Examining the Complexities of Terrorism: Definitions, Designation, and Racialization

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Abstract: The concept of terrorism is nebulous. There are numerous definitions of terrorism, each different in their own way for many reasons. Examination of terrorist designations draws attention to the ways that race may be considered when events and acts are deemed terroristic. Racial aspects are considered when apparently terroristic events are being defined. In this thesis, I examine how processes of racialization can shape the definition, conception, and application of terrorism. In order to do this, I work with two case studies: the racialization of Muslims and the racialization of terrorism in America, with a particular focus on whiteness. In doing this, I find that Muslims are heavily racialized and, in the minds of many Americans, deeply with terrorism. Along with this, I find that the inconsistency of the definition of terrorism makes it difficult to be applied to events, causing different events to either be defined as or *not* defined as terrorism, for example, Dylann Roof's shooting of the Charleston Church in 2016. I also find that racialization plays a role in the determination of an act as terrorism, as Muslims are more likely to be seen as and considered terrorists before a white actor of terror.

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VIGNETTE

On January 6th, 2021 the Capitol building of the United States of America found itself under attack. Citizens of the country watched on television and doom-scrolled through social media as the events of the 6th unfolded: A crowd of President Donald J. Trump supporters rushed into the Capitol, with differing intentions such as wanting to keep Donald Trump in power; others intended to "go after" and going after Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi as they effectively invaded the building. Some made their way into Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's office, while others found their way into the House Chamber and stole podiums and attacked police officers trying to defend the Capitol.

Members of the invasion carried flags in support of President Trump, others carried confederate flags and the flags of various countries, such as India. Those involved were also seen wearing Trump paraphernalia, the confederacy, as well as Nazi-supporting garbs. The broad affiliation of the crowd is not to be questioned due to these symbols, as well as due to the fact that they came directly from a speech given by Donald Trump, in which he, among others in his family and administration, declared that there should and would be a fight to 'stop the steal' of this 'fraudulent' election.

It took many hours for the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to be evacuated, including Vice President Mike Pence, from the Capitol building and to have the building cleared and secured. Once this was done, the vote to finalize the 2020 election results was completed and President-Elect Joe Biden was officially declared the winner of the 2020 presidential election.

Among all of this chaos, though, one has to wonder: Where was the tear gas and rubber bullets used during the summer of 2020's Black Lives Matter protests? Why was this insurrection initially called a protest? Was it really an insurrection, or was it a riot, coup, or an

act of domestic terrorism? Such questions animate this thesis as I aim to answer central questions pertaining to terrorism and its web of definitions.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is often difficult to define with a singular framework. There are numerous definitions of terrorism, each different in their own way for many reasons. This plethora of definitions and the inconsistency of scholarly preferred uses of the term illustrates the lack of a universal definition of terrorism. Although, this is understandable because terrorism itself is a concept and phenomena that is not easy to fully understand. The phenomenon is complex and dense.

Examination of terrorist designations draws attention to the ways that race may be considered when events and acts are deemed terroristic. In this thesis, I will examine how processes of racialization can shape the definition, conception, and application of terrorism. Even before the events of 9/11 and the Twin Towers, blame would be placed on those who were Muslim when an attack *did* occur. For example, the event in Oklahoma City at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19th, 1995, was initially blamed on Muslims, even though the real perpetrator, Timothy McVeigh, was white and radicalized by *The Turner Diaries*, an infamous racist dystopian novel written by William Luter Price (Berger 2016).

Though the definition of terrorism is complicated, and most definitions include a reference to politics or state, there are both points of convergence and divergence that allow for a general understanding of what terrorism is, albeit this may change based on the chosen definition. In simpler terms, definitions are created based on the ideas about terrorism that the creator holds and are influenced by their discipline, such as sociology or psychology. When applying the label of terrorist and terrorism, however, history and recent events have illustrated

ways in which determinations of terrorism can be racialized. In this thesis I ask two primary

questions:

1. How does the inconsistency with the definition of terrorism shape the

   applicability of the definition?

2. What role does racialization as a process play in the determination of an act as

   terrorism?

This thesis will be laid out as follows: Defining Terrorism will come first, in which I

discuss how terrorism is defined and how the definitions of terrorism vary greatly based off of

scholar perspective. I will also present different definitions of terrorism from several sources in

order to offer up a form of comparison for the reader to take part in. I also argue in this section

that there is a racial aspect to how the definition of terrorism is applied and whether an event is

defined as terrorism.

After Defining Terrorism, I move into a discussion on to Terrorism in America, in which

I will explore not only the history of terrorism in the United States, but also the current

sociopolitical landscape as it pertains to terrorism situation. In this section I will also discuss

different the forms of terrorism present in the U.S. and their characteristics so that the reader may

gain an understanding of what is currently present in the country. After Terrorism in America

comes my first of two case studies, the Racialization of Terrorism: Americans which bleeds into

the discussion of the racialization of Muslims, but also has a particular focus on whiteness.

Along with continued discussion on the racialization of Muslims, I discuss how certain events

may be viewed as terrorism while others are not, which I believe varies based on the race of the

presumed actor(s). In this section, among other things, I discuss and compare the events at the

United States Capitol Building on January 6th, 2021 and the Summer 2020 Black Lives Matter

Protests. Specifically, I will examine the significantly higher law enforcement presence during

the Black Lives Matter Protests versus the seeming lacking law enforcement presence during the

Capitol riot on January 6th even though the Federal Bureau of Investigation forewarned the

possibility of the events on January 6th would occur.

      After this, I move into my second case study on the Racialization of Terrorism: Muslims

in which I discuss how members of the Muslim community are generally racialized, especially in

the context of terrorism. More specifically, I will reference how Muslims are perceived as

terrorists not only by general representation, but also in the media and film and television. These

sections will be followed by a comprehensive discussion and conclusion.

      Interviews completed with two experts on the topic of terrorism will also be included in

the thesis. These experts are Dr. Katarzyna Maniszewska, affiliated with Collegium Civitas in

Warsaw, Poland, and Ms. Anna Meier, a PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin, Madison

will be included in the sections Terrorism in America and the Racialization of Terrorism:

Americans. The two experts give a global and a domestic view of terrorism, respectively. This is

important for understanding how terrorism is viewed from differing perspectives and how this

can affect how the definition is conceptualized or understood.

DEFINING TERRORISM

      First, I start with the difficult task of defining terrorism. According to Dr. Katarzyna

Maniszewska of Collegium Civitas University in Warsaw, Poland, her colleague has counted and

found that there are over 200 definitions of terrorism. Caleb Carr, in his piece *"Terrorism": Why

the Definition Must Be Broad* has found that scholars leave certain things and acts out of definitions

in order for them to fit specific events and not fit others. So, why does this make the act of defining

something as terrorism so difficult?

