The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism

LEONARD WEINBERG , AMI PEDAHZUR & SIVAN HIRSCH-HOEFLER

Frank Cass
Taylor & Francis Group

The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism

LEONARD WEINBERG

Department of Political Science, University of Nevada
Reno, Nevada, USA

AMI PEDAHZUR

Department of Political Science
University of Haifa
Haifa, Israel

SIVAN HIRSCH-HOEFLER

Faculty of Political and Social Sciences
University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium

This analysis begins by exploring various reasons that the concept of terrorism has evaded a widely agreed upon definition for so long despite the efforts of so many writers. Emphasis is placed on the difficulties associated with all "essentially contested concepts." In addition, the investigation calls attention to such problems as conceptual "stretching" and "traveling." In an effort to solve the difficulties, the inquiry attempts to determine a consensus definition of terrorism by turning to an empirical analysis of how the term has been employed by academics over the years. Specifically, the well-known definition developed by Alex Schmid, based upon responses to a questionnaire he circulated in 1985, is compared with the way the concept has been employed by contributors to the major journals in the field: Terrorism, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, *and* Terrorism and Political Violence. *The 22 "definitional elements" of which Schmid's definition is composed are compared to the frequency with which they appear in the professional journals. If these elements appear frequently in both the Schmid definition and those employed by the journal contributors, they are then used to form a consensus definition of the concept. The most striking feature of this academic consensus over the meaning of terrorism is the virtual absence of references to the psychological element, heretofore widely thought to be at the heart of the concept.*

Few terms or concepts in contemporary political discourse have proved as hard to define as terrorism. When the subject itself appeared, or reappeared, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, various professional commentators noted the difficulties involved in articulating a definition which could gain wide agreement among those concerned with the subject. One writer, Walter Laqueur, simply threw up his hands, arguing that terrorism had appeared in so many different forms and under so many different circumstances that a comprehensive definition was impossible. An observer

would simply know it when s/he saw it.[1] Almost 30 years later, and after the publication of thousands of books and articles on the subject, another leading figure in the field noted that "... the problem of defining terrorism has hindered analysis since the inception of studies in the early 1970s" and has shown few signs of abating as we enter the twenty-first century.[2] Why has the term been so hard to define? Why has the concept evaded definitional efforts of so many for so long?

Some answers seem obvious. For one thing, 'terrorism' has been widely used for purposes of political effect. Somewhat paradoxically, Menachem Begin, as the leader of the Irgun (Lehi's Zionist rival) in postwar Palestine, was the first to see the propaganda advantage in referring to his followers as "freedom fighters" rather than terrorists. Afterwards, terrorist groups adopted this appealing description and called themselves freedom fighters, understanding the propaganda advantage.[3] The term terrorism became confused during what David C. Rapoport has labeled terrorism of the "second-wave,"[4] since organizations understood that they needed a new language to describe themselves.

The term had accumulated so many negative connotations that those who identified themselves as such incurred enormous political liabilities.[5] The application of the term to the activities of a group, organization or state institution conveys opprobrium. Naturally, those to whom it is applied regard it as an accusation and often seek to turn the tables on their accusers by labeling them as the "real" terrorists. The resulting war of words simply adds to the ambiguity and compounds the confusion. Often the polemic involves confusion, unintended or deliberate, between ends and means. A particular group or organization cannot be waging a terrorist campaign because it hopes to achieve some (self-defined) noble purpose.[6]

More important, though, for purposes of serious analysis, the term terrorism has been subject to virtually all the sins to which complex concepts are heir. Here are just a few. First, following the work of W. B. Gallie and William Connolly, terrorism has become an "essentially contested concept," one whose meaning lends itself to endless dispute but no resolution.

To quote Connolly:

> When the disagreement does not simply reflect different readings of evidence within a fully shared system of concepts, we can say that a conceptual dispute has arisen. When the concept involved is appraisive ... when the practice described is internally complex in that its characterization involves reference to several dimensions, and when the agreed and contested rules of application are relatively open, enabling parties to interpret even those shared rules differently as new and unforeseen situations arise, then the concept in question is 'an essentially contested concept'. Such concepts 'essentially involve endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users'.[7]

The assumption on the part of the disputants over meaning is that if they only argue their cases long and hard enough, a real or essential definition will emerge. But 30 years of contesting the meaning of terrorism has produced no such result. For Connolly and Gallie, this outcome may simply be the consequence of the nature of such concepts.

Second, terrorism as a concept also seems to suffer from 'border' and 'membership' problems. Where does terrorism stop and other forms of political violence

begin, guerrilla warfare or urban guerrilla warfare, for example? The same acts, such as air piracy or assassinations, may be considered terrorist acts on some occasions but not on others, usually based upon the assumed motivations of the perpetrators or the social standing of their victims.[8]

Further, terrorism suffers from ''stretching'' and ''traveling'' problems, some literal, others of an analytic character. In regard to the former, some writers seem to identify terrorism based on the physical or social distance between the act in question and the observer. If, for instance, an act of political violence occurs at a significant distance (geographically or psychologically) from the observer, the tendency is to give it a more neutral or benign name. The same act carried out closer to home becomes terrorism.

