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Fundamentalist terrorism – the assault on the symbols of secular power

by

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Abstract

Jost Halfmann argues that fundamentalist terrorism is an extreme expression of protest against the separation of state and religion; this form of protest is motivated by a utopian vision of society as a community of the faithful. The protest against secular states arises in states with forced modernization politics (such as Iran or Egypt), but also in states which base national identity on religion (such as Israel) and in states with high popular religiosity (such as the US). The terrorist form of protest exhibits an extreme form of self-ascribed marginality. Terrorism seems to be the only expression of protest when the enemy is considered overwhelmingly powerful, the struggle must, however, not be lost. Fundamentalist terrorists view themselves as being engaged in a cosmic war enforced on them by the enemy. Terrorist assaults are, therefore, symbolic acts of violence against symbols of the enemy's power to demonstrate emporarily the enemy's weakness.

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Fundamentalist terrorism – the assault on the symbols of secular power[1]
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1. Introduction

Policy makers and consultants close to the current US government interpret terrorism as one among several responses to the military and economic superiority of the United States and its strong support for economic and political globalization. Terrorism is considered a militant practice using asymmetric means of violence against American power by choosing strategies "designed to "exhaust American will, circumvent or minimize US strengths, and exploit perceived US weaknesses" (CIA/NIC 2000, quoted in Prados 2002: 24) rather than engaging in direct military confrontation. Not only since the assault on the Twin Towers in Manhattan on September 11, 2001, the US government has focused its antiterrorist policies on states which provide terrorists with safe havens rather than on terrorist organizations themselves[2]. US-president Bush confirmed this view in his "State of the Nation" address of 30 January 2001. This explains why the US government seems to put overriding emphasis on military strikes against terrorism. The war campaigns against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (2002) and against Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq (2003) speak to this fact.

This assessment obviously rests on a stark reduction of the complexity of the issues involved in terrorism. One might condense the theory of terrorism behind these statements into three elements: terrorism is a response to the military and political superiority of the United States; it uses asymmetric means of violence to weaken the US commitment to global outreach; it emerges from traditional countries struggling with

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[1] This paper ows much of its theoretical framing to Klaus Japp's paper „Zur Soziologie des fundamentalistischen Terrors" (Bielefeld 2003).

heavy modernization strain. As a consequence, the US government perceives the challenge of fundamentalist terrorism in military terms. This view echoes the perceptions of terrorist leaders who see themselves being engaged in a "holy war" with "evil" states to which in their view the US belongs prominently (Bin-Ladin 2002). As I will try to show in this lecture, what fundamentalist terrorists are doing does not resemble a war in any meaningful way despite the bellicose language used by terrorists. Terrorist acts are committed to arouse public fear, but they have no military objective, as Mark Juergensmeyer observes (Juergensmeyer 2001: 5). By treating terrorism as a military problem it is framed as a foreign policy issue. The US have emphasized that terrorism is not just any foreign policy issue, but a priority of national security policies, which requires a long term coordinated effort in an international coalition of states. This framing of the issue of terrorism makes the fight against terrorism look like an expression of civilization clash.

One of the most influential studies on the political ramifications of Islam and fundamentalist terrorism, Samuel P. Huntington's book "The clash of civilizations" sets the tone for many social scientific and political analyses, which place terrorism in the context of a cultural conflict. Apparently, this analysis has gained some recognition among members and consultants of the current US government. Huntington in foreseeing conflicts between the Western (Christian) civilization and other civilizations such as the Islamic culture constructs a direct causal relationship between Islam as a religion and Islamic fundamentalism as a political movement: "The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture, and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power" (Huntington 1997: 217). Huntington believes that conflicts between civilizations are replacing conflicts between nations and ideologies; Huntington describes civilizations as clusters of nations, ordered according to shared religious beliefs and cultural values.[3]

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[2] see i.e. the statements of CIA Director George Tenet and Vice Admiral Thomas R. Wilson before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 7, 2001, in: Prados 2002

[3] „Huntington defines civilization as a „cultural entity ... the highest cultural grouping … defined by both common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people … A civilization may include several nation states or only one" (Huntington 1993: 24).

