Abstract: The article tries to explain suicide missions of Islamic extremism. The sociological routine of explaining actions by external attribution of causal forces (poverty, oppression) is avoided and substituted by a system-theoretical approach. This approach allows internal attributions while constructing conflict systems of the Near (and middle) East with global reach. It further allows to differentiate ‘inner motives’ and communication, which refers to ‘vocabularies of motive’. These vocabularies are the core of conflict-systems, which consist of communications structuring a difference between system and environment and producing a central code of retaliation. Actors and their motives are rather by-products of these systems than the other way around. Eventually authenticity is proposed as a general frame of reference opposing all forms of oppression and corruption. An evolutionary result of this contagious frame is the spreading of more or less extreme protest movements experiencing authenticity by searching for it. Suicide missions will be explained as an improbable but ‘normalized’ effect of religiously escalated ‘vocabularies of motive’. These allow a paradoxical expiation by taking one’s life for ‘the cause’.

1. Introduction

In the Western World we puzzle about suicide missions as they challenge our notion of a ‘fulfilled’ life as being at the same time a long-lasting life. Suicide is something lingering in the dark holes of western culture and suicide missions by Palestinians, members of ‘al-Qaida’, the Taliban etc. do not correspond to any institutionalized legitimation for suicide. But, suicide missions, which are publicly attributed to religious reasons and/or poverty and political repression, pose difficult explanatory questions in the Arab World too where religion counts for a lot, but suicide is simultaneously delegitimized culturally. Under such conditions, suicide missions emerge as enigma (Elster 2006). The central aim of this article is to solve just that enigma.

In political and academic communication suicide missions are frequently attributed to poverty or personal irrationality. In order to avoid oversimplification (see Maleckova 2005) through simple external attributions, this article approaches the phenomenon with the help of Sociological Systems Theory as a main cornerstone (Japp and Kusche 2008). Systems Theory interprets such external attributions as means for different observers with different interests to reduce social complexity (Luhmann 1995a, 165-66). Thereby, external attributions often carry latent functions which may be more important than their doubtful explanatory value. For instance, it is a conspicuous matter that conventional development policies need this kind of

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external attributions like poverty in order to legitimate their programs. The same applies to presupposed lacks of education, political participation etc. These factors may all play a role with respect to suicide missions – but in which way exactly? Systems Theory opens up two ways of explaining the enigma of suicide missions: Firstly it distinguishes – against the sociological mainstream – between inaccessible individual motives on the one side and socially institutionalized ‘vocabularies of motive’ (Mills 1940) on the other side. It separates thinking and acting (see also Weick 1995). This allows for circumventing the motivational pitfalls of action theory that equates communicated motives with in fact unidentifiable mental states. Secondly, because mental states are inaccessible for sociologists (as well as for any other observer) Systems Theory focuses on recursive communication producing social systems (Luhmann 1995a, Ch. 5), revealing the inner logic and connectivity of the systems. Thus, in the case of terrorism (with the means of suicide missions) we turn away from mainstream analysis focusing on externally propelled attributions (like poverty or economic and political deprivation) to internal attributions, e.g. blame to ‘US-Imperialism’ or the religious apostasy of home political leaders. These internal attributions belong to the recursive communication constructing the system; they secure the distinction between the system and its environment by discriminating between attributions to the system and those to the environment (Luhmann 1995a, Ch. 5). With this turn from external to internal attributions suicide missions appear as parts (structural components) of social systems and not as knee-jerked effects of (attributed) external causes (Smelser 1971, McAdams 1982 as a still valid critique).2

The specific form of such social systems are conflict systems (Japp 2007a). Conflict systems do not focus explicitly on a specific societal function (like binding decisions in the case of politics), but often they carry hidden functions. Identity formation (individual and collective) under circumstances of basic insecurity may be one of them (Kaldor 2013, Waever 2009), finding authenticity in a world of uncertainty may be another (Atran 2006, Japp 2003). In a theory of the society conflicts contribute to the society’s ‘immune system’; by indicating dangers they serve to stabilize society (Luhmann 1995a, 369-77). But these (or other) functions are rarely made explicit in conflict systems, rather their primary communicative reference is communication between opponents or enemies, who work out a contradiction, for instance between liberal standards of religious freedom and contradicting standards of Islam.

A second cornerstone of the article is the connection between a Systems Theory of Risk and suicide missions. Here it is the difference between risk and danger that helps to differentiate the strategic planners and the perpetrators themselves. Often this difference is overlooked, thereby indicating that risk and danger are equivalent with respect to something dangerous
(Beck 2002, 2007). With this blending of the distinction between risk and danger a blending of strategic and intuitive action goes hand in hand. In the context of suicide mission this implies intruding in the mental mind of actors to distinguish between groups that are operating strategically (the ‘Masterminds’) and groups operating more intuitively (the perpetrators). Systems Theory argues that risk is not a feature objectively associated with dangerous objects or developments (Beck 2007, pass.) but a special mode of defining, that is observing decisions. When observing something as a risk one attributes possible (often negative) future effects, and retrospectively, effects to a specific (risky) decision and not to external causes (dangers).

Systems Theory thus distinguishes between self-attributed risks (the system) on the one hand and externally attributed dangers on the other (the environment). Both attributions are ways to simplify an non-transparent presence as the outcome of decisions. Self-attributing a decision as risk also means that one assumes responsibility for possible negative outcomes. In contrast, external attribution may involve blaming others for those results (Douglas 1992). In risk research, this distinction between risk and danger is particularly relevant for explaining conflicts between decision-makers and those who are affected by the decisions but not involved in the decision process.

This article aims at showing the potential of this frame of reference in exploring the interpretive scripts of planners and perpetrators of religious terrorist acts like suicide missions (Juergensmeyer 2008, Ch. 6 and 2001, Ch. 8, 11) and suggests that suicide missions imply risks for strategic planners and interpretive dramas on questions of how to avoid risks because risks always imply alternatives. Management of alternatives, taking risks, is the business of the ‘Masterminds’ (Holmes 2006), not of the perpetrators. These have to blind their mind against alternatives to the ultimate act of killing oneself. Perpetrators have to find a way which signifies a suicide mission as something basically necessary, something which cannot tolerate alternatives as reflections about alternatives could undermine the necessary commitment.

The general point of this argument may be seen in system’s communication about (risky) decisions in contrast to external attributions to a potentially dangerous environment. Furthermore it points us to the interpretive drama in the communication between the ‘masterminds’ and the perpetrators and within themselves. This drama works out religiously framed (Snow 1986) suicide missions. While the masterminds might consider suicide missions as a strategic option (with associated risks), suicide missions need to be communicated toward the perpetrators as necessities without alternatives (e.g. as reaction to an external danger). Hence, not only practically (as mental minds are inaccessible), but also analytically religious motives...
need to be distinguished from the communication of these motives. The weight lies on ‘claiming religious motives’ (Atran 2006), not on presupposing motives which nobody can know, not even the (virtual) perpetrator. Thus psychological theories of irrational (Elster 2006) or unbalanced behaviour (Tibi 2012) could be made unnecessary.

