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Terrorism as Deviance or Social Control

Suggestions for Future Research

Annamarie Oliverio* and Pat Lauderdale*

ABSTRACT

The political character of terrorism is most clearly manifested when new categories of terrorism are being created or old categories are being transformed. Historical and comparative analyses of terrorism demonstrate its diverse, complex nature. This complexity creates numerous problems for researchers who attempt to examine terrorism as an analytical construct rather than a polemical construct. We suggest that because the state exists in a symbiotic relationship to terrorism, responses to terrorism by any state, particularly at the definitional stage, appear to maintain a fairly consistent pattern. It is important to utilize a political process approach to the definition of terrorism to produce systematic and precise explanations. For future research, we suggest the importance of examining the term's latent structure of politicality, the role of hegemony, the low participation of one of the largest oppressed groups in the world and the art of statecraft.

Keywords: democracy, deviance, hegemony, state, terrorism, tyrants

Introduction

Under what conditions are acts of deviance or social control defined as terrorism, and what are the mechanisms devised for the ostensible resolution of these acts? As straightforward as these questions may appear, they involve a complex examination of culture. The means of defining and responding to terrorist incidents vary from state to state and are based on factors such as social, economic and political structures. We view the state here as the political apparatus that controls or attempts to control society. Central globalizing changes also are reflected in public (civic) and state policy on terrorism.

Historical comparisons demonstrate the changing construct of terrorism: writers from the English gentry such as Edmund Burke attempted to define the nascent French revolutionaries as 'terrorists,' while Robespierre and the Jacobins considered systematic terrorism to be a crucial and inherent component of any nation-state attempting to replace its archaic, monarchical structures with a 'democratic' republic. In attempting to examine these

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variations to discover the logic and coherence of terrorism as an analytical construct rather than simply a polemical construct, what becomes obvious for research is the danger of producing cross-national generalizations that are sweeping and ethnocentric. As Crenshaw (1995: 6) notes:

In an ideal scientific world an episode of ‘terrorism’ would be identical in each circumstance, historical reality cannot be tested under laboratory conditions, especially when that reality involves violence. *Terrorism is an ambiguous variable not easily measured or quantified, in part because there are multiple forms of terrorism, and they are easily confused with other styles of violence.* [emphasis added]

On the other hand, responses to terrorism by states, particularly at the definitional stage, appear to maintain a fairly consistent pattern. Despite the conceptual problems acknowledged by most researchers, when the term ‘terrorism’ is invoked by states to define a particular act of violence, its meaning is understood and the state’s response is clear. Researchers, in their attempts to be precise and systematic, often appear helpless in dissociating terrorism from its polemical construct. Meanwhile, the state exists in a symbiotic relationship to terrorism.

A number of theoretical premises underlie an examination of the state’s symbiotic relationship to terrorism. First, inherent in definitions of terrorism is a *latent structure of politicality* that allows for practices that maintain, create, and change its definition (Lauderdale, 1980, 2003); second, the definition of terrorism is a critical part of the production of hegemony, including specific conceptions of ideological and political boundaries and dominant historical narratives; third, though participation in terrorism historically has been recorded as low, explanations accounting for this lack of participation are unclear as research on women and terrorism reveals; fourth, terrorism as an analytical concept is most heuristic when it is examined as a relative rhetoric intrinsic to the process or art of statecraft, essential to the constitution of states and their continued sovereign stability and expansion (Toggia et al., 2000).

