

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Historical Transformation and Socio-Anthropological Essence of Terrorism

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Abstract

This article analyzes the historical formation, developmental stages, and substantive transformation of the phenomenon of terrorism in modern conditions from socio-philosophical and anthropological perspectives. The forms of terrorism that have manifested in different historical periods as a means of political struggle, ideological influence, and social pressure are investigated, and the process of its transformation from traditional forms into a modern phenomenon that has acquired a global and transnational character is revealed. A comparative analysis of scientific approaches to periodizing the history of terrorism is conducted, and their significance in understanding the historical and ideological dynamics of this phenomenon is highlighted. The content of the concepts of "terror" and "terrorism", the conceptual differences between them, and their scientific and legal interpretations are also analyzed. The necessity of studying modern terrorism as an anthropological phenomenon is substantiated, based on its aspects related to human consciousness, social identity, the value system, the phenomenon of fear, and the social environment. It has been shown that globalization, digital communications, and transnational ties are expanding the sphere of influence of terrorism and complicating the mechanisms of its socio-psychological impact.

KEYWORDS

Terrorism, terror, anthropological phenomenon, evolution of terrorism, globalization, political violence, social identity, fear phenomenon, ideological influence, social environment, transnational terrorism, anthropological analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is a complex social phenomenon that poses a serious threat to the development of modern civilization. In various historical periods, it has manifested as a means of struggle for power, political influence, expression of social dissatisfaction, or achievement of ideological goals. However, in the 21st century, the acceleration of globalization, the widespread development of information and communication technologies, the intensification of transnational ties, and changes in the system of social relations are significantly transforming the essence, sphere of influence, and forms of

manifestation of terrorism. Under the influence of these processes, terrorism emerges from the form of political violence within a specific territory or state border and forms as a complex anthropological phenomenon inextricably linked to global social relations, identity crisis, changes in the value system, and human behavior. Therefore, studying terrorism not only as a political or legal phenomenon but also as an anthropological phenomenon inextricably linked to the transformation of human activity, social relations, cultural values, and social identity acquires significant scientific

significance. This approach allows for the analysis of not only the external manifestations of terrorism but also the human factor, social environment, value system, identity crisis, sense of belonging, and social changes occurring as a result of globalization that influence its formation. It is from this perspective that analyzing the historical evolution of the phenomenon of terrorism and its anthropological features is one of the important theoretical tasks of this study.

To understand the modern characteristics of terrorism, it is important to analyze the stages of its historical development and the evolution of its content, essence, and forms. Terrorism is not a static phenomenon that emerged under specific historical conditions, but a complex social phenomenon that constantly transforms under the influence of social development, political relations, economic changes, ideological processes, and civilizational transformations. From this perspective, studying the historical evolution of terrorism serves as an important theoretical basis for understanding its modern global appearance, socio-anthropological essence, and future development trends.

METHOD

The historical development of terrorism is characterized by changes in its goals, participants, and applied methods. The issue of periodizing the historical evolution of terrorism has also been analyzed in national legal research based on specific approaches. In particular, Dilshod Rakhimov divides the history of terrorism into three main stages based on its characteristics of formation and development: ancient or prototerrorism, classical (traditional) terrorism, and modern terrorism. In this periodization, the author considers the methods and means used in terrorist activities, the historical conditions that led to its emergence, and the organizational and practical mechanisms that have been refined in parallel with terrorism as criteria [1, – P. 18]. This approach allows for the analysis of terrorism not as a static phenomenon, but as one that changes in content and form under the influence of historical conditions, political relations, and social processes.

Stages ranging from anarchist terrorism, which emerged in the late 19th century, to national liberation movements, ideological, and religious-radical terrorism, show that the phenomenon of terrorism has been in constant transformation. The “four waves” concept [2], developed by David Rapoport, allows for a systematic analysis of the history of terrorism. This concept demonstrates that the forms of

terrorism change over time, but at the same time, it shows that at every historical stage, a specific person, their values, worldview, social environment, and motivation stand at the center of terrorism. It is this aspect that determines the necessity of analyzing terrorism from an anthropological perspective.

In our view, if the three-stage periodization proposed by D. Rakhimov represents a general historical picture of the evolution of terrorism, then

D. Rapoport’s “four waves” concept reveals the ideological and motivational dynamics of modern terrorism in relative detail. Therefore, it is appropriate to evaluate these approaches not as mutually exclusive, but as complementary theoretical models that explain the historical transformation of terrorism based on various criteria. At the same time, both approaches demonstrate that at certain historical stages of terrorism development, the human factor, ideological motivation, social environment, and value system play an important role, further justifying the need to analyze this phenomenon from an anthropological perspective.

The anthropological characteristics of terrorism are directly linked to the consciousness, values, motivation, and social environment of the individual carrying it out. In terrorist acts, the goal of forming an atmosphere of fear, panic, and instability in the minds of the population is of priority importance, rather than physical violence. From this perspective, terrorism manifests as a socio-psychological and spiritual phenomenon aimed at influencing human consciousness.

