

視恐怖主義為溝通：對世界最大政治威脅的跨文化溝通之研究方法

大衛・查克曼

傳播研究系副教授

美國加州州立大學薩克拉曼托校區

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中文摘要

本文主張長期以來一直屬於政治科學與犯罪政治學範疇的恐怖主義研究應被歸納至溝通此一學門，尤其最適合是跨文化溝通此一學門。作者認為定義恐怖主義本質以及將其與合法的政治暴力形式區分的本質都需要認知到這些學門的侷限性(Gadamer, 1960; Burke, 1966)，而將屬於溝通研究的語意學(semantics)研究方法(Johnson, 2008)應用至恐怖主義研究時，僅需著重於應用恐怖主義的注釋學(hermeneutics)(Gebser, 1949; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958/69; Zuckerman, 2005)就可使我們對終結此一堪稱是導致全球不穩定的現象抱有希望。

Terrorism as Communication: An Intercultural Communication Approach to the World's Biggest Political Threat

S. D. Zuckerman, Ph.D.

Fulbright Scholar

Graduate Coordinator & Associate Professor

California State University

sdzuck@csus.edu

ABSTRACT

Keywords: terrorism, hermeneutics, semantics, intercultural, communication, violence, Gebser

This paper argues that terrorism study, long the domain of political science and criminal justice, should be situated instead in the communication discipline generally, and the intercultural communication sub-discipline specifically. The paper argues that the nature of defining terrorism and differentiating it from legitimate forms of political violence requires acknowledgement of the limitations of disciplines (Gadamer, 1960; Burke, 1966) and application of semantic approaches (Johnson, 2008) native to communication studies, and that only through application of the hermeneutics (Gebser, 1949; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958/69; Zuckerman, 2005) of terrorism can we hope to end what has become a truly global destabilizing phenomenon.

This paper argues that terrorism studies, traditionally the domain of Political Science (PolySci) scholars and departments, is a better fit in departments of Intercultural Communication. The paper is organized into three major sections. The first presents deficiencies endemic to the historic PolySci approach. The second discusses the semantic difficulties inherent in the study of this phenomenon. The third presents hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches to terrorism study. This paper does not seek to discredit scholars and scholarship from PolySci by replacing them with Communication Scholars, but to symbolically add another chair to the table.

Political Science

Leading up to the events known to Americans as “9/11” terrorism and security were studied mostly in departments of political science. Indeed, the programs considered by most to be top-tier still reside in PolySci: St. Andrews, Scotland, RAND in California, and Georgetown (Sheehan, 2012) in DC. After White Supremacist Christian Americans bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in April 1995, the University of Oklahoma joined the list of stellar programs, also in PolySci. In the US, one can find some terrorism courses or degrees in other departments, but they tend to focus on law enforcement, so they are listed in Criminal Justice. Of course, the US military academies, specifically the US Army’s school, West Point, has a well-respected program that stems from its operational mission. In all, the programs one finds in the USA focus on politics, international relations, or law most of the time (Sheehan, 2012).

While the contributions of the hundreds of scholars in these departments and disciplines is laudable, the scholars are, like all scholars, operating within a particular worldview shaped by their discipline, how their discipline conceptualizes problems—indeed how it differentiates between “problem” and “not problem” at all—and how their discipline approaches those problems. Kenneth Burke (1966) called this phenomenon “Terministic Screens.” He said that they deflect, reflect, and select reality, simultaneously (re)presenting reality to us while shaping that “real” view. Hans-Georg Gadamer understood this phenomenon as well, calling it “Horizons” (1960 German/1980 English trans.). To Gadamer, as with Burke, it is clear that we are shaped by forces larger than us and the material artifacts we create, whether those artifacts are textiles, pottery, religions, languages, or academic disciplines. The self-aware scholar must work within this hermeneutic but also work *despite it*. That is, we must, as scholars, acknowledge the limitations not merely of our individual studies but also of the discipline-driven enterprise.

