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Interpreting 9/11: Religious or Political Event?

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by

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Dedication

To my mother and father, that had the greatest hand in making me who I am, for their endless love, support, and encouragement throughout my whole life.

To those who lost their lives and the heroes who risked their lives to help people in the tragic events of 9/11.

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Abstract

Terrorism or violence can be triggered by a variety of circumstances, including the religious, cultural, political, or economic conditions of the social environment, as well as the perpetrator's personal characteristics. However, studies conducted in the aftermath of 9/11 have largely described the attacks as religious events, arguing that religion inherently causes violence or that religion is the main motivation for violence. The primary argument for the approach adopted by such studies is that secular institutions are inclined to be less violent than religious ones. A second approach, on the other hand, fundamentally opposes the arguments that led to describing the 9/11 attacks as religious events. Research based on this approach does not exclude the role of religious motivations in the attacks but emphasizes that political and economic purposes were much more dominant. The purpose of this study, then, is to analyze the two approaches mentioned above as well as the arguments of David Rapoport and Mark Juergensmeyer, who classified the 9/11 attacks as religious events, and William Cavanaugh and Bruce Hoffman, who classified the attacks as political events. On the one hand, Rapoport considers 9/11 as a religiously motivated violence act carried out in line with the religious objectives of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, and Juergensmeyer emphasizes that religion is very important for such actions because it gives terrorists moral justification for killing. On the other hand, Cavanaugh argues that it is not only religion that causes violence and that religious and secular violence intersect at some points, and Hoffman, in parallel with Cavanaugh, argues that economics and politics can cause violence in addition to religion.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Religiously oriented violent acts are generally accepted as acts of terrorism, which are considered in the category of collective violence. At this point, of course, disputes regarding what should be interpreted as the term "terrorism" come to the fore. In this sense, according to Carriere et al. (2018), terrorism is politically motivated violence aimed at instilling a sense of terror and despair in a community in order to influence decision-making and change behavior. Schmid (2013) argues that terrorism is a way of struggle in which random or symbolic victims are instrumental targets of violence. Rurherford et al. (2007) highlight that terrorism is a concept that includes the use of violence against states and civilians to achieve political, economic, religious, or ideological goals by creating fear. Also, a UN panel defines terrorism as any action aimed at causing death or bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants in order to intimidate a community or force a government to do or not to do something. Consequently, it can be said that terrorism, in general, includes acts of violence based on fear that also have political, economic, or religious goals.

When it comes to the relationship between religion and violence, Munson (2005) points out that religion both strengthens links of unity among devotees of the same god and can be a source of enmity toward people who worship other gods or the same god differently. In other words, on the one hand, religious boundaries distinguish believers who are pure and virtuous from others who are wicked. On the other hand, worshipping preferences may be a justification for the killing of others. However, although the intolerant rules about others found in many scriptures often have fatal consequences, it cannot be assumed that the violent behavior of

believers is always shaped by these scriptures. More clearly, some conflicts that are supposed to be motivated by the scriptures may have secular reasons. In this context, just as the power of scriptures to cause hatred and violence should not be overlooked, all conflicts that may have a religious dimension should not be considered as the result of scriptures alone.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States of America in 2001 are one of the main instruments that fueled the discussions regarding religion and terrorism on the basis of Islam. The 9/11 attacks, which were carried out by the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization targeting the World Trade Center and Pentagon with four hijacked aircraft, were the most lethal terrorist actions in history and resulted in more than 3,000 deaths and over 6,000 injuries, as well as significant changes in anti-terror strategies and operations (FBI, n.d.). According to Lewis (2003), there is no doubt that the establishment of al-Qaeda and the successive declarations of war by Osama bin Laden mark the beginning of a new and ominous period in both the history of Islam and terrorism. The 9/11 attacks, which include the main elements of terrorism, can be regarded as the biggest terrorist attack in terms of their nature and impact because the attacks have produced political, economic, and psychological destruction given the chosen targets (Özturk, 2015). Since the attacks were carried out by members of the al-Qaeda terrorist organization, established with Islamic references, the relationship between religion and violence has come to the fore again. Accordingly, the discussions are primarily divided into two categories: "The attacks were motivated by religion" and "the attacks were driven by secular interests". In this vein, some argue that there is no doubt that the 9/11 attacks were a religiously motivated event, as they were carried out by the terrorist organization al-Qaeda. However, others argue that the attacks were a secularly motivated political event, as the targeted places are at the heart of the country's economy and security.

1.1. Problem Statement

The quest to comprehend the motivations behind the 9/11 attacks and to classify this act has largely highlighted two approaches. The first approach argues that the attacks were religiously motivated violence because they took place after al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden called for war against the United States (Sullivan, 2001). Accordingly, the fact that the attacks are carried out by terrorist organizations connected to Islam requires Islam and Muslims to be held accountable. The second approach argues that the attacks were more of a secular act of political and economic violence because they targeted the World Trade Center in New York, which is considered the symbol of capitalism (Akiner, 2004). At this point, the response to the following question becomes important: Are a religious-motivated terrorist organization and religious arguments sufficient for the 9/11 attacks to be considered a religiously motivated violent act? A satisfactory response depends on the answer to a second question: What are the differences between religious violence and secular violence? Definitely, the scientific work done in academia, especially after the 9/11 attacks, provided valuable data regarding the categorization of religious and secular violence. However, there is a lack of clarity on this issue, which makes it difficult to determine what kind of violence the 9/11 attacks were. So, determining the arguments promoting religious and secular violence is a core requirement for understanding the motivations behind the 9/11 attacks and what kind of violence was effective in the attacks.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the two dominant approaches to the 9/11, which regard it as a religious and political event, as well as their main arguments, and to analyze how commentators classify the 9/11 as religious or political violence. It is expected that this study

will contribute to a better understanding of the main arguments of both approaches and the perspectives of their leading advocates.

1.3. Research Questions

To meet the purpose of the study, the underlying inquiry was guided by the following research questions:

1. How have scholars classified 9/11 attacks as either religion or political event?
2. What are main arguments of the approach that considers 9/11 attacks as religious event?
3. What are main arguments of the approach that considers 9/11 attacks as secular or political event?

1.4. Limitations

One limitation of this study concerns the classification of violence. Even though there were a variety of ways to classify violence, including religious violence, political violence, religio-political violence, and socio-political violence, this study focused exclusively on the approaches of religious violence and political violence. A second limitation is related to Western and non-Western perspectives. This study discussed only the viewpoints of Western scholars on the 9/11 attacks. And lastly, the study is limited to four scholars who adopt the approaches of religious violence and political violence.

1.5. Literature Review

In the social sciences, conceptualizing a phenomenon can be challenging as the meaning of a concept varies depending on geography, time, and other variables. Without a thorough understanding of the concepts to be used, research may not produce the desired results. As such, the researcher should have a thorough understanding of the terms and concepts utilized in the research to avoid future disagreements on their interpretation and measurement (Sequeira, 2014).

It is commonly acknowledged that conceptualizing religion, terror, terrorism, and violence, the basic concepts of this study, is challenging. Nevertheless, in this section, efforts have been made to present objective definitions of these concepts as much as possible, based on past research.

1.5.1. Religion

Numerous scholars who have conducted research on religion have attempted to define the concept of religion. However, these definitions differ from one another, and there has been no agreement on a definition of religion so far. The differences between the definitions of religion are mainly due to the intricacies of the phenomenon of religion and subjective perspectives of those who define religion (Thouless, 1971). In addition, one of the causes of disputes over definitions is the issue of whether the term "religion" should necessarily include a reference to a supernatural or at least superhuman being(s) (Olson, 2011).

According to Olson (2011), religion definitions are classified into five broad categories: experiential, substantive, functionalist, family resemblance, and postmodern. Accordingly, the experiential definition aims to identify the main religious experience and build a theory around it. The substantive definition aims to establish a foundational premise, such as a belief in spiritual entities. A functionalist perspective seeks to understand how religion functions within a society, while a family resemblance perspective seeks out overlapping characteristics. The postmodern approach emphasizes religion's unstable and confusing character.

Attempts to define religion invariably reflect the authors' theoretical orientations (Segal, 2006). In this respect, Edward Burnett Tylor's "belief in spiritual beings" was an early and significant effort at definition. Religion, according to Émile Durkheim, is the embodiment of society's greatest purposes and ideals. Gavin Flood identifies religions as value-laden narratives

and behaviors that connect individuals to their objectivities, to one another, and to non-empirical claims and entities, without claiming universal applicability. According to Malinowski, religion developed as a reaction to mental distress. When technical knowledge is insufficient to accomplish their goals, human beings turn to magic and religion for help and as a form of catharsis.

