

THE PLURALITY OF MEANINGS 'TERRORISM'-THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENA**Prof. Mirko Bilandžić, PhD****Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb****E-mail: mbilandz@ffzg.hr****Danijela Lucić, MA****Sociology at Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb****E-mail: lucic.danijela@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT: Systematic scientific research of terrorism has begun in the 1970s, when the terrorism was recognized as a differentiated security threat in the social reality and public discourse. However, scholars and experts still have not agreed about terrorism definition. Terrorism is an 'ambiguous concept' at three levels: political, ontological, and conceptual. Scientific and expert knowledge is frequently the starting point for making policies and strategies. If there is such a disagreement about definitions, which leads to a lexicographical cacophony and a fixation on the particular aspect of terrorism, which depends on interests of actors involved, thus the efficiency of defined national and supranational policies and strategies for counterterrorism is questionable. The definition as a fundamental starting point affects the study of terrorism. Moreover, institutional definitions of terrorism are an integral part of security strategies. Thus, the efficiency of defined national and supranational policies and strategies for counterterrorism is questionable if there is such a disagreement about definitions that leads to a lexicographical cacophony and fixation on any particular view of terrorism, which depends on interests of actors, involved. In addition, such state of art in the field of terrorism studies does not contribute to the development of discipline and the accumulation of knowledge or has had a paralyzing effect on substantive research. Therefore, even for scientific and moreover for practical (counterterrorism policy and strategy) reasons, all interest-ed groups should strive to clear terms and solid definition of terrorism and should eliminate the concept of 'subjugated knowledge' which is evident in determining the origin of knowledge in the study of terrorism. The authors analyze available terrorism definitions (N = 334), systematized in the database of definitions that was constructed from the scientific and academic sources, the

expert sources, the available official sources of various institutions and organizations, news, etc. The basic analysis was conducted on 334 definitions with key descriptive variables while the further analysis included 306 definitions, i.e. those created after 1973. The content analysis establishes the key elements of the definition, and frequency analysis shows which of the elements are most commonly used for defining terrorism. The analysis confirmed the earlier findings of the surveys about terrorism definitions, where the highest percentages have the following elements: violence/force, political element, fear/terror, threat, psychological effects, victim-target differentiation, etc. In addition, some new elements have been detected like: state as actor, social aspect/motive, international aspect, ideology, religion, etc.

Key words: terrorism, counterterrorism, terrorism definition database, terrorism definition elements.

Introduction: semantic controversies about terrorism

For two centuries, whether a greater or lesser extent, the terrorism has been and still is on the world stage and is an integral part of social and political processes. Its current significance of national and international processes is such that is justified to point out that it is one of the key concepts in today's political vocabulary and the phenomena which takes a central place on the agenda of international security and national security (Buzan; Hansen, 2009; Scmhid, 2004). Especially in contemporary conditions, terrorism is certain, as Verena Erlenbusch (2014) says 'incessant agony'. At the same time, terrorism is a very complex phenomenon also wrapped with many controversies. The fundamental controversy already is causing the answer to the question: what is terrorism? Extensive research efforts, scientific and professional community's interest as well as an interest of a wider audience have not resulted with generic definition of terrorism. Moreover, some authors point out that this is 'intrinsically ambiguous' symbol (de la Calle; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2011), concept wrapped with 'hollowness' (Ramsay, 2015), and that the chase for 'canonical definition' is wasting time (Meisels, 2009), whereby the defining of terrorism is not only useless, but also impossible if seriously considering the historicity and stability of the concept (Erlenbusch, 2014). Decades of insisting on claims that the generic definition of terrorism was not achieved simply because there was no definition that can fully cover all terrorism variations that have occurred throughout history (Laquer, 1987) is still resistant to the refutations. The extensive use of the term 'terrorism' in different historical contexts prompted the authors (Richards, 2014) to put to question the meaningless of the term, and even to talk about the 'definitional quagmire' and whether about the definitional failures as a cause of terrorism. Brian Jenkins, besides all, the problem of defining terrorism has called the 'Bermuda Triangle of terrorism' for a long time, claiming that the word terrorism has become a 'fad word' as it was (is) used as a reference to violence regardless of the nature and character of that violence (Jenkins, 1980). Many of today's versions of terrorism assume that understand terrorism

