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A Critical Analysis of The Exclusion of the State in Terrorism Studies

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The use of the term *Terrorism* to designate political violence started with the application of the word *Terror* to define the regime of governance wielded by the revolutionary French state in 1793-1794.[1] Quite a few centuries later, Terrorism Studies has become one of the prominent areas of research in the Western academic world, consolidating itself as a field of great political and cultural influence.[2] However, as the set of shared assumptions, narratives and labels that constitute the field expanded,[3] one core concept from the original definition has been notably excluded: the role of the state as a perpetrator of terrorism.

The absence of the state, which has become more acute since 9/11,[4] is due in part to the origin of Terrorism Studies. The field started by focusing on control of anti-state violence through problem-solving and state-centric paradigms during the Cold War.[5] As the "War on Terror" brought a surge of interest and investment in terrorism research, the incoming scholars were socialised into adopting those same dominant paradigms, sedimenting and institutionalising the previous biases and interests[6] which worked to reinforce state power. [7] However, as it will become evident below, this mainstream orthodox view on terrorism is not only full of misconceptions, it is also counterproductive.

The goal of this paper is to examine the orthodox take on terrorism, with its actor-based definition that excludes the state,[8] and analyse critically how this approach is used within Terrorism Studies. The core assumption is that knowledge is never neutral, and by excluding the state as an actor, Terrorism Studies is biased in favour of the West. In this context, the silence around state terrorism is in itself a political position. It works to further the status quo by establishing what knowledge, discourse, and policies are considered legitimate, excluding dissenting voices, naturalising a certain political and social order, and promoting hegemonic projects.[9]

This article is split into four sections. First, it will expand on what the orthodox literature on terrorism has to say about the role of states in its practice. Following this scrutiny, it will examine the meaning behind the mainstream role ascribed to the state using discourse analysis. Thirdly, it will go through the four typologies of state terrorism as defined by Peter Alan Sproat,[10] evidencing the variety of roles the state can play as a practitioner of terrorism. Finally, a study case of the United States targeted killing programme under the light of state terrorism will highlight the usefulness of the paradigm for Critical Terrorism Studies. The aim is to exemplify how applying the label of state terrorism can assist in the questioning of counterterrorism policies, as it aids to highlight previously unacknowledged terroristic aspects of those policies and their impact on civilian welfare.

Orthodox Definition of Terrorism

Terrorism is a deeply contested term,[11] but there are some key points in its definition that tend to be uncontroversial.[12] Terrorism is inherently political, as it is the political motivation that sets it apart from other types of violence. [13] Terrorism is also about the quest for power and political change, with violence against non-combatants, or the threat of it, used to instil terror or intimidate in the pursuit or service of a political aim.[14] Finally, the victim of the violence is not the primary target of terrorism, but only a symbol in an act of communication. The primary target is actually the audience, whose behaviour the terrorist aims to impact.[15] Thus, a broad and

uncontroversial definition of the term would assert that "terrorism refers to violence directed towards or threatened against civilians[16] which is designed to instil terror or intimidate a population for political reasons."[17]

The broad description above treats terrorism as a violent tactic which, in itself, is not exclusive to one set of actors over others.[18] However, the definitions legitimised by mainstream public and academic discourse add one key term to what terrorism is: perpetrated majorly (sometimes exclusively) by non-state actors. Some influential definitions in this regard are:

1. The definition of terrorism from the United States (US) Code, which describes terrorism as "premeditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."[19] This definition, which is used by the US State Department and the CIA,[20] restricts terrorism to "sub-national groups" and "clandestine agents," which excludes direct state terrorism. Thus, under the US Code, the states and authorised agents that commit crimes analogous to those described above are not classified as terrorists.[21]
2. Bruce Hoffman, a leading terrorist scholar,[22] defines terrorism as "[…] [I]neluctably political in aims and motives; violent – or, equally important, threatens violence; designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target; conducted either by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspirational cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia) or by individuals or a small collection of individuals influenced, motivated, or inspired by the ideological aims or example of some existent terrorist movement or its leaders or both; and perpetrated by subnational group or nonstate entity."[23]

It is not surprising that governmental definitions of terrorism, such as the one from the US Code, would exclude states. Their aim is to shape the popular understanding of the term away from characterisations that could either implicate themselves,[24] or hinder the perpetuation of the state's sole legitimacy in the use of force. Also, as terrorism has a vastly pejorative connotation,[25] its application solely towards non-governmental actors becomes a useful label to be applied against opponents of the state in efforts to control public perception and legitimise policies.