Considering the stretching and traveling capacity of the term for analytic purposes, writers now deal with terms such as ''narco-terrorism'' and ''cyber-terrorism'': the latter rarely involves any reference to violence or the threat of violence. The problem is, as Collier and Mahon put it:

> When scholars take a category developed from one set of cases and extend it to additional cases, the new cases may be sufficiently different that the category is no longer appropriate in its original form. If this problem arises, they may adapt the category by climbing the ladder of generality, thereby obeying the law of inverse variation. As they increase the extension, they reduce the intension to the degree necessary to fit the new contexts.[9]

The choices are often between stretching the concept to the point of vagueness or inventing a new term to cover a wider range of activities, for example, low intensity conflict.

Confronted by doubt and uncertainty of this magnitude, we have concluded that the best way to make the definitional problem manageable is to follow Alex Schmid's advice and divide the discussion of non-state terrorism into separate ''arenas of discourse.'' Schmid identifies four such arenas.[10] First, there is the academic arena where scholars struggle to stipulate a definition useful for conducting research on the topic. Second, there are the state's statements about 'terrorism' including those expressed in the form of laws, judicial rulings and regulations. Next, for Schmid, is the public debate on the subject. By this he means the various ways the mass media choose to label and interpret the concept. Fourth, we may be exposed to ''(t)he discussion of those who oppose many of our societies' values and support or perform acts of violence and terrorism against what they consider repressive states.''[10]

Unfortunately, Schmid's categories are not mutually exclusive. There appears to be significant overlap between the first and fourth arenas, in particular. Such leading advocates and practitioners of what many would call terrorism, as Abimael Guzman (the founder of Peru's Shining Path) and Antonio Negri (the leader of the Italian Armed Autonomy) began their careers as academics. On the other side of the ledger, there are a number of individuals who retired from careers in terrorism to become part of the academic world. (Law, sociology and political science seem to be favorite destinations.)

There are still others, including the Italian Front Line and the Red Brigade leadership, who have participated in both arenas simultaneously. In fact, this may have contributed to the downfall of the groups involved. Observers have noted that the rhetoric, the public communiqués of these groups became progressively more obscure and unintelligible, the longer they continued to function. The groups lost whatever ability they had possessed to win the support of workers and peasants

because they could not make themselves understood. The incomprehensible rhetoric is frequently attributed to the fact that the groups' members lost touch with external reality, the longer they were required to operate on a clandestine basis.[11] However, it is possible that the communiqués and other messages intended for public consumption were simply written by professors who confused the first and fourth arenas as a result of long-term exposure to both.

Despite this methodological problem we think it would still be helpful if we attempted to limit our discussion of 'terrorism' to the academic arena. A good place to start is with the definition Alex Schmid proposed in the volume he edited with Albert Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data bases, Theories and Literature*:

> Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat—and violence—based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main target (audiences(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.[12]

Schmid's definition was refined from reactions he received from scholars who responded to a questionnaire he had mailed them. The respondents had originally produced 109 separate definitions. The latter consisted of twenty two ''definitional elements'' which Schmid then ranked in order of the frequency with which they appeared in the questionnaires. The comprehensive definition he proposed (see above) reflected sixteen of these twenty two ''definitional elements.''[12]

Our own approach to investigating the academic domain of terrorism discourse is somewhat different than Schmid's. Like him, we have relied on what the experts tell us terrorism means but we do not rely on questionnaire responses in identifying the concept's definitional elements. Instead, we have based our inquiry on what contributors to leading professional journals in the field of terrorism tell us the word means to them.

To be more specific, we sought definitions from three journals whose contents we scrutinized. We examined all the articles in *Terrorism* (New York: Crane Russak & Company), from 1977 through 1991 and then (Minneapolis, MN: John Scherer), 1982–1983, 1986–1989; *Terrorism and Political Violence* (London: Frank Cass) from 1990 through 2001; and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (London: Taylor and Francis) from 1992 through 2001.[13]

Our review of these journals yielded a total of seventythree definitions (drawn from fiftyfive articles) (See Appendix A). How do these compare to the 109 definitions with their twentytwo constituent elements Schmid's questionnaire produced?