According to Hinnells (2007), religious adherents may define religion as something that entails belief in aspects such as the one true god and the afterlife since because most of definitions exclude characteristics of particular world religions that question the value of compulsory beliefs and practices that are widely acknowledged as religions in a variety of societies. Thus, although some religions advocate blind faith in a particular set of teachings, others view a healthy skepticism toward religion as a necessary component of being truly religious. In this context, the Christian theologian Paul Tillich defines religion as "to be grasped by an ultimate concern". For a Christian, this ultimate concern may be salvation and eternal proximity to God, whereas for a Buddhist, it may be obtaining nirvana and being free of all illusions. Similarly, Muslim philosophers define religion from an Islamic perspective. For example, religion, according to Al-Farabi, is one of the fundamental pillars required for society to achieve happiness (Turksever and Cicek, 2018). Ibn Rushd describes religion as divine knowledge that appeals to all individuals, conveys the truth in a form that everyone can understand, and seeks to spread this truth throughout all societies (Sekman, 2018). According to al-Ghazali, religion is a spiritual experience that can only be felt and experienced between individuals and God spiritually (Topuz, 2011).

1.5.2. Terror and Terrorism

Discussions on the concepts of terror and terrorism mostly focus on the similarities and differences between the two concepts.

"Terrorism" originated from the term "terror," etymologically (Rapin, 2009). According to Vasilenko (2004), the word "terror" means "fear" or "dread" in Latin, while it is defined as fear inspired by cruel and violent acts in contemporary etymology. For example, in Russian, it refers to physical violence used against a political opponent in order to destroy it. However, the term "terrorism" in its contemporary usage was coined relatively recently and spread during the French Revolution in 1791–94 with an initial positive sense. Both terms are mostly instances of premeditated, intentional violence, meticulously calculated to elicit the maximum response and involvement from the audience (Hacker, 1980). It is agreed that the concepts of terror and terrorism, which are very similar, have a few small differences. Accordingly, while some scholars use the terms 'terror' and 'terrorism' synonymously, others distinguish them by stating that 'terror' refers to the use of terrorist methods "from above or by political power", whereas 'terrorism' refers to politically motivated violence "from below." (Micewski, 2005). In this sense, terror may be described as "the use of intimidation by the powerful." However, terrorism can be characterized as "the counterfeiting and implementation of terror tactics by the powerless.". In addition, Hacker (1980) highlights that terror and terrorism are twin concepts that both seek to intimidate, dominate, and rule via fear. Accordingly, terror is the endeavor of the powerful, including tyrants, governments, and bosses, to exert authority through intimidation. Terrorism, on the other hand, is the act of insurgents, revolutionaries, and demonstrators fueling and spreading fear.

1.5.3. Violence

Due to the multidimensionality of the concept of violence and the multitude of variables, it can be said that there is a lack of a universally agreed upon definition.

Hamby (2017) notes that a clear definition of violence should contain the terms "intentional," "unwanted," "nonessential," and "harmful," which are necessary to include all acts of violence and exclude non-violence. To the World Health Organization (2002), violence is:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

Accordingly, the definition, which reveals a very broad framework for violence, encompasses a wide variety of actions, including "interpersonal violence", "suicide", "armed conflict", "threat and intimidation", "death and injury", "psychological harm" and "deprivation and maldevelopment ". According to APA, in general, violence means the physical manifestation of hatred and wrath with the purpose to hurt or damage persons or property. In this sense, it can be labeled as an expression or extreme form of aggression, such as assault, rape or murder (APA, n.d.). Violence, according to Jackman (2001), comprises a variety of actions that causes hurt, threatens, or injures whether written or spoken. Bäck (2004) argues that violence is an act of intentional strength since only humans or animals are capable of goal-oriented conduct. DeWall et al. (2011) argue that any hostile action aiming at causing extreme physical harm, such as injury or death, is a kind of violence (Hamby, 2017). John Dewey highlighted that violence occurs when force is used incorrectly or is destructive and harmful (Bufacchi, 2005). In other words, he emphasized that coercion must be intentional or deliberate as well as destructive, not

asserting that power and violence are identical. Manganyi & du Toit, (1990) define violence by referring the combination of literal or physical violence, personal action, and violation. Accordingly, violence is the purposeful application of excessive force against X, which breaches X's worth or integrity.

1.5.4. Religious Violence

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and subsequent events piqued the interest of Western scholars in the religious violence (Mayer, 2020). According to the broad view widespread in contemporary discourse, religious groups are more prone to violence than secular groups (Esmail, 2007)**.** In this sense, Wentz argued that the line between secular and religious is increasingly blurred, and religion has an inclination toward absolutism, which is the source of violence (Medieval Christianity, n.d.). Kimball (2002) highlights five warning signs of religious corruption including “absolute truth claims”, “blind obedience”, “establishing the ideal time”, “the end justifies any means”, and “declaring holy war” in his post-9/11 book "When Religion Becomes Evil.". Accordingly, the ultimate sign of a religion's deterioration is the declaration of holy war, and so the acts of Islamic-motivated terrorist organizations following 9/11 should be regarded on this basis. According to Avalos, violence becomes a means of resolving disputes since religious claims cannot be verified or judged objectively. As a result, all religions have the capacity to incite violence (Npr, n.d.). Martin Marty, who accuses religion of being divisive, argues that a tendency regarding a group's faith is chosen by God leads to an environment conducive to violence (Cavanaugh, 2006). According to Girard's mimetic theory, religious discourse and ritual are fundamentally violent. Religious practices, in this vein, serve to sublimate, manage, and discharge human violence through organized rituals (Murphy, 2015; Troy, 2013). Bhikhu Parekh, a political theorist, suggests that religion can elicit irrational and

powerful emotions, destabilize societies, and cause political unrest (Cavanaugh, 2016). Oliver Roy disagrees with the argument that religious violence is inherent in religion and highlights that a lack of proper understanding of religious tradition is one of contributing factors to religious violence. According to Pauletta Otis, on the one hand, the failure of other ideologies and institutions and the effectiveness of religion in providing the basis for social justice and social cohesion are the main causes of religious violence. On the other hand, these causes may also contribute to the potential of religion to promote peace (Troy, 2013).

1.5.5. Political Violence

A new approach emerged that objected to the view that "religion is the main cause of violence" which became dominant particularly after the 9/11 attacks. Accordingly, assertions regarding religion being the sole or most influential factor generating violence are contentious, particularly in terms of objectivity.

Jessica Stern, a terrorism expert, emphasizes that violence is rarely motivated solely by religious motives, but it can also be temporal, spiritual, or ideological (Juergensmeyer et al., 2013). Anthony Richards makes a point of emphasizing the political nature of the violence (Özbudak, 2015). Jocelyne Cesari emphasizes that state actions toward religions are actually strongly associated with specific types of politicization of religion launched by "secular" state actors (Cesari, 2015). According to John L. Esposito, violence committed in the name of Islam by a variety of militant Muslim movements during the last few decades is the result of historical and political reasons, not only religion (Esposito, 2016). M. Cherif Bassiouni argues that violence is not solely the result of religion (Bassiouni, 2015). Accordingly, certain groups in the Muslim world have experienced violence because of socio-economic and political factors such as poverty, ignorance, frustration, resentment, and political persecution in addition to religious

causes. Fred Halliday argues that Al-Qaeda's acts were motivated by nationalist and anti-imperialist motives, and religion is employed to convey these long-standing political motivations (Fitzgerald, 2007). In other words, it is not religion that dictates political ways; rather, it is modern political groups that utilize religion. In addition, Lincoln (2006) argues that the actors of the French, British, and American revolutions accorded sanctity to secular concepts like human rights and the social contract as well as religious concepts.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

This chapter will focus on origin, definition, causes, and typologies of terrorism because to accurately comprehend and analyze 9/11 terrorist act, it is vital to first understand the key terms regarding terrorism.

