A Rational Response to an Irrational Threat

by Martin Hanson (August 2017)

Weaponized Words

If one were asked to think of one word that has the most power to generate heat without shedding any light, a front-runner must be 'racism.' To begin with, 'race' has no biological meaning; geographically, 'races', blend with one another without clear geographical boundaries. Moreover, geneticists tell us that there is more variation within 'races' than there is between them. It is only outwardly visible characteristics such as skin colour, that lead us to categorise people. And while it is true that human populations native to different climatic regions of the world show distinct adaptive physical attributes—most obviously skin colour—such differences are literally skin deep.

More importantly, when the entire human genome is taken into account, there is far less variation between human populations from different parts of the world than there is between different individuals in any given population. What's more, 'racism' is often used in contexts that have more to do with culture than ethnicity.

What does the word 'racism' mean? For a word used so often as a weapon, you'd expect its users to at least know what it means. But too often, it is used simply as a term of abuse, a rhetorical put-down, with the intention of putting a stop to thought. The word 'racism' seems to embrace a wide spectrum of meaning, ranging from downright evil at one end to the arguably laudable at the other.

So let's unpack the variety of meanings.

Type 1 'racism' is the belief that some ethnic groups are intrinsically i.e., *genetically* superior to others who are deemed to be inferior. This is the racism of the Nazis, though advances in human genetics have shown it to be without any foundation, it still has its adherents today.

Type 2 is the view that certain *cultural* beliefs and practices are primitive and inferior. The stoning of women for sex outside marriage (which in extreme cases can include being raped), the execution of those who change their religion, the amputation of limbs for theft, and the execution of homosexuals by throwing them off high buildings, and forced marriage, are regarded by decent people as primitive and barbaric and, in this respect, I'm happy to be labeled a 'Type 2 racist.'

Type 3 is so common that it can almost be called 'normal.' It's the tendency of people to prefer to associate with others with similar cultural beliefs and values. When immigration is faster than assimilation, members of the host society may feel that they are losing their identity amid an alien culture. I well remember that, traveling on a bus in Bradford, Yorkshire, thirty-odd years ago, I could not hear English being spoken amid a sea of Urdu and other languages. To a person whose first language is English—particularly someone who is unemployed, it's understandable to blame his or her misfortunes on immigrants. Indeed, it is arguably the refusal of politicians to listen to such concerns that has led to Brexit and the rise of the Far Right.

Type 4 is the tendency to judge an entire group by the actions

of a few and is, unfortunately, all-too common. Being assaulted by someone with dark skin is enough, in some people's minds, to paint all brown-skinned people with the same brush. It works the other way, too, of course. I remember reading a comment that "all whites are racists." Both are intellectual shortcuts, relieving one of the effort to think.

Type 5 is commonly called 'inverted racism' or 'cultural exemption' because certain cultural groups are considered to be exempt from behavioural standards expected of the rest of society. It is clearly exemplified by people who claim to support equal rights for women but who refuse to criticize practices such as stoning, forced marriage (a form of rape), and female genital mutilation. Particularly insidious is the belief that it is the responsibility of the host society to adapt to the values of immigrants, rather than the other way around. To give one of many examples, in Vienna, Austria, police are advising blond-haired women to dye their hair dark. An Austrian woman who had been sexually assaulted, beaten, and robbed by four Afghans was told by police that she should change her hair color and should not have been travelling alone after 8 p.m. on public transport. How long before women are advised to wear a hijab to avoid being raped? There are numerous similar reports from Norway and Sweden.

The implication is that immigrants can't be expected to adopt the standards of the host society, so the host society must change to accommodate the newcomers. In Britain, there have been cases of people who were advised not to eat pork or drink alcohol in the presence of Muslims and many school lunches provide halal meat *only*, no longer supplying pork. This is a sure recipe for resentment.

Should we tolerate the intolerant?

U.K Muslims are obviously diverse, so one should be careful before inveighing against the three million British Muslims. The most reliable guide to Muslim attitudes is an opinion poll conducted for Channel 4 TV by ICM Research. It formed the basis for their 2016 documentary "What British Muslims Really Think," presented by Guyana-born Trevor Phillips, a former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

A random sample of 1081 people aged 18+ who identified as Muslim were interviewed face to face, together with a control group of 1008 people from the general population aged 18+. The results were published as percentages of the survey sample.

Among the findings in the 615-page survey were:

- 4 percent (i.e. approximately 30,000 people) have at least some sympathy with people who take part in suicide bombings.
- 52 percent (1.5 million) do not believe that homosexuality should be legal in Britain, compared with 22 percent of the general population.
- 23 percent (690,000 people) support the introduction of Islamic law (Sharia) instead of British law.
- 5 percent (150,000) sympathise with the stoning of women for adultery, and 21 percent do not condemn it.
- 31 percent (900,000) think polygamy should be legalized.
- 39 percent (1.1 million) agree that "wives should always obey their husbands, compared with 5% of the general population."

