

April 2012

## Dancing With Wolves: Today's Lone Wolf Terrorists

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### Recommended Citation

Bates, Rodger A. (2012) "Dancing With Wolves: Today's Lone Wolf Terrorists," *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/jpps/vol4/iss1/1>

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## Introduction

Today, terrorism takes many forms. However, the rise of the self-radicalized lone wolf terrorist has created an increasing dilemma in today's security environment. This type of emerging terrorism is increasingly found among right-wing reactionaries and religiously radicalized jihadists. With increasingly effective security environments, leaderless resistance has emerged as a threat and tactic facilitated by the internet and other modern information outlets. The unabomber, Oklahoma City bomber, Fort Hood and Oslo assailants are examples of this new form of terrorist. Through the development of a sociologically informed typology that categorizes lone wolf terrorism in terms of motivation, extent of radicalization, form, and risk-awareness, a more relevant understanding of this type of non-normative behavior is proposed.

Terrorism, as a social construct, takes place within a given historical and social context (Schmid:1992). In 1999, the United States Department of State (Title 22, U.S. Code section 2656f(d)) defined terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." As a complex phenomenon, however, numerous attempts have been made to identify types of terrorism based upon the kinds of goals pursued, the types of acts manifested, the motivations for these acts, the levels of organizational hierarchy encountered, and the social and psychological profiles of participants (Bates, 2011). Since the early Jewish Zealots, the Ismaili Assassins, the Viking berserkers, and the bomb-throwing anarchists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, terrorism has emerged as both a tool and tactic in military, political, economic and religious struggles (Poland, 1968, White, 2002). O'Connor (2011) lists the many self-preferred and public names under which terrorists have operated. These labels have included avengers, crusaders, defenders, dissidents, extremists, fanatics, fighters, guerillas, insurgents, insurrectionists, liberators, lunatics, nationalists, radicals, revolutionaries, separatists and soldiers.

## Typologies of Terrorism

As a complex form of non-normative behavior, terrorism can take many forms, and a number of typologies have been promoted. In 1976, a behavioral categorization of criminals, crazies and crusaders was suggested by Hacker as types of terrorists (Hacker, 1976). Hacker (1976) also introduced the categories of terrorism from "above" and from "below" to differentiate whether terrorism was utilized in the acquisition or exercise of political power.

The social and psychological profile of terrorists was addressed by Hudson (1999) in the late 1990s. This seminal work analyzed the growing threat of terrorism from a variety of approaches, including political, organizational, physiological, psychological and multi-causal perspectives and remains one of the most complete examinations, including case studies of terrorist groups and individual terrorists.

Other typologies have classified terrorism in terms of place (Hess and Kalb, 2003) (domestic, international, non-state, state-sponsored and interneccine) or purpose (political, non-political, quasi-terrorism, limited political and official/state). In addition, Combs (2003) categorized terrorism by the type of target (mass terror, dynastic terror, random terror, focused random terror and tactical terror) and O'Connor (2011) in terms of the

underlying issues (revolutionary, political, nationalist, cause-based, environmental, state-sponsored, nuclear and genocide).

Because of their role in protection of significant public officials, the U.S. Secret Service utilizes a five-fold typology of terrorist types: crusaders, political terrorists, anarchists, religious fanatics, and criminals (White, 2012). The National Advisory Council on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals' typology of terrorism (1976) included civil disorder, political terrorism, non-political terrorism, quasi-terrorism, limited political terrorism and official or state terrorism.

More recently, The U.S. Army (2007) developed a typology of terrorism based upon a group's goals and objectives. Specifically, they categorized terrorists and terrorist groups in terms of motivational characteristics: separatist, ethnocentric, nationalistic, and revolutionary. In addition, they analyzed terrorist group structures as either hierarchical or networked command structures.

Jonathon White (2012), in training a variety of U.S. government military and security personnel, developed a typology of terrorism which employs a multi-dimensional perspective measuring levels of violence, the relative size of the threat from individual to large scale group, and the form of organizational structure. This typology of terrorism facilitates the identification of different types of threats as well as different types of perpetrators who are associated with conflict manifested in environments ranging from criminal through civil disorder, but not yet a tactical component of guerrilla warfare (Kilcullen, 2009).

