Introduction

The present article aims to provide a short overview of my research on the radicalization process of the Norwegian terrorist, Anders Behring Breivik. Its main purpose, based on the principles of transformative learning theory, is to explore the life experiences that drove him to the point to deploy violent means. The attacks on July 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2011 sent shock waves to democratic societies, since, contrary to what expected shortly after the lethal events, it was a single perpetrator, and not an organized terrorist group, who meticulously prepared and executed the plan. As a result, this type of threat, the so-called lone wolf terrorism, forced several governments to reassess their security strategies. In an attempt to delineate the term, lone wolf terrorism refers to intentional acts committed by persons who a. operate individually, b. do not belong to an organized terrorist group or network, c. act without the direct influence of a leader or hierarchy and d. whose tactics and methods are conceived and directed by the individual without any direct outside command or direction (COT, 2007,p.6).

However, due to the debate about whether Breivik belonged to a secret political movement, the Knights Templar, the study also considers a lone wolf terrorist to be part of a terrorist organization as long as this is not “a hierarchical organization in the classical sense of the word” (Bakker & De Graaf, 2010, p.2).

Lone wolves can pose puzzling problems to law enforcement agencies. The challenge is rooted in the nature of the threat, since individuals, who are not members of established networks, do not share thoughts and intentions with others (Bates, 2012). Ideally, they can

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take advantage of the fact that, counter-terrorist professionals can hardly identify their traces or prevent their acts in advance. However, it is noteworthy to mention that, in real life, not only security agents, but also lone wolves face challenges. It is not always possible to translate theory into action; the history of terrorism has shown that determination and self-discipline alone do not suffice to bear fruits, as it may also require advanced knowledge, skills or financial resources (and vice versa).

From a counter-terrorism perspective, Breivik’s success to possess these “virtues” makes his case interesting to study. As already mentioned, the conceptual framework of transformative learning theory offered the requisite tools to describe his radicalization process, i.e. the process in which individuals come to accept, condone and justify violence as a means to achieve political, religious or ideological goals (A. S. Wilner & Dubouloz, 2010). However, one needs to keep in mind that radicalization depends on various conditions, such as political, social or economic affecting each individual in a different way (A. Wilner, 2011). The complexity of its internal mechanisms, though, and its limitation to predict future attacks do not suggest that the concept of radicalization should be neglected; rather, thorough analyses of single cases can develop a better understanding of violent attitude and behavior leading to more effective responses in the fight against terrorism.

Concerning transformative learning theory, it involves 10 successive phases and centers on the mental and cognitive transformations that take place at the individual level. It describes a thinking process where adults learn to emancipate from uncritically established assumptions that have acquired during childhood, they learn to reflect on new experiences and construct knowledge. Doing so, they are able to use “a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future experience” (Mezirow as cited in Taylor, 1998, pg.5). My study explored the transformation process of Breivik deriving information mainly from his self-published manifesto and open sources associated with his personal records.
The radicalization process of Anders Breivik

Before assigning Breivik’s life events to the ten phases of the adult learning theory, it is important to point out few examples from his childhood. Breivik was born in London, on 13 February 1979. When he was one year old his parents divorced and he moved to Oslo with his mother. However, he kept contact with his father and used to visit him during summers until the age of 16 (Berwick, 2011). Regarding the relationship with his mother, the evaluation of the childcare services in 1983 reported that their relationship was problematic (Orange, 2012). She did not provide him with proper care; she was swearing and cursing him to be dead. Following the same study, his mother sexualized Breivik when he was four years old (Orange, 2012). At the same age, Breivik had been diagnosed to be quite anxious and passive ("Profile: Anders Behring Breivik," 2012b).

While at school, Breivik got intimidated and bullied by his peers, as well. His friends testify that Breivik started going to the gym and taking steroid pills, as a reaction to overcome his inferiority feelings (Carbone, 2011). In addition, Breivik was not contented with the educational system and decided to drop out of school. He was planning to pursue the Small Business Administration degree, but since he did not have that option in Norway he followed self-taught courses analogous to eight university years (Berwick, 2011).

