriptions. Similarly, those practicing religion in a private capacity may consider themselves to be superior and truly 'enlightened' in recognizing the spiritual realm amid a secular and materialistically orientated world. Both attitudes reflect a radical self-presentation of superiority and both these fundamental positions become fertile breeding grounds for radicalism.

Some, such as Peter Berger, argue that the current context is marked by a stage where secularization is considered as something of the past, and a

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[95]   Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 43.
[96]   Schleiermacher, F. (1899). *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern. 7th Edition in the edition by Rudolf Otto.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991.
[97]   Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion,* 18.
[98]   Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion,* 21.
[99]   Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion,* 23
[100] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 32.

process of re-sacralization might be eminent.[101] The new energy, vigour, and emphasis on religion is, however, not simply a return to a previous period in history during which religion was all-pervasive in society. Rather, we should talk of the current growth of religiosity or spirituality, something slightly different to religion.

People still have a need to believe in something, however, this need is not expressed in the traditional religious forms. Instead, there is a much greater tendency to create one's own compilation of religious elements deemed useful by the individual. Krüger, Lubbe and Steyn refer to this process as a search for 'alternative spirituality'.[102]

Religion is considered as a cultural expression only where the intricacies of religious practices and beliefs are no longer the main focus. Religion does still exist, but now, more than ever before, it does so as a cultural identity marker. Consequently, within such a view the transcendent as objective power is reduced to symbolic and cultural value. The immanent elements of religion (i.e., rituals, clothing, and dietary requirements) are emphasized in terms of culturally infused expressions of identity.

This focus on material elements may in fact contribute to secularization. Consider the criticism Bruno Reinhardt made of material religion.[103] According to Reinhardt, the extensive focus on material elements associated with religion detracts attention from the transcendental and enforces the immanence of religion.

Syncretism

Concerns about syncretism arise every time the gospel in a mission context enters a new cultural environment. This is especially the case among those who adhere to the exclusivist model of theology of religions. An exclusivist position requires the absolute truth and sovereignty of the gospel to be protected and defended. The danger of syncretism increases the moment that dialogue between religions is considered: 'Dialogue is dangerous as it may lead to changes in belief and threaten the distinctive character of the Christian message'.[104]

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[101] Berger, P.L. (1999), 'The Desecularization of the World', in Berger, P.L. (Ed.) *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics,* Grand Rapids, Michigan: WB Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1-18.

[102] Krüger, J.S., Lubbe, G. and Steyn, H.C. (1996), *The Human search for Meaning: A multireligion Introduction to the Religions of Humankind,* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, 294.

[103] Reinhardt, Bruno (2016), 'Don't make it a doctrine: Material religion, transcendence, critique,' in *Anthropological Theory* Vol 16 (1), 76.

[104] Mulder, D.C. (1989), 'Dialogue and Syncretism: Some concluding remarks', in Gort, J.D., Vroom, H.M., Fernhout, R. and Wessels, A., (Eds.), *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach,* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William E. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 206.

Different views on syncretism do exist, however. We can distinguish between symbiotic and synthetic syncretism.[105] Synthetic syncretism is the conscious selection of religious elements in order to construct a new religious system. Symbiotic syncretism is the gradual and natural growth by consent of a religion existing in close proximity to other religions. Religions are organic and dynamic and prone to both exerting influence and to being influenced. Symbiotic syncretism is likened to inculturation as a natural process of introducing a foreign element into a culture with, over time, the element becoming familiar and acceptable.

Syncretism can easily be the result of relativism which is associated with the pluralist model of a theology of religions. When it is accepted that all religions contain an element of truth, and that they each have some contribution to make to the understanding of the transcendent, what one believes becomes relative. A mixture of elements, then, become not only permissible, but a prerequisite even.

Konvivenz as opportunity

If we end up with the dilemma of the need to convey the gospel to the world, but are faced with the challenges of inculturation, syncretism and secularization, what are we to do? Dialogue between religions is an important option, but there are conditions to dialogue as we have seen from Lindbeck's suggestions.[106]

Sundermeier proposes *konvivenz* as way of peaceful coexistence in a multi-cultural and multi-religious world.[107] The concept *konvivenz* originated in a Latin-American context.[108] *Konvivenz* is not merely the act of living together, the coexistence of Christian missionaries with non-Christian cultures, it extends to the existence of the church in the world. Three elements of living together becomes expressions of *konvivenz*: mutual assistance, mutual learning, and celebrating together.

In helping others, Sundermeier suggests the church seek out ways of assisting communities and their needs.[109] The result is that communities maintain their independence and integrity of identity. The church helps with food, shelter, clothing and whatever might be necessary to improve living conditions.

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[105] Sundermeier, T. (1996), *sv Synkretismus. Evangelische Kirchenlexikon: Internationale theologische Enzyklopädie*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 603.
[106] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 47-61.
[107] Sundermeier, T. (1995), *Konvivenz und Differenz: Studien zu einer verstehenden Missionswissenschaft*, Erlangen: Verlag der Ev.-Luth. Mission.
[108] Sundermeier, *Konvivenz und Differenz*, 45.
[109] Sundermeier, *Konvivenz und Differenz*, 46.

When communities live together they start learning together too and so increase their knowledge of each other. Christians should not view other cultures as ignorant or in need of education, rather Christians are also able to learn from other cultures.[110] Learning becomes a reciprocal process based on the equality of humanity. As formulated by Sundermeier: '*Konvivenz* is a learning community where all learn from and with one another.'[111]

The final aspect of *konvivenz* is people celebrating together.[112] Celebrating the festival of another culture indicates one's respect for that culture. By celebrating together, all social differences are removed and, albeit only during the period of the festival itself, all participants appear to exist in harmony. Over the centuries Christianity has learned to adopt and incorporate various elements from different cultures. Festivals provide opportunities to fill with new meaning the form of the festival, thus finding new reasons for, and creating new festivals in a culture, may bring about the presence of Christianity in that culture.

The attitude underlying Sundermeier's concept of *konvivenz* is echoed by others. Tariq Ramadan, in discussing the possibility of inter-religious dialogue, refers to the importance of culture.[113] In the interactions between religions, Ramadan suggests that the principle of integration plays a dominant role.[114] When cultures interact, there is no place for isolation, withdrawal and 'obsession with identity'. Rather, entering into authentic dialogue as equals is necessary as it will eventually lead to mutual enrichment and 'partners in action'. In the end, the interaction between religions is not about relativizing one's own convictions and seeking universal neutral principles, rather, it is about acceptance and respect of pluralism, diversity and the belief of the Other.[115]

Lindbeck states that religions cannot engage with one another if they each consider themselves to represent a superior articulation of the common experience which all religions endeavour to express.[116] It is the attitude of superiority that destroys the possibility of open dialogue.[117] In this way *konvivenz* contributes to establishing *shalom* in the world.

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[110]   Sundermeier, *Konvivenz und Differenz*, 47.
[111]   Sundermeier, *Konvivenz und Differenz*, 48.
[112]   Sundermeier, *Konvivenz und Differenz*, 49.
[113]   Ramadan, T. (2004), *Western Muslims and the future of Islam,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 200.
[114]   Ramadan, T. (2010), *What I believe,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5.
[115]   Ramadan, *What I believe*, 6.
[116]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 55.
[117]   Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 59.

Conclusion

The relation of mission and inter-culturalism has been presented from the perspective of mission, theology of religions, and culture. Three challenges, namely syncretism, secularization, and inculturation, have been identified. Lastly, an attempt was made to present a solution to the dilemma of the relation between mission and culture by referring to the concept of *konvivenz* which contributes to *shalom* in the world.

The outcome of our deliberations is to determine a theologically responsible response to the possibility of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue in order to address radicalization.

The outcome of inter-religious dialogue should not be the ability to convince others to convert. Mulder is able to guide our ongoing endeavour: 'Inter-religious dialogue has as goal to create an attitude of willingness to listen and to learn'.[118] Only by gaining knowledge through listening to others can radicalization be tamed.

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118   Mulder, 'Dialogue and Syncretism', 211.

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The Role of a Policy of Multiculturalism in the Struggle against Religious Extremism: The Example of Azerbaijan

Ravan Hasanov

Abstract

Multicultural customs and traditions as well as mutual understanding have predominated in Azerbaijani society which is situated in a geography where, historically, various cultures and religious creeds have merged. Today Azerbaijan has managed to guarantee its multicultural nation completely that embraces the ideology of multiculturalism into the state policy. This article will present the political-legal experience of the Azerbaijani state in comparison with other states in terms of freedom of faith and in the struggle against religious radicalism as well as religious extremism.

Introduction

Religion is a social phenomenon has a vital role which formed the society's belief and it has a system that manages social order. It noted that all religions are based on the principles of peacefulness, humanism and humaneness, and these creeds act as an ideological basis which guides a widely social interactions. It founds that more than two thirds of the world population are the believers of different religions, the relations between religion and state, as well as religion and society, keep the peace from present till future.

Now the freedom of religion is one of the fundamental human rights. Although today religion is viewed through the prism of human rights and national-spiritual values, it also requires a an approach from the perspective of security. In many countries religion is separate from the state, however, the

state must remain responsible for a citizen's religious status and security in a country.[1]

To maintain peace, tolerance, and multiculturalism in the world today, there is a great need for distinguishing the freedom of religion from religious radicalism, religious extremism, and fanaticism. The process of deradicalization, and the steps taken by states and societies in this regard, should also be analysed from a scientific perspective to obtain the data from the field. Religious extremism and radicalism pose a threat to the national and multicultural security of any state, and in the struggle against these phenomena, States need to combat these threats through improving their legislative basis in different ways. Because religious extremism can lead to terrorism, particular attention should also be attached to international cooperation in this regard.

Multicultural Azerbaijan society experiences the religious extremist and radical forces. Her experiences in managing the religion radicalism such violation on the social stability, caused religious confrontations, and some have impinged on state sovereignty and stability for their own benefit. Despite this, today Azerbaijan imposes the multicultural society as an important state policy.

This article presents the political-legal experience of the Azerbaijan in comparison with other states in freedom for religion policy and struggled against both religious radicalism and extremism.

The threat to Azerbaijan's national security with regard to the religious radicalism religion has a multi-dimension aspect. It records that some religious-political groups, often materially and morally supported by foreign states. Their collaborative networks frequently functioning without permission, and are notoriously dangerous for national security. Thus in an international report, it shows that such groups are inclined to national and religious extremism and terrorism. Their activities cause the massive danger for the stability of society. Indeed, they can be considered a threat to our national security.[2]

Azerbaijan and the struggle against religious extremism

Terrorism and extremism, which pose a serious threat to humanity for present national and international security. In many cases these kinds of conflicts occur around ethnic, religious, racial and other lines. Irrespective of motives and reasons for the formation of different terrorist groups, terrorism remains

[1] Gunduz, Ismayilov (2014). *Tolerance: What We Know and We Don't,* Baku: Zaman, 191.
[2] Religious security is part of national security. The newspaper "Zaman". 17 March 2015
    http://anl.az/down/meqale/zaman/2015/mart/426816.htm

a manifestation of extremism and the eradication of this danger is one of the most important and basic duties of humanity.[3]

'Religious extremism' often implies aggression derived from religious belief. However, no matter how paradoxical it may seem, religion and aggression are two things that might be simultaneously emerged in the radicalism. Religious extremism clearly has no connection with sacred religious creeds and is an extremely dangerous social phenomenon. Every state combats religious extremism and radicalism in different ways.

When we review the historical experience of human civilization, the interaction between religious extremism and terrorism can be seen. In general, the religious factor is of great importance in the formation of emotional-psychological, extremist behaviour as well as terrorist activities. It can be argued that religious extremist activities carried out under the guise of religion, are the criminal activities of different organizations aiming to change the constitutional structure by force, take over power, instigate religious control and use other acts of violence to achieve political goals.[4]

To strengthen her struggle against religious extremism, the Republic of Azerbaijan regularly improves its legislative, educational, as well as law-enforcement measures, and always consolidates the ideological bases upon which they rest. Data obtained indicates that the ideological differences and non co-existence relationships are responsible for the emerging of new cells of religious radicalism.

On 5 December 2015, the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted a special Law 'On the Struggle Against Religious Extremism'. By defining the legal, organizational bases of the struggle against religious extremism, this law fixes the rights and obligations of both state organs and citizens in carrying out their fight against religious extremism. The main purpose of adopting this law is to protect the constitutional structure, sovereignty, and multicultural security of the state and strengthen the struggle against armed groups and terrorist organizations formed under the guise of religion. As such groups and organizations present a threat to the entirety of humanity and are trying to recruit young generations into their groups via the non collaborative interactions due to limited knowledge on religion and national ideology. A Law which prevents the growth of new followers of religious deviation.

Furthermore, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan which prevents the growth of religious radicalism l now successfully regulates the relations

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[3] Mammadov J., Azerbaijan in the Struggle Against Extremism. 4 http://www.gumilev-center.az/az-rbaycan-dini-ekstremizml-mubariz-d/

[4] Hajiyeva, A. (2016), *Religion and Terrorism,* Baku: S.E.P., 27.

between religion and state. The new law makes a distinction between the freedom of religion and religious extremism, radicalism, and fanaticism from the legal point of view.