A Political Process Approach to the Definition of Terrorism

Two important dimensions of the definitional process involve examining the intent and the objective consequences of an act (Gouldner, 1973; Lauderdale, 1980, 2003; Merton, 1968). Intent of the actors is a central variable in defining them as terrorists. Typically, this determination of intent follows the legal criteria of *mens rea*. Yet, the use of the *mens rea* criterion in law has been shown to be a conundrum. For example, the insanity defense is used as an exception to *mens rea*. Social analyses that base their definition of terrorism on such legal criteria have the unfortunate unintended consequence of ignoring the process of negotiation involved in defining ‘intent.’ Again, if we look at the insanity

defense, it often is used as a bargaining device. The status of 'sanity' is something to be negotiated. When we look at acts defined as terrorism, the first criterion typically employed is the intent or motivation of the actors. What was the intent, for example, of the actors who flew airplanes into the Twin Towers? What was the intent of the actors who bombed a train station in Madrid? What was the intent of the suicide bomber or the Unabomber? Most research on terrorism concentrates on explaining why particular actors engage in certain forms of action. For this reason, when an act is defined as 'religious terrorism,' we are being told that the 'intent' of the act was to kill for religious reasons, or in the name of God (Stern, 2003). During the Spanish Inquisition, thousands were killed in the name of God for religious reasons, yet such acts were not at the time nor are they presently defined as terrorism. Mies (1986: 83) notes in her research on the terrorizing of midwives as witches that it:

was directly connected with the emergence of modern society: the professionalization of medicine, the rise of medicine as a 'natural science,' the rise of science and of modern economy. The torture chambers of the witch-hunters were the laboratories where the texture, the anatomy, the resistance of the human body – mainly the female body – was studied. One may say that modern medicine and the male hegemony over this vital field were established on the base of millions of crushed, maimed, torn, disfigured and finally burnt, females' bodies. There was a calculated division of labor between Church and State in organizing the massacres and the terror against the witches.

Moreover, various cult leaders in the past decade have killed hundreds of people in the name of religion, yet these acts have not been defined as terrorism. The intent of these various actors has been defined differently, because intent is socially negotiated.

Another aspect in the process of defining an act as terrorism is based on the consequences of the action. This aspect focuses on the type of harm caused by an action and whether or not the act is political. Some writers suggest that certain acts are inherently terroristic depending upon the magnitude of the harm they cause. For example, the killing of 6 million Jews during the Second World War was an act of terrorism. The dropping of two atomic bombs in Japan when it was clear the war virtually had ended was an act of terrorism. The killing of nearly 3000 people as a result of the 9/11 incident in the United States was an act of terrorism. This *a posteriori* approach to defining terrorism is particularly useful in defining whether the act was revolutionary, reactionary, or one of resistance. Each category serves as an analytical departure point that represents: 1) different political ideals, 2) different structures of domination, and 3) proposed paths for change. History books, for example, are replete with acts of terrorism that are defined as revolutionary in nature. The American revolution, the French revolution, the Russian revolution, the Chinese revolution are just a few examples of such action.

Defining the intent and consequences of an action can provide some interesting departure points for the analysis of terrorism; however, to study the social negotiation of definitions, the role of various societal mechanisms such as professional organizations, social movements, institutionalized actors, moral entrepreneurs, the media, and the state also need to be examined. Indeed, the political character of terrorism is most clearly manifested when new categories of terrorism are being created or old categories are being transformed. The category of ethnic-nationalist terrorism, for example, has been used to include religion as an aspect of ethnicity and culture. The Irish Republican Army, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and even Zionism were defined as ethnic-nationalist groups. Religion as an inherent part of ethnicity and culture was included in this definition. Today, the creation of religious terrorism represents an additional category, whether new or adapted from the old category of ethnic-nationalism. Under what conditions do we define groups as religious versus ethnic-nationalist terrorists? These alternative conceptions of terrorism necessitate examining the latent structure of politicality in all definitions of terrorism. It is this latent structure of politicality that makes possible the redefinition of an act in terms ranging from ethnic-nationalist terrorism to religious terrorism to revolutionary terrorism to protective reaction. Briefly then, terrorism can be examined fruitfully as a creation of the state and its definition is socially negotiated. As such, this definition is created, maintained and changed through political processes. It is essential to recognize this political character of terrorism in order to understand and explain its diverse manifestations and variability.