According to Dr. Maniszewska terrorism is a phenomenon that is extremely hard to define, illustrated by the multifaceted legal definitions and attempts to legally define terrorism at country and international. Also, the challenges in defining terrorism come from the different researcher and expert perspectives. For example, psychologists will focus more on psychology, sociologists on the sociological aspects, different case for the military and this angle". Dr. Maniszewska goes on to offer her own definition of terrorism that she uses:

> *"deliberate politically motivated use of force or violence, or the threat of violence with the intention to influence the public opinion through the means of mass communication"*

It is important to note, too, that some of her colleagues and fellow professors do not necessarily agree with her on the component of mass communication because according to Dr. Maniszewska some people argue that terrorism actually is a phenomenon that has been around since the beginning of civilizations in general. She takes this angle and she think[s] that [she] can present some solid arguments for this modern terrorism and the effect that the terrorists want to achieve literally in the fear that they create on a global level.

Anna Meier, the second expert interviewed for this thesis, offers the following definition:

> *"terrorism is a form of violence or sometimes even just political contention, protest or things that are not violent necessarily that challenge the established status quo society. What I mean by that is these are groups, individuals who dare to put forward an idea of order in society that is not that challenges the dominant group's right to be in power"*

While conducting research for this thesis, I also engaged the following definitions:

Caleb Carr:

> *"Terrorism...is simply the contemporary name given to, and the modern permutation of, warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will to support either leaders or policies that the agents of such violence find objectionable"* (Carr 2007).

Pete Lentini's preferred definition:

> *"[terrorism] occurs in conditions when a sub-state group or an individual uses or threatens to use violence against innocent people or non-combatants – or even property – to effect political change and achieve political goals by creating an atmosphere of fear"* (Lenitni 2008)

Article 1(2) of the 1937 Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism:

> Acts of terrorism are defined as *"'criminal acts directed against a [foreign] State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons, or a group of persons or the general public'"* (Saul 2019)

The USA PATRIOT Act:
> Defines terrorism *"as violent action that is intended to intimidate or coerce a civil population or influence the government"* (USA Patriot Act 2001)

Which Caroline Corbin interprets as:

"violence in the United States that is meant to inspire fear and is

motivated by ideology rather than, say, financial gain."(Corbin 2017)

Financial gain even being mentioned here is interesting because it is not mentioned in other definitions of terrorism. This discrepancy is just one another that highlights the inconsistency of definitions. One has to wonder what influences Corbin's definitional framing. Along with this, it could also mean that financial gain is the root of several types of criminal acts, but not the root of terroristic acts, thus the reason to make sure that it is known that the acts are motivated by the inspiration of fear and ideology, and not financial gain as criminal acts may typically be.

I argue that there is a racial aspect as well to deciding is an act is both seen and considered terrorism. Consider a hypothetical situation in which a Muslim person goes into a church and shoots all of its Black attenders in the name of a race war – is that terrorism? Now, imagine it is a white man instead, is *that* terrorism? This may depend on context and opinion of the beholder.

On June 17th, 2015, Dylann Roof entered Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Carolina during a Bible study session and began shooting (Norris 2017). By the end of his rampage, nine people were dead. Roof was not apprehended until the next morning in North Carolina (Norris 2017). Witnesses at the church "reported that immediately before the attack, Roof announced he was there "to shoot black people," and during the shooting, he said "Y'all are raping our women and taking over the country. This must be done" (Norris 2017). Such articulations concretely delineated the racist aspects of Roof's violent intentions (Norris 2017).

In the case of Dylann Roof, the government did not officially call his heinous acts terrorism. In fact, they called them a hate crime, which is strange and albeit confounding because the then Attorney General described hate crimes as "'the original domestic terrorism.'" (Norris 2017). In fact, according to Considine "A hate crime is understood as 'a criminal offense motivated in whole or in part by the actual or perceived group status of another, such as race and ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity'", which is shown with event perpetrated by Roof, seeing as his goal was to incite a race war (Considine 2017).

In the case of Dylann Roof, Meier states that "it's really complicated in the US, we have no federal crime of domestic terrorism, we just don't. The reason Dylann Roof was not charged is because he couldn't be under the law". This adds to the complication of determining supposed acts of terrorism *as* terrorism in the United States. Even though one may perceive an act as terrorism, if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it may not *legally* be considered terrorism, and although the public and the media may be screaming 'terrorist!', the government may likely say otherwise.

Another facet of this broader discussion includes a question about the difficulty for the general American public to understand the definition of terrorism. Anna Meier gave her thoughts on this, in which she did not think that it was difficult for the general public to understand the definition of terrorism because they are the ones creating that discourse that helps us intuitively understand who should go in the terrorist camp and who should not. Or, to state it another way, the public plays an active role in creating and shaping ideas that influence policy makers, who in turn mold the ideas of prejudices of the general public. In this sense, it may seem that the general American public has no difficulty understanding what terrorism is.

This does not mean, however, that there is not a great deal of complexity surrounding what is perceived to be terrorism and who is perceived to be a terrorist. In adding to the perceived confusion around the definition and defining of terrorism, "The closest the UN has come to defining terrorism is in the ongoing negotiation of a Draft Comprehensive Terrorism Convention since 2000, based on an Indian proposal. Agreement was reached on most of the twenty-seven articles by 2002 (UNGA Sixth Committee 2002, annex II, 7–8), spurred on by the terrorist attacks of 9/11" (Saul 2019). This shows the importance of the 9/11 attacks in the topic of terrorism, as well as its definition. The events of 9/11 shaped numerous domestic and global responses to terrorism, but one can argue that it may have been far too focused on one type of terrorism. Of course, it makes sense to want to prevent an attack of that magnitude form ever happening again, but one must also note that other forms of terrorism are causing almost as much death as 9/11 did, one manifesto at a time.

The events of the September 11th attack on the Twin Towers in New York also included the Pentagon, and the Capitol Building or the White House (the correct target is unknown) by the Islamic extremist group Al Qaeda. This event will forever have a significant spot in American and terrorist history as a successful terrorist attack against the United States that resulted in the incredible loss of life of American peoples. This attack led to an attempted crack down on terrorism, which is called "The War on Terror", coined and put forth by the United States President at the time George W. Bush. After the events of 9/11 there was an increase in hate crimes against Muslims, which dwindled over the years, but in 2016 saw an uptick (Lichtblau 2016).

