TERROISM, IDENTITY AND LEGITIMACY: THE FOUR WAVES THEORY AND POLITICAL VIOLANCE

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ABSTRACT

There is a multitude of situations capable of provoking terrorism. We find terrorists among deprived and uneducated people, and among the affluent and well educated; we find terrorists among psychotic and 'normal' healthy people; and among people of both sexes and of all ages. Terrorism occurs in rich as well as in poor countries in the modern industrialised world.

When analysing the causes of terrorism, we are confronted with different levels of explanations. These are clearly marked by diverging notions about which research questions are the most central ones to be answered. These aim primarily at psychological explanations, such as identifying why individuals join a terrorist group. Explanations on the societal or national level primarily attempt to identify causal relationships between certain historical, cultural and socio-political characteristics of the larger society and the occurrence of terrorism.

Who are the terrorists? Is there a specific 'terrorist personality'? What drives individuals towards the act of terrorism? Why do they act the way they do? What are the psychological mechanisms of group interaction? Psychological research on terrorism can be divided into two main traditions:the psycho-pathological and the psycho-sociological traditions. Theories Relative deprivation theory is one version of the psycho-sociological research tradition. The connection between human frustration and political violence was recognised in ancient times, and it is essential in Aristotle's classical theory of revolution.

The role of modern mass media in this process is seen as a key explanation of the phenomenon of contagion. Hence, as a symbolic act, terrorism can be analysed in this paper much like other mediums of communication, consisting of our basic components: transmitter (the terrorist), intended recipient (target), message (bombing, ambush) and feed back (reaction of target). The terrorist's message necessitates a victim, but the target or intended recipient of the communication may not be the victim. In this context, the 'waves' of terrorism may be partly explained by the desire of terrorists to assurance newsworthiness and consequently, media access.

There is a multitude of situations capable of provoking terrorism. We find terrorists among deprived and uneducated people, and among the affluent and well educated; we find terrorists among psychotic and 'normal' healthy people; and among people of both sexes and of all ages. Terrorism occurs in rich as well as in poor countries; in the modern industrialised world and in less developed areas; during a process of transition and development, prior to or after such a process; in former colonial states and in independent ones; and, in established democracies as well as in less democratic regimes. This list could easily be extended, but it suffices as a demonstration of the wide diversity of conditions we need to consider when trying to develop an understanding of terrorism. Obviously, this diversity makes it difficult to generalise about terrorism, and the dynamic nature of most of these conditions makes it hard to predict anything about future terrorism. Probably for this reason, as Kegley has observed "many rival explanations have been advanced but none has managed to command widespread respect".

However, prediction can only be based on theories that explain past patterns, and effort should therefore be placed at systematic comparative studies of the causes of terrorism. When analysing the causes of terrorism, we are confronted with different levels of explanations. These are clearly marked by diverging notions about which research questions are the most central ones to be answered. There are explanations on the individual and group level, on which much of the existing research on terrorism has been focused. These aim primarily at psychological explanations, such as identifying why individuals join a terrorist group. Explanations on the societal or national level primarily attempt to identify causal relationships between certain historical, cultural and socio-political characteristics of the larger society and the occurrence of terrorism. Explanations on the systemic or international level seek to establish causal relationships between characteristics of the international state system and relations between states on the one hand, and the occurrence of international terrorism on the other.

The individual and group levels of analysis aim mostly at psychological explanations. Some of the major tasks in this field would be to identify why individuals join a terrorist group in the first place, and secondly, why they continue to stay with the group. Other related research questions on the individual and group levels of analysis would be: Who are the terrorists? Is there a specific 'terrorist personality'? What drives individuals towards the act of terrorism? Why do they act the way they do? What are the psychological mechanisms of group interaction? Psychological research on terrorism can be divided into two main traditions: the psycho-pathological and the psycho-sociological traditions.