In developing such system’s theoretical perspective on religiously framed terrorism and suicide missions, the next section will elaborate on the connection between social systems and attributions (2). The main point is, that most explanations of terrorism recur to external attribution of an external observer. This is problematic, because often the process of attributing a cause is taken at face value and the control over the act of attributing is lost. This can be avoided by looking at the internal attribution of a social conflict system which uses attributions for reducing complexity, system development and its maintenance. The next step refers to the insight that social systems do not consist of motives – and also not of motivated actions – but of communicated motives (3). Thinking and acting are separated and only communication binds them together by instructing thoughts as well as enabling action. Actions are not driven by motives of an actor – this is ‘only’ an attribution which refers to ‘vocabularies of motives’ (the third cornerstone of the article) which are used by communication. These communications are directed by their recursive connectivity which is producing and constrained by a social system – in our case a conflict system. In a more concrete manner, it will be shown how a conflict system – the system which confronts western fundamentalist secularism against eastern religious fundamentalism – constructs itself with the help of a vocabulary of motives which provides both sides with respective retaliatory descriptions of their actions (4). Following these arguments, the distinction between risk and danger will be used in order to describe the putative orientations of action and the respective constraints of Atta and his group (5). The main point is a drama of constructing motives which bypass the uncertainty of risky decisions and substitutes such decisions by a perspective of danger. This perspective allows external attributions of guilt from within. Furthermore, this argument highlights that generalizing economic and political protest and channeling them into religious motives of protest coincides with a collective search for authenticity (6). Authenticity is the other side of apostasy or hypocrisy and is easily ‘discovered’ by protesting against all forms of corruption and religious apostasy. In the last chapter (7) this ‘metaframe’ of (missing) authenticity is connected with the relaxation of internal bindings in modern society and a respective ‘search for authenticity’. This search is contagious insofar as the mass media and the networks of putative perpetrators (and their masterminds) all contribute to cumulative effects of protest
communication channeled into complex conflict systems. In short, this article sheds new light on the ‘enigma’ of suicide missions by coupling Sociological Systems Theory with the distinction of risk and danger and by focussing both perspectives to ‘vocabularies of motive’.

2. Social systems, attributions and descriptions of motives

Building on the sketchy frame of reference introduced above, this section aims at demonstrating two points. First, Sociological Systems Theory is an appropriate choice for explaining suicide missions with religious background and world-wide reach because instead of externally attributing causes it directs us towards the internal attribution (and communication) of motives constituting and stabilizing systems of religiously framed terrorism. Economic misery, political repression and ethnic-religious confrontations are prominent causal factors of global terrorism. Authors like Crenshaw, Waldmann, Riesebrodt, Tibi, Kaldor and Huntington and many more refer to these factors. The question, which is posed by these authors, is the question of the origin, the deeper reason of new forms of global conflicts. In most cases a causal scheme is presupposed which itself is not reflected. These schemes serve as starting points for causal attributions. Difficulties with these attributions lead to more complex attributions mobilizing more causal factors. Bjorgo (2005) distinguishes structural, catalytic and motivational factors with increasing specificity. Crenshaw (2003) argues that the ‘primary cause of terrorism is the existence of grievances among a subgroup of a larger population such as an ethnic minority discriminated against by the majority’ (94). Typically such arguments allow causal attributions and some complexity by additional (demographic, cultural, motivational etc.) causes. Terrorism is then an effect of attributed causes. The same applies to ‘lack of political participation’, ‘elite disaffection’ and so on (see Bjorgo, pass.). The more factors are added, the more ambiguous the causal relation and the more contingent the analytical exercise become. Causes (and effects) are dependent on contingent observers. Always other causes of the same effect and other effects of the same causes are possible. Eventually causes and effects may overlay mutually – up to complete non-transparency. Why should poverty plus the insight that Israeli occupation policy contributes to this poverty determine a Palestinian into becoming a terrorist? Could it not be the identity-consolidating attraction of the social movement and its pressure on the individual (Merari 2005) which enables terrorism? Or a generalized readiness to protest which becomes active by more or less insignificant events? Attributions which support political programs (poverty, democracy, education) are self-evident in a pragmatic-political context which is used by most descriptions of terrorism. But it is also evident that these descriptions deal with attributions activated by observers who could
always attribute otherwise (Luhmann 1992a). When this – not very original – argument is
developed and differentiated a point emerges that excludes ‘ultimate reasons’ or ‘root causes’
beyond communicative attributions. These, however, are unavoidable. The point is to observe
how an observer (a scientist, the media, politics or the movement itself) attributes. This im-
plies a turn from the what to the how of the processes, not taking attributions at face value but
turning to the observer who attributes. This includes ourselves as observers who attribute
causes and the system of interest which enforces internal attributions. Attributions are un-
avoidable because they reduce complexity by constructing selective causalities. The point here
is, that it is decisive if external or internal attributions are made use of as the latter help to
produce a social system and the former are part of its environment to which it adapts.

The second point made in this section is, that systems theory follows a ‘communicative
turn’, which leads to interpretations of actors and their motives as constructions of com-
munication and not the other way around.11 The conflict between Islamic fundamentalism and
the Western World (of liberal regimes with their own fundaments) should be seen as a system
– as a conflict-system – which unfolds the actions and their motives of terrorist actors as well
as of their enemies.12 These actors emerge in the wake of system formation and nobody can
know what they are thinking. Psychic systems and social systems are – in the perspective of
Systems Theory – strictly separated. Therefore the ‘real motives’ that have driven – for exam-
ple – the perpetrators of 9/11 cannot be known. Furthermore, the perpetrators themselves
probably had only an elusive imagination of what they were doing (Holmes 2006). Highly
improbable social behavior (like a suicide mission) typically escapes a clear cut understanding
of what someone is doing. Another – maybe structural – reason suggests, that nobody knows
what s/he is doing as long as s/he does not use a social description, which captures an action
in terms of the communication constituting a social system (Warriner 1970, Ch. 2).13