I argue that it is difficult for the general public to understand the definition of terrorism because the definitions are too numerous and divergent. Some scholars, law makers, and

journalists claim that certain acts are terrorism while others do not. It becomes complicated and messy, and overall difficult to ascertain when there are two-hundred or more definitions in the world that have been documented. Ben Saul (2019) discusses how defining terrorism can be a "conceptual minefield" and goes through many definitions of terrorism. Saul states that "scholarly attempts to define terrorism have sought to isolate a range of identifying characteristics, focusing variously on methods, targets, effects, victims, perpetrators, intention, motive, and so on" which is confirmed by the writings of Caleb Carr, discussed briefly above. In knowing this and having researched the topic, Saul introduces us to many different types of definitions of terrorism, documented below:

The "basic legal consensus is that "terrorism is criminal violence intended to intimidate a population or coerce a government or inter? national organization basic legal consensus" (Saul 2019), of course, *how* this definition can be applied is different as well. According to Saul, even with international agreement on defining terrorism in basic terms edges closer, "there remain intense moral and political disagreements, however, on whether there should be exceptions for just causes (such as liberation violence and rebellion), armed conflicts, and state violence" (Saul 2019).

What all of these definitions documented earlier have in common is the use of "politics/political", "state", and "government", words that are all connected through government leadership and policy. This shows that there is consensus that terrorism is connected to politics, either targeting governments or civilians in order to make political change or doing so through political ideology. The definitions also tend to state that the violent acts of terrorism typically target civilians in order to affect the politics, not necessarily the people being attacked. My understanding of all of this is that though the definition of terrorism is complicated, the many definitions have

some base characteristics that can typically be found when looking through the many definitions, showing that the phenomenon can at least be generally identified when an act is committed.

Overall, terrorism is a multifaceted phenomenon that is difficult to define with a singular notion. Scholars such as Caleb Carr argue that the definition must be broad, yet, as illustrated above, this tendency to broadly define often results in challenges to concretely identify what terrorism is and what it is not. As such, it seems that personal and scholarly preference significantly shape how scholars define terrorism, highlighting the subjective nature of terrorism and its usage. Some scholars will leave certain violent acts out of their definition while others choose to include the role of the media in their definition. As later sections of this thesis will show it is also the application of these many definitions that makes terrorism a multifaceted phenomenon. Before this, the next section will feature a discussion of the presence of terrorism in the United States.

TERRORISM IN AMERICA

Terrorism has been prominent in America for a long time. The phenomenon has been around for example since the formation of groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (the KKK) "founded in 1866 during the Reconstruction Period" as a vigilante group meant to police black people (Osei-Opare 2016). Using Dr. Maniszewska's framing of terrorism as deliberate politically motivated use of force or violence with the intention to influence the public opinion through the means of mass communication, it can be argued that terrorism has existed for thousands of years, as Maniszewska states in her interview. Considering this, it is not surprising that terrorism would present itself even in America, the apparent land of the free. Many types of terrorism can be found in America, from far-right, far-left, and religious terrorism. All pose a threat, of course.

One of my primary ais in interviewing Dr. Katarzyna Maniszewska stemmed from her knowledge of terrorism in the U.S and global terrorism. Although her primary point of view is from Poland, she works through the think tank and with audiences abroad such as students from schools around the world and is the viceroy of International Affairs at Collegium Civitas.

I immediately took my interview opportunity to ask Dr. Maniszewska what she thought about the rise of far-right terrorism in the United States. She stated that recent increasing statistics did not surprise her and that "This is a trend that is visible for the last five years". She also quotes the Global Terrorism Index and states "not focusing specifically on the US but at the global level the rise of right-wing terrorism" (Institute for Economics & Peace 2019). Overall, though, she said that when you look at terrorism globally, far-right terrorism is not as equitable to the level of jihadist terrorism.

The information provided by Dr. Maniszewska shows that, there is an upward trend in far-right terrorism. I propose that this means that there should be more focus placed on the phenomenon that is far-right terrorism, even though Jihadist terrorism is still the main threat globally. In the U.S. however, there is a lack of focus on the far-right terrorism, with more emphasis often placed on what is considered jihadist terrorism. Still, with the trends that are seen, far-right terrorism is obviously becoming a problem and deserves increased attention from us so that possible solutions may be found or at least identify trends so that attacks and events may be predicted and prevented from happening.

Far right terrorism is on the rise in America. According to the Global Terrorism Index (2019) this rise is "mirrored by a rise in hate crimes in the United States" which argue is a trend that is ignored when people look at terrorism (Institute for Economics & Peace 2019). I argue that due to significant events such as 9/11 the general population of the United States tends to focus on terrorism as purely jihadist. Or some focus more on far-left terrorism, such as former

President of the United States, Donald Trump, who would attempt to call out ANTIFA and Black Lives Matter as far left terrorists, while also claiming what he referred to as far left terrorism is a big problem in the country (Goldman, Benner and Kanno-Youngs 2021).

Based off of my research, I counter Donald Trump's claims with the knowledge from the Center For Strategic and International Studies, which states that "far right terrorism has significantly outpaced terrorism from other types of perpetrators", which is a second well-informed source that notes a growing trend in far-right terrorism and does not call out far left terrorism. The Global Terrorism Index (2019) also notes that "The three largest politically motivated terrorist attacks in the West in the last 50 years have been perpetuated by far-right extremists", another important trend that should be observed and not ignored. There is evidence in front of us that far-right terrorism, not jihadist terrorism, is the growing threat in America, yet people still focus on other forms of terrorism and tend to ignore that which is in plain sight (Jones, Harrington and Doxsee 2020).

In fact, "far-right terrorism is more than five times deadlier on average than far-left terrorism", a statistic that should be taken into account when deciding what types of terrorism to highlight and address (Institute for Economics & Peace 2019). This is not to say that types of terrorism that are not far-right should be ignored. Rather, this is meant to point out that far-right terrorism deserves more attention, seeing as it is a deadly, impending threat on America. Still, while far-right terrorism imposes a major threat to the United States, it "remains a tiny fraction of total terrorism world-wide", but this statistic should not dilute the threat that this type of terrorism imposes (Institute for Economics & Peace 2019).

Of course, far-left terrorism *is* still a real and present threat in the United States of America. It is not invisible. In fact, the Center for Strategic and International Studies explains exactly what far-left terrorism entails, which has great differences from its counterpart, far-right

terrorism. This side of the terrorism spectrum is defined as "the use or threat of violence by subnational or non-state entities whose goals may include racial or ethnic supremacy; opposition to government authority; anger at women, including from the incel ("involuntary celibate") movement; and outrage against certain policies, such as abortion" (CSIS pg. 2), meanwhile far left terrorism refers to the use or threat of violence by sub-national or non-state entities that oppose capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism; pursue environmental or animal rights issues; espouse pro-communist or pro-socialist beliefs; or support a decentralized social and political system such as anarchism (CSIS pg.2) (Jones, Harrington and Doxsee 2020).