The silence around state terrorism, however, is also vastly dominant in the academic scholarship, as evidenced by Hoffman's definition above. He is not the exception, however, as the vast majority of research conceptualises terrorism solely or primarily as a form of illegitimate non-state political violence.[26] The orthodox literature justifies this stance on a set of four main premises. First, it bases itself on the grounds of legitimate versus illegitimate use of violence, which constructs non-state violence as terrorist and state violence as legitimate.[27] In a Weberian concept of state, which is characterised by the relation of men dominating men through legitimate violence, political violence and the state are intimately bound together as a part of the latter own means of existence.[28]

Domestically, this suggests that the state is always morally and legally right due to its origin in a social contract, while the terrorist actor is indisputably wrong.[29] This legitimacy and power of the state confers to it a cloak under which violence assumes different guises. It is arrest instead of abduction, imprisonment instead of hostage taking, execution instead of murder, coercive foreign policy instead of blackmail,[30] all of which are legitimate and lawful uses of violence. Even though the orthodoxy recognises instances of "illegal violence perpetrated by the state against individuals it has a duty to protect, with the aim of inducing fear in a target audience beyond the direct victim in order to further a political agenda",[31] those instances are arbitrarily classified as state "terror".[32] This classification serves no other purpose than to distinguish itself from "terrorism", which is set aside for non-state actors only.

On the international realm, orthodox scholars argue that the nature of political violence as perpetrated by the state is intrinsically different from that of non-state actors, thus preventing the analysis of both phenomena under the same light.[33] Supposedly, there is a qualitative difference between those two types of violence,[34] as states are subjected to the rules of war and are accountable for war crimes. International terrorists, on the other hand, refuse to be bound by such rules of warfare.[35] Moreover, the contextual differentiation between non-state and state violence regarding to terrorism is justified by an effort to bring analytical precision to the term, which is seen as ever more "promiscuously and expansively applied".[36]

There are, however, a few instances where traditional Terrorism Studies focus on state terrorism. Those are when it is done by "the other"[37] in an instance of state-sponsored terrorism. The mainstream discourse and scholarly research only associate authoritarian or totalitarian states with the practice, making them out to be the nemesis if not the actual enemy of the liberal democratic state.[38] Coincidentally or not, those "rogue" states[39] labelled as sponsors of terrorism in the literature, are also often present in the US State Department's annual list of state sponsors of international terrorism.[40]

As seen above, the orthodox Terrorism Studies organise itself paradigmatically around four main suppositions in order to legitimise its exclusion of state terrorism as a viable phenomenon. Those are: 1. The use of violence by the state, as derived from the social contract, is legitimate; however the use of violence by non-state actors is always illegitimate; 2. The nature of political violence as perpetrated by the state, as it is subjected to rules of war, is intrinsically different from that perpetrated by non-state actors; 3. The exclusion of the state helps to bring analytical precision and clarity to terrorism, which is a term that is promiscuously applied; and 4. The non-western state-sponsored terrorism is the only mainstream 'terroristic role' playable by a state. In the following session, this paper will critically analyse those four assertions and prove that, beyond fallacies, they are in itself biased toward privileging the interest of western hegemonic states. [41]

To Whom Does it Serve? A Critical Evaluation of the Orthodox Terrorism Studies

Borrowing from Richard Jackson, [42] I will proceed through a first-order critique[43] of the four main discourses utilised by the orthodoxy to legitimise their choice in excluding the state as a perpetrator of terrorism. The first argument concerns the legitimacy versus illegitimacy of violence, with the underlying assumption that whereas state violence is legitimate, especially within the state's own borders, non-state violence is always illegitimate.[44]