The study of terrorism, therefore, requires that we examine how various political entities construct and dismantle definitions of terrorism. First of all, actors (groups, organizations, states) with varying resources create, maintain or transform definitions of terrorism. Second, these ensuing processes require delineation at various stages: 1) The processes need to be examined during the conditions under which the definitions are created; 2) the initial consequences of those definitions; 3) the routinization (or normalization) of those definitions; and 4) the application of sanctions to those definitions. Rather than emphasizing the motivations of terrorist action, the examination centers on the sources of changing definitions of terrorism. Research on terrorism typically ignores most of the political processes involved in its definition in exchange for justifying political motivations.

The Role of Hegemony

Though most scholars use the term hegemony as a synonym for domination, Gramsci's explication of this concept as a 'war of position' that takes place through the institutions and organizations of civil society is more heuristic in examining terrorism. Hegemony, or the war of position, as a social process, includes those who dominate modes of production, imposing and promoting

crucial world views through cultural means. These world views are expressed through central information sources and societal institutions such as the media, education, church, health practitioners, and even academics in producing meaning for the social world. Gramsci defines the war of position as a slow, protracted struggle involving diverse, 'non-violent' aspects of civil society. He conceives the war of position in terms of the role of the state in civil society. This strategy for social change is more effective and successful in defining the collective will formation rather than a 'war of maneuver,' which he defines as a strategy of quick, direct, often violent confrontation between opposing forces in a society. Revolutions and coups d'état provide classic examples of the war of maneuver. The war of maneuver typically is ineffective unless it is followed by a war of position.

Thus, hegemony as a cultural concept includes both political and economic aspects of society. Hegemony is an order in which a certain way of life and thought dominates, in which one worldview permeates customs, politics and religion, especially their intellectual and moral connotations. In simple terms, hegemony involves all the processes and strategies which develop a society's (or the world's) 'common sense' – a taken-for-granted understanding of reality that is beyond critique or judgment (Augelli and Murphy, 1988). For example, it was common sense during the Middle Ages to believe in Aristotle and Ptolemy's conception of the earth as stable and the center of the universe. Those who challenged such common sense were eliminated or imprisoned. Christopher Columbus's discovery of America remains a matter of common sense, even though indigenous peoples in hundreds of diverse 'nations' already lived there. It was also a matter of common sense that people biologically belonged to different 'races,' the Aryan race being superior. This latter taken-for-granted reality led to the extermination not only of European Jews during the Second World War, but also, at other times and places, African Americans and countless indigenous cultures throughout the world. With respect to the Horn of Africa, for example, Toggia et al. (2000: xv) note that:

To marginalized indigenous groups, the crisis materializes itself as social experiences of terror. Contemporary social life in the Horn region is generally a state-orchestrated experience that terrorizes the majority of the people.

In fact, ethnic superiority is still used as a 'common sense' justification for eliminating diverse peoples, especially poor people. Hegemony, therefore, is a practical struggle: a struggle waged through intellectual and moral leadership leading to collective, objective will formation. For a hegemonic order to survive, individuals must reproduce interpretations and definitions of persons, places, and events that inform social practices and discourse. This information must resemble interpretations advanced by the practical and discursive elements of the larger social structure.

An example of hegemony as it relates to terrorism can be gleaned from

the immediate reaction of the state to the Oklahoma City Federal Building explosion. Without any evidence, the US state blamed the bombing on Middle Eastern terrorists. Until conclusive evidence to the contrary was found, the media transmitted different versions of the 'Middle East' terrorist story to the world. In the United States, for example, because of the effectiveness of hegemony, 'terrorism' has become virtually synonymous with Middle Eastern religious fanaticism and it is 'common sense' to suspect someone of Middle Eastern origin as the perpetrator of such violence. Alternative explanations for and understandings of terrorism that may provide 'good sense' are typically marginalized. Terrorism, therefore, remains an enigmatic and elusive phenomenon in society.

Women and Terrorism

Research on women and terrorism is particularly scant despite participation of women in so-called terrorist groups throughout history. Today, interest in the involvement of women in terrorist activity is reappearing as Muslim females, for example, ostensibly are increasingly being used to carry out suicide attacks in the Middle East (Cunningham, 2003; Monshipouri and Karbasioun, 2003). Though still exceptionally low compared to male participation, women historically have participated in terrorism. Yet little scholarly attention has been devoted to examining such participation.

