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Terrorism and Radicalisation



European Network based  
prevention and learning program

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# Understanding Radicalisation

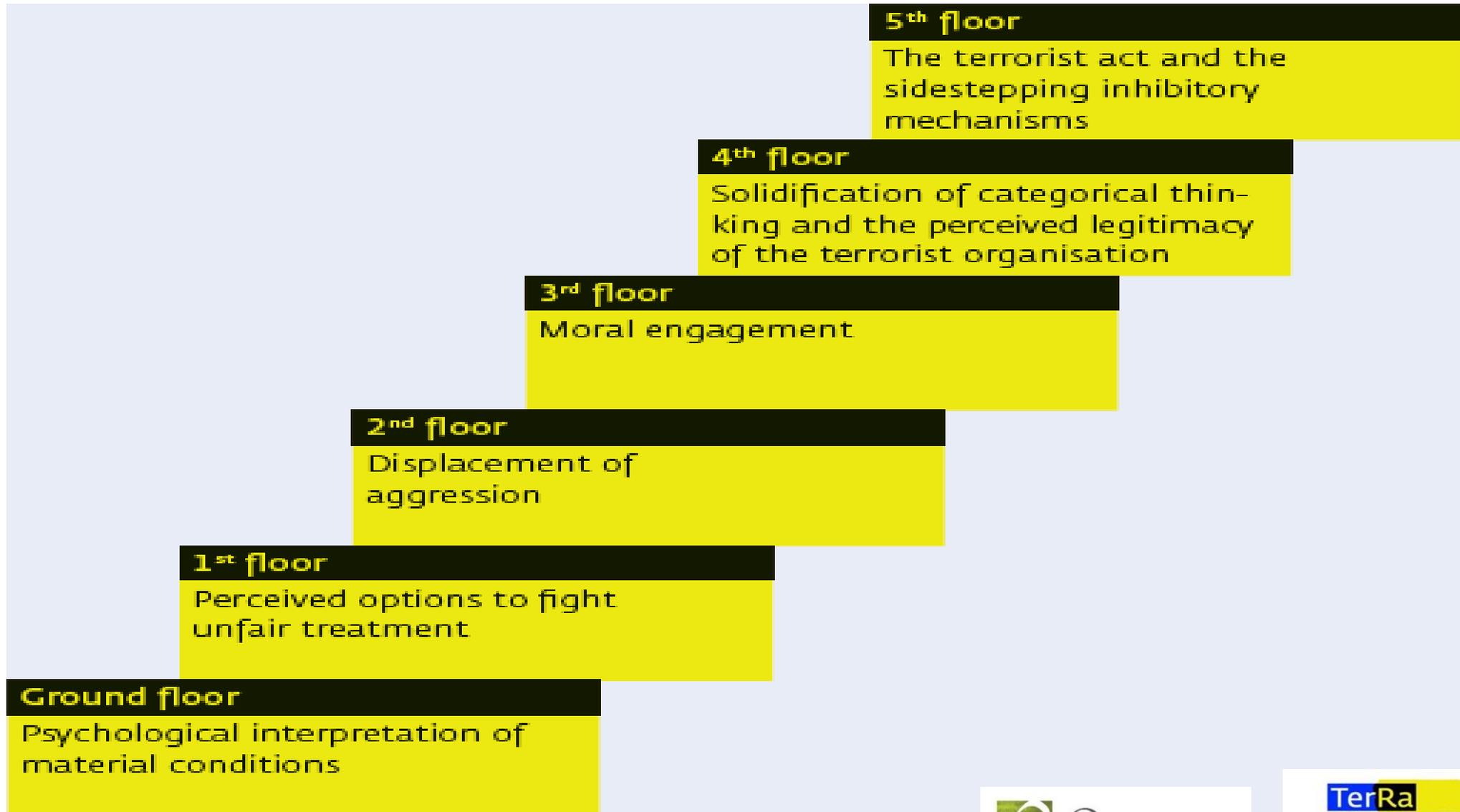
# What is Radicalisation

Numerous different definitions of radicalisation:

- An individual process influenced by group processes;
- Dominant political order and dialogue are rejected, as is belief in the ability of compromise and tolerance to generate change;
- Violent behaviour is increasingly adopted to achieve goals;
- Doesn't always lead to terrorism or violence but can lead to narrow-mindedness and suspicion, and contempt for the out-group.

# The Staircase Model

Based upon *The Staircase to Terrorism* (Moghaddam 2009)



# The Staircase Model

- Shows radicalisation as a decision-making process, the movement from one floor to the next.
- Whether or not a person stays on a floor or moves further depends on their experience at that stage.
- As an individual moves further up the staircase, or further along in the radicalisation process, they increasingly consider choices to be closed to them, and their potential for harming others increases along with it. Often it can be the only possible outcome.
- It is possible for individuals to climb back down the stairs (de-radicalise), again depending on their experience.

# Lost in Terminology

- ‘Radicalisation’, ‘extremism’ and ‘terrorism’ are all contested terms with different meanings attached to them by different individuals or in different contexts.
- A prolonged debate about what the term ‘radicalisation’ really means, and how it can sometimes be a good thing, is tangential and best avoided.
- It is more accurate to speak in terms of specific ideological outlooks that are easier to define, i.e. Islamist or far-right extremism.

