Terrorism & Historical Sociology

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Recent critical scholarship on terrorism, as a topic for academic analysis, has bemoaned the state of the field. Some criticism, such as the problem caused by an inability to reach a widely accepted definition of terrorism, is almost universally accepted. Andrew Silke, early in his 2004 overview of the state of field, quotes two scholars that the "debate over an acceptable definition is 'the most confounding problem in the study of terrorism.'" So relentless is the bickering that "it is unlikely that any definition will ever be generally agreed upon"[1] One prominent author, Walter Laqueur, writing in the 1970s, neatly captured the essence of the challenge:

> Any definition of political terrorism venturing beyond noting the systemic use of murder, injury and destruction or the threats of such acts toward achieving political ends is bound to lead to endless controversies. Some terrorist groups have been indiscriminate and their victims are 'symbolic', others have acted differently. Some merely wanted to create a climate of fear, others aimed at the physical destruction of their opponents…It can be predicted with confidence that the disputes about a comprehensive, detailed definition of terrorism will continue for a long time, that they will not result in a consensus and that they will make no notable contribution toward the understanding of terrorism.[2]

Other recent criticisms of the field, such as that terrorism studies is too policy-prescriptive or too state-centric (seeing terrorism as a tactic overwhelmingly inflicted by delegitimized sub-state actors, whereas state violence represents some other, more legitimate, type of activity), are more controversial. Richard Jackson, quoting Silke, argues terrorism studies is limited by "[t]he dominance of orthodox international relations (IR) approaches and a lack of interdisciplinarity; the tendency to treat contemporary terrorism as a "new" phenomenon that started on September 11th, 2001 and a persistent lack of historicity."[3] We believe that such objections reflect an over-simplification of a highly diffuse area of study.[4] The best of the existing literature has clearly been aware of terrorism as both a historic concept and as one that has had differing meanings over time. Rapoport's "Fear in Trembling in Three Religious Traditions" discusses groups over a

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[1] Andrew Silke, ed., *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements and Failures* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 3.
[2] Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978), 79n.
[3] Andrew Silke, "The Road Less Traveled: Recent Trends in Terrorism Research" in Silke (ed.), *Research on Terrorism* quoted in Richard Jackson, "The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies," *European Political Science* 6 no. 3 (2007): 244.
[4] For example, Schmid and Jongman argue that, far from being overly informed by orthodox international relations, terrorism studies simply lacks rigorous theories and concepts. Schmid & Jongman, *Political Terrorism* quoted in *Ibid*.

chronological span of 2000 years.[5] Hoffman's *Inside Terrorism* includes discussion of the etymology and changing content of terrorism as a concept from the French Revolution onwards.[6] Both are both excellent examples of work that would be considered part of the "orthodoxy" by Jackson and other critical terrorism scholars. However, we also believe that the Jackson/Silke assessment offers a challenge to scholars of such violence to expand their analytical scope, of which this article is one attempt.

This project thus has a two-fold rationale, the first in relation to historical sociology in IR and the second in relation to historical approaches to terrorism. First, we are trying to expand the reach of historical sociology in IR by application to a topic of particular interest (i.e. terrorism.) In so doing, we are, second, introducing a different way of 'historicizing' terrorism that is open to variation in actor and motivation over time.

Why Historical Sociology?

Historical Sociology (HS), although it has its origins in the 18th century, represents one of the "new", non-orthodox theories of IR. As the name suggests, it draws upon a range of disciplines, notably history and sociology as well as traditional IR.[7] Lawson observes that one of the key criticisms of the mainstream theories of IR is that they are "curiously ahistorical". While adherents of realism would argue that this constant quality is precisely one of its strengths, Lawson suggest "mainstream IR has systematically truncated the study of world politics by introducing a levels of analysis parlour game which reifies social processes and social facts – states, the market, sovereignty – as timeless analytical (and ultimately ontological) entities."[8]

In an earlier article, Lawson identified three major advantages of HS. First, it has a diachronic understanding of the international realm. Agency matters, precluding universal or timeless categories in favour of a messier, but more analytically rich multilinear theory of historical development.[9] The second advantage of HS that Lawson identifies is that it offers the possibility of providing not only sophisticated analysis across eras but also within eras, since it assumes that both history and specific context matter but that each exists within the broad structure of the wider international realm. Third, HS seeks to investigate the processes and development behind seemingly

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[5] David C. Rapoport, "Fear and Trembling in Three Religious Traditions," *American Political Science Review* 78, September (1984).
[6] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism: Revised and Expanded Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 3-20.
[7] Steve Smith, "Reflectivist and Constructivist Approaches," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 236-38.
[8] George Lawson, "Historical Sociology in International Relations: Open Society, Research Programme and Vocation," *International Politics* 44 (2007): 346.
[9] ———, "The Promise of Historical Sociology in International Relations," *International Studies Review* 8 (2006): 415.

immutable structures, such as states or anarchy, which are in fact rooted in specific historical circumstances.[10]

HS, as a theory, thus satisfies many of the concerns leveled at terrorism research by critical scholars. It is interdisciplinary, historically-driven, and does not rely on a state-centric perspective of international relations, as do some of the more traditional theories. However, much of the best known work in HS focuses on the macro level of analysis: the formation of states or the nature of civilizations, for example. This project is better suited to a micro-historical analysis, as advocated by Mabee and others.[11] While complementing rather than contradicting such macro analysis, micro-historical studies place still greater emphasis on agency and processes at the individual or group level. These have to be connected back to the macro level, however, so that the micro/macro choice is not an ontological division so much as a problem-oriented analytical distinction.[12] One of the pre-eminent figures in contemporary HS is the Columbia University sociologist, Charles Tilly. His view of micro-historical analysis requires "studying the experiences of individuals and well-defined groups within the limits set by large-scale structures and processes."[13] This will be our approach in this paper.

