Terrorism acts have been occurring over the world for years. Terrorism is a contested concept (Hinkkainen 2013) and there is no clear definition (Maikovich 2005). One definition according the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) terrorism is “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (Terrorism 2011). On the 22nd of July 2011, Norway was devastated by a terrorist attack. On that day Andres Behring Breivik (ABB) bombed buildings of Parliament and then shot at youths at a Norwegian Labour Party summer camp. These actions and the reasons ABB gives for the actions label him as a terrorist. Terrorism has an aim they are trying to achieve whether it be political or religious (Spaaij 2010). In ABB’s case his aim is political and his targets in his attacks show that. He was able to become morally disengaged and commit his terrorist attack on the youth’s summer camp. His transition was over several years and is one that draws into the ways he became the terrorist he is.

It could be argued that ABB was not a terrorist because he worked alone. When people think of terrorism it is usually thought of as a group that is organized and commits acts as a larger group (Spaaij 2010). In a sense ABB fits this because he believes he is working for a social movement known as the Knights Templar. Any evidence of this being true has yet to be reveled (BBC 2012). However, not all acts of terrorism have to be committed by a group. There are people who engage in terrorist attacks alone and they are called individual terrorists, solo terrorists or the more common name lone wolves (Borum et al. 2012). Lone wolves are described to have physically separated themselves from society (Sppaij 2010). ABB was said to engage with friends but he separated himself closer to the time of his offense. The lone wolf will also put loads of planning into their attack and they are methodical in their attack (Capellan 2015). According to the police, it appears that ABB planned his attack for years. He visited Prague in 2009 to purchase weapons for the attack (Andres Behring Breivik 2015). He also bought a farm earlier in the year to gain easy access to fertilizer fort he bomb. Since the lone wolf terrorist acts alone they are willing to pay the personal cost of doing what is needed. They are willing to sacrifice themselves for the bad behavior that does not affect them directly. They believe they are carrying out the justice needed to punish the people who are in the wrong. They are able to complete this with the expression of altruism, which is the carrying out of justice themself (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2011). The lone wolf commits their acts alone, however, they can be linked to a larger organization. This link is nothing more then showing similar views and support for their ideas of the organization. Lone wolves will also show commitment to identify with the organization (Appleton 2014). ABB’s actions were those of his own but they were influenced by a bigger organization. Often times lone wolfs, like ABB, get their beliefs and ideas from a bigger organization and then proceed to carry out their own separate attacks (Appleton 2014; Spaaij 2010). ABB acted alone but he got his ideas from the anti-Islamic social movement that he supported. During his trial a video about multicultrism and the war against Islamic demographics was played and it was said that ABB was wiping a tear when it was done (BBC 2012). Him tearing up to the war against Islamic nations and multiculturism shows just how much ABB identified with the anti-Islamic movement. He was so moved by the video that he had tears. He also believed the notion from the movement he supported was that multiculturism was dangerous and would lead to the downfall of Western civilization (Berntzen & Sandberg 2014). It was even stated in his statement that he knew the actions he took but that is was in self-defense. He was defending himself and the country of Norway from the multicultrisim and Islamization the Labour Party was allowing. ABB was also affiliated with neo-Nazi ideologies. This is seen in his web history of neo-Nazi websites and everyday in court he greeted the court with the neo-Nazi salute. Therefore ABB showed strong support for the anti-Islamic social movement and the neo-Nazi ideology. These two things combined are that led to him creating the plan of his attacks and executing them.

A terrorist usually attack with the ending aim being politics or religious in nature (Spaaij 2010). ABB’s actions were influenced by the current political beliefs and actions in Norway. The violence terrorists chooses is thought out and has reason. The attack is not just an attack but also a political or religious message to certain people in a group of society (Engene 2004; Hinkkainen 2013). A terrorist’s motives can be seen through the group of society they choose to target (Borum et al. 2012). The victims in the terrorist attacks will be of some symbolic value to fulfill their message. The more the victims represent a meaning the better the message will be carried and received (Engene 2004). In this case ABB directed his violence at the youths of the Norwegian Labour Party. ABB believed that the Norwegian Labour Party was destroying the country and the Norwegian culture because of their stance on multiculturism (Berntzen & Sandberg 2014). His actions were a message and a warning to the party and the nation about the severity of the problem that is multiculturism. The message was that the stance the Norwegian Labour Party and the elite left wings that they were undermining the Norwegian people (Berntzen & Sandberg 2014). His motivation of politics in his own country are what labels him as not just a lone terrorist but also a homegrown terrorist. He was born and raised in the country he attacked. Citizen and residency in the same country as the one they attack shows that the terrorist is homegrown (Hinnainen 2013). The issues the terrorist are trying to show are dealing with their homeland. ABB saw himself as doing what was necessary by preventing a war in Europe (BBC 2012).

