Re-Purposing the Push-Pull Model to Describe Signature Patterns of Terrorist Disengagement by Group: A Validation Study.

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Abstract

Various researchers have developed the push-pull model (Aho, 1988; Altier, Thoroughgood, & Horgan, 2014; Altier, Boyle, Shortland, & Horgan, 2017; Bjorgo 2009). Others have completed research on factors of disengagement (Barrelle, 2014; Gill, Bouhana, & Morrison, 2015). The studies aggregate data from either individual testimonies or group analyses into a broad pool of factors in order to create a universal theory. This paper argues that rather than trying to view all terrorist organizations as having commonalities, the push-pull model can provide a unique perspective of how each group is dissimilar. Each organization has a distinctive pattern of disengagement that aligns with its context. Of particular interest is the positive or negative orientation of members toward their former community. The data from four studies of disengagement from different terrorist organizations also provide a meso-level view to validate the push-pull model, allowing for a comparative analysis of whether some factors occur more frequently or do not appear in specific groups as well as whether some factors are missing from the model. A future counterterrorism application of this paper would be to carry out push-pull analyses of terrorist organizations in order to create a convincing strategy tailored by organization that will encourage members to voluntarily leave.
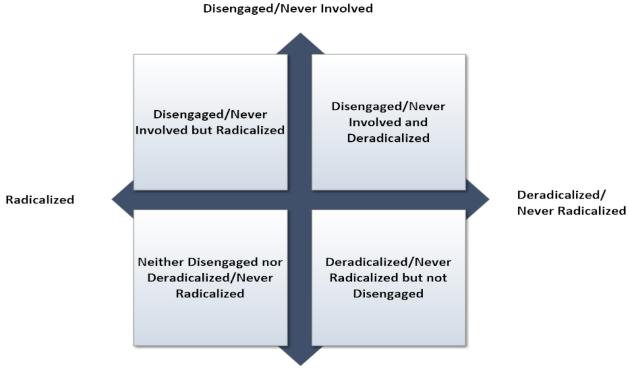
Introduction

Terrorism, like other forms of crime, rarely serves as a career choice, decreasing sharply with age (LaFree & Ackerman, 2009; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1986). The individual

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faces a clandestine life, death, arrest, or disengagement - briefly bearable, but tough to aspire to long-term. Some terrorists may defect independently in the midst of the struggle; meanwhile, terrorist groups can also fold in on themselves in situations of "organizational decline" (Horgan, 2009b). When the end of the conflict appears imminent, the rate of disengagement may increase.

Figure 1: Deradicalization and Disengagement Continuum for Terror Organizations

Deradicalization denotes an individual separating from an extremist ideology whereas disengagement refers to a cessation of terrorist behavior (Horgan, 2009a). Not everyone who joins a terrorist group is radicalized; it is possible to join solely for financial reasons, for example. Likewise, not everyone who is radicalized joins a terrorist group. Similarly, someone may deradicalize without leaving a violent extremist organization or also disengage without deradicalizing. Disengagement without deradicalization may be the minimum goal of

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counterterrorism - stopping the physical strife. However, therein lies the risk of the disengaged radical resuming the fight at some point in the future. The very literature of the push-pull model witnesses that in that the paper originating the model (Aho, 1988) included a case study of one Greg Withrow who, while disengaged in 1988, later returned to white supremacy (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2005).

A number of studies have addressed disengagement from individual organizations (Alonso, 2011; Chernov Hwang, 2017; Della Porta, 2009; Ferguson, Burgess, & Hollywood, 2015; Ferguson, 2016; Lopez-Alves, 1989; Moghadam, 2012; Neumann, 2015; Reinares, 2011; van der Heide & Huurman, 2016). Additionally, scholarly works have focused on creating a theory of disengagement (Aho, 1988; Altier, Thoroughgood, & Horgan, 2014; Barrelle, 2014: Bjorgo & Horgan, 2009; Bjorgo, 2011; Crenshaw, 1991; Cronin, 2009; Horgan, 2009a; Horgan, 2009b; Horgan, 2014; Windisch, Simi, Ligon & McNeel, 2016).

Aho (1988) originated a push-pull model of disengagement, theorizing that some factors like poor leadership push an individual out of the group while other factors pull him or her out, such as a wish to start a family. Altier et al. (2014) enumerated a list of factors based on Bjorgo (2009). Some group studies have specifically listed push and pull aspects (Chernov Hwang, 2017; Ferguson, 2016; van der Heide & Huurman, 2016). Altier, Boyle, Shortland, and Horgan (2017) completed a quantitative analysis of 87 defector accounts for push and pull factors, concluding that push factors more frequently figured in disengagement.