means realizing that it is a term that cannot be fully understood (Furedi, 2009). The complexity of the heterogeneous nature of the phenomenon of terrorism, convincingly painted by Thomas H. Mitchell, pointing out the negative approach to the definition of terrorism, according to which the definition of terrorism must clearly define what terrorism is not (cited in Schmid, 2004: 408). However, Philip Schlesinger, British sociologist, considers that consensus definition of terrorism has not been achieved since the process of defining is a part of a wider dispute in relation to the ideological and political goals (cited in Schmid, 2004). The concept of terrorism could not be separated from the broader social, political, cultural and linguistic context, which constitutes an necessary prerequisite for any discussion of terrorism (Erlenbusch, 2014). Definitional approaches are faced with resistance of different kind of reasons: fundamental epistemological, methodological and analytical. The ubiquitous conceptual debate and the lack of consensus on the concept of terrorism, as pointed out by Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca (2014), in return, point to deep anomalies in the study of terrorism. The controversial issue is whether 'lexicographic fixation' contributing to the development of the discipline and the accumulation of knowledge within the discipline or is paralyzing substantive research. It may be questioned: is the terrorism within the academy located in some kind of 'pre-theory stage' (Richards, 2014). Should terrorism, even be defined or it will never be defined as its meaning is in the debates about terrorism where the actors of debates are producing it with its own meaning and importance (Ramsay, 2015). Depends on the perspective, goals and research interests, each author (actor) defines the term terrorism differently. Obviously, the explanations of the reasons for the enormous number of definitions of terrorism could be found within the framework of the sociology of knowledge and science as a discipline which deals with connection of human thought and society (Matić, 2013). According to this framework, science should not be *a priori* considered as an intellectual activity which takes place in a social vacuum and in an isolation of its protagonists from the impact of the wider society. The science is oriented towards goals which are collectively supported making that scientific cognition constitutively of social character. Sociologists agree that knowledge has constructivist character; it is not merely the product of the social structure, but rather the force with which the social order (reality) is constituted. The autonomy argument as an element of the scientific dogma which claims that the science follows the internal logic of development and that the scientific research are not influenced by the values and interests which are active in its close socio-cultural environment seems not credible in terms of defining terrorism. Social scientists who study terrorism appear to be under constant attack of public and political discourse of the communities in which they operate. With these actors, they share a common language with which social preferences and political power has been expressed. Social scientists agree that terrorism from the beginning of the 1970s was diagnosed as a social problem that has become the object of expert knowledge and scientific research. This is also the beginning of the development of separate studies - terrorism studies (Riegler, 2009; Jackson; Breen-Smyth; Gunning; Jarvis, 2011; Stampnitzky, 2013). Four decades earlier terrorism was a marginal social problem, while the results of academic work indicate the existence of 'mature' terrorism studies (Crenshaw, 2014). Still definitional and other controversies within the social science of terrorism suggest that the terrorism studies have analyt

ical deficits and limits. Is it even possible to produce objective knowledge about terrorism? Could we therefore understand terrorism if it is not possible to define the meaning of a term which is the origin of all knowledge and opinion. Also, there is a question about possibility of scientific study of terrorism, though it is not defined? Scientific and professional positions are polarized. Harvard sociologist Lisa Stampnitzky, analyzing terrorism studies convincingly proves that expert discourse on terrorism operates between science and politics, between academic expertise and state (Stampnitzky, 2013). Hence, the plurality of meanings 'terrorism' and the absence of objective, coherent and consequently definition which allows subjective labeling of a phenomenon and behavior as a terrorist, link into consideration of the relationship between knowledge and power (Foucault, 1994). In the asymmetric conflict as terrorism is the state has a monopoly on the definition of terrorism, government is a principal defining agency that maintains the 'power to define'. Surely, this is one of the reasons that some knowledge about terrorism is unrecognized and excluded from the study of terrorism. Studies of terrorism are characterized by a dominant form of knowledge and, as Michel Foucault says, form of 'subjugated knowledge' evident in determining the origin of knowledge in the study of terrorism (Jackson, 2012). Regardless of the methodological and analytical flaws of terrorism studies, normative bias, focus on problem-solving theory, rather than on the perspective of critical theory (cited in Joseph, 2009), a research effort aimed at the search for a universal definition of terrorism is a venture of that academy and professions should not give up. Terrorism definition should specify concept uniqueness and its distinctions in relation to other forms of human behavior and political violence. This is useful for at least two reasons. First, without usable definition, as Roberta Senechal de la Roche (2004) says, theory is not possible. Second, the knowledge is absolutely necessary prerequisite for resolving terrorism, which has a form of modern social scourge, 'social cancer' and negation of 'social being' which represents the dark side of human civilization (Jalata, 2010). The knowledge is the best tool for good policy. Scientific results undeniably contribute in defining of quality national policies as well as strategies for combating terrorism. Having this in mind, the efforts for further investigation of terrorism and practical application of research results in particular attempts to resolve 'the terrorist conflicts' are imposing as a basic need. This work has just such a direction, its goal is with an empirical analysis of existing definitions, provide a further contribution to the understanding of the term terrorism.