The way ABB was able to bomb and shoot at youths at the summer camp murdering 77 people in total as because he was morally disengaged. When someone is morally disengaged they do not have any reason to be troubled or guilty over the inhuman conduct they commit and are even able to believe their actions are for a worth purpose (Bandura et al., 1996). The harmful actions are deemed honorable through moral disengagement by moral justification, exonerating social comparison, sanitizing language, attribution of blame and dehumanization (Bandura 2004). ABB believed he was doing what was best for Norway through his actions. He turned his killing of teenagers into an honorable act. The higher the disengagement is the lower the guilt the perpetrator will feel and therefore it will weaken the resistance from committing the behavior (Bandura et al 1996). If a person will not feel guilty then there is no reason for them to resist taking action. To become morally disengaged the perpetrator will morally justify their actions. This is taking the violent conduct and making it have an acceptable meaning to it. By giving the action a socially worthy and moral purpose the terrorist is able to commit their crimes easier. Moral justification is a means to make violence a good cause (Bandura 2004). ABB morally justified his actions by saying that his actions were those for a bigger cause. As stated early he believed he was preventing a way from occurring in Europe and was trying to protect the Norwegian country and culture (BBC 2012). People will act the way they do in according to their moral standards (Bandura et al, 1996). ABB’s moral standards were to rid Europe, mainly Norway, or the evil that is multicultrism. Another way ABB became morally disengaged was through social comparison. This is where the people look at what they believe to be the alternative that could happen if they do not act. In a sense killing is a defensive weapon they must use to stop the cruelty they are trying to prevent (Bandura 2004). In ABB’s case he believes attacking the summer camp of the Labour Party will send a message that multicultrism is not a good thing. His comparison is him killing the youths or multiculturism destroying everything. He chooses the former and believes he chose correctly. A third way of moral disengagement is through the language the perpetrator uses. It is said that language people use will affect their actions (Bandura et al., 1996; Bandura 2004). The way a person talks about others will dictate how a person will act when confronted with them. Therefore, sanitizing the language can make killing another human will not have as significant impact on the person (Bandura 2004). ABB would say the people affiliated with the Labour Party were ate fault for multiculturism occurring in Norway and eventually lead to his actions taken against the party. Alone moral justification, sanitizing the language and making the comparison are strong enough to make someone like ABB morally disengaged and follow through with their attacks (Bandura 2004). They are not the only three though. There is also the attribution of blame. By putting the blame of the suffering on the targets makes the perpetrators own actions excusable. The perpetrator will put the blame on the victims and say they are the ones responsible for their own suffering (Bandura 2004; Bandura et al., 1996). This will cause the perpetrator to feel faultless and instead be the victim that was forced to take action. This will make increase the feeling of self-righteous in their actions (Bandura et al., 1996). ABB’s reasons for the attack shows he put blame on the victims. During his trial when he said that he recognized the actions he took but said he took them in self-defense shows him putting the blame on the victims. He felt he was a victim to the Labour Party’s stance on multiculturism and was forced to take action. The last way to disengage is by the way of viewing the targets in a different way. By dehumanizing people the ability to mistreat them increases. Without dehumanizing the target it is difficult to conduct inhuman actions against a human and risk self-condemnation. The process of dehumanization is taking away the characteristic that make up humans away from the targeted group. Afterwards the targeted group is viewed as the target and not as a human with human qualities (Bandura 2004; Bandura et al. 1996). ABB dehumanized his targets in his process to morally disengage. It was said that during his trial when the court showed footage of his bombing he was “impassive” and even smirking (BBC 2012). He did not see the destruction and death or injury caused by his actions. He only saw the righteous act he committed for the cause he thought to be apart of. Smirking during the explosion while victims and victim’s family members showed just how much he did not view the people of the Labour Party as humans. He was not sympathetic or even neutral about the situation. He was proud in what he did. He was able to become fully morally disengaged which lead him to successfully execute his plan.

ABB made the transition to terrorist over several years. According to McCauley and Moskalenko (2014) that transition is very important in the lives of the terrorist. To the terrorist it is going from nothing to being something. The two scholars believe that someone does not start out as a terrorist but as someone who is neutral to the case and are inhert. In other terms the person will start off neutral to the situation. Then they will be come sympathizers to the groups they support. They will then become justifiers of their radical actions. The final stage is taking it upon themselves and having a feeling of moral obligation to the cause. Then they gradually move up to activists, then radicals and then finally terrorists (McCauley & Moskalenko 2014). ABB made the same transitions in his life. In his early years he lived a normal life of being an entrepreneur. He was affiliated and politically active with the Progress Party. He even became a representative in the political party. He later dropped their politics and showed support for the Christian Democratic Party. Each party was anti-Islamic and against Islamization of Norway. He grew within the political parties then at the time of the attacks he denied any affiliation (Berntzen & Sandberg 2014). He rose from just being an active member to being the terrorist who uses political reasons to commit violence. He took it upon himself to show the country of Norway and the Labour Party the dangers of multiculturism.

ABB is a lone wolf terrorist. His terrorist attack was inspired by political stances and framed around the anti-Islamic social movement (Berntzen & Sandberg 2014). As a lone wolf terrorist he was able to distribute his ideology in the form of his manifesto via the Internet before his attack (Appleton 2014). Showing they were his ideologies and his own work. He planned his actions out and was able to execute his plan to the end through the process of moral disengagement. His moral disengagement is still strongly present in him because still to this day he does not show any remorse or sympathy for the victims or the victim’s families.

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