CLASSICAL SCHOOLS OF SOCIOLOGY AND TERRORISM

Hüseyin CİNOĞLU
Police Academy

Süleyman ÖZEREN
Police Academy

Abstract

Maybe one of the least utilized disciplines in our ongoing efforts to better conceptualize terrorism has been sociology. Within the existing literature, it has been clearly visible that psychiatry, psychology, political science and social psychology, etc. accommodate a lot more researches and studies on terrorism than sociology. This article is a humble attempt to fill that gap using mostly macro level approaches and sociology's basic theoretical paradigms. Functionalism, conflict and symbolic interactionism were separately applied to the phenomenon of terrorism and the resulting arguments have been used to better understand it from a more sociological viewpoint. Moving from the unfortunate prerequisite suggesting terrorism as one of the inseparable aspects of our modern individual and social life, it has been established that with the sociological understanding of terrorism we will be able to effectively identify the underlying social reasons to it. This will pave the way for more effective long term solutions.

Key Words: Sociology, classical sociological theories, terror, terrorism, terrorist, sociology of terrorism.

KLASİK SOSYOLOJİ EKOLLERİ VE TERÖRİZM

Hüseyin CİNOĞLU
Polis Akademisi

Süleyman ÖZEREN
Polis Akademisi

Özet

Terörizmi anlama yöntemlerinden belki de en az kullanılanı onun sosyolojik bir gözlükle kavramsallaştırılmasıdır. Psikiyatri, psikoloji, siyaset bilimi ve sosyal psikoloji gibi disiplinlerin terörizmi anlamada sosyolojiye oranla daha yoğun çalışmalarının bulunduğu mevcut literatürde açıkça görülebilmektedir. Bu makalede bu açık daha çok makro bir perspektifle ve sosyolojinin en temel kuramları kullanılarak doldurulmaya çalışılmıştır. İşlevselci, çatışmacı ve sembolik etkileşimci kuramlar ayrı ayrı terörizm fenomenine uygulanmış ve elde edilen soyut çıktılar terörizm olgusunu daha sosyolojik anlamamada kullanılmıştır. Terörün bireysel ve sosyal yaşantımızın bir parçası olduğu neredeyse bir önkabul şeklini almıştır. Bundan hareketle, onun sosyolojik analizinin terörizmi döngüsel olarak oluşturan sosyal nedenleri daha etkin öğrenmede kolaylıklar sağlayacağı da bu makalede ulaşılan önemli bulgulardandır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyoloji, klasik sosyoloji kuramları, terör, terörizm, terörist, terörizmin sosyolojisi.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (1993) the textbook definition of sociology is "the science of society, social institutions, and social relationships; specifically: the systematic study of the development, structure, interaction, and collective behavior of organized groups of human beings". From this definition one can easily draw the conclusion that sociology as a science is strictly related to the phenomenon of real life. Although a universal definition for terrorism is a daunting and yet unfinished task for scholars and practitioners, there is a consensus over its being partly the end-result of peculiar social, political, religious, economical, legal, international, and in some rare cases even environmental conditions. Therefore, sociology that is dealing with human environment cannot turn a blind eye to terrorism. However, one could find difficulties to observe the similar organic and constructive relationships with terrorism that have already established between sociology and other crimes/deviance.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

As a matter of fact, Austin T. Turk (2004) firmly believes that "sociology of terrorism has been understudied" (pg. 271). This condition will be one of the major limitations of this paper due to very inadequate literature aid. The major goal behind this paper is to contribute to the efforts of establishing scientific understanding of terrorism by acknowledging the already stated limitations. Future researches to extend our sociological understanding of the phenomenon are essential and extensively needed.

3. DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

The goal of this paper is not solely to describe and define terrorism; however, it is imperative to review the literature on definition to be able to establish sociology's view of terrorism. Therefore, some scholarly and professional definitions of terrorism are included in this study.