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "the far-left includes ANTIFA, which is a contraction of the phrase "anti-fascist (Jones, Harrington and Doxsee 2020)." It refers to a decentralized network of far-left militants that oppose what they believe are fascist, racist, or otherwise right- wing extremists" (Jones, Harrington and Doxsee 2021). This shows that far-left terrorism is the stark contrast of far-right terrorism. Along with this, though, one must also note that ANTIFA is *not* an organization, but rather an ideology found on the left side of the spectrum. Moving forward, ANTIFA and the left must not be equated to the right or other forms of terrorism, as they are all different in their own significant ways, and are not necessarily polar opposites in a sense, but rather contrasts of one another.

Further, the Center for Strategic and International Studies states that, "right-wing extremists pose the most significant terrorism threat to the United States, based on annual terrorist events and fatalities", providing evidence that more focus should be placed on far-right terrorism, as it is increasingly becoming a greater problem in the United States (Jones, Harrington and Doxsee 2020).

The FBI defines domestic terrorism as "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a

political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature" which shows that even though there is no law specifically pertaining to domestic terrorism, one can still be in some way *defined* as a domestic terrorist. This means that they will not be charged with terrorism, and would likely be found guilty on different, possibly less severe charges, as a way to still be placed in lock up. This means that they will not be *legally* labeled as a terrorist, as is the case of Dylann Roof, who was charged with hate crimes instead of domestic terrorism.

After discussion with Anna Meier, I found that there were three criteria for being considered a terrorist in the U.S. The first was that a weapon of mass destruction must have been used. In the case of Dylann Roof, he used a gun, not a bomb or any form of chemical, biological, or radiological nuclear weapon, although the statute does not actually define *exactly* what a weapon of mass destruction is. The next component is an attack on transportation (this is due to 9/11 al Qaeda's attack on the airlines) and hijackings that happened to be common during the Cold War and Cuban and Puerto Rican Independence movements. Roof also did not follow this criterion, nor did he follow the third, which was being associated with a designated foreign terrorist organization as seen with the 9/11 hijackers' association with Al Qaeda. Dylann Roof did not follow these criteria because he used a gun, not a bomb or any other form of weapons of mass destruction, he attacked a church, not transportation, and he was a lone actor and not associated with a designated foreign terrorist organization. Thus, Dylann Roof seemingly could not be designated as a terrorist.

A terrorist is not born. Becoming involved in terrorism is a choice and is not reliant on mental incapacities or personality disorders. Although, there are various factors that play into one deciding to commit acts of terror, such as humiliation and the loss of loved ones in violent

conflict with perceived enemies. In the case of Dylan Roof, his decision to commit a hate crime, the supposed original form of domestic terror, places him in this category.

THE RACIALIZATION OF TERRORISM: THE UNITED STATES

There are four core attributes of race, racialization, and racism. They are as follows: "(A) are socially constructed; (B) categorise people as "other"; (C) naturalise features thought to belong to the group of people regarded as race; and (D) are concerned with presumed community-like groups" (Grotthius, 2020). Nikolay Zakharov's approach to racialization emphasizes the, "social process of attaching racial meaning to social personhood, relations, and somatic features (Zakharov 2015)." Though the category of Muslim has historically been considered a religious one, scholars such as Rana and Considine, demonstrate the ways that Muslims are racialized. One of the best illustrations of these racialization processes comes from the analysis of terrorist attacks and how Muslim people are categorized and seen as an 'other'.

Though not always acknowledged, race and racialization seem to significantly shape applications and designations of terrorist and terrorism. As discussed previously in point number 4 of the eight components of Islamophobia, Islam is often perceived by non-Muslims as

"violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a clash of civilizations (original emphasis);", with emphasis on the "supportive of terrorism" portion, thus showing that many people associated the religion of Islam with terrorism and terroristic acts (Selod 2014). In fact, "The notion of the infidel Muslim as a menacing figure was transferred into the Americas as part of the reigning 'common sense'" (Rana 2011).

According to Dr. Katarzyna Maniszewska, the greatest threat in the world, especially the European Union, is Jihadist terrorism. I argue, however, that this kind of insistence can contribute to the negative views and thoughts against Muslims. With such an important trend in

the world's terrorism issue, it is important to realize the impact that this trend can have on the Muslim population of America. People who are innocent are accused of being a part of something that they are not, simply because of how they dress or what they are named. Due to a hyper focus on Islamic extremism, right-wing terrorism is skirted and ignored, and not given the attention that it should be receiving, which only increases the potential for dangerous and deadly terroristic violence.

Research has shown that especially after the events of 9/11, there has been bias against Muslims when it comes to terrorism (Selod 2018). It is not uncommon for people to associate attacks with Muslims once they happen, before details about the actual actor of the event are released. In fact, according to Selod (2015) "Islam has become synonymous with terrorism", which takes away from other forms of terrorism that pose a threat and are on the rise (Selod 2014). These types of responses further exemplify how the notion of terrorist, and *who* is considered a terrorist, is racialized.

For example, far-right terrorism is on the rise in America, and yet, terrorism is still associated with Islam because of the impact that major events have had on the perspectives and ideals of American citizens. This also allows for Muslim Americans to be treated as a security threat because of their perceived associations with terrorism. Selod (2018) even states that "in the context of the USA, 'Muslim' is becoming a de-facto racial classification. The religious identity is riddled with so many negative associations that those who are identified as Muslim consequently have racial experiences in their everyday lives" (pg. 92), which explains the negative association of Muslims with terrorism (Selod 2018).

According to Corbin (2017) "when we hear 'terrorist,' we unconsciously associate it with all manner of information, including, as it so happens, brown and Muslim perpetrators", which I believe is due to major events such as 9/11 being perpetrated by radical Islamists. Although,

what had to be remembered is that terrorism is not exclusive to skin color or religious affiliation. There are radical Islamists, but there are also radicalized far-right extremists that commit horrible, terroristic acts as well. Terrorism must not be boiled down to one subgroup, not when there are others that pose as high a threat as, for example, far-right terrorism does. Furthermore, the aforementioned examples of Muslim racialization draw attention to the ways that white people are also racialized. The majority of those persons charged with far-right extremism or right-wing extremism in the U.S. are white, yet they are not charged with terrorism or deemed terrorists, and this information is not commonly known to the majority of the American public, which still tends to associate terrorist with Muslims (Gross 2020).

According to Corbin (2017) "A Government Accountability Office report found that of the eighty-five extremist incidents that resulted in death since September 12, 2011, right-wing violent extremists were responsible for sixty-two (73 percent) while radical Islamic violent extremists were responsible for twenty-three (27 percent)" showing a not only a significant increase in far-right extremism, but also how far-right extremism has begun to outpace radical Islamist extremism (Corbin 2017). Although, the problem here is that it may not be widely known that these statistics exist. Some politicians tout that left-wing terrorism is problem that needs to be focused on while ignoring the statistically proven growth of far-right extremism. Because of the political salience and potential for greater political influence, many of these politicians continually perpetuate a hyper-focus on what they frame as radical Islam. The truth here is that all of these types of terrorism deserve attention, but some are starting to garner the need for more than others are.