A major limitation of the PolySci approach to terrorism study stems from its structuralist/functionalist approach to terrorism and political violence as attributes of social cohesion and decay or as threats to the status quo of the national or sub-national unit. But terrorists and terrorism do not play by the rules carefully conceived by even the most brilliant scholars of Political Science any more than they recognize the borders drawn by colonial powers who intended to divide or contain them. One example is the Durand Line, the 2,640 km (1,640 mi) border drawn in

1893 between Afghanistan and Pakistan (at the time called “British India”) to separate the Pashtuns and enable a quiet British rule in the “Great Game” of Asian colonialism. The Pashtuns did not accept the reality of the Durand Line in 1893, nor do they today. What the American military and political leaders describe as infiltrative attacks from Pakistan are Pashtuns crossing what they consider to be an imaginary line to engage in battle with those they see as invaders. They do not recognize the border, no matter how much the Americans insist that it is real. It is not that the PolySci scholars have made meaningless contributions, but that they are limited by the models. As Korzybski said in 1931, “the map is not the territory.” In the case of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, this is literally true. But beyond the literality, we need to see a more fundamental point: it is the nature of the worldview itself that fails to see that it is less that the theories have not yet found solutions, but that *the approach* to the problem fails to lead to solutions.

What is important to understand here is that the case of Pashtun cross-border attacks is only terrorism to those who recognize the border and see the Afghan Pashtuns as fundamentally different from the Pakistani Pashtuns. To those who see the Pashtuns as connected by tribal affiliation, family ties, and bloodlines, it is not at all surprising that they would cross the border to fight. In short, the difference is between people who see them as residents of Pakistan or Afghanistan and those who see them as residents of Pashtunistan. Those holding the former view will point to a map and say “Pashtunistan does not exist,” but the Pashtuns will shrug and continue

living as they did before Europeans drew the Durand Line. In the Terministic Screen of nation-state thinking, the Pashtuns destabilize the order of things in Central Asia. Again, the Pashtuns do not seem to care about this.

An alternative approach that can shed better light on the issues regarding terrorism can be found in most communication departments, but this has not yet been accepted by the discipline as a whole. Table 1 shows the number of papers about terrorism presented at NCA and ICA 2010-2013. This table was limited by the search term “terrorism,” and so it underreports the total number of papers delivered on the topic at the respective conferences. For example, I presented a paper about Al-Qaeda’s attempt at English-language web-based media at the 2011 NCA conference, but the paper’s title excluded the word “terrorism,” so it was not included in the table. Nonetheless, even if the number of papers were increased by a factor of four, it would still be a very small amount of papers given the size of the conferences.

Year	NCA	ICA
2010	5	8
2011	5	4
2012	9	2
2013	6	2

Table 1: “Terrorism” papers by year at NCA and ICA 2010-2013

Semantics

And yet, the phenomenon of terrorism is fundamentally a communication topic. The word itself is so politically charged that one is reminded of the old maxim of “one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist.” As Nicholas Johnson (2006) explained, “For starters, it’s not at all clear what we mean by “terror” or “terrorism,” or whether, once we agree on a definition, it’s something from which one can rationally protect oneself by fighting anything fairly described as a “war.”” (p. 8). These terms are difficult to define, as most “legitimate” governments (another undefined term) would argue that a person who plants an explosive device at a wedding is a terrorist, but the nation that, based on bad intelligence, shoots a missile that kills everyone at wedding is not a terrorist regime. To avoid this, most world powers have drafted similar definitions of terrorism. Table 2 presents a sample of the legal definitions of terrorism in use today. A look at the various definitions shows a common set of themes: illegal actions meant to destabilize governments, damage infrastructure, and intimidate populations. In fact, the most straightforward definition in use today may be that offered by the US Army: “The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear. It is intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies... [to attain] political, religious, or ideological goals.” (US Army Field Manual 3-0, 2001, Chapter 9). Despite the US Army’s clear definition, the slippery nature of the terms themselves call for the particular expertise of communication scholars whose Terministic Screens and Horizons are connected to language and semantics.

