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The analogy of Islamic radicalisation and a successful marketing campaign

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## The analogy of Islamic radicalisation and a successful marketing campaign

### *Abstract:*

*The concept of radicalisation poses an open debate about what it really implies, having been proposed, consequently, multiple theories about how is the process of becoming radicalised. Parting from what it has already been studied, this article has aimed to gather different elements from different approaches and create a new one, establishing links with marketing strategies and understanding the whole process as a result of an elaborated terrorist marketing campaign, which takes advantage of all the inner and outer-influencers of the individual and knows how to employ a powerful and seductive narrative. Thus, the analogy of marketing and terrorism eases to identify the key ingredients of the current terrorist recruitment success, and therefore, might help to act in haste of their movements and improve counter-terrorism measures.*

### *Keywords:*

*Radicalisation, marketing, terrorism, recruitment strategies.*

**\*NOTA:** Las ideas contenidas en los **Documentos de Opinión** son de responsabilidad de sus autores, sin que reflejen, necesariamente, el pensamiento del IEEE o del Ministerio de Defensa.

## Introduction

History has illustrated terrorism as an old phenomenon which has evolved not only in its connotations but also its impact, development and the organizing structure it has become throughout the years. From Second World War to nowadays terrorism has erupted out of the five continents in the most virulent ways, sometimes seeming to return to an old barbarism.<sup>1</sup>

So the question here is: how such a nihilist phenomenon has been able to acquire such a success?<sup>2</sup> Terrorist groups are easily getting adapted to current world's performing. Thus, carrying out their actions taking into account the environment has allowed them to turn into international organisations. And all today's successful organisations have one thing in common: they are strongly customer-focused and heavily committed to marketing.<sup>3</sup> This is why this article aims to give a new perspective of what it has already been studied, demonstrating the importance of marketing techniques and strategies in the process of radicalisation and hence a rational answer to this intricate issue, denying of course any justification nor legitimization of it. On the other hand, it seeks to contribute to a broader reflection about what radicalisation involves and to what extent counter-terrorist policies are not stopping but stimulating it.

Consequently, Section 1 provides a general conception of radicalisation and the influence variables in its process. From this overview, Section 2 proceeds to establish links with marketing strategies.

This analysis will let it conclude that Marketing is a new and very useful approach to study the radicalisation process in order to improve counter-terrorism strategies.

### **Radicalisation: definition, process and theoretical models.**

Analysing the individual internal psychological process, provides a first grasp for following explorations on the process of radicalisation. However, it is impossible to

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<sup>1</sup> GARCÍA-FRAILE, Ángel, "La amenaza terrorista. ¿Hacia la Tercera Guerra Mundial?", Editorial ACTAS, s.l., Madrid 2014. 254-256.

<sup>2</sup> SAVATER, Fernando, Jornada "Las nuevas dimensiones del terrorismo global", Estudios sobre terrorismo, IEEE, Zaragoza, 18.11.15

<sup>3</sup> ARMSTRONG, Gary; KOTLER, Philip; HARKER, Michael and BRENNAN, Ross, "Defining marketing and the marketing process" in "Marketing: an Introduction", Pearson Education Limited, Harlow 2009.6-7.

fully comprehend the human cognition without taking into account external factors that will, directly or indirectly, impact on our mental and behavioural activity, especially from the marketing angle.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, it is needed a depiction of the different conceptions and theories elaborated by scholars and experts on the topic, to show afterwards how to examine from a marketing perspective the external environment of the individual and his particular patterns of needs and behaviours, which are all radicalisation catalysts.

### ***Defining radicalisation***

Despite the ease by which the term is currently being used, the concept of radicalisation is more doubtful than ever, since it has acquired so many diverse meanings parting from very different approaches.

The simplest and most general definition of radicalisation could be described as the process of becoming extremist. As David Mandel (2009) explains, 'Radicalisation is to extremism as velocity is to position', i.e. radicalisation is an increasing alteration in the progression of an individual or group extremism<sup>5</sup>.