Most research on women and terrorism uses theoretical perspectives and models from the area of female criminality (Bustamente, 1973; Cowie et al., 1968; Davis, 1937; Freud, 1933; Konopka, 1966; Lombroso and Ferrero, 1897; Messerschmidt, 1986; Pollak, 1950; Rappaport, 1957; Shapiro, 1996; Simon, 1975; Thomas, 1923; Vedder and Sommerville, 1970; Willis and Rushforth, 2003). For the most part, this area of research has been narrow or biased (cf. LaFree and Dugan, 2002). It attempts to examine female criminality in terms of physiological, psychological, biological and sexual factors. Thus, female participation in terrorism usually is explained on the basis of mental, emotional and even 'genital' deficiencies. Other interpretations seek to relate female terrorism to social factors such as female emancipation. Such research suggests that female participation in terrorism increases as women become more emancipated in society (Adler, 1975; Weinburg and Eubank, 1987). As women achieve egalitarian status in society, they increasingly participate in activities from which they have been excluded by male domination, such as terrorism (Georges-Ageyie, 1983).

According to Cunningham (2003) and Victor (2003), female participation in terrorism in the form of suicide bombers in the Middle East has increased recently, suggesting that female participation in terrorism is on the increase and that this trend will continue. They argue this increase will continue because of local and regional conflicts, the fact that women attract less attention

and women are equally willing to participate and be rewarded for their participation. No doubt, historically women have played important roles, from gathering intelligence to violent activity. Yet, despite similar claims from past research regarding the increase of female participation in 'ideological' forms of terrorism, it remained low compared to men's. Women's participation tended to be the exception, not the rule. If anything useful is to be gleaned from history, and in particular from women's history, it is that female participation in terrorist-type violence, though particularly poignant, is remarkably low. To be sure, a number of famous female 'terrorists' have been involved in ostensible terrorist activity. Among them are Ulrike Meinhof, Margherita Caghol, Leila Khaled, Samira, Angela Atwood, Bernadine Dohrn, and Fusako Shigenobu, to name a few. But perhaps one of the interesting conundrums regarding research on women and terrorism is that much of the research begins with the assumption that women become involved in terrorism for much the same or similar reasons as men. Rather, we should ask under what conditions do women participate in terrorist-type violence and under what conditions is this participation recognized widely.

To explain such a low level of participation as simply a reflection of the subordination of women in society is too simplistic and denies other forms of subordination besides that which is gender-related. It assumes patriarchy and domination as the social norm which women strive to attain or maintain. Also, it denies the role of the state in defining the activities of women as political versus terrorist. But mostly, it denies women's ability to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence, despite their existence in patriarchal, social structures. This perspective distracts from the history of female struggles and their successes without the use of domination and violence. Anyone can learn to use weapons. Yet, the increased social, political, and economic status of women has not been achieved by suicide bombers, torture, biological weapons, or warfare. Women typically do not engage in terrorist activity because terrorism is a manifestation of larger societal transformations and structures of domination. Women are usually the victims of domination, not the perpetrators; thus, working within the structures of domination of modern and traditional societies is of little use in addressing women's concerns and can even be counterproductive (Eisler, 1987; Mies, 1998; Oliverio, 1998a; Werlhof, 1997).

Because of women's underrepresentation, their participation in terrorism during the past four decades provides more than a mere curiosity. Women comprise a self-conscious, dynamic sector of society that often perceives itself as an oppressed majority. Women are oppressed not only because of religion, ethnicity, or national origin, but also because of gender. Yet, women typically have not mobilized other women en masse to use violence in their struggles as men have. This difference is not due to 'female passivity,' lack of education, or other ostensible 'deficiencies.' The difference is due to the recognition and historical knowledge that using patriarchal strategies of domination such as

violence cannot produce positive changes for society as a whole. Simply stated, terrorist violence, whether perpetrated by states or challenge groups, is a tactic that privileges structures of domination and hierarchy. There is a deep reason for the North American Indian saying: 'A society is not conquered until the hearts of the women are on the ground' (Allen, 1986). Consequently, the few women who choose to participate in terrorism reflect the limitations offered by patriarchal states, not women's emancipation.