This argument is flawed in many ways. First, it starts by labelling terrorists as inherently illegitimate without reflection on whether or not the state lacks legitimacy in the experience of those who support the terrorists.[45] Secondly, it neglects the instances where the state exerts illegitimate violence, which is not always terroristic in essence, but might be. The creation of the label "state terror" to be applied in situations such as these does not add anything to the discussion, much on the contrary. Its only usefulness is to cloak the state from the inherently pejorative meaning of "terrorism", undermining the delegitimizing power that come with such label and the political struggle of human rights activists.[46] Thus, the whole argument around legitimacy versus illegitimacy of violence based on the identity of the actors perpetrating it reflects an inherent realist and state-centric understanding of International Relations.[47] This view is western in essence[48] and does not reflect the reality nor the needs of those living under state terrorism.

The second argument is that, in the international sphere, the nature of the violence perpetrated by the state is intrinsically different from that perpetrated by non-state actors, as the latter does not abide to international rules of war. According to this orthodox vision, a violent act – or the threat of violence – against non-combatants with the desire to instil terror in a target audience in order to further a political agenda would only be terrorism if the culprit was not a state. If the perpetrator was a state, then the violent act would shift in its definition to configure solely a war crime. However, one thing does not preclude the other. Even though not all forms of warfare can be equated with terrorism, terrorism is a form of warfare.[49] Thus, as a tactic, state terrorism can configure a war crime without losing its essence nor its political aims. Additionally, state terrorism is only liable under war crimes tribunals if the state accepts their jurisdiction, which the United States, for example, does not.[50] In this context, the labelling of state terrorism for what it is carries even more political weight.

The third argument, that the exclusion of the state as an agent of terrorism brings clarity to the term, is highly illogical. There is nothing in the nature of terrorism, understood by its uncontroversial broad definition of "violence directed towards or threatened against civilians which is designed to instil terror or intimidate a population for political reasons,"[51] that necessarily hinders states from partaking. As Richard Jackson exemplifies:

"when government agents attempt to cause fear and intimidation to sectors of their own population in order to undermine support for an opposition movement through a violent campaign that involves random murder, kidnapping and torture, assassination, and bombs planted in public places (the very same acts that non-state terrorists commit),

there is no doubt that in analytical terms, this constitutes terrorism. It is similarly terrorism if they attempt to intimidate the population of another state through the same means."[52]

Instead of bringing clarity to the definition of terrorism, the exclusion of the state only brings about more confusion, as it is unclear why a violent tactic would go by different names depending on the actor using it.

Finally, the fourth argument is that the only relevant way states can partake in terrorism is through the sponsorship of terrorist organisations. This argument is not put forward explicitly in the literature, but is implied through the fact that most of the orthodox scholarship that discusses state terrorism only does so under this archetype.[53] Furthermore, much of this already small body of work is devoted to investigating only state sponsored terrorism in the case of authoritarian or totalitarian states.[54] This furthers the myth of the "Western exceptionalism" which denies the long history of Western involvement in terrorism.[55]

The thorough disavowal of the four arguments above lead to the conclusion that, in its exclusion of state terrorism, orthodox Terrorism Studies are subservient to western interests and hegemonic projects. Critical terrorism scholars point to many reasons for this subservience, from which this article will highlight three.