Defining terrorism is a hefty task with major potentials for causing more problems than producing solutions. Bulk of this problem comes from the difficulty of reaching a universally achieved consensus in international arena as to what kinds of acts could be labeled as terrorism. This dilemma is revealed clearly with the infamous statement that was inspired by a proverb: *one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter*. Even long before September 11, 2001 incidents, terror expert Laqueur (1977) stated

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the difficulty of defining terrorism, and unfortunately to this day, his perspective still holds true. To him,

> "It can be predicted with confidence that disputes about a comprehensive, detailed definition of terrorism will continue for a long time, that they will not result in consensus and that they will make no noticeable contribution to the understanding of terrorism" (pg. 135).

This does not necessarily mean that we do not have any definitions at all. As a matter of fact, almost every country, agency, and some experts have their own definitions for terrorism coming from their own orientations, benefits, and tasks. Actually, it is that moment we start seeing conflicting views on some acts. These are the types of actions that one country or party identifies and condemns as terrorism, while others might be hesitant to do so. These conflicts of interests might easily escalate up to wars or armed struggles between parties. Such consequences of terrorism are also not the area of this paper.

Since terrorism is seen as the major threat not only to national securities of countries, but also to global security, acts of terrorism are assigned the highest priority by investigating and countering bodies. It is that moment where we see behavioral differences in attitudes. To better illustrate this, Turk (2004) talks about Paul Hill incident. He was executed in Florida, the USA in 2003 for a murder that was politically motivated, which could have easily been defined as a terrorist act.

Numerically, terrorism is one of the most defined concepts of recorded human history. Schmid (1983) himself collected 109 different definitions for terrorism and published them in his book.

To be able to demonstrate differences and variations among terror definitions, some of them are given below.

In his article, Jenkins (1982) begins by trying to give a solid definition for terrorism. The problem he faced there was the absence of any set of words that can clearly define terrorism. He claims that "some governments label as terrorism all violent acts committed by their political opponents, while anti-government extremists frequently claim to be the victims of government terror" (pg. 12). The problem with defining this term has already become or on the verge of becoming a moral

dilemma. And it is natural that everyone has a different set of morals, and they see terrorism in a different way based on these views.

According to him, another major issue with terrorism is the continuing increase. He stated "the number of fatalities and other casualties resulting from terrorist attacks has climbed. Terrorists incidents resulting in multiple fatalities have increased both in actual number and as a percentage of the total number of incidents" (pg. 13).

Bergesen and Lizardo (2004) state that there is a limited sociological involvement with terrorism because terror acts demonstrate scattered and random characteristics. In their article, they define terrorism as the premeditated use of violence by a non-state group to obtain a political, religious, or social objective through fear or intimidation directed at a large audience typically involving two different countries.

They (Bergesen and Lizardo, 2004) provide us with a unique way of looking at terror and its perpetrators. They established three levels of observations for terrorists: individual, group, and national levels. At the individual level of terrorism, we think of people like Osama bin Laden or Abdullah Ocalan. In the group or social movement, we think of some characteristics of terrorist organizations, such as cells, and social movements exploiting religion. At the national level, we might consider the society as a whole, nations, and/or states.

In his article, Turk (1982) mostly tries to seek answers to the question of "is terrorism an ideological weapon or an analytical tool?". He defines terrorism as deliberate, shocking, unjustifiable violence against noncombatants as well as combatants. The problem with the term "terrorism" again is the political aspect of it that comes with the very word "terrorism". Terrorism involves a goal and calculated violence, both expressive and instrumental. It is also random, in choosing who, where, and when to attack. Turk stated that "terrorism will mean an ideology justifying acts of terror or a strategy giving priority to such acts" (pg. 121). When you are trying to define whether or not violence should be considered terrorism, a judgment must be made based on particular actors in regard to circumstances based on individual and most of the times subjective observations.