'Violence begets violence.' Is this a credo women understand intuitively and experientially, accounting for their very low participation in terrorist activity? Or do women recognize the deeper, structural futility of employing a patriarchal tactic that dominates definitions of and responses to terrorism? Most of the research that exists to examine terrorism, female or male, predominantly analyzes males and male interests. Consequently, national security efforts also are largely centered on the identification of terrorism based on 'male' patterns. At a time when technological innovation changes rapidly, innovative ideas are needed to respond to them. A comprehensive analysis of female terrorism can be significant in exposing the hegemonic facade of patriarchy and in the construction of alternative methods for controlling terrorism in general.

Examining Terrorism via the State

Since 11 September 2001, interest in terrorism globally, and particularly in the US, has increased dramatically. The extraordinary drama of watching two of the most prominent pillars of the global economy be destroyed in the blink of an eye and with the 'simplest' of methods has left many people horrified and resolute that 'terrorism' must cease to exist. Despite the media's and state's significant efforts, however, attempts to manage terrorism, let alone eradicate it, are becoming increasingly violent and ineffective (Colvard, 2002; Lauderdale, 2003).

Barely two months before the Twin Towers incident, the *New York Times* published a short article entitled 'The Declining Terrorist Threat,' by a former State Department counter-terrorism specialist. He ironically and poignantly states the importance for the state to be strongly prepared to confront terrorist incidents, but he also writes (Johnson, 2001: 3):

I hope for a world where facts, not fiction, determine our policy. While terrorism is not vanquished in a world where thousands of nuclear warheads are still aimed across the continents, terrorism is not the biggest security challenge confronting the United States, and it should not be portrayed that way.

Did state policy reflect this view? It seems at that time, the counter-terrorist specialist who wrote this article recognized that the state was merely providing 'lip-service' to the widespread concern about terrorism in order to justify its expanding budget including an expansion of police-state technology,

surveillance, bureaucracies, related intelligence agencies, and the military. State security agents had been aware for years of the growing problem of Islamic extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as conflicts between Islamists and Hindus and related problems in Colombia, Ecuador, Nigeria, Indonesia, or the Philippines. And yet, nothing significant was being done about 'terrorism' or about the increasing global social, political and economic issues that might have mitigated or prevented violent confrontations such as the attack on the Twin Towers.

Indeed, prior to the Twin Towers incident, despite the state's ostensible focus on terrorism, critical research on terrorism was in decline. Since 11 September 2001, a plethora of 'new' and 'renewed' terrorist experts, specialists and agencies have been born. Now, terrorism is one of the top priorities of the state, and also of news reports and diverse portrayals of villains in the popular media. Not since the fight against communism, has the US been clear about the enemy it is to defeat . . . or is it? After all, the war is against 'terrorism' a type of violence that is based on a political construct. And such a construct is present in all states from liberal democratic at one end of the continuum to dictatorships at the other end. What happens after the infamous Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein and others are defeated? Eventually and inevitably, does one have to fight oneself?

