ABSTRACT

The interdisciplinary team at CISTP recommends that an analytic model of inclusion is a desirable framework for facing the complex, long-term challenges that terrorism poses. Successful policy and intelligence approaches should “include” the multi-faceted, interacting aspects of systems that affect peace, which entails the physical, psychological, material/economic, cultural/religious, and ecological well being of peoples. The concept of “inclusion” as an analytic paradigm also suggests several other conceptual and pragmatic directions, such as: fostering identification amongst multiple communities, generating and maintaining trust between marginalized and majority communities, promoting community inclusive programs in education, sustainability, development, and security, considering a model of social resilience as a long-term goal for communities, focusing on a multi-generational approach that looks to the future, implementing intelligence approaches that recognize the value of local knowledge and interdisciplinary expertise, sharing resources and power amongst communities, facilitating a broad network approach that generates commitment from the grassroots level upwards and outwards, and reconceptualizing the most efficient policing mechanisms and state boundaries. Overall, the concept of “inclusion” is a useful tool for charting future models as well as a helpful starting point for considering the effectiveness of current counter-terrorism approaches in capturing the complexity of the cycle of religious and ideological extremism.

INTRODUCTION

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1 CISTP, a non-partisan association, does not represent any official position of James Madison University and receives no funding from governmental agencies. Primary authors on this working paper include: Frances Flannery, Lennis Echterling, Glenn Hastedt, Shin Ji Kang, Anne Stewart, Timothy Walton, with Jennifer Connerley. Additional concepts emerged from conversations amongst all CISTP Faculty Fellows and invited guests.
As a conceptual goal informing counter-terrorism efforts in the U.S. intelligence community and public policy arenas, the idea of “peace” typically refers to the preservation of national security interests and the physical security of American persons and property. CISTP begins by redefining the goal of “peace” as entailing the physical, psychological, material, cultural, and ecological well being of peoples. This framing of peace more adequately addresses the systemic nature of contemporary terrorism, especially of the transnational variety, which arises out of complex socio-cultural dynamics and contexts of discontent. It also recognizes that as the world becomes more interconnected, the well-being of peoples across the globe consistently affects U.S. and allied concerns. Most importantly, this definition of peace recognizes that some counter-terrorism efforts can unintentionally worsen terrorism when policies and operations do not take into account the long-term, complex nature of the problem of terrorism. Our conviction is that the most effective counter-terrorism efforts do not mainly or simply target a group of people considered terrorists, but rather aim at eradicating the violent ideology of terrorism through change at the grassroots level of society upwards.

With this framework in mind, CISTP recommends a conceptual paradigm shift towards a model of inclusion in intelligence analysis, policy, and military/policing narratives. This model would shift away from heavy reliance on post 9-11 conflict focused and peacebuilding anti-terrorism efforts, which are largely developed and administered by U.S. military personnel, towards a strategy that shifts the emphasis to a bottom up focus. Such a community inclusive approach builds on joint partnering with or support of local, regional, and national initiatives through a commitment to supportive social actions that improve the lives of people “on the ground.” This strategy recognizes that terrorism (both transnational and domestic) is a symptom that arises out contexts of perceived oppression. We therefore maintain that only a careful analysis of the social contexts in which terrorist ideology arises and finds reception, in combination with an inclusive strategy that identifies with marginalized and vulnerable populations, can successfully stem the ongoing threat of violent extremism.

Long-term approaches to stemming terrorism must ameliorate the cultural contexts that foster discontent. To be successful, such a broad goal must necessarily reach beyond governmental resources to include and support the efforts of local political/tribal leaders, NGOs, faith based organizations, and grassroots efforts. It may also entail pragmatic changes to policies that foster perceived oppression amongst groups or individuals at high risk for extremist radicalization.

Also vital is positive counter-messaging against extremist ideology, which typically portrays the U.S. and our allies as an evil enemy. This effort should utilize the full range of media, including television, radio, print journalism, social media, art, music, and other modes of expression. Counter-messaging should focus on generating positive images for the U.S. and our allies through humanitarian policies and communicating historical and contemporary instances in which the U.S. and our allies have worked for the benefit of
marginalized communities. Counter-messaging could also factually relate immoral actions of terrorists but should strive to avoid strategies that may accidentally empower the terrorists’ message. These include instilling fear, portraying the terrorists as powerful, or employing dehumanizing language against the terrorists themselves. Finally, counter-messaging should encourage communications from faith communities that feel that extremists have distorted their religion or cultural heritage.