Certainly, the existence of mono-ethnic and intolerant societies is one of the causes of religious extremism. From this point of view, the basic ideological foundation in the struggle against religious radical groupings is the advocacy and support of the idea of multiculturalism and the model of multicultural society. By turning the policy of multiculturalism into one of the political guidelines, Azerbaijan has created an approach of equality to all religious communities, creeds, and cultures at the state level.

However, in contrast, in many Western societies the notions of religious fundamentalism, religious extremism, and terrorism have thought of these three terms are same and often associated with Islam. It is very unfair if a small part of Islamic communities that manipulate the Islam Jihad to make terrors which often threat the big Islam communities and non Moslem are used to generalize that all Islam fellows are terrorists. This is very dangerous. In other words, a dialogue between Moslem community and Western one need to arrange more to reduce the religious radicalism al over the world. A very interesting research conducted by sociologists from the University of Maryland in 2008, it revealed that 51 per cent of the population of 20 countries completely rejected any association with a particular religious creed.[5] It found that the misleading of using the religion is associated with terrorism have been rejected by the informants.

It should be noted that the line of development of these dangerous phenomena, which have actually no connections with religion and are beyond religion, is usually as follows:

Religious fundamentalism → religious radicalism and fanaticism → religious extremism → terrorism

It seems that ideology as a main factor in religious radicalism, instead of combination of the favourable socio-political and psychological environment. That is, the existence of religious dogmas, inherited from the past, absolute, unchangeable, and unadaptable. The following conditions trigger the Religious fundamentalism;

• Believers should be managed by unchangeable and absolute religious rules established in the past,

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[5]   *The Caucasus and Globalization,* 3 (2-3). https://www.ca-c.org/c-g/2009/journal_eng/c-g-2-3/c-gE-02-03-2009.pdf

- These religious rules can be interpreted only in one way, and
- These religious rules should be above the secular rules.

Religious fundamentalism first manifested itself in Christianity and Judaism in the 1900s, whereas in Islam it started to spread extensively at the time when Salafism emerged in the Middle East in the nineteenth century.[6]

In a report by the European Commission in 2008, the notion of religious radicalism was considered together with religious fundamentalism, and it was noted that radicalism is a phenomenon that can pave the way to religious extremism and terrorism by uniting people with similar views and ideas around extremist religious ideas.[7] It can be concluded that religious extremism is not something that emerges suddenly. Rather, religious fundamental ideas develop along a certain path which leads to religious extremism. The process of radicalization takes a long time. From this arises the question: when does this process of radicalization turn into extremism completely? Can one draw a line of demarcation between these two notions?

In fact, even in everyday life, it is very difficult to differentiate between freedom for religion and religious radicalism. Many scholars also demonstrate the long time of the entire process of transition from devout faith persons to religious extremists. Nevertheless, there is a generally accepted idea that an extremist is a person who tries to gain results through illegal means and by force in order to disseminate his/her ideas.

Although in the early twentieth century terrorism, radicalism and extremism resulted in a serious threat in a number of countries including Azerbaijan, the country's highly educated youth are capable not only of preventing radical terrorism but also of denouncing it openly. The development of education plays an important role in providing solutions to social problems and in the development of the country. Many conflicts in various countries around the world are due to the low level of education in those societies. Equal educational

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[6]   Mohammed-Ali Adraoui indicates that the origins of Salafist epistemology can be historically situated as a puritanical reaction to several successive crises in the Middle East during the nineteenth century, going back to the teachings of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). Mohamed-Ali Adraui (2019), 'Salafism, Jihadism and Radicalisation: Between A Common Doctrinal Heritage and The Logics of Empowerment', in Serafettin Pektas, Johan Leman (Eds.), *Militant Jihadisme. Today and Tomorrow*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 19-24. Motti Inbari describes radicalization within Judaism as a reaction to assimilation in the nineteenth century and Zionism in connection with the Holocaust, which resulted in the emergence of an apocalyptic radicalism in orthodox circles during the twentieth century. Motti Inbari (2014), 'Messianism as a Political Power in Contemporary Judaism', in J.J. Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, London: Oxford University Press, 391-406. In the first article in this collection J. Temmerman describes Christian fundamentalism in the twentieth century as a reaction to Darwinism.

[7]   The European Parliament, Religious Fundamentalism and Radicalism, Briefing, March 2015.

opportunities are created for every citizen in Azerbaijan, irrespective of his/her religion or ethnic identity. Owing to the work and commitment of the Azerbaijani state which attaches particular importance to this sector, over three thousand schools have been built over the last ten years. In addition, over 3500 young people have received an international education through education programmes abroad. Multiculturalism is taught at universities having been incorporated into our country's university curricula.[8]

The 4 December 2015 the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan 'On the Struggle against Religious Extremism', defined the legal and organizational foundations of the struggle against religious extremism in the Republic of Azerbaijan, fixing the rights and duties of both state organs and citizens in carrying out the struggle against religious extremism. In it religious radicalism and fanaticism are conceptualized as follows:

> Religious radicalism is behaviour which expresses extreme religious views within the framework of any faith, demonstrating irreconcilable attitudes in terms of determining the exceptional nature of those religious views and is characterized by the use of aggressive methods and means in it's dissemination.
>
> Religious fanaticism is an extreme degree of religious belief which excludes any critical approach and is accompanied by a blind observance of religious norms, one of the ideological bases of religious extremism.[9]

Besides, that law reflects the main goals of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the struggle against religious extremism – the guarantee of the foundations of the constitutional structure of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as its territorial integrity and security, the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, the detection and prevention of religious extremist activities, the minimization of the expected harm resulting from religious extremism, the detection and elimination of the reasons for and conditions of the formation of religious extremism and the implementation of extremist activities as well as the detection and elimination of the cases of financing religious extremism, the main principles of the struggle against religious extremism, the subjects, forms and methods of carrying out special operations against religious extremism, the situation and responsibility arising from the religious extremist activities, also in cases of violation of the appropriate provisions of the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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[8] The Role of the Youth in the Struggle Against Terrorism, Extremism and Radicalism. /http://www.dtx.gov.az/news112.php

[9] The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On the Struggle Against Religious Extremism, 2. http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/31509

Conclusion

It is obvious that as a social phenomenon, religion is a very sensitive and timely theme. The more religion is alienated from its original form, the more it becomes politicized and turned into a tool in the hands of extremist forces to achieve certain goals. Thus, from religious extremism it results in another negative social phenomenon. It makes an opposite stance of religious radicalists to force their ideas to hurt others. In the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan law enforcement bodies are taking consistent, educational, and systematic measures to prevent extremist and radical tendencies in the country. One of the state's main goals is to prevent the facilitation, or disallow the dissemination, of any radical sects or religious extremism in Azerbaijan.

It seems almost impossible in contemporary society to prevent these kinds of problems without the joint efforts of a powerful state, civil society, and international organizations. The existence of both a powerful state and a strong civil society is necessary in order to effectively combat extremism and radicalism.

As a civil and secular state, Azerbaijan has always been opposed to religious extremism, condemned religious intolerance, and has cooperated with other states in this sphere and is continuing to do so today as well. Azerbaijan gives preference to cooperating with the countries which are actively combating terrorism and religious extremism. Legal enforcement bodies are currently taking consistent and targeted measures to prevent the radical and extremist tendencies. The activities of all the radical religious movements in the country have been controlled and the importing of harmful religious literature and its dissemination in the country have been prevented.

Educational work is being carried out intensively in Azerbaijan both by state organizations and civil society representatives. Every year the State Committee for the Work with Religious Organizations develops special programmes on educational work and, in addition, hundreds of civil societies functioning in the country implement projects on religious education and advocacy of multiculturalism.

According to research carried out, it is clear that religious security is truly part of national security. Despite stability in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the peaceful co-existence of its citizens, the threat of religious extremism and radicalism exists for every state. To prevent this, traditions of tolerance and multiculturalism should be maintained, developed, and advocated throughout the whole of society.

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Mission and Missiology:
The Quest for a 'Grassroots' Narrative to Address 'Radicalization and Violence' in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Eugene Baron

Abstract

The Christian narrative of 'good news' by missionaries has assisted in the creation of, and breeding the conditions for, radicalization and violence in various countries, including South Africa. Religious narratives were merged with the nationalist ones of colonial and neo-colonial governments which have brought about the dehumanization and loss of identity of the oppressed and marginalized.[1] It is those narratives, adopted within neo-colonial contexts, that have been internalized by people and that have bred frustration and resulted in social isolation, often engendering a process of radicalization and violence. It was the task of the missionaries to convey the 'good news' to various communities and in South Africa missionaries did so through a particular narrative which did anything but deliver this to the majority of South Africans struggling to make ends meet. The 'good news' they proclaimed in most instances supported the oppressive government's narrative, one which only served to aggravate the oppressive conditions under which indigenous people had to live.[2] This chapter will discuss the relationship between narrative and violence in an African context. Subsequently, it will discuss three African contexts (Algeria, Rwanda, South Africa) and the predominant narratives that have engendered radicalization and violence and destabilized those countries. Then the focus turns to the question 'what kind of narrative should be dominant in South Africa to counter radicalization and violence?' Then finally, a discussion on how missiology should adopt projects of narrative construction.

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[1] Mary Doak discusses the use of a narrative approach in public theology. Her discussion of the corpus of Johann Baptist Metz (a Catholic theologian) is relevant for the discussion of the chapter because his approach is to link national narratives with the Christian one, reflecting this chapter's argument of the narrative approach of mission and missiology. He argues that real subjects and their historical experiences should appear in theology. Doak, M. (2004), *Reclaiming Narrative for Public Theology*, New York: State University of New York Press, 11, 108.

[2] Ernst Conradie refers to the apartheid as a quasi soteriology. See Coetzee, M. & Conradie, E. (2010), 'Apartheid as Quasi-Soteriology: The Remaining Lure and Threat', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 112-123.

Introduction

The causes of radicalization and violence are myriad. This chapter argues that one of the causes is a national narrative that creates marginalization and oppression. For many centuries there has been a particular narrative, presented and propagated especially by the 'Zionist'[3] movement throughout the world regarding the reasons, conditions, and the legitimization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This narrative has made the geopolitical space in the Middle East almost the epicenter of 'radicalization and violence', one that has continued for decades. Irrespective of whether the Zionist movement's narrative has any merit or not, the counter-narrative of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank receives less funding and is less widely publicized by the media, and nor is it globally supported by the Israeli government. This is not the only context within which a socially constructed narrative produces radicalization and violence. In 2009 the Catholic theologian, Emmanuel Katongole argued that the Rwanda genocide in 1994[4] was not the result of mere 'tribalism', rather the underlying narrative in the social imagination of the Rwandan people was the cause of such a massacre. He contends that the ethnic violence between the Hutus and Tutsis came about because of the narrative constructed by missionaries and internalized by the indigenous people of Rwanda.[5] He argues that those narratives became the reason why people who had previously been neighbors and friends, sometimes fellow congregants even, came to hate and kill each other. It is clear that in Rwanda the Church did not provide an alternative narrative to that which had been conveyed by colonial and post-colonial states. In fact, Church missionaries in these 'post-colonial' contexts, such as in the case of Rwanda, became both actors and complicit in a narrative that imagined violence and power of denomination as a means to prosperity and 'progress'.

Following Katongole, there is indeed often a close relationship between the narratives of both the Christian Church, colonial and neo-colonial

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[3] The foundations of Zionism were formulated some three thousand years ago, and they are: (1) The Jews are God's chosen people, (2). All other peoples are merely two-legged animals (*goys*), (3) The Jews have both the right and the obligation to rule the world.

[4] He argues that the churches in Rwanda played a significant role in the formation and narration of the two ethnic identities and how they see themselves, and the hatred that developed between the two ethnic groups (Hutus and Tutsis). He consequently argues that before the missionaries came to Rwanda, there was no such intense ethnic rivalry. Katongole, E. (2009), *Mirror to the Church. Resurrecting Faith after Genocide in Rwanda. Grand Rapids*, Michigan: Zondervan.

[5] Katongole (2009: 12) writes, 'If Christians in Rwanda had been slaughtered by non-Christians, it would have been tragic – but perhaps even easier to comprehend. However, Christians killed other Christians, often in the same churches where they had worshipped together.'

governments, and 'radicalization and violence'. The Christian Church can either support the government's narrative of society or provide an alternative one. Nevertheless, the Church's position in relation to a particular narrative also determines the kind of reaction that will come from society. In contexts of oppression and marginalization, the Church should provide an alternative narrative. It should constitute a narrative that articulates Africans as having human dignity, and forming an integral part of society, and as people who are able to function independently. Through its system and values its narrative should provide prosperity and growth on the continent. The radicalization and violence that emerged throughout South Africa during the years of apartheid, was the result of the 'masses' being marginalized through a 'quasi-soteriology', aggravated by the living conditions of blacks in South Africa. This apartheid narrative functioned as the backbone of the emergence of radicalization and violence in South Africa. Moreover, it seems unimaginable that such a narrative was in fact condoned by some of the churches in South Africa.[6]

Directly after the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, and before the first democratic election in 1994 in particular, South Africa was on the brink of a civil war. During that time there was a strong presence of 'right-wing' groups that were fully armed in order to impede the 1994 elections. This would have left the country in disarray. After the 1994 conflict, enmity between people of different races and ethnic backgrounds became increasingly intense. Recent newspaper reports on political speeches and comments make clear that the 'rainbow nation'[7] ideology has not delivered. Indeed, in the post-apartheid context an even greater divide between people along the lines of race and ethnicity persists, and the narrative about the poor and the marginalized remains unchanged. Poignantly the poor remain poor. Despite the implementation of a new democratic government, there are still people in South Africa who have experienced oppression and marginalization and this continued oppression has the potential to explode into anarchy and become a breeding ground for radicalization and violence in South Africa.[8]

This chapter will focus on three post-colonial contexts (Algeria, Rwanda, South Africa). Through the lenses of three prominent scholars it will dissect

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[6]   Elphick states, 'They [DRC] denied that the Bible advocated racial equality in society or politics, and contended that Afrikaaners' racial views were natural and God-given products of their history, and in no way irrational or bigoted.' Elphick, R. (2012), *The Equality of Believers. Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa*, Charlotsville: University of Virginia Press, 6.