UN SC Res 1566 (8 Oct 2004)	EU (22 Jun 2002)	UK (2000)	US Criminal Code	PRC (29 Oct 2011)	ROC
criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international	offences under national law, which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of: - seriously intimidating a population, or - unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from	(b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and (c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause. (2) Action (a) involves serious violence against a person, (b) involves serious damage to property, (c)	activities that -(A) involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended - (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect	Activities that severely endanger society that have the goal of creating terror in society, endangering public security, or threatening state organs and international organizations and which, by the use of violence, sabotage, intimidation, and other methods, cause or are intended to cause human casualties, great loss to property, damage to public infrastructure, and chaos in the social order, as well as activities that incite,	Adoption of Anti-Terrorism Law pending.

organization to do or to abstain from doing any act	performing any act, or - seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation, shall be deemed to be terrorist offences:	endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action, (d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or (e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system. (3) The use or threat of action falling within subsection (2) which involves the use of firearms or explosives is terrorism whether or not subsection United Kingdom.	the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum;	finance, or assist the implementation of the above activities through any other means. (Decision, art. 2.)	
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Table 2: Sample of Definitions of Terrorism

The terrorism definitions do an adequate job of classifying the behaviors they seek to prohibit. This is the purpose of laws. Yet they themselves are the product of the legal/Political Science worldview discussed earlier in this paper. What the definitions do *not* do is to reflect or address the context or motive of terrorism. This is not to say that we should cultivate a sense of sympathy for terrorists. As Stephen Sloan, noted terrorism scholar often said, "Terrorism scholars are no more pro-terrorism than oncologists are pro-cancer" (personal conversation, 2002). We can be disgusted by the atrocious actions of terrorists, but we will not prevent them until we understand why these actors act in the ways they do.

It is for this reason that I am part of a small but growing number of colleagues in the US who have begun to examine terrorism from a Communication Studies perspective. Greenberg released an edited volume of mass communication studies called *Communication and Terrorism* in 2002. In 2005, I published a peer-reviewed book chapter about identity and violence in Northern Ireland (Zuckerman, 2005). One year later, Arizona State University created The Consortium for Strategic Communication (now called the Center for Strategic Communication or CSC) and put out its first White Paper in 2006. A year later, articles from non-CSC scholars appeared on terrorism and: media framing (Edy & Meirick, 2007); elite press coverage (Woods, 2007); conspiracy theories (Stempel, Hargrove, & Stempel, 2007); public opinion (Van Ginneken, 2007), and; Arabic online discussions (Abdulla, 2007). Last year, Sage released a communication and terrorism textbook. Earlier this year, I,

along with two colleagues, published a piece on Al-Qaeda's online media efforts (Schreiner, Williams, & Zuckerman, 2013). I have several more articles in preparation and under review, and recently taught Communication and Terrorism as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. The communication discipline is starting to contribute in very real ways to the conversation about terrorism.

Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Phenomenology is the study of life's lived experience, as it is lived by human beings. Associated with people like Wilhelm Dilthey, this branch of work has been described by Kramer (2001) as "the most purely empirical method" because scholars who use it must directly experience the phenomena of interest. Many phenomenologists also apply hermeneutics, the study of how we make meaning of the phenomena we encounter. Perhaps the most comprehensive phenomenologist and hermeneuticist of the 20th Century was Jean Gebser, who showed that humans have gone through successive "structures of consciousness," (See Table 3) which have shaped our art, religions, and worldviews. While Gebser is not the only scholar to make such a claim, his work stands apart for two principle reasons: First, Gebser was a polymath whose scholarship is much deeper and evidence-rich than anyone else's. Second, Gebser argued that we do not simply pass from prior consciousness structures to latter ones, but that as we do so, we retain all that we were. Though we are much more advanced, technological beings than our ancestors centuries ago, Gebser

understood that the past is within us. As he put it, the origin is ever-present. And it emerges in interesting ways. For example, as Anderson (1991) explained, we live in “imagined communities” rather than actual ones. It is not reasonable to feel a connection with millions of strangers with whom you have little to nothing in common, yet nationalism refuses to fade away, and we see it return, often expressed through violence perpetrated either by the state or by private actors. Anderson points out the non-rationality of nationalism, but does not adequately explain why it continues to occur in a world populated by a