Psycho-Pathological Theories The first tradition treats the individual terrorist in isolation, searching for deviant character traits. The simple basic assumption of such pure psychological theory of terrorism is that nonviolent behaviour is the accepted norm, and that those engaged in terrorist activities therefore necessarily must be abnormal. Based on behavioural studies and profiles, several researchers of psychology claim to have identified a distinguishable terrorist personality. Spoiled, disturbed, cold and calculating, perverse, exited by violence, psychotic, maniac, irrational and fanatic, are character traits frequently claimed to be typical to the terrorist. Although he has dismissed the theory of a terrorist personality, In diagnosing terrorists as mentally disturbed individuals, and portraying terrorism as violence just for the sake of violence itself, explanations like these de-politicise terrorism. Psychopathological explanations have been much criticised, not only for divesting terrorism completely from the socio-economic and political setting, but also on empirical grounds.

In the second field of psychological terrorism research, the focus on individual characteristics and mechanisms are supplemented by recognition of the influence of the environment on individual behaviour. Among others, Wilkinson is seemingly sceptical to pure psycho-pathological explanations of terrorism, and theories of violence for the sake of violence, and attempts to relate psychological factors to the societal environment.

Hence, the central problem is to determine when and under what circumstances extremist organisations find terrorism useful. There are many examples of this type of explanations of terrorism. Strategies of political violence have been dealt with extensively in radical leftist and revolutionary writings from mid-19th century. For example, the doctrine of 'urban guerrilla warfare' became a central

tenet in radical leftist ideology after the defeat of the rural guerrilla movements in Latin America in the 1960s. Hence, there is a vast body of literature available for students of motivations and justifications of political violence, seen from the perpetrators' own perspective. It has been observed that masses seldom rise spontaneously – the decision to employ terrorism often follows the failure to mobilise popular support for a radical political programme, or the failure of non-violent means of struggle to address political or ethnic grievances.

Theories Relative deprivation theory is one version of the psycho-sociological research tradition. The connection between human frustration and political violence was recognised in ancient times, and it is essential in Aristotle's classical theory of revolution. Later we find discussions of these mechanisms both in Tocqueville's work on revolution and in the early work of Freud.

The role of modern mass media in this process is seen as a key explanation of the phenomenon of contagion. Several scholars have reconceptualised the phenomenon of terrorism in the framework of symbolic communication theory, viewing "terrorism as theatre" and as a medium of communication.

Hence, as a symbolic act, terrorism can be analysed much like other mediums of communication, consisting of our basic components: transmitter (the terrorist), intended recipient (target), message (bombing, ambush) and feed back (reaction of target). The terrorist's message necessitates a victim, but the target or intended recipient of the communication may not be the victim. In this context, the 'waves' of terrorism may be partly explained by the desire of terrorists to guarantee newsworthiness and consequently, media access. This perspective on terrorism has been developed further to explain the sudden increase of international terrorism in the late 1960s. The symbiotic relationship between modern mass media and terrorism is also seen as a major force behind the rising lethality of international terrorism over the last decades.

Societal Explanations of the national and systemic levels of analysis are so far assumed to be the most applicable for this study. Higher level analyses first and foremost have the advantage of not being constrained by too many situational and case specific factors, and may, as such provide viable general sable explanations. Societal explanations thus, albeit often vague and underdeveloped, can more easily be integrated into a more comprehensive and predictive model on terrorism. On the societal level of analysis, explanations of terrorism are primarily sought in the historical development and culture of a larger society or system, and in its contemporary social, economic and political characteristics and environments. Research questions often focus on whether it is possible to identify a causal relationship between certain characteristics of a society, be it a region, a nation or an international system, and the occurrence of terrorism within the same. Systemic explanations might include virtually all developments in the global.

There are many examples of such trans border contacts. West European terrorists trained at Palestinian camps in Lebanon in the 1980s. Red Brigades were in contact with Rote Armé Fraktion and Czechoslovakia, the IRA received substantial assistance from Libya, the Japanese Red Army trained in Lebanon, members of the IRA even offered to the Norwegian Lapp activist movement in the early 1980s to sabotage Norwegian energy infrastructure. Crenshaw . For the IRA offer to the Norwegian Lapp movement, see Dagbladet 17 December 1983, Klassekampen 17 December 1983, and conversation with Dr. Tore Bjørgo at the Norwegian Institute for Foreign Affairssystem, such as patterns of conflict and co-operation, international trade and investments, distribution of wealth and power, and the internal policies of other states.

