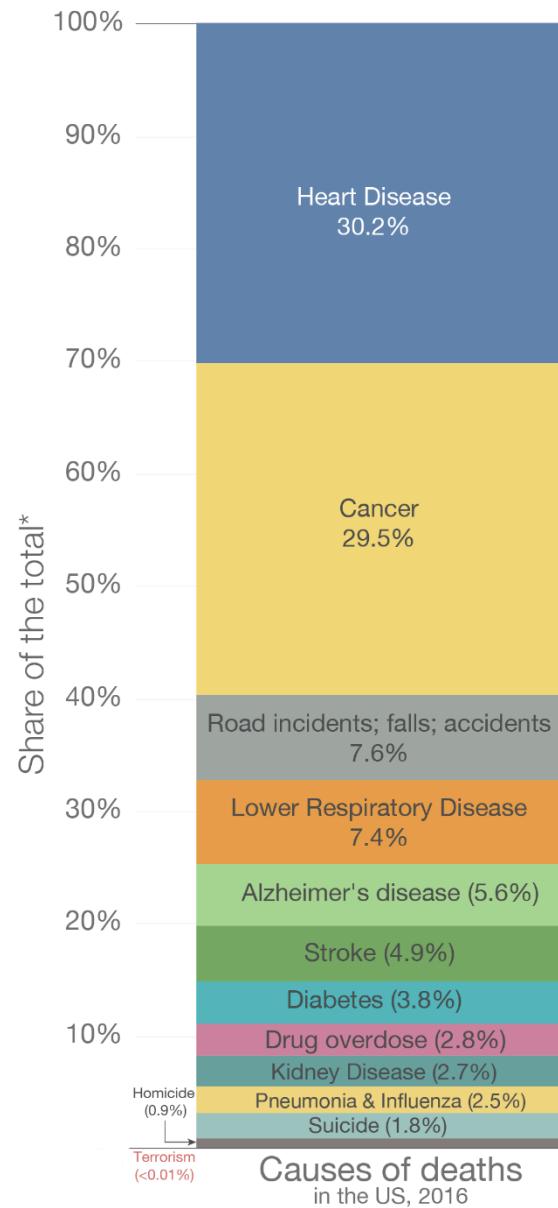