Whitehead (1987) provides the reader with a relatively different view on terrorism. He claims that "terrorism is a sophisticated form of political violence. It is neither random nor without purpose" (pg. 216). Terror attacks serve a purpose, whether it's trying to prove a point, make a

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scene, to conduct a counterattack; to Whitehead, one needs to search for reasoning behind them. For example, in his words, "they want people to feel vulnerable and afraid. They want citizens to lose faith in their government's ability to protect them, and they want to undermine the legitimacy not only of specific government policies but of the governments themselves" (pg. 216). Their ultimate goal is to cause an uneasiness and chaos in people's lives and by doing that drawing attentions to their cause. That's why terrorists declare victory after any policy changes following their attacks. They also feel successful when governments respond to them with uncalculated counter attack measures. Whitehead (1987) concludes his remarks by stating that all states and political systems are practical targets for terrorism.

Black (2004) tries to give his idea about terrorism in pure sociological terms. He explains human behavior with social geometry, ignoring the human mind. He claims that "violence is the use of force, and most violence is social control" (pg. 15). All violence has different forms of structure, such as beating, dueling, lynching, feuding, and even terrorism. When giving a definition for terrorism, Black says "pure terrorism is self-help by organized civilians who covertly inflict mass violence on other civilians" (pg. 16). Interestingly, to him, since terrorism is simply a form of social control, it is in the same family as law, gossip, ostracism, ridicule, and any other process that responds to deviant behavior. However, to reveal the differences between a regular crime and terrorism he reaffirms that terrorism takes more planning than a simple murder of a specific individual by a specific group.

Black (2004) also believes that terrorism is a major moral issue that takes much planning and time to hurt its audience. It again demonstrates that there is a sense of social control. And as to the probabilities of terrorism, in his article it is stated that it arises when there is a high degree of cultural distance, relational distance, inequality, and functional independence, in other words *social polarization* between the aggrieved and their enemy.

As could be seen from the definitions above, individually defining terrorism is already an achieved task, while on the other hand having an accepted and agreed upon single definition has already become an enormous venture and a goal for many scholars.

4.ANALITICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIOLOGY AND TERRORISM

Turk (2004) strongly believes that sociological approaches towards terrorism should be limited, and should not deal with policy making process. To him, sociological studies need to focus on "(a) the social construction of terrorism, (b) terrorism as political violence, (c) terrorism as communication, (d) organizing terrorism, (e) socializing terrorists, (f) social control of terrorism, and (g) theorizing terrorism" (pg. 271). He gives illustrative explanations for both of those arguments in his article.

To this point, due to the present lack of solid sociological analyses of terrorism, nonsociological perspectives were applied by many to better grasp the social roots of terrorism. This has constituted a false perception among the readers and practitioners about the relationship between sociology and terrorism. More policy oriented views have always been welcome while perspectives dedicated to sociologically understand the phenomenon had the higher chances of meeting with a less enthusiastic audience. In this part of the paper, three major sociological theories' view of terrorism will be presented.

5. FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE ON TERRORISM

As the founder of functionalism, Durkheim (1933) believes that society is composed of interrelated systems. Functionalism also assumes normality and sees equilibrium as one of the major tenants of social life. Functionalism sees any deviations from those assumptions as "shocks", and strongly believes that, just like living organisms, society recovers from shocks and can evolve itself accordingly. September 11, 2001 terror incidents could provide an illustrative example here. According to functionalists, it was a social shock and society adapted itself afterwards by changing its structure. Therefore, functionalism sees crime - could easily be extended to terrorism as well - as an abbreviation and a temporary deviation from the presumed normal stage and also functional to the society (Durkheim, 1933 and 1938). We could also infer from that statement that functionalism sees terrorism not only as a temporary stage and deviation from the mainstream, but also as having some latent functions. This view could be considered a useful tool by practitioners due to its empirical investigation for social world.

Following arguments are the application of Merton's (1957) *manifest and latent function* concepts to terrorism.