What follows are views from academic experts representing a variety of fields on the need for an **analytic model of inclusion**. A specific case example of this approach is outlined in the CISTP position paper on ISIL/ISIS, available at [www.jmu.edu/cistp](http://www.jmu.edu/cistp).

- **PERSPECTIVE: Frances Flannery, Ph.D.  Associate Professor of Religion with expertise in apocalyptic thought and movements, religious terrorism, and religion and sustainability:**

Most religious and ideological terrorism today subscribes to some version of the radical apocalyptic worldview (although no group uses this academic concept for self-identification). While each cultural context must be understood on its own terms, in transcultural terms the radical apocalyptic thought system shows consistent characteristics that can shed light on the motives and goals of many extremists.

A radical apocalyptic worldview maintains that the world is under the influence of evil persons who are exercising the will of some cosmic, evil force. It holds that the divine realm promises to intervene and end the rule of evil, inaugurating some good or perfect divine rule that transforms history. A group adhering to a radical apocalyptic worldview may believe that their actions will trigger this divine intervention, perhaps establishing them as a temporary suzerain until the ultimate salvation of the world unfolds. Since it is the future or transcendent realm that motivates them, typical national or “earthly” concerns for the welfare of their members may not apply. If the group also maintains that violence is redemptive or acceptable as a means to that glorious end, there is little to stop them from acting violently towards those whom they deem to be evil (Flannery 2015).

At the heart of this violent, radical apocalyptic worldview are three simple conceptualizations that counter-terrorism efforts must be extremely careful to avoid reinforcing, lest they unintentionally increase the appeal of extremist ideology. The first concept is that the world is easily divisible into “good” and “evil” persons engaged in a cosmic war (Juergensmeyer 2003). In this worldview, there is nothing in-between the two sides of the moral and cosmic scale and all people line up on one side or the other. The radical apocalyptic group views moderates from related or parent traditions as hypocrites, liars, traitors, and the worst representatives of evil, deserving of even worse treatment than evil persons who are unassociated with the religious or cultural tradition of the radical group. The second idea to avoid reinforcing is the radical belief that the
“good” people, the radical apocalyptic group and its adherents, are currently suffering at the hands of the “evil” world. The third concept is that violence is an act of piety and goodness.

Thus, to be successful in the long-term in stemming apocalyptic terrorism and radicalization, policy narratives and counter-terrorism paradigms should avoid characterizing a complex situation in terms of “good” vs. “evil” persons, perpetuating policies or messages that convey the world is against the group on the basis of their theology, and speaking of military victories in terms that glorify violence. As tempting as those positions may be, they inadvertently strengthen the radical apocalyptic view of extremists and contribute to the further spread of the ideology.

By contrast, a model of inclusion would redefine the conceptual relationship of the majority society in relation to those marginalized communities that are vulnerable to radicalization. To lessen the appeal of terrorism effectively in the long-term and halt the cycle of terrorism, the U.S. and its allies must expand the boundaries of those with whom we identify through compassionate inclusion that translates into actions that meet the physical, psychological, material, and cultural needs of marginalized persons, especially children. Recognizing that humans and their environment interact to create both vulnerabilities and resilience in systems (Turner et al. 2003), these actions must also be ecologically sustainable in order to be stable in the long-term.

For example, educational, social, emotional, and psychological supports for refugee children in post-conflict scenarios are not only humane, but also pragmatic. Millions of displaced children will grow up within a decade to form the next generation at risk for radicalization. In addition, the U.S. and its allies should frame military achievements as necessary last resorts, mindful and regretful of any unintended casualties, devastation, or displacements. Recognizing that ritual is vital to cementing community ties, the U.S. and its allies could respond publicly to military actions resulting in unintended civilian deaths with (genuine) expressions of grief and material support for affected families and neighborhoods. Conflicts in which we have provided military and humanitarian aid to marginalized persons and groups, such as in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, provide opportunities for counter-messaging extremist narratives.