Methodology

In order to get the deeper insights into a part of the existing knowledge about terrorism with the emphasis on the existing definitions, the database with 334 terrorism definitions⁵ was constructed. The greatest part of the database contains 262 definitions that could be found in the section *The Definition of Terrorism* in the master work of Alex Schmid – *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* from 2011. The database used in this work was extended for 72 new definitions that have been selected from various types of sources. Hence, there are scientific and academic definitions, definitions of experts, the definitions of the various institutions, organizations and associations (e.g. the UN, the EU, the FBI, the CIA, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, etc.), the definitions of news sources, and so on. For all the definitions, key descriptive data were defined – year, author and source. Also, certain attributes and types were assigned to all of the definitions with regard to whether they are academic, professional, organizational, where they occurred or with which country and region they could be linked and have they appeared prior to or post September 11 of the 2001. Since, the basic idea of this work was to analyze the definitions of terrorism after its scientific research had begun and after entered into a broad public debate, means since 1973, so 28 definitions that have been published up to 1972 were left from further analysis. The content analysis of 306 definitions confirmed previously known (existing) elements and extracted some new element and the frequency analysis defined the order of the most frequently used elements for determining terrorism. From a total of 31 elements that in a greater or less percentage appears in the definitions, 22 of them are known from earlier research and were for the first time described in the work of Schmid and Jongman in 1988 (*Table 1*). These elements are retained (confirmed) in the analysis of the definition used in this study (*Table 3*). Some of the 22 elements were slightly modified (in their description some synonyms were added to facilitate content search) but the meaning of “adopted” elements remained thus unchanged. All the elements obtained in the content analysis, 31 (22 + 9), have been introduced as attributes in the database in order to be assigned to the definitions in which they appear and ultimately, to conduct the frequency analysis and to show the frequency of appearance of elements in the existing database of definitions of terrorism.

A short review of earlier studies

Scientists have been for decades preoccupied with trying to determine the meaning of the term terrorism. In a very influential and cited research, Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman (1988) investigated

⁵ It should be noted that the database, although it covers the longest period, and therefore the highest number of definitions of all previous studies of such type, certainly do not represent a comprehensive database of all definitions. Therefore, based on the results, and in addition to all previously presented controversies about the possible generic definition and related problems, we cannot have generalized and definitive conclusions on the concept of terrorism. Rather, it is possible to speak of observed changes or ‘trends’ in the existing origin of knowledge about terrorism. In addition, it is possible to draw convincing conclusions about the fundamental qualitative codes or elements of the concept of terrorism.

the frequency of specific words in the 109 relevant terrorism definitions, which were published to the mid-1980s⁶. The research results (Table 1) showed that violence/force, political and terror/fear are words which appeared in the most of definitions: violence 83,5%, political 65,0%, fear/terror 51,0% and threat 47%. This was the first case (1984) of the academic consensus definition of terrorism.

Table 1: Frequency of use single word in the terrorism definitions, N=109 (Source: Schmid and Jongman, 1988: 5)

Elements	%
Violence, Force	83,5
Political	65
Fear, Terror emphasized	51
Threat	47
Psychological effects and (anticipated) reactions	41,5
Victim-Target differentiation	37,5
Purposive, Planned, Systematic, Organized action	32
Method of combat, strategy	30,5
Extra-normality, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constrains	30
Coercion, extortion, induction of compliance	28
Publicity aspect	21,5
Arbitrariness, impersonal, random character, indiscrimination	21
Civilians, noncombatants, neutrals, outsiders as victims	17,5
Intimidation	17
Innocence of victims emphasized	15,5
Group, movement, organization as perpetrator	14
Symbolic aspect, demonstration to others	13,5
Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence	9
Clandestine, covert nature	9
Repetitiveness, serial or campaign character of violence	7
Criminal	6
Demands made on third parties	4

⁶ A critical review of this research could be found in Ramsay, 2015.

This consensus has brought 22 elements of terrorism and four of them (indicated above) had the highest frequency of occurrence in the existing definitions. The second 'academic consensus' of 1988 was based on comments by fifty scientists on the content of the definition (elements) of terrorism from the first 'academic consensus'. According to the results, the definition of terrorism included 16 elements (Schmid, 2004: 382). According to these elements terrorism could be summarized as: 1) an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated 2) violent action, employed by 3) (semi-)clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for 4) idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. 5) The immediate human victims of violence are generally 6) chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or 7) selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. 8) Threat and violence-based 9) communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used 10) to manipulate the main target (audiences(s)) turning it into a 11) target of terror, 12) a target of demands, or a 13) target of attention, depending on whether 14) intimidation, 15) coercion, or 16) propaganda is primarily sought.