2.1. Origin of Terrorism

The origin of terrorism and the development of the concept of terror are inextricably linked. In this sense, according to McKelvie (2021) the term terror, which derives from the Latin word for "scare" and refers to the emotion that creates overwhelming fear, was coined in 105 BC to characterize a warring tribe's war preparation time and was later used to describe Maximilien Robespierre's deadly French Revolution period. Accordingly, during the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, commonly known as the terror, was a time of state-sanctioned violence and mass executions. In the period 1793-1794, the revolutionary government of France ordered the arrest and execution of thousands of people. More specifically, Maximilien Robespierre, a French statesman, spearheaded the terror fueled in part by the rivalry between two major political parties, the Jacobins and Girondins. As a result, the Girondins were executed by using the guillotine and fear was instilled into the society. Similarly, Ayhan (2015) argues that terrorism in the modern sense was formed as a result of the French Revolution of 1789. Because the terrorism of the French Revolution has at least two characteristics of contemporary terrorism. To begin, the terror regime was planned, purposeful, and methodical. Second, as is the case with contemporary terrorism, the goal and rationale for terrorism was replacement an undemocratic

and corrupt system with a "new and better society". In addition, one of the authors of the Times used the term "terror" to describe Robespierre's actions, and the term was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 1798 (Crime Museum, n.d.).

In sum, although the meaning of terror dates to prehistoric times, terrorism has been a concept used since the late 18th century to describe acts of violence used by political power in government, aimed at instilling fear in order to make the people submissive. The individual, group, or administration that wants to instill fear harms the things that the target audience physically and symbolically attributes power to, and it is intended to be perceived by the target audience as a warning signal for possible attacks (Lewis, n.d.).

2.2. Definition of Terrorism

Considering a variety of definitions of terrorism will contribute to creating a general conceptual framework for terrorism. The literature indicates that there is no consensus over the definition of terrorism since the fact that any country or group's purposeful thought is effective in defining the concept (Cavanaugh, 2009). For example, terrorism, according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, is the use of violent action to attain political objectives or to compel a government to act (Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, n.d.). Aven and Guikema (2015) argue that terrorism is an act or threat of violence intended to incite fear to accomplish a declared or implicit ideological, political, or religious objective. In addition, according to Bruce Hoffman, terrorism is primarily the use (or threat of use) of violence to elicit psychological effects from a targeted audience. So, inevitably, the terrorists' objective is to sow widespread fear and intimidation. (Hoffman, 2001). Another source defines terrorism as the deliberate indiscriminate killing of defenseless and non-combatants in order to instill fear of mortal danger in a civilian population as a strategy designed to further political ends

(Meisels, 2009). Similar to academia, there is no consensus on the definition among global and national institutions. Accordingly, while a number of national and regional definitions exist, there is no global legal definition of terrorism that has reached academic consensus or been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (Schmid, 2012). For example, the UN defines terrorism as criminal acts designed or calculated to instill fear in the public, a group of people, or specific individuals for political goals (Perera, n.d.). According to the U.S. Department of State (n.d.), the term "terrorism" refers to any action that results in the death, injury, or destruction in human life. In this sense, it intends to frighten or force civilians and to influence a government's policies or conduct through intimidation, coercion, mass destruction, or assassination, and so forth. Department of Defense argues that terrorism is the intended use of violence or the threat of violence to force governments or societies in the pursuit of generally political, religious, or ideological purposes (Schmid, 2004). The most recent themes to come to the fore regarding concept of terrorism are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Themes of Terrorism

1	Terrorism is a term that refers to both the anticipated efficiency of a particular form of fear-generating, coercive political violence and the conspiratorial practice of deliberate and direct violent action without a moral or legal justification.
2	As a strategy, terrorism is used in contexts of illegal state repression, propagandistic agitation by non-state parties in peace times or outside conflict zones, and as an illegal tool of irregular warfare employed by state and non-state groups.
3	Terrorist actors employ single-phase acts of deadly violence such as armed assaults and bombing, dual-phased life-threatening attempts like abduction, and multi-phased number of actions such as killing and brutality.

Table 1 (Continued)

4	The public/-ized victimization of terrorism initiates threat-based communication processes in which conditional demands are put on institutions, communities, groups or individuals thereof, and in which specific constituencies are enlisted for support.
5	At the heart of terrorism is the spread of terror among people who identify with or have parallels with the direct victims caused by some of the terrorist act's modalities.
6	The primary direct victims of terrorist attacks are typically not armed forces but civilians or other defenseless and innocent individuals who have no direct responsibility for the war that spawned terrorist activities.
7	The direct victims serve as message generators to reach various audiences and conflict parties that identify either with the victims' plight or the terrorists' professed cause, rather than the ultimate target of a terrorist act.
8	Broad international networks, individuals, small organizations, and government agencies can all be sources of terrorist violence.
9	Terrorist violence has some characteristics in common with organized and war crimes but is essentially political in nature.
10	Acts of terrorism are intended to frighten, destabilize, intimidate, agitate, threaten, demoralize, or enrage a target population with the goal of gaining a favorable power through the resultant insecurity.
11	Terrorism is motivated by a variety of factors, including exacting personal or vicarious revenge, seeking redress for alleged grievances, revolution, national liberation, and collective punishment, as well as a variety of political, national, social, religious, or ideological causes.
12	Terrorist acts are frequently part of a larger strategy of violence that, due to the serial nature of the assaults and the possibility of more attacks, can create a widespread climate of fear that enables terrorists to exert control over the political process

Note. Adapted from Schmid (2012).

Recent studies have revealed a lack of clarity and consistency over the definition of terrorism. In this sense, some scholars argue that there are over a hundred contemporary definitions of terrorism that lead to a lack of clarity on this issue, while some others argue that the essence of terrorism cannot be identified due to numerous definitions. As a result, although there are numerous definitions of terrorism, there is a lack of a globally acknowledged academic and legal definition. One of the main reasons for this is that any

organization or group that defines terrorism operates in accordance with its own ideological, political, and national interests (Meisels, 2009). The fact that governments do not prefer certain definitions with political motivations contributes to the unclarity of the term of terrorism. In this regard, it is suggested that for an objective definition, the term should be defined exclusively by a mediator and an impartial administration and should be studied similarly to other international relations concepts (Slater et al., 1988). Schmid (2013) points out that a number of scholars have considered the efforts regarding the definition of terrorism as an endless tunnel. Accordingly, Omar Malik, Brian Jenkins, Kiran Krishan, Walter Laqueur, and J. Bowyer Bell have declared their positions as “Enough to the definition of terrorism”, "The Bermuda Triangle of terrorism", "The one chasing a delusion and nothing but a pointless polemic exercise", “Any definition of terrorism that goes beyond stating the systematic use of murder, injury and destruction, or the threats of such acts to achieve political ends, is bound to spark endless debate.”, “Tell me what you think about terrorism and I'll tell you who you are”, respectively. Although the statements of these scholars may seem a bit exaggerated at first glance, Schmid (2013) produced similar consequences. Accordingly, a survey of 91 participants revealed that the concept of terrorism is difficult to define. In addition, the study, which is analyzed 109 definitions of terrorism analyzed, determined that numerous concepts such as violence, force, political, fear, terror, threat, victim, purposive, planned, intimidation, coercion, and criminal were used with different frequencies. Similarly, definitions of terrorism by academics, countries, and international organizations emphasize a range of terms such as “Terror (population)” , “Threat”, “Political character” , “Civilians”, “Illegal, criminal”, and “Demonstrative use”, “Coercion (government)”, and “Tactic, strategy”.

In conclusion, a consensus on the definition of terrorism seems unlikely to be reached because different countries, structures, communities, and traditions deal with the concept based on different priorities, although there is a relative consensus that terrorism aims to influence individuals, societies, and governments through fear, threat, violence, and intimidation, etc.

2.3. Causes of Terrorism

Ethnic, religious, and political oppression, as well as humane, social, and economic discriminations, might be one of the causes of terrorist attacks that harm mankind. In other words, sometimes acts of violence can be considered a way to change undesirable conditions such as ethnic separation, resistance to colonial rule, internal political factors, support for external factors, and ideological beliefs (Azar, 2003). In general, politics, religion, humiliation, poverty, geographical characteristics, demographics, widely accessible weapons, urbanization, biology, and societal components, the definitive success of terrorism, dictatorship, and a lack of democracy are considered major causes of terrorism (Michael, 2007).

