Multicide: is there a connection between mass murder and terrorism?

Introduction

This purpose of this research is gain an understanding of why individuals either commit or connive in multicide, either through mass murder or terrorism and if there is a link between these types of murder. The focus will be on mass murders committed by individuals for their own personal reasons (eg. Port Arthur Massacre) and comparing these with acts committed in the name of a “cause” (terrorism) by either groups or individuals. This “cause” is often motivated by differences between one group and another (e.g. religion, politics, race) with many individuals being sacrificed in order to advance “the cause”. This paper will compare and contrast different types of multicide (eg. familial, stranger, work related, terrorist/freedom fighting) committed in different periods of history and look for the similarities and differences between the individuals who either committed or connived in these acts. Social constructionist theory will be used to examine how the acts themselves are defined and framed by different commentators according to their own agenda (Duwe, 2005). For example, is the perpetrator a terrorist or a freedom fighter; mentally ill or the natural product of a faulty society where violence is condoned? Rational Choice Theory, particularly in relation to criminal behaviour, will be the theoretical perspective used to examine the behaviour itself. This theory focuses on the “situational inducements and impediments to offending but also places at least as much emphasis on would-be offenders subjective estimates of expected rewards and costs” (Nagin, 1993: 469).

The intention of this research is to demonstrate that there is a link between terrorism and mass murderer and that this is not behaviour that is confined to a few “crazy” individuals or groups, as it is often portrayed in the media. That is, to gain a better understanding of the motivations of the individuals involved.

Literature Review

In order to undertake the literature review of this subject, the research question was divided into three areas of study, each of which contributed information to the resolution of the research question, and guided the selection of the theoretical perspectives chosen:

1. Physiological: Why do humans commit violent and aggressive acts and who are most likely to commit these acts? If the behaviour is innate, why is this so and why is it suppressed in some situations but not others?
2. Sociological: What group or social norms contribute to violent acts in general and multicides in particular, and what are the dynamics that operate within groups that lead individuals to change their behaviour in response to the group norms?
3. Psychological: What are the individual characteristics (if any) that might lead an individual to participate or connive in violent and murderous behaviour, either as an individual or as part of a group? Why do individuals join groups and change their behaviour in order to conform to the group, even when the behaviour is against their previously held beliefs?

Definitions

The terms used in this research in relation to murder/homicide will be as follows:

- Paracide – attempted murder
Suicide – self murder

Monocide – murder of a single individual

Multicide – murder of more than one individual

Generally a distinction is made by criminologists between two types of multicide based on their timing. Mass murder is generally used to describe an event in which a number of victims are killed within a single event, often over a short time period (Levinson, 2002: 1036-7). This is distinguished from a serial murder in which “a number of victims are slain one at a time over a number of weeks, months or even years” Levinson, 2002: 1037).

Most researchers on mass murder are very specific in relation to the number of victims in their studies. For example Meloy et al (2001: 720) limit the data collection in their study to “the intentional killing of at least three victims (other than the perpetrator) in a single incident”. Hempel et al (1999:213) used the following definition in their study: “a single adult .. perpetrator intentionally kills at least three victims other than himself in a single incident”, although noting that another definition used by Dietz (cited in Hempel et al, 1999: 213) was slightly different, being “the wilful injuring of five or more persons of whom three or more are killed by a single offender in a single incident”. Duwe (2005: 62) in his research limited the data to incidents in which four or more victims, were killed over a 24-hour period.

Spree murder is also a form of mass murder which is defined as a “single event with two or more locations and no emotional cooling-off period between the murders (Levinson, 2002:1563). There is obviously some overlap between the definitions of spree and mass murder.

Holmes & Holmes (1992:53) in discussing the difference in the numbers of victims used in the research emphasised that any definition of mass murder should take into account the number of victims, the time of the killings, the location of the murders and the distance between the murder sites, as these are the important features that distinguish between mass, spree and serial murders. When making comparisons between the results of different research these differences in definition may be important as they may limit the comparability of the data.

However, the success or failure to achieve a high enough number of victims to be included in the research may be a matter of chance, and therefore researchers should also consider attempted murders in their data, if they are to make valid conclusions about the motivation, demographics etc of such offenders. The definition for mass and spree murder should also include events in which an attempt is made to kill multiple individuals, even if it is not successfully carried out (paricide).

Although terrorism has been used throughout history by individuals, groups and governments to intimidate groups or individuals into retreating from the threat of violence, neither academics or policy makers agree on how to define terrorism (Lentini, 2003:368). The term terrorism was first coined by Robespierre during the French Revolution (Levinson, 2002:1604). He perceived it as an effective means of governing (Wardlow, 1982). Levinson (2004:1615) distinguishes a difference between terror and terrorism. That is, “terror” constitutes a threat which is used by a government or its agents as a means of social control. “Terrorism” refers to the execution of these threats and the spread of fear by revolutionaries who seek to use this fear to change or destroy the existing government or social/political/religious order. Genkin (2005:12) distinguishes 4 essential properties of terrorist organizations that distinguish them from either crime gangs, social protest movements that may have accidentally turned violent, and guerrilla organizations that attack only military targets. These are that the act is politically motivated, deliberate in its actions (ie not accidental), violent (threatening or acting out) and civilian oriented (directed against civilian or civilian targets).

Lentini (2003:368) maintains that among all the definitions there is a “general consensus that terrorism involves using, or threatening to use, violence against innocent people or non-combatants in order to
effect political change and achieve political goals … [and] its tactics include murders, kidnapping, shootings and bombings”

Suicide terrorism is defined by Bloom (2004: 1) as “violent, politically motivated attacks carried out in a deliberate state of awareness by a person who blows up himself or herself together with a chosen target. The premeditated certain death of the perpetrator is the precondition for the success of the attack .. it encompasses attacks of military targets .. the assassination of prominent leaders .. and the attack of large numbers of civilians”. It is often used by the powerless to empower themselves by “achieving a balance of terror that would otherwise be unachievable .. self-sacrifice [is seen] as the ultimate tool against a powerful enemy” (Madsen, 2005: 99-100).

Social constructionism is a useful theoretical perspective from which to examine the definitions used in the research into multicide. For example, is the perpetrator a terrorist or a freedom fighter; mentally ill or the natural product of a faulty society where violence is condoned (Duwe, 2005)? According to this theoretical perspective social phenomenon are not natural but are given meaning as a result of the interactions of individuals. That is, “if [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Lindgren, 2005:8).

In relation to the research in criminology, a social constructionist perspective assumes that certain acts are assigned a criminal status by the collective consciousness. That is, we do not disapprove of certain actions because they are crimes, but rather they become crimes because we disapprove of them (Lindgren, 2005: 10-11). This assists in understanding how the same individual can be both lauded as a freedom-fighter by one group, while simultaneously being condemned as an evil terrorist by another group, depending on each group’s different perspective on the situation. This is not to say that committing a murderous act is value-neutral, but that it’s value as either evil or not will depend on the group’s perspective: whether it is approved of or not by the society or group.

