

IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON CIVIC SOCIETY: EUROPEAN UNION'S CASE STUDY

Jaroslav Gryz

National Defence University, Poland, e-mail: j.gryz@aon.edu.pl

Abstract. *Only countries possess effective tools – instruments of politics – that can counteract impact of terrorism on European Union's civic society. The aim of the study is to develop patterns of thinking and cognition of reality in context of an individual assessment and collective action with violence as a source of change. Analysis indicated in the article show that the ease of radicalization combined with the view of reality forms the basis of the described phenomenon, giving it a specific, individual character in each European Union's country. The outcome and as well as the outline of this study can be foundation for future studies on security policy of every individual European Union state, connected with other under the umbrella of European Commission and other common structures. An open question is, In which direction is the phenomenon of international terrorism in European Union's states evolving and what does it encompass while changing the character of social reality? The clearly drawn criteria of change allows to present a selective approach. They show the complexity of problems connected with contemporary terrorism, particularly in fighting the phenomenon. Article concludes that without comprehensive actions to combat terrorism, conducted individually and in common European Union's security policy this phenomenon may intensify and result in consequences that are easy to foresee.*

Keywords: *civic society, European Union, responsibility, terrorism, transformation.*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary international terrorism in the European Union's countries takes place within societies, against societies and for specific communities. This triad defines its cultural identity linked to particular symbols, sometimes beliefs or ordinary prejudices. Therefore, the following elements of contemporary international terrorism should be pointed out as they constitute the final form in open, democratic societies of the European Union (EU).

Terrorism in the EU is confirmed by patterns of thinking and knowledge of reality. It is manifested through individual assessment and collective actions with the use of violence as a source of change. Easy radicalization combined with a perception of reality creates the foundations of the phenomenon and gives it a specific, individual character in each European country (according to authors calculations in year 2016, 36 terrorist attacks took place in Europe: In Germany – 9, France – 13, Belgium - 6, Russia – 2, Denmark – 1, Great Britain - England and Scotland, – 4, Sweden – 1. In total: 145 people were killed, 538 wounded).

In context of terrorism phenomenon two sources of inspiration remain unchangeable, i.e. people and the Internet. In the case of the first source, the scale of impact is related to the social structure, its character and the possibility to affect it. In the case of the latter source, it relates to the forms of communication which strengthen the radicalization. The social networks are a radicalization tool of behaviour leading to terrorism, used as a social placebo, easily controlled by terrorists and their supporters. This refers both to terrorist acts and intimidation as means of violence. In that context about European societies, the fear syndrome can be observed both in France and Belgium after the attacks that took place in 2015. (1)

Counteracting terrorism, ability to limit it, methods applied and related assets become as complex as terrorism itself. (2) This creates premises to take actions which are to eliminate or reduce the phenomenon of terrorism within the European Union. Firstly, within societies exposed to terrorist activities. Secondly, in an international environment where terrorism is more and more commonplace. (3)

The form of contemporary international terrorism which takes place in the European Union and its implications, are the bases of the considerations taken. There are questions related to them, i.e. *In which direction is the phenomenon of international terrorism in Europe evolving and what does it encompass while changing the character of social reality?* The main thesis of the article is that in the 21st century, international terrorism will lead to new forms of social organizations within the framework of open, democratic societies, acting as a response to a constant, unpredictable, in terms of time and place, threat.

In network societies in which communication takes place outside the state, beyond the state and within the state (4), the phenomenon of terrorism gains a new character. It is primarily connected with control over formal and informal rules of political game and principles of social exchange. At present, this is the fundamental purpose of terrorist activities. Any other actions accompanying the first ones mentioned have a derivative character. Hence, the multidimensional character of contemporary terrorism occurring in the European Union's countries.

Terrorists' efforts still aim at gaining power, both the informal one, leading to fundamental political change and the formal one which is really held. (5) Two issues remain unchanged: *How terrorists in a practical way affect political behaviour in network societies? Which social institutions create them and use them for their purposes?* They relate to generating and then taking advantage of terrorists' influence on social reality with the use of violence as a means of achieving their intended political goals.

