

Good essay on enriched understanding on terrorism

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



Introduction

Chapter 1 of *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism* by Mia Bloom, entitled “ A Brief History of Terror and the Logic of Oppression,” served as an introduction to terrorism as a phenomena per se and the participation of women as terrorists (9-34). Apart from explaining the evolution of terrorism through its four waves - anarchist, anti-colonial, New Left and religious, Chapter 1 provided concise yet informative information on the engagement of women in terrorist activities (9-34). As argued by Bloom (9-34), it has been highly unusual for women to get themselves involved in terrorism, given that they have a traditional profile characterized by peace, motherhood and care. This essay seeks to explain how Chapter 1 has shaped my understanding of terrorism, alongside the application of the “ four R’s plus one” of Bloom (233-250). After reading Chapter 1, I admit that much of my impression on terrorism has changed and has been enriched by useful information portraying it as a harmful social phenomenon with wide-ranging consequences to various actors, specifically women.

Terrorism, as I have initially understood it, is conducted by belligerent forces fighting for a common cause by deliberately targeting civilians for attacks. However, I found out through Chapter 1 that my understanding of terrorism is just among the contemporary definitions constructed over time, given that many have tried to provide various interpretations of what a terrorist does and intends. Simply put, Chapter 1 has defined terrorism using a historical approach, dividing it into four waves - anarchist, anti-colonial, New Left and religious. The anarchist wave of terrorism arose when anarchists in the

United States (US) sought to overthrow the government, their most notorious attack being the assassination of President William McKinley. The anti-colonial wave of terrorism flourished in the early 20th century in colonies, in which actors sought to fight for independence. The New Left wave of terrorism came about as a result of the merger of communist ideologies with terrorist activities. The religious wave of terrorism, which applies in contemporary times, involved religious fundamentalism that drove terrorists to eliminate power structures seen as enemies of their religion (Bloom 9-34; Lecture 12; Lecture 13).

Given the different waves within which terrorism has evolved, Bloom (9-34) began to substantiate her focus on analyzing the involvement of women in terrorist activities. Throughout history, women have involved themselves in terrorism, despite the fact that their traditional profile - that of peace, motherhood and care, did not match well with that of a typical terrorist (Bloom 9-34; Lecture 13). Women have since involved themselves in various kinds of terrorist activities such as assassins, intelligence gatherers and suicide bombers, among many others. Such inevitably digressed from the traditional profile of women, as it has served as a crucial gray area in my understanding of terrorism. Bloom (9-34) suggested that such may be due to the perception that women lack a strong sense of agency compared to men, which in turn has allowed gender to work as "both a tool and product of terrorism." Rather, Bloom (9-34) showed that not all women are coerced to commit terrorist activities, given the finding that many of them have expressed awareness to risk their lives to uphold their cause. Therefore, the

progression of terrorism provides anticipation to greater participation of women in terrorist activities.

Factoring the “ Four R’s Plus One”

Since Bloom (9-34) explained that women terrorists may have either volunteered for the cause justifying their support for terrorism or faced coercion, specifically from men related to them, it is important to factor in what she calls the “ four R’s plus one” - revenge, redemption, relationship, respect and raped. Women are driven to commit terrorist activities due to retributive reasons, possibly because of desires to avenge the death of a family member or to redeem themselves from any wrongdoing. As part of an emancipation process, the ideologies justifying terrorism may match the desires of women for revenge or redemption, thus making their involvement voluntary (Bloom 233-250). Social pressures may also push women to commit terrorist activities, particularly in the form of their relationships with men in terrorist organizations and desire to gain the respect of their immediate community influenced by the ideals justifying terrorism. As a result of the foregoing, some women terrorists end up involving themselves in terrorism out of coercion and fear for their survival (Bloom 233-250). Anguish over rape also drive women to use terrorism as their outlet, as correlate the injustice they have experienced to ideals justifying their engagement in terrorist activities they see as liberating for them (Bloom 233-250). Summarily, the “ four R’s plus one” of Bloom (233-250) are instrumental in explaining the reason behind the emergence of women terrorists - explained in Chapter 1 as a phenomenon seen to grow in time.

Conclusion

My perception on terrorism has since changed since I read Chapter 1, particularly because of the investigated on its historical circumstances and the explanations behind the involvement of women in terrorist activities. My understanding of terrorism, as it turned out, is just among one of many contemporary definitions. At the same time, I figured that gender has shaped the discourse on terrorism, such that traditional gender profiles have been defied with the emergence of women terrorists. Thus, the participation of women in terrorist activities has since served as an urgent matter that must be considered in combating terrorism.

Works Cited

" Lecture 12: Radicalization." n. d. Lecture.

" Lecture 13: Women, Gender and Terrorism." n. d. Lecture.

Bloom, Mia. Bombshell: Women and Terrorism. Philadelphia, PI: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Print.