Current Historical Accounts of Terrorism

Many studies of terrorism begin discussion of the concept with the French Revolution. Although this is not the approach of the current project, such a beginning has logical weight in at least two respects. First, the French Revolution is a common historical breaking point between the "pre-modern" and "modern" eras. Previous campaigns had replaced kings with non-monarchic leaders, as in the Commonwealth following the English Civil War or the United States following the American War of Independence. The French Revolution, however, represented a much more fundamental shift. Weinberg argues that the Revolution had the effect of providing an ideal for subsequent revolutionaries to pursue and a model for using tyrannicide as a means of removing repressive leaders.[14] In that sense, the French Revolution can be seen as the predication of modern revolutionary violence. As terrorism increasingly came to be seen as an action perpetrated against the state, starting studies of the phenomenon with the Revolution makes some logical sense.

Moreover, the etymology of "terrorism" stems from the Revolution's 1793-94's *régime de la terreur.* As has been widely noted, however, in this context terrorism was the

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[10] *Ibid*: 415-6.
[11] Bryan Mabee, "Levels and Agents, States and People: Micro-Historical Sociological Analysis and International Relations," *International Politics* 44 (2007): 431-49.
[12] J.C. Alexander & B. Giesen, "From Reduction to Linkage: The Long View of the Micro-Macro Debate" in J.C. Alexander et al (eds.), *The Micro-Macro Link*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) cited in *Ibid*: 432-33.
[13] Charles Tilly, "Future History" *Theory and Society* 17 (5) p. 706 cited in *Ibid*: 437.
[14] Leonard Weinberg, *Global Terrorism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2005), 22-23.

system by which the revolutionary government protected the new state against "enemies of the people". The mainstream, present, view of terrorism as revolutionary or anti-governmental violence conducted predominantly against the state by sub-state actors is a more recent evolution of the term.[15] Hoffman suggests two common aspects of French Revolutionary terrorism and the more recent variants. First, each should be perceived as "organized, deliberate and systematic" rather than random or indiscriminate. Second, each reflects a drive to create a "new and better society" to replace a corrupt or unfair political system.[16] Arguably, these same elements can be projected backwards, as well as forwards, in history.

While Hoffman and others have shown that the term "terrorism" can be traced to a specific time and place in history, as Laqueur suggests, "there have been terrorists (and terrorism movements) *avant la lettre*."[17] However, Laqueur's examples of such violence before the French Revolution focus on religious motivations, notably the three ancient groups (Zealot-Sicariis, Assassins, Thugees) highlighted by Rapoport.[18] Likewise, Weinberg is open to the possibility that terrorism existed before the French Revolution, but suggests that it was generally pursued for religious goals.[19]

Combs also discusses the Assassins and the Thugees, but suggests that acts of terrorism predate the French Revolution in the form of tyrannicide. She cites examples of tyrannicide and assassination, beginning during the ancient Greek democracies and extending to the early 20th century, as evidence of a longer timeframe.[20] Laqueur has also considered tyrannicide as a precursor of more modern terrorism. Both he and Combs found an extensive list of scholars, dating from Antiquity onwards, who were willing to provide both religious and secular justifications for the forcible removal of a tyrant or unjust monarch. Laqueur and Combs particularly note the 16th century Spanish Jesuit, Juan de Mariana, who argued that a king's power was predicated on a contract of "popular sovereignty" with the people.[21] Any private citizen could, and should, remove a king that violated the contract. Mariana's key work, *De Regis Intsitutions*, was banned in France, but appeared elsewhere in Europe. Mariana was representative of an era where tyrannicide was frequently advocated in countries such as France and practiced in Italy.[22] In France, the Monarchomach movement, originally a Huguenot legal theory (although later also adopted by Catholics) of tyrannicide and the right of rebellion against an unjust monarch was prevalent during the Wars of Religion during the late 16th century.

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[15] Cindy C. Combs, *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), 24, Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 3.
[16] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 4.
[17] Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (New York: Little, Brown, 1987), 12.
[18] *Ibid*, 12-14.
[19] Weinberg, *Global Terrorism: A Beginner's Guide*, 22.
[20] Combs, *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, 20-4.
[21] For a discussion of the development of popular sovereignty in the Sixteenth Century, see Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics Volume Ii: Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 245-63.
[22] Combs, *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, 22-23.

Indirectly, the theory is thus part of a lineage that predates the development of revolutionary terrorism in the 19th century.

Although we agree with much of this preceding analysis, we would argue that a broader historical view of terrorism is justified. It is our contention that, at least in France from the Wars of Religion onwards, examples of religious and secular-motivated terrorism beyond the assassination of key political leaders can be identified. This is important not only in analytical terms, but also because it ties the discussion back to core works in the terrorism studies literature. Hoffman, for example, argues that lone assassins are not terrorists if they are not tied to a wider political movement: Their action cannot be politically purposeful in this case. He specifically notes the example of Sirhan Sirhan's killing of Robert Kennedy in 1968, where there was no evidence that the assassin had links to any wider political movement, but was instead driven by personal frustration over Kennedy's stance on the Middle East.[23] Equally, for our purposes, assassinations are analytically problematic unless they form part of a wider political effort. Thus, assassinations such as those of the Duc de Guise or later Henri III during the Wars of Religion, or that of Henri IV in 1610, or the attempted killing of King Louis-Phillippe in 1832, have not been included in our study.[24] As in Hoffman's example, in these instances, the assassin was motivated by mainly personal motives (even if these had political effects). The Duc de Guise was killed because of the threat his accumulating power posed to the reigning monarch, who ordered the assassination; Henri III was in turn killed by a Catholic clergyman believed to be acting out of vengeance.

