Chapter 2
Why is Terrorism Wrong?

Abstract Terrorism, as best defined, has four generic wrong-making characteristics. It uses or threatens violence. It typically produces terror. It uses persons as means without respecting them as autonomous moral agents. It attempts to coerce. These make terrorism morally wrong because they involve the infliction of serious harm and the violation of human rights. Political terrorism is also wrong because it undermines trust, generates conflict within a liberal society, undermines the capacity for self-government and disrupts social order. State terrorism violates the duty of nation states to protect citizens from harm and the violation of their human rights. International terrorism threatens peace and security and violates the sovereignty of nations. Racial terrorism always violates the moral right to equitable treatment of its victims and often oppresses members of the terrorized race. Family quasi-terrorism violates one's special moral responsibilities to members of one's family, destroys the necessary conditions for intimacy and often causes post-traumatic stress disorder. None of these wrong-making characteristics is limited to innocent victims; innocence is primarily relevant because it excludes any justification of terrorism as a defense against wrongful aggression.

Terrorism has an unsavory reputation. Whether it is always morally wrong is controversial, but hardly anyone can deny that it is always prima facie wrong. Surely terrorism is morally wrong unless there is some justifying reason strong enough to outweigh the important moral considerations that normally make it grievously wrong. I have defined terrorism as the attempt to coerce an indirect target by means of terror produced by the use or threat of violence against a direct target. This definition points to four essential characteristics that individually and collectively explain why it is by its very nature morally wrong. It (1) attempts to coerce an indirect target (2) by means of terror (3) produced by the use or threat of violence against a direct target (4) who is thus used merely as a means of coercion. Let us begin by examining these generic wrong-making characteristics.

2.1 The Use or Threat of Violence

Terrorists often use violence against their primary targets. Violence consists in treatment or usage tending to cause bodily injury or forcibly interfering with personal freedom. The obvious reason that the use of violence is prima facie morally

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wrong is that injury and interference with liberty harm the victims. Hare describes some of the harms that might be inflicted by a terrorist using violence.

> He is, say, killing a lot of people in an airport lounge with a sub-machine gun; he is bereaving their children and spouses (and bereavement is often the greatest of human ills); he is wounding others; he is disrupting air travel, which may have far-reaching though hard-to-measure consequences if people who ought to go to places decide not to for fear of such attacks; he is causing governments and airlines to spend a lot of money on precautions against terrorism, and so increasing taxes and the price of air travel; and so on (Hare 1979, p. 245).

Similarly, suicide bombing typically causes severe harm to primary targets, often collateral damage to property or nonhuman animals or both, and has harmful consequences for other individuals who may or may not be friends or relatives of the immediate victims of violence.

Trudy Govier explains convincingly why there is a presumption that the use of violence is morally wrong. She notices, as Hare does not, that in addition to causing grievous harms, violence violates fundamental moral rights.

> Fundamentally the basis of this presumption is that the entities damaged or destroyed in acts of physical violence have value in themselves or in virtue of their function and use. Persons are believed to have a right to life that should be overridden only when absolutely necessary. Animals have value as sentient creatures and as serving biological or other needs of persons….Any ethic in which persons, environment, and properties are deemed to possess positive value yields by implication the presumption that it is wrong to harm or destroy them. Thus a presumptive case against physical violence emerges logically from any ethic in which one grants rights to persons, presumptions against harm to sentient creatures, and value to the interests of human beings and other sentient creatures and their need for resources (Grovier 2005, p. 114).

Even when the use of violence does not kill its primary targets, it usually inflicts serious injury on them or damages their property. Hence, the use of violence is typically morally wrong because it causes very serious harms and violates human rights such as the rights to life, personal security and property. Here is the most obvious explanation of why terrorism is grossly immoral unless there is some justifying reason sufficient to outweigh these wrong-making considerations.