Social constructionism also assists us to consider the different social worlds that people inhabit, which account for these differences in perspective. For example, they are shaped in part by differences such as religion, race, class, ethnicity and gender (Johnson & Newcomb, 1992). It therefore provides an opportunity “to step out of the realities we have created, taking stock of who is speaking, who is silenced, and what the repercussions are … [and that] all knowledge is relational/situated/constructed” (Korobov, 2000:366-7). This is particularly useful in relation to researching such controversial actions as terrorism and multicide, as it is “concerned with an actor’s point of view, not the truth of any allegations .. whether the target is blameworthy may be relevant to the legal system but it is irrelevant to a scientific analysis of violence” (Felson, 1993:104)

**Research methods**

This research has been done using the unobtrusive method of reviewing the results of research that has been reported in the academic literature and other information available in various forms of media (newspaper, internet, films). The aim was to compare and contrast different types of multicide (eg. familial, stranger, work related, terrorist/freedom fighting) committed in various venues and different periods of history, with the aim of establishing the similarities and differences between the individuals who perpetrated these acts and the groups and/or societies in which the acts were committed. The analysis of the results will also be informed by various theorists in this area of study.

It was also necessary to examine the literature on individual murders, in order to construct a model that would account for the main motivations for multicide in comparison to other types of murder, particularly in relation to establishing a common link between mass murder and terrorism. This was as a result of discovering while conducting the research that the number of victims killed is less important in understanding this behaviour, than are the motivations of the perpetrator.

c. Toni Kennedy, 2007
In relation to the research literature there were some problems with the information in relation to the methods used to collect the data which effected its reliability and validity, and thus whether the information and theories resulting from the research can be considered accurate.

The focus of the literature review was in the following areas: mass murder by an individual (e.g. familial, work, and school), mass murder by a group (e.g. suicide bombing, terrorist attacks), theories of deviance and the nature of aggression, the nature of cults, group dynamics and processes, the relationship between violent media and violent acts (and the attractiveness of crime and violent literature and media), mental illness and personality disorders and their relationship to individual and mass murder, post colonialism and it’s effects on individuals and societies and the relationship between religious and political movements and multicide.

In relation to selecting a theoretical perspective that would aid the understanding of multicide, the social constructionist theory was very useful in interpreting the perspective of the authors who write in this subject area, and how this perspective effects their views on the causes of the behaviour (e.g. defining concepts and labelling). Rational Choice Theory was found to be the most useful theory in understanding the behaviour itself. Evolutionary theory, particularly as it relates to criminal behaviour was also useful in understanding the reasons for aggressive and murderous behaviours, especially as it relates to the age and gender of the majority of offenders (e.g. Quinsey, 2002). Feminism and Post colonial theory was also useful to some extent but was too limited in time and place to provide more than a partial explanation of the behaviour.

**Volume of Information**

There was a large amount of information in this subject area, both in the scholarly literature and the popular media. It would seem that there is an inexhaustible craving for information about violent behaviour (personal communication with book sellers and librarians). There are a number of theories advanced to account for this fascination with violence. As Tudor (1997:456) notes, “we could all probably agree that some people, for some of the time, enjoy being grossed out, enjoy being horrified or enjoy the categorical transgressiveness of monstrous beings”. Beattie (1996:36) makes the point that “it seems to be an important part of the human psyche to create bogeymen, from myths of old, through to urban folklore and ghost stories” This is not just a recent phenomenon, as is shown in history with the popularity of public executions and “sports” such as bull baiting. As Meyer (2005:3) notes, “violence of course has been a societal staple predating the mass media”. Crime, violence, death, dying, natural disasters or accidents routinely rate well in all forms of media, fiction and non-fiction, and in both humorous and serious portrayals. “Whether painted on a cave wall, carved in Assyrian stone, performed in Greek tragedies, or projected onto the silver screen, images of crime have always been a defining feature of society .. [and is] artistically popular” (Lovell, 2001:229). Perhaps this is because it allows the chance for “vicarious participation in antisocial behaviour that is not possible, or actively discouraged in real life” (Meyer, 2005:3) or because it provides the thrills and intensity that is missing from most lives. It is also true that “violence travels well .. that is, whereas a verbal joke that is hilarious in the United States may make no sense in Singapore, the humorous potential of a knee to the groin is appreciated in any culture” (McIntosh et al, 2003: 357). Although violence is not indispensable for program or news popularity (Mustonen, 1997) the sheer volume of the information on this subject available in all forms would suggest that it is an ongoing area of fascination for many people.

**Types of Research**

The research into multicide (including terrorism and mass murder) has mainly been done in the fields of the social sciences, especially sociology, criminology and psychology. Researchers have used a number of different methods to carry out this research, both qualitative and quantitative. Some of the...
most frequently used methods include:

- Interviews and questionnaires with either a self-selected or a “captive audience” (e.g. prison) participant group. These may include convicted offenders (or attempted offenders in the case of suicide terrorists), victims and/or “normal” populations (that is, not convicted of a crime), and can cover a wide range of subjects including individual histories, especially childhood experiences, preferences, attitudes, behaviour and motivations. This type of information can be difficult to obtain as many “successful” offenders are dead as a result of their acts (e.g. Soibelman, 2004; Kapardis, 1989; Ramsland, 2005; Blazak, 2001; Reynolds, 2004; Marks, 1992; Soibelman, 2004; Mullen, 2003)

- Examination of personal histories compiled about, and “martyr tapes” or diaries left by, successful and unsuccessful offenders. These often focus on the psychological profiles of offenders. (e.g. “They hoped to die”, 2006; Oliverio & Lauderdale, 2005; Scott, 1997; Kapardis, 1989; Lester et al, 2004; Mansdorf, 2003; Victoroff, 2005; Miller, 2006a; Miller, 2006b; Weatherston & Moran, 2003; Ganor, 2000; Bloom, 2004)

- Examination of police case files on specific incidents to determine similarities, differences or trends in relation to the characteristics of both victims and offenders (e.g. Barnes, 2000; Hempel et al, 1999; Duwe, 2004; Holmes & Holmes, 1992; Duwe, 2005; Mullen, 2003; Johnson, 2005; Challans, 2005; Bell, 2005; Meloy, 2001; Brookman, 2003)

- Examination of published and unpublished offence statistics with the aim of making comparisons, and examining trends over time (e.g. Meloy et al, 2001; Macdonald, 1986; Kaplan et al, 2005; Barnes, 2000)

- Compilation and examination of databases of offences. This can also include studies of the reports about offences found in some newspaper indexes (e.g. Duwe, 2004; Duwe, 2005; Brunner, 2005; Pape, 2005; Pape, 2004; Pape, 2003; Bloom, 2004)

- Anthropological, cultural and historical comparisons of similar offences. Much of this literature is currently focused on the religious basis for violence, especially as it relates to Islam, although previously the focus was more on the political philosophies underpinning the behaviour, such as anarchism or communism (e.g. Flaherty, 2006; Carroll, 2003; Lazarus, 2005; White, 2003; O’Connor, 2006; Coker, 2005; Girard, 2005; Preti, 2006; Schwartz, 2003; Langman & Morris, 2003; Stenhouse, 2006; Jones, 2005; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Durie, 2006; Wrighte, 2002; Wang, 2003; Kamat & Mathew, 2003; Wolf, 1981; Wardlaw, 1982; Souryal, 2004; Taheri, 1987; Gray, 2003; Gray, 2004; Leeman, 1991; Palermo, 2006; Madsen, 2005; Atran, 2004; Rho, 2006; Schweitzer, 2000; Kainz, 2003)

- Ethnographic and demographic reviews of groups involved in terrorist activities, as well as interviews with individuals involved in cults, and terrorist and hate-based groups. These studies often focus on the personality traits and age or identity formation stage of the individuals involved in these groups, the dynamics within the groups, and the links between terrorist and criminal groups (e.g. Blazak, 2001; Flaherty, 2006; Marks, 1992; Shapiro, 2005; Genkin, 2005; Ehrenfeld, 1990; Collins, 1991; Hassan, 1988).