The first one lies in the historical origins of terrorism scholarship from within counter-insurgency studies during the Cold War, which focused on the control of anti-state violence through a problem-solving approach.[56] Embedded in the roots of Terrorism Studies, this approach is not critical of its framework of reference, its categories, its origins nor the power relations behind the production of such categories.[57] As such, it is state centric, positivist and objectivist, taking security, in its narrow definition, to mean the security of the state in an ahistorical and asocial context.[58] Secondly, the aim for policy relevance that dominated the field during the Cold War resurfaced in the post 9/11, with the new scholars of the field being socialised into adopting those same approaches and viewing terrorism under the same particular light.[59] Additionally, government funding opportunities and affinities between state institutions and researchers helped to build an uncritical relation between state perspectives and scholarly research.[60] Finally, as pointed out by Jackson, [61] there is also a taboo in discussing state terrorism amongst traditional scholars. They tend to take the issue as not useful, inappropriate, risky in career terms and difficult in practical turns due to the lack of state funding and support.

Whatever the reason for this scholarly subservience, it is a social fact that the orthodox terrorist research community has intricate and multifaceted links with the structures and agents of state power, most obviously in the United States.[62] As critical theory never tires to highlight, however, knowledge and its production is never a purely neutral exercise but always works for someone and for something.[63] Applied to the specific case of the absence of state terrorism from academic discourse, this silence functions to "promote particular kinds of state hegemonic projects, construct legitimising public discourse for foreign and domestic policy, and deflect attention from the terrorist practices of the state."[64] This has far too real consequences in international affairs, as it is the scholarly output that denies the existence of a western state terrorism that is going to be used to justify and legitimise terroristic counterterrorism campaigns.[65]

Broadening Concepts, Questioning Hegemonic Projects: The State As a Terrorist

Claims that states have engaged in more terrorism than non-state actors are difficult to prove due to difficulties attesting intentionality and responsibility.[66] However, it is undeniable that state terrorism can be far more serious and destructive than non-state terrorism, due to its superior military prowess and aptitude to institutionalise terrorist practices in permanent state structures.[67] Thus, facing the neglect impinged on state terrorism by orthodox scholars, it is the duty of critical researchers to further the examination of the theme and its implications.

As Jarvis and Lister highlight,[68] the Critical Terrorism Studies' literature on state terrorism is still small, but already heterogeneous and fragmented into diverse typological frameworks. For the purpose of this article, the typologies of state terrorism will be analysed through the categories set forth by Sproat in 1991.[69] I consider these especially useful because they highlight the varieties of activities that fall within the state terrorism spectre while allowing for the differentiation between domestic and international levels of analysis. Sproat differentiates state terrorism through four

levels: direct and domestic; indirect and domestic; direct and international and, finally, indirect and international, which is the same as the state-sponsored terrorism discussed above.

Direct and domestic state terrorism takes place when an act of violence perpetrated by the state goes beyond a legitimate act of punishment necessary to maintain obedience to its laws. In order to make the distinction, one must examine not only the legal status of the action but also the intentions of the punishment. If the goal of the violence is instilling fear and impacting behaviour of a targeted group, then it can be considered terrorism. However, not all acts of political violence perpetrated by the state are terroristic in nature. A political assassination, for example, will only be terrorism if there is an intention of making the immediate victim serve as a symbol in a process of communication with the real target audience.[70] Moreover, not all direct domestic terrorism is strictly unlawful.

If a state threatens or uses violence against any individual or group in accordance with an indiscriminate catch all or blanket piece of legislation, such as a suspension of habeas corpus that leads to imprisonment without trial, then this legal use of violence by the state could qualify as an act of direct domestic state terrorism if the intention to instil fear in others exists, because the state has disregarded the individual victim's innocence.[71]

Direct domestic state terrorism is hard to evidence due to uncertainties regarding intentionality. It relies, therefore, on the ambiguity of the well-known secret rather than overt announcements.[72] Indirect domestic state terrorism, in turn, shares the main characteristics of the former, with the addition of the use of surrogate actors, such as insurgent groups, working covertly for the state. Added to the issue of intentionality, then, is that of the responsibility for the political violence.[73] Additionally, the bureaucratization, mechanisation and specialisation of the state leads to a depersonalisation of the actual violence inflicting process, both in direct and indirect domestic state terrorism, which in turn increases the possibility of the tactic being applied.[74]