In September 2005, European Commission defined violent radicalisation as the phenomenon whereby people embrace opinions, points of view and ideas which can lead them to terrorist acts, and this description could be complemented with social networks recruitment in local cells willing to commit terrorist acts<sup>6</sup>. From the purest psychological vision, radicalisation consists in the progressive separation of the complex reality and the absolutisation of the relative. And therefore, radicalism assumes a position of absolute truth, refusing any possibility of dialogue, tolerance or debate about the principles adopted.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> SANTESMASES, Miguel et al. "Consumer behaviour" in *Fundamentals of Marketing*, Ediciones Pirámide, Madrid, 2011. 93-103.

<sup>5</sup> MANDEL, David R.; PICK, Thomas; SPECKHARD, Anne and JAUNCH, Beatrice, "Radicalisation: what does it mean?" in *Homegrown terrorism: understanding the root causes of radicalisation among groups with an immigrant heritage in Europe*, Institute of Physics Press, Brussels, 2009. 111.

<sup>6</sup> "Comunicación de la Comisión al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo sobre la captación de terroristas: afrontar los factores que contribuyen a la radicalización violenta", Brussels, 21.09.2005, COM (2005) 313 final, Commission of European Communities, 2.

<sup>7</sup> BACA, Enrique. Jornada "Las nuevas dimensiones del terrorismo global", Estudios sobre terrorismo, IEEE, Zaragoza, 18.11.15.

The main disruption with radicalisation's definition arises from the debate about its nature: whether it is a cognitive trend which culminates in extreme political and social ideas or a behavioural progression, which would be the actions resulted from this previous reasoning process<sup>8</sup>. Another division that could be made from clustering all these theories would be three broad categories depending on the importance given to socialization: individual, 'group-level' and 'mass-level'<sup>9</sup>.

From a marketing perspective, consumer behaviour, which could correspond with the radicalisation process, refers to the set of actions carried out from the cognition to the final action, or in other words, the full sense of belonging to a terrorist group<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the conception of radicalisation as a cognitive process must be considered just as the first stage of a whole progression.

### ***The process of radicalisation.***

Once explained the scholars' discrepancies to define the meaning of radicalisation it is understandable that there also exists different approaches in the path to extremism, depending not only on the personal preconceptions of the meanings of radicalisation but also the changing events throughout the years such as the rise of DAESH, the conflict in Syria or the technological globalisation. Following Michael King and Donald M. Taylor's review of theoretical models of radicalisation (2011), this article introduces their five models chosen as the most specific in framing the steps towards radicalisation<sup>11</sup>. Hence, it will be easier to establish not only common internal factors of all the models but also the outer-influencers, allowing thus to conclude the bonds with marketing.

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<sup>8</sup> NEUMANN, Peter R., "The trouble with radicalisation", The Royal Institute of International Affairs, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Oxford and Malden, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> KLEINMANN, Scott M., "Radicalisation of Homegrown Sunni Militants in the United States: Comparing Converts and Non-Converts", Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 35:4, 278-297, Page 280, 19.03.12, available here <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2012.656299>. Date of consulting: 14.09.15 at 12:57.

<sup>10</sup> SANTESMASES, Miguel et al.... cit. 81-100.

<sup>11</sup> KING, Michael and TAYLOR, Donald M., "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence, Terrorism and Political Violence", 23:4, Routledge, 2011. 602-622. Available in: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ftpv20> Date of consulting: 02.12.11 at 2:22.

### 1) Theoretical models of radicalisation

- *Understanding the Terrorist Mind-set, by Randy Borum, Ph. D.*<sup>12</sup>

This model starts with the previous framing of a background in which there is some undesirable situation for an identified target. So once there is this social and economic deprivation, the extremist individual or group set this adverse condition as something “unfair” or which “it’s not right”, creating inequality and in the ones stroking deprived, feelings of resentment and injustice. This stage triggers the next one, blaming and attributing the injustice to a transgressive behaviour of a concrete subject. Once having an out-group to blame, it gives the path to create the enemy as something “bad” and to dehumanize it in order to legitimate violence.

- *Joining extremist groups, by Quintan Wiktorowicz.*<sup>13</sup>

The second model, proposed by Wiktorowicz, refers to the steps someone takes in order to join a radical Islamic group, but without using the term “radicalisation” as such. It all starts with a “cognitive opening” which allows the individual to receive new ideas and world interpretations, normally owing to an identity crisis. The person’s receptiveness will be focused towards religion, contemplating extremist Islamic ideologies. He calls this stage “religious seeking”, which will be followed by a religious deference or “frame alignment” that will end at last with the “socialisation” and joining in the group, participating in their activities and embracing their cause.