Indeed, people typically employ ‘vocabularies of motive’ (Mills 1940), that is, social
descriptions, explaining actions to others and to oneself. Actions are attributed to persons or
actors who are thereby constituted as a social reality. These attributions are a simplification
of communications which are far more complex and even unobservable units of social systems
(Luhmann 1995a, 164f., Warriner 1970, Ch. 2). Attributions reduce such complexities by
punctuating the flow of communications, constructing addresses for communications and
providing these communications with bases for further communications thereby reproducing a
social system. Such a concept of action can do without the (impossible) knowledge of the
‘real’ motives that ‘caused’ Atta and his comrades to launch into the Twin Towers. While it is
equally impossible to know whether the perpetrators had a distinct knowledge of their mo-
tives, their ‘vocabularies of motive’ (Mills 1940, Warriner 1970), that is, socially distributed descriptions for explaining their actions in terms of communication and not in terms of idiosyncratic motives, are well known14. These vocabularies are connectable with vocabularies of others in their homelands, in the local and wider public and between – and within – themselves. Furthermore, such vocabularies are important components of social systems which program themselves through internal attributions based on vocabularies of motives. While Mead and other inter-actionists (Mead 1967) could develop the idea of vocabularies of motives as a repertoire of social descriptions of action, Systems Theory adds the function of these vocabularies. These not only provide individuals with socially connectable descriptions of motives but also are the cornerstone of self-programming social systems. This is important because individuals could not act without the complexity-reducing work of social systems. To sum up, actions are the result of attributions, thereby constituting persons. The attributions must be communicated; this does not become real by referring to ‘actors’ but to ‘vocabularies of motive’. These are used to instruct (virtual) actors.

3. Vocabularies of motive

The opposition to this approach is rational choice. Jon Elster, for example, cites the ‘usual explanatory machinery of the social sciences, the key elements being the motivations and beliefs of actors, attackers, and organizers, and the constraints they face’ (2006, 233, original emphasis). Elster focuses on the ‘actual mental states of the martyrs’ (257) and concludes that the ‘aims and beliefs’ of the perpetrators are at least irrational if not remaining ‘an enigma’ (257). Elster is right with regard to the latter, although it is not in accord with his own thinking. He believes that individual motives are accessible, but those of suicide attackers are not because these perpetrators do not fit into any frame of action, which could be understood by a Western mind. Yet, whenever one tries to find the ‘real motivational causes’, an enigma will emerge. This is due to the darkness of the consciousness of the individual as such (Luhmann 1995a, 110). ‘Real motives’ are an enigma because they are inaccessible. What can be done is looking for ‘vocabularies of motive’ in popular use and infer from these vocabularies the constraints which Elster has in mind. Constraints would then be the expectations built by the structure of the system and attributed to their masterminds as producers, recipients and transmitters of constraints to their social networks, to their peers and to a more or less general public in the Arab World: communication instead of thought. As far as expectations are built into discernible ‘vocabularies of motive’, that is, social descriptions of actions which are used by the perpetrators, communicative clues will appear not to their ‘real mental states’, but to caus-
al maps which are components of the communication of motivated actions.\textsuperscript{15} From such a viewpoint motives would not be irrational, but plausible as making sense at all with respect to the exigencies of the communication of action under cross-cutting pressures.\textsuperscript{16}

It is this difference between action and communication which separates rational choice from a system approach.\textsuperscript{17} Whenever terms of individual action are used, that is, action as a manifestation of subjective intentions, the relevance of mental states cannot be avoided and then the observer is lost in the ambiguities of the ‘murky’ (Holmes 2006) world of the mind. A better way of discerning beliefs with possible causal impact is to presuppose that actions are the product of attributions which have to be communicated by social descriptions.\textsuperscript{18} An example for such a social description is the ‘narrative of blame’ which is used in the Arab World for political as well as for religious reasons. Stephen Holmes (2006) regards this narrative of blame as a trigger of political motives as well as religious motives for terrorist actions such as suicide missions. He talks of intertwined motives of ‘humiliation’ (146). More consistent with the systems theory perspective is to take a step back and define this narrative as a repository of motives which have to be communicated (that is: mobilizing and recruiting) if they are to become real within social systems.\textsuperscript{19} Holmes notes that religious reasons may count because of their bellicosity and because of their better public acceptance, that is: only to a lesser extent as substantial meanings. At least this could be the ‘inner motivation’, which cannot be known, but this presupposes that communication instructs thinking. The modern mass media (including the internet) reinforce such a social description of a narrative of blame or a ‘jihadi story’ (Atran 2006).

But how do narratives, social descriptions, motives and actors stick together? How does it all get some hold beyond a paradigm of individual subjects and their institutional constraints (Elster 2006)? One answer would be the tight coupling – the consensus-seeking pressures (Janis 1972) of a small group like the ‘Hamburg cell’. At least its expressive path dependency of religious bellicosity in contrast to the more instrumental path dependency of the ‘Masterminds’ (sustaining al-Qaida in turbulent environments) was probably decisive. Looking from above, the ‘Hamburg cell’ – in contrast to their Masterminds – had ‘expressive reasons’ to become religiously fervent in order to reproduce itself as a radical cell. But the Hamburg cell was only a ‘knot’ within a large and dispersed network with other more organized knots – e.g. the Masterminds\textsuperscript{20}. In a sense it was ‘alone’. The sticking together of different (descriptions of) motives affords more than mere pressures which work on and within a small cell based on personal interaction.
With this question in mind and with reference to the mentioned ‘communicative turn’, it follows that a conflict-system is constructing itself out of communicating the asymmetric comparisons between Western standards of life and those of the Islamic east (classic, Said 2003). Comparisons between technology, economy, and religion reduce the perceived authenticity of the compared entities (Tibi 2012) and modern culture of world-society is nothing than the seedbed of the dissolution of formerly undoubted, that is, authentic entities (Luhmann 1995c). This is the result of a universal tendency to compare, propelled by functional differentiation of the world-society (Lechner and Boli 2005, Luhmann 1997, Meyer et al. 1997) and the conversion from unity (by religion) to difference (by setting free different – political, economic, judicial etc. – functional references). Comparisons between the Western and the (Muslim) Eastern World contain a potential of ‘humiliation’ (Atran 2006; classical, Said 2003, modern: Khosrokhavar 2009, 196-200) for the latter and may be interpreted as a general communicative medium for specific disappointments. These disappointments may be of economic (poverty, inequality, dull career options), of political (hypocrisy of the elites, occupation by foreign powers) or religious origin (religious inauthenticity of the elites, apostasy). While claims on economic equality or political autonomy are not easily organized against the repression of autocratic regimes, religious claims have probably the most resilience on their side. Furthermore, religious frames of economic and political deprivations support consistency, inclusiveness and complexity of the respective views on deprivations. These characteristics promote the ability to act collectively (Brunsson 1985, Ch. 3). Khosrokhavar (2009) attributes religious reasons to the transformation of a ‘culture of violence (59f.) into a ‘culture of death’ (ibid.). He reads the controversies within extremist Islam as a medium for the enforcement of a ‘strong ideology’ (Brunsson 1985, Ch. 3), prone to terrorist action, not to mere discourse. These escalating and generalizing (i.e. self-enforcing) conditions (Juergensmeyer 2008, Ch. 6) may have executed a binding force on the members of, for instance, the Hamburg cell as isolated from their families and social background as they were.21 But on which reasons with anticipatory and retrospective, that is systematic sensemaking (Weick 1995, Ch. 2)? Or in terms of system theory: what kind of expectations are candidates to structure a social system (al-Qaida and others) that is built into an overarching conflict-system? A system capable of sticking together and stabilizing different descriptions of motivations? In short, ‘vocabularies of motive’ fulfil the function of institutionalized descriptions of social situations, including connectable motives. As such, those vocabularies may lead the way to the thoughts that persons who communicate only clandestine (the Hamburg cell), might have.
Terrorists are dependent on vocabularies like any other person, especially when they become addressees of attributions in (conflict-)systems.