Altier et al. (2017) used individual data of disengagement to create macro-level conclusions about the weight of factors. While Alonso (2009) analyzed counterterrorism efforts against ETA and the IRA, Disley, Weed, Reding, Clutterback and Warnes (2011) along with Gill, Bouhana, and Morrison (2015) have compared causes for disengagement among groups. Interestingly, many studies in disengagement include data from other sources such as former members of new religious movements and gangs. This may be useful in that the field of terrorism study has traditionally lacked data, but many questions remain. How do terrorist organizations and new religious movements overlap? How are they different? Some terrorist organizations propagate cults of personality and radicalize their members. Similarly,

some cults such as the Rajneeshees or Aum Shinrikyo carried out terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, Lewis (2011) argues that a handful of violent cults have led to the assumption that all cults are violent. Likewise, Lynch (2015) questioned whether all terrorists truly commit violent acts or whether ceasing to engage in violence but remaining in an organization could be considered disengagement. That overlap of qualities of both types of organization can be explained more from the aspect of disengagement. Similarly, gang data are often vaguely described and the qualitative connection between terrorist organizations and gangs as refers to disengagement remains an area of untapped research.

Perhaps not enough attention has been paid to Aho's emphasis of strong social ties within the organization correlating negatively with desistance. Continuing the conversation, Harris, Gringart, and Drake (2017) suggested that organizational responses to key situations snowballed into defection rather than focusing on the accumulated grievances before the event. Both studies complement each other to support the theory of social learning theory in terrorism (Akers, 1973; Akers & Silverman, 2004). Vidino, Marone and Entenmann (2017) and Reinares, Garcia-Calvo, and Vicente (2017) all support the concept of radicalization in clusters. Vidino et al. state that "radicalization is a group phenomenon, which takes place among small clusters of individuals who influence and support each other." The Spanish data from Reinares et al. verified that 68.7 percent of Spanish jihadis arrested between 2013 and 2016 were radicalized by an individual with whom they had a pre-existing social bond. If social ties are so important for radicalization, perhaps as Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez, and Boucek (2010) intimate, some terrorists may also leave in clusters.

This study occurs on the meso level by analyzing group-level data and then comparing results between groups. The individual-level studies that have already been done are important because they gather universal trends searching for commonalities; meanwhile, a meso analysis is more qualitative, allowing for a counterterrorism strategy by group. One value of that is a validation of the push-pull model, if different aspects factor more heavily in different groups, or if a specific consideration in particular re-occurs. Furthermore, it allows for a review of Altier et al. (2014) to see if any factors are missing or unnecessary. This paper

hypothesizes that while Altier et al. (2014) have developed the basic push-pull factors, there might be room to re-consider the individual factors of the model or add to them. Actually, Altier et al. (2017) title the list of push-pull factors as "hypothesized," implying that scholarly conversation is welcome. However, the key takeaway is the counterterrorism application could follow from understanding the predominant signature of an organization to construct propaganda or a psychological operation to question the organization at its core using the weak points its own members criticize.
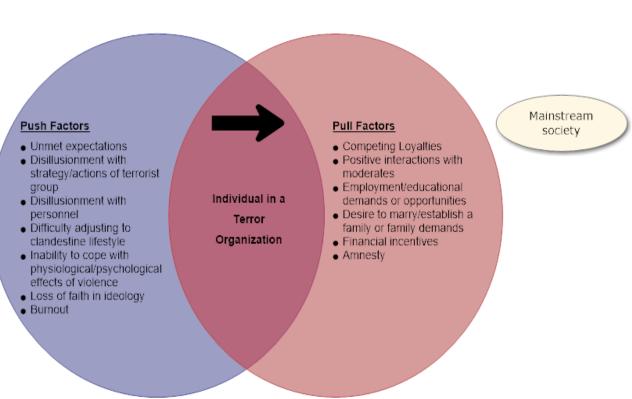
Push-Pull Factors (Altier et al, 2014)

Push Factors
- Unmet expectations
- Disillusionment with strategy/actions of terrorist group
- Disillusionment with personnel
- Difficulty adjusting to clandestine lifestyle
- Inability to cope with physiological/psychological effects of violence
- Loss of faith in ideology
- Burnout

Individual in a Terror Organization

Pull Factors
- Competing Loyalties
- Positive interactions with moderates
- Employment/educational demands or opportunities
- Desire to marry/establish a family or family demands
- Financial incentives
- Amnesty

Mainstream society

Figure 2: Factors for Terrorist Disengagement (Altier et al., 2014)

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Methods

This paper addresses voluntary departure from terrorist groups and how different groups compare when using the push-pull model. In order to do so, a search for relevant articles was carried out using the university library search engine, Google Scholar and citations in papers on disengagement. One particular aid was Appendix A of Windisch, et al. (2016), a list of articles focusing on "ideologically-based and violent organizations." Since this study only included papers on terrorism, those on gangs and new religious movements were excluded. If the paper considered multiple groups at the same time, it was only used if the data included small groups with a similar ideology (e.g., Loyalist groups, Indonesian jihadi groups). If only one or two subjects were interviewed, the study was considered too small to compare for this paper. That means that autobiographical narratives were not included. In order to be included, the study had to provide reasons why the terrorists left the organization. Disengagement and deradicalization do not necessarily co-occur (Horgan, 2009a), and so papers focusing on deradicalization but not disengagement were excluded. If the paper centered on a deradicalization or disengagement program but did not include factors for leaving, it did not have enough data for this paper. Fifty-two papers or books that broadly fit the criteria of having or being likely to have some group-specific data that could be coded using push-pull factors with some explanation as to source of the data and the number of participants can be found in Appendix A. All meet the general criteria of discussing disengagement from terrorism, but many did not meet the more rigorous requirement in order to code the responses.

