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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Dunning, M. (2016). 'Established and Outsiders': Brutalisation Processes and the Development of 'Jihadist Terrorists'. *Historical Social Research*, *41*(3), 31-53. https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.31-53

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'Established and Outsiders': Brutalisation Processes and the Development of 'Jihadist Terrorists'

Michael Dunning *

Abstract: *»'Etablierte und Außenseiter': Brutalisierungsprozesse und die Entwicklung von ‚dschihadistischen Terroristen'«.* The attacks in Paris in November 2015, the conflict in Syria and Iraq and the huge amount of political and media attention that these issues have had show that the problem of 'jihadist terrorism' is significant for Western nation-states. In this paper I examine some of the interdependent processes and relationships that have been contributing to 'jihadist terrorism' and use a number of figurational concepts with which to do this, including 'established-outsider figurations,' 'double-binds' and 'decivilising processes.' I focus specifically on the November 2015 Paris attacks and with the use of media reports and government documents discuss how the language used reveals the complexities of the 'established-outsider' figurations and double-binds that Western nation-states and 'jihadists' are locked into with each other, and how the structures of these relationships are contributing to 'decivilising' or 'brutalisation' processes of Western 'jihadists.' These brutalisation processes are, in turn, 'feeding back' and contributing to the double-binds within which Western nation-states and jihadist are caught.

Keywords: Terrorism, established-outsiders, figurations, double-binds, decivilising, brutalisation, jihadists.

1. Introduction

In this paper I examine how 'established-outsider figurations,' 'double-binds,' and 'decivilising processes' are central to the problem of what has come to be known as 'jihadist terrorism.' Of course, such a paper can only ever touch upon a very small area of these relations and processes but I hope that it will still be able to provide one of a small number of useful starting points (see also Dunning 2014; Vertigans 2008, 2009, 2011) that explain some of the figurational problems concerning 'jihadist terrorism.'

The empirical data discussed in this paper is from online 'mainstream' media and political speeches, since these provide a rich supply of the kinds of language used by both 'established' and 'outsider' groups. Most of these

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sources relate to the attacks on Paris in November 2015. Central to this approach are an examination of the social relationships involved in the creation of these kinds of documents, which, in the case of this paper, involve 'established-outsider figurations.'

My selection of media sources grew out the approach I developed during PhD research. This focused on the sociogenesis of 'terrorism' in Britain and how it developed as part of the relationships that established groups in Britain had with a variety of outsider groups over the course of the more than 200 years since the 1789 French Revolution, which was the point at which the concept of 'terrorism' was first coined.

In order to examine these relatively long-term processes I analysed time series data mainly from newspaper articles and Hansard dating from the 1789 French Revolution until the present-day. As part of this I undertook a systematic analysis of every *Times* newspaper article every five years from 1790 that contained the words 'terrorism,' 'terrorist' and 'terrorists.' This revealed that these concepts underwent 'sociogenetic' changes over a period of time as part of changing 'established-outsider relations' in Britain. This is because the 'sociogenesis' of concepts can help to reveal 'sociogenetic' changes in society more generally.

Based on this time series data analysis I also undertook a slightly less systematic (not every five years), though still diachronic, analysis of Hansard and the nineteenth century radical press in Britain and media reports relating to the 7/7 bombers. I have used some of that research here, for example, in the reports relating to how sections of the British press have stigmatised British Muslims. However, for the most part, in this paper I have utilised media sources that build on the time series analysis undertaken in my PhD research. That is, sources such as the *Times* tend to be representative of established groups. The same is true of most of the other sources examined here, which include *The Telegraph, The Prime Minister's Office, The Guardian, Mail Online, Business Insider, BBC News Online, The US State Department, The Huffington Post, The Sun.* All of these news media and government sources have readerships that tend, for the most part to be from 'established' groups relative to 'outsider' groups that are referred to as 'terrorists.' In addition, the media sources claim to have readerships that fall into the ABC1, C2 and D categories of social stratification, with most in the ABC1 category. They are also owned, edited and written by people who belong to 'established' groups, and so tend to represent those views more than any others.

My approach in the case of this paper included sifting through a wide range of online media sources from 'mainstream' media, which can be said to be more or less representative of 'established' groups in Britain and elsewhere in the West. In some cases I looked specifically for the reporting of politicians' responses, as representative of 'established' group responses to the Paris attacks. In other cases, such as the reporting of a rise in Islamophobic attacks following the Paris attacks these sources were able to show evidence of 'decivi-

lising' consequences as part of the 'double-bind' that the West is locked into with 'jihadists.'

Accordingly, from this research, I begin by showing how 'established' groups in the West have an interdependent relationship with 'outsider' 'jihadist terrorists.' I do this by giving examples of 'involved' thinking and actions that are experienced and undertaken when one's 'we-group' is attacked, as was the case in Paris. I then explain, with the use of examples from speeches given by senior politicians from the West, how an attack on Paris was regarded as an attack on Britain, Germany, the United States and other Western nation-states, and that this was framed as an attack on the 'civilised' world by 'barbaric outsiders,' albeit 'barbaric outsiders' who, in the cases of those individuals who actually carried out the attacks, were from the West. The language used by senior politicians and the self-styled Islamic State (IS) following the attacks contained a great deal of 'praise and blame gossip,' much of which that was based on 'fantasy' conceptions of their own group and their 'outsider' enemies. I explain how 'praise and blame gossip' is a universal regularity of all 'established-outsider figurations' and helps to perpetuate the 'double-binds' within which the West and 'jihadists' are entangled.

I then discuss how the structure of the 'established-outsider figurations' and related double-binds that the West and 'jihadists' find themselves are exerting significant 'decivilising' pressures, which in the case of 'jihadists,' especially, are contributing to their undergoing severe 'brutalisation processes.' I use Elias's (1997, 186-96) example of the 'brutalisation' of *Freikorps* in Weimar Germany to show how such a process appears to unfold in relation to Western 'jihadists.'

Before I begin to tackle these issues it will be appropriate to first give a brief explanation of some of the main figurational concepts that I am using, as these may not be familiar to all readers.