4. Communication and (conflict-) systems

Charles K. Warriner (1970) connects an action (a ‘social act’) with actors’ conceptions of actions. Typically these conceptions are ‘collective, consensual, conventional’ (ibid., 17). Social acts are ‘named’ – in order to wrest actions from the non-transparent stream of the individual consciousness and of the likewise non-transparent stream of action. In this way, someone who has visited a cinema may report about something ‘interesting’, but not about willingly sinking into the darkness of the cinema or even willingly sinking into the darkness of himself. Reports of actions have to be ‘plausible’. Motives are inferences from the observation of action in terms of social descriptions (‘conceptions’) and this complication is the reason why motives cannot be used as causal forces for action. The respective ‘narrative of causality’ is itself a social description. Such a description of action produces the problem of identifying the social unit which constrains actions as derived from social descriptions and of motives attributed to an actor. Systems Theory refers to communication as the micro-unit of these complexities and to systems as their macro-unit. Without advancing into these complexities it can be said that communications are the product and the solution of situations of ‘double contingency’ (Luhmann 1995a, 103ff.). In a more concrete sense, indeterminacy of social situations enforces communication ‘between actors’ and a difference between system and environment in order to constrain or to program communications and actions which are attributed to persons. In order to do this, a system attracts expectations and in more complex cases it attracts programs. When applying these concepts to terrorism as part of a conflict-system (Japp 2007a), the system programs itself by a retaliatory frame of action (Holmes 2006, 165; Wickham 2002, 119ff.). A code of such a system might be ‘attack versus counter-attack’ and its program – its repository of plausible motives and expectations – might be a ‘narrative of blame’ (Palestine) or the ‘jihad’ (al-Qaeda) or a ‘war on terror’ (the US in Iraq). A conflict between secular states of the West and Islamic networks (Sageman 2004, 25ff.) like al-Qaeda integrates these respective narratives (Juergensmeyer 2008, Ch. 1). The structure of the respective system – that is, its repository of expectations – evolves with this ‘underlying’ conflict. The conflict communication draws on reasons which vary from economic deprivation to political repression and from there to religious reasons for rationalizing, that is generalizing and thereby framing the attribution of blame (Juergensmeyer 2008, 252f. and pass.)
by and within the larger conflict system. This process is driven by the retaliating parts of the conflict system itself and supported by conflict-seeking global media. Western politics, the ‘war on terrorism’, are part and parcel of this framing process (Waever 2009), resulting in a retaliatory confrontation between secular and (Islamic) religious forces26.

Such a conflict-system can be seen as encompassing the Israeli State and the Hamas or encompassing al-Qaida and the USA. Especially the latter operate both with global visions of war on global infidelity and on terrorism respectively. With such a frame of reference we have no need for arguments which refer to attributional effects (that is: motives) without seeing that these effects are the result of attributions and not ontological facts (e.g. Waldmann 1998). We follow the Luhmannian dictum that systems exist, but they and their components like communications, expectations, motives, actions and actors are nevertheless constructed. And this does not mean constructed by men (as the mainstream has it), but by communication itself (Luhmann 1995a, Ch. 5).27 However, what about the actors who are drawn into the business of terrorism by communicating their cause? In short, terrorists cannot be ‘understood’ by intentional action, because both – intentions and actions – presuppose social systems, which allow specific intentional actions and others not. Conflict systems focus on retaliation and it is this module of ‘vocabularies of motive’, which draws the virtual terrorists into their ‘cause’.

5. Risk and danger

Thinking of the ‘masterminds’ behind the perpetrators of 9/11, it should be clear that people like the late Bin Laden or Zawahiri and others do decide on vital matters. Insofar as they try to realize goals by decisions, they take risks. As risk-takers they act as any modern actor weighing future events with advantages and possible unwanted side-effects. They use strategic procedures or at least they decide by thumb-nail. Importantly, in deciding they have to live with (always lingering) post-decisional regret (Harrison and March 1984). At first, one might think that also the operative perpetrators, the suicide bombers, take a decision: The decision to take one’s life. But this ‘decision’ is of a different nature, lacking a strategic, rationalist foundation. Not only in the West, but also in the Arab World and elsewhere suicide is a negatively sanctioned act. Religion, in particular, makes no exception: Life is a gift of god and may not be simply thrown away. Many people in the Arab World may despise the socio-economic injustice and religious apostasy of their elites but would not participate in terrorist resistance (e.g. Islamic brotherhoods) let alone suicide missions. The challenge of suicide is too grue-
some and socially stigmatized for deciding for suicide light-heartedly (Holmes 2006). With regard to the suicide bombers, one has to assume a slow, sequential and time-consuming process of gaining and internalizing social descriptions to which attributions of decisions are attached producing additional motivational force. The anticipation of possible post decisional regret has to be excluded and substituted by a certain blindness (Harrison and March 1984). Families, the mass media or politics, when speaking of the ‘decisions’ of the suicide attackers are actually attributing guilt or glory respectively. The perpetrator himself may attribute in this way after he has gone through a self-socializing process by group-solidarities, training and ‘group think’ (Janis 1972) – if he is still alive. The case of Atta in the Hamburg cell may illustrate this process. Reportedly, it was marked by the allegiance to several groups with severe pressure on loyalty. First, there were several Islamic groups, to which he affiliated (Muslim Brotherhood). These groups taught him primarily the narrative of blame with respect to socio-economic injustice. Religious blame of apostasy served primarily a bias to bellicosity (Holmes 2006) and as a generalizing and escalating force on motivation (Jürgensmeyer 2008, 244f.). Second, he was trained in camps in Afghanistan and made contact with Bin Laden and other leaders. He learned how to kill and was introduced into the mysteries of an organization which was absolutely determined to retaliate against western attacks and humiliations in general. Finally, he became a leading member of the ‘Hamburg cell’ with several comrades. In this group he learned how to persevere a long time in social isolation. All three situations were characterized by consensus-seeking dynamics (see Elster 2006, Gambetta 2006, Holmes 2006) demanding not so much a singular explicit decision to join the collective, but producing an attitude of decidedness, which these collectives were pressing into Atta and his comrades. This means that Atta (and his comrades) were no deciders or risk-takers in the usual sense of these terms. Rather, they followed or even obeyed the expectations of the collectives they affiliated. While following expectations implies a decision as well (Luhmann 1995a, 294-295), at least in the sense of (the decision of) not to disobey the expectation. such a kind of decision is concealed under the slow, sequential process of self-socializing, which dispenses with the rationality of taking risks. The attribution of a decision is then possible only from the outside. Furthermore, the future of a suicide bomber is not open – as it is in situations of risk – but secure: He will die by his own hand and no intuition of post-decisional surprise or even regret may disturb this deadly decidedness.