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5.1. Forms and strengthen in-group solidarity and cohesiveness

The founders of functionalist perspective in sociology did not provide us with specific statements about terrorism. However, in studies of crime, it is fairly easier to find clarifications about crime, deviance, and other social problems. Liska and Warner (1991: 1443) pay special attention to those views since they also have the potential to explain the role and place of terrorism in functionalist perspective. Every system and things in the society have at least one vital or necessary purpose and function. Terrorism would be seen as functional since aligning against it creates a sense of belongingness to a group and enhance in-group solidarity and cohesiveness. According to Durkheim (1938) group solidarity and cohesiveness are imperative in providing the individual with required support to prevent anomie. Anomie is the stage where individuals do not need to refer or obey any norms in order to survive or maintain a social life (Giddens, 1972).

5.2. Clarification of social rules

Durkheim (1933) claims that "Crime brings together upright consciences and concentrates them. We have only to notice what happens, particularly in a small town, when some scandal has just been committed. They stop each other on the street, they visit each other, they seek to come together to talk of the event and to wax indignant in common" (pg. 102).Terrorists, just like any other criminals and violators of social norms, become reference points where individuals and systems could refer to them as *violators of the rules*. As they were being violated by terrorists, not only the norms and rules themselves become more evident, but also their necessities do so as well. In order to protect and maintain status quo, and/or evolution (slow paced, internalized, and functional change) society utilizes terrorism as a blow to equilibrium and reassert its crucial role in individuals lives. Therefore, people re-realize the importance and functions of social norms, and come to see terrorism as a major threat to social equilibrium and their everyday life. Elaborating on Durkheim's way of seeing the functionality of crime, Erickson (1966) states that "the deviant individual violates rules of conduct which the rest of the community holds in high respect; and when these people come together to express their outrage over the offense and to bear witness against the offender, they develop a tighter bond of solidarity than existed earlier. The excitement generated by the crime, in other words, quickens the tempo of interaction in the group" (pg. 4).

5.3. Can bring about needed change

Durkheim and other functionalists firmly believe that social change is not only desired, other than being inevitable, it is required to maintain a balanced and healthy society. And to them, a healthy and balanced social change resembles but not limited to slow, well planned, and evolution type of transformations. And social change, most of the times, comes from a drastic need for change which is preceded by a social shock. The intensity of the shock is pivotal. If the intensity is too high that society could not possibly recover or transform itself, then just like any living organisms society ceases to exist (dies). Just like the unpopularity of rural life in certain cultures, exacerbated by the advent of technology and industrialization, and by the trend towards urbanization. Terrorism surely brings about a social shock which moves society towards a certain change direction that would enable it to adopt new ways to protect its way of living. Especially after 9/11 incidents, American social life underwent a relatively rapid change. The establishment of new institutions and enactment of new laws totally changed or at least had major impacts on American way of living (the Department of Homeland Security, Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (PATRIOT Act), Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, and etc). Functionalists believe that these new developments provide a healthy and slow paced social change which was needed. Then terrorism becomes one of the expected and in some cases needed shocks. Therefore, according to the supporters of functionalism, it is safe to argue that terrorism is functional in a sense that it encourages the society to transform and change itself to its benefit.

5.4. Can make conformity seem more desirable

Through the means provided by the institutions of the society (criminal justice system, media, education system, and even religion), individuals easily identify and tend to vilify the violators of social norms. In addition to identifying them, they also observe the consequences of those violators' deeds, and also the fates specifically readied for them. Functionalists are naturally resistant to unplanned social change and are advocates of status quo, and whenever the society witnesses an intrusion (a shock) the first reaction would be expected as resistance and intervention. The interventions provided by the criminal justice systems against terrorists could be a good example here. Observing this, rather than being an agent of change and consequently a threat to status quo, majority of individuals choose to maintain a certain conformity level

towards social norms, and to society. Therefore, terrorist incidents become agents of enforcing and enhancing conformity levels.