### Lone Wolf Terrorism

Obviously, terrorism is a very complex phenomenon and has been approached from a variety of perspectives. Though not a new form of terrorism, the emergence of the lone wolf terrorist increasingly has been seen a growing threat to America. In February 2010 during a homeland security review to Congress, both the Director of the FBI and the Director of the CIA indicated that lone wolf terrorism was emerging as a major concern. Then CIA Director Leon Panetta noted, "It's the lone wolf strategy that I think we have to pay attention to as the main threat to this country." (Sage, 2011) Recently, President Obama re-emphasized this concern when he stated:

The risk that we're especially concerned over right now is the lone wolf terrorist, somebody with a single weapon being able to carry out wide-scale massacres of the sort we saw in Norway recently. You know, when you got one person who is deranged or driven by a hateful ideology, they can do a lot of damage, and it's a lot harder to trace those lone wolves (CNN,2011).

Lone wolf terrorism involves violent acts by self-radicalized individuals designed to promote a cause or belief. History is filled with examples of single individuals engaged in assassinations or mass murder and who, though inspired by others, have acted autonomously. This type of terrorism, long employed by extremist movements, owes part of its origins to the writings of Mikail Bakunin and Sergey Nechaev of The People's Will, a Russian revolutionary group which championed the concept of "propaganda by deed" in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (White, 2012). The "propaganda by deed," committed by a lone wolf terrorist, appears to have been resurrected in the latter half of the 20th century by radical right-wing extremists, Islamic jihadists and others.

Unlike group or network-sponsored terrorists, lone wolves have been extremely difficult to identify or counter. Though lone wolves do not have the resources and support available to other forms of terrorism, they also do not suffer from the liabilities experienced by many of these groups. Though they usually are not capable of large scale operations, they have emerged as a significant and increasingly lethal threat (Bakker and de Graaf, 2010).

### Self-Radicalization

Though lone wolf terrorists are self-radicalized, their motivation may not always be political or religious. In some instances, they may be motivated by personal agendas in response to some real or perceived organizational or institutional event. From 1940 to 1957, George Metesky terrorized New York City with 33 pipe bombs, of which 22 detonated, in response to having been injured while working for Consolidated Edison. Known as the “Mad Bomber of New York,” Metesky’s reign of terror was finally ended when he was arrested through one of the first successful applications of psychological profiling (NPR, 2011). Likewise, from 1978 through 1995, Theodore Kaczynski, a neo-luddite known as the unabomber, sent 16 bombs to universities and airlines (Alston, 2004).

The lone wolf terrorist concept emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as an outgrowth of reactionary right-wing, anti-government activities (White, 2002). The neo-Nazi, anti-semitic and anti-Black ideologies of The Order, Posse Comitatus, Identity Christian and the Klu Klux Klan provided motivation for individual acts of terrorism not only by groups, but also by un-affiliated individuals who were self-radicalized by their exposure to teaching, writings and publications (Coates, 1987). Through Glaser’s process of differential identification (Thio, 2010), some true believers (Hoffer, 1951) took it upon themselves to violently act upon these groups.

Single-issue protest groups such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), the Environmental Liberation Front (ELF), and anti-abortionist groups also have spawned a number of lone wolf terrorist attackers. Because of their historic roots in Great Britain, both ALF and ELF are international, leaderless resistance groups that have been engaged in direct action. Both groups claim to be non-violent, but they both have been associated with a number of single individual-type attacks which have resulted in extensive property damage, especially in the United States. As a consequence, they have been placed on the terrorist watch list by the Department of Homeland Security (Leader and Probst, 2011). The anti-abortionist movement, however, has had a strong history of violent acts committed by lone wolf operators, including the bombing of clinics and murders of a number of health-care workers. Likewise, Eric Rudolph, most known for his Olympic Park bombing in 1996, also bombed a number of abortion clinics (White, 2009).

The 1985 Seattle murder of the Goldmark family by David Lewis Rice exemplifies this process of self-radicalization. His belief in the perceived threat of a government/Zionist conspiracy to facilitate a communist invasion of the United States had been fueled by his attendance at a number of presentations by the ultra-conservative Duck Club in Seattle (Coates, 1987). Similar instances of lone wolf terrorism also include Doris and David Young’s 1986 hostage bombing of a school in Cokeville, Wyoming (Coates, 1987) and the 1999 Jewish Community Center attack by Buford Furrow (Bakker and de Graaf, 2010).