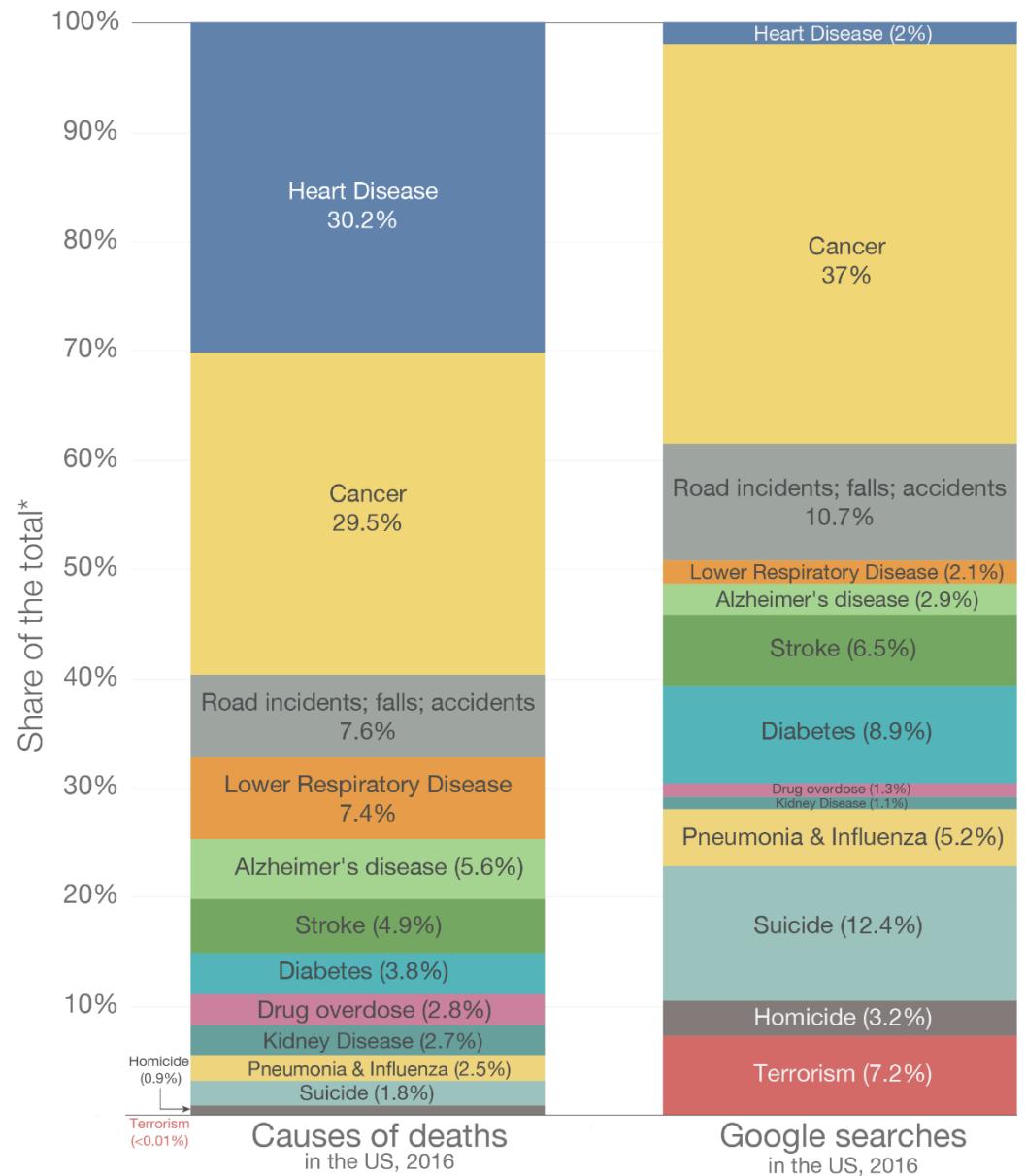