Frequencies of Definitional Elements of Terrorism

A brief examination of Table 1 reveals wide differences in the relative strength of the 22 definitional elements Schmid reports when compared to the journal contributors'

Table 1. Frequencies of definitional Elements of "Terrorism"

Element	Schmid & Jongman Survey (1988) frequency (%)	Our survey (2002) frequency (%)
1. Violence, Force	83.5	71
2. Political	65	60
3. Fear, Terror emphasized	51	22
4. Threat	47	41
5. Psychological effects and (anticipated) reactions	41.5	5.5
6. Victim-Target differentiation	37.5	25
7. Purposive, Planned, Systematic, Organized action	32	11
8. Method of combat, strategy, tactic	30.5	31.5
9. Extranormality, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constrains	30	0
10. Coercion, extortion, induction of compliance	28	5.5
11. Publicity aspect	21.5	18
12. Arbitrariness, impersonal, random character, indiscrimination	21	0
13. Civilians, noncombatants, neutrals, outsiders as victims	17.5	22
14. Intimidation	17	11
15. Innocence of victims emphasized	15.5	10
16. Group, movement, organization as perpetrator	14	29
17. Symbolic aspect, demonstration to others	13.5	5.5
18. Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence	9	1
19. Clandestine, covert nature	9	7
20. Repetitiveness, serial or campaign character of violence	7	0
21. Criminal	6	5.5
22. Demands made on third parties	4	1

Note: The Schmid & Jongman survey consists of 22 elements drawn from 109 definitions. Our survey consists of 73 definitions drawn from 55 articles collected from three journals.

suggested definitions. In two instances, elements 9 ("extra-normality, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constraints") and 12 ("arbitrariness, impersonal, random character, indiscriminate"), which emerged as important constituents of Schmid's definition, received no mention at all in the relevant journal articles. Another element, 10 ("coercion, extortion, induction of compliance"), which

appeared in 28 percent of the definitions in Schmid's survey, was mentioned in less than 6 percent of the journal definitions.

If we match this difference to discrepancies in references to two other elements, we may discern something of a pattern. The journal-based definitions were also much less likely to mention the arousal of fear and terror (element 3) and "psychological effects and anticipated reactions" (element 5) as important components. In general, then, the journal contributors placed much less emphasis on the psychological aspects of terrorism, a theme which, of course, has loomed large in general discussions of the topic over the years. One obvious explanation for the paucity of references to these psychological elements among the journal articles might be the paucity of psychologists. But this does not seem to be the case. About the same proportion of contributors to the journals as respondents to the Schmid survey identified themselves as psychologists.[14]

Are there aspects of the meaning of terrorism on which Schmid's respondents and the journal writers actually agree? Yes; in fact high percentages of the experts in both categories (20 percent or more) identify terrorism as a method of combat or a tactic (element 8), involving a threat (element 4) of force and violence (element 1) used for a political (element 2) purpose. The pursuit of publicity (element 11) is mentioned somewhat less frequently but members of both groups seem to agree that it is part of the definition of terrorism. So it is possible to discern a consensus among academics who study the subject, to this extent. Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role. This consensus definition stresses terrorism as an activity, a method of conduct, over the psychological. And, surprisingly, given our own understanding, neither the distinction between combatants and non-combatants nor between immediate target and wider audience is mentioned.

In addition to the comparison between Schmid's respondents and the contributors to professional terrorism journals, it is essential to examine whether there are significant differences among the journals themselves in the way terrorism has been defined.

Table 2 shows the frequency of definitional elements of the term terrorism according to the three journals analyzed in this article. However, to test whether differences among those three journals are significant, we also performed an analysis of variance (One way ANOVA). Significant differences were found with relation to: *threat* ($F_{(2, 70)} = 4.49$, $p < .05$) and *method of combat /strategy /tactics* ($F_{(2, 70)} = 8.75$, $p < .001$). In terms of *threat* (m = 2.00, sd = .00) SCT journal presents the highest mean (e.g., highest rate of non-usage of this category). In terms of method of *combat/strategy/tactics* (m = 1.87, sd = .34), Terrorism present the highest mean.

The significance in the *threat* element resulted from the differences between SCT and Terrorism ($p = .01$) and between the SCT and TPV ($p = .04$). The significant differences in the *tactics* element resulted from the difference between the Terrorism and SCT ($p = .00$) and between Terrorism and TPV ($p = .02$). To summarize the comparison of definitional elements among the professional terrorism journals, we may say that significant differences were found with relation to two categories: *threat* and *tactics*. More specifically, SCT did not at all use the *threat* category in the definition for the term terrorism, while in the case of *tactics*, Terrorism presented the highest rate of non-usage of this category.

Regarding the various definitions presented in these three journals, it seems that, despite the need for serious conceptual work, only few articles really grapple with the

Table 2. Frequencies of definitional elements of ''Terrorism'' according to the three journals

Elements	Terrorism $N = 38$	Studies in conflict and terrorism $N = 10$	Terrorism and political violence $N = 25$
1. Violence	68%	80%	72%
2. Political	63%	50%	60%
3. Fear	21%	20%	24%
4. Threat	50%	0%	44%
5. Victim	16%	50%	28%
6. Tactic	13%	70%	44%
7. Civilians	16%	30%	28%
8. Movement	24%	40%	32%

Note: Our survey consists of 73 definitions drawn from 55 articles collected from three journals.

problem of definition. Most of them just place a definition in the text as a matter of formality and, in fact, never pay attention to it again. Nevertheless, we believe that even though most of the articles used in developing our data file did not grapple with the problem of definition, it is still very important to examine these definitions as they appear, mainly from the academic point of view, as vital and relevant literature on the perception of terrorism.