2.3.1. Religious Motivation

According to popular belief, terrorists are frequently religious fanatics who target those who hold opposing beliefs. This point of view is supported by academic literature. Accordingly, extremist religious beliefs contribute to the motivation of terrorism (Bird et al., 2008). In addition, it is argued that terrorism, which was previously motivated by revolutionary and separatist ideologies, began to be predominantly motivated by religious fundamentalism after 9/11 (Hoffman, 1997; Wilkinson, 2011). According to Ayhan (2015), religion is critical to terrorism because it gives moral grounds for killing and imagery of cosmic conflict that enable activists to believe they are engaged in spiritual warfare. This is not to say that religion causes

terrorism; rather, it implies that religion frequently provides the symbols required to commit atrocities and even catastrophic acts of terrorism. For example, religious motivations were frequently used by well-known terrorist groups such as the Jewish Sicari (Zealots) and the Assassins of Hasan Sabbah.

2.3.2. Political and Economic Motivations

Generally speaking, political and economic hardships serve as the primary motivators of terrorism. According to Michael (2007), when certain groups' political and economic rights aren't respected, they turn to terrorism as a means of expressing their outrage. Accordingly, one of the themes that stands out in common definitions of terrorism is that terrorism is an organized system of intimidation, particularly for political reasons. In this vein, it is clear that terrorism is positioned directly against peaceful political orders. Similarly, it is widely known that individuals who experience economic deprivations are more prone to violence and terrorist acts. Newman (2006), emphasizes that as poverty density increases, the poor become more vulnerable to crime, disease, violence, and family instability. Bird et al. (2008) argue that terrorism stems from unhappiness caused by feelings of relative economic deprivation. In addition, inequality caused by economic poverty creates a breeding ground for conflict, especially within different national, religious, cultural, or ethnic groups (Newman, 2006). Moreover, many political and economic motivations, such as demographic structure, urbanization, and lack of democracy, have also found their place in the literature.

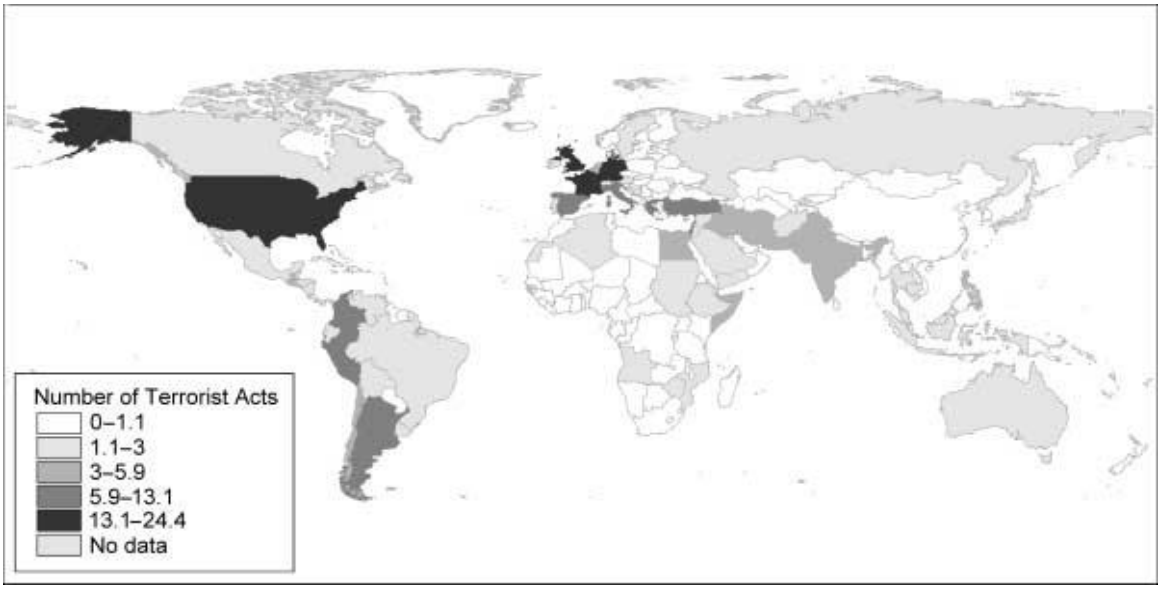
First of all, demographics, urbanization, and humiliation have the capacity to promote terrorism (Newman, 2006). Accordingly, demographics, including immigration, population growth, and changes in the religious, ethnic, and social balance of societies, may lead to the emergence of terrorist violence. In Indonesia, for instance, population changes due to

immigration cause the spread of terrorist acts. Moreover, urbanization, when combined with poverty and unemployment, has the capacity to create a dissatisfied population, thus facilitating terrorist recruiting. In this sense, migration to urban slums, which is derived from the lack of water and cropland in rural areas, provides terrorist groups with an opportunity to recruit new members. Furthermore, according to Abadie (2006), terrorism is deeply connected to violations of human rights, humiliation, and displacement. Accordingly, in general, these kinds of perceptions exist among groups that consider their ideological, cultural, or rights to be violated, and terrorist action is fueled by an insatiable feeling of injustice, hopelessness, and excessive anger.

Secondly, Bird et al. (2008) point out the role of geography on terrorism. Accordingly, terrorist attacks occur at varying frequencies in different regions of the world. For instance, on the one hand, terrorism has been virtually non-existent in Canada and New Zealand. On the other hand, it is more widespread in developed European and North American democracies except Canada, as well as in Middle Eastern countries. In addition, terrorist acts have tended to decline since the 1990s in the territories dominated by the former Soviet Union.

Figure 1

Map of the World by Terrorist Incidents



Note. Reprinted from Bird et al. (2008).

Thirdly, Ayhan (2015) emphasizes the accessibility of weapons and technology, the sheer success of terrorism, and the lack of democracy. Accordingly, terrorist groups or individuals have easy access to weapons and information about them as a result of extraordinary advancements in weapon technology and human knowledge. In particular, the progress in internet technology has made it easier for terrorists to access weapons, while making it difficult for states to control this area. In addition, terrorism's swift and result-oriented nature encourages terrorist groups to commit acts of violence in order to achieve greater results in a short period of time. Also, dictatorship or a lack of democracy limits or eliminates, particularly, the capacity of the opposition masses to criticize governments or

express themselves. In undemocratic environments, acts of violence can become a means of expression since people are unable to express their dissatisfaction in democratic ways.

Finally, biological instincts, social learning, and frustrated aggression, also, lead to terrorism (Ayhan, 2015). Accordingly, individuals predisposed to violence inherently are convinced of terrorism through social learning and their own frustrations.

2.4. Typologies of Terrorism

A typology is a grouping system that makes complexities, differences, and continuum qualities separable in order to create a comparable theory-driven classification system (Sadre-Orafai, 2020). It is also defined as "the study of types, or a system of dividing things into types (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). The primary objective of typologies is to organize, simplify, and rank data in order to enable comparison (McKinney, 1969). So, typology is a significant criterion for categorizing terrorist groups based on their characteristics and more quickly identifying their strategies.

Schmid (2013) argues that typologies provide a number of advantages to the scientific field. First, typology allows one to create a serious data pool by analyzing the components in the structure that is being defined and storing this information. This makes it a very convenient way to categorize and analyze the data obtained, especially when it comes to terrorism and political violence. Secondly, typologies contribute to the realm of policy by allowing for increasingly sophisticated explanations, particularly for new or emerging situations. Another significant advantage of typologies is that they enable the construction of a precise and conclusive framework around the phenomena, and that this data pool can assume a falsifiable and testable function when confronted with a novel and distinct occurrence to study. Fourthly, typologies encompass all the psychological, sociological, cultural, economic,

and ideological factors that contribute to the emergence of terrorism, as well as the individual and group-oriented fundamental and secondary purposes of each stakeholder that contribute to the formation of this structure. This enables the detection of organizational gaps and weaknesses. Finally, they describe the similar characteristics of the overseas areas that terrorism can affect and the conflict areas where it dominates geographically.

Vasilenko, (2004) provides an in-depth review of a variety of classifications regarding the typologies of terrorism that are discussed in the literature. Accordingly, first of all, Felix Gross, one of the leading researchers on revolutionary terrorism, has put forward a mixed typology based on the targets and forms of terrorist acts in order to facilitate the understanding of terrorism:

1. Mass terrorism is terrorism that the ruling regime forces the opposition to and is applied by the state.
2. Random terror is carried out by placing explosive devices in places frequented by large numbers of people.
3. Focused random terror mainly involves placing explosive devices in places where representatives of the opposing side may congregate.
4. Tactical terror is directed only at the government in power.