Four representative studies were selected using those criteria: Chernov Hwang (2017), Ferguson et al. (2015), Reinares (2011), and van der Heide and Huurman (2016). There are others that fit the criteria, so this study could and should be enlarged in the future. One of those is Moghadam (2012), which also has a quantitative analysis of each factor as evidenced in different generations of the Red Army Faction. Alonso (2011) was not included in this study because Reinares (2011) already considered ETA. A qualitative study was preferable in

this situation to using every possible study since the primary goal of this paper is to highlight the unique profiles of each group and how that presents a counterterrorism pathway.

Two of the studies already included a push-pull analysis done by the authors (Chernov Hwang, 2017; van der Heide and Huurman, 2016), and one was completed for both Reinares (2011) and Ferguson et al. (2015). Each analysis consisted of reviewing the paper to see whether the factors for leaving fell into existing push or pull factors. Any reasons for disengagement that fell outside Altier et al.'s list were tentatively placed into push or pull categories and marked as possible new factors. Furthermore, each factor was considered on a chart so that it was easy to tell which factors occurred in that organizational study and which ones did not. Since only some of the studies quantified their results, this analysis only reported the presence of the factor rather than how frequently it occurred. Finally, the results were compiled into a comprehensive table in order to see which factors occurred most often over all groups and which ones did not occur.

Analysis

Altogether, the studies comprise 123 participants. Only two indicate the period of disengagement. The ETA members left between 1970 and 2000, and the Islamic State followers abandoned the group between 2014 and 2015. The Red Hand Commando was established in 1972 and the Ulster Volunteer Force before that in 1966. The two organizations established a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program on May 3, 2007. Therefore, the Loyalist defections must have occurred anywhere from 1966-2007. Jemaah Islamiyah and the other affiliated Indonesian organizations were part of Darul Islam until 1993; thus, the 50 former Indonesian terrorists must have left between 1993 and 2014.

Three of the authors interviewed their participants while van der Heide and Huurman used Neumann's (2015) data. Van der Heide and Huurman coded Neumann's cases into push-pull factors, which is why that study was used rather than Neumann. The interviews occurred over a range of time from 2006 to 2015, with some possibly as early as 1970, and Neumann's defector narratives were gathered in 2015 from public sources. Since these studies are based

upon self-reported information, it is important to note that people aren't always the most objective about their own behavior, and so these results must be tempered with that understanding. A psychological scale might allow for a more quantitative study.

	UVH/RHC	ETA	Indonesia	Islamic State	Overall
Participants	11	35	50	27	123
Date Disengaged	1966-2007	1970-2000	1993-2014	2011-2015	1966-2015
Methods	Interviews	Interviews	Interviews	Open Source	Mixed
Interview Dates	2006-2009	Pre-2001	2010-2014	N/A	1970-2014

Figure 3: Overview of the Studies

1. Northern Ireland

Ferguson et al. (2015) interviewed 11 members of two Northern Irish Loyalist groups - the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Red Hand Commando (RHC). Nine of the 11 interviewees had served prison sentences of at least five years. The authors encountered the individuals by using community organizations to invite participation. The interviews were completed from 2006-2009 while the group was in process of disarming.

For this reason, the main push factor was not frustration with the organization, but the power of "transformative leadership" encouraging the members to stop the struggle. In that sense, disengagement was somewhat involuntary.

However, there were no other push factors listed in the study and that should be of note. It is important to ask whether there were minimal pull factors due to the organizations treating their members well or whether the encouragement to leave the groups led to members viewing it in a more idealistic fashion. It is somewhat paradoxical, but the fact that a group kills people does not mean it treats its members poorly. Furthermore, one might expect that individuals joining a terrorist organization don't have particularly high expectations, especially in the material realm.

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Push	Push-Pull	Factors in UVF/RHC	Existing	New
	Unmet expectations			
	Disillusionment with strategy/actions of terrorist group			
	Disillusionment with personnel			
	Difficulty adjusting to clandestine personnel			
	Inability to cope with physiological/psychological effects of violence			
	Loss of faith in ideology			
	Burnout			
		Transformative leadership - leaders directed them to stop violence		√
Pull	Competing loyalties			
	Positive interactions with moderates	Including dating Irish Catholic women	√	
	Employment/education demands or opportunities	Getting an education	√	
	Desire to marry/establish a family or family demands	Family responsibilities	√	
	Financial Incentives			
	Amnesty			
		Getting older		√
		The next generation: end the cycle of violence		√
		Finding space to think: in prison or out of the country		√

Figure 4: Northern Irish Push-Pull Factors

Interestingly, Shapiro (2015) reported from "An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Northern Ireland" by Malcolm Sutton that the Loyalist forces killed 85.6 percent civilian victims as compared to their enemy, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which only had a 35.9 percent civilian death toll. Nevertheless, most of the Loyalist casualties were Catholic, so that might have influenced their judgment. Still, 61.9 percent of all combatants killed by the

Loyalists were their own men. This analysis suggests that those members Ferguson interviewed might have been from the central core of the organization who believed in it without question (although not necessarily the upper echelons). In that sense, his study has answered the question of what can make the most committed members leave. This study might have particular utility when considering how to vacate the core of a terrorist organization.