Terrorists often refrain from actually using violence and merely threaten to use it. What, for example, is wrong with high-jacking an airplane or taking a few hostages if they are later released "unharmed"? Although the hostages may not be physically harmed, they are still harmed in at least four ways. The threat of violence, especially being killed or injured, is experienced as distressing, even agonizing. This is a relatively minor harm, but a genuine harm nevertheless. The threat of being subjected to serious violence often causes the primary targets of terrorism to modify their lifestyles, perhaps by avoiding places or discontinuing activities they now consider dangerous, thereby making their lives less satisfying to themselves and less useful to others. Sometimes the threat so shocks its victims that it causes a trauma resulting in lasting psychological damage or even leading to neurosis. And any threat of violence tends to escalate to the use of violence thus imposing the risk of death or injury upon direct targets.

Even when no such escalation occurs, the threat of violence violates the human right to personal security. Because a person is as much or more a psychological entity as a physical body, the right to personal security is the right not to be subjected to either psychological or physical injury. Hence, being subjected to the experience of distress or agony and possible psychological trauma violates this basic human right. And because one's bodily integrity is not secure when one is subjected to the risk that the threat will escalate into the use of violence, one's human right to person security is violated in a second way. It may be that the threat of violence is a less serious moral wrong than the use of violence, but it is far from a minor wrong to its victims.

2.2 The Production of Terror

Terrorism usually does and is always intended to produce terror in its indirect targets. But this is typically not terror in the strict sense defined by the OED as "The state of being terrified or extremely frightened; intense fear or dread; an instance of this." It is terror in a broader sense of deep anxiety or fear. What defines this sort of terror is not the felt intensity of the emotion but the seriousness attributed to the feared harm. Why do indirect targets take the dangers of terrorism so seriously? Jan Narveson describes three characteristics of terrorism that might explain this feature of the sort of terror it produces.

> *Sense of risk*. First, for the affected public at large, there is the uncertainty of life it engenders: an increased probability of persons unknown visiting evils upon us without our being able to anticipate them…. *Powerlessness*. Secondly, these risks, no different in kind and considerably less in degree than those facing the frontline soldier in wartime, differ from the soldier's case not only in that we have no control over the fact of being put at those risks, but also in that we have no way of even knowing that we have assumed them… .*Apparent absurdity*. A further feature often adds to the agony of the phenomenon from the point of view of the ordinary person. This is what we might call the putative absurdity of terrorism as a method of achieving the terrorist's aims (Narveson 1991, pp. 124–125).

No doubt the incessant and graphic publicity given by the media to acts of terrorism also insinuates that they should be taken seriously.

Why might the production of terror be morally wrong? Fear and anxiety are disagreeable feelings that are intrinsically evil. And anxiety tends to be pervasive and thereby make one unable to fully enjoy what would otherwise be much more valuable experiences. More harmful is the way in which terror undermines one's practical rationality. There is considerable evidence that indirect targets typically overestimate the risks of terrorism. For example, the deaths and injuries caused by automobile accidents in Europe and the United States each year vastly outnumber those resulting from terrorism. Yet almost no one chooses to avoid driving while large numbers of persons cancelled or refrained from taking long-distance flights after 9/11. Terrorism produces an anxiety that makes indirect targets make unreasonable sacrifices in their own lives and too often motivates them to act in ways that reduce the value of their contributions to the lives of others. In these

ways, and perhaps in others, the production of terror is prima facie morally wrong because it is harmful.

2.3 Using Persons

Terrorists use or threaten violence upon their direct targets in order to produce terror in their indirect targets. Thus, they are using the former as means to their end of terrorizing. In the case of political terrorism, they are typically using the terror produced to put pressure upon some political body to modify its policies. Hence, they are also using their indirect targets as means. As Scheffler observes:

> Using Kantian terminology, we might say that the primary victims are treated not just as means to an end but as means to a means: that is, they are treated as a means to the end of treating the secondary victims as means to an end. Those who engage in this kind of terrorism do not merely display callous indifference to the grief, fear and misery of the secondary victims; instead, they deliberately use violence to cultivate and prey on those reactions. This helps to explain why there is something distinctively repellent about terrorism, both morally and humanly (Scheffler 2006, pp. 9–10).