Most descriptions of terrorism *avant la lettre* are similar in that they project backwards in time our contemporary focus on terrorism as an act of violence against the state. This is in contrast to Hoffman's account, in which terrorism has evolved from a practice of states to a tool of non-state entities. In addition to changes in actor, the changing motivations for terrorism have also been discussed in the literature. Rapoport has also provided a vision of modern terrorism as having four waves, starting with anarchist terror in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, followed by anti-colonial violence from the 1940s to the 1960s, leftist terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s and finally religiously motivated terrorism from the 1980s onwards.[25] Although Rapoport is a major proponent of the role of religion in terrorism *per se* throughout history, his account of four waves presents religious motivation as a recent development in *modern* terrorism – something that has become central to assertions that contemporary Islamic extremist terror is fundamentally 'new'.[26] Taken in combination, these historical accounts of terrorism give very different perspectives on the evolution of the phenomenon over time. Terrorism has either always been a tool of non-state actors, or has evolved to be such; religion has either been a long-

[23] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 37.
[24] On the 1832 incident, see Alistair Horne, *La Belle France : A Short History*, 1st American ed. (New York: Knopf, 2005), 252.
[25] Rapoport's four waves are recapped briefly in Mark Sedgwick, "Al-Qaeda and the Nature of Religious Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 4 (2004).
[26] Isabelle Duyvesteyn, "How New Is the New Terrorism?," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27 (2004).

standing motive for terror, or it is a recent development. We believe that an HS approach which treats both agent and motivation as variables of interest, rather than elements of definition, can offer a more unified historical account of the phenomenon.

Tilly and "Terror"

In many ways Charles Tilly is the doyen of HS, and so it is appropriate that our attempt to apply HS to terrorism should be inspired by his approach. Tilly's key work in HS is the book *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1992,* whose conclusions build on Tilly's earlier observation that "[Preparations for war] tended, indeed, to promote territorial consolidation, centralization, differentiation in the instruments of government, and monopolization of the means of coercion, all the fundamental state-making processes. War made the state and the state made war."[27,28] The way that different European states gained power over the population, particularly from the Early Modern Period, is of relevance to this project because we are concerned with examining the development and nature of political violence in one such European state, France, from the late 16th century onwards. Part of the exercise, therefore, is to consider both state uses of violence and challenges to the French state's developing dominance. As the state's power developed, such challenges inevitably became increasingly asymmetric. This asymmetry is in turn a key characteristic of terrorism.

Helpfully, Tilly has also addressed the issue of terrorism. In a 2004 article, he made the following observations:

- "The word terror points to a widely recurrent but imprecisely bounded political strategy
- We can reasonably define that strategy as asymmetrical deployment of threat and violence against enemies using means that fall outside the forms of political struggle routinely operating within some current regime.
- A great variety of individuals and groups engage in terror, thus defined, from time to time, most often alternating terror with other political strategies or with political inaction.
- Groups and networks specializing in terror and no other forms of political action do sometimes form, but they typically remain unstable and ephemeral.
- Most groups and networks that engage in terror overlap extensively with government-employed and government-backed specialists in coercion – armies, police, militias, paramilitaries, and the like.
- Even when they organize in opposition to existing governments, specialists in coercion typically adopt forms of organization, external connections, and sources of supply resembling those of government-employed specialists.

[27] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, Ad 990-1992*, Revised Edition (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992).

[28] _____, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 42.

- Most types of terror actually occur as complements or as byproducts of struggles in which participants – often including the so-called terrorists – are engaging simultaneously or successively in other more routine varieties of political claim making.
- Terror as a strategy therefore ranges from (1) intermittent actions by members of groups that are engaged in wider political struggles to (2) one segment in the modus operandi of durably organized specialists in coercion, including government-employed and government-backed specialists in coercion to (3) the dominant rationale for distinct, committed groups and networks of activists.
- Despite the publicity it has received recently, variety (3) accounts for a highly variable but usually very small share of all the terror that occurs in the contemporary world."[29]

A Brief History of Four Centuries of Terror in France

Drawing from Tilly's observations about terror, we chose to examine political violence within France from the late 16th century to the present in order to develop a historical account of terror that is neutral on questions of agent and motive. We thus take terror to be a strategy, usually one among several, that takes many forms and that is used by a variety of actors, both states and non-states. It is a type of political action, but one that falls outside the normal conduct of politics. Terror is also asymmetric, which means not only that it may be employed by a weaker actor against a stronger one, i.e. sub-state against state, but also that a stronger actor (usually the state) may employ its dominant coercive power against a weaker (usually sub-state) actor. As such, Tilly urges us to consider "terror", rather than to discuss "terrorism" or "terrorists":

> [Social scientists] should doubt the existence of a distinct, coherent class of actors (terrorists) who specialize in a unitary form of political action (terror) and thus should establish a separate variety of politics (terrorism).[30]

For Tilly, terror is a political or "public" strategy, so that excludes "private" types of violence for purely self-gain, such as criminal enterprises. This is in keeping with mainstream terrorism studies thinking. Hoffman argues that:

> [U]nlike the ordinary criminal or lunatic assassin, the terrorist is not pursuing purely egocentric goals; he is not driven by the wish to line his own pocket or satisfy some personal need or grievance. The terrorist is fundamentally an altruist: he believes that he is serving a "good" cause designed to achieve a greater good for a wider constituency – whether real or imagined – that the terrorist and his organization purport to represent.[31]

Another standard aspect of many orthodox definitions of terrorism is that it is violence, or the threat of violence, which is intended to influence an audience beyond its immediate victims. We have chosen to retain this criterion for this study. "Terror" is a strategy that

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[29] _____, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1 (2004): 5-6.
[30] *Ibid*: 5.
[31] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 37.

exists in the public (political) sphere and, by definition, terrorizes. This implies that a broader audience exists and is a target for influence. The communicative or symbolic character of the violence is therefore a critical aspect of "terror": it occurs not only in the public sphere, but also has a demonstrative intent.

Based on these three criteria (extra-normal, public, and communicative violence), cases were selected for study with the goal of covering the time period evenly. Specific incidents were first identified in general histories of France and by database searches; additional focused research on incidents of interest was done to determine whether they could legitimately be included as 'terror'. Upon inspection, some cases were discarded – generally because the violence lacked the communicative element of our definition, and often took the form of relatively-organized military conflict (which also meant it was not significantly asymmetric.) Within this roster of cases, we have sought to identify variations in motivation (between political and religious) and in agency (between state and non-state actors).