1.1 Established-Outsider Figurations as Balance of Power Relations

The central concept of this paper is 'established-outsider figurations,' which always involve balance of power struggles. Groups who have greater power chances often think of themselves as superior to other interdependent groups who have fewer power chances. Within these power relations the former are able to manipulate the latter much more than the latter can manipulate the former. They often believe their own groups have special virtues, which they see as lacking in others. In fact, those with fewer power chances are sometimes dehumanised and are said to be 'dirty' and 'anomic.' Elias and Scotson (1994) used the concepts of 'praise and blame gossip' in this respect. Praise gossip is used by established groups to cement the bonds between their members and consolidate their hold on resources. Blame gossip is used to try to keep outsiders in their place through 'stigmatisation.'

Elias and Scotson (1994, xxxvii) contended that struggles between established and outsider groups operate on a continuum which can vary from subtle conflicts that are part of how two or more groups cooperate within a setting of embedded inequalities, to more obvious battles for control or changes to a society's institutional framework. In all cases (unless an outsider group is totally 'powerless') outsider groups constantly apply pressure to try to increase their power chances relative to established groups. An important point to make, however, is that established-outsider figurations are not static relationships. That is, balances of power between groups are constantly shifting both in the short-term and long-term, and it is in this constant flux of power relations among a huge constellation of social groups that 'civilising' and 'decivilising processes,' 'double-binds' and a whole host of other interdependent human processes come about. As part of these processes, over the longer term, there has been integration of smaller human units towards larger state units (see Elias 2012), which, among other things, has profound implications for the development of people's 'we-images' and which groups they identify as their own.

Accordingly, the emergence of 'jihadist terrorism' has come about as part of a complex interplay of these intra- and inter-state competitive pressures, which themselves are formed of established-outsider figurations. These have also contributed to the development of established-outsider figurations on more micro-levels of integration. Therefore, the way that countries were configured in the Middle East following the fall of the Ottoman empire (itself a consequence of intra- and inter-state pressures (see Sutton and Vertigans 2005, 99-101)) was related to competitive pressures between European nation-states, with Britain and France dividing many of the territories between themselves. These earlier processes have made a significant contribution to the present-day conflicts in the Middle East, which have played a part in the development of 'jihadism.' Likewise, competitive pressures between the United States and the Soviet Union contributed to the emergence of 'jihadist groups' following the Soviet-Afghan conflict in the 1980s. Of course, the strategic importance of the Middle East as the most significant area of global oil and gas extraction has also contributed to that region's position in relation to competition between nation-states during the Cold War and more recently, in relation to the 'war on terrorism.' There are also further and related competitive pressures fuelling conflicts on the intra- and inter-state levels in those Middle Eastern countries, which include regional powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to go into any further detail as to how these more macro-level processes contribute to the development of 'jihadist terrorism.' Suffice to say they clearly do not form some sort of 'unstructured historical prelude' (see Elias and Scotson 1994, xxxvi) to the established-outsider figurations I seek to examine below but

rather are macro-level interdependent processes that have contributed to the 'sociogenesis'[1] of 'jihadist terrorism.'

1.2 Double-Binds

Related to these processes are 'double-binds,' which is a concept Elias (1987) used when referring to social processes in which two or more interdependent social groups become locked into a conflict that none of them can fully control. This inability to control and related fear encourage highly emotive or 'involved' responses that tend to have a low level of 'reality congruence'[2] and are laden with fantasy beliefs. Such responses tend to perpetuate double-bind processes, as each side acts towards the other based on their fantasy ideas of each other. Elias (1987, 50) argued that the high level of affective thought governing inter-human relationships is similar to the relationships that human groups at a pre-scientific stage of development had or have with non-human nature. Accordingly, double-binds can develop as part of established-outsider relations and do so whether the balances of power between groups is relatively uneven or even. These problems tend to be most acute at the 'inter-state' level where there is no effective monopoly of physical force that can prevent social groups from attacking each other. This means that nation-states, 'proto-states' and other internationally orientated human groups that fulfil a survival unit function are in a constant state of insecurity fearing attack by 'outsiders.'

1.3 Decivilising Processes

Double-binds and the fear of attack can exert pressures that contribute to decivilising processes. For example, Elias (1997, 2012) argued that if the level of social fears increases then the human capacity for rational action tends to be diminished and there are subsequent increases in the fantasy-content of peoples' beliefs about each other and the world around them. Consequently, a society could suffer a corresponding increase in violence, and brutalisation or decivilising processes can gain greater traction, which encourage disintegration

[1] Sociogenesis quite simply, means 'social generation.' It is also bound up with the processes of psychogenesis, which refer to the influence of processes at the level of the psyche on wider social processes. There is an interdependent interweaving of sociogenetic and psychogenetic processes. That is, psychogenetic development drives sociogenetic development, while, at the same time, sociogenetic development drives psychogenetic development.

[2] Reality congruence is a process concept and focuses on degrees of approximation rather than static either-ors. It should be understood in terms of degrees of knowledge derived from research and theories developed by scientific specialists investigating what is real, as part of an overarching dynamic process of interdependence. Reality is not regarded as a fixed thing that we can fully know, but is rather, "a dynamic totality which includes humans and their expanding (and sometimes contracting) knowledge as an integral part" (Dunning and Hughes 2013, 134).

or centrifugal forces to exert greater pressure and potentially become the dominant direction of travel.

Fletcher (1997) has pointed out that decivilising processes also consist of the following:

> a shift in the balance between constraints by others and self-restraint in favour of constraints by others; another would be the development of a social standard of behaviour and feeling which generates the emergence of a less even, all-round, stable and differentiated pattern of self-restraint; and, third, we would expect a contraction in the scope of mutual identification between constituent groups and individuals (cf. Dunning and Sheard 1979, 288-9; Dunning et al. 1988, 242-5; Mennell 1990a, 206; Fletcher 1997, 83).

For the purposes here, I suggest that decivilising processes include both 'brutalisation processes' and interdependent processes of structural disintegration at the macro level. 'Brutalisation processes' on the other hand, refer to the more micro-level processes described by Fletcher above.

'Civilising' and 'decivilising processes,' however, can work in tandem and whichever are the most prominent determine the overall trajectory of a particular society over the longer-term. For example, some of the processes that have contributed to the 'brutalisation' of European 'jihadists' ought to be recognised as having taken place within in the context of Europe in which the direction of travel, for the most part since the Middle Ages, has been integrative or where centripetal forces have been in the ascendency, and 'civilising processes' have been dominant.