An alternative hypothesis came from Lynch (2015), who confirmed that Northern Irish combatants might have disengaged but they did not deradicalize. That lends some explanation to the continuance of the Dissident Irish Republicans and Loyalist organizations to this day, albeit at a much lower level of violence than previously.

Three new pull factors contributed to their exit - "life changes," including getting older and "family responsibilities;" "finding space to think" as a result of leaving the country or going to prison; and a desire to build a joint society. Three pull factors were already in Altier et al.'s list, - "positive interactions with moderates," "employment/education demands or opportunities," and the "desire to marry/establish a family or family demands." The uniqueness of the situation in which the leaders wished to desist resulted in a focus on pull factors as there was no need to justify leaving the organization.

One of the most salient pull factors described by Ferguson et al. is the influence of "time to think," including time in prison. Aho (1988) aptly labels that "metanoia." Although Ferguson et al. focused on the transformation occurring during that time, it is also interesting to think about the passage of time as moving an individual further along the age-crime continuum (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983). Perhaps disengagement does not depend upon a change, but rather time itself. This suggests a theory of deterrence might be meaningful when dealing with extremists.

Ferguson et al. also highlighted negative factors that encourage individuals to stay within their organization. Any strategy must also be capable of assessing why recruits remain, and not just from an outsider's perspective.

Overall, none of the push and three of the pull factors found validation in Ferguson et al. Three new pull factors and one new push factor appeared. The new factors appeared quite important: the push factor in the absence of the existing factors and the pull factors in the strength of the time to think factor. Ferguson et al. provide data that suggest that leaving a terrorist organization doesn't always have to be full of anger and disappointment. In fact, with so little criticism of the group or the violence, there were no signs that the individuals were deradicalized in spite of their complete disengagement. There was no indication of introspection or a sense of responsibility for their connection to violence. Therefore, they most likely fell into the bottom right quadrant of Figure 1. Since self-awareness about the criminal behavior was minimal but the desire for a new life high, propaganda could have emphasized the benefits of their new life while avoiding sparking conflict by criticizing the UVF or RHC.

2. *ETA*

Reinares (2011) interviewed 70 individuals who had left the Basque ethnonationalist organization ETA over the time period of 1970-2000 and used 35 of those interviews for his study.

At least one of those was a woman. Reinares also developed a questionnaire. Reinares explained the theme, "Until the mid-1980s, the individual decision to leave ETA tended to be linked to a subjective perception of ongoing political and social changes. From then on, disagreement with the internal functioning of the ethno-nationalist terrorist organization or the tactics adopted by its leaders became more salient motivations for those militants who decided to walk away."

The ETA members felt strong push factors to leave the organization. Since Franco's death, Spain had become more democratic, and that meant their struggle no longer felt so necessary and the Basque population cooled in its support. The leadership did not inspire confidence in its members either. The members had "unmet expectations," disillusionment, questioned bloody attacks, and were upset at "ironclad control." They believed that level of

violence was not required. Not only did the violence alienate the community, but also the extremists. The new push factors were less social support from the surrounding community as well as a belief that the organization must end.

	Push-Pull	Factors in ETA	Existing	New
Push	Unmet expectations	Failed to live up to internal goals	√	
	Disillusionment with strategy/actions of terrorist group	ETA(pm) disbanded and not all wanted to join ETA(m), lost confidence in organization	√	
	Disillusionment with personnel	Upset at ironclad control, aversive experiences with orders	√	
	Difficulty adjusting to clandestine personnel			
	Inability to cope with physiological/psychological effects of violence	Questioned bloody attacks	√	
	Loss of faith in ideology	Structural transformation in Spain made the violence not necessary	√	
	Burnout			
		Less social support		√
		Inevitable end of group		√
Pull	Competing loyalties			
	Positive interactions with moderates			
	Employment/education demands or opportunities			
	Desire to marry/establish a family or family demands	Desire for relationships, to get married and have a family	√	
	Financial Incentives			
	Amnesty			
		Fear		√
		Boredom		√
		Spiritual Experience		√

Figure 5: ETA Push-Pull Factors

There was really only one factor that did not reflect negatively on ETA, the pull factor of having a family. There were three new pull factors, and in general they emphasized the negative about the group as well: fear, boredom, and having a spiritual experience.

