Globalisation, terrorism and political violence

By Philip Leech-Ngo
Today

- News segment
- Violence and terrorism
- Break
- What is security?

AND JUST LIKE THAT

* POOF*

WEEKEND. GONE.

Happy Monday!!!!!
News

• Top news stories of the week?
POLITICAL VIOLENCE

A Scenario
What is terrorism?

What is political violence?
Truth, Terror and Globalization

- Terms like terrorism and Globalisation are so lose and variously used

- In such highly emotional contexts

- The act a bit like the Rorschach inkblot Test

- Confirming or highlighting pre-existing biases
Narratives

• People jump to conclusions

• Make connections Based more or their own pre-exiting narratives than on evidence

• Sometimes these (false) connections are deliberately suggested - or left uncontested

• Why?
‘Terrorism’ is useful

- Politically expedient
- Profitable ($300 Billion Counter-Terror Industry)
- Shifts blame
- contains nuggets of truth
- Can never be put to bed
Echo Chambers

• In our globalised world, the media— and with growing emphasis on social media— is becoming less of a platform to learn the facts and details of events (if it ever were that) and instead is rapidly becoming part of the battlefield itself.

• Yet it is also on that battlefield that racism, mistruths and damaging double standards can and must be challenged.
Two Forms of Violence

Revolution
- Public seizure of the state in order to overturn the existing government and regime

Terrorism
- Use of violence by nonstate actors against civilians in order to achieve a political goal
Revolution

- **Key elements**
  - Some element of public participation
  - Goal is to gain control of the state
  - Often, but not always, violent

- **A revolution is not** a
  - coup d'état: elites remove a regime government and replace it with a new one (examples: Chile, 1973; Mali, 2012).
  - negotiated transition: leaders of one regime plan a transition to a new system (examples: Chile, 1989; South Africa, 1994).
  - secessionist movement: one group seeks local control or independence (example: South Sudan, 2011).
Terrorism, Defined

- **Key elements**
  - Carried out by nonstate actors
    - State-sponsored terrorism is largely carried out through proxies
  - Targets civilians
  - Has a political goal or intent

- **Terrorism is not**
  - ordinary or “random” violence (this is crime).
  - nonstate actors targeting a state (guerrilla war).
  - a state targeting their own civilians (human rights violations) or citizens of another state (war crimes).
DEFINITIONS

• Were the attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, acts of terrorism?

• Were the American uses of the atomic bomb against Japanese cities in 1945 acts of terrorism?

• Are attacks against American military personnel by the Taliban in Afghanistan acts of terrorism?

• Were the attacks by John Brown in the 1850s, in which he and his followers entered the territory of southern states and freed slaves by killing their owners, acts of terrorism?
COMPARING EXPLANATIONS: FREE WILL

- Institutional
- Ideational
- Individual

Determinism → Free Will
COMPARING EXPLANATIONS: UNIVERSALISM

Institutional

Ideational

Individual

Particularistic

Universal
Institutional Explanations for Terrorism

- Economic: poverty, lack of education, inequality
  - Criticism: mixed empirical evidence

- Political: terrorism is more common when
  - state capacity and autonomy are weak.
  - mechanisms for public participation are poorly institutionalized.
Ideational Explanations for Terrorism

- Specific religious ideology
  - Criticism: All religions have their terrorists.

- Nihilism
  - Belief that all institutions and values are meaningless
  - Only redeeming value is violence

- Alternative: Ideas are a justification for, not a cause of, violence.
Individual Explanations for Terrorism

- Feelings of alienation or humiliation
  - Generate grievances, frustrations, and desire for vengeance

- Social benefits of membership
  - Sense of identity
  - Group solidarity
How effective is Terrorism

- Terrorists seldom achieve their policy goals.