Kant did not, of course, believe that it is always wrong to treat people as means. There is nothing wrong with using a taxi driver to get where one wants to go or a doctor to restore one to good health as long as they freely choose to assist one in these ways. What is morally wrong is treating people as means only, treating people as means without at the same time treating them as ends in themselves (Kant 1949, p. 87).

But what is it to treat someone as an end in himself or herself? Kant suggests, but does not clearly explain, his answer to this question.

> Beings whose existence does not depend on our will but on nature, if they are not rational beings, have only a relative worth as means and are therefore called "things"; on the other hand, rational beings are designated "persons," because their nature indicates that they are ends in themselves, i.e., things that may not be used merely as a means. Such a being is thus an object of respect and, so far, restricts all [arbitrary] choice. Such beings are not merely subjective ends, whose existence as a result of our action has worth for us but are objective ends, i.e., beings whose existence in itself is an end. Such an end is one for which no other end can be substituted, to which these beings should serve merely as means (Kant 1949, pp. 86–87).

In sum, to treat persons as an ends in themselves is to respect their individuality and practical rationality, that is to limit one's treatment of them by deferring to their individual capacities to choose and act on the basis of practical reasons. This strikes me as a profound, but deeply puzzling, moral insight.

Why is it wrong to fail to respect the individuality and rationality of persons? Kant's answer is implicit in the following passage:

> The ends which a rational person arbitrarily proposes to himself as consequences of his action are material ends and are without exception only relative, for only their relation to a particular constituted faculty of desire in the subject gives them their worth….But suppose

> that there were something the existence of which in itself had absolute worth, something which, as an end in itself, could be the ground of definite laws. In it, and only in it, could lie the ground of a possible categorical imperative, i.e., of a practical law. Now, I say, man and, in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will (Kant 1949, p. 86).

In other words, a person's capacity for rational choice and action makes him an end in himself with an absolute value, a value not relative to or derived from any subjective desire or inclination. And treating him as a means only would be contrary to his absolute value.

To my mind, this explanation raises several questions that Kant does not, and perhaps could not, answer persuasively.

(1) Why assume that a rational person selects his or her ends arbitrarily, for no valid reason? Kant asserts that our goals, the objects we strive to attain or achieve, have value merely because we desire them; but a more adequate theory of value would suggest that a rational agent desires this rather than that, because it is more desirable, because it has good-making characteristics that make it more valuable. Hence, Kant's distinction between objects with merely relative values and persons with an absolute value is dubious.
(2) How could the capacity for practical reason, as Kant conceives of it, give a person any value at all, much less an absolute value? Kant insists that practical reason must be pure, free of all desires or inclinations and, more generally, everything empirical (Kant 1949, p. 84). But to have value is to be desirable, satisfactory, admirable or, in the case of virtue, worthy of moral approval. Thus, the concept of value implies an emotional aspect excluded by Kant's conception of pure practical reason (Wellman 1961, pp. 207–227).
(3) Even if the capacity for practical reason did confer absolute value, how could this impose any moral obligation not to treat a person as a means only? I can understand how this might possibly imply an obligation not to perform a prefrontal lobotomy or to administer any drugs that would interfere with one's rational deliberation, for such acts would destroy or diminish one's capacity for practical reasoning and thereby reduce or eliminate one's absolute value. But most ways of treating someone as a means only, such as fraudulent advertising in order to sell defective products to unsuspecting customers or stealthy theft or forcible rape, leave the victim's capacity for practical reason intact and thus have no impact on his or her absolute value.

Why, then, is there any moral duty to respect the rational agency of others? As I explained some years ago:

> Rational agency involves setting one's goals, selecting ways of achieving them, and integrating ends and means into a more or less coherent life. But this becomes impossible, or at best very difficult, if others do not defer to one's decisions and yield to one's actions. It is projects that enable one to realize one's valued goals, and one's projects give the coherence and meaning to one's life that make it more than a series of trivial satisfactions. Hence, to disrespect the rational agency of another by interfering with her action is to reduce her control over her life and thereby to threaten what matters most to the value of her life (Wellman 2005, p. 44).