[7]   See in particular Allen, J. (2006), *Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Rainbow People of God. A Spiritual Journey from Apartheid to Freedom*, Cape Town: Double Storey Books.

[8]   See Boesak, A.A., & DeYoung, C.P. (2012), *Radical Reconciliation, Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism*, New York: Orbis Books.

their understanding of the underlying narrative in each of these contexts and how these narratives relate to continued radicalization and violence. Subsequently, Emmanuel Katongole's fundamental argument in his book *Sacrifice of Africa* (2011) on how to re-imagine violence and radicalization in Africa will be discussed. The chapter will then focus on a potential change of the script in South Africa and how missiology could contribute to this.

Narrative as the cause for Radicalization and Violence

Ranstorp[9] discusses the causes of and breeding grounds for radical movements within Islam (jihadists) and argues that the process is so complex that there cannot be a single cause for the formation and development of such movements within various societies around the world. Nevertheless, it can be a combination of factors such as 'socio-psychological factors, political grievances, religious motivation and discourse, identity politics' that can collectively cause individuals to move towards extremism. Ranstorp[10] emphasizes that the ostracization of a particular group in society is one of the main causes; such groups are marginalized in a foreign country and feel that they do not belong to either culture or society.

A recently reported case demonstrates that the 'ghosts' of apartheid have not been buried. The well-known Christian 'tele-evangelist', Angus Buchan made a public pronouncement that white Afrikaners' are part of the covenant relationship with God. His statement brought alive the apartheid narrative that God has a covenant relationship with the white people in South Africa only, making God an exclusive God.[11] This is not a new phenomenon. Elphick argues that under the 'Dutch East India Company rule, the colony had slowly evolved into a rigid racial order, with whites on top, slaves and Khoisan below. Many whites, drawing from a specific strand of Calvinist thought, attributed their dominant status to a covenant relationship with God.'[12]

Ranstorp argues that radicalization and violence occur as the result of a multitude of factors which sometimes include a 'perception of injustice'.[13] The thesis of this chapter is indeed moulded around the argument that the

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[9]   Ranstorp, M. (2010), *Understanding Violent Radicalisation. Terrorist and Jihadist Movements in Europe*. London: Routledge, 6.

[10]   Ranstorp, *Violent Radicalisation*, 6.

[11]   In 2019 the South African online newspaper *news24* reported that Angus Buchan apologized for saying only 'Jewish and Afrikaans people' have 'covenant with God', see the full article: https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/angus-buchan-apologises-for-saying-only-jewish-and-afrikaans-people-have-covenant-with-god-20191106

[12]   Elphick, *The Equality of Believers*, 1

[13]   Ranstorp, *Violent Radicalisation*, 6.

narrative should be focused on the conditions of the poor in South Africa and that the *missio Dei* of the Church should address the dire conditions of the poor and the marginalized in a radical way. The narrative should always be based on the 'injustice' suffered by the poor.[14]

Richard Elphick argues that in South Africa, 'Missionaries were pivotal to black-white relations, not only on the turbulent frontiers of the nineteenth century, which historians have thoroughly researched, but also in the twentieth-century struggles over industrialization, segregation, and apartheid, where missionaries' role has been largely ignored.'[15] He further states, 'Most significantly, and most consequentially, the broad vision of apartheid, designed explicitly to thwart the drive toward racial equality, originated, in part, among missionary leaders of the Dutch Reformed churches.'[16] Elphick goes on to say, 'Apartheid was indeed a product of twentieth-century thought, but it was not developed, initially, by neo-Calvinist philosophers (or by secular thinkers), but by evangelical missionary leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church who sought to foster 'development' among blacks without threatening white supremacy.'[17]

According to Elphick, the idea of equality among all people in the Cape emerged when the *voortrekkers* moved to the North and the work of evangelists within the mission schools kindled such an idea. Particularly interesting is the role of the missionaries in terms of an ethos of 'equality' and the construction of a different narrative of the God of the Bible. In addition, Elphick also focuses on the work of the black missionaries who fought against segregation.[18]

The questions that need to be probed are: How do missiologists construct a narrative in South Africa through their writings? Should missionaries/missiologists focus only on personal salvation and not 'structural' conditions in South Africa? How rigorous are their analyses when focussing on the narratives from below? The Church still proclaims the 'good news', but does the 'good news' narrative encompass everything? Finally, what strategic plans are there to turn the conditions around for the *shalom* of the poor'?

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[14] See Cone, J.H. (1997), *God of the Oppressed*, New York: Orbis Books.
[15] Elphick, *The Equality of Believers*, 2
[16] Elphick, *The Equality of Believers*, 2
[17] Elphick, *The Equality of Believers*, 6
[18] 'The new South African parliament embarked immediately on a series of racially discriminatory acts that have led historians to call the years from 1910 to 1948 the "Age of Segregation." Initially, blacks responded with a moderate African nationalism; in 1912, the direct ancestor of the African National Congress was founded, almost entirely by mission- educated black Christians. For their part, beginning in 1904, missionaries organized themselves on a region-wide basis in the General Missionary Conferences, which would enable them to play a mediating role between whites and blacks in the decades to come.' Elphick, *The Equality of Believers*, 4.

It is the missionaries, those who did not replace the dominant narrative of 'race' with a one of 'co-existence', 'symbiosis', and 'interculturality', who should reconstruct such a narrative in South Africa by all means necessary. Another way of doing this is to speak in terms of the 'oikos' metaphor.[19]

Jonathan Sacks, reflecting on his work *Not in God's Name*, argues that people are and become what they are because of 'metanarratives.'[20] He argues that religion has come to the fore because of a vacuum and the existence of the idea that people do not need religion (secularization). However, people are intrinsically part of a group and they see themselves as being part of a group. Sacks argues that religion has provided narratives that lead to violence, referring to this as 'religious narratives.'[21] These narratives consist of people who do not form part of the story and are always acting in a self-destructive manner – irrespective of whether they are innocent victims or not, something he refers to as the 'dualism narrative'. However, there is also the 'displacement narrative' where a newer religion replaces the old, as when Christianity superceded Judaism and Islam (supersessionist theology). Though these Abrahamic faith traditions base most of their arguments on the Old Testament, he argues that Genesis, though it contains rivalry between brothers, goes beyond that – reconciliation and forgiveness. This is seen especially in Joseph's forgiveness of the brothers that sought to kill him. Therefore Sacks urges, 'There is something deadly about dualism on the one hand and narratives of displacement on the other hand, in an age fraught with the possibilities of mass destruction, we must confront it while there is still time.'[22]

Sacks argues that:

> the West is still inadequately prepared to understand quite how dangerous some narratives are, especially the master narratives that form the basis of identity… This is not because these master narratives are religious, but because we are human. We are social animals; we find our identities in groups; all groups include and exclude; groups encourage altruism towards insiders and suspicion, fear, and potential aggression toward outsiders. In extremis narratives can dehumanize the

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[19]   In 2020 Baron & Mangayi wrote a 'Study Guide in Missiology' at the University of South Africa based on the mission of God as God's involvement in the Oikos (Household of God). However, these scholars draw from the work of the Oikos Journey project, the contributions of Ernst Conradie, especially his edited work with Clive W Ayre, 'The Church in God's household. Protestant Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ecology' in Ayre, C. W. and Conradie, E.M. (2016), *The Church in God's Household. Protestant Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ecology*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1-185 is noted.

[20]   Sacks, J. (2018), 'The Stories we tell', in Burridge, R.A. & Sacks, J. (Eds.), *Confronting Religious Violence. A Counternarrative*, Texas: Baylor University Press, 19-34.

[21]   Sacks, *The Stories we tell*, 30.

[22]   Sacks, *The Stories we tell*, 33.

> outsider as either a force of evil or a sibling rival for the scarce resource we seek, even when that resource is the love of God.[23]

Sacks states that there is an inherent connection between narrative and identity.[24] In South Africa, there is often a resurgence of different ethnic groups coming to tell their stories. This is precisely because of a search for identity. Khoisan and other indigenous groups, for instance, the so-called 'coloured people', have recently been fighting for their story because, as Sacks insists, 'stories offer meaning.[25] Sacks argues that only stories can tell us the 'why', science can only tell us 'how', 'technology can give us power but not tell us how to use it', and 'the market economy gives us choices but cannot tell us which choices to make.'[26] People seek stories to understand and strengthen their identity, however the danger lies in the story that religion tells. In this way, Steve Biko criticized the story that the Christian religion told people, because blacks are continuing to live the story that was told by Christians, internalised it, and continue to follow the script with different characters.

A narrative that destabilizes three African countries

In this section, the manner in which a particular narrative has caused the breeding ground for radicalization and violence in three African countries – Algeria, Rwanda and South Africa – will be discussed. These examples demonstrate the relationship between narrative and radicalization and violence in the context of Africa. In Africa, radicalization and violence cannot be divorced from the socio-economic conditions of the poor. The close link between the two has been well articulated in the work of Frantz Fanon, Emmanuel Katongole, and Stephen Bantu Biko.

Fanon's reflection on violence in Algeria

Fanon writes about the conditions for violence in a post-colonial country from his observations on the effects of colonialism in his own country, Algeria. In his chapter 'Concerning Violence' he discusses the resurgence of violence as a consequence of the breakdown of a structural system of oppression that was erected through force.[27] He argues that, the conditions of submission and ser-

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[23] Sacks, *The Stories we tell*, 33.
[24] Sacks, *The Stories we tell*, 34.
[25] Sacks, *The Stories we tell*, 34.
[26] Sacks, *The Stories we tell*, 34.
[27] Fanon, F. (1963), *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: Penguin Books, 27-74.

vitude of the colonized mean that the rectification of the structural oppression, one that has become so entrenched, means that violence became the only and natural means of breaking down the historical process of colonization. Fanon argues that this was an intentional process, one constructed by the colonizers to create an atmosphere where most of the 'natives' would accept their fate. The narrative is constructed in such a way that the 'native' would come to envy the conditions under which the 'settler' lives, and their response and reaction to the conditions created by the 'settler' would ultimately lead to violence.

It is apparent in Fanon's account that the colonizer is responsible for the conditions that the 'natives' are living in.[28] The colonizer therefore needs to be held accountable for the systems that were erected, systems which have functioned as the breeding grounds for radicalization and violence. Radical violence is often framed by the West as a 'behavioural problem' of Africa. Besides the narrative that violence occurs because of the oppressive conditions that are created within societies, there is indeed the theory that violence also occurs because of 'rebellious action' leading to the blaming of the colonized for not 'behaving well.'[29] It is evident in the arguments of Fanon that it is therefore always the 'sin' of the colonized (natives) and they should therefore take full responsibility for all the violence that erupts within the colonies. Fanon's account captures not only the life of the colonized during the colonial period, but also how, within the neo-colonial context of Algeria, the colonizers' conditions and narratives continue by proxy.

Katongole's reflection on violence in Rwanda

In his book *Mirror to the Church* (2009), Katongole argues that it is the narrative imposed upon Rwanda that is the cause of the violence that resulted in the Rwanda genocide in 1994. He says about the cause of Rwanda's radicalization and violence in 1994, 'If we stand before the mirror that is Rwanda, it will show us how we become the people we are because of the stories we tell ourselves … Rwandans became people who were willing to kill one another because of a story they were first told by Europeans and later learned to tell themselves.'[30] Katongole argues that the narrative of 'race' brought to Rwanda by Europeans is what killed people in Africa.[31] He argues that before such a narrative, both the Hutus and Tutsis were separated as indigenous groups by their roles and place in society, not by some physical features. When the Europeans came to

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28   Fanon, *The Wretched*, 27-84.
29   Fanon, *The Wretched*, 27-84.
30   Katongole, *Mirror to the Church*, 52.
31   Katongole, *Mirror to the Church*, 57.

the country, however, the Tutsis were considered to be 'superior' to their Hutu neighbours in terms of their physical features. This narrative was sustained throughout the years of colonization and continue through post-colonial times and, as Katongole argues, caused hatred and resulted in the 1994 genocide.[32] Katongole states, 'What must be noted again is that all of this was nothing but European anthropology of the worst kind, which Speke and the Western missionaries after him simply accepted, and to which Christianity now supplied a biblical narrative (Ham) to explain the allegedly racial difference between Hutu and Tutsi.'[33] Katongole does not question that the indigenous people were violent in 1994; rather he bases the cause of the genocide mainly on the narrative that was constructed by the Europeans and internalized by the indigenous people (Hutus and Tutsis) of Rwanda.