- *The Staircase to the Terrorist Act, by Fathali M. Moghaddam.*<sup>14</sup>

The author creates the metaphor of a “decision tree” or the ladders that an individual must climb to arrive on top of the building which is terrorism. This path to radicalisation changes depending on the perception of the individual and the choices he think he has available. This stairway narrows as the person climbs up. The ground floor contains feelings of material paucity which however does not necessarily have to fit with the reality, it is more the subjective interpretation and a

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<sup>12</sup> BORUM, Randy, “Understanding the terrorist mind-set”, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin; Jul 2003; 72, 7; Criminal Justice Periodicals pg. 7

<sup>13</sup> WIKTOROWICZ, Quintan, “Joining the cause: Al-Muhajiroun and Radical Islam”, Department of International Studies, Rhodes College, 20.03.03, available in <http://insct.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Wiktorowicz.Joining-the-Cause.pdf>. Date of consulting: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016 at 12:02

<sup>14</sup> MOGHADDAM, Fathali M., “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration,” American Psychologist Vol. 60, No. 2, Pages 161-169, February-March 2005, available at [http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/zick/Moghaddam%20\(2005\)%20staircase%20model.pdf](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/zick/Moghaddam%20(2005)%20staircase%20model.pdf). Date of consulting: 01.05.16 May 2016 at 12:05.

relative deprivation. Thus, people feel motivated to change their situation and “fight unfair treatment”. Guiding on the second floor their disgruntlement towards a target, they start seeing radical options to fight against injustice, climbing to the third floor, where violence is already morally legitimated and this groups become more isolated. This increases differences between them and the rest of society which becomes the external enemy. For the ones who continue climbing the staircase, the last floors would be the official joining in a terrorist group, consolidating the categorisation of “good vs. evil”, and the willing to commit a terrorist act at last.

- *NYPD’s assessment of the radicalisation process.*<sup>15</sup>

The New York City Police Department suggests a model of radicalisation consisting of four phases: “pre-radicalisation” or the stage before starting any change, through which they conclude that radicalized individuals tend to be young and with “ordinary” lives, with no criminal history and well educated; then the “self-identification”, where individuals influenced by different external and internal factors such as identity crisis begin to explore Salafi Islam and make the ideology as their own; then at the third stage of “indoctrination”, the individual fully accepts the ideology and get convinced of the necessity of his or her participation into the cause, putting apart individualistic goals and changing them into common goals to protect the ‘Ummah’; finally the “jihadization” would start when they formally take their roles of ‘holy warriors’ in order to perpetrate a terrorist act.

- *The four prongs of Marc Sageman.*<sup>16</sup>

This is the only model whose shape is non-linear as the other four. Marc Sageman defends a model in which all factors are mixed and interplaying and radicalisation surfaces only when the four are performing together. A “sense of moral outrage”, a common “frame to interpret the world” or i.e. the terrorist single narrative, and a resonance of these two with personal experience, creates together with a “social network mobilisation” the radicalized individual.

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<sup>15</sup> SILBER, Mitchell D. and BHATT, Arvin, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat”, NYPD Intelligence Division, New York, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> SAGEMAN, Marc, “A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists”, Annals of the American Academy of Political and social Science 618, July 2008: 223-231. Available at [http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Sageman\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Fighting.pdf](http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Sageman_Strategy_for_Fighting.pdf). Date of consulting 01.05.16

## 2) Evaluation of the external environment.

As it has been previously shown, the inner-process to become radicalized depends enormously on the outer-circumstances, which will play a different boosting role on each individual. If a terrorist group was studied in the light of a company's framework, which actually would be a pretty close evaluation to reality, these catalysts exploration is what is called in business terms the PEST analysis ("Political, Economic, Social and Technological"). This analysis permits any organisation to frame, deliberate and establish threats and opportunities towards their strategic planning.<sup>17</sup> But moreover, terror management needs also a strong commitment to cultural causes from the radicalized individuals<sup>18</sup>, which means that understanding cultural factors will be also crucial to recognise their global marketing strategy.<sup>19</sup> Under all these requirements, it has been created a new analysis framework: PSECT ("Political, Social, Economic, Cultural and Technological"). It is based on the combination of marketing and terrorism experts' methods of evaluation, such as Philip Kotler, in the marketing area, or Rogelio Alonso, in what concerns terrorism.