Finally, sustained efforts at intra-religious and interreligious dialogue at the grassroots levels up through official clerical levels are vital means of extending the limits of our perceived communities. To be the most successful, the exchange of knowledge, activities, programs, insights, and empowerment must be reciprocal, recognizing that each tradition has much to contribute to the greater peace.

- PERSPECTIVE: Anne Stewart, Ph.D. Professor of Graduate Psychology and Lennie Echterling, Ph.D. Professor of Counseling, with expertise in social resilience in post-conflict and disaster scenarios:
The construct of social resilience, described as the “timely capacity of individuals and groups – family, community, country, and enterprise – to be more generative during times of stability and to adapt, reorganize, and grow in response to disruption” is a useful concept for government, agency, and organization leaders (Leitch and Sutton 2013). Dimensions of social resilience may help identify factors that promote healthy and adaptive reactions to disorder while recognizing threats.

The violence, devastation, and chaos of war, social conflicts, and natural disasters can threaten to destroy communities by inflicting pervasive trauma, wrecking infrastructures, undermining regular social interactions, and sabotaging residents’ support networks. Once the violence and destruction have abated, communities vary greatly in their ability to recover and reinitiate normal social functioning. In some cases, communities are so profoundly affected that they disintegrate; in other cases, not only do they quickly attain some semblance of normal functioning, but also they eventually rebuild and go on to prosper and thrive.

In physics, the concept of resilience refers to the extent that a material can endure strain and return to its original shape. In recent years, ecologists, political scientists, and economists have also found productive ways to apply the concept of resilience to disasters (Turner et al. 2003). For example, environmental scientists and engineers are collaborating to design resilient coastlines that can withstand the impact of hurricanes. Mental health professionals also have used the notion of resilience to characterize the ability of individuals and families to bounce back after adversity. More recently, social resilience has provided a useful conceptual framework for exploring factors that may promote or impede the posttraumatic recovery, stability, and growth of communities. Applying a social resilience lens may help develop strategies and identify promising interventions for how to strengthen communities early in a conflict so that the effects of war related violence might be mitigated and the well-being of the community would be enhanced.

The construct of social resilience and the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) can assist in organizing responses to the following questions:

- What factors are most influential in promoting or hindering a community’s resilience?
- What social characteristics define a resilient community that responds quickly to the impact of violence and takes steps to help those individuals and families who are most in need?
- Which specific social networks or behavioral responses are observed in post-conflict communities that promote healing and recovery?
- What cultural, religious, and national identity differences influence recovery?
- How do urban and rural communities differ in their capacity to recover?
- What role do national or international aid agencies play in assisting or inhibiting recovery?
Of particular interest is the potential for violence generated within the community during the vulnerable recovery phase after a conflict:

- What kinds of social networks can prevent violence and criminal acts?
- What types of social responses are most effective in reducing violence?
- How do communities mobilize successfully to prevent violence?

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological framework helps to organize information about people in their relevant context in order to understand their reciprocal influences.

To be successful, efforts to foster social resilience should recognize the interconnectedness of these systems (individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) and the importance of including the networks in each (e.g. facets of the individual, family, church, peers, health services, school, social services, industry, local politics, mass media, neighbors, and attitudes and ideologies of the culture).

- PERSPECTIVE: Timothy J. Walton, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Intelligence Analysis and former intelligence practitioner with expertise in counter-terrorism, European conflicts and history, and the Balkans:

To maximize its chances for success in efforts against the Islamic State and other transnational terrorist organizations, the United States needs a strategy, which means a multidisciplinary, regional approach, geared to the long term. The UN’s Arab Human Development Reports detail the magnitude of the challenge in trying to reduce the factors, such as anger and frustration among the population in the Middle East, that provide a seedbed for militant extremism. Now that the American military has reengaged, it is also useful to consider the lessons learned from previous conflicts. Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant (Flynn et al 2010) highlights the importance of detailed and accurate local knowledge in areas where foreign civilians (such as aid workers) and the military will be operating. One of the authors of Fixing Intel was Major General Michael Flynn, who was senior commander in Afghanistan and later head of the Defense
Intelligence Agency. He, along with many others, have noted that to be effective, outsiders simply must have an understanding of culture, such as local languages, indigenous customs, and tribal structures.