He anticipates a major fault line between the Islamic civilization and the Western civilization opening up due to Islamic hostility to "Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state" (Huntington 1993: 40)[4]. Huntington's analysis implies a division of the world into different civilizations, which at any given point in time are at different stages in their life cycles. While the Western culture, which has spread its values and rules of conduct all over the world has reached its historical pinnacle, other cultures such as the Islam, but also the Chinese (Confucianism) are on the rise. The aggressive stance of these cultures prompts measures of the West to defend its culture of "industrialization, urbanization, increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilization, and more complex and diversified occupational structures" (Huntington 1997: 68). Huntington's concept of civilizations as clusters of states has contributed to the belief that fundamentalist and terrorist threats can be attributed not only to organizations and groups like Al-Quaeda, but also to states, which embrace or further fundamentalist views and terrorist activities. This analysis then, seems to support politics of military measures against so-called "rogue states".

In describing terrorism as a virus of modern society, Jean Baudrillard has pointed at a major weakness of this kind of analysis. Baudrillard stipulates that it would be wrong to see the problem of terrorism as resulting from the confrontation of cultures with differing levels of modernity. To him, it is rather a conflict within modern global society itself; it is, in Baudrillard's words, "triumphant globalization battling against itself" (Baudrillard 2002: 11). Globalization or – in Huntington terms - the spread of Western concepts of free markets and democracy, has a self-destructive reverse side. According to Baudrillard's analysis the terrorists are not pre-modern, but use all ingredients of modernity ("money and stock-market speculation, computer technology and aeronautics, spectacle, and the media", Baudrillard 2002: 19) for one singular purpose: to turn their (often suicidal) terrorist attacks into symbolic weapons for which their opponents have no appropriate answer. Engaging themselves in a "culture of death" (with the expectation to

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[4] For a critique of the rise of Islam as homogeneous civilization confronting the "Christian civilization" see Esposito 1999

enter paradise after their death) fundamentalist terrorists see the weakness of their enemies in their adherence to a "culture of life". In this vein, Baudrillard comes to the conclusion that even though religious terrorists apply the notion of (holy) war to their actions[5] to counter terrorism by military means is the "continuation of the absence of politics by other means" (Baudrillard 2002: 34). Based on these introductory remarks, I will propose a preliminary definition of terrorism and particularly of fundamentalist terrorism. Terrorism can be defined as acts of violence against symbols of power of a state to demonstrate the enemy's weakness and to mobilize a potential constituency. Fundamentalist terrorism will deploy these acts of violence as part of a cosmic war.

2. Modern society and social differentiation

Baudrillard's essay, which does not pretend to be a fully-fledged sociological analysis of terrorism, points at two issues, which are important for any analysis of fundamentalist terrorism. First, that terrorism is part and parcel of modern society and not in any way of traditional society; and that modern society has to be viewed as global society. Second, that the aim of terrorism is not to challenge state sovereignty, but its symbols of power. The first claim is corroborated by Mark Juergensmeyer's research who found striking similarities in the worldviews of religious terrorists from very different countries and denominations, be they US-American adherents of rightwing religious organizations such as Christian Identity, Israeli followers of Kahane's Kach party or members of the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo sect. Fundamentalist terrorism is not simply a threat emerging from pre-modern or modernizing societies; it is generated in modern societies themselves (Juergensmeyer 2001). A similar argument is made by Olivier Roy who describes the emergence of radical Islamic organizations in Western states with no ideological or organizational ties to Islamic countries (Roy 2003). The second claim is shared by many analyses of terrorism (see i.e. Juergensmeyer 2001: 123; Crenshaw 1995, Hoffman

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[5] In 1998, Osam bin Laden together with other leaders of the "World Islamic Front" proclaimed that the American intervention in the Middle East is a "declaration of war on God, his messenger, and Muslims"; the fatwa, issued in response to this war calls for jihad, a holy war against America (Bin-Ladin et al. 2002:

1998).[6] The question yet to be solved is, however, on what grounds terrorists strike against symbols of power and what the meaning of such assaults is.

