



INSIDE TERRORISM

SRA 211 Chapter 1 week 1

INTRO



Introduction

This first unit introduces the concepts of terrorism and crime, their complexities, and methods of studying. The topics include:

- Definitions of Terrorism and Crime
- Analysis of the similarities and differences
- Methods of study

DEFINING TERRORISM

- "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."
- THOUGHTS?

YASSER ARAFAT'S DEFINITION

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=A8Y0OJF0FLU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8Y0OJF0FLU)

- "whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom of his land...cannot possibly be called terrorist." –Yasser Arafat, 11/13/74 before the UN



WHY TERRORISM?

Before we discuss what terrorism is, we need to understand why?

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS AS TO WHY?

DEFINING TERRORISM

What is terrorism?

What is your definition? What do you think of?

Take a moment to write down your thoughts to share in class

RICHARD PIOUS

- "The use (or threat of the use) of force against noncombatant (i.e., innocent) civilians with means that violate criminal laws or the laws and customs of war, often on a random basis, with the goal of terrorizing and immobilizing the population in its economic, social and cultural activities."

H. H. A. COOPER

- "the intentional generation of massive fear by human beings for the purpose of securing or maintaining control over other human beings."

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."

WALTER LAQUEUR

- Counted over 100 definitions and concluded that the "only general characteristic generally agreed upon is that terrorism involves violence and the threat of violence."

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Most people have a vague idea or impression of what terrorism is, but lack a more precise, concrete and truly explanatory definition of the word.

This imprecision has been aided partly by the modern media, whose efforts to communicate an often complex and convoluted message in the briefest amount of airtime or print space possible have led to the promiscuous labelling of a range of violent acts as 'terrorism'.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Pick up a newspaper or turn on the television and -- even within the same broadcast or on the same page -- one can find such disparate acts as the bombing of a building, the assassination of a head of state, the massacre of civilians by a military unit, the poisoning of produce on supermarket shelves or the deliberate contamination of over-the-counter medication in a chemist's shop all described as incidents of terrorism.

Indeed, virtually any especially hateful act of violence that is perceived as directed against society -- whether it involves the activities of anti-government dissidents or governments themselves, organized crime syndicates or common criminals, rioting mobs or persons engaged in militant protest, individual psychotics or lone extortionists -- is often labelled 'terrorism'.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Dictionary definitions are of little help. The pre-eminent authority on the English language, the much-venerated *Oxford English Dictionary*, is disappointing when it comes to providing edification on this subject, its interpretation at once too literal and too historical to be of much contemporary use:

Terrorism: A system of terror. 1. Government by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in power in France during the revolution of 1789-94; the system of 'Terror'. 2. *gen.* A policy intended to strike with terror those against whom it is adopted; the employment of methods of intimidation; the fact of terrorizing or condition of being terrorized.

These definitions are wholly unsatisfying. Rather than learning what terrorism is, one instead finds, in the first instance, a somewhat sealed historically -- and, in respect of the modern accepted usage of the term, a uselessly old-fashioned -- description.

The second definition offered is only slightly more helpful. While accurately communicating the fear-inducing quality of terrorism, the definition is still so broad as to apply to almost any action that scares ('terrorizes') us. Though an integral part of 'terrorism', this definition is still insufficient for the purpose of accurately defining the phenomenon that is today called 'terrorism'.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

A slightly more satisfying explanation may be found in the *OED*'s definition of the perpetrator of the act than in its efforts to come to grips with the act itself. In this respect, a 'terrorist' is defined thus:

1. As a political term: a. Applied to the Jacobins and their agents and partisans in the French Revolution, esp. to those connected with the Revolutionary tribunals during the 'Reign of Terror'. b. Any one who attempts to further his views by a system of coercive intimidation; *spec.* applied to members of one of the extreme revolutionary societies in Russia.