- Laboratory tests, observations, interviews and cultural or media studies investigating the effect of violence in the media on different groups (“normal” or convicted offenders) (e.g. Lovell, 2001; Mustonen, 1997; Freedman, 1996; Haridakis & Rubin, 2003; Tudor, 1997; Schechter, 2005)
• Ethnographic and demographic studies of criminal behaviour per se, often focusing on the essential “maleness” of violent crimes generally and the possible evolutionary reasons for this phenomenon (eg. Quinsey, 2002; Burnett & Maruna, 2004; Canter, 2000; Canter, 2003; Newman, 1987; Musgrave, 1987; Walters, 2002; Felson, 1993; Lentini, 2003)

• Review articles about the research in this subject area (eg. Nettler, 1982; Macdonald, 1986; Falk, 1990; Daly & Wilson, 1988; O’Connor, 2006)

**Theoretical Foundations**

Most theoretical perspectives provide an explanation for only certain aspects of the behaviour of individuals committing multicide. For example feminist theory is useful in helping to explain the behaviour of some female terrorists. Brunner (2005) discusses this in relation to Palestinian female suicide bombers. Some of these individuals have used this behaviour as a way of challenging their society’s general repressive attitude towards women, while it would seem that others become suicide bombers as a means of complying with the dominant male culture. For example, a woman who had committed adultery felt she was able to make restitution for her shame by giving her life for the cause (Brunner, 2005:34). In the case of the Tamil Tigers the large representation of women in the movement has resulted from the group’s stated aims of giving equal rights to both genders, which is an attractive vision for women in a traditionally male dominated culture. The female recruits are thus able to combine a vision of personal freedom (as a woman) with ethnic freedom from oppression (as a Tamil), which helps to explain the popularity of this movement for women in the region (Shanmugam, personal communication). Women are considered equal in the struggle for freedom, if not in other aspects of their lives (Madsen, 2005). Women have also been very active in the suicide bombings in Chechnya (the so-called “Black Widows”) (Bloom, 2004) and in older political movements such as the Baader-Meinhof group (Oliverio & Lauderdale, 2005). However, overall “female participation in terrorist type violence is remarkably low” (Oliverio & Lauderdale, 2005:4). This is also the case with mass murder (Duwe, 2005; Duwe, 2004), which diminishes the value of feminist theory as a means of explaining the reason for the phenomenon.

Postcolonial theory assists in explaining some specific conflicts in the modern world, but is too limited in time and place to satisfactorily explain this behaviour throughout history. The conflict in Sri Lanka for example arose from a combination of the local customs and history overlaid by the legacy of the British colonisers. Originally Sri Lanka was comprised of 3 main kingdoms, 1 of which was Tamil with the other 2 being Sinhalese. When Britain took over the island they combined the 3 kingdoms into one for administrative ease. However when they de-colonised the county the previously separate areas were not given autonomy, and the minority Tamil population came under the control of the majority Sinhalese, who attempted to exert their hegemony in language and culture over the minority (see: Navaratnam, 1991; Gunasingam, 1999 and Balasingham, 2001 for an in depth explanation of the origins of the conflict). This repressive behaviour, combined with the two groups’ differences in religion, culture and language has led to violent clashes between the populations. The rise of a number of Tamil opposition groups such as the Marxist-based Tamil Tigers, has resulted in Sri Lanka having the unenviable record for the greatest number of suicide bombers of any group (Pape, 2003). The conditions resulting from the colonial experience has contributed to this behaviour but is not the only reason it has occurred – there are many other factors which have contributed to it (Pape, 2003).

The theory that best explains the range of behaviours that are the subject of this study is know as the Rational Choice Theory (RCT). The concept of rationality in this theory relates to “assumptions made about the motivations of individuals and how we try to explain why they choose to do particular things” (Taylor, 1993:164). RCT also has links to social constructionist theory in that an individuals
choices will often be effected by the complex social situation in which they live (Scott, 2000).

RCT is based on the following assumptions (see: Turner, 1991):

1. Humans are purposive and goal oriented
2. Humans have sets of hierarchically ordered preferences
3. In choosing lines of behaviour, humans make rational calculations with respect to:
   - Benefits
   - Costs
   - Best method for maximizing benefits and minimizing costs
4. Social structures, collective decisions and collective behaviour are ultimately the result of rational choices made by utility-maximizing individuals which determine
   - The distribution of resources among individuals
   - The distribution of opportunities for various lines of behaviour
   - The distribution and nature of norms and obligations in a situation

RCT posits that criminal behaviour arises because “people with certain characteristics are more likely to engage in crime than people without such characteristics, largely due to their differences in perceptions of expected costs and benefits regarding the activity in the given circumstances”(Tibbetts & Gibson, 2002:6). This is because each persons “reward” may be another person’s punishment. For example, for some individuals choosing to sacrifice their lives for a cause (such as in being a suicide bomber) is a rational choice, according to their personal or societal beliefs. Other individuals with different beliefs and traditions would regarded this as an act of madness. Similarly, individuals who commit mass murders are generally acting for what they perceive as rational motives, according to their beliefs at the time. Some of these motives can include (but are not limited to) the need for revenge, as a means of declaring their ownership of or power over another person, as a way of becoming famous or because they believe they have the right to act in this way (Kapardis, 1989; Johnson, 2005).

RCT also provides some insights into how enduring individual differences can account for the propensity to offend (Nagin & Paternoster, 1993), because of the resulting individual differences in the perceptions of costs and benefits. Some criticisms of RCT have focused on the definition of rationality, implying that this means rational according to some external standard of rationality. However it is clear that “rational choice” in this theory is based more on personal beliefs and individual perceptions at a particular moment, rather than actual risks at an objective level (O’Connor, 2005). Thus the risk of being apprehended and punished may be minimised within the individual’s mind, despite the objective likelihood that this will happen as a result of their behaviour.

In relation to the participation of individuals in terrorist activities, RCT provides an explanation for this behaviour based on the observation that “individuals join terrorist organizations when the utility of doing so is at least as good as that provided by their next best option” (Shapiro, 2005:4). The utility arises from their belief that they are doing what they (or their society) believe is right either in order to further group goals or to wreak revenge on a perceived oppressor, as well as any personal, social or monetary rewards that might accrue to them (Shapiro, 2005).