1.4 The Concept of 'Terrorism'

So far, I have used the concept of 'terrorism' without any acknowledgement of its controversy, so before I expand on how a variety of processes are playing an important role in the development of 'jihadist terrorism,' it is necessary to very briefly consider this problem. The concept of 'terrorism' has been the subject of a great deal of debate (much of it sterile) as to how it should best be defined. I do not intend to enter that debate here apart from pointing out that I regard 'terrorism' as a relational concept that has particular functions for those who use it to designate others as 'terrorists' and for those who are designated as such. Those designations of 'terrorism,' however, change over the long-term, which highlights the fact that social relationships are processual. There has been and is, in other words, a 'sociogenesis' of the concept of 'terrorism.' The sociogenesis of concepts, including 'terrorism,' can reveal wider structural changes. Accordingly, the changing designations of the concept of 'terrorism' reveal the changing functions of the word for those who use it and those who it is aimed at. Needless to say, this is how I intend 'terrorism' to be understood here. But now let me turn to some of the specifics of the problem of established-outsider figurations and 'jihadist terrorism.'

2. The Paris Attacks: How an attack on our 'We-Group' has Tightened the Double-Bind

While I was in the early stages of writing this paper 'jihadist terrorists' from Islamic State (IS) massacred 130 people in Paris and, as a result, feelings (including my own) in many countries around the world but especially in France and Europe, were intense. This emotional 'involvement' is somewhat pertinent in light of this paper and presents a way in which to examine some of the established-outsider figurations that appear to have contributed to these attacks and 'jihadist terrorism' more generally.

The reason why many people in France, Europe and other (predominantly) Western nation-states had such a strong reaction to the Paris atrocities is because our 'we-group' was attacked. In terms of balances of power, our interdependent Western nation-state we-groups have much greater power chances than those who attacked us. Accordingly, in this context we can see how we in the West represent an established group, and IS and other 'jihadist terrorists' are outsiders, albeit interdependent outsiders.

The 'involved' reaction in the West to the recent Paris attacks has significant implications in terms of how the established-outsider figurations between the West and 'jihadist terrorists' might develop. An initial useful way in which to begin an understanding of this is through Elias's concept of 'involvement and detachment.' Accordingly, Elias (1987, xiv) explained how our approaches to knowledge operate on a continuum between 'involvement' and 'detachment.' By 'involvement' he meant forms of thinking and feeling that tend to have a high level of fantasy content and are orientated towards the 'short-term,' and which displace a 'long-term diagnosis orientated towards facts.' More 'detached' thinking involves a process of distancing oneself from these 'present-centred' short-term feelings, a kind of stepping outside of the emotional immediacy of events and the kinds of 'traditional attitudes' that tend to be associated with those events in order to develop a longer-term perspective. Elias expressed this:

> a long-term perspective demands a greater capacity for distancing oneself for a while from the situation of the moment. […] it also opens the way towards greater detachment from the wishes and fears of the moment, and thus from time-bound fantasies. It increases the chance of a more fact-orientated diagnosis. In terms of an old French proverb, it is a case of '*reculer pour mieux sauter*' (Elias 1987, xv).

As I suggested earlier, in the aftermath of the Paris attacks the level of emotional involvement directly associated with the attacks and even in day-to-day

life (such as increased levels of fear) as a result of the attacks,[3] for many people in the West has been more intense than is usually the case. This 'involvement' fuels the kind of 'present-centred' 'short-term' thinking that Elias was talking about. For example, on reading and watching the many news reports about the attacks my own feelings included sorrow, fear, anger, hatred, confusion and a desire for revenge, including, on one level, a desire for the perpetrators that were then still alive to be violently disposed of. Such feelings appeared at the time, and even now, to be shared among many people in France, Europe and the rest of the world, as is clear from the kinds of comments (some examples of which shall follow) and actions (including France declaring war on IS, increased bombing of Syria, banning unrelated demonstrations about climate change in Paris and a curfew on the streets of Brussels) that have been made by politicians, media commentators and members of the public. *The Huffington Post* website (Matthias 2015), for example, has compiled a list indicating a rise in Islamophobic acts in the United States since the Paris attacks. In Britain, *The Guardian* newspaper website (Gani 2015) reported a threefold increase in the number of attacks against London's Muslims. This indicates a high level of emotional 'involvement' and is an important consideration when it comes to trying to understand some of the processes and relations associated with these attacks and 'jihadist terrorism' more generally.

This level of 'involvement' also has a number of implications for research on 'terrorism,' including the extent to which we can gain 'reality congruent' (see Elias 1987) knowledge in such affecting circumstances. Unfortunately, there is not space here to explore this particular problem. Nonetheless, the 'involved' reaction that people in the West had is a related problem because, as has been stated, the attacks were on one of our 'we-groups.' This shows that when we are caught in 'double-binds,' there is a great tendency to develop 'involved' and 'fantasy-based' knowledge. This kind of knowledge performs the function of satisfying our feelings of self-love for our 'we-group' by claiming we have superior human attributes but it, as mentioned, often lacks 'reality congruence' and can help to further entrench us in double-binds, making violence even more likely and increases the chances that decivilising processes will gain greater traction.

One of the issues for sociologists in the context of researching a problem like 'jihadist terrorism' is to try to not allow 'involved' thinking to become the sole, or even main, determinant of how the phenomenon is approach, especially

[3] 'Terrorist' attacks often seek to deliberately make all of those people who are party to them more emotionally involved by inspiring emotions like fear, anger and a desire for revenge on the part of those who were attacked and jubilation, feelings of superiority and a sense of 'power' on those who committed an attack. Hoffman (2006, 173) citing Dr. Frederick Hacker points out that, "terrorists seek to 'frighten and, by frightening, to dominate and control. They want to impress. They play to and for an audience, and solicit audience participation.'"

following events like the Paris attacks. Accordingly, in order to develop more 'reality congruent' knowledge when one is heavily emotionally involvement in a subject or problem it is necessary to undertake what Elias (1987, 6, 36, 105, 106) referred to as a 'detour via detachment,' followed by 'secondary involvement.' Dunning and Hughes have explained what Elias meant by this:

> What the metaphor of a 'detour' means is that, like other social scientists, sociologists have specific interests to defend emotionally involved positions but should strive to learn, at first, to distance themselves from and control them, and then return to them *via* a process of 'secondary involvement' (Dunning and Hughes 2013, 13).