6. DYSFUNCTIONS OF TERRORISM

Evidently, not everything functions to the benefit of the society, and might not necessarily have one or more of latent or manifest functions. Realizing this, Merton (1957) provided a more systemic view on the functions of systems in the society, and criticized Durkheim's version of functionalism. According to him, not everything functions in a way that benefits society and provide the smooth and desired social change. As a matter of fact, Merton believes that some systems in the society work against the social structure. He utilized the term dysfunctions to address those functions. However, bulk of his elaboration was made on deviance, and to the researcher, some of them could also be extended to terrorism, since terrorism is also considered as a form of crime.

6.1. Terrorism makes life unpredictable and dangerous

One of the biggest challenges of terrorism comes from its being unpredictable. One considerable goal of terrorism is to achieve the biggest publicity in one incident. That's why their attacks need to be well designed and well organized in order to achieve that goal in a more cost effective manner. Put differently, individuals who maintain conforming lives in the society come to undergo irregular shocks from terrorism which will alter the perception of the life style offered by the society. As was mentioned several times before, functionalists favor status quo over rapid change and desire evolution-like-slow-paced change protected from irregular and high pitched shocks. Terrorism comes as a powerful shock, and although it was not scientifically proven, if one weigh the latent functions against dysfunctions of terrorism, he or she would see that dysfunctions would outweigh the contributions of latent functions. In sum, terrorism hurts equilibrium, which, to Durkheim (1933), is one of the vital tenants of functionalist perspective in sociology.

6.2. Weakens people's motivation to conform

Individuals in the society constantly and regularly need encouragements to engage in conformity. Society strives to achieve that through positive and negative sanctions. For offering their conformities, individuals expect protection, peace, predictability, etc. in return. If society fails to offer those expected prices, then the individuals will start questioning even the very bases of the society. And society will face difficulties producing

conforming individuals which are essential in maintaining its existence. Seeing the limitations of the society in effectively preventing terrorism, individuals will realize that they are not getting promised dues and will face anomie, the state of normlessness, where disconformity is praised over conformity.

6.3. Confusion of norms and values

Terrorism also creates an environment where strong confusions prevail about the norms and values. In equilibrium, the correlation between the norms and values are well set without leaving any question marks. Norms and values are particularly important in providing individuals with socially accepted goals and means to achieve those goals. Durkheim's and Merton's strain theories are very explanatory in the importance of norms, values, goals, and the means to achieve those goals. Any confusion in one of those have the potential to generate serious problems in individuals' selection of the means to achieve socially approved goals. Terrorism is one of the phenomenons that could generate such confusion. Seeing society's ineffectiveness in providing equilibrium, and seeing the power of terrorism to disrupt the status quo, individuals start to question the utility of the norms and values imposed upon them. Seeing ineffectiveness and worthlessness of some of the values and norms could lead easily up to society level confusion.

6.4. Violation of trust

The base of functionalism depends on interrelatedness among systems, equilibrium, and cooperative recovery efforts after shocks to any of the systems within the structure or to the structure as a whole. All three of these assumptions, as could easily be inferred, depend on trust and cooperation. Terrorism, especially the type coming from within the structure poses chief threats to this essential harmony. Therefore, terrorism, through its means and its very nature, is more prone to hurting not only individuals but also the whole system and the notion of peace that that particular structure is based on. This comes as a shock to society. It is the intensity of that shock that will determine the consequences and results. Again, the aftermath of September 11, 2001 attacks could serve as a good illustrative example at this juncture.