This is significantly more helpful. First, it immediately introduces the reader to the notion of terrorism as a *political* concept. As will be seen, this key characteristic of terrorism is absolutely paramount to understanding its aims, motivations and purposes and critical in distinguishing it from other types of violence.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Terrorism, in the most widely accepted contemporary usage of the term, is fundamentally and inherently political.

It is also about power: the pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change.

Terrorism is thus violence -- or, equally important, the threat of violence -- used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim.

With this vital point clearly illuminated, one can appreciate the significance of the additional definition of 'terrorist' provided by the *OED*:

- 'Any one who attempts to further his views by a system of coercive intimidation'.

This definition underscores clearly the other fundamental characteristic of terrorism: that it is a planned, calculated, and indeed

THE CHANGING MEANING OF TERRORISM

The word `terrorism' was first popularized during the French Revolution.

In contrast to its contemporary usage, at that time terrorism had a decidedly positive connotation.

The system or *regime de la terreur* of 1793–4 -- from which the English word came -- was adopted as a means to establish order during the transient revolutionary period of turmoil and upheaval that followed the uprisings of 1789, as it has followed in the wake of many other revolutions.

Hence, unlike terrorism as it is commonly understood today, to mean a *revolutionary* or anti-government activity undertaken by non-state or subnational entities, the *regime de la terreur* was an instrument of governance wielded by the recently established revolutionary *state*.

THE CHANGING MEANING OF TERRORISM

It was designed to consolidate the new government's power by intimidating counter-revolutionaries, subversives and all other dissidents whom the new regime regarded as 'enemies of the people'.

The Committee of General Security and the Revolutionary Tribunal ('People's Court' in the modern vernacular) were thus accorded wide powers of arrest and judgement, publicly putting to death by guillotine persons convicted of treasonous (i.e. reactionary) crimes. In this manner, a powerful lesson was conveyed to any and all who might oppose the revolution or grow nostalgic for the *old regime*.

THE CHANGING MEANING OF TERRORISM

Ironically, perhaps, terrorism in its original context Was also closely associated with the ideals of virtue and democracy.

The revolutionary leader Maximilien Robespierre firmly believed that virtue was the mainspring of a popular government at peace, but that during the time of revolution must be allied with terror in order for democracy to triumph.

He appealed famously to 'virtue, without which terror is evil; terror, without which virtue is helpless', and proclaimed: 'Terror is nothing but justice, prompt, severe and inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue.'

CONFUSED?

THE CHANGING MEANING OF TERRORISM

Despite this divergence from its subsequent meaning, the French Revolution's 'terrorism' still shared at least two key characteristics in common with its modern-day variant.

First, the *regime de la terreur* was neither random nor indiscriminate, as terrorism is often portrayed today, but was organized, deliberate and systematic.

Second, its goal and its very justification -- like that of contemporary terrorism -- was the creation of a 'new and better society' in place of a fundamentally corrupt and undemocratic political system.

Indeed, Robespierre's vague and utopian thoughts of the revolution's central goals are remarkably similar in tone and content to the manifestos issued by many contemporary revolutionary -- primarily left-wing, Marxist-oriented --

TERRORISM

Terrorism is not new – been around for thousands of years

Terrorism can make governments seem unfit, bad, or even stupid

Terrorist have the advantage against governments because they don't have to play by the rules and governments do.

THOUGHTS ON THE STATEMENTS ABOVE?

DEFINING TERRORISM IS DIFFICULT

- "Terrorism is always a strategy, never a goal."
- It is not about the cause, but the strategy used to achieve the goals of the cause
- There are hundreds of definitions, but one that covers every situation may not be possible
- THOUGHTS?