Biko's reflection on violence in South Africa

In 1988 Desmond Tutu wrote to the then State President P.W. Botha, 'We believe that the government, in its action over recent years, has chosen the path which will lead to violence, bloodshed, and instability.'[34] Tutu wrote a letter to the Prime Minister B.J Vorster in 1976 to warn him, 'I am writing to you, Sir, because I have a growing nightmarish fear that unless something drastic is done very soon, then bloodshed and violence are going to happen in South Africa almost inevitably. A people can only take so much and no more.'[35] However, Tutu decoupled violence from black agency in circumstances of injustice and oppression when he states, '… I know violence and bloodshed and I and many of our people don't want that [violence] at all … But we blacks are exceeding patience and peace-loving. We are aware that politics are the art of the impossible.'[36] However, in his sermon, at the funeral of Steve Biko, Tutu attributed violence in the neocolonial state of South Africa, or the 'colony', to white people, 'We [whites] talk of non-violence but we have the legalized violence that separates husband and father from his wife and family. We have long periods of detention without trial and deaths in detention. We have bannings and banishments.'[37]

The narrative of South Africa during apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa can be analysed in the work of Steve Biko. Stephen Bantu Biko died in 1978 before the emergence of a 'new' South Africa, and the abolishment of

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[32] Katongole, *Mirror to the Church*, 58.
[33] Katongole, *Mirror to the Church*, 58.
[34] Allen, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*, 10.
[35] Allen, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*, 10.
[36] Allen, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*, 12.
[37] Allen, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*, 20.

apartheid. He argued that South Africa should come to have a more 'human face' even though, arguably, this has not yet materialized judging from the violence and human rights abuses that are rampant in post-apartheid South Africa. Steve Biko's thoughts on the state of South African society is well captured in the collection of his speeches in the book *I write what I like* (1978).[38] Steve Biko argued that the black man has to 'come to himself' which was the main reason for his and other black students breaking away from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). The black [man] should become conscious of their value and worth, and not expect it from the 'white man' he argued. He also questioned the idea of black people seeing themselves as 'non-white' as that meant that 'white' was the standard of what it means to be human. This in itself was Biko's request for a new social imagination. However, while many would leave his argument there in terms of the 'black man', Biko's ultimate vision was a 'human face'.

Nevertheless, Steve Biko argues that the movement towards a 'human face' becomes a reality through 'black' solidarity and all becoming 'Africans'. His idea was 'radical' and utter (radical) 'madness' in a society where the norm was 'white' and where multiracial platforms were seen as a move closer to 'non-racialism'. He changed that narrative. He ascribes the violence, inflicted on black people themselves, and the enmity between 'black'[39] people (Indian, African, coloured) as a lack of their own appreciation of themselves. Violence was therefore not an option for Biko, but rather a 'self-emptying' and 'self-appreciation' of blacks in South Africa.[40] Cloete argues that Biko's black consciousness philosophy is '… deeply rooted in an African humanist philosophy that provides the normative context for his critical entanglement with white supremacy in colonial-apartheid South Africa.'[41]

These three scholars reflect on the violence brought about as the result of colonization and neo-colonial conditions. In doing so, all three call for a new social imagination, a different narrative in these African countries that would reinvent their future.

In the conclusion of Katongole's *Sacrifice of Africa* (2011), the distinction between Fanon, and Biko, become apparent when the notions of 'radicalization

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[38]   Stubbs, A. (fl. 1978) (Ed.), *I write what I Like. Steve Biko. A selection of his writings*, Oxford: Heinemann Publishers.

[39]   The notion of Black for Steve Biko, was an inclusion of all oppressed and marginalized people under the apartheid government.

[40]   At his funeral he was described by Emeritus Desmond Tutu in his eulogy as, 'A young man completely dedicated to the pursuit of … peace …' Allen, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu,* 19.

[41]   Cloete, M. (2019), 'Steve Biko: Black consciousness and the african other – the struggle for the political', *Angelaki 24(2),* 104.

and violence' are engaged. Fanon, Biko and Katongole conflate these two concepts as if radicalization cannot be divorced from violence. Katongole, however, starts with the idea of 'revolutionary madness.'[42] He argues that an essential component for changing the narrative for Africa, particularly those nation-states considered only to act violently – is to depart from the script that states 'nothing is good in Africa', a narrative which is also in the interest of the general population. He pertinently argues that radicalness has nothing to do with violence, rather with changing the very nature of the Church to becoming a space in which members would live the 'new' story, one that would challenge the nation-state narrative. It would form communities that would live a story which would subvert the neo-colonial narrative. In so doing, Katongole decouples radicalization from physical violence.

It is also evident that these authors make a point of not starting from the default position in relation to violence, in other words, one which is less focused on who acted violently (the physical aspect), than on who created the conditions for radicalization and violence. The interlocutors in this section go beyond the 'victim' and 'perpetrator' discourse, instead they seek a level of human dignity common to all human beings through social re-imagining.

Katongole: Africa and the unchanged script

Changing Africa's narrative

Katongole approaches violence that occurs in Africa in a similar vein, pointing out that it would only continue if the current narrative were sustained in African politics. Africans have bought into a narrative (script) produced by the West because they were made to believe that they do not have a history. He writes, '… nation-state politics performs the same discouraging drumbeat that accentuates Africa's poverty, backwardness and tribalism…our analysis has shown that this discouraging drumbeat is connected to the story of denial – "nothing good out of Africa" – that grounds nation-state legitimacies.'[43] The 'nation-state' narrative was to imagine Africa as a state without a history, one that can be exploited. The colonists came and exploited Africa and molested

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[42]   In his chapter 'Daring to invent Africa', Katongole suggests three things that would be needed to change the narrative within African nation states: 'intellectual clarity, revolutionary madness, and commitment and sacrifice.' This, Katongole argues, was President Sankara's strategy for the five years rule of the former French colony in Upper Volta, that is, to change the narrative of the African nation state. However, this was also the root cause of his assignation on 15 October 1988 by the former president who argued, '… Sankara jeopardized foreign relations with former colonial power France and with neighboring countries.' Katongole, E. (2011), *The Sacrifice of Africa. A Political Theology for Africa*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: WMB Eerdmans Publishers, 89.

[43]   Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 80.

the continent and the same is being done by the bourgeoise and 'nationalists' in neo-colonial contexts. They are far removed from the 'general population' (the social) and their everyday struggles. Katongole believes that as long as Africans buy into this Western narrative, Africa will suffer the same consequences as it did during colonial rule. It will breed violence from the masses. Indeed, Katongole links the violence in Africa directly with 'nation-state' history.

Any attempt to abstract it from this story projects the violence as a 'tribal' or 'ethnic' affair, some kind of bizarre cultural trait of Africans – just the sort of thing Africans do now and again:

> Nevertheless, this is misleading, for there are often no cultural, 'ethnic', or 'tribal' interests at stake. The phenomenon of widespread violence in post-colonial Africa – military coups, civil unrest, state repression, insecurity – must itself be placed in the narrative of the politics of competing for elite interests and power struggles. The nation-state project in Africa has not questioned this story of colonial violence and dispossession, but has in fact, neatly reproduced it, thereby becoming the modern embodiment of King Leopold's Ghost.[44]

Katongole states that the 'nation-state' narrative frames the lives of Africans:

> within a telos of 'nothing is good here' (hopelessness) and thus shaping expectations of mere survival while producing the very same hopelessness and desperation it assumes. This denial of any transcendental purpose desacralizes the lives of African men and women, making them cheap and easily disposable. Given the fight for political spoils that is the permanent feature of Africa's elite politics, it is not difficult to see how the masses become easy prey for recruitment into whatever cause – tribalism, warfare, banditry – that advances the self-interests of the elite. In the end, this widespread desperation underwritten by nation-state politics in Africa constitutes the ultimate wastage – indeed the sacrifice of Africa.[45]

The African people themselves start believing a narrative which devalues African lives to 'nothingness', a narrative that downgrades Africa's institutions and their culture, a narrative perpetuated by those that stole real control over their lives from them.[46]

Katongole argues that the violence which occurs in Africa is indeed the result of the 'nation-state' narrative and that Africa needs a new 'story', a different foundational narrative or narratives that can give rise to new expectations and a new imaginative landscape within which a new future in

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[44]   Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 79.
[45]   Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 83.
[46]   Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 82-83

Africa can take shape.[47] There is a desperate need to search for a new future in Africa, which is also the search for a different starting point for politics, according to Katongole. He makes it clear that the 'nation-state' narrative has not been successful in narrowing the gap between the general population and neo-colonial governments. What is needed instead is one where the general population would be integral to the decision-making processes and be crucial in engaging as partners within the struggle to alleviate poverty.[48]

The role of the Church in changing Africa's script

Africa, which needs this new story, is well-positioned in terms of its biblical narrative to create the space needed for such a narrative to develop, argues Katongole.[49] Furthermore, the Church should also re-imagine its role in order to become an integral part of the social and political sphere. The Church exists not only to comment or contribute to other social and political sciences, rather it should itself allow people to imagine their lives differently in the social sphere through a theological imagination.[50] He argues that the reason the Church is so far removed from the majority of the population is because of the nation-state narrative it adopts.

Katongole argues that the Church should be the place where a new and compelling story should be offered and practiced.[51] It should not only be concerned with the 'life beyond' but with the Kingdom of God, the 'here and now'. This story is one that has at its centre the struggles of the general population (for example, lack of sanitation, agriculture), who would be able to imagine their social realities differently. A story of 'beginnings' which would allow their present struggles to be perceived through a narrative in which their human lives can become meaningful. The Church must confront the historical narratives and overcome it with a different narrative. However, Katongole cautions:

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[47] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 83.
[48] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 83.
[49] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 113.
[50] Katongole's engagement with the work of John Milbank is interesting. Milbank argues that theology should not just leave engagement with social reality to other disciplines because no discipline engages in a 'dispassionate analysis' as they are themselves 'carriers of political, moral and theological understandings of reality'. It is therefore evident that their accounts of reality can never be neutral and would mostly be done from the perspective of a 'nation-state' narrative. The integral role that theology should play is not merely to add theories from other disciplines to 'reality', rather to be able to provide their own view of social reality. He argues that theology is part of social science and should therefore not give up its privileged position. Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 115-116.
[51] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 113.

> … such a search for an alternative history is neither initiated by, nor grounded in, the politics of the nation-state and its ideologies (globalization, new world order, etc.), to which the Church can contribute its social pronouncements or spiritual inspiration…these are ideologies whose top-down structure perpetuates patterns of alienation and dependency. Thus, the search for an alternative history takes place at the grassroots in communities of faith and the ordinary realities of every-day life.[52]

Katongole argues that the Church should become a space where 'it opens up and interrupts the hegemonic practices of the "nation-state". Examples include gestures of peace to interrupt the constant anticipation of war and people arming themselves, servitude interrupting power and domination, and charity and self-sacrifice interrupting the politics of control and selfish ambition.'[53] He argues that there should be a shift from the big stories of power and violence in Africa to a story that focuses on the struggles of the 'small people of God'.[54] Indeed, those stories require a connection with people on a grassroots level, one not provided by the nation-state narrative. It was one that continued a narrative in which the national elite is so far-removed from the majority of people that their frustration spills over into violence.

Katongole argues that stories in Africa that tell of power as domination and violence should be replaced by different ones. It is clear, therefore, that he does not support physical violence as playing a part in this new script for African's well-being. Katongole writes, '…the challenge for Africa is not simply to achieve sovereignty in order to determine its destiny, but rather to interrupt this vision of power as a denomination with a different account of power and thus a different vision of society and politics.'[55] Nonetheless, Katongole continues to subscribe to the notion of 'revolutionary madness' that would radically change the patterns and the narrative of Africa.[56] For it to be sustainable, however, a different story about power should be imagined. The Church should provide such a story as embodied through 'Jesus incarnate'. He argues that the story of the incarnation should be made real to people, through a 'theology of relocation' of the Church, where the Church lives and works 'with a community of people at the extreme margins of society, a people that were completely abandoned by the official establishment' and through such actions provide them with new meaning and deconstruct the 'nation-state'.[57]

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[52] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 109.
[53] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 121.
[54] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 121.
[55] Katongole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 129.
[56] Katongole, The *Sacrifice of Africa*, 131.
[57] Katongole, The *Sacrifice of Africa*, 132.

Missiology: changing the South African script

Vosloo cautions that if we (in this case, missionaries and missiologists) do not engage with the past, it might lead to further polarization and violence in South Africa. Therefore, he argues that we cannot run away from the questions of 'how we remember and how we construct the past'.[58]

Missionaries, as well as some churches both during apartheid and currently in the post-apartheid context, are proclaiming the 'narrative' of Jesus of Nazareth in such a way that it does not destabilize the apartheid narrative. The apartheid narrative might have allowed and sustained peace within 'white' communities but it simultaneously aggravated the pain and suffering of other (black) communities. The process of radicalization is one of the challenges faced by a non-negotiable narrative aimed at excluding other narratives that might be equally 'true'. The purpose of this chapter is to argue that the practice of mission in society should be an 'open-ended' narrative approach in a racially divided South Africa.[59]

The question arises: when missionaries, churches and missiologists respond to the situation in South Africa, to what extent do they create an 'alternative' story in post-apartheid? Furthermore, do they suggest a new way of social imagination, one that would subvert the narrative of former colonial powers? The Church and missiologists should provide a new way of interpreting 'reality'. This means considering theology as a 'social science', one that would allow people to imagine the social realm differently rather than only carrying 'theological contributions' on the social sciences as Osmer suggests.[60] Theology (including missiology) and the Church should, therefore, create space in which a new narrative can emerge that will be in the interest of the poor and the marginalized.