Fifteen years later Martha Crenshaw (2003) has identified thirteen elements of the definition of terrorism: 1) a specialized form of political violence, 2) conspiratorial and deceptive, 3) requires few numbers and resources, 4) symbolic targets, most often civilian and undefended, 5) performed for psychological effect on key audiences, including those who identify with the victims and those who identify with the perpetrators, 6) key element of surprise and shock, as well as fear in targeted audiences, 7) does not directly engage the armed forces of the enemy, 8) primarily seeks publicity and recognition for a cause, 9) usually performed in an urban environment, bombings being the preferred method, 10) strategy can serve different ideologies and goals (e.g. revolutionary, nationalist, reactionary or vigilante, single-issue), 11) can become an end in itself, although rarely successful in the long term if not combined with other methods, 12) usually associated with non-state organizations but can be used by state or state bureaucracies as a clandestine tool of foreign policy or against dissidents living abroad and 13) a 'contested' concept because of its pejorative connotations and use as a political label to condemn or delegitimize an opponent.

Almost at the same time, in 2004, research conducted by Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler was announced. These authors investigated the meaning of the term terrorism through exploring frequency analysis of 73 definitions of terrorism that have been published in 55 scientific articles between 1977 and 2001 in the three leading scientific journals that deal with the topic of terrorism: *Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. The results (Table 2) confirmed that the fundamental elements are: violence, political, fear and threat. Richard Jackson (2011), however, was exploring the minimum basic elements of the definition of terrorism.

Table 2: Frequencies of definitional elements of 'Terrorism' according to the three journals (Source: Weinberg; Pedahzur; Hirsch-Hoefler, 2004:783.)

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%

Finally, decades of rigorous academic and thorough expert analysis of the current definition of terrorism were the base for Alex Schmid (2011) to claim that revised/upgraded academic consensus on the definition of terrorism has been achieved, so-called 'revised academic consensus definition'. In terms of achieved consensus, ten elements are defined that constitute the term terrorism or represent the explanatory definition of terrorism: 1) the dual character of the concept of terrorism: it is a doctrine that postulates the effectiveness of the use of a special political violence and assumed its strategic effects, which should produce power in the political conflict in which victims of violence (primarily civilians and non-combat forces) are not the primary target; and it is the practice, tactics or method of (de)personalized killing and production shocking violence on the public with the aim to influence the political process or manipulate the process; 2) the triple context in which terrorism occurs: the rule of fear (eg. a repressive and illegitimate regimes); continuous protests and propaganda by other means that lead to disruption of public order; context of irregular, psychological or asymmetric warfare; 3) executors as sources or agents of violence: terrorism is the product of man, no terror without terrorists who are non-state and state actors; 4) political character: terrorism is a political (not criminal) violence; 5) violent acts of terrorism involving the commission of a demonstrative, intentional, unilateral, illegal or illegitimate and without moral restraint, selective or non-discriminatory act of violence, which causes death or serious injury and which is undertaken in peacetime or outside the zone of combat operations; its goal is deterrence or coercion against a third party who is directly or indirectly connected with the victims, with the ultimate aim of complying (subordination) executor goals; 6) communication based on threats: the threat of terrorist violence is a form of 'conditional killing', it is creating a climate of fear, which implies a threat coming impact anytime, anywhere and to anyone if they do not comply with the requirements of terrorists;

7) the distinction between direct civilian victims and the final target audience: direct victims who are subjected to threats of violence or use of violence execution are different from the final target audience; therefore anyone can be a victim of terror; direct victims are impersonal target; they are passive means to achieve the goals of terrorists; most of the victims regardless of whether they are representative or symbolic targets of violence actually are the objectives of the secondary character⁷; 8) terror/fear/horror: the intended act of violence is designed to produce the effect of extreme fear or intimidation (terror) which is above the proportion of the results of violence; terrorists are trying to cause public shock, fear and an exaggerated climate of terror⁸; 9) intent: a terrorist act is undertaken with the intent to terrorize the aimed target and exploitation of uncertainty created by the act of execution of a terrorist act; threat of future terrorist act is in compliance (subordination) function of the terrorists or deter the other side from taking any action inconsistent with the aims of terrorists; 10) terrorism does not make an individual act of terror, but it is a campaign that takes place in a series of terrorist acts.

⁷ In the case of non-state terrorism and having in mind that one of the fundamental functions of the state is to provide security to its citizens, a terrorist act causes instability of the social order proving that the state is unable to protect its citizens which brings into question the social contract between government and citizens.

⁸ The degree of fear of secondary victims means society (public) depends on the spatial and emotional distance to the direct victims and ranges from fear, over anxiety to despair. Social groups that have a positive attitude towards terrorists or negative towards the victims do not share such feelings.