The 1995 anti-government Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh, the 1996 Olympic and other bombings by Eric Rudolph, the 2002 shoe -bomb incident with Richard Reid and the 2010 attempted Christmas tree bombing by Osman Mohamed in Portland are other examples of lone wolf terrorist attacks (Homeland Security News: 2010). The 2009 Nidal Hasssan attack at Fort Hood and the 2009 attempted underwear bomb attack on an American airliner by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, as well as the recent Oslo bombing and massacre by Ander Breivik reflect the fact that lone wolf terrorism is not restricted to a single political or religious orientation (Pantucci, 2011).

The one thing that these various lone wolf terrorists have in common has been their self-radicalization. Though a number of lone wolf terrorists have had some contact with extremist groups, they have not committed themselves to continuous membership or group involvement. Therefore, the majority of their identification and internalization has taken place through secondary sources. Historically, books, writings and manifestos were frequent sources of self-radicalization. In some cases an incident, such as the standoff and final confrontation between the federal government and the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas or the event at Ruby Ridge, can radicalize an individual. More recently, the advent of the internet has created a fertile environment for the self-radicalization of lone wolf terrorists by providing ideological justification and direction from a distance. Nevertheless, self-radicalization is a matter of degree and may be considered as one end of a continuum in the process of ideological commitment.

#### Leaderless Resistance

The concept of “leaderless resistance” is another important component of the lone wolf terrorist. Louis Beam (1992), borrowing heavily from the racist, anti-government novel, *The Turner Diaries* (Pierce/MacDonald, 1978), proposed the “leaderless resistance” concept of a decentralized terror campaign conducted by independent operators. Alex Curtis, another white supremacist, employed the internet and his *Nationalist Observer* magazine to popularize the concept of the lone wolf terrorist (ADL, 2011). In 1993, Curtis encouraged other white supremacists to act alone in committing violent acts so that they would not incriminate others. Curtis even posted on his web-site a “Lone Wolf Points System” that awarded scores for assassinations based upon the potential significance of the victims (ADL, 2011).

The concept of leaderless resistance also has been picked up as a tactical component by a number of other groups. The Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front have stressed this concept as a part of their operational philosophies. Carlos Marighella, the left-wing champion of urban terrorism in the 1960s, advocated this policy in his *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (1969).

Despite the tactical success of Al Qaeda’s 9/11 airline attacks, the growing effectiveness of counterterrorism techniques has made the planning and conduct of complex attacks increasingly more difficult. In 2003, an article by Osama bin Laden in the jihadist internet forum “Sada al Jihad” encouraged Al Qaeda members to take action without waiting for instructions (Bakker and de Graaf, 2010). Similarly, in 2006 Abu Jihad al Masri circulated an article titled “How to Fight Alone”(Clemons, 2010) in support of the concept of lone wolf terrorism..

The importance of personal jihad has been transformed by a number of Salafi clerics, including Abu Musab al-Suri, from a religious revivalist concept to a tactical tool

of terrorism, as in the case of the Fort Hood actions by Nidal Malik Hasan. Bruce Hoffman, a noted counterterrorism theorist, has suggested:

This new strategy of Al Qaeda is to empower and motivate individuals to acts of violence completely outside any terrorist chain of command. The nature of terrorism is changing, and Major Hasan may be an example of that (Hoffman, 2010).

Hoffman also stated that “leaderless resistance” is the wave of the future. Though it might be less lethal in each instance, lone wolf terrorism will be more difficult to combat as there are fewer indicators to lead to its discovery (Hoffman, 2010).

The increasingly effective dissemination of extremist ideology has contributed to the rise of the leaderless lone wolf terrorist. Individuals with extremist interests or leanings are now easily self-educated and radicalized through the acquisition of not only an ideology, but also justifications and tactics for its use. Leaderless resistance not only mobilizes, it also provides inspiration for a single individual to become a leader by deed.

### Chaos (single event) or Career (serial) Terrorism

Lone wolf terrorism can take either of two forms, chaos or career. Chaos lone wolf terrorism is characterized by a single event in which the lone wolf appears as if from nowhere and engages in a singular disruptive event. Suicide terrorism is a major form of chaos lone wolf terrorism. A single event is planned and conducted in such a manner that maximum impact in terms of casualties and/or public visibility is achieved. The destruction of the Twin Towers in New York by Al Qaeda suicide terrorists is an example of chaos terrorism with impact beyond the immediate casualties and destruction through the public nature of the event and the role of the media as a force multiplier (White, 2009). The Fort Hood Massacre by Major Nidal Hasan also is an example of chaos terrorism by a lone wolf.