They go on to say:

> assuming that one does not get lost along the way, undertaking a detour *via* detachment can lay the foundation for a process of 'secondary involvement,' for returning to a more 'involved' position in which – if the detour has been successful – armed with potentially *more* 'reality-congruent' or *more* 'object-adequate' knowledge, subsequent generations of sociologists will have the potential to intervene in the social world in a manner that has more intended relative to unintended consequences than would have been possible hitherto. So, Elias and those who have taken up the mantel of his work, share with 'critical' sociologists, a desire to act, to 'make a difference' in the world (Giddens 1984), and in particular to change specific forms of social relations if they can be shown to embody constraints greater than are necessary, or are inherently exploitative, dehumanising, or in other ways unsatisfactory (Dunning and Hughes 2013, 13).

This process of a detour via detachment and secondary involvement is precisely the approach that I am seeking to take in this paper.

2.1 How the Attack on Paris was an Attack on Western We-Groups: An Example of Global 'Civilising Processes'

Accordingly, we can see double-bind processes at play in relation to Western nation-states and IS. For example, as mentioned, the feelings people in the West experienced following the Paris attacks and the subsequent actions mentioned above show this. However, the idea of 'we identity' made up of people from Western nation-states requires some explanation, particularly as the established-outsider figuration in the context of attacks like those in Paris, should be viewed on one level as being between the established West and outsider 'jihadists.' An important point to consider in this respect is the fact that the attack was on Paris, and not Britain or New York or Berlin. So why should this be considered an attack on the 'we-group' of people who are not French?

An explanation for this can be found if we examine a related issue that was discussed in the media (see Malik 2015) in the guise of complaints that the Western media focused more on the Paris attacks than it had on other recent attacks by 'jihadists,' for example, in Beirut. The media focus on Paris suggests

that, on balance, people in Britain and elsewhere in the West identify more closely with French people than they do with Lebanese people. This issue allows us get a partial understanding of the huge level of complexity that established-outsider figurations have in this regard. That is, we each tend to belong to a number of fluctuating established and outsider groups and our bonds to these are of varying strengths. For example, the Paris attacks were regarded as an attack on the 'civilised' world, which tends to refer most closely to established groups in Western nation-states or those elsewhere who adhere to their values. The most obvious way in which this could be regarded as an attack on 'we-groups' from countries like the United States and Britain is that British, American and people from countries other than France were among those attacked and in some cases killed. At the same time, it is very easy for someone from Britain or the United States to identify with French people because of a shared sense of 'civilisation.'[4]

Nevertheless, it is becoming easier for people in many parts of the world to identify more closely with many other nationalities because of the growing diversity of cultures and nationalities in some countries like Britain, France and the United States and due to growing interdependencies across the world. Andrew Linklater (2010, 157) has talked about 'global civilising processes'[5] in this context. Consequently, this shows that established-outsider relations ought to be seen as fluid and changing and that people can identify with several we-groups, but that identification is of varying strengths depending on a person's bonds to those we-groups.[6] However, complex levels of interdependence to-

[4] This shared sense of 'civilisation' between Western nation-states has a relatively long precedence and there are examples of it relating to the First and Second World Wars relative to 'outsider' and 'barbaric' Germany, and in relation to Western colonialism compared to 'barbarous natives' who needed civilising (see Dunning 2014).

[5] According to Linklater, inter-state violence can be held off through processes of mutual identification between people across states, as part of what he refers to as 'universal history.' He shows the extent to which the 'scope of emotional identification' is able to keep pace with the lengthening of webs of material interconnectedness (Linklater 2010, 156). He argues that international societies have a major role in moderating the inter-state problems that arise as part of established-outsider figurations. He says the following in this connection: "[G]lobal civilizing processes that replicate the patterns of self-restraint within pacified domestic realms have rarely influenced the conduct of international relations, but they have not been entirely without influence. The expansion of 'frameworks of communication' through which social systems coordinate longer chains of interdependence, and become attuned to one another over greater distances, is evidence of a global civilizing process that has its source in the human ability to develop shared meanings that span diverse cultural horizons (McNeill 1995a; van Vree 1999). At least in that limited sense, it is legitimate to claim that "despite numerous back-eddies and local breakdowns of civilized complexity, [there] has been an ineluctable expansion of the portions of the globe subjected to or incorporated within civilized social structures" (McNeill 1983, 10). (Linklater 2010, 157)

[6] Elias (1991, 222-3), for example, discussed the differences in the levels of we-group identification between national and supra-national we-groups.

gether with shared 'civilised' values between Western nation states makes this identification easier and perhaps greater than the case might be with respect to countries that have different levels of interdependence with Western nation-states. We can see, therefore, that there appears to be a globalising established we-group that was attacked in Paris by an outsider 'they-group' or 'jihadist terrorists,' which is also expanding across the globe.

The outsider status of the attackers is/was also highly complex. For example, IS is an outsider group on the inter-state/inter-survival group[7] level relative to Western nation-states. At the same time, the attackers themselves and many members of IS, as well as many 'jihadists' more generally were born in and grew up in Western nation-states.[8] In this context, they were or tend to be outsiders within their home countries. For example, the fact that they were/are the sons and daughters of first and second generation Muslim immigrants has contributed to their outsider status due to the outsider status of both Muslims and immigrants in Europe more generally. This status has been further accentuated by their rejection of established groups in Europe and their embrace of 'jihadism' and IS. In their relationships with established groups in Europe they have become 'detached outsiders.' Their status as people who have been brought up in Europe has important implications with respect to the 'brutalisation processes' that the attackers appear to have undergone. I have more to state on that shortly.

3. How Established-Outsider Figurations were Manifested Linguistically following the Paris Attacks

First, however, it will be useful to examine some of the language used soon after the attacks, which highlights a number of important points, including the manifestation in language of established-outsider figurations and the related double-binds in which the West and 'jihadists' find themselves:

British Prime Minister, David Cameron (2015), for example, stated the following in his speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet three days after the Paris attacks:

> These were innocent people going about their lives enjoying a Friday night out brutally gunned down by callous murderers. Murderers who thought that their acts of depravity could somehow destroy everything we stand for.