Additionally, J. Bell, from Columbia University, divides the "random terror" category into six subtypes: organizational, affiliated, functional, provocative, manipulative, and symbolic. Secondly, Cindy Combs has classified terror typologies under four subheadings based on type, tactic, target, and organizers:

Table 2

Typology of Contemporary Terrorism

Type	Organizer (Executer)	Object	Tactic
Mass Terror	Political leaders	General	Coercion
Sanctioned Terror	State-political leaders, individuals and groups	Population	Organized repression
Dynastic Murder	Individuals or groups	Head of state or rulling elite	Selective violence
Random Terror	Individuals or groups	Anyone happening to be in a given place	Bombs in public places
Focused-Random Terror	Individuals or groups	Representatives of the opposition	Bombs in public places
Revolutionary Tactical Terror	Revolutionary movements	Representatives of the government	Attacks on political leaders

Note. Adapted from Vasilenko, 2004.

Thirdly, V. Luneev introduces a new typology by combining contemporary terrorism and nationalist terrorism: terrorism for political motives, criminal terrorism, nationalist terrorism, airborne terrorism, and international terrorism. Fourthly, N. Melent'eva develops a different typology that assumes that ethnic, political, and religious minorities are the causes of these actions while accepting the existence of state terrorism: ideological terrorism (for political purposes), ethnic terrorism, religious terrorism, criminal terrorism, and individual terrorism. Similarly, Iu Avdeev, by emphasizing the ideological basis of terrorist activity, categorizes terrorism as follows: ideological terrorism, nationalist terrorism, religious terrorism, and criminal terrorism. In addition, Iu. Antonian proposes a more inclusive typology, with special reference to international terrorism: political terrorism, state terrorism, religious terrorism, selfish terrorism, criminal terrorism, nationalist terrorism, military terrorism, idealistic terrorism, and guerrilla terrorism (Vasilenko, 2004). Additionally, some

terrorism classifications were developed based on the terrorist's philosophy and objectives as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Classification of Types of Terrorism

Type of Terrorism	Aims
Political	Struggle for power
Separatist	Right to territorial secession, violation of territorial integrity of state
Nationalist	Exclusion of other nationalities and ethnic groups from all speheres of activity-pilitical, economic, cultural, and so on.
Religious	Recognition of leading role of own religion, suppresion of other religious confession
Criminal	Material profit, suppresion and elimination of commercial and other rivals for selfish purposes

Note. Adapted from Vasilenko, (2004).

Taken together, it can be concluded that the 9/11 attacks bear the traces of various typologies. Accordingly, facts such as the perpetrators' Islamic origins and the religious motivations for the 9/11 cause the attacks to be mostly classified as "religious terrorism". Secondly, in the Felix Gross's typology, the 9/11 attacks can be classified under the categories of "random terror" and "focused random terror" because they targeted places visited by a significant number of people and that symbolize a nation's economic and security values. Similarly, the attacks can be classified as "random terror" in Cindy Combs' typology, as they were carried out by the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda in the form of bombing certain places. In addition, the 9/11 can be categorized as "religious terrorism" and "ideological terrorism"

since they were caused by religious motivations and had political purposes, such as threatening economic interests and national security based on the N. Melent'eva's typology.

In conclusion, mainly, it is understood that "state repression" is accepted as a common theme in terrorism typologies and terrorist activities are classified as state, group, and individual terrorism. In addition, some studies point out that targets of terrorist groups are taken into account in the typologies of terrorism too. To draw a more general framework, criteria like the structure and nature of terrorist groups, their goals, the geographic and political boundaries of their targets, the group's motivational origins, and the methods and tools they use all play a significant role in the development of various typologies of terrorism.

Chapter 3: The 9/11 Attacks as Religious Event

In this chapter, following an overview of the concept religious violence, the approaches of David C. Rapoport and Mark Juergensmeyer on religious violence on the basis of the 9/11 attacks will be discussed.

Scholars have tried to clarify various issues, such as whether the term "religion" refers to social and private behavior and whether religion is a concept that focuses on supernatural beings. Similarly, violence, which includes various ways of thinking, including but not limited to cultural destruction, social manipulation, political oppression, and bodily harm, is a concept that is not easy to define (Juergensmeyer et al., 2013).

Due to the fact that both religion and violence concepts have controversial, ambiguous, and complicated meanings, the concept of religious violence is inevitably becoming contentious (Cavanaugh, 2004). Juergensmeyer et al. (2013) highlight that since the end of the Cold War, religious violence has erupted on practically every major continent, and many of its perpetrators are glorified by those who find religious meaning in such acts. Nevertheless, while some argue that religious violence is not truly religious and is rather a symptom of something else, many of its perpetrators believe that violence is sanctified by fundamental religious principles. Similarly, proponents of the mainstream secularization theory argue that religious motives or concerns are at the roots of repression, tensions, and conflict, and they may even result in war (Svetelj, 2018). Also, Khaleeq (2020) suggests that it is emphasized that religious fanatics believe that the use of

violence and force to eradicate evil is religiously sanctioned. Accordingly, religious violence is motivated by a variety of factors, including violent stories contained in holy scriptures and the conviction that God sanctioned the religious violence. Avalos (2005) argues that religions' proclivity to confer unique supernatural favors on themselves and others culminates in violence. In addition, religions take an exclusionary stance by attributing a unique and transcendent value to certain concepts, thereby triggering conflicts between people who believe in different values.

According to Cavanaugh (2004), religions cause violence because every religion positions itself as the only universal truth and focuses on convincing other belief groups of this truth. For example, the claim about uniqueness and ultimacy of Christianity motivate Christians to commit acts of violence against non-Christians. However, Hick underlines, that this is not a dynamic specific to Christians, but one that is inherent in all religions. In other words, religions' claims to ultimate truth and supremacy sanctioned violence, intolerance, and exploitation.

R. Scott Appleby also focuses on the issue of religion causing violence but does not agree with the claim that religion naturally causes violence. In this respect, he suggests that religion has an ambivalent aspect rather than a dangerous one, supporting the argument that faiths nourish fanaticism in both the realms of violence and peace (Lynch, 2016).

Richard Wentz points out that religion, which is frequently referenced as a source of ideas that add order and meaning to life, does not inherently contain violence by its nature. Accordingly, individuals fortify their self-image by constructing fragile absolutes and responding aggressively when others do not agree with them. In this regard, he concludes that religious violence is caused by an insistence on religious absolutism rather than religion itself (Wentz, 1995; Eriksson, 1987).

According to Charles Selengut, religions have the capacity to reveal both peace and violence, but they also have a significant role in encouraging individuals and organizations to conflicts. More specifically, all religions contain components of peace and tolerance, whereas some of their sects in practically utilize their scriptures to advocate and promote violence (County College of Morris, 2010). In this context, he concludes that religious violence is the result of a combination of internal and external factors, such as sacred scriptures, religious leaders' misdirection, individual incentives, and collective psychology.

In conclusion, although it is frequently discussed that religion has a violent side, it does not seem possible to say that there is only one general theory about religion and violence, or which connects religion and violence. In addition, although religion has the potential to promote peace or violence, scriptures or certain extremist religious interpretations make the violent tendency of religion more visible.

3.1. David C. Rapoport

The approach of David C. Rapoport's on terrorism, which was shaped by terrorist attacks in the 1970s, argues that religion plays a critical role in terror acts. His well-known articles "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions", "Terror and the Messiah: An Ancient Experience and Some Modern Parallels", and "Messianic Sanctions for Terror" have inspired the religiously motivated terrorism studies in the contemporary sense (Kaplan, 2016). Accordingly, ancient scriptures are key instruments in inciting and maintaining terrorist actions. Additionally, the articles have established decisively that terrorism, which was previously assumed to be a purely modern phenomenon, is a timeless response to existential threats without sacrificing their faith

Rapoport analyzes the relationship between religion and violence in the context of his "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism" theory. His article titled "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11", published in the wake of 9/11, brought the waves concept together. (Parker and Sitter, 2016). Accordingly, the four waves in chronological order are the anarchist wave (1878–1919), the anti-colonial wave (1920s–early 1960s), the new Left wave (mid-1960s–1990s), and the religious wave (1979–?). A wave is defined as a cycle that lasts forty years and is dynamic in nature, expanding and contracting. The end of one wave and the beginning of the next converge. In this sense, each wave has its own trademark tactics, triggering events, and weaponry, and an unavoidable steady fall that ends with the birth of the next wave, and groups associated with a particular wave adapt to the circumstances of their period and adopt the tactics of contemporary terrorist groups (Kaplan, 2016).