One of the most significant and ironic aspects to the nascent counter-terrorist intelligentsia is that their dominant ideas are structurally very similar to the prescriptions offered by Edmund Burke in the late 1700s to rid the world of the 'rule of the masses,' which he defined as terrorism. To be sure, weaponry is much 'smarter' and more deadly today than in Burke's time, but the dominant ideas guiding state definitions and policy about terrorism fundamentally have not caught up. In essence, there is little difference between the way the concept of terrorism is invoked in most contemporary democratic states' political discourses and the discourse of classic 18th-century intellectuals such as Edmund Burke. In *Reflections*, Burke describes the newly emerging states of his time, the United States and France, as being governed by a 'college of armed fanatics, for the propagation of the principles of assassination, robbery, fraud, faction, oppression and impiety' (Ebenstein, 1969: 235). In identifying the movement as 'fanatic,' Burke summons a European crusade to crush, by force of arms, the revolutionary spirit of democracy. As an aristocrat, the idea of being governed by anyone of an inferior class was deplorable and ridiculous. Peasants, workers, and merchants were simply not learned enough to lead society. Today, no longer worried about the inappropriateness of the 'rule of the masses,' the state is concerned about other groups considered inappropriate to have a political voice. For example, those people attempting to shed colonial rule are defined as ethnic-nationalist terrorists; people attempting to assert the importance of their cultural beliefs are defined as religious terrorists; people attempting to fight against economic oppression are defined as ideological terrorists; and

indigenous peoples from rural areas throughout the world attempting to declare their existence are defined as guerrillas. Thus, a perspective combining the examination of terrorism in its broad, political and historical context with its present global manifestations provides a heuristic understanding of the relationship between the state and terrorism.

Research on the state and terrorism also profits analytically from the inclusion of areas such as deviance, social control, and international law. Since the 1960s, the United States has seen substantial growth in the literature on deviance and social control and international law. In contrast, research on terrorism provides little more than a demonization of terrorists (Alexander and Swetnam, 2001; Emerson, 2002; Grosscup, 1998; Jenkins, 1985; Lesser and Tellis, 1996; Nacos, 2000; Reich, 1998; Stohl, 1988; Whittaker, 2001; Wilkinson, 1986, 1990). This demonization is explained (and justified) according to ethnocentric versions of reductionist psychology supporting motivational generalizations, despite the obvious heterogeneity among ostensible terrorist groups. While the importance of a historical and cultural analysis is frequently acknowledged, most research on terrorism is narrow in scope, providing sweeping individual-oriented generalizations and reductionist historical chronologies. The preoccupation and sensationalization of terrorism today allows policymakers, media, and researchers to avoid investigating and understanding more fundamental issues such as societal transformations and structures of domination of which terrorism is only a manifestation (Crenshaw, 1990; della Porta, 1995; Hoffman, 1999; Tilly, 1985, 2004a, 2004b; Wagner-Pacifici, 1986). Future research would benefit from more detailed, comparative data on the relationship between definitions of terrorism and social control (Oliverio, 1998b; Lauderdale and Toggia, 1999).

Besides providing a broad theoretical framework for exploring the relationship between terrorism, states, and social control, comparative research on the relationship between definitions of terrorism and social control needs to include a detailed analysis of how events are perpetuated, disseminated and experienced in a particular culture through hegemonic processes. Some of these events become narratives that transcribe historical facts into moral or immoral acts, vehicles of social values, and prescriptive behavior. Such acts sometimes become symbols, models or paradigms of behavior, especially when the narratives are internalized and become part of the collective memory by which people are socialized to perceive the meaning of events, to interpret them and to initiate new ones. For example, the Boston Tea Party, the 47 masterless Japanese samurai, Robin Hood, Columbus sailing the ocean blue, 'revolutionary' George Washington, or the Spirit of Crazy Horse are not simple political events or 'facts.' They all share an authentically popular base and historical complexity; yet, in the rush to make disciplinary generalizations that justify the enactment of policy initiatives, the history of diverse cultures in the United States and around the world is presented as an uncontested chronology of

political events, devoid of social context, that together or in isolation may 'cause' another event, often motivated by politics or pathology. Colvard (2002: 2) points out in her analysis of current research on terrorists that 'people who are willing to use violence in the service of a political idea are usually rather ordinary human beings . . . not devils or psychopaths but people who may base their actions on morality, commitment, and group loyalty, which in other circumstances we would consider admirable.'