To assume that terrorism is a modern phenomenon like other features of modern society such as democracy or free markets requires a theory of society, which can account for the variety and heterogeneity of social phenomena, but at the same time for radical or moderate attempts at generating interpretations of the "good" society. The notion of the "good society" (Bellah et al. 1991) stands for expectations of an ideal society, which can provide all individuals with peace, security and benign rule. The "good" society is portrayed as a community or union of people; this community can take various forms, depending on which background concept is applied. Nationalists envisage a community of citizens, fundamentalists a community of the faithful, communists a community of the workers. For the sociological theory of society such notions of a good society reflect the lack of unity in society and the often utopian hope for a society which is organized as a face-to-face union of individuals united by shared values and rules of conduct. Macrosociological theory concentrates on social structures rather than on individuals. By arguing that social relations built on recurrent expectations (such as norms or rules) are formed into social systems (such as organizations) society is built not on the basis of direct arrangements between individuals (mediated by contractual or exchange acts), but on the basis of providing individuals with inclusion chances. Inclusion in social systems is the way in which individuals participate in society. The particular structures of social systems, therefore, frame the potential for reflecting social structures and for affirming, criticizing or rejecting them. Since Max Weber's notion of the plurality of values coevolving with the process of rationalization modern society has been described as a social system with a multitude of different social spheres. Sociological systems theory speaks of modern society as a functionally differentiated society (Luhmann 1997). This means that different from stratified or segmented societies modern society is differentiated into social spheres of politics, economics, law, religion, sports or health

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176-178); from this results, as Juergensmeyer notes, the belief of many terrorists to be victims of some state's actions and to become martyrs when dying during their actions (Juergensmeyer 2001: 167).

which all function on the basis of self-generated modes of operation. Politics is concerned with collectively binding decisions, organized around the social medium of power which motivates actions to "play the game"; economics with the satisfaction of future needs, revolving around the medium of money; religion with the meaning of transcendence, sports with differential physical achievement etc. Modern society lacks a social system or an institution, which integrates these different social systems and the interpretations, which are generated within in these social contexts. Neither politics nor religion nor 'cultural values" (Parsons 1970) provide rules or interpretations which make collectively binding sense of society or secure some sort of an overarching just social order which could guide the behavior and thinking of each individual. And while democracy is the modern society's solution to the problem of securing the submission to political decisions by making the collective at the same time the source and the object of these decisions, free markets are the main means by which the modus operandi of the economic system – the interplay of payments (rescinding goods) and non-payments (receiving goods) – becomes institutionalized. Both "institutions" – democracy and markets – suffer, if looked at from the ideal of the "good society, from a major drawback. The institutionalization of social systems addressing basic social problems does not secure everyone's inclusion in these institutions nor a positive outcome of public or private welfare expectations. Democracy does not guarantee that all are allowed to participate (since it is reserved to citizens only) and that participants are satisfied with the decisions of political elites and, thus, can live safely, freely and happily. And free markets do not guarantee that all can participate and that participants can live a life free of want. In addition, democracy is no guarantee for free markets and vice versa.

What these two brief examples signify is the contingency and potential disconnectedness of inclusions in and outcomes of the diverse social systems. The modernity of modern society consists precisely in the lack (or loss) of an instance of integration and unification of the diverse social systems in society. This feature distinguishes modern from earlier forms of society, which were organized around some integrating instance such as

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[6] A different point of view is introduced by those authors, who believe that asymmetrical violence can be looked at as a form of warfare capable of undermining the sovereignty of states (see Van Crefeld 1991). The examples chosen to demonstrate this refer to states with unstable regimes or incomplete statehood.

religious or political peak institutions and where inclusion in society was provided to individuals by birth and divine order. For the individual actors the differentiation of social systems and the diversity of inclusions in these systems mean first and foremost the experience of risk and contingency. The lose coupling of the social systems in modern society and the mere procedural character of their operations have been noticed with regard to their consequences for the individual actors as "Sinnverlust" (the loss of meaning, Weber), the "Verlust der Mitte" (the loss of the center, Sedlmayr 1948), or as existentialist deprivation of any transcendental reassurance (Sartre, Camus).