The lone wolf suicide terrorist, a form of ultimate altruism, not only damages a target or target population, but also establishes the cause for which the terrorist sacrifices his life as one worthy of great respect and even fear. As Pape (2005) noted in his study of suicide bombing, this type of terrorism is very effective, difficult to deter, and is a tactical tool designed to allow an individual or small group the ability to coerce a more powerful foe. Bryn (2007) noted six important lessons concerning suicide terrorists: (1) suicide bombers are not crazy; (2) it is mainly about politics and not religion; (3) sometimes it's strategic; (4) sometimes it's retaliatory; (5) repression escalates attacks; and (6) sometimes empathy with your enemy through the recognition that true grievances must be addressed can reduce the root causes of suicide terrorism (Bryn, 2007). For the most part, chaos or single event terrorism has been the domain of political and religious extremists who consider their dramatic act as a valued sacrifice to a higher cause. In many ways, chaos terrorism is very similar to mass murder. In most cases, a mass murder episode ends with the murderer dying at the scene of a dramatic event (Thio, 2010).

Career or serial terrorism by a lone wolf operative usually involves a continuous series of lower-level acts of violence over an extended period of time. Ted Kazinsky, the unabomber, is an example of a career or serial lone wolf terrorist. As previously noted, Kazinsky engaged in a mail bombing campaign that spanned almost 20 years that killed 3 people and injured more than two dozen others (Alston, 2004). Currently, a unabomber copycat has been sending letter bombs to a series of nanotechnologists in Mexico (Lloyd and Young, 2011).

Lone wolf operatives engaged in career or serial terrorism see their violent protests as a long-term strategy in which their survival is a prerequisite for the continued visibility and viability of their campaign. This type of lone wolf terrorist has a strong egoistic belief in his ability to continue to outsmart the agencies of control. In a sense, they are gamers who seem to derive satisfaction from the contest as well as support for the cause they advocate. Social profiles of serial lone wolf terrorists are quite similar to those of serial killers, and that profile suggests that most lone wolf terrorists are relatively normal, ordinary individuals. However, some researchers have noted that there may be some factors that link the type of terrorism to certain types of individuals (White, 2010).

The social character of the serial lone wolf terrorist is often linked to personality and social traits associated with other isolated individuals. They tend to be above average in intelligence, self-centered and to some degree paranoid, especially in regard to the forces of social control (Coates, 1987, White, 2010). Because of their need to justify their extreme actions over an extended period of time, serial lone wolf terrorists often create public justifications of their actions. For example, Ted Kazinsky published his own manifesto and wrote frequent letters to the media denouncing technology. He stated, "In order to get our message before the public... we had to kill people" (Artiga, 2011). The internet has provided a ready forum for a number of lone wolf terrorists. Anders Breivick, of the Oslo incident, also published a manifesto (internet), as did George Metsky (self-published), the Mad Bomber of New York.

Consistent with the behavior of terrorist groups, lone wolves may not have been direct victims of the actions of their target group. Nevertheless, lone wolves are committed to correcting some perceived injustice befalling someone, whether that be the environment, animals, unborn children, the white race or an ethnic or religious group. Through "propaganda by deed" and "leaderless resistance," lone wolves are motivated not only to oppose an injustice but also to take action with force, thus becoming a hero in the struggle (Artiga, 2011).

Terrorism, whether the single episode resulting in chaos and destruction or the serial practice of smaller-scale ongoing attacks, is increasingly the result of the self-radicalized lone wolf committed to creating a public performance in support of a cause (Braniff and Moghadam, 2012). Terrorism is drama in its most tragic form.

### Other Typologies

Analysis of lone wolf terrorism can take a number of forms. These perspectives provide different insights into a complex phenomenon. For example, Peter Phillips (2011) employed game theory and utility analysis to develop a detailed mathematical analysis of this form of terrorism. Using these economic models of behavior, he developed an important series of first-order predictions. Phillips (2011) determined that, depending upon the levels of risk-aversion or risk-seeking behavior, lone wolf terrorists predominantly elect, in descending order, assassination, armed attacks, bombing, hostage taking or other non-conventional attacks as their tactic of choice. He also noted that lone wolves involved in successful serial attacks (in terms of fatalities) will often withdraw from activity for a period of time. In summary, Phillips (2011) suggested that "the lone wolf terrorist agent inhabits the boundary of orthodox economic analysis of terrorism."