In contrast with the concealed nature of the domestic state terrorism, direct international state terrorism is the most overt. In this scenario, the threats are known at least by the target of attention, if not by the potential victim and external researchers.[75] As orthodox scholars will be quick to agree, state terrorism is distinct from non-state terrorism in the sense that the former is subject to the rules of war. One of the main points established by those rules is the discrimination of combatants from non-combatants, with the latter being protected from attacks, both domestic and internationally, and both in the battlefield and outside.[76] Thus, direct international state terrorism takes place when the enemy's civilian population is targeted by threats or actual strikes. For example, when weapons of mass destruction are used indiscriminately with the aim of deliberately inducing fear in non-combatants in order to modify the behaviour of others, which in this example would be the government of the enemy. Following this rationality, nuclear deterrence may be set forth as a widespread exponent of direct – and mutual – state terrorism.[77]

Finally, indirect international state terrorism, better known as state-sponsored terrorism, is in essence a covert action that entails the active support, encouragement, and assistance from a foreign government to a terrorist group.[78] The goal of the tactic is to further one's political agenda while maintaining plausible deniability in the international sphere. As it was mentioned above, state-sponsored terrorism is the only of the four typologies of state terrorism that consistently graces the pages of orthodox terrorism research. Even then, however, the focus tends to be on the practice by the so-called rogue states. Western states, however, are also known for perpetrating indirect international state terrorism, with the US sponsorship of anti-Castro movements in Cuba, for example, being a clear-cut case.[79]

Sproat's four typologies of terrorism help to shed light on the variety of terrorism activity that might be perpetrated by the state. It is a sharp contrast to the orthodox view on the theme and, through its methodical analysis of the role of states regarding political violence, assists to deconstruct the mainstream favouritism of western state biases in the terrorism scholarship. The next section of this article aims to make this discussion more tangible through a case study of the US targeted killing programme. Conceptualising such programme under the paradigm of state terrorism aids in removing it from the legitimising clutches of traditional counterterrorism literature and questioning the underlying assumptions that are used to justify its lawfulness.

Case Study – Drone Warfare and State Terrorism

Drone warfare has emerged as a preferred counterterrorism measure of the US government in the "War on Terror."[80] It was thus chosen as the case study for this article due to its pervasiveness, contemporaneity and usefulness in highlighting how the removal of state terrorism by orthodox scholars has created the space for governments to justify, institutionalise, expand and praise terrorist counterterrorism policies. This case study also serves to highlight how analysing the US drone targeted killing campaigns through the lenses of state terrorism helps to expand the criticism of the former to include previous unacknowledged consequences of the strikes, such as the terror impinged on non-combatants. This way, the state terrorism paradigm becomes a useful tool to challenge the United States government's narrative that presents the operation of drones strikes as having minimal downsides for civilians.[81]

The US drone targeted killing programme started in 2002, under the context of the "War on Terror", and currently takes place in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Niger.[82] The drone campaigns operate on the basis of identifying individuals or groups of individuals as members of non-state terrorist groups who are deemed to pose an imminent security threat to the US. The targeted killings are carried out in two ways: personality strikes and signature strikes. Personality strikes are perpetrated against specific individuals or groups, whose identity the US believes to know and whose ties to terrorist activities is supposedly assured. In a signature strike, however, the targeting of an individual or group of people occurs based on behavioural signatures deemed as suspicious, such as gatherings of men travelling in convoy, for example. Once the individuals or groups are identified as a threat, they are targeted and killed in drone strikes, while the drone pilots sit safely away.[83] At the programme's core, it is the definition that all military-age males in strike zones are considered as combatants, unless explicit posthumously intelligence proves them innocent.[84]

The targeted killing programme is portrayed as a new,[85] surgical[86] and precise counterterrorism tactic used for eliminating terrorists that are deemed to pose a threat to the United States, while at the same time limiting collateral damage.[87] These allegations, however, do not reflect the reality, as there is abundant evidence of poor intelligence and imprecision of strikes leading to the targeting of civilians. [88]

As it has been mentioned above, the definition of state terrorism faces two main problems: that of attesting responsibility and intentionality. As the drone programme is overtly carried out by the United States, the issue of responsibility is out of the table. There is still, however, the matter of intentionality. As the strikes are justified under the guise of a new, more precise form of counterterrorism, the intention is supposedly that of killing terrorists, and not that of deliberately inducing fear in non-combatants in order to modify the behaviour of others.