Opening up inquiry into motivation requires adding one caveat to Tilly's observations, namely that in this paper we will make distinctions between religious and secular violence. We do so for heuristic reasons, rather than as a means of definition. If violence as a political strategy is seen as "public" violence, as a means of distinguishing from "private" violence, religiously-motivated terror should be seen as an aspect of the former, of politics in its broader sense. As such, including religion as one aspect of the paper does not appear to contradict Tilly's concept, provided religion is not used (either positively or negatively) as a defining characteristic for the violence to be assessed. We will consider religion to be at issue when the divisions that give rise to violence are drawn along religious lines and when the violence is in some sense directed at a cosmological audience, even if it also has clear nomological implications. This, obviously, draws on the work of Hoffman.[32]

Regarding the agency of terror, the concepts of "state" and thus "non-state" are significant but difficult since the nature of the "state" changed over the period we are considering, from systems of monarchical absolutism to more popularly-based governance in the 19th and 20th centuries (although admittedly with obvious returns to monarchical or imperial rule for parts of the 19th century.) Since we are not seeking to problematize the state in this paper, we have chosen to take a relatively simplistic notion of statehood: That it is "a legal territorial entity composed of a stable population and a government; [with] a monopoly over the legitimate use of force; its sovereignty is recognized by other states in the international system."[33] However, within the terrorism literature, "state" is usually used synonymously with the *government* of the state, so that violence supposedly against the state is generally directed primarily against the government of that state and "state terror" is that which is directed or condoned by the

[32] Bruce Hoffman, "'Holy Terror': The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 18, no. 4 (1995).
[33] John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 280.

leadership of a state and which employs the institutions and mechanisms of governance for the perpetration of such violence. Within the terrorism literature, "sub-state" means action perpetrated by a constituent and unofficial unit of the state. We have chosen to retain these conventions in the following twelve cases.

The St. Bartholomew's Eve Massacre, 24 August 1572

The French Wars of Religion, lasting roughly from 1559 to 1598, have variously been explained in political or class terms, but in recent years historians have placed increasing emphasis on the role that religion itself played in the violence.[34] This violence, between the largely Catholic monarchy and Protestant Huguenots, was every bit as brutal as the Balkan implosion of the early 1990s.[35]

One incident of note in these decades of sectarian violence was the St. Bartholomew's Eve massacre in 1572, in which some fifteen thousand Protestants were killed throughout Paris – allegedly on the orders of the young King Charles IX.[36] Though there is some debate among historians as to whether the broad scope of the massacre was intended, in either case the violence was ordered by the King with the aim of eradicating Protestantism from France.[37]

The St. Bartholomew's Eve Massacre is one of the most documented instances of terror in the Wars of Religion. The violence had a distinct communicative quality, seemingly an attempt by the monarchy to signal to its increasingly restive Protestant population that their very presence in France would not be tolerated. It had an audience larger than those directly affected, even though the number of directly affected was exponentially greater than in what we generally consider as "terrorism" today. It was also explicitly public in character, aimed at preserving the religious purity of Catholic France in the face of a Judgement Day believed to be fast approaching.[38] Of particular interest to this study, however, is the fact that the violence was distinctly religious in motivation: Not only were the lines of alterity drawn on the basis of confession, but the violence itself was at least in part a response to cosmological imperatives rather than purely nomological ones. Meanwhile, responsibility for the St. Bartholomew's Eve Massacre lies with the state in the person of Charles IX.

[34] Mack P. Holt, "Review: Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion," *French Historical Studies* 18, no. 2 (1993), Horne, *La Belle France*, 88.
[35] Horne, *La Belle France*, 88.
[36] *Ibid*, 89.
[37] Kathleen A. Parrow, "From Defense to Resistance: Justification of Violence During the French Wars of Religion," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Ser.* 83, no. 6 (1993): 41.
[38] *Ibid*: 12.

The Suppression of Peasant Revolt in the 17th century

Brown has argued that though the suppression of revolt in France often involved extensive force, this often followed deeply entrenched legal norms (despite seeming incredibly brutal by present-day standards.)[39] However, in the 17th century the monarchy was compelled by its foreign military campaigns to levy increasingly burdensome taxes on its population.[40] These often sparked revolt in the rural periphery of France, and between 1640 and 1675 the regime frequently employed extra-normal violence to bring these revolts to heel.

The beginning of this shift is usually linked to the suppression of the revolt of the Nu Pieds in 1639. Following the destruction of the small rebel force by royal troops, the local military commander carried out a range of summary punishments for suspected leaders – executions for some, torture for most. The troops were then dispersed across the province, to live by pillage at the order of the King.[41] In addition to outcry over the punishments meted out to the supposed leaders of the revolt, contemporaries saw the routine violence of such a quantity of troops living by appropriation as vastly excessive. As tax revolts grew more common throughout the 17th century, however, extremes of repressive violence were repeatedly employed by the state.[42,]

The use of excessive military force to suppress tax revolts in the 17th century was communicative in that it signaled to the population at large the consequences of disobeying the monarchy. Like the violence of the St. Bartholomew's Eve Massacre, it was sanctioned by the state; unlike the Wars of Religion, however, the violence was carried out by uniformed, acknowledged representatives of royal authority acting under explicit orders. In sharp contrast to the Wars of Religion and the further anti-Huguenot violence that would come under Louis XIV, the repeated instances of suppressive violence in the mid-17th century were purely political. At one level they were simply about tax revolt; at another, deeper level they were the violent consolidation of an absolutist monarchy.