Phillips and Pohl (2011) further invoked economic models to develop a profile of lone wolf offenders in response to emergent weaknesses that have been demonstrated in

other instances of offender profiling. Specifically, they noted that an “important advantage of the rational choice approach to offender profiling is its capability at handling cognitive and behavioral factors as well as situational factors” (2011).

As a consequence of the rational choice model, Phillips and Pohl identify two basic types of lone wolf terrorists, the risk-averse and the risk-seeking individual. The risk-averse lone wolf terrorist is, in many cases, a part-time terrorist who engages in low level acts of serial terrorism while also engaging in other, more legitimate, forms of activism. Their statistical analyses of a number of lone wolf terrorist incidences documented the fact that any alteration of the expected return due to law enforcement action of increased security at possible targets may deter risk-averse individuals from pursuing their goals. Specifically, they note that these types of terrorists may space out their illegitimate actions in both time and geographic location to minimize their potential exposure and risk of capture (Phillips and Pohl, 2011). On the other hand, risk-seeking lone wolves employ an alternative calculus placing higher value on the expected marginal return in comparison to the potential threat of exposure and capture. In essence, the risk is of as much importance, and possibly more so, than the cause or crusade.

Within the social sciences, the creation of typologies has facilitated the identification of certain relevant categories that have contributed to enhanced understanding of certain social phenomenon. However, typologies are methodological constructs which, in fact, are arbitrary divisions of continuums of the phenomena under investigation. Some typologies are one-dimensional and others are multi-dimensional.

An instance of a single-dimensional typology of lone wolf terrorism is the recent example of risk-aversion and risk-seeking proposed by Phillips and Pohl (2011). Also, a number of researchers have focused on motivation as the basis for a typology of lone wolf terrorism. Lisa Andrews (2001) has identified a number of motivations for terrorist actions: moral justification; religious conviction; social change; political antagonism; revenge; attention; and symbolism. Others have suggested that lone wolves may be motivated by ideological, social, psychological, political, monetary reasons, or in response to coercion. Likewise, Artiga (2011) noted that lone wolves are motivated to (1) send a message to policy makers, adversaries or supporters; (2) raise awareness for their cause; (3) influence the political process; (4) instill fear; (5) destroy key or symbolic infrastructure; and (6) correct a perceived injustice.

Hacker and Laqueur have debated the possibility of psychologically profiling terrorists, including lone wolves. Hacker's (1976) typology included criminals, crazies and crusaders. On the other hand, Laqueur (1999) suggested that developing a composite profile of terrorists is impossible because the complexity of contexts creates a multitude of conditions conducive to the emergence of this type of violent response.

Multi-dimensional typologies of lone wolf terrorism involve two or more criterion of categorization. White's Tactical Typology of Terrorism, which looks at the type of activity (criminal / political), the level of terrorist activity, the type of activity and the type of potential response by agents of social control, represents one of the more successful multi-dimensional typologies of terrorism (White:2012).

Pantucci's (2011) recent article, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: A Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists,” is one of the most complete and documented reviews of self-radicalized, single terrorists operating within an environment of leaderless resistance. This typology focuses on the means and context of self-radicalization, their



tactics of engagement and the framework of available support. Though the documentation for this review was limited to Islamic jihadists, it does offer significant potential for generalization to lone wolves across the spectrum of individual terrorist action.

Pantucci (2011) has identified four basic lone Islamic terrorist types: the loner; the lone wolf; the lone wolf pack; and the lone attacker. Loners are individuals who plan or attempt to carry out an act of terrorism using the cover of extreme Islamist ideology. Though they claim some adherence to radical Islamic beliefs, they do not have any ties with extremists, except through what they can access through the passive consumption of published or posted ideology. Pantucci (2011) suggests that they use radical Islam as a cover for other social or psychological grievances that they wish to address through violence. Lone wolves, on the other hand, while appearing to carry out individual actions without any apparent actual outside instigation, have demonstrated some level of contact or even training with operational extremists (2011). The lone wolf pack involves a small cell of independently operating terrorists who have become self-radicalized (2011). Though they have not become involved in a hierarchically controlled network, they exhibit some direction and control through the public agendas of noted individuals or groups, such as Al Qaeda or leaders such as Anwar al-Awlaki. Lone attackers, according to Pantucci (2011), “operate alone but demonstrate clear command and control links with Al Qaeda or affiliated groups.” In each instance, Pantucci categorizes his groups in terms of the type of self-radicalization and degree of self command and control exhibited.