It has been found that "anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiment is more common among Americans who are 45 and older, those who are Republican, and those who are white, which is

seen in the support of former Republican president Donald Trump, who made statements claiming that Islam hates the United states, playing into the belief that all Muslims are terrorists (Considine 2017). This, of course, has never been true, nor will it ever be. Believing that an entire religion has hatred towards a nation and their values is phobic at least to continually perpetuate these ideas further evinces the forms of racialization and racism that mark Muslims as others who do not belong.

Recently, though, the label of terrorist has somewhat moved away from blaming Muslims in entirety (but certainly not abandoning the notion at all) and has begun to focus on another part of the terrorism spectrum: left-wing terrorism. In a presidential debate against now-President Joe Biden, former-president Donald J. Trump refused to renounce white supremacy and instead moved the blame to what he framed as left-wing terrorism, such as ANTIFA (which is actually an ideology, not a terrorist group). This push towards a crackdown on left-wing terrorism came after a summer of protests from the group Black Lives Matter after the unjust killing of George Floyd.

There have been many significant attacks now in the United States by far-right actors. One of particular interest was the events at the United States Capitol Building on January 6th, 2021, discussed in this thesis introduction. Many lawmakers, media outlets, and organizations continue to debate whether or not this was an act of terrorism, with many saying that it was, while others calling the attempt by other names such as 'coup' and 'insurrection'. Many arrests have been made since the events at the Capitol, holding people accountable for the events, but many still have questions pertaining to the 'insurrection'.

One question that remains concerns the preparedness of law enforcement for the events at the Capitol. It is apparent that there was significantly more preparation for the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 than for the attack on the Capitol building. Why is this the case? Were authorities not warned of the impending threat from those that stormed the capitol? Did they not have enough time to prepare for the outrageous event? Of course, after this blunder, the capitol was placed under lockdown and significantly stronger security precautions were put into place in order to protect President Biden and other members of his party on the day of his inauguration. As of now, the capitol still faces threats and remains to be locked down -- but could this all have been avoided had the threat posed by the mob that came from the Trump speech been taken seriously or been perceived as a violent threat?

In relation to the events at the Capitol building, now-President Joe Biden said "'Don't dare call them protesters. They were a riotous mob - insurrectionists, domestic terrorists'" (Panetta 2021). Even the current President of the United States does not have one single name for those who took over the Capitol building. In knowing this, it suggests that there may never be a complete consensus about *what* they were, or rather, how they should be referenced. Along with President Biden, the mayor of Washington D.C., Muriel Bowser, refers to the events as both an insurrection *and* as domestic terrorism. *Time* magazine calls the actors of the events at the Capitol "rioters" (Vance 2021). Terminology continues to fluctuate, with perpetrators being named insurrectionists, a riotous mob, domestic terrorists, protestors, or actors of a coup -- and one will likely refer to them as they please, since there is no official title for those at the Capitol that day.

Along with the problem of naming the actors of the events at the Capitol on January 6th, the lack of preparedness continues to resurface as a major area of contention. It was notable that

even though apparent FBI warning came about the possibility of violence at the Capitol, law enforcement in charge of protecting the building and those inside was hopelessly underprepared for what unfolded. In fact, as mentioned previously, one might draw comparison between the summer of 2020's Black Lives Matter protests, which were met with heavy policing and rather violent tactics apparently meant to 'settle' the crowds. Instead of rubber bullets and tear gas, rioters were met with virtually nothing to settle the mob that had formed at the Capitol. In fact, real gun shots were only fired when some of the event actors broke a window, ending with a woman being shot in the chest and subsequently dying of her wounds (Barrett and Manu 2021).

The problem of defining the events of January 6th is difficult because the defining of terrorist attacks in the United States of America is not a clear-cut process, Anna Meier also acknowledged this after the discussion of the attack by Dylann Roof. The bottom line is, the United States has no federal crime of domestic terrorism, explaining why Dylann Roof could not be charged as a domestic terrorist and why the insurrectionists at the Capitol, in part, are being charged with weapons infractions and other more minor offenses than terrorism.

In total five people died due to events at the Capitol building. One of them was capitol police officer, Brian Sicknick, who was beaten so severely by the mob that he died the next day in the hospital (Healy 2021). Others died of apparent medical emergencies, although "authorities have released limited information about the deaths of the others" (Healy 2021), so it is likely the public will not know exactly what caused their deaths, and only that they were connected to the events at the Capitol building (Healy 2021).

With so much violence and death, one might wonder why there wouldn't be more preparation for an apparently predicted event. In fact, many have called out the preparedness for

the Black Lives Matter protests for being far-more surrounded by law enforcement presence, unlike January 6th. Far more people were also injured by law enforcement in the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, with some losing eyes, suffering skull injuries, and sickened by tear gas. Meanwhile, these crowd control tactics were not seen at the Capitol insurrection, also bringing about the persistent question of *Why?*

Some of the deadliest terrorist attacks since 9/11 have actually not been committed by Islamic extremists, but rather far-right extremists. In fact, in 2018 (according to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index), "the deadliest attack was a mass shooting by an anti-Semitic extremist at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in which eleven people were killed and seven others were injured, including the assailant and four police officers" (Institute for Economics & Peace 2019). This is simply more evidence that shows the severity of the rising problem of the far-right in America.

Research has shown that "there has been a surge in far-right terrorism over the past decade" (GTI 2019) from Dylann Roof to Robert Bowers and many other events that have taken place with far-right motivations (Institute for Economics & Peace 2019). This is a trend that needs to be given more attention seeing as it has become a significant trend and is having a significant impact on the lives of American citizens, whether they notice it or not.

As of July 18th, 2019 a bill has been introduced to designate Antifa as a domestic terrorist organization, driven largely by the efforts of Donald Trump and members of his political party. This will be interesting because Antifa is an ideology referring to anti-fascism and is not actually an organized group that has actors. Some may subscribe to the Antifa ideology, but there is not an actual group by the name of Antifa. The focus placed on Antifa over other pressing issues, such as the far right, is to say the least, almost a scapegoat. Instead of focusing on the

real, particularly white home-grown terrorists, some would rather place focus their energy towards an 'organization' not as associated with white people, and rather more people of color.

This brings around again the incorrect claims that Antifa was responsible for the capitol insurrection on January 6th, 2021. As Anna Meier explained, if the attempt had been successful, there would have been a highly coveted victory to claim. Since it was not, Antifa (and Black Lives Matter) became a scapegoat, someone to place the blame on and skirt the responsibility of the failed event. This is an interesting concept to take into consideration seeing as it is entirely possible that there would have been a different outcome in this sense had the insurrection at the capitol been successful.