In order to build this prospect into the personality of young men with no apparent reason to commit suicide (such as depressions and the like), it is necessary to circumvent the narrative of risk and to attract narratives of danger. As mentioned above, risk is always bound
to one’s own decisions while danger is attributed to the environment – in this case to a dangerous environment of disbelief, which has to be fought against. Risks imply alternatives and post-decisional surprises, danger is (or is constructed as) an experience without alternatives. This difference serves the exigencies of the masterminds who decide and the perpetrators who act without pondering alternatives.

From the outside – primarily families, kinship and mass media – a suicide mission seems deeply paradoxical: On the one hand, it is a contingent act which could be omitted. On the other hand, the mission seems necessary – it must be done. The potential perpetrator and his environment of comrades and masterminds have to unfold this paradox. This occurs in a process of socialization, which demands decisions and simultaneously conceals these decisions under the cover of powerful expectations to advance a common ‘cause’ without explicitly deciding. The concealing follows a narrative of danger and not of risk. Commitment, expectations and motivation can be strong under these one-way-only circumstances. That is, attributions of blame can be directed to external forces, such as the politico-religious enemy (USA) or an infidel world (the West), and need not be linked to internal motives for deciding suicide. The mission can thus be described as the fight of a deadly danger which renders suicide as a weapon of soldiers. The perpetrator will become a hero then – a martyr – with a built-in dramatic necessity of dying for the cause (Kepel 2009, 102). In short, risk and danger constitute the difference, which separates ‘masterminds’ and ‘perpetrators’ by using different – strategic versus intuitive – ‘motivations’. These motivations are reconstructed from vocabularies which instruct persons in different situations within an over-arching conflict-system.

6. Authenticity

Suicide bombers are mainly people from ambiguous social backgrounds. Mostly they come from a national middle class with ample contacts to the Western World and its secular and individualistic values. Travelling back and forth between western countries and their homeland they often become strangers in both worlds with ensuing disorientation and emotional deprivation (Japp 2003, Holmes 2006). Furthermore, these people are often experiencing blocked careers and turn against their national elites for worldly reasons, apart from despising the religious and political hypocrisy of these elites. Rejection of foreign occupation plays a major role (Pape 2003, 2005). This constellation of a fragile mix of economic, political and religious motives is a nutrient medium in the sequential socializing steps towards a terrorist career. There are putative enemies, there is inner stress and there are acknowledged organiza-
tions which provide appropriate narratives. These components virtually wait for a process of tight coupling.

The sequentiality of this process spares any need for a stable intention for becoming a terrorist let alone a suicide bomber. Yet, religious motives may function to consolidate this sequential build-up – this self-enforcing process – of extreme motivation against an elusive enemy. The religious frame reduces the non-transparent mix of reasons to clear-cut language with specific bellicosity. First, the process uses a religious ‘vocabulary of motive’ without much recourse to religious substance – at least not necessarily. The basic function of this frame lies in generalizing a mix of local motives. Second, this general frame which allows structuring and channelling rather diffuse motives from an insecure social background into a terrorist socialization, is intentionally driven only by the ‘masterminds’ behind the scene. The scheme of a loss of Arab or Muslim authenticity – mirrored in the general backwardness compared with ‘the west’ (Said 2003, pass.), political and religious hypocrisy by the elites and occupation by foreigners – serves to make the process reliable. In the Arab World, a vocabulary of motive contains religious motives that turn an orthodox religion (Islam as the only true one) against a privatized and inauthentic religion in the west (Fish 1999, 177f.). In a collective search for authenticity – as the process of resisting comparisons with a superior but infidel civilization – the religious vocabularies of motive mobilize the program of the Islamist part of the overarching conflict-system. This resistance against an inauthentic enemy generates the communicative distinction of inauthentic versus authentic actions, ways of life and general expectations. The inner center of the conflict system is the conflict between lost authenticity (of the liberal regimes of the Western World) and the threat of one’s own authenticity loss by the power of those liberal regimes, which are interpreted as the reason for all the apostasies of the elites.28 Intentions do not play a decisive role in this process; but, sequentiality and externalizing of attributions do.29 And the power of the vocabulary supports the hypothesis that ‘suicide bombers’ are forced to attribute their reasons of action to an unjust, hypocritical, infidel environment, and – most importantly – to religious expiation in the act of killing by dying: Suicide is such an extreme and counterintuitive action that it has to be transformed into a response to danger which allows for attributing the relevant motives to the experience of intolerable expressions of infidelity, injustice and sin – environments one refuses to live in.

Risks in terms of possible failure of one’s own decisions are taken only by the ‘masterminds’ who try to influence the socialization of others into terrorist motivation and launch attacks with complex arrangements. Both risk and danger are rationalized by using vocabularies of motive. The conceptual potential of the difference between risk and danger appears
when asking whether ‘suicide missions’ within religiously framed terrorism imply risks or rather interpretive dramas in order to avoid risks and to find authenticity. The narrative of blame – both of socio-economic injustice and of religious apostasy – aims not only at the western secular states but also at the loss of authenticity in the Arab World. This loss may be attributed to self-serving decisions of socio-economic and religious elites as risk-takers and the ensuing dangers – as a general loss of socio-economic options and religious authenticity – are then attributed to those who do not decide. In this way, the distinction between risk and danger offers a link, both to social descriptions within ‘narratives of blame’ and to the attribution of motives against the environment of infidels and hypocrites. Dying by killing the infidels (as the paradoxical but utmost of worship!) may then be seen as an appropriate reaction to the loss of authenticity, because this act emanates – within a wider conflict-system built on retaliation – as the paramount of authentic action: retaliating against primarily religious inauthenticity by taking one’s own life; that is, being a soldier in the service of god (Holmes 2006, 146). Put briefly, the vocabularies constituting the motives for terrorist action (and planning) refer to a vague idea of authenticity, informed by all sorts of apostasy and corruption (mainly) in politics and religion.