In the context of globalization, the anthropological characteristics of terrorism are becoming increasingly complex. Modern communication technologies, transnational networks, and the digital space create conditions for the rapid spread of terrorist ideas. As a result, terrorism has transformed from a local phenomenon into a global security problem, which, alongside its historical evolution, increases the need for a deep study of the human factor and its anthropological essence.

The historical evolution of terrorism shows that its forms, goals, and methods of implementation have undergone changes over time. However, to fully understand the historical development of this phenomenon, it is first necessary to define its essence, concept, and conceptual foundations. Since terrorism has been interpreted differently in different historical

eras and within various scientific schools, a unified and universally recognized scientific approach to its essence has not yet been formed. In this regard, studying the definitions of the concept of "terrorism" found in scientific sources, its main structural aspects, as well as its relationship with related categories such as extremism or political violence, is of great theoretical importance.

In academic literature, the terms "terror" and "terrorism" are used to denote various phenomena related to the use of violence against certain individuals, social groups, and even entire classes. While historians... analyze such phenomena as the "Red" and "White Terror" during the civil war, modern researchers and journalists assess phenomena such as criminal terrorism, aircraft hijacking, and hostage-taking as manifestations of terrorism. It is clear that despite the outward similarities of the violence, we are dealing with different phenomena. Therefore, to avoid terminological ambiguity, some researchers interpret the concept of "terror" as violence employed by the state, i.e., violence from the "strong" side, and "terrorism" as violence by the opposition, i.e., the "weak" side [3, – P. 16]. However, in academic and public discourse, the terms "terrorism", "terror", and "terrorist" are often used interchangeably and syncretically, presented as a single, terrifying, and threatening phenomenon. This, in turn, blurs the conceptual boundaries of these terms and complicates the precise definition of their content. Therefore, a key theoretical task in the academic study of the phenomenon of terrorism is to define the content of and distinctions between these terms.

In the dictionary of foreign words, "terror" (Lat. terror - fear, horror) is interpreted as violence aimed at destroying or intimidating political opponents or opponents [4, – P. 959]. From this etymological interpretation, it can be seen that at the center of the concept of terrorism lies not the physical violence itself, but the idea of psychological impact through fear and horror. Therefore, the primary goal of terrorist activity is always not the direct infliction of physical harm, but the creation of a state of fear, instability, and distrust within society or certain social strata.

T.B. Isayeva, who researched the historical evolution of the concept of terror, interprets the content of this term in connection with its origin and political practice. According to the author, "terrorism is a method of exerting pressure on state power through criminal means to realize the political interests of the opposition and to create an atmosphere of social fear and spiritual decay in society" [5, – P. 9-10].

In the National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, "Terrorism" is defined as "...acts of violence (persecution, destruction, hostage-taking, murder, bombing, etc.) committed with the aim of causing panic and unrest among the population" [6, – P. 336]. At the same time, in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Terrorism", this concept is expressed in a more comprehensive and legally substantiated form. "Terrorism is violence, the threat of violence, or other criminal acts aimed at creating a threat to the life and health of an individual, destroying (damaging) property and other material objects to achieve political, religious, ideological, or other goals, as well as forcing a state, an international organization, a natural or legal person to commit or refrain from committing any actions, complicating international relations, violating the sovereignty or territorial integrity of a state, inflicting damage on its security, provocations aimed at arming conflicts, intimidating the population, or destabilizing the socio-political situation, for which liability is provided for by the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan" [7]. From this definition, it follows that Uzbekistan's legislation evaluates terrorism not only as a criminal act of violence but also as a complex socio-political phenomenon that poses a threat to the security of the state, society, and the individual and is aimed at achieving political, religious, and ideological goals. At the same time, intimidating the population, destabilizing the socio-political situation, and exerting pressure on state bodies or other entities are recognized as one of the primary signs of terrorism.

The encyclopedic dictionary "Philosophy" states: "Terrorism is an ideology of violence and ignorance; a political practice carried out through terror. Terrorism is a complex phenomenon that formed several centuries ago and can be found geographically in all regions and countries" [8, – P. 398]. This definition reveals not only the legal or political aspects of terrorism but also its ideological foundations. In it, terrorism is interpreted as a complex social phenomenon formed under the influence of certain ideas and values, aimed at achieving political goals through violence. This approach creates an important theoretical basis for analyzing terrorism from socio-philosophical and anthropological perspectives.

However, one of the controversial issues in academic literature is the relationship between the concepts of "terror" and "terrorism". While some researchers use these terms as synonyms, others emphasize the need to distinguish between them in terms of their substance and function. One such

approach was proposed by V.P. Yemelyanov, who clearly defined the conceptual differences between terror and terrorism.