3. Unifying interpretations of modern society

Compared to pre-modern society, modern society is a society without a center, in an institutional and in an interpretative sense. It is a pervasive feature of modern society that the experience of differentiation and contingency has been dealt with by a variety of unifying interpretations of society, concepts, which try to make overarching sense of the confusing diversity of modern society. This is what will be called a unifying semantic throughout this presentation. Unifying semantics are interpretations of a right and good order of society, typically proposed from a particular social system perspective, which are geared at reducing the implications of the pluralist, heterogeneous and contingent character of modern society. Often, unifying views of society emerge from social movements and their adherents in literary circles, academia and the mass media. Nationalism is a case in point: it describes society as a territorially circumscribed community of citizens. Nationalism is a unifying semantic, proposed from the point of view of the political system. To make such a solidarity net plausible nationalist semantic resort to rural and familial images of kinship relations and face-to-face cooperation, even though the national community is a community of strangers who hardly no each other. In his book on "Nations and Nationalism" (Gellner 1983), Ernest Gellner has made this argument convincingly. Nationalism is to Gellner a semantic device, which accompanies the societal transformation from agricultural to industrial society, from a society based on personal to one built on impersonal relationships. The social meaning of nationalism is to

make the strain of alienation during that transformation process palpable. Similarly, pan-national movements such as Pan-Slavism (Kohn 1960) or Pan-Arabism define community in ethnic rather than in territorial terms.

In a similar vein, fundamentalism can be interpreted as a unifying worldview, but in difference to nationalism, society is being viewed from a religious perspective and its constituency is not defined territorially, but universally. Its specific target is the separation of politics from religion. This has been noted by some scholars of fundamentalism. Bassam Tibi states that the secular nation-state is the "prime target of fundamentalism" (Tibi 1998: 6). But it is not the (cultural) fragmentation of modernity as such, as Bassam Tibi claims (Tibi 1998: 6), which is the direct cause of modern fundamentalism. It is the interpretation of fragmentation as a sign of cultural decay, which is at issue. Cultural fragmentation – that is different views of society and particularly, different views of "good society" – is the norm in modern society, given the plurality of perspectives following from functional differentiation of society: one can chose to view society from an economics, a politics or a health perspective, and each time one looks at a different kind of society. Fragmented outlooks, fragmented identities are the norm in modern society.

There are different ways of dealing with fragmentation (or: functional differentiation): one might acknowledge and perhaps praise it, as cultural pluralism or postmodernism does, one can search for interpretations that make sense of society as a whole. These I will call unifying interpretations – and fundamentalism is one variant of this. Unifying semantics view society from one particular perspective, using values and symbols, which are geared at improving the chances for consensus on specific issues across diverging social groups and the system borders of functional differentiation. Unifying worldviews try to counter the contingency of outcomes by offering compensatory rewards and outlooks. All unifying semantics view society from a vantage point, quasi from the outside in order to look at society as a whole. From the social scientific point of view, all unifying semantics are views constructed inside society, emerging from some particular social system, be it politics, religion or social movements. The attempt to pretend to take

an outside look at society introduces a potential for excluding evidence which contradicts this view and which speaks toward plurality and contingency of the world. Cultural theory argues that the content and degree of rigidity of a unifying semantic depends on whether a unifying world view belongs to the center or the periphery of society, that is whether its potential for soliciting consensus is high or low (Douglas 1973, Douglas/Wildavsky 1983, Thompson/Ellis/Wildavsky 1990).

Rationalism is a unifying set of values and symbols, which assumes that roughly the same means/ends-calculi direct the behavior in politics, economics or the family[7]. Rationalism, but also solidarity and community are sets of unifying values and meanings which are prevalent in segments of society with a high coping level concerning functional differentiation, such as in professional milieus of urban areas in advanced countries.

Such unifying worldviews found in the center of modern society contrast to unifying worldviews at the periphery of modern society (for this distinction see Shils 1961). The distinction between central and peripheral positions is a cultural one, which denotes the degree of resistance a unifying view – and the intentions of changing society - would encounter in society; it signifies a high vs. a low acceptance of unifying semantics in society across the spectrum of differentiated social systems. Rationalism – the concept of applying cause-effect-types of explaining events in the world - is a unifying concept of central segments of modern society, which finds comparatively easy acceptance in economy, politics, law or sports due to a range of technologies, which embody the principles of rationalism. (Think of Max Weber's theory of rationalism as leitmotif of modernization in society which cuts across the diverse "value spheres" as he called the diverse social contexts). Central segments of society have also developed a high acceptance of the ambiguity, which is involved in unifying concepts: tolerance for breakdowns of rationalism, which become probable under conditions of the diverse modes of operation and the diverse meanings of rationalism in the respective social