As an analytical concept, terrorism can be viewed as a manifestation of larger societal transformations and structures of domination. Indeed, structures of domination provide the essence of discovering the logic and coherence of terrorism. While terrorism has been characterized in terms of psychological motivations, economic deprivation and ideological politics, an approach that examines the 'structure' of terrorism has been neglected. To understand the structure of terrorism, its logic and coherence, we need to examine the structure of the state and its transformation. Past research on terrorism has projected the role of the state as simply reactive to 'terrorist' challenges, as if terrorism is an objective reality unrelated to the state's polemical constructs.

Particularly since the Enlightenment era, terrorism as a polemical construct and as a state policy has been inextricably associated with the formation of modern nation-states, including control and expansion of territory, moral boundaries, human resources, and the construction of political identities:

The New World order, employing only part of Enlightenment discourse, continues stressing sameness and similarity rather than diversity across the human condition. Under the rubric of rationality there is the claim that the Order will pull in those who have traditionally been included, leading to an eventual melting pot where identity maintenance is minimal, since identity transformation is archaic or unrecognized. 'Emancipation,' and 'rational social order' are central and interrelated concepts of the project with an undefined or varying concept of democracy touted as essential. Democracy for the Order typically is a rhetorical device for maintaining or gaining power. Often the reality is 'elite democracy' as local elites compete with one another for power while attempting to service local capital and the requirements of international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Or, the imposition of external control is imposed without local participation. (Lauderdale and Toggia, 1999: 159–60)

As the site claiming the successful 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory,' the state is symbiotically related to terrorism. This relationship provides two essential features: first, the state reinforces the use of violence as a viable, effective, mitigating force for managing conflict; second, such a view is reinforced by culturally constructed and socially organized processes, expressed through symbolic forms and created in complex ways to present simplified social interests. In this context, terrorism is invoked in the art

of statecraft when multiple often conflicting versions of the past are produced and when particular historical moments become sites of intense struggle. This would appear to be one such crucial time for many states throughout the world, including the United States.

The manner in which societies maintain a vision of their collective selves with projected narratives of time and place produces different types of terrorism and different state responses to it. Rather than referring only to its current western legal or extralegal status, the process by which cultural meanings and inscribed motives constitute terrorist violence must be explicated. In the United States, for example, terrorism has been defined as a type of political violence undermining the legitimacy of the state. Yet George Washington is viewed as an American hero of independence (by the US and other nation-states seeking independence) despite actions that at the time were defined as treasonous and violent by the existing British state (Lauderdale, 1980).

Terrorism, therefore, is a culturally produced phenomenon both in terms of a global (geo-political) context and a specific cultural context. Terrorism is not a discrete topic that can be easily and conveniently examined apart from the political, social, and economic context in which it takes place. Terrorism is a creature of its own time and place. 'Time,' for example, important to a particular terrorist act or group, may be a moment, day, month, decade or century previous to an event. And, the explanation of 'time' may be an integral part of a people's historiography, traditional narratives, legends or myths constituting their identity. 'Place' can also refer to more than geography. Place can refer to areas of the past, projected areas, utopian visions, or spiritual bonds.

An approach examining the process by which definitions of terrorism are negotiated within the global context compared to definitions of self, such as within projected narratives, could provide some useful insights on the cultural context of terrorism. A projected narrative refers to any text or textual display that tells a story with a prescription of normative behavior viewed as transcendent collective values of morality. Such narratives also can prescribe ideal directions or exemplary paths for life and death so that individuals can productively and properly contribute to a particular culture and to its future. Recent events perpetrated by Islamic extremists, for example, are praised as heroic by like-minded cultural extremists. Militia-type groups exist all over the world, though they may identify themselves differently and pray to different gods. Viewed from a contrasting cultural context, these projected narratives can be a dynamic and crucial process that is labeled as terrorism.