As in most discussions of terrorism, even those taking place in the academic domain, we should pay some attention to the point of view of the observer. Who is defining the term and where does s/he come from?

Frequencies of Definitional Elements of ''Terrorism'' According to Writer's Professional Affiliation (Figure 1)
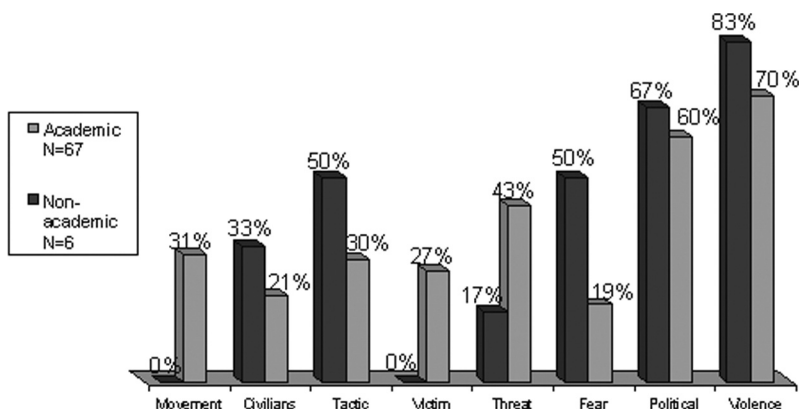

Figure 1. Frequencies of definitional elements of ''Terrorism'' according to writer's professional affiliation. The Survey consists of 73 definitions drawn from 55 articles collected from three journals.

Frequencies of Definitional Elements of "Terrorism" According To Writer's Region (Figure 2)
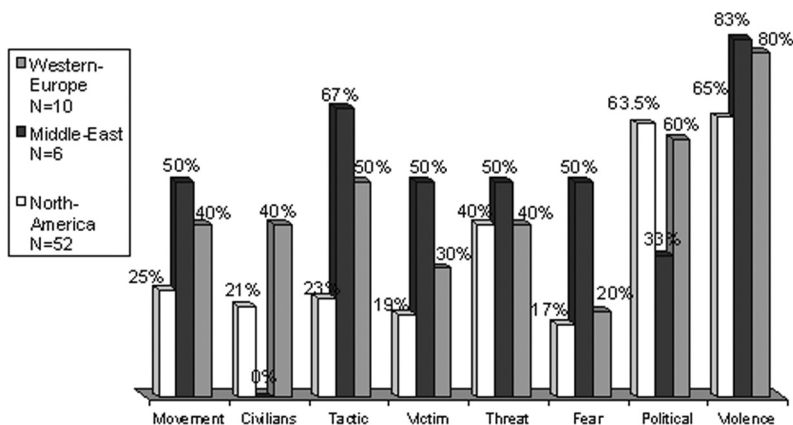

Figure 2. Frequencies of definitional elements of 'Terrorism' according to writer's region.

In both cases, we are dealing with academics. A modest six of the seventythree professional journal contributors were non-academics, and only one of Schmid's respondents identified himself/herself as a journalist; the rest reported various academic specialties. Second, we are dealing overwhelmingly with North American and Western European academics. (What seems to us a modest number, only five of the contributors were Israeli.) There were a handful of respondents in both groups who fell outside the Western orbit, but the preponderance of both respondents and contributors was based in these regions, with the United States far and away furnishing the largest contingents. Consequently, we understand that the consensus over the definition of terrorism among academic specialists is not universal but one grounded in the view of Westerners, and Americans in particular.

The question which emerges is whether or not country of origin makes a difference in definition. In order to answer this crucial question, we examined the frequencies of definitional elements of terrorism according to writer's region. Looking at Figure 2, we may see that country of origin does play a role in the way scholars in the professional journals define the term terrorism. For example, scholars from the Middle East never mentioned (0%) the element "civilians", while scholars from Western Europe and North America mentioned this element more frequently (40% and 21%, respectively). In contrast, half of the scholars from the Middle East mentioned the element "fear" in their definitions for the term, while less than a quarter of scholars from Western Europe and North America used it. However, although there are differences in the definitional elements used by the writers, as shown from Figure 2, the most popular element among all ethnic groups was violence.[15]

Before offering an assessment of the merits or deficiencies of the consensus definition, we should reflect for a moment on why there were such wide differences between Schmid's respondents and the contributors to the professional terrorism

journals. (This is particularly true since we would expect that there would be some overlap between the two groups.)