Clearly it would be morally wrong to inflict such a grievous harm upon any person. And because what is morally relevant about a person's rational agency is its importance for his or her own life, this requires one to respect the individuality of each and every person, to refrain from imposing one's own will against the will of another rational agent.

Terrorists typically treat their targets without sufficient concern for their individual capacities for rational choice. Sara Ruddick describes the intentions of the pilots who flew their planes into the World Trade Center.

> The pilots, if their Primer is to be trusted, also thought they were killing a kind—"the Unfaithful," "the Infidels." But the people who would become the victims on the planes and in the buildings are curiously absent from the reports about the pilots and from their preoccupied self-reflections in the primer. It is as if victims who were nothing but a "kind" became victims who were merely fungible accessories to a plan that inevitably involved the death of passengers and office workers whoever they might be. To paraphrase Simone Weil, in those planes, in those buildings, "they were nothing. They simply did not count" (Ruddick 2003, p. 216).

In other words, they were treated as mere means because the pilots treated them in ways to which no one of them could rationally consent.

Terrorists always use their direct targets as mere means by using or threatening violence upon them against their wills in order to produce terror in their indirect targets. And they often treat their indirect targets as mere means by inflicting terror upon them without their consent as a means of causing some political body to alter its policies. Therefore, terrorism is morally wrong unless there is some overriding justification for failing to respect the rationality of each of its individual targets.

2.4 An Attempt to Coerce

Terrorism, as I have defined it, is an attempt to coerce. Hence, if successful, it is prima facie wrong because coercion is harmful, and it is prima facie wrong to harm anyone. The one who is coerced is forced to act against her will. Thus, at the very least she will feel frustrated by not being able to act as she would have chosen. Given the diversity of human desires and lifestyles together with the special circumstances of our individual lives, each individual is normally the best judge of what is in her interest and the most motivated to act on her best judgment. Therefore, by forcing one to act against her best judgment, coercion will usually force one to sacrifice some portion of her welfare. And when a moral decision is involved, coercion is typically wrong because it denies a conscientious moral agent the opportunity to act in the morally right manner.

But suppose the attempt to coerce fails because the target evades or overcomes its force. It is still harmful for much the same reasons. Being forced to evade or resist attempted coercion is frustrating because it is being forced to act in some way one would not freely choose to act. And coerced evasive or resisting action equally denies one the opportunity to act on one's best prudential or moral judgment. However, when an attempt to coerce fails because the target is unaware of it or not threatened by it, then it is not harmful in any obvious way.

Nevertheless, any attempt to coerce normally does violate the moral right to liberty, a right with a broader scope than the right to liberty in most national legal systems. The defining core of this right is the moral liberty to act or refrain from acting in any way one chooses unless in so acting one would be violating a moral duty. The most relevant associated position in this right is the moral duty of all second parties not to prevent or hinder the right-holder from exercising her core moral liberty. Although one may sometimes be justified in infringing this very broad moral right to liberty, it is always prima facie wrong to deny its exercise to any normal human being. Hence, any attempt to coerce is almost always prima facie wrong because it is harmful to the person one coerces or attempts to coerce and always infringes her moral right to liberty.

The subject of my moral assessment is terrorism defined as the attempt to coerce an indirect target by means of terror produced by the use or threat of violence against a direct target. Thus defined, terrorism has four generic wrong-making characteristics—the use or threat of violence, the production of terror, using persons as means only, and the attempt to coerce. However, my very broad definition of terrorism ignores the differences between the various species of terrorism. Because the defining features of terrorism are not the only ones that explain why it is prima facie wrong, and may not even be the most serious ones, any adequate moral assessment must examine at least the most important species of this genus.

2.5 Political Terrorism

The most common and for the general public the paradigmatic kind of terrorism is political terrorism. Indeed, many authorities define terrorism in terms of its political motivation or goal. Several authors identify distinctive wrongs specific to political terrorism. For example, Michael Bauer argues that political terrorism undermines trust in a context of mutual dependence and puts a liberal society into conflict with itself.