However, there are aspects of the drone programme that allows for it to be categorised as state terrorism. Most blatantly, the programme's criteria for discriminating civilians from combatants is extremely problematic. The labelling of military-aged men standing in a strike zone as combatants is an arbitrary measure that allows for the massive killing of civilians. Moreover, this definition, per se, is a terrorist measure. As the identities of the victims of signature strikes are essentially unknown,[89] there is no measurable way of knowing how the killing of those people will impact the organisation of terrorist groups. This, in turn, disavows any argument in favour of the efficiency of those strikes in combating terrorism.

Instead, the signature strikes work as a tool to instil fear in the population, affecting community, familial relationships and social cohesion.[90] Communities have described avoiding social gatherings, reducing the time they spend socialising, and feeling afraid of going to mosques.[91] This signals how the United States has effectively limited movement and social life in target areas through the threat of bombardment.[92] Additionally, those strikes have also disrupted the political, economic and social spheres of civilian life.[93]

Another terrorist practice of the drone programme is that of the "double tap", which consists of striking an already targeted site in quick succession. This discourages civilians from coming to one another's rescue and inhibits the provision of emergency medical assistance from humanitarian workers.[94] The design of the "double tap" is to be terroristic in nature, as it mimics a practice defined as such by the 2004 US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Bulleting, which states that "[T]errorists may use secondary explosive devices to kill and injure emergency personnel responding to an initial attack. Such terror devices 'are generally detonated less than one hour after initial attack,

targeting first responders as well as the general population."[95]

Additionally, the dehumanisation of civilians under the drone's gaze reflects a long history of imperial worldview that divides the world into those who are rightful subjects versus those who are mere objects of the coloniser.[96] The terrorism of the drone programme is not a simply unintentional and unfortunate consequence of the targeting of terrorists in far-away lands. Rather, the state terrorism paradigm sheds light on how the drone warfare waged by the United States works to further imperial dominance and entrench western hegemony through a deliberate project of state terrorism that indiscriminately kills and terrorise populations.

Conclusion

As terrorism continues to be a ubiquitous term, and the "terrorist threat" is increasingly presented by politicians and the media as an existential menace against the West,[97] it becomes all the more important to go back to the core definitions of Terrorism Studies and examine the assumptions holding it together. Questioning the exclusion of the state by orthodox literature brings to light the biases, interests and hegemonic goals being furthered by the mainstream research.

The silence around state terrorism is in itself a political position. It works to further the status quo by establishing what knowledge, discourse, and policies are considered legitimate, excluding dissenting voices, naturalising a certain political and social order, and promoting hegemonic projects.[98] In this context, it is important to acknowledge those biases and question how they work against inclusion and emancipation.

This article aimed to prove that the neglecting of the role of state in terrorism silences dissenting voices in the international community, negates the struggle of those living under political violence and effective hinders a full comprehension of the terrorist phenomenon. On the other hand, the case study of the United States drone targeted killing programme shows the possibility of bringing those silenced voices back to light through the paradigm of state terrorism. It is thus my firm belief that only through the careful, self-critical and honest analysis of terrorism as a tactic perpetrated by both non-state and state actors alike, that effective and emancipatory counterterrorist policies will begin to emerge.

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Notes

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[2] Richard Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism," in*Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 67.

[3] Jackson, 67.

[4] Richard Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror: Knowledge, Politics and Terrorism Studies,"*Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1, no. 3 (December 10, 2008): 377, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539150802515046.

[5] Richard Jackson, "Terrorism Studies and Academia," in *Weapon of the Strong: Conversations on US State Terrorism* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Pluto Press, 2012), 118–19, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dcu/detail.action?docID=3386692.