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[7] This world-view has gained strong support even in academics, as the spread of Rational-Choice theory indicates. Much of so-called postmodernist thinking targets the hidden implications and excluded ambiguities of unifying interpretations and thus uncovers the social efforts behind the construction of unity without often giving much thought to the question of why there is difference rather than unity.

systems. Thus, unifying semantics in the center enjoy far reaching acceptance and exert relatively little exclusionary power to those who disagree; they allow at the same time for paradoxes and contradictions, that is for acknowledging breakdowns of rationalism which become starting points for critiques of this kind of unifying world views (see the cultural critiques of modern "instrumental" views of social relations in the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, Habermas).

Peripheral segments in society are characterized by the experience that their unifying semantic meets much resistance. Political Islam in "modernizing" countries like Turkey or Egypt is stiffly resisted by the secular elites. These modernizing regimes tend to exclude Islamist groups from political representation for reasons of keeping religion and politics apart. Often these regimes are politically rigid and resistant to democratic government, as the example of Algeria in the nineties shows.

Center and periphery unifying semantics can exist in one country at the same time, as the co-presence of fundamentalist movements and professional elites in the US demonstrates.

In a world, which exhibits a plurality of values principles and in which no institution has evolved, which could establish a hierarchy of values only religion can offer absolute values. Other sources of quasi-absolute values such as Marxism, which have also been used as justification of terrorism (Red Army Faction in Germany or Red Brigades in Italy) are much less well suited as a basis for fundamentalism because of their close association with scientific reasoning and its intimate relationship to doubt and revision.

I have argued that the thrust of unifying world-views depends on how the experience of difference (in social systems, social values and life-styles) is negotiated against the drive for unity as a medium of sense-making. Unifying world-views with a high regard for the diversity of incarnations of unifying semantics (depending on the social context in which they are used) and for the other side of unity (difference) could be called post-modern

(example: rationalism). Unifying world-views which experience high resistance and which articulate little tolerance for alternatives (difference) would represent the other end of the spectrum (fundamentalism). Unifying semantics, which are posited in view of other competing unifying world-views might be called modernizing unifying semantics (example: Kemalism, Nasser's Pan-Arabism in Egypt). Inward-oriented unifying semantics with little regard for other competing semantics might be labeled traditional (example: Sufi religion).

Unifying Semantic

Other-referential	self-referential	
		Low
Post-Modern	**Traditional**	
(rationalism)	(Sufi-religion)	
- semantic competition	-marginalization	Communicative resistance
Modernizing	**Fundamentalist**	
Kemalism)	(polit. Islam)	
- state repression	- terrorism	High

4. From fundamentalism to fundamentalist terrorism

The fundamentalist unifying world-view targets the institutional separation of politics and religion in modern society. Religion is a particular virulent issue in those states, which are in the process of establishing and maintaining a secular territorial nation state vis-a-vis strong mass religiosity and vital lobbyism of religious elites struggling for a decisive role of religion in politics. The major "Western" state with a widespread popular adherence to the Christian religion is the US (Wuthnow 1998). The Islam is the prevalent religion in a variety of states, which – different from the US - are on a path of "modernization" such as Iran, Turkey, Algeria or Egypt. In the following considerations, I will concentrate on Islam and Islamic fundamentalist terrorism; the North American variant of fundamentalist terrorism is clearly similar to Islamic fundamentalism in its unifying semantic (Juergensmeyer 2001). Political Islam attacks two issues of these regimes: the territorial basis of nation-statehood which undercuts the universal supranational idea of religious community; second, the rigidity of these modernization regimes in keeping religion out of politics, which deprives religious elites from access to power and privileges (see the laicism of Turkish Kemalism (Lewis 1968) or Egyptian Pan-Arabism (Esposito 1999: 65-73). These modernizing states have dealt with the threat of political Islam in different ways: some declare themselves to be Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia, applying Islamic law and granting the clergy (ulama) political privileges in advising the government's policies. The elites of other states such as Egypt under Anwar Sadat, Lybia under Muammar Quaddafi, Pakistan under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia ul-Haq adopted some of the semantics of political Islam to gain popular support. Other states such as Turkey have pursued a very rigid secular strategy of state building (Esposito 1999: 74-127).