The Dragonnades and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 1681-1685

Although the Wars of Religion came to a close with the Edict of Nantes in 1598, sectarian violence returned to the fore in the late 17th century. McCullough describes the period between 1598 and 1681 as a religious cold war, in which royal decrees progressively limited the rights and freedoms of Protestants.[43] 1681, however, marked

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[39] Howard G. Brown, "Domestic State Violence: Repression from the Croquants to the Commune," http://www.history.ac.uk/eseminars/sem11.html.

[40] Charles Tilly, "Contention and Peasant Rebellion in Seventeenth-Century France," in *Symposium on Peasant Rebellion* (Johns Hopkins University: Center for Research on Social Organization, University of Michigan, 1980).

[41] Brown, "Domestic State Violence."

[42] *Ibid*.

[43] Roy L. McCullough, *Coercion, Conversion and Counterinsurgency in Louis Xiv's France* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 125.

the beginnings of the use of force to inspire conversion when the monarchy began to preferentially billet the most notorious of its troops – the *dragoons* – with wealthy Protestant families. Horne describes these as effectively "armed raids accompanied by torture, pillage and scorched-earth against Protestant dissenters".[44] At first done on a small scale and with some hesitation, by 1684 the authorities responsible for allocating troop billets were instructed to dramatically increase the number and cost of billets imposed upon Protestants, and the troops themselves given orders to show little restraint in commandeering the homes and belongings of their hosts.[45] In October 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked, ending the policy of official tolerance, and the *dragonnades* became part of much larger military operations in Protestant areas of France aimed at ensuring the loyalty of the newly converted and coercing any hold-outs to follow their example.

This form of low-intensity state violence bears striking similarity to the repressive use of troop billets throughout the mid-17th century. As with those earlier billets, the *dragonnades* not only served the straightforward military purpose of maintaining the royal army but also to achieve a political goal through terror. McCullough cites numerous contemporary documents that speak of the communicative goals of the violence, which clearly had a much broader audience than those Protestants directly affected by the troop billets.[46] As with the suppression of tax revolts, this violence was explicitly authorized by the highest levels of the state (even if some mid-level officials displayed more zeal in its execution than others). In sharp contrast with the previous example, however, it was religious in motivation: As with the Wars of Religion over a century before, the targets of the *dragonnades* were selected specifically because of their faith.

The Revolt of the Camisards, 1702-1704

Not long after the *dragonnades* and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the still-numerous French Protestants in the Languedoc region rebelled in what came to be known as the Revolt of the Camisards. Almost immediately local authorities felt it necessary to contain the rebellion "by force and fear".[47] The resulting strategy was heavily focused on the use of terror, in particular by means of holding villages collectively responsible for any aid to Protestant insurgents or any harm to Catholic clergy or royal troops; massacres of the entire Protestant population of towns; and burnings of buildings where Protestant services were held while the celebrants were still inside.[48] Local Catholic militia supplemented some 25,000 royal troops deployed to the region, often engaging in atrocities against the Protestant population (who themselves frequently slaughtered Catholics in retaliation.)[49]

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[44] Horne, *La Belle France*, 167.
[45] McCullough, *Coercion, Conversion and Counterinsurgency*, 152.
[46] See, for example, the discussion of the case of Nîmes in *Ibid*, 153.
[47] *Ibid*, 187.
[48] *Ibid*, 208-09.
[49] Brown, "Domestic State Violence."

If the *dragonnades* were an instance of religiously-motivated terror on the part of the French state, the suppression of the Camisards was exponentially more so. The rebels also frequently engaged in massacres, church-burning and the assassination of Catholic clergy, however. If anything, then, the Revolt of the Camisards was a return to the terror of the War of Religion, practiced by both the state and its non-state opponents.

The Storming of the Bastille, 1789

Much has been written about the storming of the Bastile by an enraged Parisian mob on July 14, 1789. Reacting to the shooting of rioters by soldiers the previous day, a crowd of Parisians marched on the Bastille, a notorious prison and symbol of royal authority.[50] The prison governor ordered his detachment of 110 soldiers to open fire, resulting in the death of ninety-eight in the crowd; following the subsequent fighting the governor was killed and his head paraded through the streets on a pike. The Bastille itself was demolished.

What makes the assault on and subsequent demolition of the Bastille of interest for this study is the highly symbolic nature of the incident – which can be taken as representative for any one of hundreds of similar insurrectional events in the early years of the Revolution.[51] A non-state force engaged in a form of violence that was almost purely symbolic, signaling as much to the to the crowd itself as to members of the *ancien régime* the power of popular rage. The identities of the actual victims – even the unfortunate prison governor – were quite irrelevant. The grievances that sparked these early harbingers of revolution were exclusively political, and presaged the bloody years that gave birth to the word 'terrorism'.

The Reign of Terror, 1793-1794

As a succession of ever-more radical factions took control of the revolutionary government, the combination of external military threats and internal counter-revolutionary movements real and imagined inspired the massive, systematic violence of the reign of terror. Thousands of suspected royalists or counter-revolutionaries were executed on the guillotine following conviction by Revolutionary Tribunals.[52] Only with the execution of its chief architect, Robespierre, did the Terror finally come to an end.[53]

In the space of only a few years, people who had been merely loose groups of conspirators came to hold the reins of power. Despite this intriguing continuity, however, the Reign of Terror was violence performed by the state and on a scale only the resources

[50] Horne, *La Belle France*, 189.
[51] Brown cites a study by John Markoff counting some 4,700 such events between 1788 and 1793, for example. See Brown, "Domestic State Violence."
[52] Horne, *La Belle France*, 199.
[53] *Ibid*, 201.

of a state could support.[54] It was also explicitly intended to consolidate the Republic by inspiring fear in its domestic opponents (rather than merely eliminating them entirely, though in practice the scope of the violence tended towards this latter extreme.) The veneer of legality given to the violence by the Law of Suspects in September 1793 (which criminalized "disloyalty" to the revolution) makes clear that, despite some anti-religious tendencies, the motives for the Terror were political.[55]

The Rise and Suppression of the Paris Commune, 1871

Despite many bloody changes of power in the years between the revolution and the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, communicative and symbolic forms of violence were largely absent. Following the capitulation of France to Prussia, a new National Assembly was established at Versailles. Following the desertion of army detachments sent into Paris to reclaim artillery that had been seized by the Parisian National Guard, government officials and remaining army units in the city were promptly ordered to decamp to Versailles, leaving Paris effectively ungoverned.[56] Some days later, following elections within the city, the independent Commune of Paris was proclaimed.