### - *Political and socioeconomic factors.*

First of all, the political and socioeconomic circumstances are the breeding ground for radicalisation's emergence. The lack of integration policies and governments' constraints and opportunities, along with additional conditions such as the country's foreign and defence policies or even the level of national trust in the political system, they all directly incise into population's possible radicalisation shaping.<sup>20</sup> However, regarding socioeconomic conditions there is not a much defined link between poverty and the decision of joining a terrorist group whereas education instead affects directly on the will to actively participate in political issues, as it gives more

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<sup>17</sup> IBORRA, María; DASÍ, Ángels; DOLZ, Consuelo and FERRER, Carmen, "El entorno de la empresa" in Fundamentos de Dirección de Empresas, Conceptos y habilidades directivas, Ediciones Paraninfo, SA, Madrid 2006. 98-101.

<sup>18</sup> KRUGLANSKI, Arie W. et al. "Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers' Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance", *Political Psychology*, 30:3,338-344

<sup>19</sup> GHAURI, Pervez N. and CATEORA, Philip "The Scope and Challenge of International Marketing" in *International Marketing*, McGraw-Hill, Berkshire (UK), 2010. 3-28.

<sup>20</sup> BAKKER, Edwin, "EU Counter-radicalisation Policies: A Comprehensive and Consistent Approach? Intelligence and National Security", 30:2-3, 281-305, 06.01.15, available here

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2014.988442>. Date of consulting: 14.08.15 at 14:21

awareness of individual's influence on political process and confidence in their actions.<sup>21</sup>

- *Socio-cultural factors: Islam as a homogenizing ideology and network dynamics.*

Since human beings are social animals, the individual personality is not enough and we hang on a strong collective identity, feeling part of a group with whom to share common values, beliefs and traits<sup>22</sup>. Jihadist terrorism merges the heterogeneous social characterization into a mutual extremist interpretation of Islam, hence constituting the axis of indoctrination and the foundational legitimation of violence.<sup>23</sup>

This eases enormously the manipulation of a group and the differentiation with other individuals who do not belong to it, being able to create a subculture of violence nurtured and shared through social interaction.<sup>24</sup> This collective interaction and the role of charismatic figures is another key for radicalisation and recruitment. These network subtleties are mainly developed in prisons, Internet, mosques or other types of associations for religious worship and training.<sup>25</sup> Charismatic figures provide not only a spiritual guide but also an operational and organized leadership, thus attaching themselves an image of prestige and admiration that makes the inclusion into the group more attractive.<sup>26</sup>

- *Technological factors and the propaganda of terrorism.*

Internet has become the most dangerous tool and the key element for terrorist propagation, as it has transformed the world into new pattern of social interaction, customer-value creation and marketing in general.<sup>27</sup> For example, U.S. authorities estimate that several thousands of people consume DAESH online propaganda.<sup>28</sup> Through different channels such as videos, audios, books, articles, and everything via Internet used for the purpose, propaganda helps not only to postulate solid

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<sup>21</sup> BOTHA, Anneli, "Political Socialization and Terrorist Radicalisation Among Individuals Who Joined al-Shabaab in Kenya, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*", 37:11, 895-919, 15.08.14, available here <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.952511>. Date of consulting 11.02.16 at 4:50

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Page 902.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, page 38.

<sup>24</sup> ALONSO, Rogelio. "Procesos de radicalización y reclutamiento en las redes de Terrorismo Yihadista", in *La Inteligencia, factor clave frente al terrorismo internacional*, Cuaderno de Estrategia 141, IEEE, Madrid, June 2009, Page 41.

<sup>25</sup> BAKKER, Edwin "EU Counter-radicalisation Policies... cit. 300.

<sup>26</sup> ALONSO, Rogelio. "Proceso de radicalización... cit. 45-49.

<sup>27</sup> ARMSTRONG, Gary et al., "Marketing in the digital age" in "Marketing: an Introduction"...cit. 476-477.