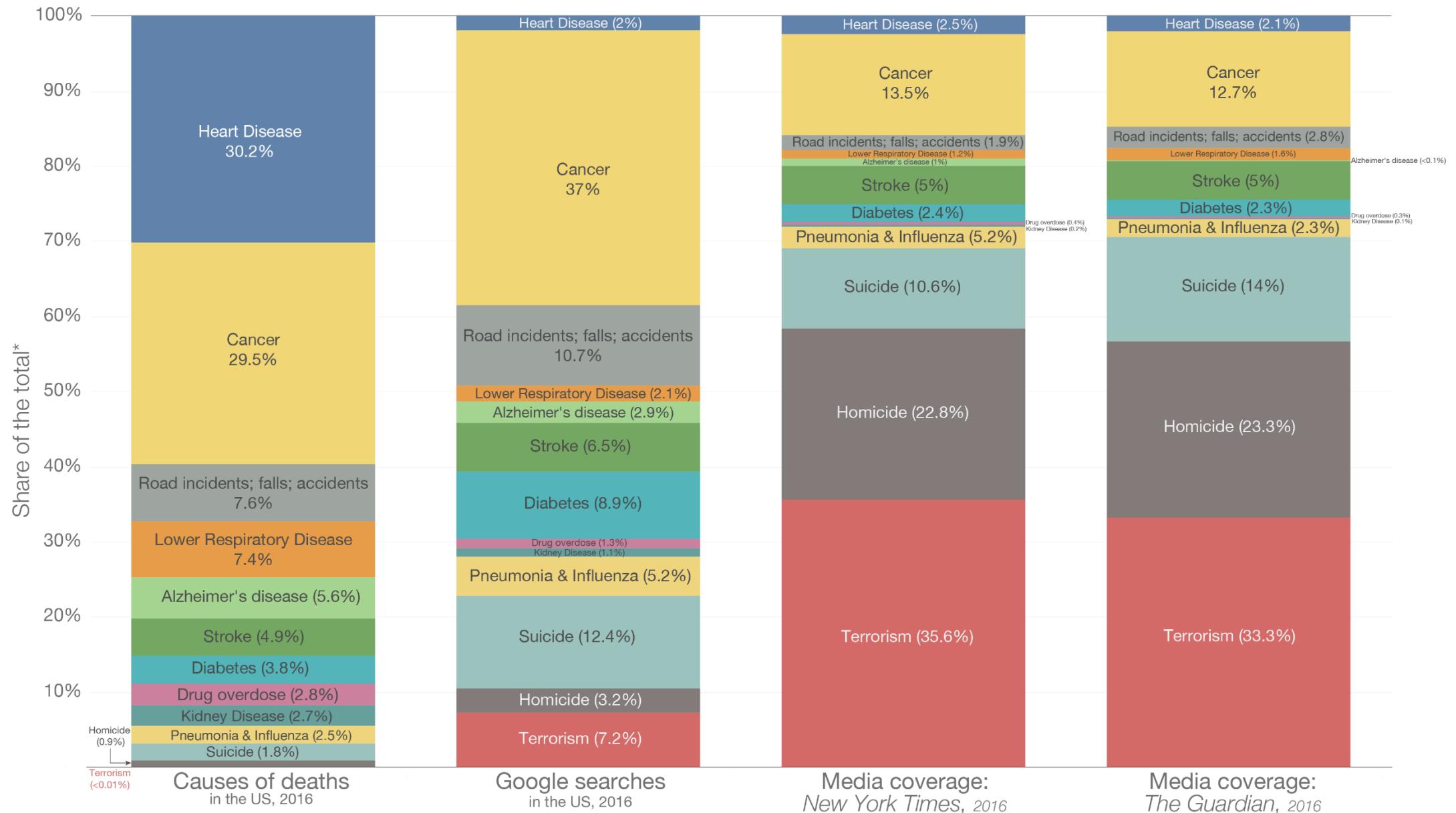
Domestic Terrorism and Ontology Engineering