This choice to participate in terrorist activities and commit mass murders can be seen as rational in relation to the utility of the action. This is shown by the copycat effect. For example Dugan et al (2005) have demonstrated that successful plane hijacking are likely to lead to more attempts, whereas...
unsuccessful attempts and increased security measures decreased the number of hijackings. There is also the fact that mass murders (e.g. in schools and workplaces) are often the catalyst for more attempts being made in other similar locations, because other individuals perceive this as an effective method of resolving their problems, or making a statement (e.g. Terror at US schools, 2006; Duwe, 2005; Kapardis, 1989; Anon, 1998; Meloy, 2001). From a rational choice perspective, therefore, from the point of view of the perpetrator, mass murder works.

There is a widespread perception (in terrorist organizations and in the academic literature) that suicide terrorism also works. Pape (2003) for example lists many incidents that have been successful for terrorists in relation to furthering their cause. It is particularly seen as a weak or poor persons “best strategy in a highly technological era [as it] seems to have a high rate of success, possibly because of its suddenness, unpredictability, and uncontrollability” (Palermo, 2006:119). There is a logic and rational basis for this behaviour (Bloom, 2004; McConell & Pape, 2005; Madsen, 2005; Atran, 2004; Ganor, 2000; Pape, 2003; Pape, 2005). For example according to Pape’s database, between 1980 and 2001 suicide attacks accounted for 3% of all terrorist attacks, but 48% of total deaths due to terrorism (Pape, 2003:5). In addition to this, suicide terrorist campaigns during this period have been associated with gains for the terrorist’s political cause approximately 50% of the time (Pape, 2003:9). This compares favourably with a success rate of less than 30% for international military and economic coercion perpetrated by governments (Pape, 2003:9).

Terrorist organizations have often learnt from others. "Because of the high degree of publicity and media attention engendered by spectacular attacks [they] become familiar with what has worked and what has failed in other contexts (Bloom, 2004: 9). This is why “terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead” (Pape, 2003:3) as they are then able to publicise and spread their message. Therefore, from a rational choice perspective, terrorism works.

Some other useful theories focus on the evolutionary and physiological basis for criminal behaviour. For example, Maclean (1990) discusses the three mentalities of the brain and how different segments of the brain affect aggressive behaviour, and provides a very useful perspective from which to view aggression and murder in humans and animals. Quinsey (2002) provides a useful theoretical perspective on the evolutionary basis for violence, especially in relation to young male perpetrators. Burnett & Maruna (2004) and Walters (2002) also provide relevant information that assists in understanding the development of offending behaviour over the life cycle of the individual.

**Results**

**Research Design Issues**

1. **Population Sampling Techniques**

A fundamental goal of research (especially quantitative research) is to be able to generalise the results – that is, to say something reliable about a wider population on the basis of the findings in a particular study (de Vaus, 2002: 69). One major problem encountered by researchers of terrorism and mass murder relates to the reliability and validity of the population sampling techniques that are used, as they may lead to biased samples. Some of the issues related to offender samples include whether the subjects are convicted offenders of not, voluntary or involuntary subjects, and what will be the legal ramifications of admitting behaviours, how truthful they are, or if they are in denial? For example, the people who are willing to be interviewed for research purposes may be more moderate or less committed (which could be why they survived, rather than dying during the offence) than either those who would not participate or did not survive (Soibelman, 2004:188). Another issues that might effect the result of research is that the offenders may lie in order to fool the researchers, either to aggrandize themselves or their cause. Another important feature of these individuals is that they represent only...
those few offenders who have been accused, found guilty and incarcerated. Successful suicide bombers, and mass murderers killed during the commission of their offences (which may comprise the majority) are not available to be interviewed, and “martyr tapes” or suicide notes may be produced either under duress or again as a means of promoting themselves and their cause, rather than as an expression of their real feelings.

Subjects may also choose to lie, either to under-report or over-report, exaggerate or minimise their offence, depending on what they think the researcher wants from them, and how safe they feel in revealing the information. They may be influenced by the nature of the research, and who is asking the questions, and for what reason.

Another problem relates to the reliability of retrospective findings in research, and is important because much of what is known about terrorist acts and mass murder (e.g. incidence, details about the perpetrator and their intention) comes from retrospective studies. Generally prospective studies can provide a number of significant advantages over retrospective designs because they are often more rigorous, with less biased sample selection and better measurement of the natural history of a phenomenon. However prospective studies are not really viable in this kind of research because generally the offenders do not advertise their intentions before the offence. This does not mean that findings from retrospective studies should be disregarded, as they may be all that is available (Kendall-Tackett & Becker-Blease, 2004) but because of the uncertainties associated with retrospective research and the limited generalisability imposed by the sample selection methods, the results must be interpreted conservatively (Smith, 1999).

In many studies on multicide there are also often difficulties with the sample size of the population studied. Many studies are done with quite small populations. Soibelman (2004) and Mullen (2004) for example had only 5 individuals in their sample populations, and many other studies cite sample sizes of 10-20 individuals. The authors however generally recognize that this limits the generalisability of the results (e.g. Soibelman, 2004: 188). Those studies with larger sample sizes are often done with large databases, such as those compiled by Pape (2004) and Dewe (2004; 2005), but even these suffer because of the possibility that they are not necessarily totally comprehensive (which is acknowledged by Dewe in relation to his data collection methods). Schweizer (2000) and Bloom (2004) for example cite offences that are not listed in Pape’s study. This raises the question of whether Pape’s database is as comprehensive as he claims - has he missed these accidentally or did he purposely leave out instances that didn’t support his theory of causality?

2. Measurement Validity

Measurement validity is concerned with “whether a measure that is devised of a concept really does reflect the concept that it is supposed to be denoting” (Bryman, 2001:30). In relation to this study the research in relation to the effect of violence in the media on violent behaviour Freedman (1996:1) outlines a number of ways in which the measures used could be considered dubious. For example the researchers often measure what the subjects say they would do, rather than what they actually do, or they use laboratory-based rather than real-life situations. Also, as observed in the 1972 Report to the Surgeon-General “whether or not the use of physical force will be defined as violence depends upon one’s perspective and upon the context, as well as upon the nature of the act” (p. 30).

Published prevalence rates of mass murders in recorded statistics (usual criminal), are an inaccurate guide to actual prevalence rates because of the unknown rate of attempts that don’t fit within the sometimes quite restrictive definition of the offence (see Definitions above). For example in a recent spate of school based offences some would be included in the statistics for mass murder, while others would not, although it is clear from the reports that the fact that only a small number of people died was as a result of either an accident or because of individual bravery on the part of bystanders. The c. Toni Kennedy, 2007
motivation of the offenders was the same – only their “success-rate” was different (eg. “Two dead after school siege”; “Teenager kills school Principal”; “Girls executed in Paradise”). They are therefore only a measure of the reported offences that fit within the very strict definition of mass murder employed in academic studies, rather than of the less successful or unsuccessful offences, both of which are also important in relation to the motivation of the offender.

3. Internal Validity

Internal validity or credibility relates to the issue of causality. That is, “if we suggest that x causes y, can we be sure that it is x that is responsible for the variation in y and not something else that is producing an apparently causal relationship” (Bryman, 2001:30).