During the apartheid years, South Africa had various evangelical outreach programmes among black communities. The focus of these projects was on a diagnosis of sin that placed an emphasis on personal wrongdoing and less of a focus on 'structural' sin. The challenge with such an approach is not that people are unwilling to focus on their own 'personal salvation', something quite often the focus of evangelism, but that 'structural' sin as well as structural conditions have not been central in missionaries' narratives. This is still prevalent

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[58]   Vosloo, R. (2017), *Reforming Memory. Essays on South African Church and Theological History*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 66.

[59]   Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 66.

[60]   Osmer, R.R. (2008), *Practical Theology. An Introduction*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans. This is also Katongole's argument in his discussion on the position of theology within the current political and social sphere. See Katongole, The *Sacrifice of Africa*, 133.

in most 'black' communities and churches that continue within the narrative of 'spiritualizing' the conditions of the poor and the marginalized. It is the 'as long as you go to heaven' narrative that forces individuals to internalize political and social science narratives. The Church does not provide a different narrative for its members, especially through its evangelization projects.

Missionaries and missiologists are at the forefront of sharing the 'good news'. I suggest therefore, that missionaries should intentionally deconstruct and reconstruct the narrative of the past that has been the cause for radicalization and violence in South Africa. People should be able to use their stories of struggle and marginalization to create a story that would foster human dignity. The narrative construction within mission discourse has to do with how missionaries construct the experiences of people within a specific context, whereas within missiology, it has to do with the secondary sources that they select and engage with (interlocutors) to construct a narrative of the 'other'.

Missionaries and missiologists still have the power to 'tell' the story and sustain that story throughout history. The work of Paul Ricoeur is valuable in terms of his discussion on responsible historiography. Missionaries and missiologists present the stories, are the ones that would translate and interpret the stories of the 'other' and should therefore do it responsibly in terms of the narrative it constructs (or reconstructs). Ricoeur, in his book *Memory, History and Forgetting* (2004), speaks about the 'historiographical operation' and the three phases thereof.[61] The first is when the historian collects data (the proof), secondly then interpreting that data, and thirdly 'representing' that data.[62] However, Vosloo cautions against the idea that a historian approaches historical events and archives without 'bias' and the idea that a historian is 'value-free' is far from the truth.[63]

Particularly within black communities in South Africa, missiologists should question the narrative that sustains the oppression and marginalization of the poor. In 1990, Dirkie Smit argued for a narrative approach when he responded to the contribution of Nico Smith, a missionary and missiologist.[64] Smit asserts that the story that strikes him the most in South Africa is that of of

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[61] Ricoeur, P. (2004), *Memory, History and Forgetting (translation by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer)*, Chicago: Chicago Press.

[62] Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 19-22.

[63] Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 22.

[64] He refers to the storytelling of Nico Smith (a missiologist) that would in his sermons and conversations used stories to illustrate how people were humiliated beause of their race and their socio-economic background. This is therefore a narrative that focuses on the structural conditions of the marginalized and the oppressed, which is vital to state. Smit, D. (1990), 'Prof Nico se storie…oor narratiewe teologie, herinneringe en hoop', in Hoffmeyer, M., Kritzinger, JNJ. & Saayman, W., *Wit Afrikane? In gesprek met Nico Smith*, Kaapstad: Taurus, 115.

pain, suffering, and the injustice(s) in the apartheid society. It is interesting to note as a 'white' South African he does not articulate the violence in South Africa, which was heightened at the time of his publication before the first democratic elections in 1990.[65]

There are various ways in which missiologists can play a role in constructing a new narrative for social cohesion, and it would address the violence that often emerges from the profound inequality in South African society. Holland and Henriot's (1983) 'pastoral cycle' provides a valuable theological method in the construction of a new narrative, one that would expose the destructive powers of the day and enable the voices of the marginalized and the oppressed to be heard.[66] It views society from the perspective of 'decolonialism' which takes into account the shaping of society and structures within colonial and post-colonial society. Missiologists such as Kritzinger further develops this method into the praxis matrix, one which aims to change the livelihood of the most vulnerable. This method commences with people's stories, demonstrating solidarity with the most vulnerable and oppressed.

Vosloo's proposal of projects of 'shared historiography' would also take seriously the fact that our (black and white) histories are interwoven with others.[67] These projects would aim to explore possibilities of 'joint memory work and historiography'.[68] In a country like South Africa, where missiologists have access to vulnerable communities, bringing those communities' stories together, as well as searching and exploring their interwovenness together with them would be crucial too. Therefore, rather than engaging in narratives of communities in isolation, the interaction between communities in search of a common narrative that would aim at human dignity should be encouraged. Such projects would need to be 'sensitive to the fragile nature of such an undertaking' and missiologists and missionaries should be conscious that 'what would be viewed in one community as … founding moments, turning points or events worthy of celebration might represent a low point, indeed a wound or a scar, in the memory of another.'[69]

Vosloo also suggests the use and value of 'oral history' projects rather than merely relying on historical and documented evidence.[70] This would bring more stories within the 'collective' memory of South Africa to the fore, possibly

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[65] Smit, *Prof Nico*, 115.
[66] Holland, J & Henriot, P (1983), *Social Analysis. Linking Faith and Justice, Maryknoll*: New York: Orbis Books, 5.
[67] Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 24.
[68] Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 74-75.
[69] Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 75.
[70] Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 25-26.

adding some unknown atrocities and painful memories that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was not able to capture in its seven published volumes.

In his work Vosloo references Alasdair MacIntyre, particularly his arguments on 'living tradition'.[71] MacIntyre talks about the 'storied self' who cannot be dislocated from a person's 'social and historical embeddedness'.[72] This tradition is 'historically extended' (our views are part of historical developments), and 'socially embedded' – meaning that our tradition is part of the communities, narratives, practices, and institutions that we are all part of in our respective contexts. Vosloo therefore asserts, 'the history of our lives is embedded in and made intelligible by the larger and longer histories of several traditions.'[73] For missionaries and missiologists, the idea of 'living traditions' posited by MacIntyre would mean that narratives should always be written with both the community and the 'self', who is very much part of the narratives, to form a collective history.

Vosloo remains critical of those who believe that gathering and collecting 'primary sources' would automatically mean they have a complete 'story'. However, he states, 'even "sources" do not tell the complete story, and even the best archives offer us a limited window onto the past. Access to archives and primary sources does not absolve us from the task of interpreting the sources in the light of the narrative and rhetorical frameworks that make them intelligible.'[74] Do missionaries therefore understand the broader story and the skills needed to narrate a story truthfully and with integrity?

He refers to Margaret Miles, who states:

> A history of Christian thought must narrate the triumphal story in which a small local cult within Judaism became a world religion and empire. But it must also include the failures, abuses, and violence of the Christian past. In short, it must be both sympathetic and critical. It must be sympathetic to present the vivid beauty of Christian resources of ideas, artworks, and practices. And it must be critical because it is not only a history of the past but also a history of the present.[75]

Vosloo argues that there is much criticism about the lack of church historians engaging with the social sciences, and it is within this vacuum that missionaries should tell the stories of those like Steve Biko and other politicians that interpret the social and political situation in South Africa as part of the

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[71]   Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 56.
[72]   Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 56.
[73]   Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 57.
[74]   Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 67.
[75]   Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 68.

process of constructing the South African narrative.[76] There are examples of various esteemed missiologists that look through the social lenses of Steve Biko.

Narrative missiology:
A proposal to counter radicalization and violence

Fanon, Katongole, and Biko allow their readers to re-imagine notions of radicalization and violence from a different 'beginning' - the story of the poorest of the poor, the masses that have been removed from the center of neo-colonial power. Radicalization and violence will take on a different shape and form from that perspective.

The story of colonization in South Africa is that of a special type (apartheid), one where the colonizer and the colonized shared the same geopolitical space. Missionaries, mission organizations, and missiologists had to proclaim the 'good news' within this context. This is almost a replica of the post-colonial conditions in Algeria during the time of Fanon.

One of the main challenges faced in contemporary society is that apartheid was a brutal system implemented by individuals who black people still have to engage with every day without showing their anger. How do they overcome their suspicions if the structural systems (economic, political) are still perpetuating the past? What will the missionaries' 'narrative' be, especially in the post-apartheid situation?

As with the Crusades, it was not the Christian mission that was guilty, rather, it harnessed very effectively an enterprise engaged in violence. Bevans and Schroeder state:

> If Phillip Jenkins is correct in predicting that Christianity in the future will tend to take on a more militant attitude, particularly in Africa and Asia, we believe that one of the Christian mission's most significant challenges will be to help people to understand that the gospel has its roots in shalom, Jesus' call for non-violence and the Bible's vision of new heavens and new earth.[77]

Should there be only one narrative? Has mission always been a vehicle for propagating one 'narrative'? The narrative certainly always tended to favour the one who told the story. Theology, too, has become a site where one predominant narrative has been contested. The story has now been told from a group

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[76] Vosloo, *Reforming Memory*, 69.
[77] Bevans, S. & Schroeder, R. (2004), *Constants in Context. A Theology of Mission for Today*, New York: Orbis Books, 375.

perspective. Whether from the perspective of a church (Stanley Hauerwas)[78] or whether from a marginalized position, a story's details favour the narrator of the story most of the time. The modern missionary is therefore crucial in the message that he/she tells.

Moreover, everyone should be critical of the narrator because he/she will, in most instances, be presented as the hero. One of the main problems regarding the stories that missionaries tell in present-day South Africa is simply, what are they telling and how is the story construed? Who is it that would be crippled and trampled upon today as a result of these stories?

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[78]   Hauerwas, S. (1991), *A Character of Community. Towards a Constructive Social Ethic*, London: University of Notre Dame.

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Human Dignity in the Process of Radicalization

Elizabeta Kitanovic

Abstract

This article argues that human rights law is a suitable instrument to combat religious radicalization. To this end, it is necessary to implement human rights in national legislation. Politicization and instrumentalization of international law stand in the way of this process. In order to combat inequality and discrimination, the stereotypes surrounding religious communities will have to change. To this end, diversity must be enshrined in legislation.

Introduction

Everybody has human dignity. That is the understanding of those who believe that human beings are created in the image of God. Human dignity does not have a colour, nationality, race, ethnicity, sex, age, religion or belief. Both perpetrator and victim have the same human dignity that no one can take away from them. It might sound surprising, but there is a sense of good in everyone regardless of the sin one may have committed. What has happened to the human dignity of those who have become radicalized or those drawn into a psychological process of becoming radicalized? What aspects should be considered in the process by which someone is radicalized through religion?

Children and their religious identity

There are many reasons why one might be susceptible to radicalism. An individual may wish to become part of the community and experience a sense of belonging.[1] This feeling of belonging is primarily created within our own

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[1]   For more see: Final Report Summary - RELIGARE (Religious Diversity and Secular Models in Europe – Innovative Approaches to Law and Policy) https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/244635/reporting [30.09.2020].

family and in our social or religious community. Belonging to a certain family can be characterized by the sense of love, but also by one of rejection. It can be both a positive and negative experience as is the case for one's social and religious environment. If a child comes from a family with a migrant background, it can experience discrimination and bullying already from an early age. In article 24 of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights,[2] in describing the rights of a child, says:

> 1. Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. They may express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity.
>
> 2. In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities orprivate institutions, the child's best interests must be a primary consideration.
>
> 3. Every child shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis a personal relationship and direct contact with both his or her parents, unless that is contrary to his or her interests.

Article 24 is a basic precondition, the minimum conditions necessary for a positive start to the development of a child's disposition. The human dignity of a child is very fragile during its physical and mental development. In which cases do life experiences become definitive for a human being? At some point during their lives children may take the wrong path triggered by various events.

Difficult childhoods as a source of radicalization

Because they cannot invoke legislation themselves, children[3] represent the most vulnerable group when it comes to human rights. They can be discriminated against on multiple grounds, for example, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, belonging to a particular ethnic group, speaking a certain language, coming from a migrant background, or living in poverty.

Children can face physical and emotional bullying[4] because of such differences which is often very painful and may cause mental health problems

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2   The UN Convention on Rights of Child celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2019 https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx [22.09.2020].

3   Child rights in the EU, *Supporting you, supporting them*, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2019 https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-child-rights-in-the-eu_en.pdf [7.10.2020].

4   https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-talk-your-children-about-bullying [22.09.2020].

and create long-lasting emotional damage for them, their parents and their social and religious environment.

Child-perpetrators usually 'come from a perceived higher social status or position of power, such as children who are bigger, stronger, or perceived to be popular,'[5] those who feel powerful enough to start abusing other children who usually belong to vulnerable groups[6] like migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, unstable and poor families, children with disabilities, children experiencing uncertainty about their sexual orientation, or those belonging to a religious community that is different from the majority religious identity in a certain educational environment.