> As systematically unsystematic violence, terrorism undermines trust on two levels: (a) it undermines the citizens' trust in the government's ability or will to protect them, and (b) it undermines the citizens' trust in one another as individuals. Terrorism thus has the effect of delegitimizing and destabilizing social institutions and relationships that are based on trust, and supplanting such institutions and relationships with ones that are based on fear or coercion (Bauer 2005, p. 20).

And the consequences for a liberal society are especially profound.

> Terrorism is a challenge to modern liberal societies not only "from the outside," but also "from the inside." This is because civil society's attempt at preserving itself through the "war on terrorism" requires the increasing surveillance of possibly innocent transactions, and the use of overwhelming force against the perceived perpetrators and sponsors of terrorism….Thus the more we execute the war on terror (a war we cannot fail to engage in some fashion), the more we run the risk of using means that are difficult to distinguish from those used by the terrorists themselves (Bauer 2005, p. 21).

To the extent that political terrorism is widespread and effective, it does have these consequences. And because they are very serious harms to a society and to its members, this makes political terrorism prima facie wrong.

Goodin describes a rather different way in which political terrorism harms a democratic society.

> People who are terrified do not reason clearly. They are panicked or cowed. Terrorism, insofar as it succeeds in producing terror, would thus have the effect of undermining people's capacity for autonomous self-government, both individually and collectively. Therein, I suggest, lies the distinctively *political* wrong of terrorism, understood as 'acts intended to frighten people for political advantage' (Goodin 2006, p. 158).

This diagnosis is confirmed by the tendency, even in nations with a strong democratic tradition, to uncritically accept pronouncements of its leaders and to confer upon its administration powers to curtail the constitutional rights of its citizens. To my mind, these are very serious political harms.

Scheffler argues that political terrorists take the insights of Thomas Hobbes to heart.

> In "the standard cases," terrorists undertake to kill or injure a more or less random group of civilians or noncombatants, in so doing, they aim to produce fear within some much larger group of people, and they hope that this fear will in turn erode or threaten to erode the quality or stability of an existing social order. I do not mean that they aim to reduce the social order to a Hobbesian state of nature, but only that they seek to degrade or destabilize it, or to provide a credible threat of its degradation or destabilization, by using fear to compromise the institutional structures and disrupt the patterns of social activity that help to sustain that order. The fear that terrorism produces may, for example, erode confidence in the government, depress the economy, distort the political process, reduce associational activity and provoke destructive changes in the legal system (Scheffler 2006, p. 5).

Although political terrorism is seldom if ever effective enough to produce all of these harmful consequences, it often has some such consequences. And to this extent, it is morally wrong. The special features of political terrorism identified by these authors add to its prima facie wrongness grounded on the generic nature of terrorism

2.6 State Terrorism

The subject of this section is state terrorism in the narrow sense defined as terrorism perpetrated by a nation state against members of its own population. Paradigm examples are the eighteenth century French Reign of Terror and the twentieth century Red Terror of the Bolshevik regime under Lenin. In this narrow sense, state terrorism does not include state-sponsored terrorism such as that of the Hizballah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine sponsored by Iran or the international terrorism that occurs when one state commits terrorism against the citizens of another state.

The distinctive wrong-making characteristics of state terrorism are implicit in Article 7 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that reads in part: "All are

equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law." State terrorism is morally wrong because it violates the moral responsibility of a nation state to protect its citizens from harm and the moral right of its citizens to equitable treatment.

Any nation state has a moral obligation to protect its citizens from harm. This is because by instituting and enforcing a legal system it prohibits its citizens, with very few exceptions, from using force against one another. Thus, it prevents or hinders the individuals over whom it has jurisdiction from almost all forms of self-help should their lives, bodies or property be wrongfully attacked. Therefore, simply by governing its population it invites, even requires, them to rely upon the state for protection from wrongful harm. If it subsequently commits acts of terrorism against its own citizens, it betrays the reasonable reliance it has invited, which is morally wrong. Indeed, not only does it fail to fulfill its moral duty to protect them from harm, it wrongfully harms them itself.

