

Identity theory of terrorism

Government, Military



The article by Schwartz et al. presents an Identity Theory to identify the commonality of terrorist movements. These are the cultural, social and personal identities of an individual. Identifying the identity elements of a terrorist would identify the roots of their movements. Identifying the motivations why such groups could be exploited by resolving the perceived conflicts, threats and problems by these groups and in the process, severing the root of their causes. Terror groups result from an "us versus them" attitude (Schwartz). Identifying and bridging the perceived differences could end the cause of these terrorists as it will show that there is really no difference between them and the group they are fighting with. Cultural identity molds society and a person's belief of religion, family, politics and other social perspectives. Of the three identities, this is the most important as it defines the social and personal identity of individuals. In order to understand the enemy, the first step is to know him - by knowing his beliefs and his culture to understand how he thinks. Any solution can only be effective by attacking the cultural roots of the problem and gradually showing to terrorists that there is no difference but rather there is a commonality between them and their perceived threat groups. Degrading the cultural identity of a terrorist would ultimately lead to degrading the cause he perceives to be fighting for.