[7] Even though IS claims to be a state it is not recognised as such by any other nation-states. However, it does provide a survival unit function for its members. See Elias (1991, 229) for a discussion about survival units.

[8] They would have undergone a very specifically Western processes of psychogenesis from an early age.

Cameron's use of 'we' clearly indicates that he saw the attacks as being against his or the British people as well as France and, most likely, other western countries or 'civilised' people around the world.

United States secretary of state, John Kerry (2015), said something similar in another speech following the attacks:

> These terrorists have declared war against all civilisations […] They are in fact psychopathic monsters. There is nothing, nothing civilised about them. So this is not a case of one civilisation pitted against another. This is a battle between civilisation itself and barbarism, between civilisation and medieval and modern fascism. The people of Paris – joined by their friends, partners, and family across the globe – will stand up for and live by the values that light the world, the underlying principles that form the backbone of our laws and the essence of our common humanity: the pursuit of justice and the embrace of peace; the belief in the dignity and the worth and the rights of every human being; libertè, egalité, fraternité […] [Y]our American sisters and brothers will stand with you, shoulder to shoulder, as we have stood together throughout history […] Tonight, we are all Parisians.

Kerry's use of 'we' and 'brothers and sisters' when referring to France, America and their allies again shows how the attacks in Paris were felt as attacks on those 'we-groups.' Both his and Cameron's language is also highly illuminating in terms of how distinctions are made between our 'we-groups' and 'they-groups' or established groups and outsiders groups. Our 'we-group,' according to Kerry, 'lights the world,' and is in fact 'civilisation.' The attackers and IS on the other hand are 'barbarism,' 'psychopaths,' and 'medieval and modern fascism,' whatever the latter might mean.

3.1 Praise and Blame Gossip as a Universal Regularity of 'Terrorism' Related 'Established-Outsider Figurations'

The precedents for this kind of dichotomisation in the language used by human groups to describe themselves and outsider groups in relation to each other are innumerable[9] and involve what Elias and Scotson (1994) referred to as 'praise and blame gossip.' In fact, Elias and Scotson (1994, xvi) argued that 'praise and blame gossip' are a 'universal regularity of all established-outsider figurations.' The 'praise gossip' used by Kerry in the above quotation is an expres-

[9] I uncovered numerous examples of this process in research I undertook (see Dunning 2014) on established groups in Britain in relation to a range of different established-outsider figurations in which 'terrorism' was an issue over a 200-year period. These included Britain and the French revolutionaries and following this, in diachronic order, established groups in Britain relative to rebellious Irish Catholics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, British trades unions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, European revolutionaries in the nineteenth century, Germans during the first and second world wars, communists, the Soviet Union and left-wing 'insurgents' during the twentieth century, groups that rebelled against the British empire in the twentieth century, and British-based 'jihadist terrorists.'

sion of the 'collection virtue' that established groups attribute to themselves and has a 'deep anchorage' in their personality structures. It is an example of what Elias and Scotson (1994, 103) called 'group charisma.' This has its 'counterpart' in the personality structures of outsider groups and is what Elias referred to as 'group disgrace.' Moreover, the function of praise and blame gossip is dependent on the power ratios between established and outsider groups. Accordingly, when power ratios are relatively uneven, blame gossip has more of a duel function. It is able to denigrate an outsider group to the extent to which the stigmatising language can enter the self-consciousness of the stigmatised and manifest itself as a form of 'group disgrace,' thus helping to maintain the uneven balance of power. At the same time, as already discussed, the stigmatising of outsider groups also performs a function for established groups by providing a counter to their 'we-images' of greatness or their 'group charisma' and shows to them how they are special in comparison to the outsiders. This helps to cement the bonds between members of an established group. However, when power ratios are more even between groups, stigmatisation tends not to have the same impact on the stigmatised, and so the function of blame gossip in this context tends only to help in the maintenance of 'group charisma.'

3.2 The Fantasy Content of Praise and Blame Gossip and the Perpetuation of Double-Binds

Praise and blame gossip used in the context of 'jihadist terrorism' often has, as I just suggested earlier, a high level of fantasy content attached to it and helps to perpetuate the double-binds within which the two or more groups are enmeshed. Elias stated the following in relation to 'praise' and 'blame gossip':

> the building up of collective praise- and blame-fantasies plays so obvious and vital a part in the conduct of affairs at all levels of balance-of-power relationships; and no less obviously they all have a diachronic, developmental character. On the global level, there is, for instance, the American dream and the Russian dream. There used to be the civilizing mission of the European countries and the dream of the Third Reich, successor to the First and Second Reichs. There is the counter-stigmatization of the former outsiders, for example, of African countries in search of their negritude and their own dream (Elias and Scotson 1994, xxxvi).

We can see that the 'praise and blame gossip' in the statements by Cameron and Kerry has a great deal of fantasy content and this plays an important role in the perpetuation of double-binds, including those in which we are entangled with 'jihadist terrorists.' For example, Kerry's description of the Paris attackers as 'medieval and modern fascists,' would appear simply to be an attempt to stigmatise rather than the claim having any basis in reality. Likewise, the idea that they are 'psychopathic monsters' may make people in the West feel better about ourselves when we compare ourselves to IS but the idea that 'terrorists' are psychopaths tends again to be based on a 'fantasy approach' to the phenomenon. Horgan

(2005, 49), for example, has shown that the idea that 'terrorists' are psychopaths is for the most part, fallacy, as psychopaths tend not to have the levels of trust or bonding to make them suitable candidates for 'terrorist' activities.

The praise gossip that Kerry uses to describe people in the West is also imbued with fantasy content. For example, the idea that people in the West 'embrace peace' is simply not borne out by the reality of the numerous wars and conflicts Western countries have been involved in over both the long- and short-term. His words, however, do provide the function of helping to strengthen the bonds between people in the West who consider themselves to be 'civilised.'

'Jihadist terrorists' also use similar praise and blame gossip in their relations with us and their other enemies. For example, in a statement reported in the *Daily Mail* (Corcoran 2015) attributed to IS following the Paris attacks, IS claimed that the killers were acting under the guidance of Allah. In other words they were being praised as killing in the name of God. It also claimed they were 'soldiers of the Caliphate' and 'martyrs.' In contrast, the statement refers to Paris as the 'capital of prostitution and vice,' as having 'filthy streets and alleys' and French people as 'crusaders.' It claimed that French President, Francois Hollande, is an 'imbecile' and that the people who attended a concert that the attackers targeted were 'idolators gathered for a concert of prostitution and vice.'