The famous joint Army and Marine Corps manual on counterinsurgency (FM 3–24 2014), recently updated, also stresses the importance of situational awareness and non-linear thinking. One of the other sobering lessons of the manual is that counterinsurgency can be effective, but requires a substantial commitment of personnel, funds, and time. For this long-term effort to reduce extremism in the Middle East, there are presently some resources available in places such as academia, the business world, and parts of the government. But they are not enough, and we need to be thinking about scholarships, institutes, and other efforts that can build a knowledge base. The kind of effort that went into supporting Slavic studies, Russian language courses, etc. in the Cold War is a useful model.

- PERSPECTIVE: Shin Ji Kang, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Education with expertise in refugee education, religion and education, and South Korean education:

A primary concern that arises from military models of counter-terrorism is that violence damages non-combatants and their communities. This can result in a violation of basic human rights, as indicated in the first sentence of the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “. . . recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world . . . .” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948).

According to social ecology, violence that affects family and community systems causes serious problems for human development in the entire global society (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Because an individual’s overall development is immediately and directly influenced by one’s family, school, and neighborhood dynamics, maintaining the safety and health of families and communities is crucial in supporting basic human rights and desirable development.

Rebuilding the lives of people displaced and damaged by terrorist and militaristic counter-terrorist violence can be reactive and costly. Still, implementing a community inclusive approach to counter-terrorism that nurtures the social consciousness and justice oriented identities of young people could be both preventative and proactive. For example, having quality education accessible in post-conflict communities could reduce the chances of children being exposed to violence, kidnapping, and recruitment into terrorist ideology (Demirdjian 2012).

Formal or alternative schooling in conflict affected communities entails more than just child safety. An example of a successful case of engagement with the community through education is the UN initiative Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP
School sport programs aimed at promoting development and peace in countries such as Liberia and Tanzania have brought comprehensive advantages, including the development of civic values (e.g., teamwork and respect), and social/emotional capitals (e.g., confidence, social networks) that are transferable to other domains of their lives. They improve the mental, psychological, and physical health of all participants, especially in the case of marginalized populations (e.g., girls and religious/tribal minorities). Such an approach also engages the family and community of the children, facilitates community capacity building, and contributes to indigenous efforts of social reform.

**Perspective:**

Glenn Hastedt, Ph.D. Professor of Justice Studies with expertise in American foreign policy, conflict studies, intelligence, and political science in a global context.

A focus on inclusion in conducting counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations highlights the importance of two aspects of this struggle. The first relates to what Zambernardi identifies as “the COIN trilemma,” resulting from attempts to implement FM 3–24 (Zambernardi 2013; FM 3–24 2014). Countries engaged in COIN simultaneously seek to accomplish three goals: protect their soldiers, distinguish between combatants and non-combatants in order to limit civilian casualties, and defeat the enemy. Zambernardi notes that only two of the three can be accomplished at any one time. If inclusion is the goal then distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants cannot be sacrificed, leaving the counterinsurgent state the option of either minimizing one’s own casualties or maximizing the damage inflicted upon the enemy.

Choosing the latter goal requires placing one’s forces in-country. This action, in turn, raises the question of how these forces should be organized and tasked. A focus on inclusion points to a policing presence in which local forces take the lead, rather than a “boots on the ground” approach in which local security forces play only a secondary or incidental role.

Additionally, a focus on inclusion points to the need to focus on the nature of the political unit to which participants in the conflict will give allegiance. With the notable exception of the former Yugoslavia, to date the focus in COIN conflicts has been on recreating state authority within existing boundaries. However, such a perspective virtually guarantees a long-term continuation of conflict when that conflict is regional in nature.

Globalization has created an international system in which existing state boundaries have become increasingly porous and sovereignty has been punctured. Size is no longer an advantage. What needs to be investigated is redrawing boundaries and reconceptualizing the role of the state as part of a solution that seeks to instill a sense of legitimacy upon post-conflict political orders. In the short term this solution adds yet another layer to the
problem as large-scale international migrations are likely to occur. Over the long term, however, it may hold the most promising foundation on which political systems can be built.

Selected References