FOUR BASIC GOALS OF TERRORISM

- To bring awareness to an alleged grievance by performing shocking acts to create attention EXAMPLES?
- To use the media to maximize people's knowledge of the cause
- To influence public reaction to acts of violence by spreading fear
- To produce government policy change through acts of violence

OUR OPERATIONAL MODEL OF WHAT TERRORISM IS

- **VERY IMPORTANT!**
- Is an act of violence
- Has a political goal
- Is carried out against innocent people
- Is intended to frighten the larger audience

APPLIED TO THE REAL IRA

- Irish Republican Army (IRA), also called Provisional Irish Republican Army, republican paramilitary organization seeking the establishment of a republic, the end of British rule in Northern Ireland, and the reunification of Ireland.
- In 1998 the IRA set off a car bomb in Northern Ireland killing 29 people and wounding 220 others, many of whom were women and children. The IRA opposed the peace process attempting to bring peace to Northern Ireland
- READ BOOK PAGE 6–7
- Was this an act of terrorism?

AMERICAN BOMBING DURING IRAQ WAR

- On May 19, 2004, during the Iraqi war, American planes bombed Mage el-Deeb in what was described by some as an attack on a wedding party
- READ BOOK PAGE 7
- Was this an act of terrorism?

RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT TO TERRORISM

- Image–Causes are damaged when they are associated with terrorism
- International law–Acts of terrorism supported by government officials can lead to criminal charges
- Idealism–Terrorists see themselves as good guys
- Prejudice–Since international law codes of conduct were written by the colonial powers of the west, they were written with a built in bias against freedom fighters

CONFUSING THE ISSUE

- Terrorists, governments, and even the media often refuse to define terrorists as terrorists in order to suit an agenda
- It is not sufficient to judge the act by whether or not it is part of a just cause
- THOUGHTS?

CAUSES ARE INFINITE

- Dissatisfied individuals and groups exist worldwide. Simply because they unite in support of a political cause does not justify abandoning rules of war. Valid cause or not, it does not justify killing innocent people
- Islamic terrorists routinely point to Jews, attacks on the Taliban, Israel's existence, American troops in Arab countries, and the crusades all as justification for killing innocent people

MEDIA AND THE IRAQ WAR

- During the Iraq war, the media has taken to referring those fighting American forces as insurgents and the resistance. These insurgents intentionally bomb mosques, marketplaces and civilian infrastructure killing thousands of civilians
- Are these insurgents, or terrorists?

UNITED NATIONS DEFINITION

- There is none
- Why? Arab countries insist that Palestinian suicide bombings of Israeli population centers must not be considered terrorism because the cause of fighting foreign occupation is just

A NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL LAW

- Guerillas and terrorists are different
- Guerilla fighters must set themselves apart from the general population by wearing uniforms or some identifying material
- They must carry their weapons openly and honor the rules of war, which means not deliberately hurting civilians

WHAT TERRORISM IS NOT:

- Terrorism is not war but may be a tactic of war.
- For clarity war is the use of force to achieve a policy. It is an act of violence to impose your will upon another, it is a violent act like terrorism but it is also sustained, organized, and collective. Finally war is winnable, we will never eliminate terrorism.
- Finally, conventional wisdom contends terrorism is violence perpetrated by a group that has some organization and "chain of command."

Real World Cases: Oklahoma City

- Was Timothy McVeigh's Oklahoma City bombing or would McVeigh and Terry Nichols cooperation be considered a group?
- In the current environment of "homegrown" terrorists who are radicalized and trained via the Internet, this definition is even more complex. Or, the case of Nick Reilly who tried to detonate a homemade bomb in Exeter in 2007 after being recruited but not trained by presumed Al Qaeda operatives.

SUMMARY

Defining terrorism is very difficult.

The reason for the difficulty range from legal disagreements to manipulation, to support of a favorable party.

One workable solution to this is to use our workable model of:

- **Is an act of violence**
- **Has a political goal**
- **Is carried out against innocent people**
- **Is intended to frighten the larger audience**

The people performing terrorism do not see themselves as terrorist.

IN CONCLUSION

- "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."
- "whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom of his land...cannot possibly be called terrorist." –Arafat
- As we go through the semester we will pay attention to the history of terrorism. Knowing how we got here will help us understand the present and shed light on what could happen in the future.

VIDS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVMcTMuspHk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3XzImwYnXE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaKefXE2sis>