The praise gossip used is an attempt to claim an almost omnipotence in relation to their killing of Westerners. At the same time their blame gossip attempts to delegitimise and dehumanise their enemies and is based on a collective 'blame fantasy' about French people, Europeans, non-Muslims more generally and people who do not adhere to their version of Islam. However, because the power differentials between IS and other 'jihadists' relative to France and the West, more generally, are so great in favour of the West, this kind of blame gossip fails to make much of an impact on the French or other Westerners.

However, another of the functions of blame gossip is to dehumanise (Elias 1997, 196; Vertigans 2011, 116) and delegitimise those it is used against. Again, in this context, this function is aimed more at members of the group who are deploying it as it can make denigration and violence easier towards those groups who are regarded as inferior or even 'sub-human.' This process of dehumanising others, as we have seen, is often associated with 'decivilising processes.'

Praise and blame gossip, therefore, play an important role in the perpetuation of double-binds that Western countries (and others) are enveloped with 'jihadist terrorists.' Within these particular established-outsider figurations there has been a spiralling towards 'dehumanisation' and violence which have contributed to decivilising processes. As part of these decivilising processes, 'jihadists' have tended to have undergone brutalisation processes and this certainly seems to have been the case with respect to the Paris attackers.

4. Double-Binds, Decivilising Processes and Detached-Outsiders: A Brief Comparison between Elias's Account of the 'Brutalisation' Processes of the *Freikorps* in Weimar Germany and Present-Day Western 'Jihadists'

We can see that the established-outsider figurations and double-binds within which the West and 'jihadists' are bound together are contributing to attacks like those in Paris, and if the security services and mainstream news media are to be believed many other potential attacks have been thwarted. For example, according to a report by *BBC News Online* (2015), the French interior minister, Bernard Cazeneuve, recently claimed that 10 attacks have been foiled in France since 2013. In another report, this time in *The Guardian* (Wintour 2015) newspaper, British prime minster, David Cameron has said that seven 'terrorist' attacks had been prevented in Britain in the past year. It was also reported last year in *The Telegraph* (Agence France-Presse 2015) that at least 5000 to 6000 Europeans had travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight, the majority were from France, Germany, the UK and Belgium. As such, the numbers who can be considered as outsider 'jihadists' in Europe is small but not insignificant. If we take into account the established-outsider figurations and double-binds in which the West is locked with 'jihadist terrorists,' we can conclude that within this context there are fairly clear 'decivilising processes' at play. That is, the configuration of the particular established-outsider relations between the West and 'jihadists' are exerting decivilising pressures, that, on balance, are greater on the 'jihadists' as outsiders. This is because, as outsiders, they tend to have a lower level of cohesion than established groups do and so their social standards are less able to hold up to the forces exerted on them within the double-bind. These pressures are being exerted on the 'jihadists' both in the West and in Syria and Iraq. Some examples of these will follow shortly. But that is not to say that there are not decivilising pressures being exerted on non-'jihadist' Westerners. The growth of far right movements and anti-immigrant sentiment has some relationship to the double-binds that the West finds itself in with 'jihadists,' evidence of which comes from the increase in Islamophobia in the West following the Paris attacks cited earlier. We can also see other ways in which the double-bind that the West and 'jihadists' are trapped in is working. For example, it has been claimed that the Paris attacks were in retaliation to France's participation in the bombing of IS in Syria that began two months before the attacks (see the *Business Insider* website (Engel 2015)). The subsequent increase in French bombing of IS together with Britain joining the conflict in Syria further highlights the double-bind and this spiral of violence. Likewise, the extent of the violence in Syria and Iraq is such that double-binds appear to be tightening there along with significant decivilising pressures. Accordingly, it can be argued that 'jihadist terrorists,' including the Paris attackers, have undergone brutalisation processes both in Europe and in Syria and Iraq.

Elias (1997, 186-96) described how these kinds of process worked in relation to the *Freikorps*[10] (who were military groups of former army officers that formed in Weimar Germany) in his book, *The Germans*. Very briefly, *Freikorps* were mainly made up of young middle-class former officers who, following the First World War, wanted to stay in the military because, as Elias (1997, 189) said, it gave them pleasure. Officers who joined the *Freikorps* did so because they were unable to find civilian roles that matched their status aims. Consequently, many travelled to the Baltic region to fight the Russian Bolsheviks at the request of Latvian nationalists, who, in turn, promised them land. They saw this kind of life as more fitting to their status aims. According to Elias (1997, 192) *Freikorps* members felt like 'detached-outsiders' in Germany and believed their home country was 'rotten to the core' was 'going under' and had a 'wish for this to happen.'

Western-born 'jihadists' also appear to have 'detached-outsider' status and often regard themselves and other Muslims as victims (Bracher 2009; Vertigans 2011). Like the *Freikorps*, there is also an idea among Western-born 'jihadists,' as well as many 'jihadist' groups more generally, that Western societies are rotten to the core and they have a wish that these societies will be replaced by an Islamic state. For the members of the *Freikorps*, said Elias (1997, 193), there was also a dream to return to the 'old world' where the German Empire is restored and military values were highly regarded again. 'Jihadists' dream of restoring the Islamic empire or Caliphate. Elias (1997, 196) pointed out that defeat after defeat, including that of the First World War, and the poor living conditions of the *Freikorps* in the Baltic had a number of effects on

[10] Elias (1997) pointed out that *Freikorps* were formed of military groups of former army officers following Germany's defeat in the First World War. He also (1997, 184) pointed out that, at the same time as Germany was defeated in the First World War, its leading social groups – the upper and middle classes – were challenged by the emergence of organised working class groups. The ruling elites saw themselves as the true representatives of Germany and they organised extra-state violence and propaganda against workers' organisations and Jews through the *Freikorps*. Elias (1997, 186) says of one particular *Freikorps* – the Ehrhardt Marine Brigade – was a precursor to 'the undercover terrorist organisation, '*Consul.*' One of the goals of this group, he says, was the "systematic murder of prominent politicians whom they regarded as 'undesirable.'" He added that the *Freikorps* and related student associations probably murdered hundreds or thousands of people in the early years of the Weimar Republic. The majority of students and the *Freikorps* wanted to overthrow the government of the Weimar Republic and took it for granted that violence was an appropriate way to do this. Elias (1997, 189) goes on to explain how the reduction of the size of the German army by the Allies led thousands of officers who were forced out of the army to form *Freikorps*. Elias argued that the Baltic campaign is useful in helping to explain the emergence of 'terrorist' groups in pre-World War II Germany. According to Elias, there was a radicalisation process that individuals went through on their way to joining these terrorist groups. They were: an officer of the Wilhelmine army, a member of the *Freikorps*; member of a conspiratorial secret association of a terrorist character, a member of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party.