Transformative learning theory

In the following parts, I look at the life experiences and events that appear to play decisive a role in his transformation into a terrorist, as presented, in the manifesto, by Breivik. What distinguishes in his analysis is the notion that Islam poses a significant threat to Europe and its people and, if not tackled immediately, future generations run the risk of becoming slaves within their countries.

Step 1: Experience of a disorienting dilemma

The first incident that seems to disorientate Breivik refers to the change in the behavior of his best friend, a Pakistani Muslim. Breivik is nearly 16 years old when his friend decides to join the Pakistani community in Oslo; an act of betrayal that shatters their friendship as reported in the manifesto. This is a moment of personal crisis for Breivik who loses a friend.

Andreas Dafnos: Lone Wolf Terrorism as a Category: Learning from the Breivik Case.
but it is not only that. He says: “I remember that pride and certain moral codexes/principles have always been very important to me ... The majority of people who shared these principles of pride were the Muslim youths and the occasional skinhead” (2011, p. 1,463). Thus, it is important to understand that Breivik appreciates the companionship with Muslims. He has high expectations of them which result in a great sense of disappointment after the incident with his friend.

Breivik records further that his former Pakistani friend deliberately rejects the Norwegian lifestyle, since it is not compatible with the principles of Islam. The Pakistanis hang out together and proceed to violent activities, such as beating and raping of ethnic Norwegians. Another incident involves the cases of two Pakistani and one Turkish girl. Breivik is 10 years old when the girls, one after another, unexpectedly disappear from school. Later, he finds out that it was their families that sent them back to their home countries due to the fact that they were overly familiar with the Norwegian culture. In addition, Breivik keeps account of several assaults and robberies caused by Muslims during the period 1994-1999, describing in detail the scenes and protagonists of each incident. As a consequence, these disorienting dilemmas challenge the interpretation of his meaning perspectives creating doubts about the role of Muslims and Islam.

**Step 2: Self-examination (i.e. feelings of fear, shame, anger and guilt)**

Before the disorienting experiences, Breivik believes that Islam is a peaceful and tolerant religion which aims to preach and spread love. He also thinks that Islam and Christianity are sharing some common ground. But the savage behavior of Muslims makes Breivik feel deceived, frustrated and disgruntled. His disappointment is evident in the next sentence; “I was unable to make the correct conclusions” (2011, p. 1,452). He could not see the truth while being at school. Maybe, this is the first time that he begins putting the pieces of his later ideology together. He labels society hypocritical and perceives Islam, the government, Western media and extreme left (i.e. the traitors) as a net that interweaves conspiracies against Europe.
Moreover, Breivik is 16-17 years old when he joins the youth organization of Progress Party; the Norwegian voice against immigrants. The media call its members racists, Nazis or fascist pigs. This is the worst fear of Breivik. He is terrified on the idea that someone will classify him in the category of racists. The latter seems to affect his social life, since he is extremely cautious concerning the factors that may cause damage to his social image. Reviewing his self-examination reports, Breivik admits that “if I had met myself 12 years ago I would probably think I was an extreme and paranoid nut, who believed in conspiracy theories” (2011, p. 813). However, as time goes by this belief fades out and Breivik departs towards the violence in order to defend Europe and bring out the truth to its people.

**Step 3: A critical assessment of assumptions**

The concept of critical reflection constitutes a distinguishing element of transformative learning theory and represents the ability to question established assumptions and expectations. In the case of Breivik, the event that tips his scales is the invasion of NATO to Serbia in 1999. At that time, Breivik is still struggling to assimilate the experiences of the last years into his meaning structures. After the invasion, he comes closer to the conclusion that Islam and the traitors are responsible for the Islamic colonization of Europe. Breivik states that the war against Serbians will lead to “a future where several Mini-Pakistans would eventually be created in every Western European capital” (2011, p. 1,454). He complements that this tendency will create a chaotic situation; an unacceptable situation that must stop. Several more issues make Breivik reflect deeper on his assumptions. For example, he feels dissatisfied with his government that decides to grant the Nobel Peace Prize to the leader of Palestine, Yasser Arafat ("Nobel Peace Prize," 2012). Interestingly, this particular event took place in 1994; however, Breivik goes through the period of assessing whether uncritical experiences of childhood remain functional during adulthood. Therefore, he cannot derive adequate answers from his habitual way of thinking. He begins reading various theories of political science, such as Islamism, socialism, capitalism and egalitarianism. Breivik says that “I then, for the first time, understood why I hadn’t learned anything of relevance about Islam at school, and the motives for suppressing the truth on these issues – political correctness”
(2011, p. 1,453). It is apparent that he is entering a new phase where the transformation of his meaning perspectives is under way.