The pursuit of nation-state building in these countries has prompted the critique of the established religious authorities as well as of Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Liberation Organization, which attack the often populist use of Islamic semantics for secular purposes. At the same time Islamic organizations and movements appeal to the masses by referring to a reading of the Quran which emphasizes a classless society and promises a future redemption for the disinherited. Ali Shariati and the Ayatollah Khomeini stood for this reinterpretation of the Quran in pre-revolutionary

Iran of the 1970s, confronting an increasingly repressive secular regime of Reza Shah Pahlavi whose appeal to Islamic religion was considered mere window dressing (Esposito 1999: 110-3). In those instances in which an Islamic revolution is successful, terrorism is no longer an issue of opposition movements and organizations.

But when neither revolution nor reform, appear possible terrorism seems to be an option of last resort. The fundamentalist emphasis on a sharp difference between political and religious semantics contributes to a dogmatic reinterpreation of the old scripts (the Quran, the Bible) and furthers Manichaean visions of the world, a belief in a cosmic plot (Douglas 1973) against the adherents of the "true religion". Such a view provides the basis for the idea of a "holy war" which must be waged against the forces of evil (see i.e. Hoffman 1998: 94-5). When differences in worldview are perceived as fundamental and mutually exclusive a conflict can be interpreted as cosmic: cosmic war is what fundamentalism sees itself engaged in. Cosmic wars are wars between order and chaos, good and evil, truth and falsehood (Juergensmeyer 2001: 169); in such a war violence is justified. Juergensmeyer points at three conditions under which religion is used as a justification of violence: when the struggle is exerted in defense of basic identity, when losing the struggle becomes unthinkable, and when the struggle cannot possibly be won (Juergensmeyer 2001: 161-2). The religious underpinning of violence makes terrorist politics uncompromising: "The absolutism of cosmic war makes compromise unlikely" (Juergensmeyer 2001: 154).

What turns adherents to political Islam into terrorists is neither poverty or deprivation nor alienation (the rejection of Western life-styles, the culture of individualism or sexual liberty – although all these motives may play a role in terrorists' accounts of making sense of their decisions, see Juergensmeyer 2001), but the belief in the foreclosing of any other option, of the need to defend against a war which has been imposed by an overwhelmingly powerful enemy. There are no typical terrorist personality structures[8]; terrorists are made by the organizations which would-be terrorists join.

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[8] Which reduces the validity of „profiling" terrorists, at least if it is meant to contribute to prenventive measures. Profiling is a reconstructive method of identifying personality traits of terrorists, which only works if one has already acquired empirical knowledge about terrorist behavior. One relevant indicator of

Violence is an answer to the experience of powerlessness to the fact that opposition to functional differentiation (in this case: between politics and religion) is treated as opposition against Western values. Violence is the expression of protest where no other forms of expression (such as reform) allow marking a difference to the opponent or enemy.

The ultimate expression of terrorism is the assault on symbols of the enemy's power: it is the vacuous attack, void of any strategic significance. The assault on the Twin Towers has primarily symbolic character; it shall demonstrate "the vulnerability of governmental power" (Juergensmeyer 2001: 132). Because of the uncompromising character of terrorism the possible death of innocent victims is not an issue. The sharp division between the holy mission and the evil to be fought excludes any recognition of the idea that there can be innocence on the part of the enemy.