V.P. Emelyanov differentiates between the concepts of "terror" and "terrorism" based on a number of criteria. In his view, while terrorism is a collection of individual acts, terror is systemic and prolonged in nature. Furthermore, whereas terror is a mass phenomenon aimed at influencing broad segments of society, terrorism is characterized by exerting pressure on specific actors to achieve particular political goals. Furthermore, if terror is, as a rule, carried out by official state power, terrorism is associated with the activities of non-state entities seeking to influence or seize power. On this basis, V.P. Yemelyanov evaluates terrorism as a socio-political phenomenon, and terrorism as a phenomenon manifesting within the framework of criminal law [9, – P. 67-68].

One of the researchers who developed this approach, V. P. Yemelyanova, E. S. Akhyadov, also explains the difference between terror and terrorism through the balance of power between subjects, noting: "Terror is a method of violence and intimidation applied by a stronger party against a weaker one, while terrorism, in turn, is a method of violence and intimidation applied by a weaker party against a stronger one" [10, – P. 5-9].

Malika Ziyamova, summarizing the substantive features of terrorism, defines it as a phenomenon associated with the systematic use of violent measures, threats, and intimidation to achieve specific political goals. M. Ziyamova emphasizes that as a result of such actions, not only political figures but also ordinary citizens may suffer, and various methods, up to physical destruction, may be used to achieve the set goals [11, – P. 13].

Thus, despite having some common features, the concepts of "terror" and "terrorism" differ from each other in their subjects, pursued goals, methods of execution, and social functions. Understanding these differences allows for a correct interpretation not only of the historical evolution of the phenomenon of "terrorism" but also of its socio-anthropological characteristics. After all, in terrorism, physical violence is not the primary goal but rather a means of influencing human consciousness, intensifying an atmosphere of fear and distrust in society, and exerting pressure on specific social or political decisions.

The concept of terrorism is not a product of modernity. This

term was first used at the end of the 18th century in connection with the repressive policy of the Jacobins during the French Revolution [12, – P. 14]. Later, the content of this concept expanded to include not only violence used by the state but also the practice of intimidation and threats carried out by various political, ideological, and religious groups. As a result, terrorism has emerged as a complex social phenomenon that has been enriched in content over the course of historical development, acquiring new forms and content.

The historical transformation of terrorism has led to its theoretical reinterpretation. One of the thinkers who first attempted to systematically substantiate the theory of modern terrorism is Karl Heinzen. His ideas, put forward in 1848, reflected some fundamental aspects of the later theory of terrorism, particularly the idea of not recognizing strict restrictions on the choice of means for achieving political goals. According to K. Heynsen, "regardless of whether we achieve victory with gunpowder, poison, sword or dagger, explosives, or cannons, there is no fundamental difference between these means. The main thing is to defeat and destroy the enemy" [13, – P. 9]. According to the author, this is the decisive criterion in the political struggle. This indicates that he evaluated political violence through an instrumental approach.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that terrorism is not a historically unchanging and homogeneous phenomenon in its content, but a complex phenomenon that has transformed in form and essence alongside the political, social, ideological, and cultural development of society. Although the goals, subjects, organizational forms, and methods of influence of terrorist movements have changed at different historical stages, the human factor, its worldview, social environment, values, and attitude toward certain ideas have always been at the center of them.

Scientific approaches to the periodization of terrorism history allow for explaining the logic of this phenomenon's development based on various criteria. On one hand, the division into historical stages reflects changes in the organizational and practical forms of terrorism, while on the other hand, the analysis of its ideological and motivational dynamics contributes to revealing the social and ideological factors that serve as the driving force behind terrorist acts in

each specific period. Therefore, it is advisable to consider these approaches not as mutually exclusive, but as complementary theoretical models that explain various aspects of terrorism transformation.

Analysis shows that while a certain semantic proximity exists between the concepts of "terror" and "terrorism", from a scholarly perspective, it is incorrect to consider them identical phenomena. There are differences between them in terms of their subjects, objectives, scale of impact, implementation mechanisms, and social functions. Defining these conceptual boundaries is of great theoretical importance for a proper understanding of the essence of terrorism and for distinguishing it from other forms of political violence.

At the same time, the main feature of terrorism is not limited to the infliction of physical harm or the destruction of a specific object. The impact of a terrorist act is primarily directed at human consciousness and the collective psyche, manifesting in the formation of an atmosphere of fear, anxiety, distrust, and instability. In this sense, analyzing terrorism solely within the framework of a legal or political category does not allow for the full disclosure of all its characteristics. Researching this phenomenon in connection with human behavior, social identity, the value system, and the cultural environment enhances the scientific significance of the anthropological approach.

Globalization processes have further complicated the characteristics of this phenomenon. Thanks to information and communication technologies, the digital space, and transnational social ties, terrorist ideas and influences are transcending specific territorial boundaries and gaining the opportunity to influence a wide audience. This requires that when studying modern forms of terrorism, special attention be paid not only to its organizational or political aspects but also to its mechanisms of influence on human consciousness, changes in identity, and relationships with the social environment.

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