them. Not least, this included a slow process of brutalisation and this was borne out in the 'orgy of violence' they undertook against their enemies. Elias stated:

> If one enquires into the conditions in a society under which civilized forms of behaviour and conscience begin to dissolve, one sees once again some of the stations on this path. It is a process of brutalization and dehumanization which, in relatively civilized societies, always requires considerable time. In such societies, terror and horror hardly ever manifest themselves without a fairly long social process in which conscience decomposes (Elias 2007, 196).

It appears that Western-born 'jihadist terrorists' like the Paris attackers and IS more generally, have also undergone a process of brutalisation. It certainly seems to be the case that many have engaged in an 'orgy of violence' in places like Syria and Iraq. A somewhat crude and general but nevertheless useful sketch of how Western-born 'jihadists' might become brutalised follows (see also Dunning 2014):

As already stated a person or persons might be 'outsiders' in the West due to their status as Muslims; they may also be immigrants or the children or grandchildren of immigrants and with that status they may also be subject to significant levels of blame gossip and associated group disgrace. Evidence from newspapers suggests that Muslims very often do tend to be the subjects of blame gossip. For example, the following three headlines are examples of the large amount of anti-Muslim rhetoric espoused by the British press. In 2010, *The Daily Express* (Twomey and Dixon) newspaper ran the front-page headline: 'Muslims tell British: Go to Hell.' In 2012, *The Daily Mail* (Faulkner) newspaper ran the headline: 'Muslim gang jailed for kidnapping and raping two girls as part of their Eid celebrations,' In 2013 *The Sun* (Beal, Hollywood and Prynne) newspaper ran the front-page headline: 'RAMADAN A DING-DONG.' In 2015, after the Paris attacks *The Sun* (Newton Dunn) newspaper ran the headline: '1 in 5 Brit Muslims' sympathy for jihadis.' Their outsider status as Muslims can be further compounded by the related marginalisation of many Muslim communities in certain parts of Western countries. This certainly seems to be the case with the experiences of many 'jihadist terrorists.' For example, those who undertook the Charlie Hebdo attacks[11] in Paris at the beginning of 2015 were said to have come from marginalised Parisian suburbs (see *The Guardian* (Chrisafis 2015)). Some of the more recent Paris attackers came from what has been described as the 'run-down' Brussels suburb of Molenbeek (see *The BBC,* (Forsyth 2015)).

The fact that many 'jihadists' come from groups that have relatively few power chances means that a variety of pathways to a meaningful social and political existence may be blocked to them. Like the *Freikorps*, such a position may not correspond to their status aims. On top of this low outsider status, part of the specific brutalisation process of some Western Muslims then manifests

[11] Al Qaeda claimed this attack, rather than IS.

itself in the perceived injustices towards Muslims around the world, together with a sense of injustice in the West due to having their routes to meaningful political expression curtailed. Accordingly, many develop a sense of being a victim, while, at the same time, their interest in perceived injustices towards Muslims across the world grows further. This is fuelled by watching horrific acts of violence towards Muslims by either the Western military or regimes, including those in Muslim countries, who are supported and/or armed by the West, on the internet and DVDs with other like-minded Muslims. At this point, they may well start to feel even more like detached outsiders and even as enemies of whatever Western country they live in. Nevertheless, they are likely to have knowledge of the 'global jihadist movement,' as well as a belief that Islam has a 'golden past' as an almost utopian society. This kind of fantasy-based knowledge and its related praise gossip tends to give them a sense of superiority and a feeling that non-Muslims are inferior. The existence of the 'global jihadist movement' offers a way out of their detached-outsider status in the West and many travel abroad to undertake 'jihad.' In the past, this has included to a variety of conflict zones, including Afghanistan in the 1980s and 2000s, Bosnia in the 1990s, Kosovo in the 1990s, Pakistan in the 1990s and 2000s and Iraq and Syria in the 2000s and 2010s. The willingness and desire to travel to conflict zones and fight is clear evidence of a partial brutalisation process and corresponds closely to the processes undertaken by those who joined *Freikorps*.

In the present-day context of Syria and Iraq, it appears that Western 'jihadists' have undergone further brutalisation while they have been there. For example, media reports (see *The Telegraph* (Ensor 2014)) suggest that fighters are living in squalor but with a degree of freedom unlike they are used to in Britain. The laws and rules that they must adhere to are not those they are used to in Western countries but are determined by the groups they are with in Syria and Iraq. There is likely to be a loosening of certain emotional constraints. In fact, this is probably encouraged to an extent. However, under certain instances in Syria and Iraq, foreign 'jihadists' will have to exert great self-control, such as adhering to a strict Islamic regime and other group pressures associated with fighting a war and 'jihad.' At other times, it is likely that they also express extremely uncontrolled releases of drives, perhaps during certain battle situations or in their treatment of prisoners. This is similar to Elias' (2008, 6) argument that people in the past and in less complex societies were or are often able to exert great self-control and at the same time were or are able to express extremely uncontrolled drives. He (2008, 81) pointed out that Japanese warriors during the Second World War could be observed undergoing these extreme swings in relation to battle situations and the treatment of prisoners.

It is important to note that the change in regulations for those who go to fight 'jihad' are changes in the social standard of self-regulation, not simply just changes to their patterns of self-control. They are, after all, living in different social configurations in the Syria and Iraq context. Adding to these brutali-

sation processes in Syria and Iraq, the 'jihadists' will be involved in fighting, seeing their companions killed and killing their enemies. There have been many reports of Western 'jihadists' having been killed in battle, dying as suicide bombers or through bombing strikes by Western countries. There are also high-profile cases, such as Mohammed Emwazi aka 'Jihadi John' who have been involved in torture, rape and murder, including the beheading and burning alive of prisoners, crucifixion and many other horrific acts, many of which they filmed and posted on the internet. These people have, in the words of Elias, undertaken 'an orgy of violence' in Syria and Iraq. This extreme violence has been imported back to the West by these brutalised 'jihadists, with the Paris attacks being the most bloody so far and has contributed further to decivilising processes in both Syria and Iraq and to an extent in Europe.