Findings and interpretation of research results

Although the sample of the definition of the base dating back to 1972 is small (N = 28), and methodologically speaking, incomparable with those definitions created from 1973 to date, it is still possible to indicate some trends in the field of knowledge about terrorism. It is interesting that for the period until 1972, only 28 definitions were recorded in the database or 8.4% of all definitions, while from 1973 to date 306 definitions were recorded, or 91.6%. Terrorism as it is today usually define - threat or use of violence/terror to achieve political goals - if only briefly looked in the past to the year 1972, in social reality often appeared in its 'purest' forms, but scientific and professional community only in a small percentage spoke of terrorism as a separate phenomenon. Deeper analysis of 28 definitions of that period, says that 8 of them occurred within the revolutionary parties, 19 of them could be characterized as scientific (academic) and professional. Here it should be noted that for many of authors of that period the definition of terrorism was a 'by-product' since they were not specialized for the phenomenon of terrorism, but primarily for the general theme of political violence. It is interesting to emphasize that content of 25 (89.3%) of those definitions imply that the 'user' of such forms of violence could be any actor. In other words, those definitions are inherently neutral, the actor could be non-state, but it could be state as well which in some definitions is explicitly stated.

Therefore, while analyzing the production of definition from 1973 to date (Figure 1), it is evident that there are certain 'booms'. The first one was in the mid-1970s, which had followed the entrance of terrorism in the area of interest of scientists and experts. The special 'boom' is notable in the early 2000s, for which it is not necessary to say anything more than 9/11.

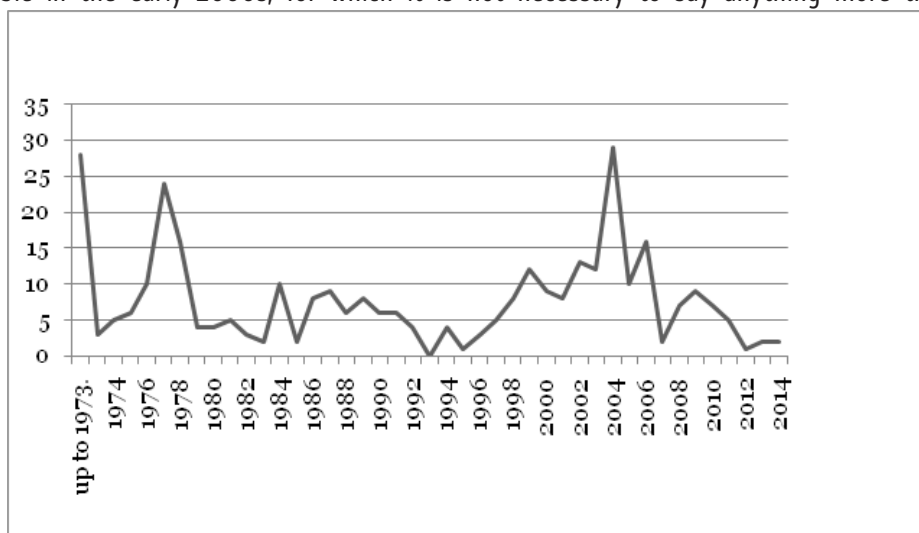


Figure 1: Frequency of definitions per years

In order to support the thesis of popularity of terrorism as a subject of study it should be noted that there are a large number of authors as 'producers of knowledge'. From the 1973 to date, there are 231 authors in the database who suggested one or more definitions of terrorism⁹. Whether this is the systematic and continuous scientific approach on the one hand or is this 'ad hoc' and perhaps for certain purposes ordered knowledge on the other, maybe is best illustrated by the fact that a very small number of authors had produced more than one definition of terrorism. The most productive authors of this period are: Paul Wilkinson (7); Brian M. Jenkins (6); Alex P. Schmid (5); Cecil A. J. Coady, Bruce Hoffman, Todd Sandler and Michael Walzer (4); Yonah Alexander, Walter Enders, Tomis Kapitan, Walter Laqueur, Edward Francis Mickolus, Wayman C. Mullins and Leonard Weinberg (3); Cynthia C. Combs, Ronald D. Crelinsten, Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, Brian Crozier, Khusrav Gai-bulloev, Boaz Ganor, Frederick J. Hacker, Gerald Holton, Michael Horowitz, Rex A. Hudson, Milivoje Karanović, Gary LaFree, Omar Malik, Jay Mallin, Christopher Mitchell, John F. Murphy, Benjamin Netanyahu, Jordan J. Paust, Ami Pedahzur, David C. Rapoport, Louise Mary Richardson, Joshua Sinai, Michael Stohl, Charels Tilly, Grant Wardlaw and Burliegh Wilkins (2)¹⁰.

⁹ Some definitions were published in the co-authors' work. In such cases, all the authors were separately listed.

¹⁰ The number of definitions of the respective author is placed in brackets after the name/names. Also, authors Crenshaw, Hutchinson, Crozier and Mallin have published one definition before and one after 1973.