**Step 4: Recognition that one’s discontent and process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change**

Breivik is 16-17 years old when he turns to politics. All the events, described before, have created a sense of confusion and discontent which lead Breivik to join the youth organization of Progress Party. This is the only political party that propagates anti-immigration ideas and actively resists multiculturalism. It is plausible to assume then that Breivik’s decision is based on his need to interact with people who share same concerns and feelings. To put it differently, he needs to communicate and identify with like-minded thinkers who have negotiated a similar change in beliefs and have also foreseen the threat posed by multiculturalists.

Breivik is in search of group identification; a trait that is very common in human relationships and involves the classification of individuals’ world into two categories; us versus them. Individuals who identify and sympathize with a group (i.e. us) feel well when the members of the group live with prosperity. By the same token, individuals feel bad when the members encounter problems. In contrast, individuals who oppose a group (i.e. them) feel content when the members of the group are in trouble and vice versa (Moskalenko, McCauley & Rozin as cited in Nijboer, 2012). Breivik appears to react in a similar way at that time. He blames the traitors for criticizing the values and practices of the Progress Party. He thinks that they are hypocrites, since they attack the only party that cares for Norway. For example, he expresses anger towards the media which conceal the violent riots of Muslims aiming to hide the truth from Norwegian people.

**Step 5: Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions**

Around the year 2000 Breivik realizes, probably for the first time, that democratic means cannot defeat Islamization. He discards the idea that democracy can contribute to changing the current situation. He asserts that the discussions with multiculturalists have lasted 40
years; however, no progress has been achieved. Moreover, Breivik is already 3-4 years in the Progress Party pursuing his political ideas. It seems, though, that this is not adequate to make him satisfied. He does not feel that the Progress Party can ignite a radical change. He begins, therefore, seeking new roles and relationships and exploring alternative way to express his opposition to multiculturalism. It is then that he sees violence as an attractive and potential tool to fight the enemy. It is obvious that Breivik struggles with the disorienting dilemmas that overwhelm his life. But he is not ready to utilize violent means, since the transformation is not complete yet.

According to his personal record, the major problem at the time is that there exist no resistance movements appealing to him. However, he does not quit. He tries to reach groups that represent his views and this is the reason why he cannot imagine himself being part of a racist-anti Jewish movement. Breivik contacts a Serbian group on the internet and this seems to be the moment that changes his life. Through this Serbian movement he connects with several individuals in Europe and the group that forms later on the political movement of Knights Templar. Breivik becomes a founding member of the movement in 2002. The meeting takes place in London and Breivik describes how proud he feels of this achievement; this new role that acquires, since he is the youngest member of the organization.

In addition, this is the period that Breivik explores new relationships. For example, he feels blessed and privileged having the opportunity to meet a Serbian Crusader Commander in Liberia who introduces him to the Knights Templar. It is plausible to say that after his involvement in the revolutionary movement, as he calls it, Breivik feels more confident and shifts towards a new direction. He rejects the idea of following democratic ways and it seems that he loses his faith to authorities. Saying so, he decides to postpone joining the army until he is eventually dismissed (Ravndal, 2012a); ”I avoided the mandatory draft service when I was 18 because I didn’t feel any loyalty to the ruling political parties” (2011, p. 1,486). Finally, having explored the new role and relationships, Breivik makes the decision to plan the next steps of his personal campaign.
Step 6: Planning of a course of action

As mentioned before, since 2000 Breivik loses his hope that democratic values are capable of ceasing Islam. He calls this period of his life the crossroad phase. In his view, the Progress Party is now a moderate party which consists of opportunistic politicians having no courage to fight for their ideas; instead, they only care for their political future. Breivik comes to the point to perceive the Progress Party as being a basic component of the problem, since it deliberately deceives the Norwegian people. Therefore, this realization forces Breivik to go further down the path of violence. He starts planning the next steps meticulously. He says that "if you are going to be capable of executing such a bloody and horrendous operation, you need to work on your mind, your psyche, for years. We have seen from military traditions you cannot send an unprepared person into war" (Pidd, 2012, para. 21).