Table 4

Characteristics of the Four Waves of Terrorism

Wave	Catalyst	Goals	Targets	Tactics	Reasons for Decline
Anarchist 1878–1919	Slow political reform, declining legitimacies of monarchies	Revolution, eliminate government oppression	Heads of state	Assassinations using dynamite, bank robberies	Aggressive state opposition, beginning of WW1
Anti-Colonial / Nationalist 1920s - early 1960s	Versailles Peace Treaty, increased desire for self-determination	Eliminate colonial rule, create new states	Police and military	Guerilla style hit and run attacks	Achieved goals, colonial rulers withdrew from territories
New Left Mid-1960s–1990s	Vietnam War, Cold War tensions	Eliminate the capitalist system	Governments, increased focus on U.S.	Hijackings, kidnappings, assassinations	End of Cold War

Table 4 (Continued)

Religious 1979 – 2020s (predicted)	Iranian Revolution, new Islamic century, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan	Creation of global Islamic Caliphate	U.S., Israel, Europe, mass transportation systems, public venues	Suicide bombings, aircrafts and vehicles as weapons	Unknown

Note. Adapted from (Walls, 2017).

According to Rapoport, the fourth wave, centered on Islam, began in 1979, when a number of events happened, such as the Iranian Islamic revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Parker and Sitter, 2016). This historical background has had a big impact on the structure of terrorist groups and the methods they utilize. Accordingly, the fourth wave groups, religious extremist ones, became the deadliest terrorist organizations and have killed significantly more people than prior secular groups and have displayed a higher propensity to withdraw and break social norms. In addition, they turned to suicide bombings rather than common third-wave techniques such as hijacking or kidnapping. This tactical change has paved the way for a lethal technique that may be used from the air, land, or sea, resulting in numerous casualties and massive property destruction. The direction of violence also perpetrated by such terrorist groups has shifted over time. Thus, while the terrorist attacks of the fourth wave targeted states with predominantly Muslim populations in the first two decades, in the second two decades they targeted mostly non-Muslim countries, including European countries and the United States (Walls, 2017).

The perspective of Rapoport on the 9/11 attacks was shaped within the framework of the arguments that he emphasized in the fourth stage of the wave theory. In this sense, he focused on the ideology, motives, and purposes of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, which has a unique

mission and recruitment model in the history of terrorism. Accordingly, Al-Qaeda's ideology was to realize a utopian goal based on Islamic ideals in order to defend the collective Muslim nation and restore the Arab countries' dwindling stability and weakening nationalism. And its ultimate goal was to build an Islamic state governed by Sharia for all Muslims. In this context, the idea of establishing a Caliphate free of secular influences instead of Western state systems became a powerful motivation for Islamic-referenced terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda to act violently. Additionally, Al-Qaeda opposed authoritarian, secular governments in Muslim-majority countries and blamed the United States and other Western countries for the corruption of Islamic traditions (Walls, 2017). As a result, the blending of Al-Qaeda's religious ideology and the belief that the West is the biggest obstacle to the establishment of a unified Islamic state was the main factor that paved the way for the 9/11 attacks.

In conclusion, Rapoport's perspective on the 9/11 attack was shaped based on his fourth wave theory. In this respect, unlike the first three waves focused on secularly motivated violence, the fourth wave dealt with religiously motivated violence and precipitated the emergence of conditions conducive to the 9/11 attacks. Consequently, from his perspective, the 9/11 terrorist attacks should be considered religiously motivated acts as they were carried out in line with the religious objectives of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, which is a component of the fourth wave.

3.2. Mark Juergensmeyer

Mark Juergensmeyer, one of the leading contemporary researchers on religion and violence, argues that all religious traditions are generally associated with violence throughout history. Accordingly, religion tends to categorize individuals into "foes and friends" , "us and them" , and "good and evil". More specifically, religion promotes violence by demonizing others

and excluding any possibility of compromise. According to Juergensmeyer (2017), religious terrorism or violence describes acts of public devastation conducted without a clearly defined military purpose that instill widespread fear and are motivated, justified, and organized by religion. So, he handles the religious violence, particularly in ground of indiscriminate or arbitrary violence against regular individuals. Also, Juergensmeyer points out that religious violence is almost purely symbolic as opposed to strategic action, carried out in surprisingly ostentatious ways, and associated with strong moral justifications and enduring absolutism (Cavanaugh, 2004). Accordingly, terrorism is one of the techniques used by the perpetrators to display symbolic authority over repressive forces and to gain some dignity in their own lives (Schmid, 2004). Juergensmeyer takes a critical approach to the relationship between politics and religion. Accordingly, the religionization of politics increases the possibility of ordinary conflicts devolving into holy wars (Cavanaugh, 2000). In other words, religion, which normally does not foster violence, becomes a factor that encourages violence, particularly when paired with movements having political, social, and ideological goals (Juergensmeyer, 2017).

In addition, Juergensmeyer uses the term "cosmic war" rather than "holy war" when referring to religious violence since it connotes not only a struggle between good and evil, but also a broader idea of a conflict between good and evil (Schneider, 2010). He considers the concept of "cosmic war" to be one of the primary causes of numerous religiously motivated acts of violence in the contemporary world. Ordinary worldly conflicts, according to Juergensmeyer, can be classified as cosmic war if they meet any of the following criteria: "the struggle is perceived as a defense of basic identity and dignity", "losing the struggle would be unthinkable", and "the struggle is blocked and cannot be won in real time or in real terms" (Fitzgerald, 2007).

In this sense, the concept of "cosmic war," which is defined as an imaginary conflict between good and evil, right and wrong, order and chaos, is not unique to Christianity, Islam, or any other religion. Because each religion contains a mythic war scenario that can be applied to contemporary conflict and can escalate a social or political struggle into cosmic war (Juergensmeyer, 2016). In other words, he argues that all religious traditions from the past to the present appear to be associated with violence (Juergensmeyer, 2017).

Juergensmeyer's views on religious violence and his evaluation of the 9/11 attacks are broadly consistent. Unlike Rapoport, who concentrates exclusively on Islam, he broadens his approach regarding religious violence to encompass all religions. In light of his argument regarding religious violence, he describes the 9/11 attacks as a form of cosmic war and a demonstration of power aimed at persuading the world to adopt their worldview. Accordingly, the 9/11 attacks, like all acts of terrorism, are attempts to acquire public approval of religious viewpoints using the instrument of violence (Juergensmeyer, 2001). In addition, the 9/11 attacks are symbolic declarations of an imagined war and a conflict of worldviews because the culture and politics of citizens of the modern West are regarded as the "other" by the terrorists' worldview who carried out the attacks (Juergensmeyer, 2002). As a result, although the attacks are considered a combination of religious motivations and political and ideological purposes, ultimately are actions that outweigh the religious aspect and aim to spread fear in the society by targeting ordinary individuals.

In conclusion, although religion has traditionally tended to encourage violence, the claims that it is inherently violent are controversial. In general, the incitement of political, social, and intellectual movements using religious motivations leads to religious violence. In this vein,

the 9/11 attacks are considered an example of religious violence in which religious motivations and political and ideological objectives are intertwined.

Chapter 4: The 9/11 Attacks as Political Event

In this chapter, following an overview of the concept political violence, the approaches of William T. Cavanaugh and Bruce Hoffman on political violence on the basis of the 9/11 attacks will be discussed.

Throughout history, numerous ideologies have encouraged and justified acts of political violence committed by non-state actors, including Islam (e.g., al Qaeda or ISIS), Judaism (e.g., the 1st Century Zealots), Christianity (e.g., the Crusaders), and even Odinism (e.g. right-wing terrorism) have all been utilized as justifications. Political violence perpetrated by non-state actors in order to advance a political or ideological cause and influence social change is an attempt to compel or frighten governments or civil powers (Webber et al., 2020). Political violence in this sense is an instance of asymmetric warfare, in which the protagonist possesses much fewer combat capabilities, resources, and troops than their adversary. According to Schmid (2004), sometimes, violence is the only tool available for a political strategy. While there are types of violence that are not political, scholars and even terrorists themselves, frequently emphasize the political motivations for violence. As such, terrorists employ violence to challenge the state's monopoly on violence.