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It appears that the members felt ETA should have disarmed much before it did on April 8, 2017. If the 1985-2000 period included dissatisfaction with ETA, the group had long-term unity concerns. The push-pull model appeared to be verified in Reinares (2011), but there were also some new factors. However, what most stands out is the negative aspect of the responses, which actually is not something measured by the push-pull model. That indicates that there had been an opportunity window in which - although currently in 2017 they have officially disengaged as an organization - ETA members had been deradicalized but not disengaged due to loyalty. Since the overwhelming sentiment was against the organization, a counterterrorist strategy should be highly critical of ETA and in particular its unnecessary use of violence. Offering opportunities to get away, especially out of the country would have likely been productive.

3. Indonesian Jihad

The data for Chernov Hwang's study come from the interviews of 50 former jihadis belonging to Jemaah Islamiyah, its affiliate Tanah Runtuh, Mujahidin KOMPAK, its affiliate Mujahidin Kayamanya, and Ring Banten. Chernov Hwang highlighted an important aspect to deradicalization in Indonesia: some individuals left independently and at the same time, the group itself became increasingly less violent. Is disengagement a process that occurs naturally across all groups (even if it takes longer for some organizations than others)? Regardless, the Indonesian jihadi groups have always been somewhat autonomous in that although they assisted Bin Laden and received training in Afghanistan, according to Chernov Hwang, they preferred to fight their local foes rather than Bin Laden's global enemies.

Chernov Hwang elaborated eight factors of disengagement, which had considerable overlap with Altier et al. (2014). Her work is also unique in that she has quantitative data for how many former mujahideen responded affirmatively to each question. The primary reasons for disengagement were "disillusionment with tactics; new friendships and relationships; changing priorities, and cost benefit analysis." The push factors were disillusionment and disenchantment, "inability to cope with violence," and a "loss of faith in ideology."

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	Push-Pull	Factors in JI	Existing	New
Push	Unmet expectations	Disillusionment and disappointment with the tactics, leadership, or other aspects of the movement	√	
	Disillusionment with strategy/actions of terrorist group	Disillusionment and disappointment with the tactics, leadership, or other aspects of the movement	√	
	Disillusionment with personnel	Disillusionment and disappointment with the tactics, leadership, or other aspects of the movement	√	
	Difficulty adjusting to clandestine personnel			
	Inability to cope with physiological/psychological effects of violence	Not in Chernov Hwang's categories, but present in study	√	
	Loss of faith in ideology	Not in Chernov Hwang's categories, but present in study	√	
	Burnout			
		The realization that the costs of continued actions are too great		√
		Not in Chernov's Hwang's categories, but present: changing context made violence unnecessary		√
Pull	Competing loyalties			
	Positive interactions with moderates	The establishment or re-establishment of relationships with individuals or networks outside of the jihadi circle	√	
	Employment/education demands or opportunities	Changing personal and professional priorities	√	
	Desire to marry/establish a family or family demands	Familial pressure, Changing personal and professional priorities	√	
	Financial Incentives			
	Amnesty	Humane treatment by authorities	√	
		(Not in Chernov Hwang's categories) time for reflection in prison		√

Figure 6: Indonesian Jihadi Push-Pull Factors

Two new factors were the "cost benefit analysis" and a belief that the violence was no longer necessary. In general, the disillusionment/disenchantment category from Chernov Hwang is too broad; Altier et al.'s breakdown seems clearer. Chernov Hwang's pull factors included

establishing relationships outside the group, "changing personal and professional priorities," "humane treatment from the authorities," and family pressures. Although not listed in Chernov Hwang's factor list, she described the jihadis realizing that time in prison allowed them to reflect, similar to Ferguson and Reinares. The reappearance of this new factor across multiple groups indicates it should be added to the factors. Gill et al. (2015) also listed that factor, calling it "change of environment." Lastly, one of Chernov Hwang's conclusions is that not one factor is key, but the accumulation of the factors together is part of the process of disengagement. These results support that, but with the caveat that each group possesses a different disengagement profile. Identifying that is key to counterterrorism.

The Indonesian jihadis presented broadly across the spectrum of disengagement. Deradicalization was not necessary and for some disengagement only meant refraining from terror but still partaking in the work of the organization. In that sense, the Indonesian jihadis might have been spread across Figure 1, but there is a trend towards the lower half of the graph in spite of a common scholarly belief in the need for deradicalization. Atran's (2010) visit to Indonesia where his own disengaged guide indicated his willingness to kill others and his ability to maintain his jihadi ideology while partaking in society support that. The current precarious state of Southeast Asia in which the Islamic State has achieved major footholds in recruitment are not reassuring as to the success of such a compromise. The best way to reach the Indonesian jihadis would lie in reminding them of the family lives they are missing out on and that the organization is not being effective with its tactics. Because former jihadis have spoken positively of the government's treatment of them, continuing or increasing such programs should be a priority; it's not very often that former terrorists have positive feedback for their government.