The programme's take-home message was summed up by Phillips. He said that the survey showed that his earlier views were wrong.

> *I thought Europe's Muslims would gradually blend into the landscape. I should have known better . . . But thanks to the most detailed and comprehensive survey of British Muslim opinion yet conducted, we know that just isn't how it is . . . The integration of Britain's Muslims will probably be the hardest task we've ever faced. It will require the abandonment of the milk-and-water multiculturalism still so beloved of many, and the adoption of a far more muscular approach to integration.*

His most disturbing finding, expressed in an article for the *Daily Mail*, was that Muslims who have separatist views about how they want to live in Britain are far more likely to support terrorism than those who do not.

The documentary produced political and social shockwaves in Britain, but there was really no justification for surprise. Several television documentaries in the previous decade have given evidence that there is plenty of cause for concern including Channel 4 Dispatches documentaries "Undercover Mosque," and "Undercover Mosque – The Return," and "Lessons in Hate and Violence—Islam."

On November 22, 2010, the BBC broadcast a *Panorama* documentary *British schools, Islamic rules,* an investigation into the influence of Saudi Arabia on the teaching in some British schools. The investigation centred round the Jame'ah mosque in

Leicester, and several institutions linked to it. Among the latter was a fatwah service, which gave rulings on religious matters. On the role of women it stated that "a female should remain within the confines of her home as much as possible. She should not come out of the home without need and necessity." The service also stated that Muslim lawyers should not assist fellow Muslims to gain asylum in Britain in order to escape death by stoning. "To assist and aid such people would be unacceptable, impermissible and highly sinful."

Panorama also investigated a network of part-time schools with connections to Saudi Arabia, involving 5,000 children in over 40 weekend clubs and schools. The textbooks were imported from Saudi Arabia and followed the official Saudi curriculum by which 15-year-olds learned about Sharia and its punishments. Theft, for example, resulted in amputation of a hand for a first offence and foot for a second. Viewers were shown a textbook with diagrams indicating where the cuts must be made. They were also taught about the execution of homosexuals by being thrown off a cliff.

These programmes elicited accusations of 'Islamophobia.' The appropriate response to this is to remember that the definition of a 'phobia' is an *irrational* fear.

If a woman has sex outside marriage in Saudi Arabia, Iran, or Pakistan, is she irrational for being afraid of death by stoning? Obviously not, but this doesn't prevent Islamic activists from using the term 'Islamophobia' to label anyone who criticizes fundamentalist Islam. A more accurate term would be 'anti-Islamism,' meaning 'dislike of Islam.'

Though these problems might seem very far away from us in New Zealand, we would be foolish to ignore the lessons learned in Britain. Citizenship for immigrants should be strictly conditional upon a willingness to integrate.

The Need for Cool Heads and Clear Thinking

The recent Ariana Grande concert bombing in Manchester is a reminder of the desperate need for objectivity and intellectual honesty, both of which have been lacking in the coverage of terrorist attacks by the mainstream media.

After the bombings there was no shortage of public figures keen to put the tragedy into their preferred political context. Here's what Wali Rahman, secretary of Wiltshire Islamic Cultural Centre had to say:

> *We stand united with Manchester, the British people in general and people all over the world who suffer at the hands of the small yet dangerous minority of murderous extremists and remind people that terrorism has no religion and despite their claim, the terrorists have **nothing to do with Islam.*** (Emphasis added)

On the other hand, Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury commented:

> *Until religious leaders stand up and take responsibility for the actions of those **who do things in the name of their***

religion, we will see no resolution. (Emphasis added)

Muslims are just as diverse in their views as non-Muslims. The most reliable data illustrating this come from the ICM survey mentioned previously.

Whereas 85% (just over 2.5 million) condemned suicide bombings, 15% (approximately 450,000) did not. Moreover, 3% (about 90,000) sympathized 'to some extent' with suicide bombings, and 1% (about 30,000) 'completely sympathised.' This means that in 2015, roughly 120,000 British Muslims had at least some sympathy with suicide bombers.

From these data, it is clear that British Muslim opinion ranges from fundamentalist radicals to modern, fully Westernized Muslims. How, then, is it possible for both Jihadists and peacemakers to call on the Koran to justify their view?