There is a lack of clarity on the definitions of political violence. Because of the nature and breadth of the concept of political violence, it is extremely difficult to achieve consensus on a widely agreed definition of political violence (Balasuriya, 2018). Also, one of the factors that

complicates definition efforts is that political violence involves various interactions of individuals and communities, such as psychological effects, motivations, and subjective judgments. In general, political violence refers to events that are planned with the intention of achieving political power, such as revolutions, civil wars, disturbances, and riots, which encompass all forms of political violence. According to Bardall (2018), political violence refers to the process of attaining or resisting regime change within established power structures, as well as controlling economic, political, or other resources (Balasuriya, 2018). Demetriou (2014) positions political violence as an umbrella term that encompasses phenomena such as insurgency, rebellion, civil war, and terrorism. In addition, political violence is described as hostile or violent action, as well as declared or undeclared conflict, that is motivated by a desire for political change (Your Dictionary, n.d.). According to Kalyvas, political violence, that is, violence by state and non-state actors to affect governance, encompasses war, military coups, and terrorism, amongst other forms of violence (Hase, 2021)**.** In addition, political violence, which is defined by the World Health Organization as the deliberate use of force to achieve political goals, is characterized by psychological and physical acts that are meant to harm or intimidate communities (Sousa, 2013). Therefore, political violence can be categorized in a variety of ways, based on the purposes and targets of the attacks and the organizational structures of terrorist groups (Bosi, 2014).

In conclusion, terrorism is widely recognized as a political issue, especially taking into account the widespread trend after the French Revolution. Additionally, although it is commonly recognized that political violence occurs in forms such as revolutions, civil wars, disturbances, and riots in order to acquire political power, there is still no universally accepted definition.

4.1. William T. Cavanaugh

Cavanaugh's point of view emphasizes the incompatibility of religion in explaining violence, by focusing on how religion is used to conceal a slew of other reasons of conflict (Francis, 2016). Cavanaugh considers the idea that religion is particularly prone to violence or is a primary factor in exacerbating violence to be incoherent. He argues that religion is not the exclusive source of violence since religious and secular violence frequently intersect. With this, he does not aim to establish that religion does not cause violence, but to indicate that non-religious factors can lead to violence as well (Cavanaugh, 2009). In response to the argument, that emphasizes the distinction between religion and what is not religion, Cavanaugh highlights that neither religion nor secular ideology is violent or peaceful, but its final outcomes are defined by political arrangements (Muhammad Usman, 2019). In addition, he points out that a consistent separation between the secular and religious is impossible as the religious/secular divide is a modern Western construction, which makes the claim that religion is absolutely prone to violence controversial (Cavanaugh, 2014b). In this sense, he highlights that his main goal is to level the playing field so that all forms of violence are subject to the same scrutiny (Cavanaugh, 2014a). More clearly, regardless of the "religious" or "secular" distinction, all religions and ideologies, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, nationalism, capitalism, Americanism, liberalism, and secularism have the capacity to generate and support violence under specific circumstances. So, Cavanaugh suggests that instead of trying to find reasons why religion tends to incite violence, scholars should focus on the conditions under which any ideology or practice causes violence (Cavanaugh, 2009). As a result, it is not fair to clearly classify the source of violence as "religious" and "secular" and claim that religion is more prone to violence than secular factors, including politics.

Secondly, Cavanaugh underlines that nation-state employs the myth of religious violence to advance their secular goals (Cavanaugh, 2009). The claim that religion inherently leads to violence is used as one of the primary motivations for a variety of policies, ranging from restricting religion's public role to efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East. For example, while the American Supreme Court defined religion as a unifying force until the 1940s, it considered religion a divisive and dangerous force in the following periods, although religious tensions were at their lowest levels in American history. Therefore, the myth of religious violence is a just-so story produced to justify secularizing systems, not a response to empirical facts (Cavanaugh, 2015). Similarly, absolutist, nationalist, and patriotic attitudes played a significant role in the rise of the 16th century European religious wars, which are often associated with religious violence (Cavanaugh, 2009). In other words, the argument that the reform era's religious wars necessitated the emergence of a secular public discourse is controversial, as the modern state embraced the same absolutist impulses connected with the religious wars under the banners of patriotism and nationalism, rather than providing a solution to religious violence (Cahill, 2012). Accordingly, the myth of religious violence enables Western consumers to be convinced that dying and killing for the cause of the nation-state is commendable, while dying and killing in the name of religion is disgusting (Cavanaugh, 2009). In other words, the myth of religious violence condemns religious violence while sanctifying secular violence in the race for acceptability between religion and secular (Thomas, 2010).

In addition, Cavanaugh adds that those who argue that religion promotes violence are confused about what religion is, and hence they make a mistake in the religious-secular dichotomy, which is the basis of their arguments as there is no universally agreed-upon

definition of religion or secularism (Cavanaugh, 2015). Accordingly, the argument that "religion causes violence" is essentially based on the assumption that "religion encourages violence because it is absolutist, divisive, and irrational". However, nobody provides a coherent argument for assuming that so-called secular ideologies such as nationalism, capitalism, patriotism, and liberalism are less likely to be absolutist, divisive, and irrational. Also, according to Cavanaugh the religion–secular dichotomy, which includes the idea of the "clash of civilizations" and emphasizes that secular power must dominate the public sphere rather than religion, can be used to justify the use of violence against those with whom rational discourse is impossible (Fitzgerald, 2007). Because the argument that "religion causes violence" describes Western culture as rational while positioning non-Western forms of culture, especially Muslim cultures, as absolutist, divisive, and irrational. In addition, Cavanaugh points out that states use the myth of religious violence to sustain the separation of church and state and to justify their foreign policies. Accordingly, the myth of religious violence compels any society to make a choice between theocracy and militant secularism. However, abandoning this myth would encourage humanity to recognize that Western-style secularism is not a global solution to the problem of universal religion but rather a collection of conditional and local social arrangements (Cavanaugh, 2009). Furthermore, Cavanaugh emphasizes that there is a need for the abandonment of the myth of religious violence in order to develop a new understanding regarding the complex and opposing currents, especially in the Muslim world, and to eliminate one of the main justifications for military actions against religious actors.

Cavanaugh's approach to the 9/11 attacks seems to be consistent with his views on religious violence in general. In other words, Cavanaugh's views on religious violence, which are

outlined above, reflect his perspective on the 9/11 attacks too. Indeed, Cavanaugh's book "The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict," which contains his arguments for religious violence, challenges the common approach that considers the 9/11 attacks just a religiously motivated event. In this sense, Cavanaugh critiques a number of scholars for ignoring or failing to see that both religious and secular motivations have the capacity to cause violence. Accordingly, he does not exclude the role of religion in the 9/11 attacks but argues that secular causes like nationalism and patriotism were also significant. In addition, Cavanaugh highlights that national governments over-emphasize the issue of religious violence in order to advance or conceal their secular objectives. For example, the phrase "They hate our freedoms" (Washington Post, 2001) used by President George W. Bush in response to the 9/11 attacks, has led to the neglect of political factors while bringing the role of religion to the forefront.

In conclusion, Cavanaugh, on the one hand, refuses the argument that the 9/11 attacks were motivated only by religious causes, on the other hand, does not rule out religion's involvement. In addition, he emphasizes that the argument that nationalism, patriotism, and other political motivations are among decisive factors in the attacks should not be overlooked. As a result, we can conclude Cavanaugh's approach to the 9/11 attacks in scope of the his following quote (Cavanaugh, 2015):

> People kill for all sorts of things that they treat as gods, including supposedly ‘‘secular’’ things like ‘‘freedom.’’ This insight is nothing more startling than the biblical critique of idolatry—human beings are spontaneously worshipping creatures whose allegiances fall on all sorts of mundane things. The point is not at all to deny that Christians and

> Muslims, for example, sometimes use their faith as justification for violence; the point is to level the playing field, so that we examine not just violence on behalf of jihad or Jesus, but violence on behalf of free markets and free elections. (p.490).