The first of these questions refers to the stability of social structures and their selective elements. Their character in network societies is created

through direct information stimuli, the communication space which enhances certain social attitudes. Psychological aspect is crucial. There is a significant issue related to it, i.e. the government's ability to create and implement policy and to manage the society. Hence, the degree of control that the government can exercise over social activities remains limited in a network-organized society. Independent networks and the ones which are subordinated to terrorist organizations or possibly under their influence, might block the implementation of political premises. (6) Moreover, they may affect negatively the ability to manage and implement the state national policy, especially in the area of individual and collective affiliation. In this aspect, in open societies, terrorist organizations' activities focus primarily on transmission, the message, undermining trust in the responsibility of the authorities' representatives, and their transparency, impartiality and the use of legitimate power. An example has been indicated in new papers release, *"On 11 March, 2004 ten bombs exploded in four commuter trains in Madrid and its suburbs. 191 people were killed, (...), and 1,900 people injured. It was the deadliest attack on the Spanish soil. Shortly after the attack, the then centre-right government stated that separatists from the Basque organization ETA, not Islamic terrorists are responsible for the massacre. The opposition accused the government of intentionally misleading the public to hide the fact that attacks are the retaliation for deploying Spanish troops to Iraq. As a result of these accusations, the conservatives suffered electoral defeat, and the Socialist government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero took over, who quickly withdrew troops from Iraq and changed the country's policy from a pro-American to "more pro-European." There was a moment that the whole world thought that the attacks were carried out by the Basque organization ETA, because it was terrorists which we suffered from in Spain for a long time. Jihad terrorism was distant from us, but it turned out that we were not right "- recalled the head of the Spanish Interior Ministry. A year later Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks". (7)*

Another essential aspect of the terrorism impact should be stressed here. Namely, it is the tendency to the arbitrariness of power, particularly in counteracting terrorist incidents. This arbitrariness, in fact its negative consequences could decide and provide the basis for omission of joint activities by citizens. As a result, reducing their reciprocity can and will lead to isolation, reduction or elimination of social ties. If this happens, terrorists will accomplish their primary goal – they will lead to the disintegration of social micro and macro structure, in which they will try to selectively destroy its consecutive elements. (8) In this respect, another alternative for terrorist scenario can be pointed out which complements the one mentioned above. It concerns activities within excluded or marginalized

communities, sometimes on purpose in media coverage. The synergy of the two discussed above phenomena, i.e. limiting the reciprocity and limiting relations, leads to identify a comprehensive strategic approach in terrorist activities, focused on the society disintegration. Violence treated by terrorists instrumentally in such a situation strengthens particular ideological form of communication achieving its fundamental goal – initiating favourable for them political change. (9)

The second question posed above refers to political institutions' ability to provide goods, intangible assets including which are demanded by citizens of a given country and, on their behalf, by their society representatives. In case of European Union's democratic societies, the terrorists' intended target is to strike the EU model based on freedom, and most of all, the freedom of expression. The freedom of thought, its expression and creative constructive political criticism is an axis of political discourse that terrorists would like to destroy. It also determines the quality of democracy, as negotiations, reaching an agreement, creating a platform of joint activities, are what terrorism fights against in the public sphere.

As far as terrorist activities are concerned, we deal with the fall or blight of trust in the institution of the state as terrorists undermine established political and civil rights and their guarantees. Thus, identity and social roles constructed in political processes are subject to revision. In the European Union, they are expressed in support and creation of civic institutions. A breakdown of liberal democracy institution, its idea of freedom in individual and collective expressions is a basic objective of terrorist's activities, especially those based on intimidation. (10) This leads to fundamental questions in liberal democracies. *How to manage a social structure? How to share responsibility for this management? How to counteract terrorists and do it effectively?* Against this background, it is worth pointing out issues crucial for the safety of community.

The first of these issues relates to the disintegration of social structure and relationships of its elements. A strong correlation between violence and its effectiveness creates a fundamental mechanism of intimidation, terror and terrorism as methods of action. Basically, it relates to the way of undermining legitimacy of power exercised in a given community or influence that it exerts.

The second of these issues concerns terrorists' aspirations to create dysfunction of particular society elements. In this perspective, terrorism gains two mutually complementing dimensions, internal and external ones. They are connected with the formula of impact on civic society. (11) In the case of the internal dimension, terrorist activities concentrate on disorder and then destruction of social relations leading to, inter alia, active self-

organization. This situational context shows one of the basic methods to reach goals by entities by using terrorism in network communities. It is the destruction of public confidence, both among members of society but also in relations – society vs. institutions of power. (12) This context of terrorist attacks can be observed after terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004, in London in 2005, in France in 2015, and in Belgium in 2016 which should be taken into consideration as leading and long-term in terrorist activities' strategy. (14) In the case of external activities, the phenomenon of terrorism is correlated with the rise of negative for the European Union social phenomena (15). They include, inter alia, mass migration to Europe in 2010 – 2014 and 2015-2016 of people of different culture and civilization backgrounds. The element of uncertainty of indigenous European communities connected with effective external terrorist activities leads to the emergence and then deepening of the described above phenomenon.

