A number of experts in terrorist studies have claimed that post September 11 we have witnessed a new era of security policy, legislation and practice internationally. At least three new facts drive these policies. Terrorists are no longer seen to be acting alone. The attribution of the New York attacks to a single organization taught us that terrorist powerful networks do exist. These are not mere cells hidden in caves, but well-funded, highly organized entities that can stand up against some of the world’s most powerful nations. In fact, most of the times, they appear to be one step ahead of national and internationally intelligence. Second, the use of weapons of mass destruction is possible including nuclear and biological weapons. If they can be obtained, then there is no guarantee that they will not be used. Third, terrorism as an act cannot be confined by time, place or nation.

Nevertheless, as we fight the attitudes and world views that lead to radical and extreme action, the words of James Madison come to mind: “Perhaps it is a universal truth that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to provisions against danger, real or pretended from abroad” (Letter of James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, May 13 1798). How true these words sound when considering the last decade's amendments to anti-terrorism legislation even in countries thought to be "liberal" and "progressive".
I argue that the road that we have taken for security policy and practice internationally is leading to further division and the erosion of our European societal values.

This is by no coincidence. Europe is in a democratic deficit perpetuated by a number of challenges such as the economic downturn, fears of security, nationalism and the continuous marginalisation of the disempowered. Our international society is becoming more polarised than ever, while the "them" (criminals - terrorists) and "us" (victims) rhetoric dominates political speeches and media representations (Gavrielides, 2016).

Using tools such as the Good Lives Model, positive and acculturation psychology and positive youth development models, I set off to explore an alternative vision for social cohesion.

As I explore these new avenues, I ask:

1) What is the role of restorative justice?
2) What are the limitation of restorative justice?
3) Why do human rights need to be at risk or in opposition to anti-terrorism legislation and policy?
4) What are the bridges between human rights practice and anti-radicalisation projects?
5) What is the role of society in breeding extremism?
6) What is my role in the fight against extremism and hate?
7) What is your role?

I cannot imagine a world where our sense of justice is measured by how many offenders we incarcerate or indeed how many terrorists we punish and kill. I understand that priority for public security can overrule a restorative justice response. But the many examples whereby communities came together to heal through a restorative ethos reassured me that we are not merely an international society of punishment and control.

The truth is that our communities will apply restorative justice whether our governments chose to endorse or fund it. For example, in the latest Paris terrorist attacks, the French government was swift by declaring a “war on terror” and by putting a ban on public gathering. And yet, what followed was unprecedented. On 11 January 2016, thousands of people from France, Europe and internationally gathered to march against what they saw as a “war on liberties”. Their slogan “Je suis Charlie” showed that there is solidarity and indeed a shared feeling of community and ownership in what happened. It is true that this demonstration did not involve any encounter between victims and offenders and yet its impetus goes at the core of restorative justice and human rights. It focused on the positive values of the affected communities and on what binds these communities together irrespective of faith, nationality and economic interests. Follow up interviews with the killers’ relatives (and other members of the Muslim community) showed that they have found the demostration to be the most inclusive and constructive act that made them feel part of the solution and no longer the enemy. “The accent was on what unites and not on what divides. We now go a step further and wonder whether a policy inspired by restorative
social ethics could contribute to a decrease in terrorism” (Walgrave, 2016).

The Paris demonstration reminded me that the forgotten victim in all terrorist attacks is the community and with it our humanity. But there is no effort to heal these victims who in fact get re-victimised by the follow up “get tough” policies. Every time there is a new terrorist attack, the immediate reaction of politicians, criminal justice agents and the media is to declare war against the terrorists and call for special meetings to toughen up immigration rules, security policies and protocols. Only they forget that ‘war’ by definition should have a time and geographical limit. Terrorism does not understand these barriers.

And I have to ask: what will it take for society to finally raise the mirror of responsibility and look well into its reflection? Every time I look into this mirror, I see nothing but myself and a thousand of other fellow citizens. We are the real architects of the social fabric that generates the extremist ideologies, which then gradually corrupt universal values such as tolerance and the respect of life, dignity and brotherhood. The extremist ideology that leads those young men, men and women to act inhumane is not an alien virus of unknown origin. It is a product of our way of living.

Sharing responsibility and the ability to look inside also made me ask whether a public debate and a restorative dialogue for responsibility-taking and reconciliation might indeed be more fruitful than yet another "war on terror" that could take more freedoms away from every-day people including those who are most vulnerable such as those in hospitals, care homes, foster care and yes ... prisons.
With this programme, I hope I get to work with as many people as possible to push the boundaries of restorative justice and human rights, challenge their movements, learn and educate. There is a long road before we can safely claim that restorative justice (through its ethos and practices) can render measurable outcomes for individuals at risk of radicalisation. But the seeds have been planted. I also believe that there is more to be gained by engaging the values and practices of human rights for the prevention of extremism and hate crime rather than view them as a hindrance. Bridges must be built if we are to change the course of events and the building up of further division and walls.

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**Project Publications & Public Speaking (updated regularly)**

ASEM 18th Informal Seminar "Human Rights and Prevention of Violent Extremism", Indonesia, Nov 18


Gavrielides, T. (9-10 May 2017), The terrorist within & restorative justice, Conflict in Europe: Meeting the challenge IIRP Conference, Dublin, Ireland