Almost immediately the insurgent *Communards* clashed with the army, loyal to Versailles. The army was under orders to summarily execute any deserters found within the ranks of the *Communard* forces; though perhaps twenty-four such executions were carried out, in Paris it was rumoured that near two hundred had been shot. In response, the Commune passed a *Law of Hostages,* which Dallas describes as "consciously modeled after […] the *Law of Suspects* of September 1793." Under the new law, anyone found to be an accomplice of the Versailles government would be detained as a hostage. Any execution of prisoners by Versailles would be answered by a three-fold execution of hostages, chosen at random, by the *Communards*.

Despite repeated attempts at negotiation over the 72-day life of the Paris Commune, in late May the army assaulted the city. Hostages were executed *en masse*, while the army engaged in its own mass executions – killing between twenty and thirty thousand suspected *Communards*. What makes yet another bloody revolt in Paris of interest to this study, however, is the fact that for weeks it was the threat to a small group of hostages– themselves selected on the basis of belonging to the vague category of "accomplice" – that formed the basis for attempted negotiation. As a form of violence this was highly symbolic and explicitly communicative. The *Communards*, a non-state entity, were thus engaged in a terror that was quite purely political in motivation – stemming from their opposition to what they saw as an attempt by Versailles to restore the monarchy.[57]

[54] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 3.
[55] *Ibid*, 4, Horne, *La Belle France*, 200-01.
[56] Gregor Dallas, "An Exercise in Terror? The Paris Commune, 1871," *History Today* 39 (1989): 39.
[57] *Ibid*.

Anarchist Terror in France, 1892-1894

In most histories of terrorism, the wave of anarchist terror that swept the Western world in the late 19th century usually connects the Reign of Terror to the terrorism of the 1960s and through to today.[58] In France, anarchist terror peaked from 1892 to 1894 when individual anarchists such as Ravachol, Auguste Vaillante and Émile Henry carried out a series of bomb attacks. These attacks targeted the houses of public figures, the legislature, police stations, rail stations, and in one instance the offices of a mining company.[59] Anarchist violence culminated in France with the assassination of President Carnot in 1894.

The violence of the anarchists, built around the idea of "propaganda by deed" espoused by Russian constitutionalists and others of the late 19th century,[60] attempted to spark a broader uprising against organized government. The relative indiscriminateness of the violence, the idea that it was a communicative act more than an attritional one, combined with the political aim and the non-state nature of the anarchists themselves makes this a very familiar example of what is generally understood by 'terrorism'.

The Algerian War, 1954-1962

Although France spent the years immediately following the Second World War fighting a doomed colonial war in Indochina, it is the long and brutal war over Algeria that is more often remembered. We include it here (while excluding Indochina and other violence arising from colonialism) because, since its conquest in 1830, Algeria had been regarded as an extension of metropolitan France. President Mendès-France's famous reaction to the initial revolt in Algeria ("Ici, c'est la France!") captures the sentiment with which France entered what it considered to be yet another domestic revolt.[61]

Though the war in Algeria sparked a series of tumultuous political crises in France and later took on a much more complicated character, between 1954 and 1957 it was a relatively straightforward guerilla war between the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* and the French Army.[62] Both sides engaged in torture and other forms of extreme violence against civilians, often targeted simply for being either Muslim Algerians or French colonists.[63] In many cases the violence, while brutal, was also communicative: The FLN tried to shape public opinion in metropolitan France; the Army, public opinion amongst the roughly nine million Algerians on whose support the FLN depended. Though the violence was primarily political in its motivation – what was ultimately at issue was the independence of Algeria – it also had religious undertones. As

[58] Hoffman's account is a particularly good example of this. See Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*.
[59] Horne, *La Belle France*, 293.
[60] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 5.
[61] Horne, *La Belle France*, 387.
[62] *Ibid*, 393.
[63] Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism: The Fln in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1978), 105.

with the Wars of Religion centuries earlier, the lines of alterity were drawn between Muslim Algerians and predominantly Catholic French colonists (though ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic cleavages formed more or less along the same lines.)[64]

Terror from the Right: l'Organization de l'Armée Secrète (OAS), 1961-1962

Following an attempted coup by French generals dismayed at President de Gaulle's movement toward withdrawal from Algeria, disaffected soldiers allied with a range of generally right-wing elements opposed to Algerian independence to form *l'Organization de l'Armee Secrète* (the organization of the secret army, or OAS) in 1961.[65] Over the next year, the OAS engaged in a campaign of violence directed at de Gaulle and other elements of French society that it saw as betraying the ideal of French Algeria. Some thirty attempts were made on de Gaulle's life, alongside a range of other shootings and bomb attacks.[66]

As far as terrorism goes, however, the violence of the OAS amounted to little.[67] Not only were there relatively few people injured (and only one killed) despite their repeated attacks, the steady stream of violence actually tilted French opinion towards support for de Gaulle and independence.[68] The violence of the OAS fits quite comfortably in the mold of 20th century terrorism: Politically motivated violence, directed against largely symbolic targets, perpetrated by a non-state entity.