4. Islamic State

Van der Heide and Huurman (2016) analyzed 27 cases of Islamic State disengagement narratives gathered by Neumann (2015) of ISIS defectors from 2011 onward. Five of the 27 were women. Their reasons for leaving were coded by factor or Laub and Sampson's (2001)

life transitions. This was helpful in that they provided quantitative data for frequency, noting that the number one reason for disengagement was that "life under ISIS...turned out to be very different than what the formers expected." In spite of the violent propaganda, many people arriving in the Islamic State felt disappointed that it was a violent and cruel place. Van der Heide and Huurman's sample was mixed foreign fighters and local Syrians, some who had come specifically to fight Assad. The violence does take a toll because an inability to adjust to the violence led many in the sample to leave. The defectors concluded that the Islamic State was not being faithful to Islam.

The fact that two of the studies involve jihadist groups is no accident - LaFree and Ackerman (2009) documented some demographical differences in jihadi recruits - they were older and more likely to be married than the average terrorist. At least in terms of recruitment, their study has always seemed to contradict Laub and Sampson's (2001) life course theory. Previously marriage had been considered a factor related to decreased crime. This is one of the criminological mysteries of the study of terrorism. While van der Heide and Huurman's data support the failure of the aging and marriage desistance theory in jihadis, some of Laub and Sampson's pull factors do appear such as important family events and the decision to go straight.

The Islamic State defectors had very critical things to say in the push categories. They were quite unhappy with their group. They didn't see Islamic State providing humanitarian aid, some who wanted to fight weren't allowed to fight, and the reality of the group was much different than expected. Then it gets darker - the combatants resented being involved in killings of other jihadis and Assad supporters. Some were angered by rapes and executions. Their friends were killed. They saw the group as barbaric and thug-like. The former members saw the Islamic State as corrupt and cruel. They described it as having "nothing to do with Islam." There were no new push factors in van der Heide and Huurman, but the factors that were present substantially validated Altier et al.'s factors.

	Push-Pull	Factors in IS	Existing	New
Push	Unmet expectations	Not providing humanitarian aid, tasks different than expected, not allowed to fight, different reality than teaching jihad	√	
	Disillusionment with strategy/actions of terrorist group	Killing of other jihadists, other groups that fight Assad are targeted, group corruption and fellow Muslims being killed, barbaric methods, Having to conduct executions and rape, illegal marriages between fighters, bad leadership, gangster mentality in other women	√	
	Disillusionment with personnel	Corruption and bad leadership within group	√	
	Difficulty adjusting to clandestine personnel			
	Inability to cope with physiological/psychological effects of violence	Cruel behavior boss, hanging of a friend, not allowed to fight, fear of death after witnessing violence, brutality of the group, Having to conduct executions and rape, illegal marriages between fighters	√	
	Loss of faith in ideology	Group behaviour nothing to do with Islam, group deviated from fundamental goal	√	
	Burnout			
Pull	Competing loyalties	Unwilling to be member of group that is capable of using exorbitant violence while using war as justification for behaviour, competing loyalties	√	
	Positive interactions with moderates			
	Employment/education demands or opportunities			
	Desire to marry/establish a family or family demands			
	Financial Incentives			
	Amnesty			
		Family members killed by ISIS (important event within family with whom a person has a strong bond)		√
		Shocked by own actions, felt himself a terrorist (decision to go straight)		√
		Homesick (decision to go straight)		√

Figure 7: Islamic State Push-Pull Factors

The pull factors were also notably negative. Some felt the group was too violent or saw their own family members get killed. Another felt horrified by his or her actions.

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Homesickness as well as horror at one's own actions and at a family member's death were the three new factors added to Altier et al.

The organizational profile of former Islamic State members exactly matches that of ETA - entirely negative, with nothing positive at all. The members have fully deradicalized if they were ever radicalized and they have completely left the organization. As van der Heide and Huurman note, leaving the Islamic State is often a life or death matter, so the individuals willing to publicly reveal information have been among the lucky ones to escape. Speckhard and Yayla (2016) interviewed Islamic State defectors and documented even more disturbing tales than are present in van der Heide and Huurman. One example is the teenage boy who described how other boys were sent in vehicles rigged with explosives without their knowledge and someone outside the vehicle detonated the switch. While the other studies had members who defected after much time to themselves, the Islamic State is still so young of an organization (if we ignore the years of Al Qaeda in Iraq) that while there have been a number imprisoned, they have not had sufficient time to reflect and disengage. Recently, many are being sent to prison in Iraq since the fall of Mosul and fighters for the Islamic State have been arrested upon returning to their home countries. If we include Al Qaeda in Iraq, we find that Abu Bakr al Baghdadi himself was imprisoned along with other radicals and that brought him on a path far from disengagement. That leads to a much more complex conversation about prison and radicalization as well as prison and torture. Regardless, any propaganda strategy against the Islamic State should target its lack of faithfulness to Islam and its hypocrisy to its own ideology. Its rapid increase in territory led to a massive influx in combatants, but also the speedy loss of land has resulted in many of the locals fleeing with foreign fighters being trapped due to their obviously foreign appearance and dying in the fight. While complaining about their violence may feel hopeless, that complaint deeply resonated within former ISIS terrorists.