<sup>28</sup> VIDINO, Lorenzo and HUGHES, Seamus "From Keyboard Warriors to Battlefield Commanders" in *ISIS in America: from retweets to Raqqa*, Program on Extremism, Washington D.C., December 2015. Page 21.

arguments regarding an extremist ideology but also to enhance and persuade mentalities in order to legitimate a violent cause. They seek to emphasize the emotional appeal of a broad audience potential of becoming radicalized.<sup>29</sup> Depending on the level of technological development of the country and taking into account their target's internet patterns, they elaborate their marketing strategy and propaganda.<sup>30</sup>

### 3) Key issues in the radicalisation marketing campaigns.

After the dissertation of different theoretical models and an environment's analysis it is now easier to establish some common elements of them and furthermore, focus on the individual or internal determinants which favours the radicalised behaviour. From a marketing perspective, these contributing processes could be divided in: needs, motivation and desires, perception, learning, personal features (demography, socioeconomic, psychographic) and attitudes<sup>31</sup> which, on the shared points of all theoretical models now presented, will appear intertwined.

#### - *Identity-related issues*

Jihad is used by terrorist groups as a cultural stream because of its collective nature, as it always implies sharing values and norms with people in a common environment<sup>32</sup>, i.e., it allows to easily indoctrinate certain values as a collective programming of the mind. Thus, especially young people, who seek to fulfil according to Maslow's classification their needs of belonging and esteem<sup>33</sup>, live a process of identity seeking and are more vulnerable to be manipulated and recruited.<sup>34</sup> They begin to link the image of "success" with fighting for "the cause", adopting collectivistic goals as their individual identity.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> ALONSO, Rogelio. "Proceso de radicalización... cit. 49.

<sup>30</sup> GHOURI, Pervez N.... cit. 184-196.

<sup>31</sup> SANTESMASES, Miguel et al. ... cit. 81-100.

<sup>32</sup> HOFSTEDE, Geert, "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind", McGraw-Hill, London, 1991. P.5. in International Marketing, McGraw-Hill, Berkshire (UK), 2010. P.78.

<sup>33</sup> SANTESMASES, Miguel...cit. 87-88.

<sup>34</sup> STERN, Jessica, "Mind Over Martyr: How to Deradicalize Islamist Extremists" Foreign Affairs, 89:1, Council of Foreign Relations, January/February 2010, 95-108. Available in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20699786> Date of consulting: 29.05.14 at 12:09.

<sup>35</sup> POST, Jerrold M., "When Hatred Is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-Cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism", in Political Psychology, 26:4, International Society of Political Psychology, August 2005, 615-636. Available in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792578> Date of consulting: 23.08.12 at 13:55.

*- Relative deprivation*

Because of their ethnocentric vision, or what is known in marketing as Self-Reference Criterion (SRC)<sup>36</sup>, extremist groups take jihadism as the one and only possible standard of living, evaluating others just considering their own values. This distinction makes easier to implant on potential radicalised individuals feelings of relative deprivation by comparing their material conditions with a negative attitude to that of other groups. The vision of disadvantage and unfair treatment of their group will motivate the individual to take part in collective action and create prejudices towards other groups<sup>37</sup>. Relative deprivation is the first step in the process of the construction of the enemy.

*- Construction of the enemy*

The construction of the enemy parts from the “preventive fear” that Leyhausen described for animals: our intra-specific aggression can be directed to someone who has no relationship with us because we include him in a collective identified as a threat, and therefore it must be destroyed<sup>38</sup>. Bearing this in mind, the process is generally based on two exacerbated ideas: there is a group of “the others” perfectly identified, inferior to us but dangerous for our way of understanding life, i.e. beliefs, ideology, culture, etc.; and “the others” don’t appreciate us and even hate us because they envy us and if they can, they take advantage of what we are and what we do. These simple notions empowered with feelings and emotions when convenient will create our enemy which is the result of a deliberate programming, as mentioned in the previous factors<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> GHAURI, Pervez N.... cit. 15-18.

<sup>37</sup> KING, Michael and TAYLOR, Donald M., “The Radicalization... cit.

<sup>38</sup> BACA, Enrique. “La agresividad... cit. P.23.

<sup>39</sup> BACA, Enrique. “Los mecanismos de la violencia” in La guerra contra la violencia. Triacastela, Madrid, 2014. 55-76.