Another side effect of terrorism, other than violating the notion of trust among individuals and systems in the society, is its nature of creating and promoting anomie. Absence or lack of trust among systems is highly likely to promote anomie among individuals who are considered as

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building blocks of systems. Anomie will encourage normlessness and will hurt the tie between individuals and conformity to norms in order to survive. When this tie is broken, individuals will not feel the need to be conforming members, and come to see themselves as individuals who could question even the very basics of the society. In his *strain theory*, Merton (1957) elaborates on that, and gives detailed information about the individuals who chooses to rebel against the society. Since the tie between culturally accepted goals and provided means break, those individuals establish new goals and new means to achieve them without including the input of the society.

7. CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE ON TERRORISM

Although there are many variations in conflict perspective for crime and criminality, it would be safe to claim that they all involve conflict over scarce resources. These resources can be economical, and/or prestige, power, and authority related, or even anything else that individuals would want for their own good. In *communist manifesto*, Marx and Engels (1848) claim that there are basically two separate and often conflicting classes in any society: proletariat and bourgeoisie. The former refers to the people who do not have anything else to sell to survive other than their own labor; and the latter class consists of individuals who own the means of production, including the labor that is being sold by the proletariat. To Marx, this explains the exploitative relationship between these two classes and even intensifies the presupposed conflict between them. Other sociologists like Dahrendorf (1959) in conflict perspective have already challenged Marxian way of dividing society in two and seeing economical concerns as the sole driving force behind the mentioned conflict. He believes that prestige is also proven to be a scarce resource and also a major factor that generates conflict between social classes (Dahrendorf, 1959). In addition to that, he believes that social classes are not predetermined by mere economical indicators.

Classical conflict theorists did not develop a separate perspective on terrorism. This does not necessarily mean that terror was not present in their times, however maybe the intensity of the incidents were not significant enough to channel the founding fathers of this theory to elaborate or develop separate ways of seeing terrorism. And unfortunately, this goes same to the contemporary conflict theorist in a different way. Therefore, this part of the paper will evaluate the conflict perspective on crime and will try to use them as bases to extend and apply their arguments to terrorism.

Before doing that, we need to revisit the potential sources for conflict. As was mentioned above, differing ideas revealed that exploitation of any kind, oppression, the concepts of prestige, authority, and power provides major sources for social conflict. According to conflict perspective, another natural outcome of this conflict becomes discrimination. This discrimination is significant and not only could be seen as a perpetuating force for more conflict and discrimination, but also helps embolden the lines between the groups in every sphere, even in crime. Chambliss (1973) investigated societal discrimination among youth criminals, and he concluded that members of upper classes enjoy the leverage of more compassionate and tolerating attitudes from society, while, the members of lowers classes, even if they commit similar acts of crime, come to face more fierce and less tolerant reactions from societal institutions. That would be a very exciting venture to extend Chambliss' findings to terrorism. As was mentioned above, conflict theorists distinguish themselves from others through their strong belief that crime is the outcome of conflict or discrimination. According to them, disadvantaged group has no other alternatives to turn to topple the exploitation system they suffer from. Therefore, criminals including the terrorists become the members of the group that belong to or at least relatively closer to the workers class, which, in Marxian terminology refers to proletariat. There is an obvious incapability of possible classical Marxian explanation of terrorism and contemporary realities. Although working class people are still a major source of recruitment for terrorist groups, new terrorist groups do not show predicted social characteristics. Currently, we witness members of higher socio-economic layers who are actively participating in terrorism, such as Osama Bin Laden who was a member of a wealthy family in his country.

8. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM ON TERRORISM

This theory differs from the first two (functionalist and conflict theories) in its scope. Symbolic interactionalism is a micro level theory with majority of its focus laying on individual interpretations of beliefs and meanings in our social lives. To this theory, that would not be unfair to claim that there is no single, or maybe put better, there is no objective reality at all (Mead, 1934). Symbolic interactionalism claims that individuals in their lives come across with many subjective realities, and they need to form their behaviors according to their own interpretations (Mead, 1934). However, that does not mean that this theory undermines the effects of society over individual. Actually to the theory, group membership is one of the major determinants of individual interpretations of reality. Because of that, to be able to explain crime from this theory's

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perspective, many scholars conducted researches and studies on gang members.