In 2002, Breivik already knows that his future operations have chances to succeed, only if he gains financial independence; otherwise, he will not have enough time to devote to the preparation phase. As a result, he lays out the next steps paying attention to every single detail. By the end of 2002, he works in a customer service company while making an attempt to run his own business. In 2003, he decides to focus exclusively on his programming services business because he sees that it is more profitable. Breivik manages to collect 4 million NOK (approximately 500,000 Euros) within two years. Furthermore, the financial crisis, during 2005-2006, affects his company urging him to cease business. Given the conditions in Norway, his decision to go bankrupt seems to be the most cost-efficient solution to maintain some of the funds he earned in the previous years.

In addition, a part of his planning requires Breivik to remain silent when meeting up with friends or family members. He admits that it was hard in the beginning, but he is aware of the fact that any possible leak runs the risk of destroying the campaign. At the same time, his decision to keep it secret reveals once more a compassionate side to his personality. He says that he did not discuss anything about the attacks because he feared incriminating his friends. Moreover, Breivik, in order to not raise suspicions about his true intentions, constantly creates cover stories. For example, he describes an incident in the manifesto about some friends who “believe that I have chosen semi-isolation because of some alleged
homosexual relationship which they suspect I am trying to hide, LOL. Quite hilarious, as I am 100% hetero, but they may continue to believe what they want as it prevents them from asking more questions” (2011, p. 1,457).

**Step 7: Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans**

In 2006, Breivik starts writing the manifesto; a period which lasts approximately three years. For, he decides to live again with his mother, after a break of five years (Ravndal, 2012a), in an attempt to save money. Albeit embarrassing it may be for a grown man to live with his parents, he confesses that it is acceptable for a Justiciar Knight, as he labels himself, who aspires to launch a resistance campaign. Breivik uses Google Translate in order to derive educational material from a wide range of sources and school himself to non-English writings (Pidd, 2012). He is smart enough not to restrict himself only to ideologies pertaining to his goals. He studies the al-Qaeda’s attack tactics or Marxist revolutions against which Breivik holds a hostile stance. However, he emphasizes that successful case studies can provide valuable lessons.

Breivik collects information on weapons and armor as well as potential criminal networks that he can contact. Except that, he goes to a pistol club and plays the video game Call of Duty in order to practice his shooting skills (Ravndal, 2012b). In addition, he becomes acquainted with methods that may function as a psychological stimulus and can help him remain motivated and focused during the preparation phase. He is aware of the possible challenges that he may face during the attack, such as fear, anxiety, pain or injury. Breivik also trains himself to chemical compounds and procedures to make explosive mixtures. The next description from the manifesto eloquently shows the extent of skills and knowledge that he had obtained at this stage: “filter the solution into a 2L beaker containing 1,5L of distilled ice water with ice cubes while rapidly stirring the liquid (magnetic stirrer). This will convert it into bright yellow crystals. The ice cubes are scooped out and the liquid filtered again. The filter papers will contain purified DDNP crystals” (2011, p. 1,533).

Breivik comes across and identifies with the papers of nationalist statesmen and authors, such as Winston Churchill and Fjordman that inspire him. Breivik feels a connection with
Fjordman that seems to have a catalytic role in the justification of his activities. He studies several political systems and expresses admiration for the systems of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, since their first priority is to protect their culture. Moreover, Breivik researches counter-terrorism measures that have been developed over the years in order for him to be able to surmount them. He knows that after the 1995 improvised bombing attacks carried out by McVeigh in the USA, it is extremely difficult for an individual to obtain materials for explosions. Nevertheless, he complements that the ability of the enemy to adapt, placing obstacles in the way of a warrior, should make the warrior adapt, as well. Therefore, it is evident from the analysis that Breivik is dedicated to his mission planning accurately every step of the process.