State terrorism is directed against "the enemy within," that portion of its citizens that the government believes, correctly or incorrectly, threaten its power to rule as it wishes. By terrorizing some members of its population while sparing others, it violates their moral right to equitable treatment, their right not to be treated worse than others similarly situated without a just-making reason (Wellman 1982, pp. 139–146). Accordingly, state terrorism is a very serious kind of immoral discrimination. However, when a state enforces its just laws, it does not violate the right to equitable treatment because the justice of its legal system constitutes a just-making reason for treating those who act illegally worse than those who obey the law. Accordingly, the specific wrong-making characteristics of state terrorism are that it violates the moral duty of a nation state to protect its population from harm and their moral right to equitable treatment under law.

2.7 International Terrorism

Terrorism is international when nationals of one state or quasi-state use or threaten violence, or aid and abet the use or threat of violence, against the persons or property subject to the jurisdiction of another state or quasi-state. Examples of quasi-states would be colonies of some governing nation state or territories such as Palestine that have extensive but limited authority of self-government but are not recognized as sovereign states in international law. Paradigm examples of international terrorism are terrorist acts of the IRA against persons or property in the United Kingdom, rocket fire or suicide bombing by members of the PLO or Hamas against Israelis, and most spectacularly the 9/11 bombing of the World Trade Center. The international dimension of this species of terrorism introduces additional distinctive wrong-making characteristics.

Although Leiser's definition of terrorism is unduly prejudicial, his analogy between international terrorism and piracy is illuminating.

> Pirates were regarded as enemies of mankind because they acknowledged no law, because they acted as if they were a law unto themselves….To be sure, the system of international law is still frail and rudimentary, but there is clearly *some* sense in which such a system does exist. In any event, it is the principal means adopted by the peoples of the world to assure peace among nations. One who flouts this fragile system, who transgresses against the sovereign rights of peoples and governments in their own territories or who violates the fundamental norms of international society, must stand condemned as an international outlaw and be regarded as if he had in fact declared war upon the system and upon all who owe allegiance to it and to the values it is designed to preserve (Leiser 1986, p. 409).

Here Leiser points to at least two wrong-making characteristics of international terrorism.

By violating international law in such a notorious manner, it threatens the peace and security of the international community. The primary purpose of international law is to preserve peace and promote friendly relations among the nations of the world. Although it is not entirely successful in this regard, it does contribute to these ends to a considerable extent. Because many terrorists disregard international law, including the Geneva Conventions, they undermine these norms and increase the possibility of international conflict or even warfare, declared or undeclared, between nations. International terrorism is prima facie wrong because it imposes the risk of these serious harms upon mankind. That this risk is both real and grave can be seen in the continuing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Because international terrorism consists of the use or threat of violence by citizens of one state or quasi-state against persons or property in one or more other nation states, it violates the sovereignty or quasi-sovereignty of the invaded nations. Such attacks on national sovereignty are morally wrong, not only because sovereignty is a fundamental principle of international law, but also because of the moral justification of preserving state sovereignty. Both internal sovereignty, jurisdiction over all those residing in its territory, and external sovereignty, independence from coercion by outside forces, are necessary conditions for effective government. And effective government is necessary in order for state officials to protect their nationals from harm and to protect the human rights of their citizens. Therefore, any act that infringes national sovereignty, at least when it is exercised in a morally justified manner, tends to harm the inhabitants of a state and to reduce their exercise and enjoyment of their rights. In both regards, international terrorism is prima facie morally wrong.

2.8 Racial Terrorism

Racial terrorism is terrorism intended to terrorize the members of another race. Thus, what defines it as specifically racial is the racial identity of its indirect targets, not that of its direct targets. Although it inflicts violence or the threat of violence primarily upon members of another race, it also targets same-race individuals who support or are thought to sympathize with the race it is designed to terrorize. A paradigm example of racial terrorism is the activities of the Ku Klux Klan after

the Civil War freed the Negro slaves in the United States. The Klan systematically lynched African-Americans who failed to recognize their "proper place in society," often inflicted grievous bodily harm upon them and sometimes burned their homes or businesses. The Nazi terrorism of the Jewish race, epitomized by Kristallnacht and culminating in the concentration camps, is another example. And South African apartheid was to some extent preserved by racial terrorism.