Causality is a very difficult area to establish in most areas of social and psychological research. One area that has frequently been studied in the literature on mass murder is the relationship between the use of violent media or computer games and the effect of an individual’s subsequent behaviour. This subject has caused much disagreement between the researchers, often because of their preconceived ideas, which are often evident in the design and interpretation of the results. For example, Kapardis (1989) in his study of a number of a number of offenders repeatedly reveals his biases in this area with statements such as “the impact of Rambo-like films on some vulnerable young minds points to the need to refuse classification to such violent films and to embark on a systematic education program about films in the context of violence in the wider society” (Kapardis, 1989:182). This is stated without any real supporting data that watching such movies led to the offences in question. Freedman (1996) on the other hand has extensively reviewed the effect of violent media on violent behaviour and concluded that although “television is an easy target for the concern about violence in our society [it is] a misleading one .. instead let us turn our attention to the obvious major causes of violence, which include poverty, racial conflict, drug abuse and poor parenting” (Freedman, 1996: 3). That is, because an individual who commits a mass murder may have viewed violent movies or television does not prove that this caused him to act violently, as his propensity for violence (or mental disorder) may have led to him prefer viewing this kind of material. This is supported by Haridakis’ research that concluded that “antecedents of media use – especially audience characteristics and viewing motivation – shape media use”, rather the other way around. (2003:12). In summary therefore, although x and y may co-exist in the same person, it does not necessarily prove that x causes y.

4. External Validity

External validity or transferability is concerned with the question of “whether the results of a study can be generalised beyond the specific research context” (Bryman, 2001:30). Freedman (1996) believes that, at least in the area of research into the effect of violence in the media, the researchers are so concerned with the laboratory research that they do not pay attention to results from the real world, which may contradict the laboratory results, and there is thus little external validity.

King et al (2004) studied the external validity of continually using undergraduate college students as participants in studies of psychological phenomena. It was thought that college samples drawn from psychology department subject pools may be disproportionately represented by psychology majors, which raised concerns that participant attributes and response tendencies might differ significantly from that of the average college student. However, they found that psychology majors did not differ significantly from other college students on any of the variables studied. Psychology department subject pools therefore would appear to provide participant samples that adequately represent the attributes and qualities of students within the broader college community. However how representative are they of the population as a whole? Eskridge (1986) found that college populations demonstrate deviant behaviour that is comparable with others in the general “law-abiding” society. From this
research it could be inferred that research on college populations could have good external validity, in relation to general deviant behaviour in society. However, it could have less validity in relation to offender populations. Also college populations may have little external validity in comparison to groups from lower socio-economic and educational groups in other measures of their behaviour.

5. Ecological Validity

This form of validity is concerned with “whether social scientific findings are applicable to people’s everyday natural social settings” (Bryman, 2001:31). As mentioned previously, the research on perpetrators of multicide is very likely to be biased to only those that survive (for whatever reason: accident, design or mismanagement) and that the results of the research on this sample may not reflect this group of offenders as a whole. That is, they may be less committed, less able etc.

6. Reliability

Reliability or dependability is concerned with whether the results of a study are repeatable. Research on terrorism and mass murder is difficult to be done reliably because of a number of the features of the research noted above, including small sample sizes, difficulty in ensuring the accuracy of the data (either because of reporting bias, inadequate data collection methods) and concern with the reliability of the self-reports of the study participants. This is particularly revealed in the research on the demographics of specific types of offenders. For example, some research on suicide bombers says that the important factors that lead them to commit these acts are because they are either mentally ill and/or mostly male, young, poor, uneducated with low self esteem and few prospects (eg. Palermo, 2006; Rho, 2006; Ganor, 2000) whereas other research cites many cases involving offenders who are well educated, socially and financially secure, female offenders who are often mainly motivated by a need to avenge someone, or a sense of anomie or other psychological and group factors (eg. Madsen, 2005; Atran, 2004; Soibelman, 2004)

Why Multicide?

A number of reasons have been advanced in the research and the popular media to explain the occurrence of multicide in relation to mass murder and terrorism. These reasons include mental illness, personality disorder, personality type, membership of particular types of group (religions, cult, ethnic), violence in the media and the effects of living in a post colonial society. These are similar to the explanations for all types of murders (suicide, monocide, paracide and multicide) (see: Macdonald, 1986; Nettler, 1982; Falk, 1990). For the purposes of this research it is therefore necessary to analyze the data further to understand the particular motivations that provoke mass murderers and terrorists to behave as they do, as opposed to others who commit other forms of multicide (e.g. serial killers, governments, felony related killers)

Mental Illness

Traditionally mass murder and terrorist acts have been seen as the result of mental illness on the part of the perpetrators. A common response to news of another school massacre or suicide bombing is that “they must be crazy to do such a thing”. Thus “pathologizing a violent act against us delegitimizes any traces of justification we may uncomfortably suspect underlies the act” (Miller, 2006b:257). Numerous studies have been conducted on both surviving perpetrators and the personal histories (through diaries, martyr tapes, interviews with friends and relatives) of those who have not survived. The researchers have often tried to find signs of mental illness. The most frequently investigated disorders include Axis I disorders such as paranoia, depression, psychosis and schizophrenia. However, in relation to mass murderers, although there have been particular individuals with clear signs of mental pathology (Macdonald, 1986), and there is a tendency in the media to frame mass murder as a mental health
problem (Duwe, 2005:68), with the exception of depression, most perpetrators have not been diagnosed either before or after the event with an Axis I disorder (Johnson, 2005; Kapardis, 1989). Although many high profile offences are committed by individuals who are mentally ill, as Duwe’s research has demonstrated, “the mass media present a distorted image of mass murder .. [with an] overemphasis placed on the most sensational and least representative mass killings” (Duwe, 2005:60). In reality the statistics related to mass murders demonstrate that they are mainly either familicides (a man killing his partner and children or a woman killing her children, generally either as a result of misplaced altruism or as a means of maintaining control over the family) or felony related (i.e. during the commission of another crime such as burglary) (Duwe, 2004). School, workplace and stranger mass murders are very much in the minority in that they comprised only 13% of the mass murders committed between 1966 and 1999 (Duwe, 2004:755).

Researchers in the area of terrorism have found that there is generally no causal connection between an individual’s mental health and their engagement in terrorist activities, although engaging in these activities may have a deleterious effect on an individual's mental health (Weatherston & Moran, 2003). In fact it has been noted by some researchers that “psychological strength, not weakness, may underlie the characters of the most effective terrorists” (Miller, 2006b: 257). Victoroff (2005) has extensively reviewed this topic and concluded from the evidence that “while terrorist groups are sometimes led by insane individuals, and a few terrorist acts might be attributed to unequivocally insane persons, terrorists rarely meet the psychiatric criteria for insanity” (Victoroff, 2005:12).