There are several signs that are common to child–perpetrators who bully other children: they can experience a lack of attention at home, have difficulty in finding a place within their own family, be exposed to bullying from their family members, or have difficulties dealing with a complex emotions that they may experience without knowing it.[7]

Such situations can lead to a child's deep feeling of anger which, later on, can align with and be expressed through radical religious ideologies. This can happen due to the need to belong to something more sacred, more just, and with the supposition that one is serving a higher cause. If the child is discriminated against primarily on religious grounds at an early age (such as when he or she belongs to a religious minority/migrant minority), and when this is combined with other reasons for discrimination such as race or language, a child might potentially develop ongoing anger against the majority religious identities of their host country or country of residence.

If these children's parents are also ostracized in their workplace due to having a different religious identity, then both can harbour feelings of social rejection. As a result, these negative feelings can be reflected in aggression being displayed towards a dominant majority or minority due to the ongoing fear of not being accepted, often because the right to self-determination[8] and the right to be different[9] is not recognized in the society as whole.

Unfortunately, one gets the impression that not all major religious communities - or dominant minor religious communities - accept God's image

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[5]   https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-talk-your-children-about-bullying [22.09.2020].

[6]   https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-talk-your-children-about-bullying [22.09.2020].

[7]   https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-talk-your-children-about-bullying [22.09.2020].

[8]   International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Dec. 19, 1966, art. 1, 'All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.' https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx [1.10.2020].

[9]   Hannum, H. (1998), 'The Right of Self-Determination in the Twenty-First Century', *Washington & Lee Law Review 55(3)*, 773.

socially and religiously. Parents and children become despondent as they are not accepted, but are instead treated as second-class citizens either because anti-discrimination laws are not implemented, or due to the lack of organizations promoting equality that would help deal with such cases.

Inequality and discrimination as source of radicalization

When an individual has negative feelings such as anger and hatred within them , they tend to isolate themselves. They also have a tendency to look for answers themselves to heal their soul and release the internal spiritual pain which they are experiencing, a pain which is very difficult to overcome. This kind of frame of mind provides fertile ground for a religious, community, or political leader to sow and increase feelings of insecurity in someone and to convey the need for justice and revenge. If the social, religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of the community is threatened and constantly exposed to humiliation and degradation, the possibility to recruit people from that community into terrorist activities is much higher.[10]

New recruits to terrorist groups believe that they will achieve a sense of justice and relief.[11] They believe that despite taking part in terrorist activities, they are walking on the staircase to heaven. They also believe that there is a reward to their martyrdom. Promotion of this sort of idea, justifying terrorist acts as an act of serving God, cannot be either theologically or legally justified. From a theological perspective, God has graciously given life to all human beings and therefore taking life away from anyone is the biggest sin imaginable. Legally, the right to live[12] is protected by law which can be found in article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and in article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Furthermore, a religious minority not in a dominant position in society might reject social assimilation into a secular society if it is steered in one direction only. This means that only this religious minority must adapt to the major religion, social culture, and language.

When the identity of a religious minority is not accepted, there is an even greater fear with regard to assimilation, something which often does not feel right. This feeling can develop even if a person is making an effort to becoming

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[10]   For more on this see Kielgard, Mark D. and Julian, Tam Hey Juan (2018), 'Stopping terrorism at its source: conceptual flaws of the deterrence-based counterterrorism regime and committing to a pre-emptive causal model', *Journal of Law & Policy 26(2)*, 1.

[11]   Kielgard & Julian, *Stopping terrorism*, 4.

[12]   European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf [1.10.2020]

integrated. . In this case there will most likely be feelings of rejection and rebellion and if there is constant pressure, the anger of both the individual and community grows.

People who identify with a religious minority, often a vulnerable position to be in, can ask the question: where do I really belong for I am also created in the image of God? It is difficult to keep going and pretending to be part of a society which doesn't accept differences, one often created on the principle of 'one size fits all' despite talking about unity in diversity.

If a certain religious identity is treated unfairly, humiliated for easier economic exploitation, regarded as second class and never given the chance to reach its true potential, then anger and feelings of revenge will provide suitable ground for the sowing and acceptance of radical ideas. The threat of possible exploitation, the feeling of inferiority, and inequality are all factors that can potentially fuel anger in a context of unfair treatment and lack of certainty. Those whose identity is exploited will feel immediate acceptance when confronted of idea of social change. That social change tends to be of radical nature.

Populism as source of radicalization

Populist ideas (espoused by both the Left and Right) and propaganda including the notion that 'others' and 'people who are different' are not welcomed in society ('they take our jobs' is a familiar populist accusation) often have the effect of bringing people towards accepting radical ideas. Ideas which call for action and give purpose to the existence of certain religious communities, precisely through their religious identity.

If a religious leader spreads messages of hate against a certain group of people during a sermon, listeners (the faithful) can become hooked to the idea that God is related with hate and, given God's human characteristics, can come to think that God really does hate people from other religions and social backgrounds.

Unfortunately, hatred against people from other religious communities is often preached through labelling the other as 'heretical' or as 'infidels', and through spreading the hate messages against other human beings with the intention of fostering a stronger attachment to the religious identity of that particular religious group.

Spreading hate messages not against sin, but against 'sinners'[13], has led to many criminal acts - believers being inspired to go to war, commit suicide and take the lives of other people in the process. It is also sometimes the case that the 'faithful' who attend religious services do not necessarily live by the principles of their religion's doctrine.[14]

The faithful can be both active in terms of attending religious services yet at the same time not be a 'good messenger' or live by the principles interpreted positively from Holy Books.

It should not be forgotten that it takes a great deal of spiritual effort for a human being to create both spiritual integrity and religious identity.

The religious identity of a migrant who comes from the context where one's religion is dominant to suddenly being regarded as minority – in the numeric sense – in an entirely different context is a situation that can provide the motivation for radicalized behavior.

If people are discriminated against for more than one particular reason, then the emotional pain and anger is much greater. It took a long time for the principle of multiple discrimination[15] to be accepted in the human rights legal system. Now discrimination on more than one counts is considered more serious than discrimination only one count.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights states in article 1 that human dignity is inviolable and that it must be protected and respected and, in its article 3 (1), that a human being has the right to the integrity of the person and that everyone has the right to respect his or her physical and mental integrity.

The most secret and meaningful thing that God has given is life. Life is sometimes easy, sometimes the path we take in trying to reach our goals is thorny. In order to reach our life goals, religions provide the guidance of religious texts to us and ideas which can serve to bring people closer to God. The messages that we find in religious texts, if well interpreted, are timeless. However, these messages can also be interpreted in a dangerous way, one which sparks religious hatred and targets innocent people and which can lead to physical aggression and verbal disputes.

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[13]   The meaning of 'sinner' depends on the theological interpretation of the preacher who has a target audience of faithful in front of him/her.

[14]   Stephen R. Covey, S.R. (1989-2004), *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – powerful lesson in personal change*, GPI Group UK, 125.

[15]   Uccelari, P. (2008), 'Multiple discrimination: How Law can Reflect Reality' in *The Equal Rights Review, Vol. One*, London: Equal Rights Trust, 24.

How do we change stereotypes about religious communities?

Religious identity is usually very closely linked to cultural and linguistic identity. Religions have their habits, rituals, and traditions that people follow. The fundamental right to express one's cultural identity is very well stipulated in article 15(2)[16] of the UN's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It that states that everybody has the right to have and preserve a cultural life, in terms of 'conservation, the development and the diffusion of science and culture.'[17]

Accommodate diversity

In reality, it means that states which have ratified the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights should have part of their budget directed to developing these cultural rights. This work would help decrease ignorance about the integral identity of religious minorities or, more generally, vulnerable groups who should have the right to access cultural goods and services and the fundamental right to develop their cultural and religious identity. In order to empower vulnerable groups, it would be important that the integration process works both ways, in other words that the host country offers a new language and lifestyle while also showing a readiness to accommodate the diversity of the newcomers and accept their cultural and religious habits. This would work on the principles of welcoming the stranger and loving the 'migrant' neighbour who could be Jewish, Muslim, a vulnerable family member, Roma, or indeed from any other belief, social or ethnic background.

The integration of vulnerable groups and the acceptance of the equality of the human dignity is required from both sides and follows the principle of 'it takes two to tango', as opposed to the contrary view of 'us against them'. For the majority of society, it is not always easy to accept the concept of equality in our humanity.

Genesis 4.9 reads: 'Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know", he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"'[18] So, our 'brother' is any human being that God has created in his image and likeness. In Galatians 3.28 we see 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'[19] This message is mirrored in the present-day EU anti-discrimination directive.

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16   https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx [24.09.2020]
17   https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx [24.09.2020]
18   https://biblehub.com/genesis/4-9.htm Genesis 4.9 [24.9.2020]
19   https://biblehub.com/galatians/3-28.htm Galatians 3.28 [24.09.2020]

We can see that Jesus introduced the principle of social and religious security in order to eradicate religious and social discrimination.

Unfortunately, the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is not so explicit in its aim. Article 15.2 only obliges UN state parties 'to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for the conservation, the development and the diffusion of science and culture.'[20]

Avoid stereotypes and generalizations

The spreading of negative ideas and stereotypes and of scapegoating via media about certain religious communities in addition to the spread of fake news and conspiracy theories all bring bitterness to our daily reality which results in suffering.

An antidote to these new and extensive developments would be the cooperation of civil society as a whole, academia, youth organizations and religious communities in order to convey an accurate picture and reduce ignorance about 'the other'.

Discrimination, intolerance, racism, and xenophobia against religious communities are all factors that can lead to radicalization. People who direct those behaviours against others are often not aware that by discriminating and being intolerant they are causing hurt and creating fertile ground for revenge, self-harming thoughts, actions and more pain.

The way out of this negative perception lies in the acknowledgement of other human beings' pain. Such an approach needs to be handled carefully, avoiding competition about who is the bigger victim along with comparisons about different situations. Any discrimination experienced on either religious grounds or race needs to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and the principle of 'one size fits al' should be avoided.

In some societies, religious leaders who flirt with populists do not realize that they are putting their community, indeed society at large, in danger and that the political gain is very small compared to the damage they can potentially do.

Understand human vulnerability and weakness

There is not a moment when, somewhere, a human being does not commit some sort of sin, whether these are sinful thoughts, words, or deeds. In training to reach maximum spiritual potential, one needs to try to reach a higher

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[20]   https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx [09.04.2021]

level of spirituality and come closer to God, feeling his love and mercy and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual education in the religious community can be a great help in decreasing social and political tensions among communities. Religious leaders should be the first to help decrease scapegoating and to help young people change their behaviours and attitudes, preventing them from adopting a vengeful mindset and developing a picture of a common enemy.

When the faithful are exposed to messages of hate within a community, the faithful should be responsible for creating alternative narratives with positive content, ones which are essentially loving towards other human beings.

Even if we are taught to hate sin within our religious communities, we shouldn't lose our spiritual integrity if we love the sinner who publicly or privately confesses the sin.

When a person chooses to sin, or when they make mistakes, it is often considered to be spiritual, mental and physical weakness that has somehow violated a person's dignity. It is precisely these people who need our special attention, help, and love. They need to be supported by their social and religious communities to help them move forward and not being rejected.

Even if religious books constantly talk about love, it can be hard to continuously practice it in our family, workplace, social and religious community. We can at times become bored of being right and kind all the time. Practicing a spiritual way of life is fascinating, albeit without doubt difficult to do every second of every day. Doing our best is the way forward.

Protect the vulnerable from hate speech

The greatest attention needs to be directed to vulnerable groups like migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, children, divorced mothers and fathers, and more generally families going through traumatic experiences in our society. When vulnerable groups are exposed to hate speech in their religious or social communities, the duty of the worshipper is to report[21] that hate speech because it has the potential to lead to hate crimes. In this regard religious majorities and minorities can both be affected by hate based on religious, ethnic, or racial grounds.

Through reporting hate crime,[22] which takes place not only within religious communities, but more publicly too, humanity has the chance to make progress in working towards more and better prevention mechanisms.

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[21] https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign/reporting-hate-speech [24.09.2020]
[22] https://www.osce.org/odihr/human-dimension-mechanisms [30.09.2020]

Strong religious identity is the key to engaging with other people of different faiths and participating in progressive interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The stronger religious identity is, and attachment to God's mission to love one's neighbour, the easier it will be to work with each other in mutual recognition of religious identities.

Religious identity is strongly linked to the rights of religious minorities. Religious majorities also have religious identity, but these communities more often retain a dominant position in society.

When we think of religious minorities there are certain stereotypes linked to such communities. This is detrimental as ignorance can exist where there is a lack of understanding of the religious identity another human being. At the heart of becoming closer as fellow human beings, both a legal and theological point of view, depends on respect for the equal, dignity, and rights for all people and equality before the law.

Promote dialogue and education

If we want to ensure the eradication of religious radicalization more dialogue is needed among various religious communities. Despite differing political, cultural, and social realities, people remain people and basic needs are very much common to all human beings. Strengthening religious identity has a positive influence on others as well as bringing about the historical recognition of culture in terms of religious art, philosophy, morality, and ethics.