[6] Jackson, 118.

[7] Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism," 67.

[8] Even though, as it is widely acknowledged, terrorism is a contested term, there is a set of shared common understandings about terrorism that predominate in the orthodox scholarly literature. This set will be dissected in this article and will constitute what is hereby defined as "orthodox definition of terrorism".

[9] Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism," 69.

[10] Peter Alan Sproat, "Can the State Be Terrorist?," *Terrorism* 14, no. 1 (January 1991): 19–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576109108435854.

[11] Jeroen Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?," *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (June 2007): 363, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2007.00228.x; Ruth Blakeley, "State Violence as State Terrorism," in*The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence* (London: Ashgate, 2012), 1.

[12] Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism," 75.

[13] Hoffman, "Defining Terrorism," 2.

[14] Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism," 75.

[15] Sproat, "Can the State Be Terrorist?," 22.

[16] Due to space restraints, the terms “civilians” and “non-combatants” will be used interchangeably throughout this article. For an interesting discussion on its different meanings, see Chomsky in Weapon of the Strong.

[17] S. Raphael cited in Jackson, “The Ghosts of State Terror,” 383.

[18] Jackson, “Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism,” 75.

[19] “22 U.S. Code § 2656f – Annual Country Reports on Terrorism,” LII / Legal Information Institute, accessed April 17, 2019, https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/2656f.

[20] In Noam Chomsky’s interview by Cihan Aksan and Jon Bailes, he argues that the US government doesn’t actually use this definition, as it contradicts with the annual publishing of the list of states allegedly supporting terror. In Weapon of the Strong, 2012, 36, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dcu/detail.action?docID=3386692.

[21] Jon Bailes and Cihan Aksan, “Introduction,” in *Weapon of the Strong: Conversations on US State Terrorism* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Pluto Press, 2012), 2, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dcu/detail.action?docID=3386692.

[22] Sam Raphael, in the article “In the Service of Power: Terrorism Studies and US Intervention in the Global South,” analyses terrorism scholars that have occupied a central role in the field between 1979 and 2004, and points to Hoffman as one of the most influential ones. In *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 20.

[23] Hoffman, “Defining Terrorism,” 43–44.

[24] Jackson, “Terrorism Studies and Academia,” 118–19./

[25] Hoffman, “Defining Terrorism,” 24.

[26] Jackson, “Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism,” 70.

[27] Jason Franks, “Orthodox Accounts of Terrorism,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence* (London: Ashgate, 2012), 38.

[28]M. Stohl quoted in Sproat, “Can the State Be Terrorist?,” 22.

[29] Franks, “Orthodox Accounts of Terrorism,” 40.

[30] R. D. Crelinstein quoted in Sproat, “Can the State Be Terrorist?,” 22–23.

[31] Blakeley, “State Violence as State Terrorism,” 1.

[32] Hoffman, “Defining Terrorism,” 16.

[33] Hoffman, 26.

[34] Hoffman, 27.

[35] Hoffman, 28.

[36] Hoffman, 40.

[37] Gunning, “A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?,” 373.

[38] Gunning, 373.

[39] As explained by Ruth Blakeley in *State Terrorism and Neoliberalism: The North in the South*, the term "rogue states" has been used as a propaganda tool by leaders of western democracies to refer to states they consider hostile. Critical scholars, however, such as Blakeley herself, Noam Chomsky, and Eric Herring also apply the term to describe the US, due to its widespread sponsorship of state terrorism. In Critical Terrorism Studies (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009), chap. Introduction.

[40] Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 381.

[41] Jackson, 377.

[42] Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror"; Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism."

[43] "A first order-order or immanent critique uses a discourse's internal contradictions, mistakes and misconceptions to criticise it on its own terms." In Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 377.

[44] Jackson, 388.

[45] Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?," 374.

[46] Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 387.

[47] Franks, "Orthodox Accounts of Terrorism," 34.

[48] Franks, 34.