We readily admit to engaging in speculation, but an accounting based on the times at which the studies were conducted may be relevant to our understanding. Schmid's survey was carried out in 1985. Respondents would necessarily have based their reactions to terrorism on activities or operations which had occurred earlier, that is from the late 1960s onwards. For the most part, those responding to Schmid's questionnaire would have obtained their understanding from observing what David C. Rapoport has labeled terrorism of the "third wave."[16]

The events on which these observers would have based their definitions would have encompassed the operations of the left-wing revolutionary groups of Latin America and Western Europe (e.g., the Tupamaros, the Red Army Faction, the Red Brigades) along with such secular nationalist organizations as those linked to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA), and a long list of others. These were organizations which wanted, to use Brian Jenkins' famous phrase, "a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead." The type of operations they carried out frequently involved taking prominent individuals hostage (e.g., Aldo Moro, the former Italian prime minister, Sir Geoffrey Jackson, the British Ambassador to Uruguay, Patty Hearst, the newspaper heiress) and holding them for ransom; another method was seizing members of the public and demanding the release of imprisoned colleagues in exchange (e.g., 1972 Munich Olympics); and spectacular acts of air piracy in which the perpetrators demanded various political concessions in exchange for the release of the plane and its passengers.

Third wave terrorism also engendered widespread discussion of such phenomena as the "Stockholm syndrome," brain-washing, the process of hostage negotiations, and the role of the mass media in reporting the events which came to be labeled terrorism. In short, the late 1960s through the early 1980s was a time during which terrorism seemed to elicit the discussion of psychological issues. Consequently, we should probably not be surprised that such definitional elements as "fear and terror" along with "psychological effects and anticipated reactions" appear so frequently among the responses to Schmid's questionnaire.

Rapoport and other observers have called our attention to the emergence of a "New Terrorism."[17] Rapoport, in particular, refers to a "fourth wave" of terrorism which was ignited by the Iranian Revolution of 1979–1980 but which really took hold during the mid-1980s. This "new" or fourth wave of terrorism has been dominated by religious concerns, and especially Islamist ones. By contrast to its predecessor(s), the new terrorists have been willing to inflict mass casualties, kill large numbers of people, and use or attempt to use unconventional weapons to achieve this end. Furthermore, from an organizational perspective, the new terrorists have tended to rely less on hierarchical and more on horizontally articulated and network-based forms than those active in the 1960s and 1970s.

Frequencies of Definitional Elements of "Terrorism" According To Year's of Publication (Table 3)

The articles in the three professional terrorism journals which we have used to compare with the respondents to Schmid's 1985 questionnaire clearly cover

Table 3. Frequencies of definitional elements of "Terrorism" according to years of publication

1997–2001 $N = 16$	1992–1996 $N = 11$	1987–1991 $N = 23$	1982–1986 $N = 13$	1977–1981 $N = 10$	Element
69%	91%	83%	54%	50%	1. Violence
44%	64%	74%	69%	40%	2. Political
19%	36%	17%	8%	40%	3. Fear
0%	54.5%	70%	46%	20%	4. Threat
37.5%	36%	26%	8%	10%	5. Victim
62.5%	54.5%	13%	8%	30%	6. Tactic
19%	45.5%	22%	23%	0%	7. Civilians
31%	54.5%	17%	38.5%	10%	8. Movement

Note: Our survey consists of 73 definitions drawn from 55 articles collected from three journals.

a wider time span than the latter. The questionnaire respondents would have been aware of the early phases of the new terrorism, but the experiences on which their definitions were based would far more likely have been derived from the events of the previous decades or Rapoport's Third Wave. The journal contributions, on the other hand, would include the observations of writers who were able to look back at the terrorist phenomenon from the 1990s and the early years of the new millennium, after the "new terrorism" was well underway and after some of the dramatic attacks associated with it had already been committed.

We interpret this distinction, with some overlap in time for both sets of observers to be sure, to mean that the definitions of terrorism proposed by the journal contributors would be less likely to pay attention to such acts as hostage-taking and kidnapping, in which the mental states of the victims and perpetrators would be central considerations. They might also be somewhat less likely to have available various autobiographies, memoirs, and written reflections that third wave terrorists furnished in abundance. Therefore, we suspect that the journal contributors' definitions were less psychology focused than the questionnaire respondents. But this is, of course, a post hoc explanation of our own.

The consensus definition to emerge from our merger of the two academic sources is as follows: *Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role.* Is this definition good or bad, helpful or not?