The third issue refers to terrorists' questioning of European values which are shared and lead to social consensus. Terrorism, regardless the object which is using it, as a social phenomenon, appeals to axiology. In this respect, its ability of effective impact is worth mentioning. First of all, in the aspect of relations of power – reciprocity – trust – responsibility. The main goal of terrorists' activity is to exert influence on institutional constraints of individual and group behaviour which can take various forms, but they are always linked with violence (17).

Undermining social trust and reciprocity leads directly to the destruction of social capital based on determining, applying and following rules. Undermining social legitimization towards the governance in the public sphere accompanies this phenomenon (18). Moreover, so does social radicalisation contesting the existing form of governance. This state of affairs may lead to very dangerous situations in which there is place for activities of formal and informal entities establishing the rules of political game (19). Outside support for destabilisation activities resulting in social radicalisation is its direct consequence (20). This support may relate to a particular European community or a community (of Brussels' district Molenbeek) which becomes the target of terrorist organization's efforts and operations.

Counteracting contemporary terrorism in Europe relates to new institutional structures which do not have to result from process of governance. They are the consequence of societies' organization and their self-organization. Governing – conscious management of political structures – equip those who hold power with a tool in which *status quo*, *status quo ante* and *status nascendi* can unite in one creative whole. However, this requires a vision of proactive activities, complementary to reactive ones in relation to the phenomenon of terrorism in Europe. Each type of these

activities refers to both, mutually complementary domains, individual and collective safety and security, of both single countries and the European Union.

Conclusions

Considering a form of governance specific for the European Union, groups of activities embracing the interpretation of combating and restricting the phenomenon should be pointed out. Basically, these activities should focus on social conditions in which terrorism occurs, as well as on these social structures which define methods and manifestations of terrorist activities and generate support of their followers in their extremism, support for terror and violence.

The first of them is the strengthening of behaviour based on obeying rules. Gaining “hearts and minds” of potential terrorists may and should be the first step to counterterrorism in Europe. The identification of its sources for the destabilisation of internal form of governance is the initial phase of this phenomenon’s diagnosis (23). As a result, a principle of individual and collective *responsibility* is possible to arise. In the individual case, it means *empowerment* of a person, their significance in a democratic society. This form of action may be treated as a strategy to prevent social exclusion and marginalisation which constitute one of the sources of terrorism (especially in the context of the so-called lone wolves). *Responsibility* and *empowerment* requires creating adequate de-radicalisation programmes and change of behaviour leading to terrorism. These two types should be accompanied by strengthening of not having appeared and marginalised earlier forms of civic society values (23). There should be pointed out political values resulting from conscious participation of the individual in a political community, political decision making both in local and general social dimensions.

The consequence of *responsibility* and *empowerment* is the *transformation* of social environments identifying with extremists, through granting them *co-responsibility* together with other persons basing on set principles of individual freedom, freedom of expression, the rule of law and legality of actions taken in a civic society. Several parallel processes should provide the basis of this transformation:

- *awareness* that violence, terror and consequently terrorism are expensive; showing the mechanisms which increase individual costs of accessing organized violence should be a complementary element;
- *strengthening the credibility and commitments* appearing in social relations and between the rulers and the ruled; it is essential to

consolidate them in time basing on principles *do ut des* - I give [you] that you may give [me.], in other words “nothing for nothing”;

- maintaining the transparency of social relations and accompanying them motivation through the exchange of information and their complementarity.

It is essential that the processes under consideration would not lead to restricting individual freedoms to create a vision presented by George Orwell in “Nineteen Eighty-Four” and “Animal Farm”. Such a vision, in the name of ideals of freedom could be very easy to realize due to available technology, knowledge about how totalitarian societies are organized and, most importantly, the so-called “good intentions”. The example of the rise of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, and then the Third Reich should be always the right direction indicator and reference point for the institution of the state’s activities against terrorism.