7. Contagion

The ‘loosening of internal bindings’ (Luhmann 1995a, 398ff.)30, especially affecting young people who are migrating between the west and the east, being neither at home in the (‘perseverse’) Western World nor in the (‘corrupt’) Eastern World anymore, just like Atta and his comrades31, seems to turn into a seedbed for the evolution of collective mentalities. These should be interpreted as the (temporary) result of cumulative effects, arising from the loose coupling between social structures and persons. This is surprising at first, as the experience of functional differentiation in the modern world and the associated role differentiation tends to uproot collective identities (i.e. modernization as individualization) and leads to increasing social complexity at the expenditure of social integration (see Luhmann 1995a, 398ff.). But the lack of collective certainties is not viable without compensatory effects and (temporary) collective mentalities may give rise to social movements – somehow as a general compensation for the decreasing power of social integration. Such collective mentalities and even social movements are typically only loosely coupled with dominant structures of the society and self-enforcing. This is true despite (or because?) of a more or less accidental offspring. Examples range from right and left populist arousals with low stability and high rates of change to
anti-globalist movements like ‘Attac’ and politico-religious mobilizations like ‘Arabellion’. These forms of observing social change may be attractive especially for uprooted biographies which are dissociated from tightly linked moral, religious and kin relations. They offer an expanding web of contagious (attractive for others) social descriptions with motivational force, resulting from an accumulation of effects. In these instances the motivational forces are consequences of that specific connectivity of respective communications, addressing questions of authenticity in a world society, which displays primarily non-transparent complexity and aimless contingency of the self – in both the eastern and the Western World. Importantly, these streams of authenticity-seeking communications in the world society do not display what authenticity really is. They display a search for authenticity with different results (from alternative cultures to suicide missions) and it may be this collective search itself which embodies authenticity versus older forms of authentic values and virtues: the movement moves itself. However fragmented and loosely coupled these social movements may be, they are also bound to vocabularies of motive and it seems that these vocabularies focus on a narrative of authenticity (Taylor 2007, IV, 13) instead of the narrative of blame (Holmes 2006).

Social processes like role-differentiation lead to the relaxation of social commitments and the specification of personal contributions – versus diffuse contributions in families and kinships. These effects do not emerge in a tightly coupled causal structure like the old class struggles. They emerge in unintended and: unexpected accumulation of effects. Often these effects take on collective mentalities as a distinctive feature of modern world society (Luhmann 1995a, 398f.). These effects can be seen in the – mass media supported (Kepel 2009, 117f.) – accumulative growth of collective mentalities or social movements which dispense with any straight or uni-directional motivational background – like the ‘old social movements’. Scott Atran (2006, 128) gives the following description for the terrorist intensification of protest milieus: ‘(...) from the suburbs of Paris to the jungles of Indonesia, I have interviewed socially uprooted and politically restless youth who echo a stunningly simplified and de-contextualized message of martyrdom for the sake of global jihad as life’s noblest cause. They are increasingly as willing and even eager to die as they are to kill.’ While these people are likely to be deeply stressed by economic, political and religious deprivations, they orient themselves along communicative frames which allow the communication of inauthenticity. One may see this as a result – not the cause – of the infusion of their homelands with western standards, observed as multiple but finally religious hypocrisies and apostasies. The relative
inauthenticity of this infection of eastern standards with (more or less liberal) standards of the Western World is observed as secularization and incredulity, individualization and decay of communities.\textsuperscript{38}

Boli and Elliot (2008, 191ff.) argue that these (moderate and fanatic) collectives are only \textit{facade} collectives, defensive and marginal compared to the solid institutions of the Western World, like the secular states and the global civil society (127). But such a view on modernity misses the drive and effects of exclusionary forces (Luhmann 1995b) in the Islamic World of the Middle and the Far East. Furthermore, it misses the pressure of globally used devaluing comparisons between liberal regimes and the ‘lower standards’ in the middle east and elsewhere. Collective reactions to ‘military and/or human interventions’ (Waever 2009), ‘state building’ (Paris and Sisk 2007) and the ‘integration’ of Muslim minorities (Huysmans 2000) in diasporas all over the world – let alone the self-exclusions in the Western World (amok, assassination and terrorist migration) – are not tightly coupled reactions to structural deprivations, but they represent loosely coupled cumulations of effects in an unsecure future. The new militant movements in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria and elsewhere are indicators of the offensive and non-marginal character of these effects. The times of structural causes of collective action (e.g. class struggles) may have gone and become substituted by (evolutionary) accumulation of social effects.\textsuperscript{39} These movements are not religious, let alone terrorist, and they present a danger for autocratic regimes in the Maghreb, the Middle East and elsewhere just because they disclaim terrorist methods. Representing moral high ground and democratic values, they cannot be fought easily except by military repression which is delegitimated in a world full of (at least declamatory) democracies. The influence of these movements on the terrorist movements of our days is nevertheless of utmost interest. This broad field of resistance has potential as long as widely ramified exclusionary forces in their home countries and the coincident, devaluative \textit{ratings} of the liberal regimes and their bureaucratic IO’s do not end (Paris/Sisk 2007). Systems of conflict – terrorist or not – are to be expected without necessarily being defensive or marginal. Just as plausible as marginalization, is a (regional) limitation and displacement of functional differentiation (‘dedifferentiation’ (Beyer 2006, pass.)) on the level of world society (Luhmann 1995b, Japp 2007b). Examples can be found in moderate Islamic ‘movements’ (McDonald 2006, 184ff., Wickham 2002, Ch. 7).

Islamic organizations, ranging from mobilized Islamic neighborhoods over social and political movements (‘brotherhoods’) to terrorist cells, play a significant mobilizing and recruiting role (Sageman 2004, 121-124, Wickham 2002, 119ff.) in the otherwise self-
organizing conflict systems. A collective search for authenticity presupposes and strengthens a contagious mentality based on a communicative connectivity, which may easily spread to Europe and globalize itself. Reformist movements and terrorism are forms of authenticity-seeking communication. Both are celebrating authenticity by resisting their respective ‘enemy’ and upholding ultimate values thereby. And both are grounded in self-enforcing processes and not something objectively constrained or even determined by regional origin or invariable and specific motives. In the terms of Gambetta for the terrorist ‘option’ (2006, 322): ‘suicide bombings spawn more suicide bombings’. Furthermore, these processes are cause and effect simultaneously: They cause systemic networks of terrorist or reformist cells and just these effects as a result of self-producing processes. It is the circular causality of systems of communication in an adversarial environment.