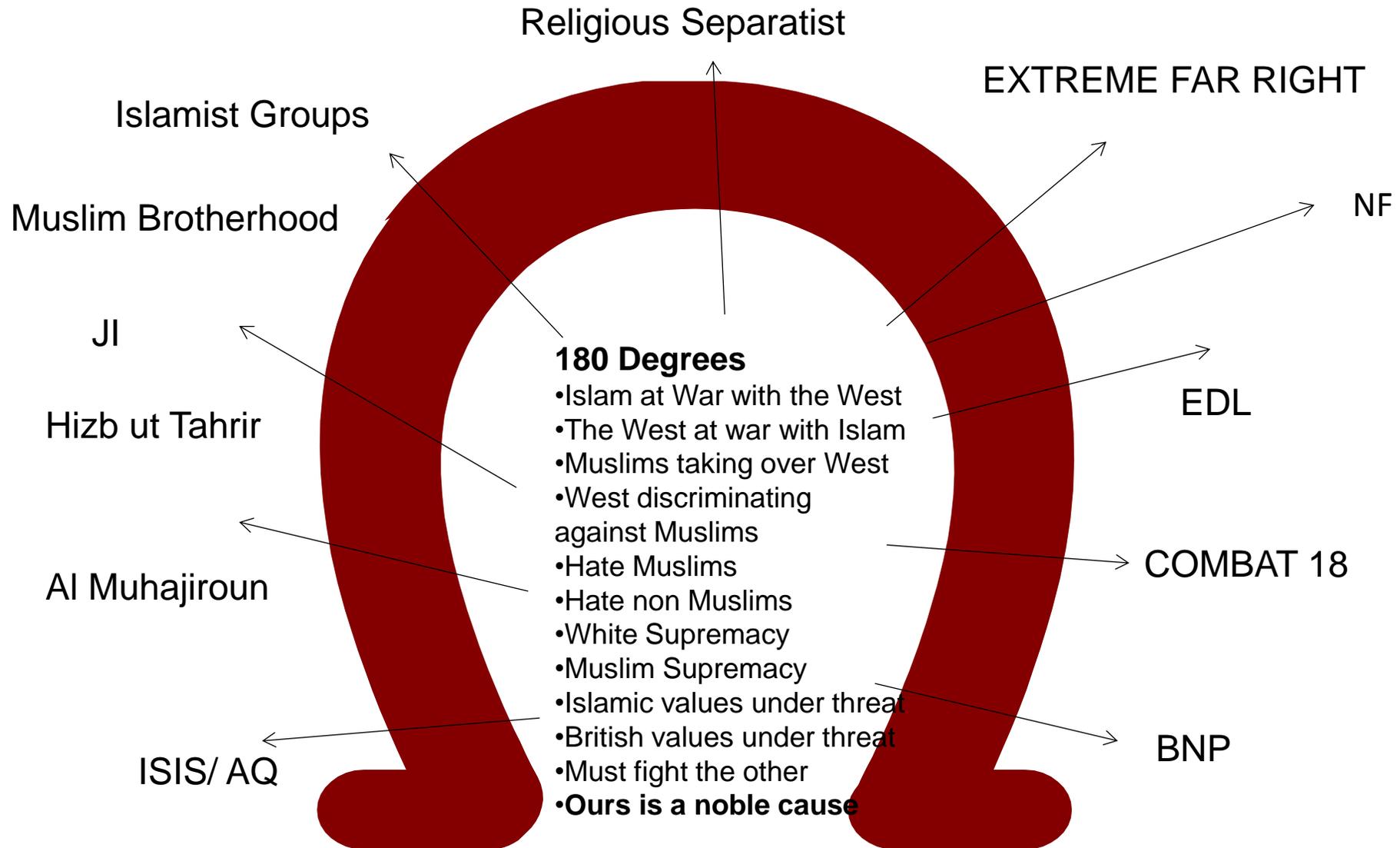
# Islamist Radicalisation

- Islam and the 'West' are competitors for global domination hence they should be in perpetual conflict
- Islam ordains a specific political model that is incompatible with secularism/democracy/liberalism
- The desire to see Islam dominate the world politically, through force if necessary
- A medieval interpretation of Shari'ah, that will trample on fundamental human rights, must be imposed on all people even if it is against their will
- Muslims who disagree with Islamist aims are corrupt, evil and allies of the West

# Far-Right Radicalisation

- Far-right groups have very specific ideas about the purity of a nation state-define territorial belonging historical ethnic ties to that territory.
- Those defined as the out-group are usually targeted through religious or ethnic differentiation.
- Commonly targeted 'enemies' of far-right groups include: Roma, Jews, Muslims, immigrants and ethnic minorities.
- Also targeted are individuals/organisations perceived as helping the out-group/enemies.
- Far-right extremist groups include the EDL (UK) or the NJN (NL).

# Extremism can work both Ways



Whoever Shouts the Loudest