[49] Sproat, "Can the State Be Terrorist?," 24.

[50] Chomsky, Weapon of the Strong, 34.

[51] S. Raphael cited in Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 383.

[52] Jackson, 383.

[53] Jackson, 381; Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism," 71.

[54] Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?," 373.

[55] Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 388.

[56] Jackson, "Terrorism Studies and Academia," 118.

[57] Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?," 371.

[58] Gunning, 371.

[59] Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 389.

[60] Crelinsten, Silke and O'Leary in Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?," 368.

[61] Jackson, "Terrorism Studies and Academia," 120.

[62] Raphael, "In the Service of Power: Terrorism Studies and US Intervention in the Global South," 50.

[63] Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 378.

[64] Jackson, 1.

[65] Raphael, "In the Service of Power: Terrorism Studies and US Intervention in the Global South," 50.

[66] Sproat, "Can the State Be Terrorist?," 25.

[67] Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror," 385.

[68] Lee Jarvis and Michael Lister, "State Terrorism Research and Critical Terrorism Studies: An Assessment," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 7, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 45–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2013.877669.

[69] Sproat, "Can the State Be Terrorist?"

[70] Sproat, 24–25.

[71] Sproat, 24.

[72] Sproat, 26.

[73] Sproat, 26.

[74] Duvall and Stohl cited in Sproat, 26.

[75] Sproat, 26.

[76] Sproat, 23.

[77] Sproat, 23–24.

[78] Hoffman, "Defining Terrorism," 14.

[79] Chomsky, Weapon of the Strong, 33.

[80] Marina Espinoza and Afxentis Afxentiou, "Editors' Introduction: Drones and State Terrorism,"*Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11, no. 2 (2018): 295, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2018.1456727.

[81] Espinoza and Afxentiou, 296.

[82] Catherine Connolly, "How US Drone Strikes Still Bring Death and Destruction from Above," March 25, 2019, https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2019/0325/1038443-how-us-drone-strikes-still-bring-death-and-destruction-from-above/; Ruth Blakeley, "Drones, State Terrorism and International Law," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11, no. 2 (May 4, 2018): 321–41, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2018.1456722.

[83] Connolly, "How US Drone Strikes Still Bring Death and Destruction from Above."

[84] Conor Friedersdof, "Under Obama, Men Killed by Drones Are Presumed to Be Terrorists – The Atlantic," May 2012, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/05/under-obama-men-killed-by-drones-are-presumed-to-be-terrorists/257749/.i

[85] The novelty of the tactic is contested. Both Blakeley and Afxentiou frame the drone programme by its historical continuity in terms of state terrorism tied to colonial imperialism (Blakeley) and air terror as a tactic of imperial control (Afxentiou). Blakeley, "Drones, State Terrorism and International Law"; Afxentis Afxentiou, "A History of Drones: Moral(e) Bombing and State Terrorism," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11, no. 2 (May 4, 2018): 301–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2018.1456719.

[86] For an analysis of the prevalent analogy between military practices and medical intervention, and how this framework renders terrorism as "treatable" through technological intervention, see Elke Schwarz (2018) Flesh and steel: antithetical figures in the War on Terrorism, Critical Studies on Terrorism, 11:2, 394-413, DOI: 10.1080/17539153.2018.1456737

[87] Blakeley, "Drones, State Terrorism and International Law," 322.

[88] Blakeley, 321–22.

[89] Friedersdof, "Under Obama, Men Killed by Drones Are Presumed to Be Terrorists – The Atlantic."

[90] Connolly, "How US Drone Strikes Still Bring Death and Destruction from Above."

[91] Connolly.

[92] Marina Espinoza, "State Terrorism: Orientalism and the Drone Programme," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11, no. 2 (2018): 384, https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2018.1456725.

[93] Espinoza, 384.

[94] Espinoza, 384.

[95] FBI in Greenwald, cited in Espinoza, 385.

[96] Espinoza, 380.

[97] Jackson, "Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism," 7.

[98] Jackson, 69.

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