One criterion for evaluating definitions of terrorism has been suggested by Schmid. This standard is whether or not advocates and opponents, authorities and their challengers, agree over its merits.[18] Whatever else they disagree over, they would share a common understanding when they use the word terrorism. But even if we remain within the academic domain, it seems unlikely that the consensus definition will satisfy some professorial critics. They regard the word itself as a snare and a delusion, a semantic device by which the state and its agents divert attention from their own crimes. For those members of academia

who wish to express their solidarity with the sufferings of the oppressed, "... it is clear that so-called terrorism is the logical and just resistance of the people against state terrorism, capitalism, racism, sexism and imperialism."[19] 'Terrorism' in and of itself is simply a way of changing the subject by transforming victims into perpetrators.

Frequencies of Definitional Elements of "Terrorism" According To Writer's Academic Field (Table 4)

In a sense, academic critics of the very idea of terrorism have a point. What we have identified as a consensus definition bears a relatively strong resemblance to the way states, and law enforcement agencies, in particular, regard the phenomenon. For instance, Hoffman reports that the US Federal Bureau of Investigation defines terrorism as "... the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political and social objectives...."[20] And British law (circa 1974) specifies that "... terrorism is the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear." [21] Whether or not the resemblance between the definitions provided by the academic domain and by the state is good or bad depends upon the point of view of the observer. However, it is relatively common, in international law, for example, for academic discussions of legal concepts to find their way into the statute books or into international conventions.

Is the consensus definition helpful to those who wish to study terrorism? By ignoring the psychological element, by, in effect, taking the terror out of terrorism, the definition facilitates observation of the phenomenon. It is easier to study politically driven actions than internal mental conditions. But, of course, the consensus definition suffers from serious flaws. Sartori's observations make good sense in this case: "The rules for climbing and descending along a ladder of abstraction are thus very simple rules....We make a concept more abstract and more general by lessening its properties or attributes..."[22]

The consensus definition is highly general. It seems too vague, in other words. It also suffers from border problems. The definition includes no distinction between combatants and non-combatants as targets of violence and, as a consequence, no way of discriminating between terrorism and, for example, guerrilla warfare of the type US forces are currently experiencing in Iraq. Nor, for that matter, does it permit us to separate the highly planned operations of small, clandestine groups from large-scale attacks carried out by large aggregations intended to attract publicity to a cause.

The cost of achieving consensus among academic analysts of terrorism is a definition which has climbed too high on the ladder of abstraction to discriminate among different types of politically driven violence aimed at achieving publicity. Thus, unless we are willing to label as terrorism a very wide range of violent activities, we may be better off finding another governing concept or looking elsewhere for a definition.

Table 4. Frequencies of definitional elements of "Terrorism" according to the writer's academic field

Element	Political science N = 22	Sociology N = 7	Communication N = 1	Psychology N = 7	History N = 3	International relations N = 3	Philosophy N = 1	Law N = 5	Other N = 5
1. Violence	73%	86%	100%	43%	67%	67%	0%	80%	100%
2. Political	59%	57%	100%	29%	67%	67%	100%	100%	60%
3. Fear	18%	29%	0%	29%	33%	33%	0%	40%	40%
4. Threat	41%	71%	100%	29%	33%	33%	100%	40%	20%
5. Victim-	41%	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6. Tactic	41%	14%	100%	43%	33%	33%	100%	0%	40%
7. Civilians	23%	57%	0%	14%	33%	33%	0%	0%	20%
8. Movement	36%	43%	100%	0%	33%	33%	0%	20%	0%

Note: Our survey consists of 73 definitions drawn from 55 articles collected from three journals.

Appendix A. List of the articles used in developing our data file

Name of author	Name of article	Year of publication	Name of journal
1. Conrad V. Hassel	Terror: The Crime of The Privileged—An Examination and Prognosis	1977	Terrorism
2. Brian Jenkins	Research Note: Rand's Research on Terrorism	1977	Terrorism
3. Thomas M. Franck	International Legal Action Concerning Terrorism	1978	Terrorism
4. Abraham Kaplan	The Psychodynamics of Terrorism	1978	Terrorism
5. Gerald Holton	Reflections on Modern Terrorism	1978	Terrorism
6. J.K. Zawodny	Internal Organizational Problems and the Sources of Tensions of Terrorist Movements as Catalysts of Violence	1978	Terrorism
7. Stephen Sloan, Richard Keaney & Charles Wise	Learning about Terrorism: Analysis, Simulations, and Future Directions	1978	Terrorism
8. Frederick J. Hacker	Terror and Terrorism: Modern Growth Industry and Mass Entertainment	1980	Terrorism
9. L. C. Green	Aspects of Terrorism	1981	Terrorism
10. Gerald W. Hopple	Transnational Terrorism: Prospects For a Casual Modeling Approach	1982	Terrorism
11. Lawrence Zelic Freedman	Why Does Terrorism Terrorize?	1983	Terrorism
12. Terrorist Research and Analytical Center	FBI Analysis of Terrorist Incidents in the United States—1982	1984	Terrorism
13. Brent L. Smith	Antiterrorism Legislation in the United States: Problems and Implication	1984	Terrorism

(Continued)

