

FROM PROTEST TO TERRORISM

PROPAGANDA & INDOCTRINATION

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FREE SPEECH & PROPAGANDA

It is often heard that freedom of speech ought only to be limited when it turns into incitement of hatred or violence towards others.

- 1: Physical political violence is the exception, and not the greatest threat.
- 2: Undermining the fundamental fabric of social cohesion is the rule:
 - distrust in the democratic processes & institutions
 - distrust in a knowable & shared (reasonably) objective truth
- 3: The goal is to replace the source and basic laws of the democratic political order with another. (cult of personality, ethnic or religious supremacy)
- 4: Physical political violence is (almost) always the necessary consequence of this precipitating process, but not its ultimate aim.
- 5: Criminal law approaches only address a small portion of this process.

DEFINITIONS

PROPAGANDA

- Target:** People *outside* or on the *periphery* of the movement.
- Aim:** Propaganda is not intended to disseminate a truth, but to supplant critical thought with strong emotions. The *political myth*.
- Mechanism** Propaganda seeks to dislodge people from the 'social realm' by fuelling pre-existing **grievances**, creating imaginary ones or offering positive group experiences.

INDOCTRINATION

- Target:** Inner circle
- Aim:** To imbue members with the conviction that radical action is **morally** necessary.
- Mechanism:** Infinite simplification of complexities of the world into monolithic causal relations and extreme diametric oppositions.
(jews are responsible for all evils, good cannot allow evil to exist)

COMMON EXAMPLES OF THE POLITICS OF GRIEVANCE

Possibly real:

- Native Dutch: we're losing our society to imported cultures (PVV)
- Turks & Moroccans: we're not succeeding because the Dutch are conspiring to hold us back (DENK)
- Trump: the press is against me

Because they are founded on reality, we can debate them and keep solutions in the realm of reality.

COMMON EXAMPLES OF THE POLITICS OF GRIEVANCE

Imagined:

- Nazis: The aryan race is withheld from its rightful place
- Communism: The working class is withheld from its rightful place
- Islamism: Islam is withheld from its rightful place

Because they are founded on an imagined reality, we cannot debate them, ideologies are undebatable and hence all the more prone to political violence.

ESSENCE

Propaganda bridges the gap between two realities

“we must not throw the masses – scant in knowledge-
into the sea before we teach them to swim”

Letter from al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi, October 11, 2005

Grievance	Reality	Ideology	Propaganda	Legal status
The muslim world is in a terrible state	True	True	Exaggerate or compare to an imagined past.	
But Islam is the perfect order for mankind	Not likely	true	Normal Da'wa.	
Our weakness is due to a lack of islam	Not likely	True, we need more islam	Normal Da'wa	
Mingling with non-believers harms the ummah	Not likely	True, we must reject their norms and values	Quietist Salafist Da'wa	
All non-believers conspire to keep the muslims weak	Not likely	True, Jews, zionists, Crusaders, 'the west', weak muslim leaders.	Countless conspiracy theories, fake news, all but direct incitement.	problematic
Purge our societies of the influence of non-believers.	Ok?	This is a prerequisite for bringing out about muslim resurgence.	Propaganda → indoctrination Political salafism – parallel societies.	problematic
Because islam is the best for mankind, the enemies of islam are the enemies of mankind	Ehh.....	The redemption of mankind requires the elimination of the enemies of islam.	Propaganda → indoctrination	

PROPAGANDA AND INDOCTRINATION

Grievances

Alternate realities

Radical solutions

Propaganda

Indoctrination

Private law if applicable

Criminal law

CHANGING FACE OF PROPAGANDA

Social media made the means of propaganda available to the masses.

The tip of the iceberg:

Medium	Year	volume of ISIS related accounts
Twitter	2014	46-90,000
	2015	125,000
	2016	325,000

Not included: facebook, telegram, signal, custom apps.

SOLUTIONS?

1: Criminal law will always be a late-stage, limited scope approach.

2: Social media platforms can act, globally, in two ways:

- offer background information on the nature of the news source.

- offer competing points of view 'counterspeech' whenever they detect highly biased posts.

This, however, poses great challenges to political neutrality, and requires an IT *tour de force* with little profit incentives.

3: The most sustainable, most comprehensive and even low cost solution seems to equip people from a young age with the cognitive toolset that prepares them for citizenship in the information age. This involves exercises in critical thinking, propaganda recognition and in general the development of a 'cognitive immune system'. This would be an area in which public-private partnerships could share responsibility and work towards implementing a common methodology.