The answer is that some verses of the Koran imply that Islam is the 'religion of peace,' while others are used by jihadists to justify their barbaric agenda. The key to this anomaly lies in the fact that the earlier Koranic verses were written when Muhammad lived in Mecca, when he was militarily weak and chose not to appear provocative. The later verses were written in Medina, where he became militarily powerful enough to attack and conquer Mecca. These verses were far less compromising, for example:

And kill them wherever ye find them, and turn them out of

the places from where they drove you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter . . . (Koran 2:191).

And

And *Fight and kill the Mushrikun wherever you find them . . .* (Koran 9:5) (A mushrik is one who worships other gods besides Allah.)

Not all the Medina verses are warlike; verse 5:32 is often quoted in support of the 'religion of peace' view: "Because of that We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or to spread mischief in the land — it would be as if he killed all mankind . . ."

But the apparently peaceful intent of 5:32 is negated by the next verse, 5:33, which includes the following: "The recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite sides . . . " To jihadists this verse provides ample justification for perpetrating their crucifixions, beheadings, amputations, sex slavery and other atrocities.

Depending on which verses you select, you can use the Koran to promote Islam as a religion of peace, or to vilify it because it demands the killing of unbelievers. The latter group claim that they have the more correct interpretation by invoking the

principle of abrogation, whereby when there is contradiction between verses, the later ones take priority over the earlier ones. And the later verses are, of course, the ones that jihadists presumably draw upon.

It should be clear by now that any backlash against Muslims in general is bound to be counterproductive. The solution must require the political isolation of the jihadist Muslims.

What Is to be Done?

Hot on the heels of the Manchester bombing has come the London Bridge stabbings, with a similarly wide range of diagnoses and prescriptions for what should be done. Sadiq Khan, Lord Mayor of London, said "The sick and wicked ideology of these evil extremists is no form of Islam that I recognize." Author and broadcaster Maajid Nawaz urged fellow Muslims to "stop pretending that violence and terrorism are completely alien to Muslim beliefs."

Like the curate's egg, the Koran is 'good in parts,' consisting of peaceful verses written when Muhammad was in Mecca, and later, warlike verses written when he was in Medina. It's a bit like the Bible; some parts of the Old Testament are violent, whereas the New Testament generally teaches love and forgiveness.

The key difference is that whereas Christianity has grown up a lot since people were burnt at the stake for heresy, hard line Islamism remains a powerful totalitarian ideology seeking to

take Europe back to the 7th century. "Behead those who insult Islam!" and "Massacre those who insult Islam!" and "Butcher those who would mock Islam!" are three of many such slogans often seen on public display at Islamist demonstrations.

So, what to do? Demonising terrorists without mentioning Islam is simply ducking the issue. Governments must stop stating that terrorism has 'nothing to do with Islam;' they seem terrified of aggressively criticising Islam for fear of accusations of 'Islamophobia' or even more silly, 'racism.'

In this context, it might be helpful to liken Islam to an onion, in which, broadly speaking, believers can be thought of as occuping three concentric layers. The innermost contains those who advocate killing to achieve political ends, stoning for adultery, execution of homosexuals, amputation for theft, and execution of apostates. The middle layer doesn't support political violence but has the same violent attitude toward gays, women and apostates. These two layers constitute the 'Medina' Muslims, and should be the focus of government attention. The outermost layer are the 'Mecca' Muslims, who have become Westernised and integrated.

In Britain, Medina Muslims are a small proportion of the total Muslim population. The authoritative ICM survey of British Muslims found that only 4% support terrorist acts as a form of political protest, 5% sympathise with people who take part in the stoning of those who commit adultery, and 3% support violent jihad. If the average figure for this toxic core of the onion is 4%, this means that about 120,000 of the 3 million British Muslims have values that are deeply hostile to Western values.

The ICM survey didn't ask British Muslims for their opinions on the amputation for theft, execution for homosexuality, the forbidding of women to leave the home without permission of their husbands. But I'd be prepared to bet that support for terrorism is strongly correlated with support for these beliefs.

So, why have no political leaders issued condemnation?

The only explanation I can come up with is fear of offending Saudi Arabia, Britain's largest customer in the arms trade. Saudi Arabia has also been actively spreading fundamentalist Islamic doctrine in some U.K. schools, as was clearly shown in the BBC *Panorama* documentary "British Schools, Islamic Rules."

The UK needs to make life so uncomfortable for violent Muslims, that they'd prefer to leave the country. So, with that in mind, I'd like to invite Theresa May to say what no UK politician has so far had the courage to say, that is, to urge Muslims who support stoning, amputation, and execution for apostasy and homosexuality, to leave the country and take their barbaric anti-Western values with them.

It is high time that Western politicians start to speak publicly as if they really do believe in Western values.

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