From 231 authors 191 of them or 82.7% suggested one definition of terrorism¹¹.

If we analyze the geographical dispersion or state (Figure 2) in which these definitions after 1973 have appeared¹², the absolute priority is on the side of authors that are coming from the United States (182), followed by the United Kingdom (46), international/transnational definition (17) Germany (12), Israel and Canada (9), Australia (7), other countries (23) and unknown (1).

¹¹ The authors are: Gary Ackerman, Jeffrey F. Addicott, Eqbal Ahmad, Richard Allan, Fritz Rene Allemann, Vijay Kumar Anand, Sean K. Anderson, Chris T. Antoniou, Navin A. Bapat, Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, Ruth Margolies Beitler, J. Bowyer Bell, Steven Best, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Michael Blain, S. Brock Blomberg, Bernhard Blumenau, Gaston Bouthoul, Joseph Boyle, Tilman Brück, John Bunzl, Brian Burgoon, Daniel Byman, Claudia Card, David Carleton, Peter Chalk, Richard J. Chasdi, Noam Chomsky, Predrag Cicovacki, Henar Criado, David Claridge, Richard Clutterbuck, Barry Collin, Joseph J. Collins, H.H.A. Cooper, J. Angelo Corlett, G. Davidson (Tim) Smith, Janny de Graf, Senechal de la Roche, Donatella Della Porta, Davor Derenčinović, Jacques Derrida, Philip E. Devine, Matthew G. Devost, Adam Dolnik, Laura Dugan, Frazer Egerton, Richard English, Alona E. Evans, Ahmed Galal Ezeldin, Geoffrey Fairbairn, Seymour Maxwell Finger, Nick Fotion, Thomas M. Franck, Chas. W. Freeman, Manfred Funke, Noemi Gal-Or, Daniel E. George-Abeyie, Danica Gianola, Anthony Giddens, Robert Goodin, L. C. Green, H. C. Greisman, Michael Gunter, Ted Robert Gurr, Lawrence Campbell Hamilton, Jussi M. Hanhimäki, Heidi Heft LaPorte, Virginia Held, Henner Hess, Christopher Hewitt, Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, Robert Paul Hoffman, Ted Honderich, John Horgan, Michael Horowitz, Brian Houghton, Martin Hughes, Ze'ev Iviansky, M.W. Jackson, Alison M. Jaggar, Asafa Jalata, Božidar Javorović, Cindy R. Jebb, Janera Johnson, Paul Johnson, Abraham Kaplan, Eban Kaplan, Irving R. Kaufman, Simon Keller, Haig Khatchadourian, Stacey L. Knobler, Edward Kossoy, Tim Krieger, Douglas Lackey, Nicolas K. Laos, William Lee Eubank, Burton M. Leiser, Jeff Lewis, Ruth Linn, Norman Linzer, Peter H. Liotta, Omar Lizardo, Juliet Lodge, George A. Lopez, Peter Lösche, Brenda Lutz, James Lutz, Edward A. Lynch, Adel A.F. Mahmoud, Joesph Margolis, Michael McKenna, Jeff McMahan, Lionel McPherson, Daniel Meierrieks, Ariel Merari, Dana Milbank, Martin A. Miller, Lyubov Mincheva, Fathali M. Moghaddam, Mehdi Mozaffari, Cathérine Müller, Brigitte L. Nacos, Jan Narveson, William D. Neale, Peter Neumann, Anthony Nocella, J.J. Nutter, Garrett O'Boyle, John N. Paden, Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez, Andrew J. Pierre, Neal Allen Pollard, Leslie A. Pray, Edward H. Price, Igor Primoratz, Anthony C.E. Quainton, Jacob Rabbie, Robert J. Rafalko, Walter Reich, Wayne G. Reilly, W. Michael Reisman, Marco Rimanelli, David Rodin, Danir Roguly, Romansheim, Jeffrey Ian Ross, Joachim J. Savelsberg, Peter C. Scderberg, Hans Joachim Schneider, Jan Schreiber, Yoram Schweitzer, Hans-Dieter Schwind, Timothy Shanahan, Thomas Sherlock, Richard H. Shultz, Yoginder Sikand, M. E. Silverstein, Peter Simpson, Baljit Singh, Christine Sixta, Martin Slann, Saul Smilansky, W.H. Smith, Lester A. Sobel, Ekatarina Stepanova, James P. Sterba, H. M. Stevenson, Jay Sweifach, Richard Thackrah, Judith Tinnes, Valery Tishkov, Harmonie Toros, Domenico Tosini, Charles Townsend, Austin A. Turk, Peter Waldmann, Clive Walker, F.M. Watson, Edward Weisband, Carl Wellman, David J. Whittaker, Michael Wieworka, M. Wilson, John B. Wolf, Franz Wördemann, Joseph K. Young, Robert Young, Janusz Kazimierz Zawodny, Oleg Zinam, Noam Zohar.