Promoting education in the area of religious and cultural diversity can help to reduce discrimination and intolerance as well as strengthening cultural respect and understanding while at the same time retaining one's own religious identity. In working on the prevention of religious radicalization, it is important to avoid generalities about religious communities to become aware of cultural and religious differences in order to avoid stereotyping. It is not enough to merely hope that when we notice a threat of religious radicalization to hope that the problem will simply go away, as it is very unlikely to do so. We need to be aware that challenges exist in order to be worked through and to make us stronger and help us avoid falling into the trap of ignorance. God has provided enough for everybody because of His love for created things. Human greed is the biggest problem of this world and because of it we fail to see God's image[23] in others. God is gracious and therefore everybody has something to give.

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[23]   Genesis 1:27.

Conclusion

Clear anti-discrimination and anti-racism regulations in the field of employment, housing, and education, as well as access to good services is key to preventing religious radicalization. In this area there is a task for everyone, regardless of whether a person is poor or rich, vulnerable or not. All of us can give love and spread positive messages in our own particular way. Treating others with respect, kindness, and compassion allows us to avoid attacking people and instead accommodate religious identity in all spheres of life.

If the state would ensure the implementation of human rights, radicalization and terrorist activities would almost certainly decrease. Acts of war in the name of democracy, human rights and rule of law or everlasting peace are the instrumentalization and politization of these values. There is lack of political coherence in justifying violence for their promotion.

This is the reason why many people do not trust international systems of human rights, democracy, and rule of law. The abuse of international legal systems might make some individuals richer, but humanity is made poorer by it. It is the vulnerable population who pay the highest price. The task of every human being is to work and protect its own dignity and the task of the state is to guarantee a legal framework for the equal treatment and effective implementation of laws to protect the human dignity of all people equally. The image of God in every human being is protected by both secular and God's laws. It is up to society as a whole to start implementing this effectively. This is the task not only for God or the law and policy makers, but for every human being.

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Radicalization and Divine Violence

Johann Meylahn

Abstract

This chapter was presented as a paper as part of a research project on violence and radicalization. It can be argued that radicalization can often be linked to identity politics and a certain political status quo, therefore the chapter will focus on divine violence in relation to the subject (identity) of radicalization. The idea of divine violence will be contrasted with the ideas of religious (fundamentalist) violence and ideological violence in the context of Benjamin's (1996) critique of violence, from his essay, 'Kritik der Gewalt'. Following Benjamin, divine violence will be contrasted to the two other forms of violence, namely: state-preserving and state-forming violence. Benjamin brings divine violence into conversation with 'Life', one could argue with 'mere life' or 'bare life', and therefore thereby demonstrating a link to the 'death drive', especially to Freud's concept of the death drive as interpreted by Lacan. This chapter will focus mainly on the presiding European Union's understanding of radicalization and on bringing that interpretation into conversation with the notions of divine violence and the death drive, via Jacques Rancière's understanding of politics versus police. This chapter will conclude by arguing that there is a need for politics, as what is currently being offered is a police construction of radicalization, one which does not address the underlying 'signifying stress' or 'symbolic misery' that is experienced, and which could be a contributing factor in the rise in radicalization.

Benjamin's Kritik der Gewalt

In his 1996 essay, 'Kritik der Gewalt', Walter Benjamin posits that the task of his essay is to expound the relationship between law and justice.[1] Violence is firstly a force or rather a cause or a means that consequently becomes violent only when it enters into a moral relationship and it is justified by one moral law or another. For example, the force that is used to kill somebody, or even to kill

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[1]   Benjamin, W. (1996), Critique of violence', in *Selected Writings Volume 1, 1913-1926, (edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, translated by Edmund Jephcott)*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 237.

a group of people, can be interpreted as just and therefore morally acceptable on certain occasions, and yet, at other times, it is condemned as a heinous crime against humanity. These arguments used to justify murder are not only found in the context of the pro and contra arguments concerning the death sentence, but also in the context of 'just war' theories, and most recently the war on terror. The idea of being able to wage war on terror has recently justified wars globally, and police violence nationally, in various Western countries. The idea of waging war on terrorism is a form of violence that is justified in the name of those elusive concepts such as 'humanity' or universal human rights and democracy, which supposedly provide the basis (and moral high ground) for the governments who have granted themselves the right to wage this war on terror. Divine violence of the death drive can also be brought into conversation with the demos as interpreted by Rancière and thus democracy (the power of the demos).[2] However, such an interpretation of democracy is not a one understood as a governmental or state system, rather as the power of the demos: the people. In the present day, force used to kill is justified from a Western perspective either in the name of human rights and 'democracy' or it is condemned as being terrorism. If one considers a recent event, for example, the murder of the Iranian General Qassem Soleimani on the 3rd of January 2020 in Bagdad Iraq, it becomes clear how force used to kill can be interpreted as 'just' or 'justified violence'. It is believed to be a necessary force (violence) committed in the name of universal human rights and as a result of the idea of promoting democracy. More importantly than the relationship of such an act to morality, are the questions: Who is it asking the questions concerning what is or is not moral? And who believes him or herself to have the moral high ground to make such judgements? Is it Fox News, CNN, or other news agencies who interpret the force used to kill as a means within the context of certain ends or within the context of certain givens as causes? A certain end or cause seems to either justify certain means or condemn them, just as the origin can also be used to justify, for example, an essentialist understanding of humanity and therefore the belief in inalienable universal human rights, or a certain understanding of God's eternal Will or Law. Indeed, what is the difference between the attack on Bagdad International Airport by a US drone and the 2001 New York, 2004 Madrid, or 2005 London attacks? What they have in common is that they were lethal. They involved the killing of individuals or of numerous people justified by one party and condemned by the other.

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[2]   Rancière, J. (2019), *Dissensus: On politics and aesthetics (edited and translated by Steven Corcoran)*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Are we not left, once again, with that persistent and problematic postmodern relativism?

In his essay Benjamin is trying to understand the question of what justifies violence. Yet he asks this question within the context of strike action, and more specifically in the context of the question of a general proletarian strike. A general proletarian strike, one could argue, is the rising up of the demos, the uncounted (the unaccounted for), the non-political. He comes to the conclusion that all violence used as a means is either state or law-preserving violence on the one hand, or state-or law-making violence on the other, except in the case of a democratic irruption of a proletarian general strike.[3] For Benjamin, the only force (means) excluded from these two types of violence is the force (means) of a general proletarian strike. The general strike exists beyond these two categories and is in that sense non-violent, yet one can argue that it is truly political, in Rancière's understanding of political. Benjamin says:

> For it takes place not in readiness to resume work following external concessions and this or that modification to working conditions, but in the determination to resume only a wholly transformed work, no longer enforced by the state, an upheaval that this kind of strike not so much causes as consummates. For this reason, the first of these undertakings is lawmaking but the second anarchistic.[4]

This was also Marx's argument, that the purpose of the revolution was never the creation of some kind of lawmaking utopia.[5] Benjamin then continues by interpreting 'mythic violence', which is the violence of the Gods, the manifestation of their wills, and thus is closely related to lawmaking violence.[6] Mythic violence should not be confused with divine violence, but it is the ultimate justification of violence either in the name of law/state making or law/state maintaining violence. Divine violence for Benjamin is carried out in the name of justice, if indeed it is in the name of anything. Divine violence opposes mythic violence, just as one can interpret the God of the Bible opposing mythic gods and idols. However, this violence is never justice in the name of a particular utopia, in other words a law which would make it law-making or law-maintaining. Rather, it is an infinite justice, one that is always yet to come, as Jacques Derrida would argue,[7] and this justice calls one into an infinite responsibility. It therefore cannot be justified by any state- or law- making or

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3   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 243.
4   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 243.
5   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 246.
6   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 248.
7   Derrida, Jacques (1994), *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International (translated by Peggy Kamuf)*, London, Routledge, 74, 82.

maintaining morality or ideology. 'Lawmaking is powermaking, assumption of power, and to that extent an immediate manifestation of violence. Justice is the principle of all divine endmaking, power the principle of all mythic lawmaking.'[8]

Benjamin therefore contrasts divine violence with mythic violence:

> This very task of destruction poses again, ultimately, the question of a pure immediate violence that might be able to call a halt to mythic violence. Just as in all spheres God opposes myth, mythic violence is confronted by the divine. And the latter constitutes its antithesis in all respects. If mythic violence is lawmaking, divine violence is law-destroying; if the former sets boundaries, the latter boundlessly destroys them; if mythic violence brings at once guilt and retribution, divine power only expiates; if the former threatens, the latter strikes; if the former is bloody, the latter is lethal without spilling blood.[9]

In this sense, divine violence can be related to mere life and therefore to the death drive in Freud and Lacan's understanding thereof:

> For with mere life, the rule of law over the living ceases. Mythic violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake; divine violence is pure power over all life for the sake of the living. The first demands sacrifice; the second accepts it.[10]

In Todd Phillips' film of 2019, *Joker*, there is the scene where Arthur Fleck is on the subway after having been fired from his job as a clown. He has just heard from his social worker that due to the austerity measures in place resulting in funding for social services being cut, he will no longer be receiving the 'help' he had been receiving until now, that is the medication. The only other passenger is a young woman quietly reading her book in the subway compartment. At the next stop three wealthy, young, professional men, probably from the financial world, enter the subway. The three men, slightly drunk and arrogant, start harassing the girl. Arthur, a few metres away, witnesses this harassment which makes him uncomfortable and nervous and triggers his uncontrollable laughter (a medical condition, for which he normally carries a card that explains the condition). He is still wearing the clown outfit and this, together with his uncontrollable laughter, attracts the attention of the three young men and the situation becomes very tense. Arthur automatically

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8   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 248.
9   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 249-250.
10   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 250.

searches for his card but to no avail as, in a previous science, the mother on the bus did not return the card to him.

The system is failing him, the checks and balances previously in place to secure his place in the ontology of the state are failing him. The three men attack him by violently kicking and hitting him. After being violently abused for some time and not responding, he eventually responds. His response is not premeditated, rather it is as if through this crack in the system – the lack of his card, him falling out of the system – a destructive force erupts and he begins to shoot at the men, eventually killing all three. He has been reduced to nothing, he is unemployed and not even the social service recognizes him anymore. He is a nothing, *nepeš*. The 'symbolic' and 'imaginary' have both failed him, and he is left with nothing but 'the real'. Out of this nothing erupts a force which kills the three young men. Who would dare call it justice? Who would name it terrorism? What morality, or rather whose morality, could be in a position to call it, name it: justice or terrorism or violence? Both news agencies and the mayoral candidate (Bruce Wayne's father) describe the act as unnecessary violence and cowardice. The crowds, on the other hand, rise up as a popular movement inspired by this act of violence under a populist slogan: 'Kill the rich!!' The violence which has been perpetrated has been named as evil in the name of state maintaining or it is a call to arms by those who want to create a new state:

> Once again all the eternal forms are open to pure divine violence, which myth bastardized with law. Divine violence may manifest itself in a true war exactly as it does in the crowd's divine judgement on a criminal. But all mythic, lawmaking violence, which we may call 'executive', is pernicious. Pernicious, too, is the law-preserving, 'administrative' violence that serves it. Divine violence, which is the sign and seal but never the means of sacred dispatch, may be called 'sovereign' violence.[11]

In liberal democracies, 'signifying stress' has perhaps reached a breaking point, and where it breaks – where the symbolic and the imaginary fail – violence or life erupts.

When bringing radicalization and religion into conversation with each other, religion, in the dominant interpretation, is seen to be on the side of the radicals. In the dominant understanding, radicalization refers mainly to Islamic Jihadists, however, it equally has to do with Christian fundamentalists, who burn down abortion clinics or murder the doctors and nurses working in them

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[11]   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 252.

in the name of their interpretation of God's Will. The state, for example the United States and its war on terror or the European Union's counter terrorism measures, are considered to be the exact opposite of religion and, God forbid, any form of religious fundamentalism. I would like to challenge this secular versus religious dichotomy and follow Simon Critchley when he, in reference to Carl Schmitt, argues that the consensus seeking of liberal democracies are deist and therefore also religious.[12]

Carl Schmitt argued that all significant modern concepts relating to the theory of the state are in fact secularized theological concepts.[13] It is in this context that Schmitt critiques liberal democracy when he argues that the liberal-constitutional state can be interpreted as a triumph of deism, a theological vision that unifies reason and nature by identifying the latter with divinity.[14] This is the sense in which Critchley speaks of holy violence and holy war when he describes our contemporary liberal democratic world. The holy war exists not only on the side of the Jihadists, the war on terror and the counterterrorism of the European Union is similarly a holy war. This holy war should not be seen as being the same as Benjamin's divine violence, rather it should be equated with mythic (ideological) violence that justifies the law or is justified by a law.

Critchley therefore interprets the current Western world as waging a holy war, where politics, religion, and violence have formed a triangle and thereby an unholy alliance:

> This situation can be triangulated around the often fatal entanglement of politics and religion, where the third vertex of the triangle is violence. Politics, religion and violence appear to define the present through which we are all too precipitously moving: the phenomenon of sacred political violence, where religiously justified violence is the means to a political end.[15]

It should be remembered that Critchley's article was not written during Trump's time in office, but during the year Obama became the 44th president of the United States, after the Bush years.

The liberal West, specifically under Obama's eloquent rhetoric, believed the modern liberal state to exist without violence, having convinced itself that everything is decided via peaceful reasoning, namely 'civilized' debate and

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12   Critchley, S. (2009), 'Mystical Anarchism', *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social theory* 10 (2), August 2009, 272-306.