**PERSONALITY DISORDER**

A personality disorder is a defined as “a cluster of perceptual, emotional and behavioral traits which lie far outside the range and expectations of ordinary human experience and societal expectations. These characteristics normally commence in adolescence or early adulthood, are deep rooted and manifest themselves over a broad spectrum of personal and social situations. The prevalence of personality disorders lies between 10% and 13% of the general population. One third to one half of adults receiving psychiatric services suffer from these conditions. They have higher rates of separation, divorce, child custody proceedings, unemployment, homelessness, violence, incidence of self-harm, suicide, criminality, drug abuse, including alcohol abuse and hospitalization than the general population” (Keys & Lambert, 2002:162). They are known as Axis II disorders in the DSM-IV Classification (Victoroff, 2005:12) and are divided into 3 clusters (A,B & C) – see below for details (Bienenfeld, 2006). More than one disorders may co-exist within the one individual (Clark, 2005: 506; Masterson, 1981).

- **Cluster A (odd, eccentric)**
  - **Paranoid personality disorder**: a pervasive distrust and suspiciousness (eg. Belief that they are being exploited, others are untrustworthy, their partner is unfaithful)
  - **Schizoid personality disorder**: markedly detached from others with little desire for close relationships.
  - Schizotypal personality disorder: exhibit marked eccentricities of thought, perception, and behaviour

- **Cluster B (dramatic, emotional)**
  - **Antisocial personality disorder (sociopathy or psychopathy)**: display a pervasive pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others and the rules of society (eg.

---

c. Toni Kennedy, 2007
repeated violations of the law, pervasive lying and deception, physical aggressiveness, reckless disregard for safety of self or others, consistent irresponsibility in work and family environments, lack of remorse and empathy)

- Borderline personality disorder: a pervasive pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships, self-perception, and moods. Impulse control is markedly impaired.

- Histrionic personality disorder: excessive emotionality and attention-seeking behaviour, dramatic and often sexually provocative or seductive.

- Narcissistic personality disorder: grandiose and requiring admiration from others (e.g., exaggeration of their own talents or accomplishments, sense of entitlement, exploitation of others, lack of empathy, envy of others, arrogant, haughty attitude, authoritarian)

- Cluster C (anxious, fearful)

  - Avoidant personality disorder: a pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to rejection.

  - Dependent personality disorder: an excessive need to be taken care of that results in submissive and clinging behaviour, regardless of consequences.

  - Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder: markedly preoccupied with orderliness, perfectionism, and control. They lack flexibility or openness and are often scrupulous and inflexible about matters of morality, ethics, and values to a point beyond cultural norms.

There is some disagreement in the literature on the relationship between personality disorders and terrorism and mass murder. Based on an extensive review of the literature Victoroff (2005) concludes that as in the case with Axis I mental illnesses, although people with personality disorders may be among the ranks and the leadership of terrorist organizations, terrorists do not, by virtue of their political violence, necessarily have a personality disorder, as the terrorist organizations may be pro-social as well as antisocial in their intentions. (Victoroff, 2005:14). However, other authors have proposed that many members of such organizations do display characteristics of a number of these disorders (see: Lester et al, 2004).

The descriptions given of the past behaviour of offenders in Johnson’s (2005) study of familicides and Kapardis’s (1989) review Australian mass murderers indicate that personality disorders of various types are common among these offenders. Many offenders in the court system in general are often diagnosed as having a personality disorder (often by non-professionals), which has now, according to Ruffles (2004), become a synonym for evil. However, again it must be emphasized that not all mass murders are committed by people for antisocial reason, as it may be done as a result of misplaced altruism.

BUT, although is clear that many terrorists and mass murderers have personality disorders, not all people with personality disorders become mass murderers or terrorists – many go on to become very successful businessmen.

**Personality Type**

There has been much attention in the research on identifying which types of people are most likely to join terrorist groups, and commit mass murders. Some of the features that have been identified include:

- Alienation from society, anomie, boredom. This may result from having too much
provided for them personally, combined with a concern about social justice for others in society. This is characteristic of the middle class university students who have always swelled the ranks of the politically-based counter-culture groups like Baader-Meinhoff, the Weatherman, and the Red Brigade (Flaherty, 2003). The movie “Fight Club” (Fincher, 1999) gives a good illustration of this type of individual (see: Carroll, 2003 for a discussion of this film). This type of group may also include individuals who feel that they are missing out on the good things in society, and are looking for others to blame for this situation. This is a characteristic of many hate-based groups such as the skinheads (Blazak, 2001). The dynamics and recruiting practices of such groups, and their appeal to individuals, is demonstrated very well in the film “American History X” (Kaye, 1998). Individuals of this type who commit mass murders often do it as part of a felony related incident or as a means of making a statement about their cause.

Susceptibility to cults and charismatic leaders. Although as Hassan (1988) notes anyone may become caught up in a cult, especially when they are run by charismatic leaders, there are individuals with certain personality traits that are particularly vulnerable, and recruiting is usually aimed at these types of people. That is (see: Hassan, 1988:43),

- **Thinkers**, who approach life with their minds, and who may be convinced to participate if other intellectuals also support the group. They often become leaders within the group;
- **Feelers**, who lead with their emotions, and react to a loving caring approach by other group members, as they want and need to be accepted by the group because they feel unloved or not accepted in either their social or family situation;
- **Doers**, who are very action oriented and want to change the world to make it a better place. They need to be convinced that only this particular group has the best method for effecting the desired changes in society; and
- **Believers**, who are spiritually oriented, and are looking for spiritual meaning in their lives. They tend to recruit themselves to the group.

Weak identity formation – these individuals they need a leader or philosophy to give them direction in their lives. This is characteristic of many young people who commit these offences (Flaherty, 2003; Marks, 1992; Reynolds, 2004; Blazak, 2001). However many terrorists and mass murderers have extremely strong personalities, know what they want to achieve and will do anything to achieve it. These are the individuals who often become the leaders and/or the enforcers for the terrorist organizations (Bloom, 2004; Atran, 2004) or who commit felony related mass murders.

*BUT, it is important to note that not all individuals who exhibit these features will become terrorists or mass murderers*

**Group processes**

Membership in a particular group may be an important reason why individuals commit terrorist acts. This is particularly so with membership in a group led by someone with a personality disorder and where the group is designed specifically to act according to the leader’s wishes. Collins (1991) and Hassan (1988) give a good illustration of the methods used to maintain group solidarity within such groups. Genkin (2005) also identifies many of the techniques used to maintain group solidarity in terrorist organizations, which have many features in common with Hassan’s work. That is:
➢ a utopian view of the world - that the world can be made perfect,
➢ obedience to authority and absolute loyalty to the group or leader,
➢ suppression of dissent, emphasis on the need for sacrifice for the greater cause,
➢ demonization and dehumanization of opponents,
➢ the burning of other social bridges outside the group (e.g. family & friends),
➢ the institution of mutual responsibility bonds,
➢ the utilization of rewards and penalties that promotes cohesion within the group,
➢ the utilization of symbols, rituals and ceremonies,
➢ reinforcement of ideological commitment,
➢ subordination of individual interests to the organizations interest,
➢ instilment of a sharp insider/outsider boundary,
➢ instilment of a point of no return in the mind of the group member,
➢ maintenance of a perception of unanimity,
➢ maintenance of a perception of constant activity that serves the goals of the organization,
➢ interpretation of setbacks and opposition to the group as a need for greater cohesion,
➢ selective focus on information (i.e. focus on success and downplay failures).