In examining the structures of domination in which terrorism is manifested, it seems appropriate to include any organization or state that privileges hierarchy and power relationships. Terrorism can then be explicated on a continuum from liberal-democratic states to tyrannies. Terrorism appears to occur in all societies. However, what changes is the rhetoric, not the action. As Hedges (2002: 9) notes:

Organized killing is done best by a disciplined, professional army. But war also empowers those with a predilection for murder. Petty gangsters, reviled in pre-war Sarajevo, were transformed overnight at the start of the conflict into war heroes. What they did was no different. They still pillaged, looted, tortured, raped, and killed; only then they did it to Serbs, and with an ideological veneer. Slobodan Milosevic went one further. He opened up the country's prisons and armed his criminal class to fight in Bosnia.

In a parallel vein, the analysis of terrorism at different levels of analysis and degrees of abstraction can provide useful insights. For example, under what conditions would 'sexual assault' or child abuse be considered a form of terrorism? A New York City gang member being tried in 2005 under the state anti-terrorist statute raises a question about the conditions under which gang violence is classified as terrorist activity. If large organizations such as states can legitimize the use of violence or force to control conflict, then groups such as families or other associations can emulate these structures. They are reproduced within processes of hegemony and therefore can be justified as part of society's common sense.

Definitions of terrorism may be found in texts from theme parks to think tanks. It is clear from events concerning the United Nations and the decision to invade Iraq that the United States' conceptualization of terrorism often dominates globally. Thus, mainstream definitions of 'terrorism' adopted in the United States are crucial to the rest of the world. Yet, the United States' intelligentsia could not predict the simplicity of technique used in the Twin Towers attack. While the US focuses on expensive, high-level technologies, little attention is devoted to diverse tactics and techniques, which can be relatively inexpensive and effective. Al Qaeda, for example, frequently uses simple tactics and techniques, such as employing commercial planes to demolish the World Trade Center in New York.

A central theme in this comparative analysis is that US definitions of 'terrorism,' particularly those negotiated by mainstream officials and organizations, are crucial to understanding the existence of diverse 'terrorist' actors, groups, and states (cf. Wagner-Pacifici, 1986), particularly their global survival. Most prior research on terrorism has attempted to construct, redefine, refine, and elaborate upon various existing definitions, models, and interpretive frameworks. Such research examines questions or interpretations about issues and incidents for the purposes of arriving at some universal truths or generalizations. It has been a method for fixing a meaning to terrorism by defining its causes, consequences, and countermeasures (see Crenlinsten and Schmid, 1995). Research, however, that examines the constructive processes, forms and interests in a complex society as they produce different versions of reality is less common because it is considered transitory and relativistic. In the attempt to research and explicate terrorism, it is important to bring these two approaches

together. The futility of rejecting either approach at the expense of the other might leave us still believing that the earth is stable and at the center of the universe.

Conclusion

Erikson (1966: 22), in a study on boundary crises in colonial United States, suggests that 'men who fear witches soon find themselves surrounded by them; men who become jealous of private property soon encounter eager thieves.' By extension, men who fear terrorism will also find themselves surrounded by terrorists. The implementation of the Patriot Act in the United States and similar acts elsewhere demonstrates the desperation of men attempting to seek and destroy terrorism. Under this act, any potential act of deviance can be defined as a potential act of terrorism. This raises more questions: under what conditions will the state define acts of deviance as acts of terrorism? And how will these acts and definitions be represented by the institutions of civil society? For scholars whose purpose it is to construct and test ideas rather than polemical categories, what are the implications of the state's definition of terrorism for research and knowledge? Under what conditions does research provide the intellectual leadership needed to construct 'common sense' rather than 'good sense?'

For researchers, some categories and stereotypes about terrorism have provided useful departure points. It is clear, however, that the more researchers discover and examine terrorism, the more there is to know, and the less valid common stereotypes or assumptions become. Perhaps it is useful to examine and learn the three 'Rs' of terrorism: revolution, reaction, and resistance. But it is also important to remember that such differences may be more a matter of subjective analysis than scientific inquiry, because there is no consistent unity in the way terrorism has been defined or constructed throughout the ages. Systematic patterns, however, can be examined when the state defines an entity, whether it is an individual or another state, as threatening to its survival and legitimacy. Under these conditions, terrorism finds its name, time, and place.

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