**Step 8: Provisionally trying out new roles**

As time goes by, Breivik feels more confident that violence is the only solution against the ongoing Islamization of Europe. He sees himself as the vanguard of Europe; a martyr for his own people. Breivik believes that “defending your people and culture from genocide is the most basic and recognized human right and one of few causes actually worth dying for” (2011, p. 1,458). In 2006, as already mentioned, he moves back to his family home and focuses on writing the manifesto. In the same year, he quits from the Progress Party due to his belief that it will never take over control. Therefore, it is obvious that Breivik begins holding more extreme views. For example, he expresses resentment on an internet forum saying that the Progress Party is open to multicultural demands and the suicidal ideas of humanism ("Anders Behring Breivik: the boy next," 2012).

Breivik tries out new roles that will transform him into the perpetrator of the 2011 attacks. He plays the World of Warcraft video game in a part-time basis for 12 months in an attempt to detach himself from a conventional lifestyle that does not appeal to him anymore. For that reason, he intends to drain every inch of himself into the preparation of his mission. “The witness described attempting to visit him with another friend on his birthday, but said Breivik's mother had told them he did not have time to see them” ("Breivik ’cut contact," 2012). During the trial, his friends testify this change of behavior. They assert that after 2006
Breivik keeps talking about immigration and politics, blaming the multiculturalist politicians of Norway for their tolerance to Muslims and betrayal to Norwegian society. However, it is important to mention here that, at this stage of preparations, Breivik does not feel completely certain regarding the necessity of the operations. Should he have seen a change in politics, he would have canceled the attacks. Saying so, the first two books of the manifesto hardly refer to armed revolutions suggesting that Breivik may feel reluctant to use violent means in the beginning. Bearing this mind, it may also explain why he decides to acquire weaponry, armor as well as chemical materials in 2010 and 2011 (Ravndal, 2012b).

**Step 9: Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships**

Over the years, a sense of disappointment settles in Breivik’s mind. To be more precise, he sends articles to newspapers unfolding his anti-Islamic ideology, but they are not accepted. In line with that, he makes an attempt to cooperate with Fjordman, but he refuses his invitations (Ravndal, 2012b). To make a review of the radicalization process so far, one can observe that Breivik fails to satisfy some of his desires and his voice cannot be heard within non-violent initiatives. His family, friends, political party and even inspiring people betray and ignore him. As a result of these events, he comes closer to the belief that violence is the only alternative. He manages to complete the manifesto in 2009 and feels ready to cross the next phase of the plan. The first movement is to build a cover story for the ensuing steps. He creates the Breivik Geofarm Company in order to buy fertilizers later on without raising suspicions that will be used in explosive mixtures.

After the completion of the manifesto, it is plausible to assume that Breivik has the need to build on self-confidence and competences communicating either on the internet or in person with like-minded individuals. He emphasizes (2011, p. 890) that lacking competence is a deadly mistake; it is a “mistake to overestimate your partners strength/conviction and to undertake actions for which you, as yet, lack sufficient equipment or competence.” Breivik comes in contact with participants of the English Defence League which is a far-right movement opposing Islamism. A year later, he joins the Norwegian Defence League which also constitutes an anti-Islamic group; however, he was forced to leave due to his extreme
views. In addition, Breivik appears to connect with several other groups, such as Order 777, Gates of Vienna and the Ancient Order of the Templar Knights showing presumably his will to justify the correctness of his acts (Ravndal, 2012b).

Finally, the aforementioned steps make Breivik believe that he is in the vanguard of fighting Islam and defending the future of Europe. He perceives “ideological confidence, patience, the ability to motivate yourself, keeping sensitive information to yourself, resourcefulness, being pragmatically and insightfulness in your own psyche” as the most important traits that a warrior must have during the operations (2011, p. 1,461). Having acquired these skills and having convinced himself for the necessity of operations, Breivik proceeds to the crucial phase of his plan; to isolate himself in a farm outside Oslo setting up the bombs.

Step 10: A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective

Breivik has been through several experiences all these years that have transformed his meaning perspectives. His novel worldview is based now on the idea that violence is the only way to inflict change. On May 2nd, 2011 Breivik moves to the rented farm and keeps a diary of the 82 days, that he remains there, explaining his daily schedule. His radicalization process seems to have reached the end of the violent line. There is no way back in terms of his determination to carry out the attacks. He is entirely confident that the new role in society contributes to making him a better man. Nevertheless, he admits that the process was not easy; “I left several aspects of my old life behind and had to completely re-establish myself on an existential level” (2011, p. 1,483).