Many of the features of these group processes are illustrated in a humorous way in the film “Monty Python’s Life of Brian” (Jones, 1979). These features may exist either in a group existing within a wider society (such as the Moonies) or in the whole society itself, however that society is defined. For example, by location, ethnicity, language and/or religion (e.g. Palestine, Tamil, Islamic). Groups/cults typically consist of one or more of the following types: Charismatic Leader, Philosopher / Intellectual, Criminal (the “Enforcer”) and a Follower (who is looking for meaning) – these mirror the groups as described by Hassan (1988) in relation to recruiting.

One of the most important features of terrorist and cults groups is that the leaders don’t commit terrorist acts or become involved in the day-to-day unpleasant activities of the group themselves, but rather use their followers as “weapons” or agents in the fight against the enemy (Hassan, 1988; Genkin, 2005). This is especially the case in suicide terrorism.

*BUT, not all terrorists and mass murderers are part of a group – some people choose to act on their own, for their own reasons – they in effect are a group of one, having within their own psyche the same fortress mentality outlined above (e.g. the Unabomber). It is also clear that not all groups, societies or cults commit mass murders or acts of terrorism – many are able to effect the desired changes in society using non-violent means (e.g. Gandhi).

Violence in the society and the media

Although it has been noted that observing violence (real or fantasy) may lead to violent behaviour in susceptible people, and that many individuals who commit violent acts enjoy watching violent media, there is no clear evidence that watching violence in the media leads to violent behaviour in the real world (Freedman, 1996; Television and Growing Up, 1972; Meyer, 2005).

Violence may be normalized and justified in some societies and some eras (e.g. in time of war) but again not all individuals engage in violent acts. Conscientious objectors have also been a feature of...
many times and places, despite the pressures placed on them to conform and fight the enemy as societies often believe that “heroes are people who are willing to take on the responsibility of murder when it has to be done” (Orman, 2005:130).

*BUT, although being surrounded by violence either in the media or society may influence a person who is already predisposed to commit violent acts, not all terrorists and mass murders are either exposed to violent media or grow up in a violent society.*

**Postcolonialism**

Many current terrorist activities and organizations can be traced to the situation in the postcolonial 20th century (e.g. Middle East & the Muslim Brotherhood, Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers). Mass murder and genocides have also occurred as the result of effects of colonization (See: Girard, 2005 for an account of this in Haiti). However, mass murder and terrorism have been used in many times and places for many different reasons, as a means of influencing events and people, that has had nothing to do with colonization. History and mythology are full of examples of suicide bombers, even to the extent of having labels such as “Samsonic Suicide” and “Suicide by Devotion” (see: Preti, 2006 for details). In World War II Kamikaze attacks inflicted the heaviest losses included in any naval campaign. In classical Europe & the Middle East an assailant’s immolation by suicide with the intent to cause damage to a hostile target was often reported. (Preti, 2006).

Mass killings by individuals have also been reported in many cultures, to the extent that some words currently used in English arose from these almost culturally acceptable behaviours. For example in the Malaysian archipelago there was a recognized phenomenon called Amuck or Amok that described individuals who embarked on spontaneous mass murders (Mullen, 2004:311) – they were said to “run amok”. In Viking communities Berserks were men who at certain times were seized by a wild fury to murder and destroy – they were often found useful in combat (Macdonald, 1986:139). This has led to the phrase “to go berserk”

*BUT, although an experience with a colonizing power, or the aftermath of colonization, may lead to mass murder and/or terrorist activities, they are not a necessary condition for these activities to happen.*

**Religion/Ethnicity**

Many terrorist groups are focused on religious or ethnic differences, especially in reaction to perceived repression based on these differences. Currently there is much focus in the media and academia on the roots of Islamic terrorism in particular (see for example: Schwartz, 2003; Eteraz, 2006; Langman & Morris, 2002; Stenhouse, 2006; Jones, 2005; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Durie, 2006; Taheri, 1987; Souryal, 2004; Gray, 2004; Gray, 2003). This is in response to the most recent acts of terrorism committed all around the world by militant Islamists.

Although it is clear that Islamic texts can be interpreted in such a way to encourage followers to attack the Dar-al-Harb (the abode or country or war – where Islam doesn’t rule) (see: Stenhouse, 2006), this is only one interpretation of the many that have been, and continue to be made by scholars from the many varieties of Islam that exist in the world (Schwartz, 2003; Taheri, 1987). However, texts from all faiths and political movements can be used or interpreted selectively as a way to justify the acts the individuals who wish to behave in a certain way. For example, the Christian Bible says in Exodus 20:13 that “thou shalt not kill” but in Exodus 22:18 that “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” – either text has been interpreted selectively according to the requirements and preferences of the time, either to oppose war or to excuse the burning of witches.
There are also many other groups committing acts of terrorism and/or mass murder that are based on religions other than Islam. Kamat & Mathew (2003) detail the violence that has been committed by adherents of Hindu Nationalist groups. Also it should be born in mind that many “religious” movements are really more concerned with nationalist/ethnic aims, of which religion is only a part of the struggle (eg. Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement in China detailed in Wang, 2003) or the Islamic insurgency in Thailand (see: Thailand Islamic Insurgency, 2006) or the struggle for Tamil independence in Sri Lanka (Gunasingam, 1999).

In the 19th and 20th centuries terrorist groups were more the result of nationalist and or political movements. Communism and Anarchism (Wardlaw, 1982) were often the basis of many of these political movements (eg. Red Brigade, Weatherman, Baader-Meinhof) and there are some groups that continue to the present day with this agenda (see: Wrighte, 2001 for an example in the Mexican Popular Revolutionary Army). Nationalist organizations, often based on a narrow interpretation of a particular ethnic/religious/language group have committed many terrorist actions (e.g. IRA, ETA) as have many hate-based groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. There have also been a number of mass murders committed against various groups on similar grounds – that one group is better and the other is not worthy enough to live (e.g. Jews in World War II, Armenians in 1915). Individual massacres have also been justified by the perpetrators on the basis that they are getting back at the “bullies” or other oppressors (Kapardis, 1989)

**BUT**, although many groups and individuals have committed terrorist acts and mass murders using religious/ethnic/class or other similar justifications to either revenge themselves against an oppressor, or to force a stronger power to accede to their demands (Pape, 2003), not all such groups use these methods.