This theory elaborates on the differing meaning of same or similar concepts from different individuals. For example, the meaning of police demonstrates dramatic differences across the members of different groups. The meaning of the police for a gang member and for a professor will differ from each other dramatically. Interactions with other individuals have the potential to create perceptions which will, in return, create subjective or groupwise realities that will be perceived as objective realities by those individuals (Mead, 1934). However, perception of these newly created realities (subjective) as constants is a mistake at best. Because they are subject to change, transformation, and reinterpretation in the event of coming to contact with members of other groups or simply other individuals. Therefore, symbolic interaction places tremendous amounts of importance over learning process.

As a matter of fact, crime and therefore terrorism are treated as learned behaviors (Sutherland & Cressey, 1978). Individuals learn how to commit crimes or become a terrorist through the interaction with other terrorists or criminals. This theory has a tendency to label criminals and terrorists as members of deviant subculture or as counterculture which encourages its members to commit just the type of acts that that particular group ratifies. Symbolic interactionist tradition also believes that involvement in group activities is equally important in learning process. Individuals, after involving with group activities, internalize the realities put forward by the group that they are trying to be a part of. This is more evident in terrorist groups. For instance, Turkish Hizbullah, after the recruitment process has its new recruits undergo a very demanding resocialization process. The major intent of this resocialization is to have newcomers internalize the group's version of realities. And as the best way to achieve that in a cost efficient way (time and money), Turkish Hizbullah have them involve in terrorist acts. The group sees deeds as the strongest socialization agent of all. The main purpose is to become *the only* reference group for its members (Bagasi, 2004).

9. CONCLUSION

Although it is not a new occurrence, terrorism has already become one of the most complex and hard-to-define phenomenon of modern history. One of the major reasons to that comes from its very political nature. That would not be unfair to claim that there are no other crimes that involve similar levels of political reasoning or input in it. The

involvement of political agendas is a crucial aspect of terrorism. Whether it is religiously, socially, psychologically motivated, or conducted as a resistance to an invading party, it is very likely to come down to politics.

At that juncture, sociology could play pivotal roles in theoretical understanding of terrorism. Most scholars, such as Turk (1982 and 2004) and Black (2004), believe that the necessary ties between pure sociology and terrorism have not yet been established, and most sociological studies are conducted as an extension or as a support for action oriented initiatives. By action oriented initiatives, they mean the type of studies largely concerned with counterterrorism measures, and not primarily concerned with abstract/theoretical understanding of underlying reasons why individuals or groups assume terrorism as their only resort. Especially to Turk (2004), the main reason behind defining terrorism's being a goal rather than an achieved task, lies on the absence of the need/demand of theoretical understanding of terrorism.

However, this does not necessarily mean that societal impacts or reasoning of terrorism is underestimated, overlooked or totally ignored in sociology or in other social sciences. As a matter of fact, especially after September 11, 2001 incidents, terrorism became a popular topic not only for counterterrorism bodies, but also for academia as well. The number of articles related to terrorism increased dramatically after these incidents (Gordon, 2005). Not only the number of articles, but also the awareness of terrorism transformed into a social problem which ranges from seeing terrorism as a regular crime perpetrated by mentally ill, or socially/psychologically marginalized individuals/groups.

This study also revealed another relatively unfortunate fact about terrorism: the absence of a theory of terrorism. Although there are attempts to develop a single theory for terrorism, the literature did not suggest a strong theory with the potential to explain terrorism as a social phenomenon. However, about crime and criminality, not only criminology offers many differing views and theories, but also other social sciences like sociology do that too. This is again due to many facts related to priorities put forth by policy makers in front of scholars. The pressing urgency to develop policies and/or direct intervention/counterterrorism strategies compel policy making bodies to perceive theoretical and sociological perspectives to be of secondary importance.

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