	Push-Pull	UVH/RHC	ETA	JI	Factors in IS	New
Push	Unmet expectations		Failed to live up to internal goals	Disillusionment and disappointment with the tactics, leadership, or other aspects of the movement	Not providing humanitarian aid, tasks different than expected, not allowed to fight, different reality than teaching jihad	
	Disillusionment with strategy/actions of terrorist group		ETA(pm) disbanded and not all wanted to join ETA(m), lost confidence in organization	Disillusionment and disappointment with the tactics, leadership, or other aspects of the movement	Killing of other jihadists, other groups that fight Assad are targeted, group corruption and fellow Muslims being killed, barbaric methods, Having to conduct executions and rape, illegal marriages between fighters, bad leadership, gangster mentality in other women	
	Disillusionment with personnel		Upset at ironclad control, aversive experiences with orders	Disillusionment and disappointment with the tactics, leadership, or other aspects of the movement	Corruption and bad leadership within group	
	Difficulty adjusting to clandestine personnel					
	Inability to cope with physiological/psychological effects of violence		Questioned bloody attacks	Not in Chernov Hwang's categories, but present in study	Cruel behavior boss, hanging of a friend, not allowed to fight, fear of death after witnessing violence, brutality of the group, Having to conduct executions and rape, illegal marriages between fighters	
	Loss of faith in ideology		Structural transformations in Spain made the violence not necessary	Not in Chernov Hwang's categories, but present in study	Group behaviour nothing to do with Islam, group deviated from fundamental goal	
	Burnout					
		Transformative leadership - leaders directed them to stop violence				√
			Less social support			√
			Inevitable end of group			√
				The realization that the costs of continued actions are too great		√
				Not in Chernov's Hwang's categories, but present: changing context made violence unnecessary		√
Pull	Competing loyalties				Unwilling to be member of group that is capable of using exorbitant violence while using war as justification for behaviour, competing loyalties	
	Positive interactions with moderates	Including dating Irish Catholic women		The establishment or re-establishment of relationships with individuals or networks outside of the jihadi circle		
	Employment/education demands or opportunities	Getting an education		Changing personal and professional priorities		
	Desire to marry/establish a family or family demands	Family responsibilities	Desire for relationships, to get married and have a family	Familial pressure, Changing personal and professional priorities		
	Financial Incentives					
	Amnesty			Humane treatment by authorities		
		Getting older				√
		The next generation: end the cycle of violence				√
		Finding space to think: in prison or out of the country		(Not in Chernov Hwang's categories) time for reflection in prison		√
			Fear			√
			Boredom			√
			Spiritual Experience			√
					Family members killed by ISIS (important event within family with whom a person has a strong bond)	√
					Shocked by own actions, felt himself a terrorist (decision to go straight)	√
					Homesick (decision to go straight)	√

Figure 8: Overall Factor View

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Results

The results of all four analyses are combined into Figure 8 for clarity of overview. Defectors of three out of four groups had unmet expectations and also disillusionment with personnel and strategies or tactics of the group. This suggests that disappointment is one of the strongest emotions linked to leaving a terrorist organization. None of the studies reported difficulty adjusting to the clandestine lifestyle. However, many of the pull factors relate to parts of life sacrificed in a life hiding from the law. The same three groups also had defectors who had difficulty adjusting to the life of violence. Likewise, their former members suffered a loss of faith in the ideology. Nevertheless, burnout was not listed as a factor for leaving any of the four groups. Still, it appears the Islamic State and ETA members felt burnout even if it was not mentioned. Their emotions towards their groups indicate that. In terms of pull factors, competing loyalties occurred one time and positive interactions with moderates two times. Employment and education had two occurrences while family had three. Financial incentives did not appear in these four studies; amnesty did once. Fourteen possible new factors have been identified. The new push factors were transformative leadership, less social support, the inevitable end of the group, a "cost benefit analysis," (Chernov Hwang, 2015) and the realization that the violence was unnecessary. The new pull factors were getting older, finding space to think, fear, boredom, spiritual experiences, family members killed by the group, being shocked by one's own actions and being homesick. Time for reflection in prison occurred twice.

To summarize, most of the factors from Altier et al. were validated. Some, however, did not appear in any of the four studies. Further research is needed to see if they would show up in a broader sample of groups. It is likely that they would since Altier et al.'s factors came from similar studies. A number of possible new factors arose. Of special interest was the repeated idea of cognitive opening resulting from time in prison, out of the country, and becoming aware of fear, boredom or spirituality.

In conclusion, a cross-organizational analysis has been completed. It is clear that situational factors are key aspects of disengagement. If a group's violence is less acceptable

due to changing political conditions or decreasing social acceptance, this will have an effect on retention. In spite of the stereotype of the unfeeling terrorist, the narratives and interviews reveal individuals troubled by excessive violence. Moral disengagement is finite.