Name of Author	Name of Article	Year of Publication	Name of Journal
14. Allan S. Nanes	Congressional Developments	1984	Terrorism
15. L. John Martin	The Media's Role in International Terrorism	1985	Terrorism
16. Robert H. Kupperman	Terrorism and National Security	1985	Terrorism
17. Michael Gunter	Contemporary Armenian Terrorism	1985	Terrorism
18. Edward A. Lynch	International Terrorism: The Search for a Policy	1987	Terrorism
19. Julius Emeka Okolo	Nigerian Politics and the Dikko Kidnap Affair	1987	
20. Ruth Linn	Terrorism, Morality and Soldiers' Motivation to Fight: An Example from the Israeli Experience in Lebanon	1988	Terrorism
21. Michele Wilson & John Lynxwiler	Abortion Clinic Violence as Terrorism	1988	Terrorism
22. Jae Taik Kim	North Korean Terrorism: Trends, Characteristics, and Deterrence	1988	Terrorism
23. Jeffrey Ian Ross	Attributes of Domestic Political Terrorism in Canada, 1960–1985	1988	Terrorism
24. Ronald D. Crelinsten	Images of Terrorism in the Media: 1966–1985	1989	Terrorism
25. Marco Rimanelli	Italian Terrorism and Society, 1940s–1980s: Roots, Ideologies, Evolution, and International Connections	1989	Terrorism
26. Daniel E. Georges-Abeyie	Political Criminogenesis of Democracy in the Colonial Settler-State: Terror, Terrorism, and Guerilla Warfare	1991	Terrorism
27. Martha Crenshaw	Current Research on Terrorism: The Academic Perspective	1992	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
28. Roger Medd & Frank Goldstein	International Terrorism on the Eve of a New Millennium	1997	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
29. Charles T. Eppright	Counter-Terrorism and Conventional Military Force: The Relationship Between Political Effect and Utility	1997	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism

30. Dennis A. Pluchinsky	Terrorism in the Former Soviet Union: A Primer, a Puzzle, a Prognosis	1998	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
31. Daniel Byman	The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism	1998	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
32. Sean K. Anderson	Warnings Versus Alarms: Terrorist Threat Analysis Applied to the Iranian State-Run Media	1998	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
33. Peter Chalk	Contemporary Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia	1998	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
34. Peter C. Kratcoski	Terrorist Victimization: Prevention, Control and Recovery	2001	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
35. Noemi Gal- Or	The Israeli Defense Forces and Unconventional Warfare: The Palestinian Factor and Israeli National Security Doctrine	1990	Terrorism and Political Violence
36. Robert P.Hager	Latin American Terrorism and the Soviet Connection Revisited	1990	Terrorism and Political Violence
37. Martin Hughes	Terror and Negotiation	1990	Terrorism and Political Violence
38. Leonard Weinberg & William Lee Eubank	Political Parties and the Formation of Terrorist Groups	1990	Terrorism and Political Violence
39. Christopher Hewitt	Terrorism and Public Opinion: A Five-Country Comparison	1990	Terrorism and Political Violence
40. M.W.Jackson	Terrorism, Pure Justice and Pure Ethnics	1990	Terrorism and Political Violence
41. Jacob M. Rabbie	A Behavioral Interaction Model: Toward a Social-Psychological Framework for Studying Terrorism	1991	Terrorism and Political Violence
42. Christopher C. Harmon	Terrorism: A Matter for Moral Judgment	1992	Terrorism and Political Violence
43. Alex Schmid	The Response Problem as a Definition Problem	1992	Terrorism and Political Violence

APPENDIX A (*continued*)

Name of Author	Name of Article	Year of Publication	Name of Journal
44. A. J. Jongman	Trends in International and Domestic Terrorism in Western Europe 1968–1988	1992	Terrorism and Political Violence
45. Wayne G. Reilly	The Management of Political Violence in Quebec and Northern Ireland: A Comparison	1994	Terrorism and Political Violence
46. Ehud Sprinzak	Right Wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimization	1995	Terrorism and Political Violence
47. Avishag Gordon	Terrorism and Computerized Databases: An Examination of Multidisciplinary Coverage	1995	Terrorism and Political Violence
48. Andrew Silke	Terrorism and the Blind Men's Elephant	1996	Terrorism and Political Violence
49. Bruce Hoffman	The Confluence of International and Domestic Trends in Terrorism	1997	Terrorism and Political Violence
50. Matthew G. Devost, Brian K. Hougthon & Neal Allen Pollard	Information Terrorism: Political Violence in the Information Age	1997	Terrorism and Political Violence
51. Thomas J. Badey	Defining International Terrorism: A Pragmatic Approach	1998	Terrorism and Political Violence
52. Ariel Merari	Terrorism as a Strategy of Struggle: Past and Future	1999	Terrorism and Political Violence
53. Max Taylor and John Horgan	Future Developments of Political Terrorism in Europe	1999	Terrorism and Political Violence
54. Jerrold M. Post, Keven G. Ruby & Eric D. Shaw	From Car Bombs to Logic Bombs: The Growing Threat From Information Terrorism	2000	Terrorism and Political Violence
55. Clive Walker	Briefing on the Terrorism Act 2000	2000	Terrorism and Political Violence

Note: Our survey consists of 55 articles collected from three journals.