The most obvious wrong-making characteristic of racial terrorism as such is that it is an extremely serious kind of racial discrimination. Any and all racial discrimination is prima facie morally wrong because it is a violation of the human right to equitable treatment of the members of the victimized race. Violence or the threat of violence is inflicted upon most of its direct targets and terror created in its indirect targets simply because they are members of another race. But being of another race is not a just-making reason for being treated worse than those of the same race as the terrorists. Hence, it violates the fundamental moral right to equitable treatment, the right not to be treated worse than others who are similarly situated without a just-making reason. And it is a very serious violation of this moral right because of how much worse its victims are treated.

Typically, although not necessarily, racial terrorism oppresses the race terrorized. It then inflicts specific harms by denying or limiting the political power and economic opportunity of the subordinated race. The former renders the members of that race especially vulnerable, and the latter tends to reduce them to poverty or at least the lack of many of the necessities of a decent human life. Moreover, it denies or unduly limits their human rights to vote and stand for elections, to remunerative work, to education and to access to any place or service intended for public use. Thus, Racial Terrorism is always prima facie morally wrong because it violates the moral right to equitable treatment of the members of the terrorized race, and when it constitutes oppression, wrong because of the special harms it inflicts upon them and the human rights it violates. Ethnic terrorism, such as the ethnic cleansing that took place during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, is prima facie morally wrong for analogous reasons.

2.9 Family Quasi-Terrorism

Claudia Card argues that family members sometimes, in fact far too often, become terrorists.

> Like other terrorists, abusive intimates use threats and heightened fear to manipulate and control. Spousal batterers use threats to obtain service and deference in everything from sex and money to petty details of household management. Physically and sexually abusive parents use terror to secure the silence and compliance of children, often compliance with wrongful demands (Card 2002, p. 143).

Wife battering or child abuse typically creates terror in its victim that is often used to coerce them into continuing compliance with the wishes of the abuser. This does not constitute terrorism as I now define it because strictly speaking there is no distinction between the direct target and the indirect target, the victim of violence

and the person coerced are the same. Nevertheless, it is very similar because to standard cases of terrorism because violence is used or threatened against some present self in order to coerce his or her future self. Hence, it is useful to recognize it as quasi-terrorism. As such it has all the defining wrong-making characteristics of terrorism except that it does not use one person as a means of coercing another person.

The most obvious wrong-making characteristic of family terrorism is that it violates the terrorist's special duties, both moral and legal, to its victims. When one enters into a family partnership, not necessarily a formal marriage, one acquires moral responsibilities to one's partner, and by having a child, one acquires responsibilities of care for that child. To subsequently use or threaten violence against one's partner or child is, not only to fail to fulfill these family responsibilities, but to grievously violate them.

Family terrorism also harms the members of the family by destroying or severely damaging the trust and affection that makes intimacy possible. Intimate personal relationships have a very special value because they make possible the sharing of almost all aspects one's life, close reliable flexible cooperation, mutual caring and response to each others' needs, feelings and aspirations. Hence, any action that undermines intimacy is very harmful by destroying these precious values.

Family terrorism is often, fortunately not always, exceedingly harmful by inducing post-traumatic stress disorder in its victims.

> Judith Lewis Herman argues that the post-traumatic stress disorders of survivors of domestic violence and rape are importantly similar to the "shell shock" of World War I combat survivors. Finding that "the most common post-traumatic disorders are those not of men in war but of women in civilian life," she argues that women and children subject to civilian rape and domestic violence actually are in a war… (Card 2002, p. 144).

Family terrorism tends to produce this very harmful disorder precisely because it is perpetrated by a member of one's own family, someone to whom one has rendered oneself vulnerable by one's previous loving trust.

