

Dorling, D. (2012) Patterns of Violence, Letter, Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Summer, p.47.



Mathew Taylor is right to point out that it would only take ‘a terrorist with a dirty bomb’ to reverse the direction of Stephen Pinker’s graphs of victims of violence. However, this would not be evidence of an overall increase of violence. It could occur while the majority of us are becoming more peaceful. Harold Shipman’s and Anders Behring Breivik’s atrocities in Britain and Norway respectively meant that murder counts rose dramatically in both countries. In different ways both men’s arrogant views, that they were superior to their victims, were bolstered by similar views held by others. More people can become peaceful, but violence still rises overall. This is inevitable if we do not also moderate all ideologies that suggest that some people are superior to others, ranging from common everyday elitism to the most pernicious extreme racism.

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