

Report on the ethics of terrorism

[Society](#), [Terrorism](#)



Throughout the course of history we can see acts that today might be adorned with the title of terrorism. Even though this is a fairly modern concept the idea of fear for the purposes of political change is not. Where do these ideals come from? What has been constant throughout history and is still clinging on even today is religion and I feel religion is the coal that fuels the furnace of terror. Throughout the course of this essay I intend to probe religion in terms of its uses and purpose and how a system of ethics is abused and talk about the ethics of terrorism. I believe that religion is slowly being replaced by modernity, by technology and that terrorism is a defensive mechanism for religion in an attempt to keep from fading away, they blow things up to avoid being ignored.

“ In the end, when all society has passed through these stages, ethics will become a science, no less objective in its results than physics or chemistry. At this point, the moral and political conflicts of the past will disappear” John Gray (2003)

The positivists are the original prophets of modernity, they claim that history is driven by technology a thought which influenced Marx's ideas on methods of production and created communism. They believe that science is the most powerful tool for changing society because science has the possibility to bring an end to scarcity.

Hume argues similarly that crime and deviance are products of the fact humans have limited resources and benevolence, so theoretically if we had infinite resources there would be no need to steal, the evils of property would vanish. They also believe that progress in science and progress in ethics and politics go hand in hand. So you can imagine how this threatens

religion, as technology is evolving, religion by definition can only stay the same and as a consequence is slowly being pushed out of the circle of politics, losing its power over people and slowly fading into obscurity. Robert Keohane's phrase 'informal violence' is a useful alternative to terrorism, because terrorism has no real analytical meaning. It's so steeped in rhetoric no one can really define it. Not only that but I like the way the phrase highlights the difference between terror and violence because in actual fact there is very little difference between an attack by a terrorist group and an attack by the American government?

You may argue that terrorism is targeting innocent people in order to make them feel fear but America kills innocent people every day with drone strikes, which you cannot deny would induce fear. If flying robots were dropping bombs on your country indiscriminately from a country thousands of miles away I would be terrified. The only real difference is that that violence is sanctioned and decided upon by a governing body and justified as some form pre-emptive strike to serve the greater good. Although terrorist cells may justify their attacks in the same way their actions are not supported by a government but by religious prejudice.

Keohane replaces the word 'terrorism' with informal violence because terrorism has so many negative connotations that it's impossible for it to be viewed objectively, resolutions against terrorism have been passed by the UN but it has been unable to define what terrorism is. Each party desperately seeks to define its enemy's actions but not their own as terrorism.

Nevertheless deliberate acts of violence arbitrarily enacted on civilians in order to cause fear are without a doubt, acts of terror. I think what he's

trying to say is really that America doesn't want to see itself as in a war but actually fighting evil so legitimises its own actions and delegitimizes the actions of their enemies.

The bottom line obviously is; there are no good guys when it comes to war there are two sides and whomever wins gets to write whatever they want in the history books but the point is this battle seems to have no end in sight.

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