## Marketing strategies and radicalisation processes

### *An overview about Marketing.*

In the same way terrorism has evolved over time acquiring not only different and new connotations but also a new category of threat increasingly more dangerous<sup>40</sup>, Marketing can be considered a fresh subject of knowledge which has adopted a starring role in the world<sup>41</sup>. Marketing as it is known today is the result of a capitalist hegemony which presents a new society based on democratic and equalitarian principles<sup>42</sup>. The free individual's attitudes and behaviours try to substantiate rational and pragmatically this continuous relationship with the market. This is the reason why Marketing has a permanent presence, although sometimes almost invisible, in our daily life along with a variety of definitions which corresponds to different paradigms and fast space-time evolution<sup>43</sup>.

On general terms, more than the old concept of "telling and selling", Marketing is now a social and 'decision-making' process through which value is created and exchanged by individuals and organisations and hence, it is based on the satisfaction of the relationship between both agents<sup>44</sup>.

Depending on these agents it appears to be some variances on the techniques and values pursuit. In this case, as terrorism plays in a political scenery<sup>45</sup>, their recruitment and radicalisation methods fits in the category of what is known as Political Marketing, and it will be proved why.

Political Marketing basically intends to offer a specific ideology linked to a 'brand', an image and concrete values to which they get identified with. Therefore, the main difference with commercial Marketing is the final objective, because instead of increasing the company's benefits, political Marketing aims to bring to power an idea, a figure or a management project, based on some principles<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> NATO, Parliamentary Assembly. Standing Committee, Brussels, 06.10.2002

<sup>41</sup> SANTESMASES, Miguel et al.... cit. Page 29.

<sup>42</sup> CALVO, Jesús, "Marketing Político", Ártica Editorial S.L., Spain 2010.19-42.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem.* 40-41.

<sup>44</sup> ARMSTRONG, Gary et al., "Defining Marketing and the Marketing process" ...cit. 6-7.

<sup>45</sup> BENAVENTE, Francisco, "Violencia, ética y poder" in "La guerra contra la violencia" ...cit. 77-92.

<sup>46</sup> CALVO, Jesús, "Marketing Político" ... cit. 67-72.

Consequently, the elaboration of an attractive offer of ideas needs of a previous investigation of both the internal and external environment, qualitative and quantitative data, and a strategic planning in order to make these effective<sup>47</sup>.

Marketing strategy is one of the most critical challenges for any organisation but especially for those who deal with more changing environments such as terrorist groups or political groups in general. Their strategy depends always on the recent events and changes on International and Domestic actions, and they hinge on their adaptive skills and fast strategic thinking to succeed in their purpose<sup>48</sup>.

On the purpose of establishing a central strategy every organisation creates what is known in marketing as 'Creative Brief', where it will set four basic points necessities to carry out any campaign: the objectives, the target, the message and the means to achieve the objectives.<sup>49</sup> Next point will put in practice these concepts in relation with terrorism.

### ***Key elements for a terrorist communication strategy.***

#### 1) Objectives

The main objective of neo-fundamentalist groups like the Salafi, is the 'deculturation' of Islam, that is to say, the alienation of traditional values leaving the pristine elements of Islam out of any cultural context.<sup>50</sup>

Parting from this base, they seek to restore a semblance of government or what DAESH calls "The Caliphate", alleviating Sunni grievances and purifying society.<sup>51</sup> And the only way to achieve this is destroying the enemy, who is not only the current system nucleus but also anyone who supports it, enjoys it or just do nothing about to destroy it.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>48</sup> WEST, Douglas, "Strategic Marketing: creating competitive advantage", 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2010. 34-35.

<sup>49</sup> WEST, Douglas, "Strategic Marketing... cit. 381-383.

<sup>50</sup> ROY, Oivier, "Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah", Hurst Publishers, London, 2004.

<sup>51</sup> SAGEMAN, Marc, "The origins of the Jihad" in Understanding Terror Networks, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2007. 4-7.

<sup>52</sup> BACA, Enrique, "La guerra contra la violencia"... cit. Page 66.