13   Schmitt, C. (2006)*, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty (translated George Schwab)*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

14   Critchley, 'Mystical Anarchism,' 273.

15   Critchley, 'Mystical Anarchism,' 272.

consensus, and that this 'civilized' striving towards consensus has the moral high ground in the world. Benjamin criticizes the forgetfulness of the violence that is present in such a consensual approach, especially when this approach is used to police the state and, in the case of the USA and its European allies, to police the world. Clearly Benjamin was not writing about our contemporary world, but in the context of Europe in the previous century. He says about these consensual statesmen and women:

> They lack the sense that they represent a lawmaking violence; no wonder they cannot achieve decrees worthy of this violence but cultivate in compromise a sup-posedly nonviolent manner of dealing with political affairs. This remains, how-ever, a "product situated within the mentality of violence, no matter how it may disdain all open violence, because the effort toward compromise is motivated not internally but from outside, by the opposing effort, because no compromise, how-ever freely accepted, is conceivable without a compulsive character. 'It would be better otherwise' is the underlying feeling in every compromise.[16]

Benjamin further argues that, 'When the consciousness of the latent pres-ence of violence in a legal institution disappears, the institution falls into decay.'[17]

It might be useful here to also bring in Jacques Rancière's differentiation between police and politics, specifically in the context of Benjamin's inter-pretation of the decay of institutions, with the focus on the absence or lack of politics:

> The police is not a social function but a symbolic constitution of the social. The essence of the police lies neither in repression nor even in control over the living. *Its essence lies in a certain way of dividing up the sensible*. I call 'distribution of the sensible' a generally implicit law that defines the *forms of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are inscribed*. The partition of the sensible is the dividing-up of the world (*de monde*) and of the people (*du monde*), the *nemeïn* upon which the *nomoi* of the community are founded. This partition should be understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, as that *which separates and excludes*; on the other, *as that which hallows participation*. A partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between a shared common (*un commun partagé*) and the distribution of the exclusive parts is determined in sensory experience. This latter form of distribution, which by its sensory self-evidence, anticipates the distribution of part and shares (*parties*),

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16   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 244.
17   Benjamin, 'Critique of violence', 244.

itself presupposes a distribution of what is visible and what not, of what can be heard and what cannot.[18]

What really deserves the name of politics *is the cluster of perceptions and practices that shape this common world*. Politics is first of all a way *of framing, among sensory data, a specific sphere of experience*. It is a partition of the sensible, or the visible and the sayable, which allows (or does not allow), some specific data to appear; which allows or does not allow some specific subjects to designate them and speak about them. It is a specific intertwining of ways of being, ways of doing and ways of speaking. The politics of literature thus means that literature as literature is involved in this partition of the visible and the sayable, in this intertwining of being, doing and saying that frames a polemical common world.[19]

I mention this because I believe it is important in terms of how one understands radicalization. I will argue that the term radicalization, and how it is used in the context of the European Union, is part of the police function and therefore the dividing up of the sensible. It is about deciding what is allowed to be visible, who can partake, and who is invited to the 'peaceful' consensus table.

For the purpose of this chapter, I would like to interpret radicalization in the context of Benjamin's interpretation of violence, as well as Rancière's differentiation between police and politics by bringing in another term from Eric Santner, one he developed in relation to both Benjamin and Rosenzweig, namely 'signifying stress'.[20]

Santner's concept of signifying stress can be used to understand something of the global situation as interpreted by the West. One could say that signifying stress exists on various levels. Firstly, in the context of the theme of this volume, there is the signifying stress caused by the various terror attacks: such as in September 2001 New York, in March 2004 Madrid, and in July 2005 in London. Then there is signifying stress that exists prior to these attacks,

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[18] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 44. Emphasis is mine.
[19] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 160.
[20] Santner, E. (2013), 'Miracles Happen: Benjamin, Rosenzweig, Freud, and the matter of the neighbour,' in Žižek, S., Reinhard, K., and Santner, E., *The Neighbor: Three inquiries in Political Theology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 92. It is this never-ceasing work of symbolization and failure of symbolization, translation and failure of translation, that constitutes what I have referred to as 'signifying stress'. We have here, then, something of a tragic cycle: my signifying stress is called forth – ex-cited – by my efforts to translate the signifying stress emanating from the other indicating, in its turn, the other's 'addiction' to his/her own enigmas. Or, as Laplanche puts it, 'Internal alien-ness; external alien-ness, in turn, held in place by the enigmatic relation of the other to his own internal alien.' In Laplanche, J. (1999), *Essays on Otherness*, ed. John Fletcher, London: Routledge, 80. In the view I have outlined here, a 'miracle' would represent the event of a genuine break in such a fateful enchainment of unconscious transmission. Santner, 'Miracles Happen', 92.

signifying stress that in a sense is depicted by the movie *Joker*. The movie begins with a news broadcast in Gotham City. Yet, the news broadcast could have been any news broadcast in any of the major cities of the Western world. It addresses unemployment, failing social systems, the disintegration of communities and thus the decay of the social fabric, an absence of values, and the fact that the problems are only increasing and starting to become overwhelming. How must all this decay – this combination of economic, social, political, and environmental challenges - be interpreted and understood? In a subsequent scene Arthur is speaking to his social worker and says, 'Is it just me or is the world getting crazier?' To which the social worker responds, 'It is tense out there!' The world is suffering from signifying stress, the stress of not knowing how to meaningfully make sense of the current world and its overwhelming challenges. The interpretive tools of the past are failing – policing (the symbolic constitution) is failing. When we consider the recent elections in Europe and the rest of the world, it does indeed indicate the presence of signifying stress. This is because the symbolic constitution is failing, traditional political parties do not seem to be able to offer meaning and sense to current socio-economic-political and environmental 'crises', and thus people are searching elsewhere or are not participating in elections at all.

Critchley does not refer to signifying stress, but instead speaks of a general feeling of disappointment, which he unpacks further as being religious and political disappointment. Critchley argues that ever since Kant, philosophy is no longer a response to awe, rather it has its beginning in disappointment.[21] For Critchley:

> Religious disappointment provokes the question of meaning (what is the meaning of life in the absence of a transcendent deity who would act as a guarantor of meaning?) and opens the problem of nihilism; political disappointment provokes the question of justice (how is justice possible in a violently unjust world?) and provokes the need for an ethics.[22]

Before exploring the infinite ethics offered by Critchley, the idea of signifying stress currently being experienced will be explored, as well as generalized proletarianism and symbolic misery as Bernhard Stiegler refers to it, which could offer an interpretation for increased radicalization as well as the rise

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21   Critchley, S. (2007), *Infinitely demanding: Ethics of commitment, politics of resistance*, London: Verso, 38.

22   Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding*, 38.

in populism.[23] Critchley argues that, within such contexts of general disappointment, only two options seem to be left: passive and/or active nihilism:

> The passive nihilist looks at the world from a certain distance, and finds it meaningless. He is scornful of the pretensions of liberal humanism with its metaphysical faith in progress, improvement and the perfectibility of humankind, beliefs that he claims are held with the same dogmatic assurance that Christianity was held in Europe until the late eighteenth century.[24]

> The passive nihilist concludes that we are simply animals, and rather nasty aggressive primates at that, what we might call *homo rapiens*, rapacious animals. Rather than acting in the world and trying to transform it, the passive nihilist simply focuses on himself and his particular pleasures and projects for perfecting himself, whether through discovering the inner child, manipulating pyramids, writing pessimistic-sounding literary essays, taking up yoga, birdwatching or botany, as was the case with the aged Rousseau.[25]

> In the face of the increasing brutality of reality, the passive nihilist tries to achieve a mystical stillness, calm contemplation: 'European Buddhism'. In a world that is all too rapidly blowing itself to pieces, the passive nihilist closes his eyes and makes himself into an island. The active nihilist also finds everything meaningless, but instead of sitting back and contemplating, he tries to destroy this world and bring another into being.[26]

It is in this context of signifying stress and active nihilism that one might be able to interpret the terror attacks in New York (2001), Madrid (2004) and London (2005).

Yet, signifying stress is also experienced by the powers that be, who seek to police this world and cannot accept this kind of stress, as it disturbs both the consensus and the ontology constituted by the dominant symbolic.

Governments encountering such signifying stress attempt to interpret and contain these events, that is, to police them. These events and the people that have caused them do not fit into the policed ontology of the liberal democratic West. The term 'radicalization' is thus the European Union's various governments' policing response to contain and once again normalize the ontology of Europe.

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[23] Stiegler, B. (2014), *Symbolic Misery: Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch,* translated by Barnaby Norman, Cambridge: Polity Press; Stiegler, B. (2015) *States of Shock: Stupidity and knowledge in the 21st Century,* translated by Daniel Ross, Cambridge: Polity.
[24] Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding,* 4.
[25] Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding,* 4.
[26] Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding,* 4-5.

> The concept of radicalization in relation to terrorism has no long-standing scientific pedigree. It was born as a political construct, first raised within European police and intelligence circles, boosted by the 9/11 attacks and finally embraced in May 2004 in an internal EU counterterrorism document.[27]

In Rancière's terms it is not a political construct, rather it is a police construct.

The conversation within this volume, is a North-South one (a conversation between Brussels and Pretoria). However it needs to be pointed out that the term 'radicalization' as portrayed in the conference literature which this volume is a result of, is very much a European and European Parliament (Strasbourg) construct. The European Commission defines radicalization as '[t]he phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to terrorism, and is closely connected to the notion of extremism.'[28]

It is a hyped word that emerged in Europe in response to the 9/11 attacks.

One could say that 'radicalization' is a police word, in Rancière's sense of police, that was created in Europe as part of the policing of a shared world and the people of that shared world. It is a word that polices what in that world is allowed to be visible, sayable, and thus acceptable at the table of consensus:

> Radicalization has a twisted history. At every turn, it gained a new meaning without shedding the existing one. In the beginning, 'radicalization' meant Muslims espousing an anti-Western, fundamentalist stance, with Iran as the epicenter of a global Muslim insurgency. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, it started to be loosely used as a synonym of 'anger'. A number of Muslims were said to become increasingly angry as a result of a wide variety of 'root causes'. But almost simultaneously, it became intertwined with 'recruitment' by foreign extremists, who tried to persuade these angry individuals to join foreign war zones. In 2004, another layer was added when 'self- radicalization' became the buzzword, since it appeared that one could also develop into a terrorist through kinship and friendship networks. That year, the EU officially embraced the concept. Myriad models and studies were financed to try to clarify the long, step- by-step process through which an individual radicalized into a terrorist. But, in a new twist, by 2015–2016 it became obvious that radicalization didn't require a long process after all. 'Flash' or 'instant radicalization' was introduced to elucidate how some literally in a moment jumped into jihadi terrorism without any previous phase of, well, radicalization. In the meantime, by 2018, the culprit behind the global Muslim insurgency had crossed the Gulf. Saudi Arabia was now seen as the villain that, through its

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27   Coolsaet, R. (2019), 'Radicalization: The origins and limits of a contested concept,' in Fadil, N., de Koning, M., & Ragazzi, F. (Eds.), *Radicalization in Belgium and the Netherlands: Critical Perspectives on Violence and Security*, London: I.B. Tauris, 30.

28   European Parliament Briefing March 2015, *Religious Fundamentalism and Radicalization,* https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-briefing-551342-Religious-fundamentalism-and-radicalisation-FINAL.pdf

> multi-billion-dollar promotion of a newly coined 'Salafi-Wahhabism', has pervert-ed the minds of millions of Muslims worldwide into a rejectionist, anti-Western stance.[29]

The attacks in London in July 2005, and those in Madrid two months previously, pushed the concept to centre stage in EU counterterrorism thinking and policies. Unlike the perpetrators of 9/11, these attackers did not come from abroad but were individuals who grew up in Europe, often having been born there. How did they come to resort to terrorism and turn against their own countrymen? Why were they attracted to extremist ideologies? What made them vulnerable to recruiters? Something, it was argued, must turn a person from a 'normal' individual into a terrorist. Untangling this process became the essence of radicalization studies and the holy grail of European (and later worldwide) counterterrorism efforts.[30]

It is a constructed term, which – as with all constructions – is context-bound. For example, in South Africa the word radicalization does not necessarily have this negative connotation. It is certainly used with regards to students and the radicalization of students, but it is also positively loaded, for example, there is a children's ministry programme called Radikids which has built its entire programme on this idea of radical.[31]

Coolsaet continues:

> The same questions are still being asked today: What exactly do we understand by radicalization? What are its drivers? How do we reverse or stop it? Are radical ideas a conveyor belt to radical action? How does religion relate to it exactly?[32]

This volume, and the conference from which it has resulted, has exactly this as its focus: How exactly does religion relate to the notion of radicalization – both positively and negatively?

The church and radicalization

Should the church partake in the police function, or should it perhaps seek to respond creatively to the underlying signifying stress that is being experienced generally? Or as Stiegler argues, there is a generalized proletarianism or symbolic misery, that is, people who are excluded from symbolic imagining

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[29]   Coolsaet, 'Radicalization', 29.
[30]   Coolsaet, 'Radicalization', 30.
[31]   https://www.facebook.com/Radikids-Childrens-Ministry-South-Africa-224456194235866/
[32]   Coolsaet, 'Radicalization', 30.