Structure	Explanation
Arhaic	Prehistoric humans: timeless and undifferentiated from nature
Magic	Ancient humans: lived in a tribal world controlled by capricious gods requiring literal sacrifice and placation; blood of tribe, enemy, and sacrifice matter
Mythic	Pre-modern humans: metaphor and symbolism begin to replace literality but still push universal truth to be embraced by all
Perspectival	Modern humans: understanding that we do not share the same view and that we differ and drift
Aperspectival	Contemporary humans: cultivating the ability to transcend one’s own perspective to see the world though the eyes of others while not losing the self

Table 3: Gebser’s Consciousness Structures

species arguably more rational than ever. Gebser provides a clear answer. As modern and perspectival as we are, lovingly cradling our smartphones and enjoying Skype conversations with loved ones 16 time zones away, we are still beholden to the Magic and Mythic consciousness that remain part of us. We wear wedding rings even though we scoff at amulets. We buy lottery tickets even though we know that the odds of winning are so remote. We wave flags even though we likely have more in common with “the enemy” than with many of our countrymen and countrywomen. Religion remains an important part of the lives of billions of humans, even though most readily accept the science behind modern dentistry and medicine. To Gebser, these are not juxtapositions, because Gebser saw that we are multifaceted beings whose consciousness includes all of this. But there is a sinister side: extremism, nationalism, and terrorism all emphasize the blood of the Magical consciousness. You either have that blood, or you do not. And if you do not, we may need to remove you from our land, or remove your head from the rest of your body. As such, we see groups like Al-Qaeda emphasize terms like the *ummah* or the Muslim people, as though Islam has become an ethnicity or race. Rationally, it is questionable at best to say that outside of religion, an Indonesian, a Saudi, a Chinese Uyghur, and a Sudanese have anything in common. They speak different languages, eat different foods, live in different types of architecture, listen to different music, and inhabit different climate zones. But Magic consciousness is pre-rational. So the concept of the *ummah* is adopted even though vicious wars are often fought between Muslim countries.

Terrorism also has hermeneutics for the intercultural communication scholar to explore. At its most basic level, terrorism is designed to scare as many people as possible by killing the fewest number necessary. That is, terror attacks are not meant to be full-scale war intended to destroy whole populations. They are by nature, asymmetrical warfare tactics waged by the weak against the strong in lieu of standing armies. If we contrast the archetypical terrorist attack with, say, the stalemate between the US and the USSR over the plains and waters of Eastern Europe during the 1950s – 1990s, we can understand why asymmetry is important. The Cold War was driven by two principal forces: symmetry and Mutually Assured Destruction, also known as the MAD Doctrine. Symmetry came in the form of tit-for-tat matching of forces between the Americans and the Soviets. Tanks were matched with tanks, missiles with anti-missile missiles, submarines with submarine-killer submarines, and the like. Each side had to match the other, but until the very end, neither was quantitatively superior to the other in personnel or materiel. The MAD Doctrine stated that whichever side was attacked first would respond with such nuclear force as to completely destroy the other side, as well, regardless of each side's own loss. In other words, MAD meant that if I was going to lose, you would, too. Life on Earth still exists as we know it because from the years of "1945 to 1991, America and the Soviet Union were diligent, professional, but also lucky that nuclear weapons were never used" (Shultz, Perry, Kissinger & Nunn, 2011).

