Anger: Radicalised in Northern Ireland

By Jonathan Barclay

Introduction
- This is an autoethnographical study into radicalising utilising my experience of anger after leaving NI.
- I was politically radicalised in NI by my own culture which was unconscious to what we were doing.
- Three cultures involved: Royalist versus Nationalist cultures and the neutral culture I moved to.
- The aim is to generate new knowledge on Non-Violent Political Radicalisation using my own story.

Method
- A thematic analysis produced four themes: Anger, Radicalisation, Royalism & Social Development.
- Using theory & research I have critically reflected on these themes to develop new understanding on the little known cultural of Non-Violent Radicalisation (Cummings, 2015).
- I invite you the reader to find meaning from my story and analyse from your own perspective.

Extracts from my story

“Do you not think he has a point?”
I felt enraged.

“My countrymen are being killed by these type of people!”

Anger I had towards a culture and people I did not know.

“Didn’t show me to think of anything but Queen and Country”

Kill or be killed for Queen and country

More developed older social group, which rejected me.

I missed two years of social development

An unprepared naive child thrust into an adult world

I was radicalised

De-radicalisation

I was radicalised while living in a mixed community with catholic friends, however my experience in Belfast at work produced unconscious anger towards the people I was living happily alongside.

Moving to England there was no political Loyalist or Nationalist rhetoric, providing the opportunity for my partner to inadvertently plant a seed of doubt by saying "do you not think he has a point."

This new culture did not give me an alternative ideology as Bertram (2015) suggested is needed to de-radicalise me, this was possibly because I was radicalised to opinion and never chose violence.

Final reflections

I have no doubt, if I had not left NI I would still be infected with the political ideology that underlies N. Irish society. An ideology introduced socially in childhood and driven by Loyalism and Nationalism.

I was radicalised to opinion rather than action (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

Political radicalisation is an increased preparation for and commitment to intergroup conflict (Cummings, 2013, p. 6).

Intergroup emotions such as my anger are more predictive of behaviour than attitudes towards the Nationalist out‐group (McVeigh & Rolston, 2007).

My anger was something I was not aware of, however given the right conditions a neutral culture surfaced.

My anger needed to be addressed; the Process Model of Forgiveness begins with confronting and expressing anger (Tem et al., 2007).

Consequences

What:
- Intergroup conflict not individual psychology drives radicalisation which came from a perceived threat to the Protestant culture I identified with.
- I was radicalised to opinion rather than action (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).
- Political radicalisation is an increased preparation for and commitment to intergroup conflict (Cummings, 2013, p. 6).
- Finding a like-minded group after being rejected by my previous social group was a catalyst for my radicalisation (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

So what:
- My radicalisation was the accumulation of beliefs that justify intergroup aggression and ultimately led to my propensity to sacrifice myself for my country (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

References:


References:

My arrested social development left me open to the radicalisation that may have been happening. I was 14.

I started work at 16 in Belfast within a sectarian Protestant culture but because I missed two years of social development I was effectively 14.

Children in N. Ireland have an emotional attachment to their respective communities.

I believe as I grew up my emotional security was negatively affected by exposure to sectarian violence in my society.

My emotional security was negatively affected. My anger needed to be addressed.

References:
Kenworthy, J. (2007). The impact of intergroup conflict, e.g. giving the Orange Order £100,000 to turn the 12th of July parades into a cultural festival (McVeigh & Rolston, 2007).

References:

I am a victim of my own culture and nothing I am doing is their fault.

I am a victim of my own culture and nothing I am doing is their fault. This reflected my Protestant resolve to fight for my country as I believed myself for Queen and Country.

It was this sort of ideology that perpetuated my belief around sacrificing Catholics as untrustworthy and dangerous.

In my country people are taking my life.

Orange Order’s ideology and culture permeates N. Irish society. I was radicalised.

Children in N. Ireland have an emotional attachment to their respective communities.

I have no doubt, if I had not left NI I would still be infected with the political ideology that underlies N. Irish society. An ideology introduced socially in childhood and driven by Loyalism and Nationalism.

I was politically radicalised in NI by my own culture which was unconscious to what we were doing.

I am a victim of my own culture and nothing I am doing is their fault.

Interventions should focus on anger (Tem et al., 2007), however my anger could only be dealt with in a neutral venue away from sectarian rhetoric.