4.2. Bruce Hoffman

Bruce Hoffman, like Cavanaugh, argues that religion is not the exclusive cause of violence (Hoffman, 2006). In general, terrorism, according to Hoffman, is the threat of violence used to force or terrify citizens or governments in order to achieve political or social objectives (Ho, 2021). In other words, terrorism is inherently political in purpose and motivation. So, it can be described as the purposeful instillation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in order to effect political change (Hoffman, 2006). On the basis that terrorism has undergone typological changes over the last two centuries, he points out the fallacy of relatively broad and ambiguous definitions that include commonalities and assumptions (Mutlu, 2016). Accordingly, in contrast to its current meaning, Hoffman argues that the terror term had a positive connotation during the French Revolution. However, by the late nineteenth century, the definition of terrorism had evolved significantly, and nowadays it is subject to varied perceptions depending on the political and cultural atmosphere of the period (Özbudak, 2015).

Hoffman points out that religious violence is typically more lethal than secular violence, owing to fundamentally distinct value systems, legitimation mechanisms, and moral justification principles. In this vein, religious terrorists regard themselves as outsiders seeking fundamental changes to the established system, whereas secular terrorists view violence as a means of promoting either the correction of a weakness or the creation of a new system (Schmid, 2013). In addition, religious terrorists consider indiscriminate violence both morally acceptable and

necessary for their goals while secular terrorists regard it as unethical and pointless. Accordingly, for religious terrorists, force and violence are acceptable and necessary tools that can be used against secular governments whose legitimate authority they do not believe in. Consequently, the legitimizing force of vengeful religious ideologies has become a prevalent characteristic of contemporary religious and secular events. In this vein, terrorists of all faiths, including Muslims, Jews, Christians, and people from other less well-known religious groups, exploit the argument that they are protecting people who are being persecuted to justify their violent actions (Juergensmeyer et al., 2013). In this regard, as a prominent scholar of the school of "new terrorism," which contends that the current wave of religious terrorism is revolutionary and drastically different from prior secular terrorism (Hendy, 2019), Bruce Hoffman criticizes Rapoport's wave theory for only talking about contemporary terrorism, noting that religion is indeed an original motivation for non-state violence. Accordingly, he emphasizes that, while "religious imperative" is the primary defining characteristic of contemporary terrorist activities, religion cannot be described as a primary characteristic of terrorism, particularly in the modern sense. For example, the emergence of Al Qaeda is a result of economic globalization, modernism, and global politics (Özbudak, 2015).

Hoffman regards the 9/11 attacks as a terrorist strike driven by religious motives but predominantly have political and economic objectives (the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia and the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City) (Hoffman, 2006). In this respect, Bin Laden's special emphasis in a post-9/11 speech that the attacks caused a loss of more than one trillion dollars in the American economy, in a way, supports Hoffman's argument (Aljazeera, 2004). On the one hand, Al-Qaeda's leader, Bin Laden, expressed his struggle in theological

terms, while thanking his god for the deaths and damage caused by the 9/11 attacks. This speech, which is backed up with Islamic terminology, included threats against the United States and its citizens regarding security. On the other hand, given that the targeted points are the economic and military symbols of the United States, it is obvious that the 9/11 attacks were carried out with the intent of causing economic harm and establishing political superiority, rather than religious purposes. Consequently, by emphasizing theological terminology excessively, Al-Qaeda attempted to obscure the main goals of the 9/11 attacks, which are an example of political violence motivated by religious convictions. In addition, Bruce Hoffman points out that the ultimate goal of 9/11, which he defines as an event that transforms terrorism from a tactical problem to a global strategy, is to overwhelm, distract, and consume. More specifically, the main purpose of the attacks was to economically deplete the United States by compelling it to spend more on national security and engage in costly overseas military commitments (Bergen et al., 2011).

In conclusion, although Hoffman recognizes that religious themes were employed in the 9/11 attacks, he argues that the attacks were primarily motivated by economic and political purposes. Accordingly, the 9/11 is essentially a political event, as the targeted locations represent symbols of security and the economy.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis, which aimed to determine on which arguments the two approaches that consider the 9/11 terrorist attacks as religious or political violence are built and how commentators classify the attacks as religious or political violence, has concluded that there are essentially two arguments that affect scholars' interpretations of the 9/11 attacks as either a religious event or a political event. The first one is the debate as to whether religion inherently leads to violence. The other one is the discussion regarding whether religion was the primary motivation for the 9/11 attacks.

The multidimensionality of the concepts of religion, terror, and violence and challenges regarding conceptualization make reaching a consensus on how to approach the 9/11 attacks practically impossible. Furthermore, the subjective perspectives of the scholars who define these concepts have a significant role in the emergence of widely disparate definitions. In this context, because of the ambiguity and complexity of the concepts of religion and violence, the concepts of religious violence and political violence are also a source of debate.

Although the literature presents a large variety of views about arguments for the approach that considers the 9/11 attacks as a religious event, there is no single theory that connects religion and violence. Overall, the major arguments for the approach can be summarized as follows:

1. Fundamental principles of religions sanctify violence.
2. Religious concerns and motifs are at the heart of oppression, tension, conflict, and war.

3. Religious violence is triggered by scriptural tales of violence and the conviction that God tolerates religious violence.
4. The tendency of religions to endow themselves or certain entities with unique supernatural values increases intra-and intergroup violence.
5. Religions lead to violence because each religion claims to be the only source of global truth and focuses on persuading others to believe so.

The arguments mentioned above are largely built on the belief that religion inherently leads to violence. Consequently, advocates of this approach generally ignore the possibility that factors other than religion may also generate violence or that religion may have an indirect effect on violence. On the one hand, David C. Rapoport, for example, classified terrorism as the anarchist wave, the anti-colonial wave, the new left wave, and the religious wave. From his perspective, the 9/11 attacks were purely religiously motivated acts carried out by Al Qaeda as a part of the religious wave that produced the most lethal terrorist organizations. Mark Juergensmeyer, on the other hand, is somewhat skeptical to the emphasize of "purely religiously motivated". Accordingly, while he emphasizes that religion motivates and justifies violence, also points out that political, social, and ideological movements can also contribute to the religion's instigation of violence. As a result, Juergensmeyer regards the 9/11 attacks as a religious event in which religion plays a big part, but also underlines how religious impulses are entwined with political and ideological objectives.

A large number of scholars point out that violence is primarily a political issue rather than a religious one. In general, this approach emphasizes the difficulty of revealing religious and secular motivations for violence in any incident of violence in which religious factors are

involved and challenges views that regard religion as the exclusive source of violence. In this sense, the proponents argue that a variety of events labeled as "religious violence" are experienced because religious motivations are utilized by certain movements with political goals. As a result, the following are the key arguments for the approach:

1. Religious causes, as well as historical factors, and socio-economic and political issues such as poverty, ignorance, frustration, resentment, and political oppression, all contribute to violence.
2. In most cases, violence isn't motivated only by religious motives, but rather by temporal, spiritual, or ideological ones.

For many years, the United States, as the leader of the unipolar world that formed following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, has been conducting military operations in a variety of regions around the world to protect global peace and its own interests. So, terrorist attacks against military targets outside of the national borders were not unfamiliar to American society. However, the 9/11 attacks differed from previous ones in that they were the first large-scale terrorist acts against the country directly and they wreaked deep trauma on the national level. Consequently, due to the fact that the attacks were carried out by the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, which has Islamic roots, it was inevitable that the powerful wave of criticism directed at religions, in particular Islam, would affect academia as well as governments. In this context, it should not be surprising that the studies in the post-9/11 era mainly focus on the thesis that the attacks were purely religiously motivated violence. This approach, which objects to the "purely religious violence" theme, is also a challenge to the populism created by the social reaction rising against religions. In this sense, William T. Cavanaugh emphasizes that the fact that religion

causes violence does not negate the fact that non-religious factors can also contribute to violence. Accordingly, he does not exclude the role of religion in the 9/11 attacks but points out that secular reasons such as nationalism and patriotism were also among the motivations for the attacks. Also, Cavanaugh discusses that nation-states purposefully created and utilized the myth of religious violence to achieve their secular goals. Similar to Cavanaugh, Bruce Hoffman asserts that the 9/11 attacks were carried out by terrorists motivated by religious extremism, but that their primary goals were political and economic. To put it another way, he argues that the purpose and cause of violence are political in nature, and that religion is not the exclusive source of violence.

As seen, in addition to religion, a number of secular variables, including ideologies, nationalism, patriotism, the economy, humiliation, and marginalization, may also legitimize violence. However, the first approach, which considers religion as the exclusive or primary source of violence, generally ignores other variables that cause violence. In contrast, the second approach, which emerged during a time when the psychological effects of the 9/11 attacks began to fade, took a more balanced position, suggesting that violence is driven by both religious and non-religious factors.

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