By contrast, terrorists rely on the principle of asymmetry because they have inherently smaller and weaker forces but a need to intimidate large populations in order to subdue them. As such, the terrorist cannot seek the same kind of military objectives as conventional warfare, such as Command & Control, infrastructure, and military assets. So the terrorist chooses “softer” targets. Targets of high value are the places that when attacked, strike fear into the minds of a population: schools, restaurants, shopping centers, houses of worship, sporting events, and public transportation. The rationale for such choices is simple. It is a rhetorical choice on the part of the terrorist to create a deep sense of connection between the victims and those in society who will say, “it could have been me or my loved ones.” In this way, terrorism is theater macabre writ larger than ever before by the tools terrorists keenly exploit: 24-hour news cycle, YouTube, Twitter, and our global news media. Military scholars use the term “force multiplier” to describe any asset that enhances one’s side’s power. Examples used by nearly every military are helicopters, drones, in-flight refueling, global satellite networks, and bomb-resistant vehicles. The terrorist typically has none of these, but the terrorist uses these media themselves as a force multiplier. Every time we see footage of bodies carried from the Tokyo Subway, the tiny coffins at children’s funerals in Oklahoma, the bomb blasts in the subways of Madrid and London, the airliners crashing into the World Trade Center, the limbs torn from runners and spectators at the Boston Marathon, or any of the scores of other attacks, the terrorist’s power to scare us grows. Osama bin Laden was well-aware of

this, as are his successors. Al-Qaeda writer Abu Mus'ab al-Suri wrote:

The types of attack, which repels [sic] states and topples governments, is mass slaughter of the population. This is done by targeting human crowds in order to inflict maximum human losses. This is very easy since there are numerous such targets such as crowded sports arenas, annual social events, large international exhibitions, crowded marketplaces, sky-scrapers, crowded buildings...etc. (*Inspire*, Winter 2012, p. 24)

A year earlier, Samir Khan, *Inspire* editor killed along with Anwar al-Awlaki in a September 2011 drone strike in Yemen, wrote very self-awarely about Al-Qaeda's media strategy. Though Khan had no degree in Public Relations, he demonstrated a deep intuitive understanding of media strategy. He described the moment when he first understood the need for what he called the "media jihad" (2011, p, 9). He said that "it was also the first time that my mind opened up to the comprehensiveness of the media jihad highlighting its serious authority and impact upon the world" (p. 9).

The idea of terrorism and counter-terrorism spreading into the virtual world is not new. Rather, it is the latest iteration in the "hearts and minds" component of counter-insurgency. The difference, however, is that the campaign for hearts and minds happens online, which raises two important points understood by communication scholars specifically: the online environment is *everywhere* and it is *nowhere*. There is no central place called "The Internet." It

does not reside in a single building that can be captured or destroyed, and that decentralization makes it simultaneously both everywhere and nowhere at all. Understanding this, and preceding Samir Khan's 2011 epiphany about online jihad, Corman and Schiefelbein, (2006) analyzed 28 Al-Qaeda messages captured by the US and came to three conclusions: that the virtual jihad seeks to a) legitimate and b) propagate their cause, and to c) intimidate those who oppose them. Corman and Schiefelbein suggest six counter-strategies, which are an extension of the hearts and minds efforts of traditional counterinsurgency. In sum, their strategies seek to delegitimize the jihadis and their versions of the truth, and to replace those narratives with those of American Muslims. The extent to which the latter point is feasible is glossed over by the authors, though one is moved to question whether such voices would be considered traitorous in the jihadi world. For his part Samir Khan published *Inspire* until he was killed by an American drone strike. This web-based magazine, which has continued after his death, is an attempt by Al-Qaeda to reach a sophisticated, English-speaking, technology-driven Western audience. And in certain respects, it is quite good. The graphics are first-rate, the layout professional and interesting, and the articles are articulate and presented with color photographs. The magazine even has "ads" that emphasize Islamic values like charity and compassion for other Muslims. Unfortunately, looks are not everything. Schreiner, Williams and Zuckerman (2013) applied Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) idea of the reason-seeking "universal audience" to analyze an *Inspire* article about environmentalism with a by-line of

Osama bin Laden, and found that despite the pleasant graphics, the article contained numerous examples of zealotry and extremism that precluded it from reaching that audience.

Summary

This paper argued that terrorism studies, traditionally the domain of Political Science (PolySci) scholars and departments, is a better fit for departments of Intercultural Communication. The paper presented three major sections. The first presented deficiencies endemic to the historic PolySci approach. The second discussed the semantic difficulties inherent in the study of this phenomenon. The third presented hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches to terrorism study. This paper did not seek to discredit scholars and scholarship from PolySci by replacing them with Communication Scholars, but to symbolically add another chair to the table.

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