¹² The unit of analysis was the definition, not authors, which means that for each definition 'country of origin' was assigned. For example, if an author of published definition is the scientist/experts who is of Jewish origin, and works/worked and lives/lived in the United States, the US was assigned as 'country of origin'. If the definition was created as a co-author work of two or more scientists/experts, one 'country of origin' was assigned from which are both of the authors. In the case where co-authors are from different countries, the criteria for assigning 'country of origin' was from which country was/is first listed author.

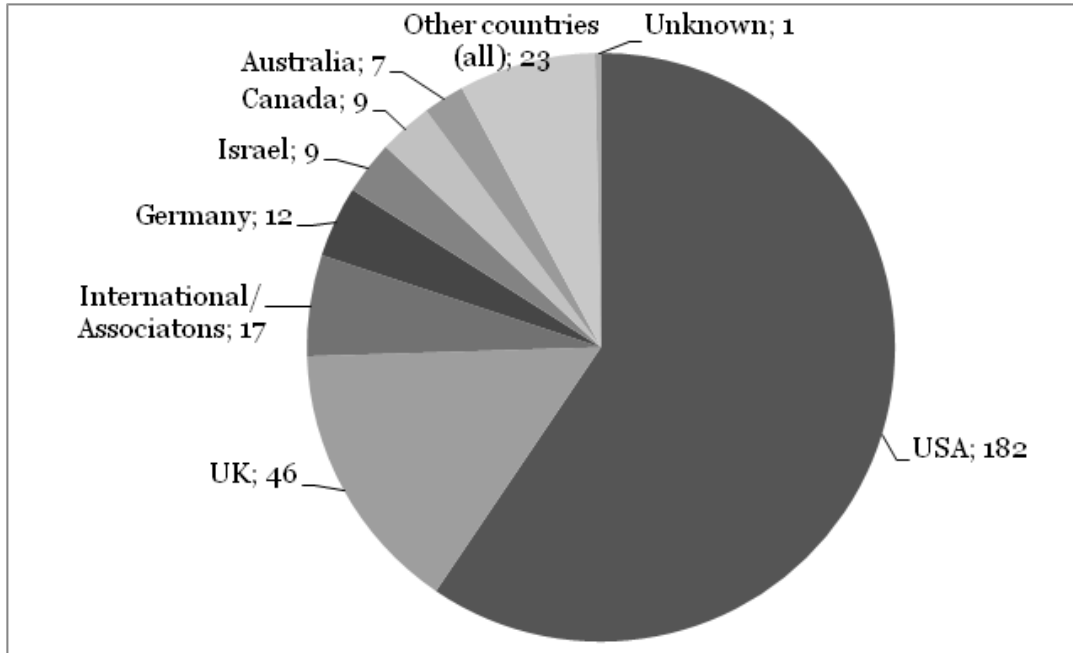


Figure 2: Frequency of definitions by country

Frequency Analysis

Frequency analysis of the key elements for the definitions of terrorism (Table 3) is based on the results of Schmid and Jongman research (22 elements) that were previously confirmed/extracted from content analysis of 306 definitions. The content analysis indicated nine elements more which are highlighted in Table 3 (gray shaded). These are: state as actor, social aspect/motive, international aspect, ideology, religion, economical aspect, revolutionary aspect, warfare (unconventional) and deranged people as a perpetrator. After the elements were assigned to definitions, the frequency analysis showed the order of elements, means the percentage of appearance for all 31 elements in the analyzed database of terrorism definitions.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of elements in the terrorism definitions, N=306

Elements	Frequency	%
1. Violence, force	245	80,1
2. Political, policy	223	72,9
3. Fear, terror emphasized	164	53,6
4. Threat	148	48,4
5. Psychological effects and (anticipated) reactions	121	39,5
6. Victim - target differentiation	105	34,3
7. Purposive, Planned, Systematic, Organized action	102	33,3
8. Group, movement, organization as perpetrator	96	31,4
9. Extra normality, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constrains	89	29,1
10. Civilians, noncombatants, neutrals, outsiders as victims	88	28,8
11. Method of combat, strategy, tactic	83	27,1
12. Coercion, extortion, induction of compliance	80	26,1
13. Publicity aspect	65	21,2
14. Arbitrariness, impersonal, random character, indiscrimination	58	19,0
15. Intimidation	55	18,0
16. State as a subject	54	17,7
17. Innocence of victims emphasized	39	12,8
18. Social, (socially motivated)	38	12,4
19. Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence	35	11,4
20. International	35	11,4
21. Ideological (doctrine)	26	8,5
22. Symbolic aspect, demonstration to others	25	8,2
23. Clandestine, covert nature	25	8,2
24. Religious	24	7,9
25. Repetitiveness, serial or campaign character of violence	19	6,2
26. Criminal	19	6,2
27. Economic, (economically motivated)	16	5,2
28. Revolutionary	16	5,2
29. Warfare (unconventional)	14	4,6
30. Deranged as perpetrator	13	4,3
31. Demands made on third parties	6	2,0