Each group presented with a clear profile or pattern. The push factors were most common across all groups. One could almost say that terrorist disengagement follows a certain Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If life in the group is so miserable that it cannot be tolerated, the individual will not focus on a new life or their dreams. In the case of Islamic State defectors, their primary goal will be surviving to tomorrow. The Islamic State and ETA defectors had a very similar pattern of responses. The Indonesian groups had a mixed push-pull profile, and the Loyalist groups fell into the pull categories. When the responses are predominantly push, the general tone is overall negative. A mostly pull profile might be expected to be more positive in view of the organization and more hopeful of a better life. Members of a group such as ETA or the Islamic State have at least minimally deradicalized themselves whereas the Loyalist members didn't show any signs of insight.

LaFree and Ackerman (2009) demonstrated that Islamist terrorism does not follow typical crime demographics, and this review of disengagement from Islamist groups shows that the Islamic State is furthest from the norm in responsiveness to those push factors while the Loyalist groups were heavily affected by pull factors. For counterterrorism purposes, push factors, such as weak leadership and dissatisfaction with the group appear to be the most universal. Both Altier et al. (2017) and van der Heide and Huurman (2016) support this policy application. Identifying the unique push factors to an organization is key to propaganda. For example, the Islamic State has long violated the norms of violence even for Al Qaeda, leading to condemnation (McCants, 2015). ETA also had considerable dissent among its members. A broad propaganda strategy could attack that weak point and it could also be used for individual intelligence recruitment or even to simply encourage members to leave. Although ETA and the Loyalist groups have disarmed, Indonesian terror groups and the Islamic State continue their fight. Identifying a signature pattern of disengagement and the most susceptible areas of criticism - not what a typical person would criticize, but a terrorist inside the group -

makes it easy to create a plan of action to challenge a group's propaganda and work to extract members.

Limitations

There are some key limitations to this work. The study is qualitative and does not have statistical significance. Since half of the authors coded their own studies, coding is not standardized. There is clearly some missing data due to the small sample of groups. For example, amnesty was an important factor for Italian terrorists (Della Porta, 2009), but it does not receive emphasis in the other four studies. Another major limitation is that two of the studies (Reinares, 2011; Ferguson et al., 2015) have figured prominently in other research such as Gill et al. (2015) and so it is hard for this to be a full validation. Reinares (2011) was one of the studies used to create the factors by Altier et al. (2014). Therefore, it is not a reliable validator in the sense the preliminary data cannot be reused to validate the model because it will simply validate that it is already present. However, Reinares (2011) is a good exemplar of how push-pull factors can create an organizational signature.

Directions for Future Research

Opportunities for future study abound. It would be useful to perform a larger study of disengagement literature, especially among groups. Coding push-pull factors in paired studies of the same group might be interesting. For example, Alonso (2011) and Reinares (2011) could be compared to verify group disengagement signatures. Altier et al. (2017) could be varied by taking the 87 autobiographical accounts and seeing if the individual data is reliable across each group, and if not, why not. Quantitative data concerning the strength of each factor in a group or for each individual would be very helpful such as what can be found in Altier et al. (2017).

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Furthermore, the nodes of connectivity between gangs, new religious movements and terrorist organizations deserve additional study. One possible aspect of that is how moral disengagement differs in terrorist organizations and new religious movements.

Numerous questions center on the disengagement process and deradicalization. Do terrorists disengage more often individually, en masse, or in clusters? The patterns of disengagement have not been fully researched. Do the most committed terrorists leave later than the less socially connected? How does the positive or negative view of the defector relate to deradicalization or previous commitment? How does it correlate with the group score on measures of thought control or abusiveness? What other groups besides the Northern Irish Loyalist groups are particularly prone to low deradicalization and a positive view of the organization even after leaving? Does the push-pull model serve as a continuum of positive or negative experiences or are most experiences mixed along push-pull lines? How can the new factor of finding time to think be applied meaningfully to counterterrorism?

However, the principal research opportunity from this study is that, ideally, it could be expanded by performing standardized individual interviews of significant numbers of disengaged terrorists by group across multiple groups, analyzing that data statistically so as to create occurrence rates for each factor and any new factors, and then describing in-depth signature patterns by organization. These patterns could lay the groundwork for disengagement initiatives for counterterrorism. There is room for expansion of those recommendations and the creation of detailed psychological operations.

The push-pull model is a useful tool in analyzing terrorist organizations into universal factors and also by group. For the most part, its current factors withstand review. Certainly, more factors deserve consideration as well. Every organization has a weak point that can be exploited to encourage disengagement; not every organization has the same vulnerability or strength. Terrorist organizations by their very etymology are frightening monoliths. Yet, secretly terrorists may be dissatisfied and in the long run leave terrorist organizations disappointed.

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Appendix 1: Group-Specific Studies of Terrorist Disengagement

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ISSN: 2363-9849

Editors in Chief: Daniel Koehler, Tine Hutzel