Treating terrorism as a socio-political phenomenon, analyses at these levels usually acknowledge, at a theoretical level, the ultimate importance of the individual actors of terrorism. Terrorism is obviously dependent on motivated individuals and on psychological processes at the lower levels of analysis.

However, practical integration of individual and societal levels of analysis has traditionally been a significant problem for research on terrorism, resulting in theories taking the influence of psychological factors for granted, without further accounting for such influence in the analysis.

The Impact of Modernisation - Two Opposing Paradigms such as in the modernisation literature we find an extensive field of theory relating political violence to the changes brought on by the process of modernisation and globalisation – often termed radical theory, or dependency theory. These theories go back to the sociologist Emile Durkheim and his classical theory of the transition from the pre-modern organic solidarity to the modern mechanic society. The basic classical argument in this tradition is that the modernisation process has a harrowing effect on social society that may weaken the legitimacy of the state, and, ultimately, promote conflict and the use of political violence and terrorism. Another line of argument, liberal theory, claims that modernisation leads to prosperity and political development – both, in turn, generally expected to be social conditions conducive to stability and the absence of violent conflict. Originally being a theory of causal mechanisms in interstate relations, as put forward and tested by Erich Weede and others, the liberal model has also proven useful employed to domestic relations. In short the theory claims that free trade and an open economy will foster a high level of economic development.

Does Political Regime Matter? Democracy and Terrorism – An Ambiguous Relationship: The democracy-fosters-peace theory is originally based on the well-documented observation that democracies do not engage in war against one another. This is an extremely strong correlation on the national dyadic and systemic levels, and it is argued to be something of the closest we will ever get to a law in social sciences. At the same time, pointing to the observation that terrorism and civil violence often originate in already existing conflicts and wars – might the implications of the democratic peace be that democracies, or a democratic world for that matter, would be less prone to internal political violence. Findings suggest an ambiguous relationship in this matter. A democratic system of government is frequently associated with lower likelihood of internal political violence.

In sum, we may conclude that democracy and terrorism are correlated, but the relationship is complex. Semi-democratic regimes and states in democratic transition are more exposed to violent conflict and terrorism than democracies on the one hand and totalitarian regimes on the other. State Legitimacy and Terrorism Theories of state legitimacy have been central to the study of the modern state and civil conflict. State legitimacy means in general that the state enjoys popular support and that the citizens consider the rule to be rightful and proper. The theory foresees in short that lack of such support eventually might result in domestic conflict and civil violence. Legitimacy can be anchored in various sources. Forsythe identifies some of these sources to be found in legal traditions, established morals and norms, history, ideology, personal characteristics, and in functional factors like efficient rule and satisfaction of needs. Legitimacy also involves the capacity of the system itself to engender and maintain popular belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society.

The idea of relative deprivation is closely related to state legitimacy. As we have seen, relative deprivation can arise out of discontent with the state's ability to satisfy the economic, social and political needs and demands of its citizens. Engene finds that terrorism in western democratic states is systematically related to problems of state legitimacy.

Eugene focuses on three main challenges to state legitimacy:

(i) Unsolved ethnic demands
(ii) Problems of continuity in the development of democracy
(iii) Problems of integrating politically marginalised groups

Eugene finds a strong association between ethnic diversity and ethnic terrorism. Furthermore, his results show a strong positive correlation between continuity problems and ideological terrorism, and a strong link between problems of integration and ideological terrorism. Ethnic terrorism, on the other hand, does not appear to be significantly related to these two latter factors. He also observes that the levels of unionisation are negatively correlated with domestic terrorism. This may also indicate that the level of integration of politically marginalised groups should not only be measured in participation in party politics.

Strong trade unions appear to play a significant role in restraining radical elements in their midst. His findings reveal a large degree of correlation between problems of continuity and integration on the one hand and the level of ideological terrorism on the other, while the level of ethnic terrorism apparently is less affected by these factors. Eugene's study concludes that terrorism is only sporadically present in states not affected by any of these kinds of legitimacy problems.