Therefore, as they believe to be fighting in a “holy war” their ultimate goal is to spread their cause throughout the world and recruit as much ‘mujahidin’ as possible, launching a call to be united and join them without fear.<sup>53</sup>

## 2) Target

When developing a campaign is necessary a market’s segmentation in order to elaborate a strategy in the most efficient way, as it is not possible to satisfy every sector of the market with the same actions.<sup>54</sup> Equivalent is for a terrorist recruiting campaign. There is not so much empirical sources about it but, some commonalities can be stated about the profile of their target. For instance, they especially seek the attraction of young Muslim men, since they are easier to get committed and less bounded to their life, as normally they don’t have strong responsibilities or affective ties such as having children or wife. Young individuals are more vulnerable and mouldable, as they live in a period of identity seeking so they are more influenced by their social environment.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, there is now a new target apart from the previous one: young Muslim women. The Islamic State has realised of the important role of women in order to motivate their ‘warriors’ and proliferate their community.<sup>56</sup>

## 3) Message

The most important part about terrorism is not the use of violence but its speech, its message.<sup>57</sup> Terrorism is the sum of the political act plus the act of terror, and violence is just something symbolic in order to achieve their objectives. As Federico Aznar (2014) explains in his reflection about the role of narrative in terrorism, the terrorist power, in practice, “relies in the same things than a publicist: a message, the symbolism and the quality of the unexpected, the surprise, to get the target audience’s attention.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Video message from the Islamic State “Join the Ranks – Wilāyat al-Raqqah”, available in <http://jihadology.net/2015/10/02/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-join-the-ranks-wilayat-al-raqqah/>

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<sup>54</sup> CALVO, Jesús, “Marketing Político... cit. 92-93.

<sup>55</sup> ALONSO, Rogelio. “Proceso de radicalización... cit. 41-42.

<sup>56</sup> MALIK Nikita, Conference “The role of women in the fight against radicalisation”, European Parliament, Brussels 02.03.16.

<sup>57</sup> AZNAR, Federico, “El Papel de la Narrativa en el Terrorismo” in “La guerra contra... op. cit. Page 28.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem.* 29-30.

The core of this narrative is Jihad, an emotional interpretation of Salafism, avoiding the reflective thought. Omitting facts and ideas, they create an intentional simplification of reality, a utopia that serves them as legitimation to fight, to achieve this illuminating 'reality' offered.<sup>59</sup> In marketing, this technique is what is known as 'storytelling' or the art of narrating. Like Christian Salmon (2008) argues, "storytelling constitutes a response to identity crisis and a propaganda tool, a mechanism of immersion and the instrument to make profiles of individuals, a visualization technique of information and a redoubtable weapon of disinformation..."<sup>60</sup>

4) Internet: the new essential element for their success.

"The Islamic State is actually not winning on the ground in Syria. Their real power comes from the cyber-space and their strong impact on social media". As Alberto Fernández (2015) states, social media has become an accelerant of radicalisation since it provides velocity and widening to their message.<sup>61</sup> The Internet provides a new social environment in which potential recruits can easily get in touch with like-minded individuals and networks amongst them, and where the most extreme ideas, suggestions and behaviours become normalised.<sup>62</sup> Taking into account the enormous presence of social media within young people's life, it makes obvious why Internet is being the main tool for recruitment.

## Conclusion

Despite how striking this analogy could seem at the beginning, this article has demonstrated that terrorism could be considered as a specific category of marketing since it is designed for the same general purpose: to have psychological effects on a target audience in order to influence in their behaviours. The terrorist strategy for recruitment meets very important elements for a successful marketing campaign, from a set of clear objectives to a perfect delivery system of a message introduced through a solid narrative.

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, Page 32.

<sup>60</sup> SALMON, Christian, "Storytelling: la máquina de fabricar historias y formatear las mentes", Ediciones Península, Barcelona, 2008. Page 34.

<sup>61</sup> FERNÁNDEZ, Alberto, Conference "Digital approaches to combat jihadism", URJC, Madrid, 17.11.15.

<sup>62</sup> VIDINO, Lorenzo and HUGHES, Seamus "From Keyboard Warriors... cit. 17-18.

Therefore, what this articles has tried to offer is not only a new approach for studying radicalisation but also a trigger to find new and different ways of combatting it. A strong narrative can only be fought with another one, we need to create strong values to counter-value them.

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