References

1. CHRISAFIS A. Michael Houellebecq: ‘Am I Islamophobic? Probably, yes’, The G2 Interview, Sunday 6 September 2015. STACK L., KARASZ P., *How Belgium Became Home to Recent Terror Plots*, The New York Times, March 23, 2016.
2. *The European Union Counter – Terrorism Strategy*, 14469/4/05 REV 4, Brussels, 30 November 2005, p. 3-17.
3. DWORKIN A. *Europe’s New Counter – Terror Wars*, European Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Brief, ECFR 192, October 2016.
4. CASTELLS M. *The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy*, in: CASTELLS M., CARDOSO G. (ed.) (2005). *The Network Society. From Knowledge to Policy*, Center for Transatlantic Relations, Washington, p. 3-6.
5. MCCANTS W. (2015). *The ISIS Apocalypse. The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*, St. Martin's Press, New York, p. 145-159.
6. STERN J., BERGER J.M (2015). *ISIS: The State of Terror*, HarperCollins Publisher, New York, p. 199-218.
7. *Spain. MSW 10 years after the attacks there is a risk of another attack.*” Gazeta Wyborcza, wyborcza.pl, http://wyborcza.pl/1,91446,15599013,Hiszpania_MSW_10_lat_po_zamachach_istnieje_ryzyko.html#ixzz41YcymPU5, accessed on 29.02.2017.
8. POP V., VERBERGT M. *Islamic State Terror Cell Found Refuge in Brussels District. Molenbeek has come to symbolize Belgium’s failure to integrate its Muslim population*, The Wall Street Journal 22.03.2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-terror-cell-found-refuge-in-brussels-district-1458694455>, accessed on 22.03.2017.
9. CRAGIN K (2007). *Understanding Terrorist Ideology*, Testimony presented before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on June 12, 2007, CT-283 June 2007, RAND Corporation. WRIGHT A. L. *Terrorism, Ideology and Target Selection*, Department of Politics Princeton University, March 5, 2013, http://www.princeton.edu/politics/about/file-repository/public/Wright_on_Terrorism.pdf, accessed on 15.03.2017.

10. MELO S. *After bloody year, Charlie Hebdo blames religion*, Politico 1/5/16, <http://www.politico.eu/article/bloody-year-charlie-hebdo-blames-religion-anniversary-edition/>, accessed on 1.03.2016.
11. MACKENZIE A., ZWOLSKI K. *Conclusion – European Security, Terrorism and Intelligence: Assessing the Path of Development*, in: KAUNERT C., LEONARD S. (eds.) (2013). *European Security, Terrorism and Intelligence, Tackling New Security Challenges in Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 229-243.
12. BELL S., HINDMOOR A. (2009). *Rethinking Governance: The Centrality of the State in Modern Society*, Cambridge University Press, p. 20-45.
14. BURKE J. *How Belgium became a breeding ground for international terrorists. Until now, European security services largely ignored the growth of extremism in the Muslim neighbourhoods of Brussels*, the guardian online 16 November 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/16/how-belgium-became-breeding-ground-international-terrorists>, accessed on 23.03.2016.
15. FUNK M., PARKES R. *Refugees versus terrorists*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) January 6/2016.
16. CARTER J. A. (2007). *Social inquiry: A pragmatist analysis of just war theory explanations of terrorism*, Purdue University, p. 77.
17. SYMONS E-K. *Cologne attacks: „This is sexual terrorism directed towards women”*, Women in the World, 1.19.2016, <http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2016/01/19/cologne-attacks-this-is-sexual-terrorism-directed-towards-women/>, accessed on 15.03.2016.
18. REVESZ R. *Cologne New Year gang assaults: Mayor says women should have code of conduct to prevent future assault*, Independent, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/mayor-of-cologne-says-women-should-have-code-of-conduct-to-prevent-future-assault-a6798186.html>, accessed on 15.03.2016.
19. JONES G., CHOPRA T. *Anti-Islam movement PEGIDA stages protests across Europe*, Reuters 6.2.2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-protests-germany-idUSKCN0VF0P4>, accessed on 15.03.2016.
20. TAYLOR J. *Radical Islamic cleric declares BRITISH law is invalid in BRITAIN. RADICAL cleric Anjem Choudary sparked fury today by declaring he 'doesn't accept' that British law is valid in the UK*, Espress, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/526538/Radical-Islamic-preacher-Anjem-Choudary-rejects-authority-British-law>, accessed on 24.03.2016.
21. SCHLIEBS M. *Radical Muslim trio preaching again on social media*, The Australian 7 January 2016, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/terror/radical-muslim-trio-preaching-again-on-social-media/news-story/1f7e87143a8c078d876be259a29ba124>, accessed on 24.03.2016.
22. RABASA A., PETTYJOHN S. L., GHEZ J. J., BOUCEK CH. (2010). *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, RAND Corporation, p. 11-26. HOEFT G. *'Soft' Approaches to Counter-Terrorism: An Exploration of the Benefits of Deradicalization Programs*, Paper, Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, Herzliyya, Spring 2015, p. 9.
23. RABASA A., PETTYJOHN S. L., GHEZ J. J., BOUCEK CH., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists...*, p. 27-28.