5. Conclusion – Towards a Loosening of the West-Jihadist Double-Bind

The problem of 'jihadist terrorism' for the West has been around for many years, albeit in different guises and posing different kinds of threats to the West and others. Its latest incarnation related to IS and groups like Al Qaeda, involves direct conflict with the West, which is resulting in mass killings like those in Paris in November 2015. The balances of power, however, between established groups in the West and outsider 'jihadists' weighs heavily in favour of established groups in the West, for the most part. Nevertheless, the West is caught in a double-bind with 'jihadists' and it seems that double-bind is tightening. Attacks like those in Paris and the subsequent retaliation by the West together with associated blame and praise gossip (much of it based in fantasy) show how this process is developing. Within this context a small number of outsider Muslims in the West are joining the 'global jihad,' which is often one of the early stages of their undergoing a process of brutalisation. For those Western 'jihadists' who travel to places like Syria and Iraq where decivilising processes appear to be dominating, their brutalisation develops further and their levels of mutual identification, particularly related to their enemies in Syria, Iraq and the West, are diminished significantly. This has contributed to the 'orgy of violence' in Syria and Iraq, including horrific murders, rape and torture, as well as attacks and planned attacks in the West. This level of brutalisation and violence is helping to perpetuate the double-binds with the West, which in turn is violently attacking the jihadists in Syria and Iraq.

The significant decivilising processes in Iraq and Syria are, partially through 'terrorist' attacks on the West and the killing of Westerners, at the same time contributing to decivilising pressures in the West, which are manifesting in stigmatisation and violence towards Muslims. This stigmatising of Muslims is

contributing to violent attacks by groups, particularly from the far right, on Muslim outsiders in the West.

A way out of this double-bind, therefore, would appear to be exceptionally difficult but not beyond the realms of possibility. There are, essentially, two related sociological processes that are useful in helping to loosen the double-bind. Accordingly, Elias stated that it is the role of sociologists:

> to find connections between social events, how their sequence can actually be explained, and what help sociological theories can offer in explaining and determining the trend of social problems – and, last but not least, in providing practical solutions to them (Elias 1978, 153).

As I suggested at the beginning, this paper is only able to examine a very small part of the complex processes and relations involved in the established-outsider figurations related to 'jihadist terrorism.' But I hope it may help towards providing a small part of a diagnosis of the problem. A more detached and 'fact-orientated' approach may help us to find a way out of the double-binds that we find ourselves wrapped in. However, it would not be appropriate nor feasible to try to offer any solutions to the problems here but that is mainly to do with constraints on space and because the central objective in researching 'jihadist terrorism' as with all other areas of research is the advancement of knowledge, rather than providing a blue-print for what I would like to happen. Nevertheless, if those members of established groups, such as politicians and media owners who are able to make policy and editorial changes are keen to reduce the threat from 'jihadist terrorism' there are some preliminary issues that can be discussed that could help us begin to work towards some solutions.

Undoubtedly, any kind of attempt that has been used so far seems to have failed. The most prominent example of a proposed solution, the 'war of terrorism' appears to have had the opposite effect and has tightened the double binds and contributed significantly to decivilising processes in both the Middle East and relatedly in Europe and the United States.

In light of this failure, 'jihadists' clearly are a threat to the interests and lives of people in the West and elsewhere. But the threat has tended to have been exaggerated. In fact, that exaggeration has contributed to exacerbating the threat by encouraging and legitimising the 'war on terrorism.' Despite the relatively limited threat posed by 'jihadists' in the West, people in the Middle East, the West and across the globe are dying at their hands. Accordingly, it would be necessary for established groups, including politicians and media owners to seek ways of loosening the constraints of the double-binds we are in with 'jihadists' by accepting that more detached approaches to the problem could offer a way out.

Without wanting to dismiss the problems of 'jihadist terrorism' outside of the West, there may be a number of ways that a focus on Western 'jihadists' could help to limit the threat that they are to the West and elsewhere. For example, policies that are able to focus on greater 'incorporation' of 'outsider'

Muslim communities in the West may offer better opportunities to those who might otherwise become 'jihadists,' that provide a great deal more meaning to their lives, including much greater access to meaningful political engagement within the context of Western democracies. Dunning, Murphy and Williams (1988) discussed the process of incorporation with respect to the British working class as follows:

> growing numbers of working-class people came to embrace aspects or variants of the values of the 'hegemonic' upper and middle classes. As part of this same overall process, members of the working class came to be accorded more of the rights of 'citizenship,' trades unions and other working-class organisations came to be accorded greater legitimacy in the eyes of socially-dominant groups, and more working-class people became, slowly at first, to become more affluent. It was a social process full of conflicts, but as it occurred, more and more members of the working class came to see class relations less solely in oppositional terms, and the resistance the majority of them continued to offer to their subordinate status came increasingly to be directed into formal channels, to be more concerned with issues of wages and conditions of work, and less characterised by open violence (Dunning, Murphy and Williams 1988).

The 'incorporation' (which is an example of a 'civilising' spurt) of the British working classes was not the direct consequence of a planned policy but it does provide a useful example of how changes in established-outsider relations can contribute to a reduction in conflict and violence. Accordingly, among many other things, in order to seek greater 'incorporation' of 'outsider' Muslims in the West, it would seem an appropriate step to limit the kinds of stigmatisation of Muslims that much of the Western media, politicians and others engage in. Much of this stigmatisation happens soon after 'terrorist' attacks and is an example of the kinds of 'fantasy-based blame gossip' and 'involved' thinking that contributes to the tightening of double-binds that has been a focus of this paper. As such, it may take a conscious effort on the part of politicians, media owners and editors and others to detach themselves sufficiently in order to approach the problem of 'jihadist terrorism' in a way that is more focused on lessening the threat over the longer-term with less of a focus on satisfying short-term wishes of their 'we-groups.'

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