- But terrorists do have impact.
  - Economy: depresses such things as tourism, foreign direct investment, and stock markets
  - Society: increases anxiety and insecurity
  - Politics: erodes state legitimacy, destabilizes politics

- Terrorism can provoke more conflict.
Factors that Can Transform Religion into Violence

- Hostility to modernity
- Belief in “cosmic war”
  - Views the modern world as marginalizing or dehumanizing believers
- Messianic, apocalyptic, or utopian belief
All Religions Have Their Terrorists

- Islam: Al Qaeda & ISIS
- Christianity: William Pierce (National Alliance)
  - Inspired Timothy McVeigh (1995 OKC bombing)
- Buddhism: Ashin Wirathu and the 969 Movement
Responses to political violence

- Fundamental dilemma: repression or reform?
  - Repression
    - May eliminate immediate threat
    - Leads to more resentment later
  - Reform
    - May satisfy some demands
    - Can encourage more demands later
Break time!
10 mins
Daesh

- Roots in Al Qaeda - itself a product of religious fighters (mujahdeens) who fought against the Soviets
- Remarkably brutal and social media savvy
- Background in Iraq war 2003
- No single cause
Background conditions

- What are the background conditions?
- Global and local
- 2003 war completely mishandled
- Suggests limitations of role of military force
- Does not mean that ‘US imperialism’ is the causes of ISIS
- Nouri Al-Maliki’s corrupt, brutal leadership - suppression of Sunni population
How to deal with ISIS

• An extension of the “War on Terror”?

• A new kind of conflict?

• A new approach altogether?

• Forever war? Everywhere war?

• Epitomizes the ‘open’ vs. ‘closed’ dichotomy of contemporary politics
Four world views

- Daesh = pure version of Islamic civilization
- There can be no peace between different civilizations
- Flip side of this is Daesh’s own propaganda
- Daesh = anti social behaviour
- International order is imperfect
- Globalization’s discontents need to be brought in to enjoy the its benefits
- Daesh = a wrinkle in the progress of history
- International order is imperfect
- Globalisation sometimes requires force to deal with its discontents
- Daesh = a warning
- Emerged from disaster
- Demonstrates that the strongest and best organized prevail - not the most virtuous
- International order is crumbling, expect more outcomes like Daesh
What is Security?
An “essentially contested concept”

- Security, in international relations remains, an “essentially contested concept,”

- “defies the pursuit of an agreed general definition” (Buzan 1983, 11).

- Yet, even while this lack of clarity has been widely acknowledged, the dominant interpretations of “security” are somewhat reductive.
Use of force

• Most interpretations of security are concerned with:

• “the conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states, and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent, or engage in war” (Walt 1991, 212).
Realist Paradigm

- Realism - one of the main schools of thought within International Relations

- Principally concerned with state-to-state interaction

- States are the primary actor in an anarchic context (no rules)

- States must (ultimately) rely on force to protect themselves

- States act from fear
‘… is a threat to Canada’s national security’

• Most interpretations of security:
  • State(s) vs Threat
    • e.g. ‘Nazi Germany is a threat to Canada’s national security’
    • ‘ISIS is a threat to Canada’s national security’
    • ‘Cyber crime is a threat to Canada’s national security’
    • ‘Climate change is a threat to Canada’s national security’
    • ‘Unrestricted migration is a threat to Canada’s national security’
  • For realists: all discussions of international affairs are really discussions about the security of states.
  • “either you are with us, or with the terrorists”
Beyond the Realist Paradigm

There are five other main schools of thought regarding security:

- “gender-critical”
- “Paris” schools
- “Copenhagen,”
- “Aberystwyth”
- “post-colonial”
Critical Security Studies

- Paris School - sociological - focuses on the genealogy of concept of security

- Feminist - gender-sensitive lenses - emphasis militerization of public culture and the de-emphasis of ‘non-security’ issues

- Post-colonial - challenging the Eurocentric, colonial and radicalized assumptions underlying most security discussions
Copenhagen School

• Focuses its critique on the process of ‘securitization’