Why is the US a target of fundamentalist terrorism? "According to a RAND Chronicle of International Terrorism, since 1968 the United States each year has headed the list of countries whose citizens and property were most frequently attacked" (Juergensmeyer 2001: 178). Regarding its homegrown fundamentalist terrorism the answer is clear: in the eyes of the terrorists, the US government has declared war on the true believers and has engaged them in a cosmic war. In the case of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, the US, ironically, represent the ultimate form of godless rule. The US is portrayed as the main force behind the spread of modern secular rule and as the major supporter of the "apostate" rulers in the modernizing Islamic countries. In the eyes of fundamentalist terrorists who wage a cosmic war, America as the leading military, cultural and economic power with vast influence in politics and economies of Islamic countries has become "Satan". The reasoning of fundamentalist terrorism is based on a condensed unifying worldview which according to Juergensmeyer has four components: the idea that the

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terrorist behavior in the German profiling technique used by the BKA's (Bundeskriminalamt, Federal Crime Agency) technique of "Rasterfahndung"("drag net" intelligence gathering) to combat terrorist groups like the RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion, Red Army Faction) was that terrorists used to pay rent for their temporary hide-outs in advance and in cash – which is a somewhat unusual pattern.

world is going awry, that ordinary options such as reform are impossible, that the enemy is the Satan and has to be fought in a cosmic war and finally, "the performance of acts that display symbolically the depth of the struggle and the power that those in cultures of violence feel they possess" (Juergensmeyer 2001: 185).

5. Conclusion: the modernity of terrorism

Fighting terrorism by military means to counter rogue states which provide terrorists with safe havens or by police means to counter terrorist organizations and their members is certainly the "gut reaction" of states whose prime task is to provide security for the constituency within the territorial realm. One should note, however, that terrorism is as much a feature of the modernity of modern society as are markets and democracy. This means that fighting terrorism by military and police means might successfully weaken terrorists and their organization, but not necessary fundamentalism. As Hassan II, the King of Morocco correctly observed: "… if fundamentalism has to be engaged in battle, it would not be done with tanks. Fundamentalists don't have armored divisions, they have no Scud missiles, and not an atomic weapon" (Interview in International Herald Tribune, March 14, 1995, quotation taken from Tibi 1998: 4). The very character of modern society as a plurality of social systems each promoting different sets of values and worldviews invites permanently attempts at finding unifying views of society. The separation of politics and religion can become an issue of demanding a unity between both to control the contingency of outcomes in a society operating on the basis of procedures rather than values.

The Manichaean world-view, which goes along with any form of fundamentalist politics knows only sharp differences between friend and foe, us and them, the powerless periphery and the overwhelming center. This view lends itself to uncompromising attitudes.[9] It is, therefore, critical, not to counter the terrorist Manichaeanism by an

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[9] It is perhaps worth remembering that the Christian religion during its long history of "Political Christianity" proclaimed to possess absolute truth and to treat its godless opponents with all necessary rigor. Aurelius Augustinus (354-430) stated this quite clearly: "There is unjust persecution: the persecution

equivalent view on the side of the state. Baudrillard reminds us of the inherent danger of Manichaeanism: "We believe naively that the progress of Good, its advances in all fields (the sciences, technology, democracy, human rights), corresponds to a defeat of Evil. No one seems to have understood that Good and Evil advance together, as part of the same movement. .. In metaphysical terms, Evil is regarded as an accidental mishap, but this axiom, from which all the Manichaean forms of the struggle of Good against Evil derive, is illusory" (Baudrillard 2002: 13).

Politics, which sees itself as a force promoting absolute values (be they freedom or God's law) will contribute to the continuation of fundamentalist terrorism because it confirms the belief of terrorists that they are engaged in a holy war about absolute values and truths. The acknowledgement of the mere procedural character of democracy and law would help put the conflict between terrorists and modern or modernizing states into perspective. But it would not support the illusion that terrorism can be eliminated because the lack of integrative beliefs and values, which is the mark of modern society, will always remain a fertile ground for persons and organizations searching for absolute truths and values. And religion is, as Juegensmeyer has demonstrated convincingly, the most potent source for absolutist ideas, beliefs and values, because "the religious imagination … always has had the propensity to absolutize and to project images of cosmic war" (Juergensmeyer 2001: 242).

Similarly, installing secular "democracies" in defeated rogue states such as Afghanistan or Iraq might replace governments, which have provided safe havens for terrorists, but it might also reinvigorate or create fundamentalism and possibly fundamentalist terrorism because secular statehood is what their protest is primarily about. Military intervention is obviously no longer a viable and prudent option in such a constellation.

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of Christ's Church by the godless; and there is just persecution, the persecution of the godless by Christ's church… The church persecutes based on love, the godless based on cruelty" (quoted in Reinhard 1999: 275).

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