Terror from the Left: *Action Directe*, 1979 to 1987

In the late 1970s, the ultra-left *Action Directe* burst onto the French political scene with a series of machine-gun attacks on the offices of the Ministry of Labour, the national railroad, and high-technology firms. Subsequent bombings and machine-gun attacks targeted businesses perceived by the group to trade in luxury goods. A split within the group in 1982 led to differing patterns of violence, but both factions continued to espouse an ultra-left ideology.[69]

Action Directe, though ideologically the opposite of the OAS, also represents a paradigmatic example of what we generally consider 'terrorism'. Their violence, particularly in the early years, was much more symbolic than practical in any instrumental sense; it was intended to inspire (another) revolutionary transformation in

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[64] For a brief discussion of the structural socioeconomic disparities in the French colonial regime, see *Ibid*, 1-2.
[65] Ehud Sprinzak, "Right-Wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimization," in *Terror from the Extreme Right*, ed. Tore Bjørgo (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 28, Geoffrey Bocca, *The Secret Army* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 69-81.
[66] Horne, *La Belle France*, 402.
[67] Sprinzak, "Right-Wing Terrorism," 28.
[68] Horne, *La Belle France*, 403.
[69] Michael Y. Dartnell, *Action Directe: Ultra-Left Terrorism in France, 1979-1987* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1995), 75-80.

French society.[70] In terms of this study, *Action Directe*'s positions on the two key dichotomies of motivation and actor are political and non-state, respectively.

Religious Terror Returns: France and the Islamic *Jihadi* movement, 1994-present

Although France experienced a spate of attacks by the Abu Nidal Organization and other Middle Eastern groups in the mid-1980s,[71] the years from 1987 to 1994 were ones of relative calm. As Algeria descended into civil war in the early 1990s, however, France became a target of the newly formed *Groupe Armée Islamique* (GIA). The GIA was among the first to take up the *jihadist* doctrines of Sayyed Qutb and the Egyptian Islamic extremists, and viewed their struggle in Algeria as part of a broader fight to establish a global Caliphate. The memory of the Algerian War and continued support of the military junta in Algeria made France the "mother of all sinners" in the GIA's eyes.[72]

The GIA's violence would be excluded from this research if it were not for the fact that the group was able to carry out attacks within France using a combination of infiltrated militants and resident Algerians. 1995 saw a series of GIA attacks despite numerous police successes in arresting GIA cells throughout the country. Over the subsequent decade, French authorities saw the GIA militants become progressively more international in their outlook, developing links to Osama bin Ladin's training infrastructure in Afghanistan, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and other extremists throughout the Western world.[73]

As the GIA and similar organizations elsewhere have evolved into a much larger, but equally more nebulous movement, they have become the paradigmatic terrorism of today – largely because of the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. This terrorism, like that of the OAS and *Action Directe*, is distinctly a tool of non-state entities (employed, as this very label implies, against states.) More complicated is whether or not the violence is essentially political despite its religious language, or whether it is genuinely religiously inspired.[74] By the criteria of this study, the fact that Islamic extremists select their targets on explicitly religious grounds (even when these are their co-religionists), and pursue a goal that is based on creating a cosmically-sanctioned order on Earth, is sufficient to place them clearly on the side of religious motivation.

Prima facie conclusions: Terror across time

When we survey these twelve cases, three conclusions about terrorism as a historical phenomenon are apparent. The first is that terrorism has historically been a tool of states

[70] Michael Dartnell, "France's *Action Directe*: Terrorists in Search of a Revolution," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2, no. 4 (1990).
[71] Michel Wieviorka, "France Faced with Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 14, no. 3 (1991): 158-60.
[72] Jeremy Shapiro and Bénédicte Suzan, "The French Experience of Counter-Terrorism," *Survival* 45, no. 1 (2003): 79.
[73] *Ibid*: 87.
[74] See, for example, Duyvesteyn, "How New Is the New Terrorism?."

and non-states alike, and has been employed with equal facility for religious and political ends. Debate over whether contemporary terrorism is in some way "new" because of its religious motivation is thus historically myopic, as are assertions that terrorism is intrinsically a practice of non-state entities.[75,76] Putting terror into a historical context without prejudging either of these qualities by act of definition demonstrates the falsity of either of these claims. This alternative way of historicizing terrorism, based on HS, should thus be read in parallel with Hoffman's etymological account and Rapoport's examination of religious violence by non-state actors in antiquity, both of which reify aspects of actor and motivation, respectively.[77]

A second conclusion, related to the question of motivation, concerns the relationship between religiously motivated terror and religious homogeneity. There is an evident oscillation in our cases between religious and political motivations for terror, regardless of the authors of the violence. Interestingly, however, the ebb in religiously motivated violence coincides with the advent of religious homogeneity in the early 18th century, following the conversion or departure of most of France's Protestant population.[78] Because the transition of French society to the fiercely secular (but decidedly post-Catholic) one of today over the subsequent centuries was not marked by significant religious violence, it seems that religiously motivated terror is associated with religious diversity. Although this is an almost self-evident point (it is, after all, difficult to divide a religiously homogenous population along religious lines!), it is worth making because it suggests that the Islamic extremist violence of recent years is in some way related to a decline in religious homogeneity and broader contestations over the role of faith in defining political communities.

A third and final conclusion about terror relates to its association with extreme power asymmetries, particularly when practiced by the state. In a sense this is a feature of definition, as was noted above; however, it is also of interest in light of Tilly's linkage of war and state formation. At several points in French history, counter-state movements opposed to the gradual centralization of power were violently suppressed. However, in instances where these movements were able to field organized military forces (such as the *Frondes* of the 17th century), this violence was more recognizable as conventional military conflict rather than terror.[79] Though standards of military conduct vary over