In saying that the word 'insurrection', it is now known that some Republican Senators refused to vote to honor the United States Capitol Police in their efforts in the attempt on the Capitol on January 6th, 2021. They did this due to the language of the resolution proposed by Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House. The three Republican representatives from Texas said it was the language of the resolutions that tarnished the resolution and thus made it so that they could not support it, even though they *did* want to honor United States Capitol Police and their efforts during the events of January 6th. According to the Texas Tribune, the resolution states specifically that "on January 6, 2021, a mob of insurrectionists forced its way into the U.S. Capitol building and congressional office buildings and engaged in acts of vandalism, looting and violently attacked Capitol Police officers", showing what I believe to be the tarnishing language, the use of the word 'insurrection' (Livingston 2021).

Some do not agree that what happened that day was an insurrection. One of those in that party is Sen. Ron Johnson, a Republican from Wisconsin, who did not see the armed 'insurrection' as such. According to the Washington Post, he even stated:

"When you hear the word 'armed,' don't you think of firearms? Here's the questions I would have liked to ask: How many firearms were confiscated? How many shots were fired? (Elfrink 2021)*"*

This quote shows opposition due to the nature of the insurrection itself. It is not one because, according to Senator Ron Johnson, not enough firearms were present and not enough shots were fired. One might assume that his vision of an armed insurrection looks something more like the front lines of a war, and not what happened at the Capitol. Although just because his vision did not match up with what happened doesn't mean that the entire event is not void and loses its insurrectionist title. It is simply one opinion of a definition, a difficult and albeit frustrating pattern that emerges when trying to define events as terroristic, particularly when the perpetrators are white. This, I argue, directly shapes the perspectives about terrorist designations.

Anna Meier because broadly studies what terrorism is and how governments understand that term as the people who most often apply the term terrorism to different actors and who are able to enact the heaviest consequences for actors who are labeled that way. Her work is relevant to mine in that she was able to answer questions I had about American terrorism, as well as the racial and gendered aspects of terrorism.

Meier was able to offer up her own perspective on the events that happened at the nation's Capital building on January 6th, 2021. According to Meier, she believes that the events at the Capitol building were *not* domestic terrorism. In fact, she would not call the events at the capitol terrorism at all and believes that people should move away from using the term to describe events.

She gives her own definition of terrorism as a form of violence or sometimes even just political contention, protest or things that are not violent necessarily that challenge the established status quo society. Considering this definition, one can see how Meier would not refer to the events of January 6th as terroristic, and why she might refrain from using the term so as to not dilute its applicability. At the same time, her discussion of a lack of comprehension and consistently applied federal definition of terrorism in the U.S. could also hinder the designation of the Capitol insurrection as domestic terrorism.

Meier was also able to give a statement on her view of how some allege that Black Lives Matter (a movement protesting police brutality) and ANTIFA (a far-left ideology meaning antifascist), were involved in the events at the United States capitol, to which she states that there is no evidence that those or any other leftist groups were involved in the events at the United States capitol, to which she states there is no evidence that those or any other leftist groups were involved in the events. An important perspective that she presents is how she sees those who are making the claims about ANTIFA and Black Lives Matter (BLM) involvement at the capitol. She says that the people making those claims "know what they're doing" and that if the attempt on the capitol had been successful, then there would have been no claims of Black Lives Matter and ANTIFA involvement. There would have been no need to place blame on someone else.

Finally, it is apparent that the difference between Black Lives Matter protests and the Capitol insurrection is stark: one was fighting against racial injustice in the name of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor (and many, many others), while the other was trying to 'stop the steal' and fight 'election fraud', allegedly inspired by the words of then President Donald Trump. The majority of the crowd at the capitol insurrection was white, while the majority of the crowd at the Black Lives Matter protests were people of color. This makes

the security that was placed for both events questionable, seeing as one has significantly

more than the other.

THE RACIALIZATION OF MUSLIMS

According to anthropologist Junaid Rana '''Islamophobia'' refers to a fear or hatred of

Islam and Muslims", which has had a significant an uptick in the aftermath of 9/11 (Rana 2011).

Although, even before 9/11 Islamophobia was alive and well. In instances such as the Oklahoma

City Bombing by Timothy McVeigh, Muslims were initially blamed for the attack before it was

discovered that it was in fact carried out by a far-right extremist. This calls attention to the

relationship between Islamophobia and racism.

When looking at racism, one finds that there is biological and cultural racism. Though

race is a sociopolitical construct, many still consider race to be biological. As such, biological

racism is based on physical features such as one's skin color. Cultural racism refers to the

prejudices against one's culture rather than their physical appearance. In the case of Muslims,

"Islam as religion, then, is translated as a cultural practice," rather than a race, "and

Islamophobia results from a belief in Islam's cultural or religious inferiority" (Selod 2019),

which one may see stemming from groups such as white supremacists who believe their race to

be superior to others, including Muslims. Thus, Islamophobia acts as cultural racism, as there is

prejudice against the culture and not the physical characteristic of the person being discriminated

against. At the same time, Muslims are racialized as terrorists by the American public, and this

includes the ways that people are physically racialized by skin color, hair texture, and style of

dress. People hear a certain name such as Muhammed or see hijabs and make the connection

between Islam and terrorism, shaped by events such as 9/11 and the 2015 San Bernardino

shooting.

Considering this, it is shown that "'Muslim' in the U.S. is simultaneously a religious category and a category that encompasses a broad concept of race that connects a history of Native America to black America and immigrant America in the consolidation of anti–Muslim racism", which comes to the point of explaining how Muslims are discriminated as a race, even though Islam is a religion, not a race (Rana 2011). This brings in the cultural side of racism, where people are able to be discriminated based on cultural features and not physical features such as one's skin color.

According to scholar Craig Considine (2017) there are eight components and characteristics of Islamophobia. They are as follows:

(1) Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change.

(2) Islam is seen as separate and Other. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them, and does not influence them.

(3) Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist.

(4) Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a clash of civilizations

(5) Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used to acquire political or military advantage.

(6) Criticism of the West by Muslims is rejected out of hand.

(7) Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.

(8) Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal

These components and characteristics are seen in everyday life in the way people view

and think of Muslims. In fact, "Some Republican presidential hopefuls and other like-minded

figures have spoken about preventing refugees and in some cases Muslims from entering the

United States because they might be "terrorists." (Osei-Opare 2016). After being elected, former
U.S. president

Donald J. Trump went so far as to actually ban Muslims from certain countries from entering the

United States of America. This extremely xenophobic ban was, as stated before, spoken about

on the campaign trail and actually enacted once Trump was sworn into office, showing the ease

with which campaign rallying cries can manifest through executive orders.