Finally, family terrorism is normally prima facie morally wrong because it reduces its victim to a condition of involuntary servitude (Card 2002, p. 143). Family terrorism uses or threatens violence against a family member in order to coerce him or her. Thus family terrorism typically produces an ongoing coercion that degrades the status of its victims. As family members coerced into submission, they are forced to serve their oppressors against their wills. And this constitutes a permanent or semi-permanent status of involuntary servitude, because they feel themselves unable to leave the oppressive relationship due to the threat of violence should they attempt to escape. Clearly, it is morally wrong to hold any human being in involuntary servitude, a status shockingly close to slavery.

Other examples of quasi-terrorism are not uncommon. For example, the school bully who picks on a classmate in order to scare him into regularly giving up some or all of his lunch money, or the employer or supervisor who harasses an employee into giving him sexual favors, or an individual or group of individuals who use or threaten violence against a neighbor, often someone suspected of being a sexual pervert or know to be of an "undesirable" race or religion, to terrorize him or her into leaving the neighborhood.

2.10 Conclusion

Terrorism, the attempt to coerce an indirect target by means of terror produced by the use or threat of violence against a direct target, is always at least prima facie wrong. This is because it has four essential wrong-making characteristics. It is coercive; it terrorizes; it uses or threatens violence; and it uses persons as means only. Although any species of terrorism is necessarily prima facie wrong for these four generic reasons, several species are especially immoral because of their distinctive wrong-making characteristics. Political terrorism undermines trust in a context of mutual dependence, puts liberal society into conflict with itself, undermines the individual and collective capacity for autonomous self-government, and disrupts the patterns of social activity that sustain the social order. State terrorism violates the moral duty of a nation state to protect its population from harm and violates their moral right to equitable treatment under law. International terrorism threatens the peace and security of the international community and violates the sovereignty or quasi-sovereignty of the invaded nations. Racial terrorism always violates the moral right to equitable treatment of members of the terrorized race, and often it inflicts the special harms of oppression and violates several human rights of the oppressed. The family quasi = terrorist violates his moral responsibilities to his victims, destroys the necessary conditions of intimacy, often causes post-traumatic stress disorder, and tends to reduce its victims to involuntary servitude. Whether, in spite of these very serious wrong-making characteristics, terrorism or quasi-terrorism could be morally justified under any circumstances remains to be seen.

But first I owe a brief explanation to my perceptive reader. I have not discussed several characteristics that are often believed to explain the immorality of terrorism, most notably that it is the use of violence against non-combatants or the innocent. I have ignored this consideration here because this is not why terrorism is, at least under normal circumstances, immoral. It is prima facie wrong because, among other things, the use or threat of violence inflicts harm and violates moral rights. The fact that it is often an attack on innocent persons or non-combatants is relevant to the moral assessment of terrorism in another way. It excludes one possible justification of terrorism, that terrorism is a defensive response to the wrongful aggression of its victims.

Tamar Meisels, among others, disagrees with my moral assessment. She takes its use of violence against the innocent as definitive of terrorism and the feature that explains why it is so seriously immoral.

> Terrorism, unfortunately, is alive and well, but so is its distinctiveness as a particular form of political violence, which can and should be strictly understood and morally condemned. Once again, terrorism is the intentional random murder of defenseless non-combatants, with the intent of instilling fear of mortal danger amidst a civilian population as a strategy designed to advance political ends…. Terrorism is a particularly morally objectionable form of free riding, as it relies inherently on the moral restraint of others and it is a paradigmatic instance of the ruthless use of individuals as mere means towards an end which they cannot conceivably share (Meisels 2008, pp. 52–53).

However, neither of these wrong-making characteristics depends upon the non-combatant status of the victims of terrorism, for they apply equally to attacks upon

military personnel. For example, when Hezbollah terrorists attacked the marine barracks in Lebanon inflecting many casualties, they were using the individual marines as mere means in violation of their status as ends-in-themselves and relying upon the moral scruples of the United States not to retaliate with the indiscriminate use of its military force.

Similarly, the fact that non-state terrorists lack the authority to use violence that states possess or that terrorism is seldom if ever necessary because there are less harmful alternatives undermine potential justifications but are not themselves wrong-making features of terrorism. What, then, might justify terrorism?

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