According to the findings of the analysis, the most common element is 'violence/force' with a very impressive number of occurrences or 80,1%. It is followed by the 'political aspect' (72,9%), 'fear/terror' (53,6%), 'threat' (48,4%) and 'psychological effects' (39,5%). The elements with a high percentage of occurrences are 'victim-target differentiation' and 'purposive, planned, systematic, organized action', etc. If we compare these results with some results from previous researches, especially with those of Schmid and Jongman from 1988 and with the results of Weinberg, Pedahzur and Hirsch-Hoefler from 2004, it is evident that four key elements ('violence/force', 'political aspect', 'fear/terror' and 'threat') remained on the identical positions, with very similar percentages (Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3). Among the new elements extracted in the content analysis 'state as actor' (17,7%) has the highest ranking. It should be pointed out that in 185 or 60.5% of the definition of terrorism actor is not nominated, but terrorism is defined in terms of content as a phenomenon that is not linked to a specific actor, which means that an actor could be non-state and state as well. If we connect this finding with the fact that the element 'state as actor' took a high place (16th position among 31) it is reasonable to argue that this important aspect for understanding terrorism was marginalized and even excluded from previous considerations and researches. Comparing to Schmid and Jongman's ranking of elements in which the element 'group, movement, organization as perpetrator' had 16th place; here it is on a fairly high 8th with more than doubled percentages (14% versus 31%). These two findings - 'group as perpetrator' and 'state as actor' indicate that a quite number of terrorism experts are trying to explain it from the perspective of actor theory. Some other new elements that appeared in analysis are also important to understand, first knowledge and constructing knowledge about terrorism. Those are: 'social element', 'ideological', 'economical', 'religious' and 'revolutionary'. Some authors have used these elements to explain terrorism; especially the contemporary terrorism and this could be the reasons why in the earlier researches these elements were not detected as components of some definitions. Another interesting element of the analysis is the 'international aspect'. In fact, some authors are defining 'international terrorism' as a separate type, but actually it proved to be a constitutive element of many definitions, since most of these definitions have been created in the last 15 years and terrorism has become an international (global) problem which doesn't have boundaries. In summary, the key elements point to the fundamental definition of terrorism. Terrorism is thus a threat of use of violence/terror and the use of terror that by means of psychological effects is trying to achieve political goals.

Other attributes and elements extracted are additional help in the differentiation of terrorism from other types of political violence. Their number indicates the various forms of terrorism in its rich empirical appearance.

Conclusions

The study of terrorism has resulted in a vast number of competing and often contradictory definitions of terrorism. The failure of generic definition still characterized it as 'ambiguous concept'. Moreover, since the expert discourse on terrorism operates between science and politics, between academic expertise and state, many definitions are biased or open to political instrumentalization. Maybe for a full understanding is not so questionable term terrorism as an analytic category but the way of using the term in the discursive practice which is inconsistent and subjected to double standards. Terrorism simply shares the fate of many concepts that are the subject of social scientific research (for example, the lack of a generic definition of the war). Terrorism is socially constructed, it's meaning and practical appearance are changing in dynamic socio-historical conditions. This is a crucial reason for the failure of a generic definition of terrorism. Nevertheless, numerous definitions show that the concept of terrorism has been defined. The problem, then, is the lack of linkages between science and empiricism, or as Gilbert Ramsay convincingly concludes, the problem is in discrepancy of consistent image of terrorism because of endless, 'inconclusive debates' about terrorism definitions and coherent but different practical use of this term. What level of scientific approval is required or could be expected in regards to defining a social (societal, sociological) or political concept? The results of empirical research for 306 available definition of terrorism presented in this paper show that a minimum level of scientific approval on the defining of the concept of terrorism has been achieved. Based on the content and frequency analysis, key elements of the definition of terrorism are obtained. These are: 'violence/force' which occurs in 245 definitions or 80,1%, 'political aspect' (72.9%), 'fear/terror' (53,6%), 'threat' (48,4%) and 'psychological impact' (39,5%). Surely, they cannot be observed as atoms, as a separate base unit, but rather as qualitative and subjective codes that which logically connected and summarized enable a basic definition of terrorism. Terrorism is thus a threat of use of violence/terror and the use of terror, which by means of psychological effects is trying to achieve political goals.

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