Notes

1. Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism* (Boston: Little, Brown 1977) p.5.
2. Martha Crenshaw, "The Psychology of Terrorism" *Political Psychology* 21/2 (2000) p.406.
3. David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism" in Audrey Cronin and James Ludes (eds), *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press 2004) p. 54; David C. Rapoport "Introduction to Part I" in David C. Rapoport and Yonah Alexander (eds), *The Morality of Terrorism: Religious and Secular Justifications* (New York: Pergamon Press 1982) pp.3–11.
4. The second wave of terrorism, also known as the "Anti-Colonial Wave," began in the 1920s and crested in the 1960s. All groups in the second wave struggled against colonial powers that had become ambivalent about retraining their colonial status. The second wave receded largely as the colonial powers disappeared (Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism").
5. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," p.54. Moreover, as Rapoport explained, "Because the anti-colonial struggle seemed more legitimate than the purposes served in the first wave, the "new" language became attractive to potential political supporters as well. Governments also appreciated the political value of "appropriate" language and began to describe all violent rebels as terrorists. The media, hoping to avoid being seen as blatantly partisan, corrupted language further. Major American newspapers, for example, often described the same individuals alternatively as terrorists, guerrillas, and soldiers in the same account" (p.54).
6. See, for example, Boaz Ganor, "Defining Terrorism: Is One Man's Terrorist Another Man's Freedom Fighter?" *Annual Editions: Violence and Terrorism 03/04* (Guilford, CT: Dushkin 2003) pp.11–19.
7. William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993) p.10. The idea comes from W.B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts" in Max Black (ed), *The Importance of Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1969) pp.121–146.
8. See, for example, Giovanni Sartori, *Social Science Concepts* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications 1984) pp.28–35.
9. David Collier and James Mahon, "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *The American Political Science Review* 87:4 (1993) p.846.
10. Alex Schmid, "The Response Problem as a Definition Problem," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4:4 (1992) pp.7–25.
11. See, for example, Donatella della Porta, "Left-Wing Terrorism in Italy," in Martha Crenshaw (ed), *Terrorism in Context* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press 1995) pp.105–159.
12. Alex Schmid, Albert Jongman et al., *Political Terrorism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988) p.28. Schmid is in the process of updating this work, see, "The Problem of Defining Terrorism" (a paper presented at a conference on Terrorism and Security Studies, George Marshall Defense Center, Garmisch Germany, June 28 2004) pp.1–30.
13. Our research attempted to define terrorism throughout the last two decades. In order to do so, we extensively collected all articles from three central journals (*Terrorism; Terrorism and Political Violence; Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*) that pertain to the matter at hand. Initially, the data we collected were divided into different categories that did not only include the context of the article but included information about its author, as well. Within the context of the article we examined the subject of the article, its focus, its research method (i.e., qualitative/quantitative case study, qualitative/quantitative comparative research, qualitative/quantitative theoretical research), its nature (i.e., conceptual, analytic, theoretical or case-study), and whether it constructs a typology, a theory, or a definition. In addition to the article's context we noted the author's professional

affiliation, field of education, and place of residence. These categories allowed for a wide observation of the phenomenon of terrorism. The second step of our research was to extract from the 110 articles found relevant, the various definitions for terrorism. Within 55 articles, the 73 definitions that originated were examined according to twenty-two elements revealed in the work done by Schmid & Jongman (1988). It was this type of incongruity which led to the main question of our research: Are the entire twenty-two elements needed in order to reach a substantial definition of terrorism or are there definitional elements that may have been crucial in the past, but are no longer relevant in the present?

14. Schmid reported that, of his 58 respondents, 10% said they were psychologists (Scmid and Jongman, p.207), while 7 of the 55 authors of the journal articles were identified with that profession.

15. In order to determine whether differences according to country of origin are significant, we considered performing an analysis of variance (ANOVA, for example). However, due to the small number of scholars in each origin (e.g., two scholars from Africa, three scholars from Australia and six scholars from the Middle East) we were unable to perform this kind of statistical test.

16. David Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism" *Current History* (December 2001) pp.419–424.

17. See, for example, Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press 1999) pp.86–129.

18. Schmid, "The Response Problem as a Definition Problem," p.11.

19. Ibid.

20. Hoffman, p.38.

21. Schmid, "The Response Problem as a Definition Problem," p.9.

22. Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," *The American Political Science Review* LXIV/4 *(December 1970) p.1041.*