Breivik thinks that it is worth sacrificing his own life in order to protect the identity and culture of Europe. Unlike his friends who prefer to live a conventional life, he believes that he has the courage to be a martyr. The latter constitutes the driving motivation during the years that he plans the operations. According to Moskalenko and McCauley (as cited in Nijboer, 2012), psychology explains this kind of behavior providing a concept which is called strong reciprocity. Therefore, Breivik has a strong feeling of reciprocity which means that he cares more for achieving common good than enjoying personal benefits. The extent of
commitment to the mission is seen from the next phrase: “I have never in my life felt that I have done anything more meaningful than what I am doing now” (2011, p. 901).

Interestingly enough, Breivik does not address anger or hate towards Muslims. He says that their religion dictates the lifestyle leaving them with no options to follow. Saying so, this is the reason why Muslims are not part of the targets. Breivik recognizes that the root cause of the current problem stems from multiculturalists; mainly the Norwegian politicians and journalists. For that reason, he plans to attack targets that involve, among others, the government headquarters, the Labour Party building and the annual conference of journalists. However, the original planning does not fulfill due to imponderable factors in making the bombs. Breivik loses valuable time and confesses that the final targets were the outcome of a compromise (Pidd, 2012). Finally, on July 22nd, 2011 after using a drug cocktail prepared by himself ("Breivik: Court in Norway," 2012) he detonates a bomb outside the government buildings at the centre of Oslo and a few hours later he opens fire against the youth organization of Labour party on Utøya Island killing in total 77 people.

Conclusion
This article presented the radicalization process of Anders Breivik using the conceptual framework of transformative learning theory. To assign his life events to the distinct phases of the learning theory, I showed that radicalization is an accumulative and complex process that can be caused by various factors. Nevertheless, there has been recently developed a debate about whether the internet played a decisive role in his transformation into a terrorist. For example, Ravndal (2013) poses the next question: “Would Breivik have become a terrorist and a mass murderer if the Internet did not exist, all other things being equal (ceteris paribus)?” His research infers that this is hard to say, since, as my study has already presented in the previous parts, Breivik drew inspiration from several sources. Indeed, he used the Internet for multiple reasons in such a way so as to communicate with like-minded individuals, to gather useful information and improve his skills, to order and buy equipment and to spread his hateful propaganda.
But the analysis should not be solely limited to these factors. Breivik faces disorienting dilemmas since the age of 16-17 years old which question established beliefs, assumptions and expectations. This is an internal battle where he constantly tries to make meaning of the new experiences. For instance, in the beginning Breivik considers that those responsible for jeopardizing the future of Europe are Muslims (Criscione, 2012). However, several other experiences and more importantly the critical reflection on them make Breivik realize that multiculturalists have caused the current situation. Therefore, he excludes Muslims from his violent campaign focusing the attacks on the corrupt politicians and journalists.

Breivik’s driving motivations appear to constitute a mix of personal and political grievances. It is possible that he sees a connection between his parents, friends, the Labor party and Islamism. Regarding Breivik’s political grievances, the threat of Islamization and the behavior of traitors dominate a large part of the manifesto. In contrast, his personal grievances are hard to reveal. One might assume that it was the mistreatment of Wenche Behring that turned Breivik to the violent direction or the betrayal of his Pakistani friend. Interestingly, Breivik’s parents were members of the Labour Party when they were young (Allen, 2011). Thus, one might also assume that Breivik attacked the Labour Party due to his troublesome childhood caused by his parents.

Several other experiences of his life can be considered as trigger events. For example, one of the friends testified that Breivik could not retain his composure when a Belarusian woman abandoned him. Another friend also said that Breivik was suffering from depression until the summer of 2008 (Fisher, 2012). Therefore, it is rational to stress that the radicalization process of Breivik combines various incidents that take place over the years. However, which events prevail over his meaning structures and at which time period is hard to tell with certainty.
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