**Discussion**

This research has been based on an examination of the literature on homicide, particularly as it relates to multicide of the mass murder and terrorist types. An attempt has been made to discover a common link between these types of murder, in order to distinguish the motivations for these actions, from that of other murderers. In order to do this an examination was done of a number of the common attributions that have been made for why individuals commit or connive in these acts. These include mental illness, personality disorder, personality type, membership of particular types of group (religions, cult, ethnic), violence in the media and the effects of living in a post colonial society. However, none of these explanations have proven sufficient to explain the reason for this behaviour in all cases, although together they contribute to the overall explanation. For the purposes of this research it has been necessary therefore to analyze the data further to understand the particular motivations that provoke mass murderers and terrorists to behave as they do, as opposed to those who commit other forms of multicide (e.g. serial killers, governments, felony related killers). This analysis of the research has resulted in the following propositions:

1. That using the number of victims as a means of classifying types of murders (and their motives) is not a useful method, as the actual number of victims killed may be due to circumstances outside of the control or the intention of the offender (eg. actions of bystanders, effectiveness of weapon etc)

2. Any crime, including murder, will only be possible if there is the means, a motive and the opportunity (Rogers, 2001)

3. All individuals are a product of a particular combination of primary and secondary influences (internal/personal and external/social) which will effect how they behave in a particular situation (see Appendix 1: Intentional Murder Model (Stage 1))
4. Certain combinations of adverse primary and secondary influences make a person more likely to commit murder as a means of solving a problem or achieving their aims – the more influences present, the more likely a person is to commit the offence

5. The type of murder committed will depend on the amount of retribution that is to be exacted (see Appendix II: Retribution Triad). Retribution is defined as “requital according to merits or deserts, especially for evil .. the distribution of rewards and punishments in a future life” (Delbridge, 2001) which encapsulates the concepts of reward, revenge and righteousness

6. Mass murder and terrorism (including murder-suicide, assassination and spree) all fit within the Retribution Triad

7. Other forms of murder may exhibit some or all of the features in the Retribution Triad, but the features of the Triad are not all necessary in order to explain the crimes (as is the case with mass murder and terrorism)

**Conclusion**

This purpose of this research was to attempt to understand why individuals either commit or connive in multicide through mass murder or terrorism, and if there is a link between these types of murder. This link was found, although unlike much of the literature, it is not based on the number of victims murdered, but is focused on the motivations of the murderers. A common linkage was found between these behaviours based on the degree of retribution involved in their actions – that is, whether it lay directly within the Retribution Triad, or was tangentially related to it.. The features of the Retribution Triad include revenge, reward and righteousness of the cause (group or individual). These features relate to the nature of the rational choice theory as they are very much the interpretation of the individual involved in committing the offence that it is a rational one, based on the situation they are in. That is, they are making a rational choice that they are achieving retribution, either for themselves or others by committing these acts. They are balancing the scales either by the act itself or by coercing others to act as they want them to. This choice may not seem rational to others outside of the group, or society, or the individuals own mind, but the point is that to the actor involved the act is rational in order to achieve their form of retribution in that time and place, according to their social construction of the cause of the act of retribution, it’s justification, and the form it should take. If “terrorism is the war of the poor, and war is the terrorism of the rich” as suggested by Peter Ustinov then mass murder is the terrorism of the individual, with the aim of achieving retribution for wrongs suffered
APPENDIX I: Intentional Murder Model (Stage 1)

Primary Influences

Secondary Influences: Internal (Personal)  Secondary Influences: External (Social)

Inhibition/Elimination of Conscience

Murder

Intentional Murder Model Stage 2
Primary Influences

- **Genes / Physiological potential**
  - Genetic predisposition (eg. alcoholism, mental illness, personality disorder)
  - Genetic mutations
  - Physical potential (eg. intelligence level, prenatal nutrition & care, possible brain damage resulting from birth)

- **Physical environment (e.g. injury, poor nutrition, inadequate care)**
  - Physical/mental/sexual abuse and/or neglect \(\rightarrow\) brain damage, mental illness, personality disorder
  - Accidents & injury \(\rightarrow\) brain damage, mental illness, personality disorder

- **Social environment (family/societal values & norms)**
  - Manichean world view (good vs evil)
  - The end justifies the means (especially in relation to violence)
  - Utopianism – the world could be perfect if only …
  - “The people” are more important than individuals
  - “They” (the outsiders) are out to get “us” and we must protect ourselves at any cost
  - Oppressors and transgressors against us must be punished, according to their deserts (as we judge them)
**Secondary Influences: Internal/Personal**

**A. Extremes: Too High or Too Low**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self control</td>
<td>Disciplined, single-minded</td>
<td>Low control of anger, frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power needs</td>
<td>Need to dominate</td>
<td>Need to be dominated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy, Emotion</td>
<td>Will do anything to help others</td>
<td>No feeling about others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about self/group</td>
<td>Superiority complex, more deserving than others</td>
<td>Feel undervalued, victimized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about the world</td>
<td>Utopian, a perfect world is possible</td>
<td>World is a rejecting, threatening place, there is no opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Able to cope with privation, persecution</td>
<td>Unable to cope with problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Secondary Influences: Internal/Personal**

**B. Specific**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive inflexibility</td>
<td>Rigid, authoritarian, fanatical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>Psychosis, depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality type</td>
<td>Idealistic, determined, sensitive to insult, proud, manipulative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality disorder</td>
<td>Paranoid, narcissistic, antisocial, borderline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age – developmental state</td>
<td>Identity formation weak – susceptible to group pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral preferences</td>
<td>Novelty seeking, drug/alcohol abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive style</td>
<td>Blame, hate, revenge, good vs evil (Manichean)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Religious, political, cult, utopian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Secondary Influences: External/Societal**
### Characteristic Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pressure or support</td>
<td>• Group/social/peer/family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Stressful events (real or imagined)   | • Critical event (death, divorce, revolution)  
• Ongoing (abuse, repression, bullying, under-employment, underemployment, poverty, family breakdown, low status)  |
| Rewards/Incentives (real or imagined)| • Increased fame/status/money (for self or family)  
• Heaven for self/family or Utopia on Earth for all  
• The message (sending or getting attention for it)  
• Efficacy – evidence that it works!  
• Power over others – removing obstacles  
• Existential (relief from anomie, boredom) |
| Family/social norms                   | • Rebellion against or contempt for  
• Conformity with  
• Perceived importance of differences between groups (ethnic, religious, status, social class) |

N.B. Primary and secondary influences coalesce within individuals and effect the ways in which they act in response to outside stimuli. These influences will vary within every individual, and at different parts of their life cycle, which accounts for the various reactions by different individuals to the same stimuli.
Appendix 2: Intentional Murder Model (Stage 2)

MURDER

Intentional Murder Model (Stage 1)

Paracide | Suicide | Monocide | Multicide
---|---|---|---
Means | Motive | Opportunity | Opportunity

Retribution Triad

Personal / Altruistic
Serial
Criminal / Financial
Military / Legal (execution)

Means
Motive
Opportunity

Mass (school, work, stranger, familicide)
Spree
Terrorism (religious, political)
Assassination (religious, political)
Reward

Retribution Triad

Revenge

Righteousness of the cause
**Retribution Triad**

- **Revenge**
  - Abuse of self or others (real or imagined)
  - Invasion, Injustices

- **Reward**
  - Financial, fame, status
  - Existential (relief from anomie, boredom, despair)
  - Send a message to the world
  - Utopia in this life or the next (heaven, a better world, reincarnation into a better life)

- **Righteousness (of the Cause or the Individual)**
  - Mental disorder (psychosis, depression, delusions, drug induced, personality disorder)
  - Justifying texts (religious, political)
  - Historical justification
BIBLIOGRAPHY


c. Toni Kennedy, 2007


c. Toni Kennedy, 2007