During a 2016 interview with CNN, Trump additionally stated, "I think Islam hates us".

I believe such statements snowballed into his initial attempt and eventual success enacting the

Muslim Ban (Corbin 2017). Relatedly, researcher Craig Considine notes that Moving from this
that "the

Americans who voice an unfavorable opinion of Islam may have sympathized with Donald

Trump's call for a 'total and complete shutdown on Muslims entering the United States' during

the 2016 presidential election" (Considine 2017).

Furthermore, highlighting component number four from Craig Considine, a component

that I argue is a key area to focus on when understanding the racialization of terrorism, we see

the association of Islam with violence and aggression to be common. Afterall, in order to be

terroristic, it seems that many non-Muslims perceive Islam and its followers as inherently

violent. In realty, Islam is a peaceful religion that does not typically subscribe to violence any

more than Christianity or Judaism.

Research has shown that since 9/11, most Muslim-American communities have been very

vocal in denouncing terrorist violence.[8] This does illustrate attempts to show that their

communities are not associated with the ones connected to the attacks on the World Trade Center and to further practice a type of American national belonging. This is an important distinction to make considering the bias that is held against Muslims since the events of 9/11, and even before then. Many associate Muslims and Islam with terrorism, and it may take a lot for this bias to subside, or at least become less common than it is at the moment (Corbin 2017).

Furthermore, according to Rana: "racializing Islam through social identifications takes place through a kind of translation of the body and its comportment via a combination of identifiers, such as dress, behavior, and phenotypic expression", which is seen prominently in how Muslims are racialized in America (Rana 2011). This is seen in how after the events of 9/11 "Muslim men were targeted because of their name, while Muslim women were surveilled because of the hijab" (Selod 2019), showing that the racialization of Muslims is not only prominent after 9/11, but also gendered. This means that Muslim bodies are racialized based off of their gender -- for women, it is their clothing, particularly their hijab, and for men it is their name. Assumptions are made about Muslims based on these things alone sometimes, with names of even twelve-year-olds being placed on watch lists after the events of 9/11 in the United States (Selod, 2019).

Since 9/11 and even before the events at the World Trade Center, there has been the "stereotype of the 'Muslim terrorist'" which has affected how the people of American see Muslims. Many people in America see Muslims as terrorists, and this originates from events before 9/11, such as the Oklahoma City Bombing. In fact, this view has become common and in the 2016 campaigns for presidential election, Republican candidates went so far as to make strongly Islamophobic statements such as the aforementioned "'Islam hates us,' '[Muslims are]

uncorked animals,' and 'I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation'",

showing the bias towards Muslims as well as the place that this bias has taken in politics (Corbin

2017).

Scholarship on representation has shown that almost exclusively, Arabs and Muslims are

portrayed as terrorists and other negative characters in the media rather than typical, everyday

people (Corbin 2017) which only adds to the bias and stereotype discussed above. This is

detrimental to the image of the Muslim, which was already significantly affected by the events of

9/11 and further affected by the negative media portrayal.

The racialization of terrorism is deeply engrained in American society. It is found that

"the mistaken belief that white people are not terrorists results in security blind spots that make

the United States less safe" (Corbin 2017), leading to also a neglect of problems that have begun

to present themselves, such as the rise of far-right terrorism in America. It is important to keep

the notion that white people, along with Muslims and other races and religions, can be terrorists.

One must not avoid the idea that white people can be terrorists, especially when there are

significant terror attacks perpetrated by whites such as the Oklahoma City Bombing by Timothy

McVeigh and the Pittsburgh Synagogue shooting committed by Robert Bowers. "'With non-

Muslims, the media bends over backwards to identify some psychological traits that may have

pushed them over the edge. Whereas if it is a Muslim, the assumption is they must have done it

because of their religion.'" (Corbin 2017) showing the difference between how different

perpetrators of violent terrorist attacks are treated and how they are perceived by the public.

"In a study on news coverage from LexisNexis Academic and CNN for all terrorist

attacks in the United States between 2011 and 2015, researchers found that news outlets gave

drastically more coverage to attacks by Muslims, particularly foreign-born Muslims—even

though these attacks are far less common than other kinds of terrorist attacks", which shows that

it is not just the general public, but also the media that perceives Muslims as terrorists and seems to dramatize them more (Considine 2017). This affects the public because news outlets are seemingly reliable sources for news, and if mainly coverage is given to Muslim-perpetrated attacks, then the perception may become that most attacks are carried out by Muslims, which has become untrue in America.

Moving forward, Considine (2017) states that "American Muslims appear to be caught in a 'clash of racializations' between exclusionary notions of American national identity and racialized 'Muslimness,' both of which operate to expose Muslims to racist activity while concomitantly excluding them from the protection of the state" showing the strife that Muslims go through due to the cultural racism that they face (Considine 2017). Even though Muslims are citizens of the United States, they do not receive 'protections' that typical American citizens would be due to the racism that plays out based off of their religion's association with violence and terrorism, namely, I argue, due to the attacks on the Twin Towers on 9/11 (Selod 2014). Even though they are American, Muslims and followers of Islam are seen as a dangerous 'other' that needs to be surveilled and protected against in America, even though Jihadist terrorism is becoming less and less of a threat in exchange for far-right terrorism growing. Meanwhile, research shows that those attacks carried out by Muslim perpetrators received approximately 449% more coverage than those carried out by non-Muslim individuals, showing significant focus on the terroristic attacks of Muslims, rather than equal coverage across the spectrum of terrorism (Considine 2017).

Considine states that "The notion that Islamophobia intersects with race is rooted in the idea that race is a social construct rather than a biological fact or reality" which calls attention to how race is a product of social and political processes, rather than grounded in biology

(Considine 2017). Even though Islam is a religion, not a race, it is treated as such. Those who want to treat Muslims as an 'other' are able to do so by placing them into their own category of race, essentially creating or, rather, *constructing* a place for them in the world of 'other'. It is cultural factors, rather than biological factors, that one identifies Muslims with, such as the wearing of the hijab or being named, for example a traditionally Muslim name such as Mohammed.