• How something becomes seen to be a security threat

• This is in order to shift the issue “beyond the established rules of the game” and elevated “above normal politics” (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 9).
Broadens security

• Some similarities to Realist school

• Accepts security is a question of state survival

• Provides greater degree of analytical breadth

• Suggests the danger of endless ‘securitization’

• Every time an issue is ‘securitized’ it makes it harder for normal political solutions to work and emphasizes the use of force
Desecuritization

- Copenhagen School: too much, or inappropriate, securitization is the problem

- We should “desecuritize” issues

- moving an issue out of the realm of the emergency - back to “normal bargaining processes of the political sphere” (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 4).

- “questioning the policies,” and “disputing the threat”
What does this look like?

• Conflict management

• Deaf to the concerns of those on the sharp end?

• silent on the problem of the essentialization of identities—also known as “othering”—that commonly goes along with securitization

• “blind to the moral choices which go into the melting-pot of the process of identity formation” (McSweeney 1996, 21).

• Example: Good Friday Agreement?
Aberystwyth School

• “ex-, anti- and post-realist” (Booth 1991b, 532)

• Moves beyond the state as the only referent object

• if human beings are considered potential “referent objects” — then states themselves can be seen as the greatest security threats.
The state as a threat

• “to countless millions of people in the world it is their own state, and not ‘The Enemy’ that is the primary security threat. In addition, the security threat to the regimes running states is often internal rather than external” (Booth 1991a, 318).

Killings of medical workers since the start of the Syrian Civil War, according to a PHR summary[207]

- Attacks by government forces (95.5%)
- ISIL or rebel groups (2.5%)
- Kurdish forces (0.1%)
- Unknown forces (1.9%)
Emancipation over problem solving

- Take seriously the “notion of the existence of possibilities for progressive alternatives” (Richard Wyn Jones 2004, 217)

- Security, then, is about far more than mere survival it is about the ability to enjoy political agency, to make choices.

- Politics-in-general becomes more inclusive.
“utopian realism”

- “world politics does not have to be this way” (Booth 1994, 15).

- combat the implicit pessimism in statist interpretations of “security.”

- human-centric “security. - “where the Marxian origins of ‘emancipation’ are filtered through Kantian idealism” (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010, 39).

- Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative that humans should never be treated as means to an end, but only as ends in themselves
Unrealistic?

- Criticized as flimsy or dangerously idealistic
- Later works provide normative guidelines to everyday practice
- Challenge structural inequalities
- May be an indirect approach to dealing with the challenges of or globalised world
Dealing with Daesh

• Realist ‘war on terror’ - discredited?

• Desecuritization - a deescalation not a solution?

• Emancipation - a radical transformation that changes the conditions?
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<td>Terrorists</td>
<td>Terrorists + overuse of military force</td>
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<td>Weaknesses in International order</td>
<td>Inappropriate secularization</td>
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<td>Kill the terrorists</td>
<td>Kill terrorists where necessary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kill the terrorists</td>
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<td>Desired Outcomes</td>
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<td>Fails to address the immediate concern</td>
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Those three world views again

- Daesh = a wrinkle in history
- International order is imperfect
- Globalisation sometimes requires force to deal with its discontents
- Squash the bugs and just keep squashing
- “The world (globalisation) breaks everyone... those who it doesn’t break it kills.”

- Daesh = anti social behaviour
- International order is imperfect
- Globalization’s discontents need to be brought in to enjoy the its benefits
- Desecuritization will allow people to articulate their concerns politically
- Makes ‘terrorism’ less attractive
- Kill the bad ones, save the good ones

- Daesh = a warning
- Emerged from disaster
- Demonstrates that the strongest and best organized prevail
- International order is crumbling, expect more outcomes like Daesh
- Unless we radically rethink the way international relations (and life) works, we’re ****ed
- Analogy = going to church, or rebuild post-war order?