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[75] *Ibid*.
[76] This tendency is reflected in policy-oriented work that assumes a non-state actor as an element of definition, as in several recent RAND studies. See Brian A. Jackson et al., "Aptitude for Destruction," (Santa Monica: 2007), ———, "Breaching the Fortress Wall: Understanding Terrorist Efforts to Overcome Defensive Technologies," (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007). Problematizing this tendency is a key element of so-called 'critical' terrorism studies; see Ruth Blakeley, "Bringing the State Back in to Terrorism Studies," *European Political Science* 6, no. 3 (2007).
[77] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Rapoport, "Fear and Trembling."
[78] Horne, *La Belle France*, McCullough, *Coercion, Conversion and Counterinsurgency*.
[79] On the *Frondes*, see Geoffrey Treasure, "The Fronde, Part I: The Revolt of the Lawyers," *History Today* 28, no. 6 (1978), ———, "The Fronde, Part Ii: The Battle for

time, history does not record the use of terror in these instances. Only in cases where there was a very extreme disparity in forces was terror employed. When this is true of non-state actors, it is very much consistent with the understanding of terrorism as a weapon of the weak, or of terror as a precursor to broader insurgency.[80] In the case of terror perpetrated by the state, however, this association may be because militaries fighting unconventional adversaries seek to minimize losses through brutality.[81] Arreguín-Toft, however, argues that engaging in such tactics tends to degrade the ability of military forces to engage in combat against other militaries.[82] This raises the possibility that the extra-normal violence that characterized several of the cases studied here had a self-reinforcing quality: Once the state began to employ terror, its forces became more able and likely to do so over the short term (though this generalization does not apply to state forces over the entire time period.)

Historical Sociology and Terrorism: Implications for research

Beyond what it tells us about terrorism as a historically bound phenomenon, the application of HS to terrorism has a broader implication for the study of terrorism itself. The very extension of a definition of terrorism backwards through time without specifying either motivation or actor (as this project has done) raises the question of whether a logically unitary phenomenon of 'terrorism' even exists. This assertion (made by, *inter alia*, Martha Crenshaw) is effectively the lynchpin of terrorism research, which is based on the existence of a distinct, transhistorical phenomenon that is amenable to generalization.[83] Of course, this question is the logical continuation of Tilly's suggestion, quoted earlier in this paper, that we consider only "terror", rather than "terrorism" or "terrorists".[84] To the extent that "critical terrorism studies" attempts to open up the definition of terrorism, it may also dissolve whatever tenuous coherence the concept currently has.

France," *History Today* 28, no. 7 (1978), Orest A. Ranum, *The Fronde : A French Revolution, 1648-1652* (New York: Norton, 1993).

[80] This latter point is made most famously by Mao Tse-Tung and by Marighella, but also more recently by Byman. See Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (Havana: Tricontinental, 1970), Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (II) (Baltimore: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1992), Dan Byman, "Understanding Proto-Insurgencies," (Santa Monica: RAND Corp., 2007).

[81] The link between loss-reduction and brutality is discussed at length in Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[82] Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11-12, 17-18.

[83] Martha Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, ed. Walter Reich (Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars and Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[84] Tilly, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," 5.

Trying to tackle the problems raised by seemingly arbitrary (and ahistorical) definitional boundaries risks undoing the key variable around which the entire research project is based – leaving us with merely a set of loosely similar but idiosyncratic cases. The continuing difficulty of defining terrorism, discussed at the outset of this paper, also strongly points towards the possibility that such a coherent phenomenon is not merely elusive and ethereal, but actually illusory. If this is the case, then any definition of terrorism can only be, at best, a necessary heuristic device for a specific study, and can never be of objective value in its own right. Terrorism studies, therefore, could only ever consider the phenomenon as a series of specific socially constructed instances. Researchers could use others' work to inform their own, but the scope for cross-cutting studies, based on others' understanding of the core phenomenon of terrorism, would be negligible.

It is not the purpose of this paper to engage in the broader debate of the relative merits of positivist versus post-positivist theories within International Relations. However, the situation described above is characteristic of the post-positivist approach and is thus an unsurprising outcome, given that this study deliberately eschewed more traditional theoretical perspectives. Such an outcome also puts into question the purpose of terrorism research, as it has been frequently pursued in the past. The subject has been frequently criticized as too policy relevant, not simply because it reinforces a state-centric approach to the topic, a criticism made by both Jackson and Blakely,[85] but also because a policy-oriented approach often leads to an excessively close relationship between scholars and state counter-terrorism organizations – a situation described by Burnett and White as "embedded expertise".[86] Post-positivist or critical approaches, such as the one adopted here, risk detaching the subject from any generalizable conclusions and thus any potential for policy relevance. This is precisely one of the key pitfalls that Gunning warned against. He cites three key scholars of Critical Security Studies, Ken Booth, Keith Krause and Michael Williams, as arguing that any such project "has to move beyond critique and deconstruction to reconstruction and policy-relevance".[87] The challenge in employing approaches such as HS lies in finding this balance. If the outcome of such approaches is to find that each incident of terrorism is characterized primarily by its uniqueness, by its differences from other incidents, then their potential contribution to policy that can be operationalized is greatly limited. Formulating counterterrorism policy on such an individualized basis effectively requires a frequent "reinvention of the wheel", preventing timely or routinized responses. Consequently, the value of critical terrorism studies may lie not in providing a radical departure from more

[85] Jackson, "The Core Commitments.", Blakeley, "Bringing the State Back in to Terrorism Studies."
[86] J. Burnett and D Whyte, "Embedded Expertise and the New Terrorism," *Journal for Crime, Conflict and the Media* 1, no. 4 (2005).
[87] Jeroen Gunning, "Babies and Bathwaters: Reflecting on the Pitfalls of Critical Terrorism Studies," *European Political Science* 6, no. 3 (2007).

traditional perspectives, but rather in offering a vital corrective to such approaches, a caveat rather than a wholly new outlook on the subject.

Keeping terrorism in historical perspective is, as critical scholars point out, an ongoing challenge – though their accusations of failure overstate the case. As we have shown, the best of the literature has long considered the history of the phenomenon. The existing historical accounts of terrorism do not exhaust the possibilities for such efforts, however, nor is terrorism research overall rich in theoretical approaches. We have thus sought to expand the reach of HS as a theoretical approach in IR overall by proposing an alternative historical account of terrorism that reifies neither actor nor motivation by definitional fiat. Doing so generates some interesting insights in to terror as a historical phenomenon, but also points to the limits of a self-consciously critical approach to terrorism research.