The relationship between prevalent social norms and historical traditions on the one hand and political culture on the other is a difficult one. It is even more complex to assess their possible effect on the occurrence of terrorism. We have already seen that the lack of continuity of democratic regimes tends to make them more exposed to domestic terrorism. One may assume that recent history of widespread political violence, stemming from for example civil wars, ethnic strife, or widespread human rights abuses under a despotic authoritarian rule will leave a legacy of political violence which it takes a long time to eradicate. Crenshaw argues for example that the frequency of terrorism in a given area may be linked to "social habits and historical traditions, which may sanction the use of violence against the government." Other writers find indications that the traditions of blood feuds have played an important role in providing a direct motivation for terrorist acts in certain regions.

The so-called "ecology of terrorism" derives its name from the thesis that societal and technological changes associated with modernisation have created new and unprecedented conditions for terrorism. The ecology thesis focuses on facilitating circumstances, not motivations, needs, experiences or ideology, and "sees modern terrorism occurring because modern circumstances make terrorist methods exceptionally easy". Significant technological developments, associated with modernisation, such as the rise and expansion of modern transportation and communications as well as modern mass media are seen as important, at least for the types and patterns of terrorist acts, though not as a motivation for employing terrorism in the first place

In sum, although technological developments provide new and more efficient means and weapons to terrorist groups, the willingness to use such weapons should not be taken for granted. Furthermore, technological developments have a significant potential in increasing the counter-terrorist capabilities of states. Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism One facilitating factor, which also falls under the ecology-of-terrorism thesis, is the symbiotic relationship between organised crime and terrorism. It seems clear that the occurrence of terrorism in certain regions is influenced by the growth and expansion of transnational organised crime, and illegal global parallel trade, especially drug trade because of the huge returns of this trade.

The relationship between organised crime and terrorism is an ambiguous one, and is still too little theory developed in this field. So far only tentative assumptions can be made. What seems clear, however, is that in several regions, such as the Latin American states of Peru and Colombia, in Lebanon, Afghanistan and Pakistan, there has been considerable interaction between transnational organised crime and terrorist groups. In the recent decade, in particular in the republics of the Former Soviet Union, the distinction between terrorism and organised crime has become blurred, inspiring mixed terms such as "criminal terrorism" and "economic terrorism."

The significance of this is that the existence of global criminal networks of illegal trade and transactions provides golden opportunities for terrorist groups, with exceptions for groups with clear ideological qualms about co-operating and indulging in regular organised crime. Co-operation or even direct involvement in transnational organised crime may provide terrorist groups for example with additional means of funding, access to weapons smuggled into the country and other potential benefits accruing from co-operation with transnational clandestine networks.

Causes of Terrorism on the International Stage can be seen on international terrorism which frequently assumed that the occurrence of terrorism, especially international, must be sought in external sources and the character of the international system, including foreign policies of states, and the global circumstances that generate a conducive environment for terrorist activity.

One common argument is that the fierce competition between the superpowers during the Cold War and the existence of nuclear arms made international terrorism a preferred weapon in the struggle for global hegemony. Hence, the superpower sponsorship for Communist and anti-Communist guerrilla movements and violent opposition groups worldwide played a crucial role in sustaining a high level of international terrorism. State Sponsorship of Terrorism In the literature on terrorism a school of thought assigns great weight to the influence of "state sponsored terrorism" as an explanation for the growth of international terrorism since the 1960s. Since clandestine groups often face a funding problem, "substantial financing may be a precondition for international terrorism as well as a contributing cause of it." Hence, contemporary international terrorism is seen as driven primarily by the material and financial support and propaganda assistance provided by states or government sponsors. This was a popular explanation, especially during the Reagan administration, who pointed to the Soviet role in sponsoring international terrorism.

Thus we conclude to say that the research literature on terrorism has long been criticised for a general lack of empirically grounded and scientifically sound research on patterns and causes of terrorism. This article has provided an updated survey of existing theories and hypotheses on the causes of terrorism, drawing upon studies not only from the specialised terrorism research literature, but also from general social science and conflict studies. As we have seen in this study, there are still few established theories and many hypotheses in the research literature on the causes of terrorism. Future research should therefore focus more attention on improving existing theoretical understanding of the causes of terrorism.

Thus the terrorism is at the high level of bipolar rivalry and hegemonic dominance in world politics tends to encourage international terrorism is an interesting thing. It should serve as a much-needed correction in the current debate on the strategic implications of terrorism and so-called asymmetric threats facing the Western world from transnational terrorist and rogue states.

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