Suicide missions are nevertheless – compared to other (e.g. reformist) forms of ‘active resistance’ – a rather improbable kind of action. The often warlike reactions of the West (esp. in Iraq, see Gambetta 2004, Kepel 2009, Ch. 1), in contrast, are not marginal at all within the system of retaliation and they further contribute to the experience of humiliation and corresponding defence of sacred values (Waever 2009). Fundamentalism is often a reaction to strong postures of the western ‘mind-set’ (Gambetta 2004). Military strikes (instead of police work) against terrorism tend to increase what should be reduced. The modern forms of fundamentalism: internet, mass media, large conflict systems as parasites of the global political system, correlate with modern forms of bellicosity (on both sides), producing circular concepts of addressable enemies (Brücher 2004) in an non-transparent world, generated by a (functionally differentiated) society without address (Fuchs 2004). Given the reservoir of potential suicide bombers specifically within the diaspora of Muslims all over the world (linked in cyber networks) – and not, at least not exclusively, within their homelands – suicide missions are not only modern but also global. This is reflected in the vocabulary of motive of a ‘jihad story’ which tells a lot about communicating actions within the framework of a social conflict-system and little about ‘real motives’, motives that become real only through communication. It should be noted that economic aid, state building and any other humanitarian action (Barnett and Stein 2012) may not reduce the supply of personell with terrorist ambitions. But a loosely coupled web of social movements, which operate all over the world, might do that in offering a narrative of authenticity and therefore representing an alternative to islamic terrorism – including suicide missions – which also focuses on a latent idea of authenticity, but mislead by religious fanaticism. In short, social movements and terrorist groups do not depend on structural effects like class struggles. In a highly complex world-
society they may (or may not) develop in milieus of weakened internal bindings and correspondingly weakened collective forms of social relations. Together with widely spread forms of political and economic corruption and an epitomizing religious apostasy, a ‘search for authenticity’ may produce cumulative but different effects by collective action. The process of the search may be more ‘authentic’ than the underlying idea – at least in a highly complex world-society with a high level of differentiation and corresponding world-views.

8. Conclusion

Suicide missions are often described by external attributions, which refer to economic, political and religious deprivations. The specific role of religion is mostly reduced to fanaticism. Individual motives with links to revenge (e.g. Iraq and Afghanistan) and lack of perspectives (joblessness of the educated middle classes) are used for further explanation. This article accepts a possible link between economic, political and religious deprivations and apostasies and the emergence of social milieus producing religious fanaticism. But it denies that we can attribute suicide missions to the individual motives of the perpetrators. Instead, it presents an alternative perspective that aims at internal attributions of conflict-systems, which use ‘vocabularies of motive’ as programs to establish internal communicative connectivity. In other words, actors and their motives are products of the system’s communication. The concepts of ‘risk’ and ‘danger’ help distinguish between the milieus of perpetrators (experiencing danger in a situation beyond their control) and ‘masterminds’ (taking risks in strategic action). Thus, perpetrators are recruited into a stream of hostile and fundamentalist communication. For them, extreme religious denominations do not refer to individually ‘motivated’ decisions as the mainstream explanations of suicide missions suggests, but mark the sequential socializing into milieus of ‘group think’. These contagious milieus flourish in a world with weak(ening) internal ties (bindings) and reflect economic deprivations as well as political and religious apostasies. They are characterized by a search for (lost) authenticity, which in a highly complex world-society, is less a definite goal than the experience of the collective search for it. From the outside, suicide missions are a rather improbable evolutionary result. For perpetrators and sympathizers, who are socialized into appropriate vocabularies, these missions seem ‘normal’. That is why these groups have ‘vocabularies of motive’ in common use. The ‘real’ motives nobody knows.
References


reputation then.\footnote{The classical reference is Durkheim (1983).} but world society (Atran 2006). Loose coupling is tight coupling. On this discussion see Fuchs (2001).\footnote{Referring to the basic distinction of system and environment.}

A "search for authenticity" is a rather abstract formula – compared with relative deprivations by economic and political circumstances. The advantage of this formula lies in its encompassing reach all over a world society. The sociological reference is not democratic versus non-democratic states (Chenoweth 2013) or the Middle East (Wickham 2002) but world society (Atran 2006). But its communicative connectivity is embedded in overarching social systems like families, politics, economy and religion. Terrorist networks are self-organizing, but only as parts of (social) conflict systems: networks are embedded in social systems just because of the fuzziness of their borders. Or the other way around: networks are social systems with a very high degree of loose coupling. The logic of distinctions (Luhmann 2002) tells us that the other side of loose coupling is tight coupling.\footnote{One may distinguish between justification and motives (Wheeler 2002, 10 and pass.). But even then, motives are objects of attribution and that means, they are dependent on an observer who performs, that is: communicates this attribution (Luhmann 1995a, Ch. 4, Fn. 53). For the sake of brevity: Communication is the unity of utterance, information and understanding. Understanding not as a mental process but as connecting present and further communication (Luhmann 1995a, 137ff.).} On this discussion see Fuchs (2001).

That is, one distinguishes between past and future (in the present) and marks the future as the relevant side of the distinction. Observations are distinctions with two sides, where one side is marked for further use (Luhmann 1993, Ch. 1). A further distinction in this context is the difference between “masterminds” with more instrumental actions and the “perpetrators” with more expressive actions. The coupling between these two action-sets may be quite loose, but the coupling within the perpetrators’ cell is quite tight. It follows criteria of “group think” (Janis 1972). The main coupling-mechanism is probably the recruiting of (virtual) “perpetrators” by their masterminds. After these mobilizing effects the emerging “cells” drift into a loosely coupled web around the world.\footnote{Many other sources of such communications see Holmes (2006), p. 351, Fns 2, 3. A further distinction in this context is the difference between “expressive” and “instrumental” activities as it appears regarding the difference between “masterminds” with more instrumental actions and the “perpetrators” with more expressive actions. The coupling between these two action-sets may be quite loose, but the coupling within the perpetrators’ cell is quite tight. It follows criteria of “group think” (Janis 1972). The main coupling-mechanism is probably the recruiting of (virtual) “perpetrators” by their masterminds. After these mobilizing effects the emerging “cells” drift into a loosely coupled web around the world.}
who speaks of “preferential attachment”. That “contagion” plays a stronger role than formal organization (see section 7 below and Sageman (2004, 139). He argues that the latter is expanding but the former is on retreat. This view is consonant with our point estinians).

absolute deprivation

and that is the expression not of relative but

organization (with formal rules and hierarchy). He distinguishes “al -Qaida Central” and “al-Qaida social move-

dimension with respect to understanding and support of a transnational network of djihad seems possible only as

religious meaning. It is the only way to compensate inauthenticity which is felt as a “loss of identity and control” (Juergensmeyer 2008, 254). It is the description of deprivation as a fundamental “humiliation” (Holmes 2006) and that is the expression not of relative but absolute deprivation.

