

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Teacher: Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Name of the instructor: Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh

Title: Counter Terrorism and Radicalization expert, United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia and UN Counter Terrorism Task Force

Organization/Affiliation: United Nations

Short biography:

Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh is a leading expert in human security and a UN expert on radicalization and counter terrorism, with geographic specialization on Central Asia and Afghanistan. She has been teaching a specialization on Human Security at Sciences Po since 2003, most lately at the Master's of Public Affairs (2006-2016), at PSIA (2017) and at the Summer School (since 2015). With over two decades of experience with the United Nations, Professor Tadjbakhsh has worked with various UN organizations and with the OSCE as advisor in human security, human development, preventive diplomacy, regional security. She was a staff member of UNDP (1995-2003), and, since 2010, as the expert with the UN Department of Political Affairs in charge of supporting the preparation and then implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia for the United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA) and the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF).

She has been a visiting professor or researcher at universities in Kabul, New Delhi, Pretoria, Moscow and Dushanbe and has recently given a series of lectures in Iran. Since 2014, she has been the Academic Advisor to the Afghan Institute of Strategic Studies (AISS) and has provided guidance for the research and publication of a series of papers on radicalization in Afghanistan.

She is the author of dozens of publications, including of the most recent ones, *A Rock Between Hard Places; Afghanistan in its Regional Security Complexes* (with Kristian P. Harpviken) (Oxford University Press/Hurst Publishers, 2016), *Human Security: Concepts and Implications* (with Anuradha Chenoy) (Routledge, 2007), editor of *Rethinking the Liberal Peace: External Models and Local Alternatives* (Routledge 2011) and author of other publications such as *Iran and its Relationship with Afghanistan After the Nuclear Deal* (with Mohammed Fazeli), (PRIO July 2016), *Regional Responses to Radicalization in Afghanistan: Obstacles, Opportunities and an Agenda for Action* (PRIO, March 2016), *Radicalization in the Heart of Asia Countries* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Department of Regional Cooperation, Secretariat of the Istanbul

Process, June 2015) ; Strangers Across the Amu River : Perceptions of Communities Along the Afghan-Tajik borders (SIPRI and OSF, October 2015) and Human Security Twenty Years On, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center Paper, Oslo: Norway, 26 June 2014 .

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: Introduction: definitions, approaches

The first session sets the scene by examining terminologies and definitions. How are radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism defined? We will look at the state of the art debate within academia and the normative regime at the United Nations. The session will also compare terminologies used within different regional and international organizations: the UN the EU, the OSCE, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings

Session 2: classification of motivations and responses

The session introduces a classification of motivations that will be studied through the rest of the course in detail and will examine the mainstream approaches to responding to violent extremism as well as their shortcomings.

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings

Session 3: The Security approach: Foreign Terrorist Fighters

The most traditional view of violent extremists is to see them as criminals, and the mainstream response is to subject them to a law and order approach. The session will look at the phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and the pros and cons of methods of countering them through traditional methods: targeted killing, border control, intelligence etc. We will examine resolution 2178 passed by the UN Security Council in September 2014 on addressing the acute and growing threat posed by FTFs, comparing it with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN Plan of Action on Countering Violent Extremism.

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of a professional Foreign Terrorist Fighter

Session 4: The sociological approach: Grievances among groups

Communities, families, madrassas, mosques, prisons and other such places of communion have become increasingly associated with places of recruitment into violent extremist groups. What does the field of sociology have to contribute the understanding this phenomenon? This class will seek group-based explanations and explore violent extremism as a social process, building on knowledge from the field of social movement theory, horizontal inequalities, relative deprivation, marginalization and social identity

theory among other concepts, to understand how behavior is guided by factors of social identity (i.e., beliefs and values derived from group membership) rather than interpersonal factors.

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of a community or family or ethnic group

Session 5: The socio-economic approach

It is often said that poverty is a leading driver of joining violent extremist groups, with recruiters luring the vulnerable with promises of material goods. In response, states are encouraged to develop job creation as a prevention strategy, especially for the idle youth. What is the difference between a development strategy and one that targets at-risk populations? We will examine evidence about the relationship between poverty/unemployment and violence.

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of an illegal migrant worker

Session 6: The psychological approach

Until not long ago – and still in some circles - extremely violent activities perpetrated by terrorists were analyzed as a form of psychopathology. This session will look at psychopathological explanations labelling violent extremists as mentally ill, irrational and fundamentally different from normal people. How helpful is the psychological lens in helping us understand why people engage in- or disengage from violent extremism and terrorism? What would a psychological approach contribute to prevention and de-radicalization efforts?

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of a lone wolf

Session 7: Ideology and religion

This class will examine violent extremism and terrorism as a group activity propelled to action by an ideology. ISIS recruiters have systematically used violence as a tool for attaining their group's ideological objectives, in this case, the caliphate, a religious state. We will review how the narrative of salafist ideology has found resonance among adherents, before examining the merits and limits of counter-ideological work using an alternative, peaceful ideology and narrative of religious values

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of an (political or religious) extremist motivated by violent ideology

Session 8: The gender dimension

What are the push and pull factors that drive women join violent extremist groups? And once they join, is there a gender division of labor? What happens to women and their children in the deradicalization process?

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of a jihadi bride

Session 9: Adolescences and youth

Recent concern and media portrayal of the increase in youth violence and, especially, relating to young people being groomed to carrying out terrorist attacks have made the youth both a victim and a perpetrator of violence. This session is devoted to the field of adolescence and will look at theories of delinquency to examine a possible correlation between adolescence and joining violent extremist groups, where young people become defenders of sacred values, identity, culture, a way of life etc. . Should young people be further alienated as part of a contemporary 'moral panic' or empowered as part of counter and prevention strategies and how?

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of a youth with an identity crisis

Session 10: The media, the Internet and mind games

How do violent extremists and terrorists use narratives construed through the media , including social media, to recruit sympathizers into committing acts of violence? This session will examine the media, the messages and the messengers that spread hatred and then question how counter- narratives have to be developed and effectively delivered as an alternative.

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of an extremist that has been indoctrinated through the internet.

Session 11 Prisons: Location for Recruitment and de-radicalization

Prisons are notorious grounds for further radicalization, not only because of the proximity with extremists with important experiences they are willing to share, but also because of the grievances against the state which can arise from sub-optimal conditions of incarceration. At the same time, most de-radicalization programs are implemented in prisons, where former extremists are easier to target. But are these effective? This class will look at the institutions of prisons using the different conceptual frameworks used in this class.

Method: Lecture, class discussion based on readings, student presentation of a profile of someone who became radicalized in prison

Session 12: Conclusions

The last class will be an opportunity to take stock of the different approaches together and propose an analytical framework for a complex understanding of violent extremism as well as an appropriate complex holistic response mechanism.

Method: class discussion between students and lecturer. No presentation