#### A General Model of Lone Wolf Terrorism

Lone wolf terrorism has been associated with a wide variety of causes. Today, the headlines fluctuate from the jihadist-inspired assassin, the right-wing reactionary, the ecologically adamant idealist or the moralistic right-to-life terrorist. However, regardless of the ideological underpinnings of each expression of lone wolf terrorism, a number of important characteristics appear relevant to their description and the development of a general typology. For the purposes of this inquiry, four dimensions will be employed in the development of a general model of lone wolf terrorism: extent of radicalization, motivation, form and risk-awareness. These four dimensions create a Rubik’s Cube type model of lone wolf terrorism.

The first dimension of this general model of lone wolf terrorism involves the extent of involvement in the radicalization process. Self-radicalization is a basic characteristic of the lone wolf terrorist, but the extent to which this process involves personal development or socialization through external contacts is a critical difference between types of lone wolves. Individual exposure to extremist ideology through literature or web-sites is a characteristic of personal self-radicalization. However, other lone wolves have had, to varying degrees, some organizational exposure and even training. For example, Shahzad (Times Square bomber) admitted to having received some financial support and training in demolitions from the Taliban in Pakistan (Foxnews, 2010). Likewise, Richard Reid, the failed shoe bomber, admitted to personal contact with Zacarias Moussaoui, the only person to date who has been convicted for the September 11, 2001 attacks (CNN, 2009).

As previously noted, there have been numerous discussions of terrorist motivation, particularly those related to the lone wolf operative. For analytic purposes,

however, we can view the second dimension on a Durkheimian continuum from egoistic to altruistic (Timascheff, 1966). In some instances, the egoistic or self-centered lone wolf terrorists may consider themselves above the constraints of the community and a specific ideological organization. Though they may be cognizant of extremist books, literature or web-sites, they manifest significant anti-social characteristics. Ted Kazinsky (unabomber) and Timothy McVeigh (Oklahoma City bomber) were socially isolated individuals who felt either individually “called” or uniquely capable of committing and succeeding because of their belief in their self-superiority (Bates, 2011). However, altruistic lone wolf terrorists are motivated more by a perceived obligation to a cause or crusade. Nidal Hassan (Ft. Hood) and Faisal Shahzad (Times Square) justified their actions as selfless acts indicative of their commitment to a greater cause.

The form of terrorism, whether chaos or career is the third dimension of this general model. Obviously, a suicide bomber is a once-in-a-lifetime practitioner of terrorism. Usually, the continuum between single event and serial terrorism is only discernable after the fact. However, serial or career lone wolves may initially plan or conduct a single event of terrorism, but if they are successful they may increasingly move towards increased activity. Likewise, a career of minor acts of lone wolf action may encourage an individual to seek a more definitive form of terrorism, culminating in a dramatic, final act. A change in life events, increased fear of apprehension or disappointment in the level of perceived effectiveness of previous actions may influence this process (Hudson, 1999). This transformation process of serial terrorist to a dramatic single event terrorist has been evident in many right-wing and single issue terrorists, as in the cases of anti-abortion, animal rights or ecological violence.