Sageman (2008, 29ff.) argues that al -Qaida is both: a social movement (networks without hierarchy) and an organization (with formal rules and hierarchy). He distinguishes “al-Qaida Central” and “al-Qaida social movement”. He argues that the latter is expanding but the former is on retreat. This view is consonant with our point that “contagion” plays a stronger role than formal organization (see section 7 below and Sageman (2004, 139) who speaks of “preferential attachment”.

“They were unable to arrive, (…) yet also unable to return home. They were too westernized to feel completely comfortable back in the Middle East, but not westernized enough to be accepted in a bigoted Europe or North America” (Holmes 2006, 153).

A thought which has been developed originally by Alfred Schütz (Schütz and Luckmann 2003, 529ff.).

The only way to do that is by attribution. And then it is a question of conceptual complexity to observe moti-

ational “causes” as attributions. This does not mean that attributions have no practical relevance. Quite the

contrary. But attributed causes are social constructions with an irrevocable horizon of contingent possibilities of

other “causes”, which an observer may “see” and consequently may put in perspective the actual attribution.

Double contingency can be found in historical situation with high and mutual uncertainty. The new “states” after decolonization, new states after the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1989, the situation in Palestine after the second World War confronting Israelis and Palestinians on a shaky disorder of double contingency. In all these cases, the intolerability of double contingency as mutual uncertainty about what ego is expecting from alter and vice versa with built-in mutual dislikes, led to specific social systems as states. That is, as part of a larger political system (the “near-east”) with built-in conflict systems (the Israeli state versus the semi-state of the Pal-

estinians).

This would be a reconstruction of Huntingtons (2006) general (civilizational) thesis in terms of a conflict-

system. Furthermore this reconstruction would leave ample room for more differentiated interpretations of “civi-

lizations” (Lechner and Boli 2005, Ch. 9): Civilizations do not act, conflict-systems, or rather their inner organi-

zations (Al-Qaida, States of NATO and others) do. At least actions are routinely attributed to these organizations as basic parts of a conflict-system. No one would do that with respect to Christian or Islamic civilization.

See Kepel (2009, 28f.) on “the axis of evil”.

For examples of an “American constructivism or constructionism” see Stallings (1995) or Finnemore (2004). Both refer to interpretations as constructions of men as constructors. But from where do men get the capacity to interpret in a connectable way?

This power is experienced by military interventions (Iraq and Afghanistan), by humanitarian interventions (Somalia, Kosovo), by state building in western style (Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia and others) and always by the US-American “imperialism”. However these “experiences” are evaluated, they are integral parts of “world society” (Boli 2005, Lechner and Boli 2005, Meyer et al. 1997) and its dominant conflict.

All the attributional candidates noted above appear again. But now they are embedded in the recursive com-

munication of a conflict-system. Attributions are put into place by the function of simplifying the identity of the system.

In the Western World: individualization of the person (Lechner and Boli 2005, pass.).
But also an increasing number of young people from the West, who may have similar (communicative) motives, but with reference not to religious apostasy but – in their individualized and secular world – to the missing of any substantial (religious) sense of it all.

Here the globalizing effects of the internet play a major role (Kotowsky 2010).

Terrorist migrants from Europe to Afghanistan and recently to embattled countries like Syria are examples.

One may doubt if authenticity is possible under modern circumstances of complexity-driven social structures. A search for it is not only possible but real (Taylor 2007, IV: 14). Just like Camus’ Sisyphos the effort may be useless in the long run. But the mode and the effects of the search may be useful anyway.

Thereby contradicting Max Webers “Disenchantment” on a micro-scale.

In a diversified world-society “authenticity” is probably also diversified. In Charles Taylor’s “A secular age” (2007, IV: 13) “authenticity” ranges from individual self-realization to the affectivity of religious community. The first “is” essential, because it penetrates the latter – in Taylor’s view.

One could say, social inauthenticity is a badly defined kind of “metacode” for social movements, while it is aggravated to religious furor in terrorist milieus (see above), resulting in self-aggravating processes of taking one’s life in cultures of asceticism (Durkheim 1994, 66).

The perception of this global alienation and the experience of defeats in the homelands of near and far east led to the distinction between a “near” and the “far” enemy. This distinction supports the globalizing of an Islamic jihad (Sageman 2008, 29ff).

“Ordinary” social movements are of interest here because “contagion” might work between them with the long-term effect of moderating terrorist networks (see also McDonald 2006, Ch. 9).

“Thus, a critical factor determining suicide terrorism behavior is arguably loyalty to intimate cohorts of peers, which recruiting organizations often promote through religious communion” (Atran 2003).

And it is communication which counts, not – or not primarily – individual dispositions. The latter are resulting from communicative socialization and that is why the search for authenticity is not a mental but a communicative search. Only recursive communication can use a distinction like authentic/inauthentic beyond the murky and unreliable world of consciousness. Non-authentic communication looks for authentic communication. To be sure – this is not possible without participating individuals (Luhmann 1995a, Ch. 6). But these are not the subjects of their actions. On the one side they think they are, as everyone does, on the other side communication itself produces this illusion (Luhmann 1995a, 111). It does this by attributing communicative acts to persons who consequentially believe in their own primacy. But even this is a product – or at least an instruction – of communication.

Which may be one of the reasons leading to the evaluation of Boli and Elliot (2008, 191ff)).

“U.S. policy, especially in Iraq, has poured oil on a fire that was in the process of being extinguished.” (Sageman 2008, 138). A “third wave” of global terrorism, mostly homegrown and not expatriate, mostly decoupled from al Qaida, internally disconnected and not supported by al Qaida’s technical knowledge and strategic planning has been inspired by U.S. policies, chiefly in Iraq. Social integration is produced more by the Internet than organizational forces. Our case, the 9/11 perpetrators belongs to the “second wave” (see Sageman 2004, 144) of global terrorism with rather opposite characteristics. To be sure, these “waves” are not isolated entities. At least partially they are overlapping. Sageman describes especially the third wave as based on networks. This argument may be taken as an indicator that the system has become more loosely coupled (for the relation between “networks” and “systems” see Fuchs 2001, Ch. 5/6)

These forms of fundamentalism should be seen as largely unintended and reactive effects of those “loosening of internal bindings”.

The psychological correlate of an improbable construct like suicide missions may be a likewise improbable escalation of socialized motives. Theses motives refer to religious expiation in a paradoxical situation of taking one’s life in the name of God whose gift it is (see Holmes 2006).