As stated by Corbin (2017) "we regularly witness the tendency to leap to the conclusion that Muslims were responsible for terror attacks" which as stated before has already been seen in the instance of the Oklahoma City Bombing on April 19th, 1995. Initially the event was assumed to have been carried out by Muslims, but later it was found that this was not the case when it was instead discovered that, according to the FBI, the real actor of the event was one Timothy McVeigh, an ex-Army soldier (FBI 2016). This shows the presence of Islamophobia in the country long before the events of 9/11. Although, it is fair to say that the events on 9/11 lead to an increase in fear of Islam and blaming events on followers of the religion.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I discuss the racialization of terrorism and how it is a difficult phenomenon to define. Along with this, I also discuss the racialization of Muslims and how they are unfairly and disproportionately connected to terrorism due to previous attacks by radical Islamists, the most significant example being that of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and attempted attack on the White House/Capitol building on 9/11. Overall, I work to show that there is a racial aspect to designating a potential terroristic attack actually as terrorism. I also work to show how difficult it is to define terrorism in a broad and general scope, which is due in part to

many scholars looking at terrorism from their own lens -- psychologists look at it from a psychological perspective, sociologists look at it from a sociological perspective, and so on. This, along with other factors, allows for coming up with a broad and general definition of terrorism to be a difficult task.

Overall, one primary goal of research was to explore who a terrorist is and who isn't, rather, who is *called* a terrorist and who is not. In this sense, my research has shown that processes of racialization play a role in these determinations, particularly when examining terrorism along racial and religious lines in the United States. I believe that there is a racial aspect, in which someone who is black, or Muslim is referred to as a terrorist far before a white person might be. This is seen in instances from Dylann Roof, ANTIFA, and the insurrection on the capitol on January 6th. These are all events and 'organizations' that have been called terroristic, but the question is: What is the *official* designation?

This thesis works to illuminate the world of terrorism and how different events are labeled. It works to look at a brief history of terrorism in America, as well as examine the many different definitions of terrorism that were presented by various authors and experts. I present similarities and differences in these definitions that show nebulous and overlapping definitions of terrorism. Definitions of terrorism will continue to be formatted and reformatted, I predict, and they will continue to be shaped by such factors as scholarly discipline and one's history and personal relationship to terrorism. As seen with Dr. Maniszewska's definition, she includes media, which in her opinion and scholarly work is important to eb included in the definition of terrorism, as she sees it. As with Saul's definition, it is seen that they make a specific jab at financial gain, making sure that their definition points out that financial gain is *not* a motivator of terrorism.

In this thesis I highlight four sections that are meant to help the reader: understanding the complexity of defining terrorism (Defining Terrorism*)*, the history and presence of terrorism in America (*Terrorism in America)*, the racialization of Muslims (*Racialization of Muslims)*, and finally the general racialization of terrorism (*Racialization of Terrorism)*. These sections together are meant to answer the two questions posed in the introduction of this thesis.

1. How does the inconsistency with the definition of terrorism shape the applicability of the definition?

2. What role does racialization as a process play in the determination of an act as terrorism? The answers to these questions can be found in analysis of the information presented in this paper.

How the definition of terrorism plays a role in determining and act as terrorism can be best understood through the instance of Dylann Roof. The way terrorism was defined in his situation legally lead to him being unable to be charged with terrorism, thus he was *not* a terrorist, even though he was charged with hate crimes. This can also be seen in the events at the capitol on January 6th, 2021 where no official call on terrorism has been determined due to the nebulous nature of defining terrorism and the event itself. There is no federal criminal offense designated as for domestic terrorism. This is the main reason that makes the official labeling of the events above so complicated. Even though people can call it as they see it, including scholars and even law enforcement officials, legally it cannot be called domestic terrorism and must be differently categorized, which in the case of Dylann Roof was 'hate crime' and in the case of January 6th, 'insurrection'.

Another example that I explore in this thesis is the insurrection that occurred on January 6th, 2021 at the United States Capitol Building during the vote to certify the 2020 United States

Presidential election, thus finalizing now-President Joseph R. Biden as President-elect of the United States. It is difficult to succinctly define the events on that day as terrorism or even as an insurrection due to many official opinions on the matter (which is seen through discussion of several Texas Senator's problems with the language of the resolution posed to honor the Capitol Police for their efforts on the day of the insurrection), as well as official definitions of domestic terrorism and laws pertaining to it. Even though the United States has the USA Patriot Act that defines Domestic Terror and is meant to deal with extremists in America, it is not effective against those that carried out the insurrection if people refuse to define the acts as domestic terror, or even an armed insurrection.

As for the role that race plays in the determination of an act as terrorism, this thesis has outlined the roles that racialization and racial biases play. As seen in the section *Racialization of Muslims*, there are major negative associations connected to Muslims due to racist ideologies and events of the past that now associate Muslims with terrorism. Islamophobia is alive and well in America and will likely continue to be present in America until we as a country are able to reckon with the roots of anti-Muslim racism and admit that there are other, growing problems with white supremacist violence and the rise of far-right ideology and violent acts on present and rising.

In comparison with the domestic and global attention given to Jihadist terrorism, not nearly as much focused is placed on far right and terrorism including mainly white actors as is on Jihadist terrorism. This, I propose, is due to several factors, particularly the major event of 9/11 and deeply embedded forms of Islamophobia which harden the perception of Muslims as terrorist. Although, as it has been shown in the body of the thesis, there have also been several significant attacks committed by white people that are not an associated factor with terrorism. Granted, due to the nature of the attacks, such as in the case of Dylann Roof and the insurrection

of January 6th, 2021, the events could not have been defined as terrorism, as says the criteria presented by Anna Meier through an interview. Thus, I feel that this shows the racial aspect of terrorism. Major events have been committed by both Muslims and whites, and yet the association with terrorism often still stands with Muslims mainly due to the events of 9/11.

Finally, in this thesis I discuss many cases of terrorism, from 9/11 (briefly) to Dylann Roof and the insurrection on January 6th, 2021. In my discussion of these cases, it is seen that the racialization of them, as well as the difficulty in defining them as terrorism. I show that the defining of terrorism is nebulous in nature and not necessarily an easy task to delineate. The definition of terrorism, though involving aspects that each definition *does* have in common, such as the association with politics, is difficult when trying to be made broad. The bottom line that I come to is that it cannot be broad, even though it should be more comprehensive in order to better encompass events and actors that deserve to be treated as terrorism/terrorists. There are too many opinions and ideology that scholars and official organizations put into their definitions that make it difficult to find points of agreement without a definition being, hypothetically, one hundred lines long.

Terrorism has been and continues to be a growing problem not just in the world, but also in the United States specifically. It is a problem that requires focus and significant study in order for us to fully understand it and have a chance at defeating it someday. Defining terrorism is difficult and not clear cut, and there are great racial associations made with terrorism that make the determination of an event as terrorism deeply challenging. In this thesis I have examined these challenges and hope that I have shed light on the arduous nature of defining terrorism as a way to illuminate the world's view of terrorism and its definition. There must be collective efforts, at the domestic and global level, to address how racialization processes shape terrorist designations. We must work together to find more common ground on defining terrorism, as well

as working to develop a law that designates acts legally as domestic terrorism, so that those who carry out terroristic acts can be properly labeled. There must be collective movement in this endeavor. There is still much to come in the future.

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