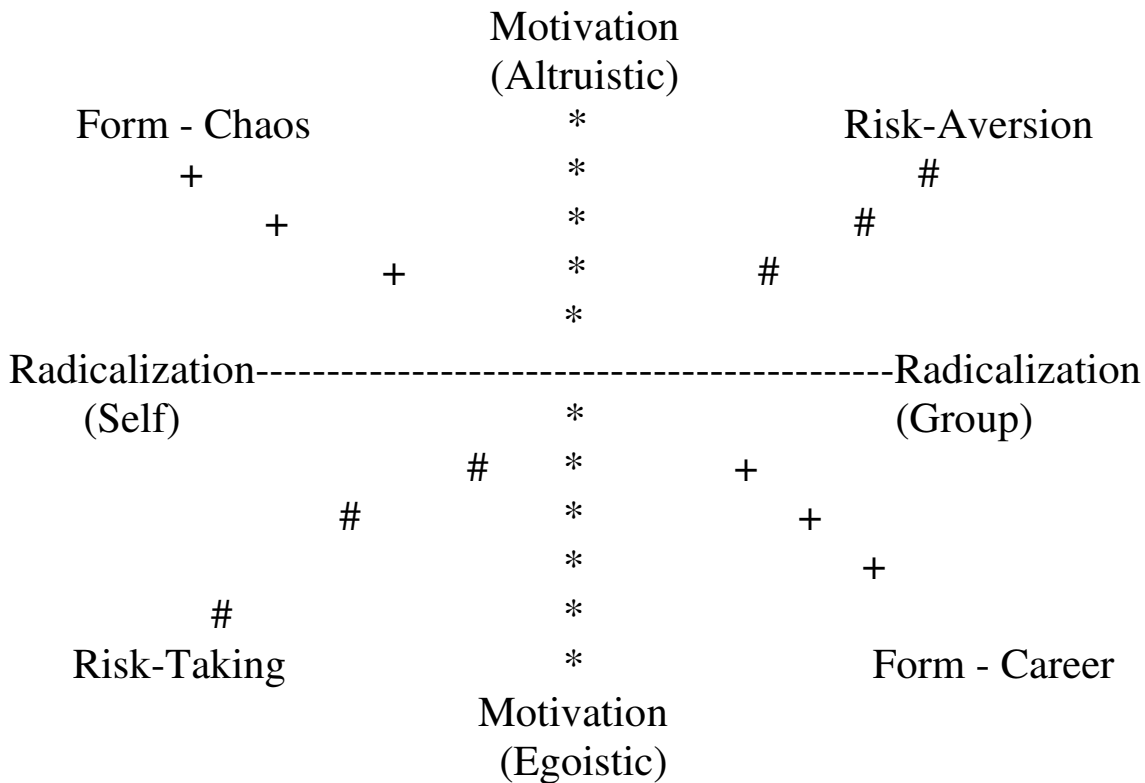
The final dimension of this model is the degree of risk activity acceptable to the lone wolf terrorist. Utilizing the continuum of risk-aversion to risk-seeking noted by Phillips and Pohl (2011), lone wolf terrorists may be influenced by their willingness to either seek or avoid the consequences associated with different acts of individual terrorism. As a continuum, we have seen individuals who have increasingly engaged in riskier acts. George Metzky’s increasingly detailed letters to public officials and Ted Kazinsky’s letters and manifesto are examples of increased risk-taking behaviors. In some ways, suicide bombers are the ultimate risk-seeking terrorists, but even in these instances the selection of the targets and the degree to which they are protected reflect different risk- versus-reward calculations. An attack on the Pentagon or a head of state is more risk-seeking, in terms of potential success, than an attack in a mall.

This four-dimensional model provides a means to assess and identify not only various types of lone wolf terrorists, but also multiple factors that may help discern conditions and causes that contribute to the emergence of this type of violence. As Figure 1: indicates, lone wolf terrorism is a complex act. (The symbols in Figure 1 are arbitrary indicators chosen to reflect the four different dimensions of the model.)

Motivation \* \*  
Radicalization ---

Form + +  
Risk # #

(Figure 1.)  
A General Model of Lone Wolf Terrorism



This multi-dimensional model allows for a large number of possible combinations of various types of lone wolf terrorism. Obviously, a model with this many possibilities is too complex for normal use, but the four dimensions contribute to a more complete understanding of the more common types of lone wolf terrorism. For the purposes of this presentation, only a few of the more common examples will be cited.

Single-issue causes, such as ecological, animal rights or anti-abortion actions, have been associated with instances of lone wolf terrorism. Stern (2003) introduced the concept of the lone wolf avenger, which exemplifies personally self-radicalized, egoistic, serial, risk-averse lone wolf terrorists like Ted Kazinsky. Kazinsky began to move from risk-averse to risk-seeking as he progressed through his series of letter bombs. By sending a series of taunting letters and issuing a detailed manifesto, Kazinsky modified his profile. Eric Rudolph, a serial bomber of abortion clinics and the Olympic Park bombing, manifested a similar profile. Frequently, this type of individual is a socially isolated loner who seeks to justify his actions through public justifications, seeking to move from a personal egoistic agenda to one which is more altruistic. Because of the level of social isolation and self-radicalization, the lone wolf avenger who is risk-averse will usually engage in a series of relatively small-scale isolated attacks. Risk-seeking lone wolf avengers, on the other hand, will gravitate to more chaos-creating acts, such as the Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh. Jessica Stern, in her book *Terror in the Name of God*, devotes an entire chapter (7) to describing the lone wolf avenger.

The lone wolf vigilante is a self-radicalized, egoistic, risk-seeking, career terrorist who pursues a series of personal confrontations. This individual sees himself as responsible for maintaining compliance to the values and standards of some cause or valued institution. An example of this type of lone wolf vigilante would be Bernard Goetz, the New York subway avenger. Whitten (2007) notes that lone wolf vigilante is often disorganized, easily caught or seeking martyrdom.

The lone wolf revenger is a self-radicalized, egoistic, risk-seeking and chaos creating example of lone wolf terrorism. Chechen Black Widow local suicide bombers who had been victims of Russian brutality, rape and the loss of their husbands and children are one example. Though the ultimate goal of the Chechen revolution was greater political autonomy, the Black Widows were engaged in a more personal form of revenge terrorism (White, 2012). George Metesky, the Mad Bomber of New York, exhibited a similar profile, with the exception that he practiced a more risk-aversion, serial form of terrorism. The assassination of two U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan as a result of the inadvertent burning of the Koran is another example of revenge motivated lone wolf terrorism.

The lone wolf guerrilla is only marginally self-radicalized because he has received some limited training or indoctrination. He identifies with a cause or belief system to which he feels a strong sense of obedience and altruistic commitment. However, as a fighter in a long-term conflict, he is a serial participant in risk-averse actions that will allow him to pursue his cause over an extended period of time. An example of this type of practitioner may be found in the early stages of liberation movements or during periods between active revolutions. This type of lone wolf terrorist was associated with the Basque Separatist Movement (White, 2012). The frequent small-scale terrorist attacks experienced by American forces in Afghanistan in the rural tribal areas is another example of this type of terrorist behavior engaged in by individual Pashtuns who are not affiliated with either the Taliban or Al Qaeda, but are responding to a cultural tradition to oppose any outside invader (Kilcullen, 2009).

On the other end of the continuum, the Ft. Hood attack by Major Nidal Hassan reflected an assisted form of self-radicalization because of his online contact with the late radical Mullah Anwar al-Awaki. Because of his commitment to a radical form of Islam, Hassan manifested an altruistic motivational profile. Likewise, given the public nature of his attack, it was both risk-seeking and a chaos-creating event. This profile is also similar to many of the suicide or attempted suicide bombers, such as Richard Reid (shoe bomber) and Umar Abdulmutallab (the underwear bomber). In many ways, these individuals reflect a lone wolf guided missile profile.

These are a few examples of the types of lone wolf terrorists, but they provide insights into the various dimensions and complexities that are associated with this growing threat to security and safety. Future inquiries will allow the identification of other profiles of lone wolf terrorists and provide opportunities to better understand the prerequisites and precursors to the motivation and mobilization of lone wolf terrorism.

## Conclusions

The literature and list of lone wolf terrorists will allow more examples of single actor terrorism to be analyzed and contrasted through the four dimensions which comprise this proposed General Model of Lone Wolf Terrorism. Through the lenses of

radicalization, motivation, form and risk-awareness, we are able to build a broader understanding of the elements which shape this emerging threat to social order. These multi-dimensional profiles, however, are not specific realities and should not be reified as a completely definitive statement on lone wolf terrorism. Building on the important works of Pantucci, Phillips, Pohl, White and others, it is, however, a beginning for understanding lone wolf terrorism and the social and psychological conditions that establish environments conducive to its emergence and possibly as a means of identifying areas of action and response to lessen this growing threat.

Today, terrorism takes many forms. However, the rise of the self-radicalized lone wolf terrorist has created an increasing dilemma in today's security environment. This type of emerging terrorism is increasingly found among right-wing reactionaries and religiously radicalized jihadists. With increasingly effective security environments, leaderless resistance has emerged as a threat and tactic facilitated by the internet and other modern information outlets. The unabomber, Oklahoma City bomber, Fort Hood and Oslo assailants are examples of this new form of terrorist. Through the development of a sociologically informed typology that categorizes lone wolf terrorism in terms of motivation, extent of radicalization, form, and risk-awareness, a more relevant understanding of this form of non-normative behavior is proposed.

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