John Beverley

Assistant Professor, *University at Buffalo*
Co-Director, National Center for Ontological Research
Affiliate Faculty, *Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science*

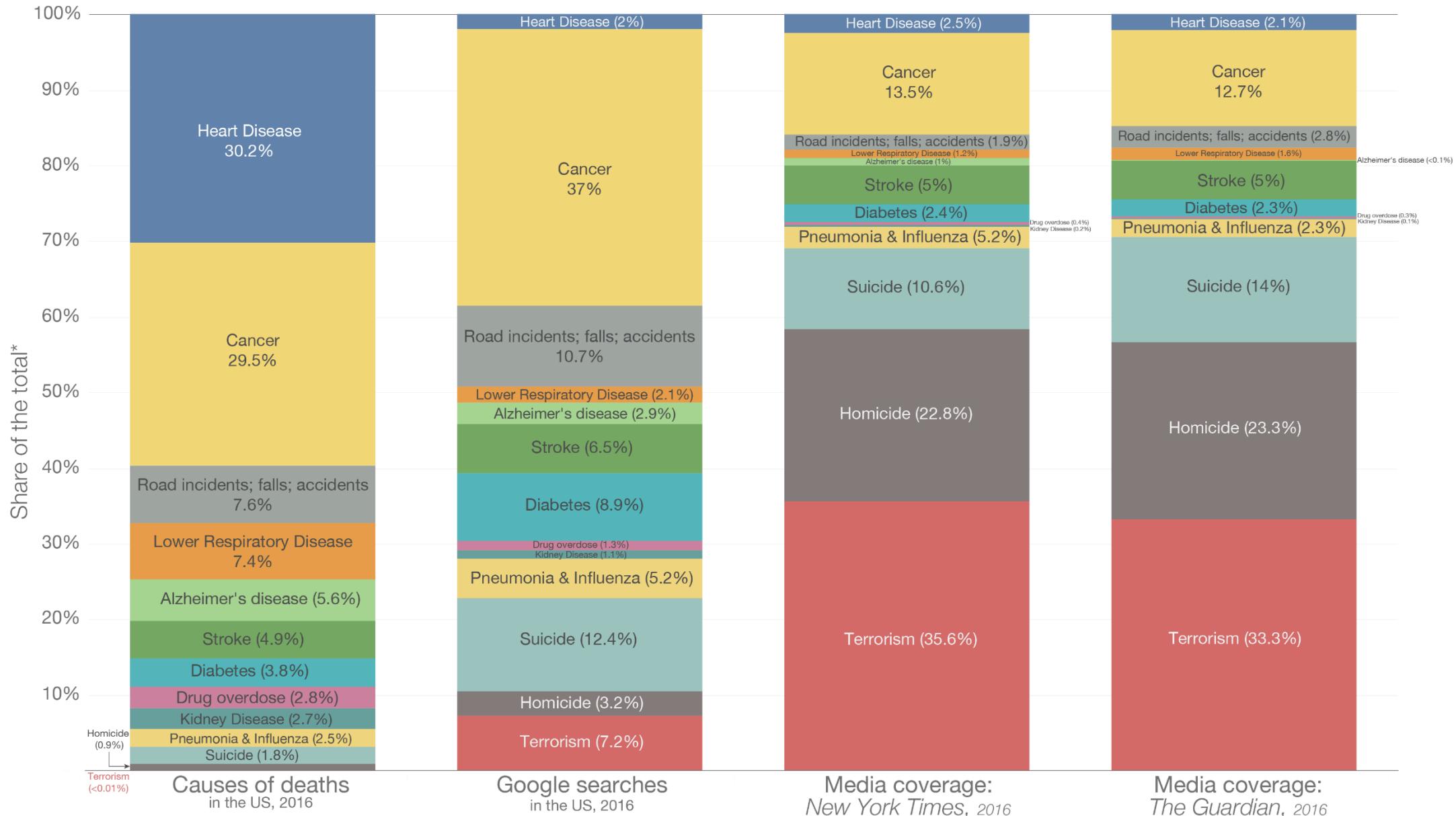






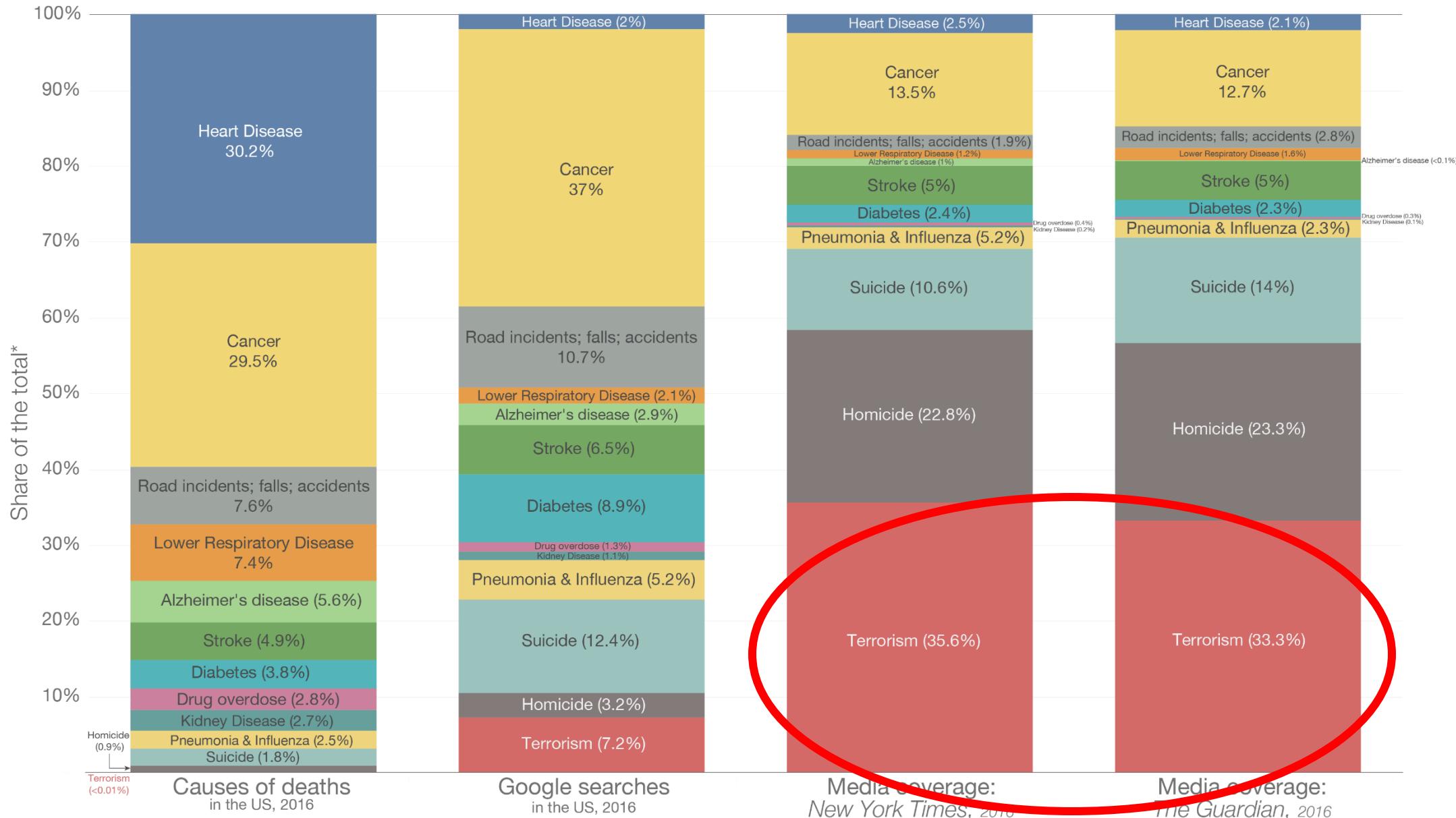
Causes of death in the US

What Americans die from, what they search on Google, and what the media reports on



Causes of death in the US

What Americans die from, what they search on Google, and what the media reports on



Outline

- Order of the Day
- Defining Terrorism
- Ontology of Terrorism

Outline

- Order of the Day
- Defining Terrorism
- Ontology of Terrorism

Origins of Terrorism

- 18th century France was a country in financial crisis
- The king could increase taxation by decree, but doing so would risk upsetting regional nobility
- Attempts to increase taxation led to the need to convene the “Estates-General” of 1789

Estates-General of 1789

- Composed of three ‘estates’
 - First Estate – Clergy
 - Second Estate – Nobility
 - Third Estate – Commoners
- Any proposal must pass 2/3 majority; the first and second estates could outvote the third despite representing less than 5% of the population



National Assembly

- During the Estates-General of 1789, the third estate declared itself to be a new “National Assembly” for which any existing taxes were illegal
- The new National Assembly insisted on a new constitution
- Louis XVI relented and commanded the first and second estate to join the National Assembly...



Reign of Terror

- “Terrorism” was coined during the French Revolution to describe the actions of the Jacobin Club which governed France following deposition of the monarchy

Reign of Terror

- “Terrorism” was coined during the French Revolution to describe the actions of the Jacobin Club which governed France following deposition of the monarchy

“Terror is the order of the day”

-French National Convention

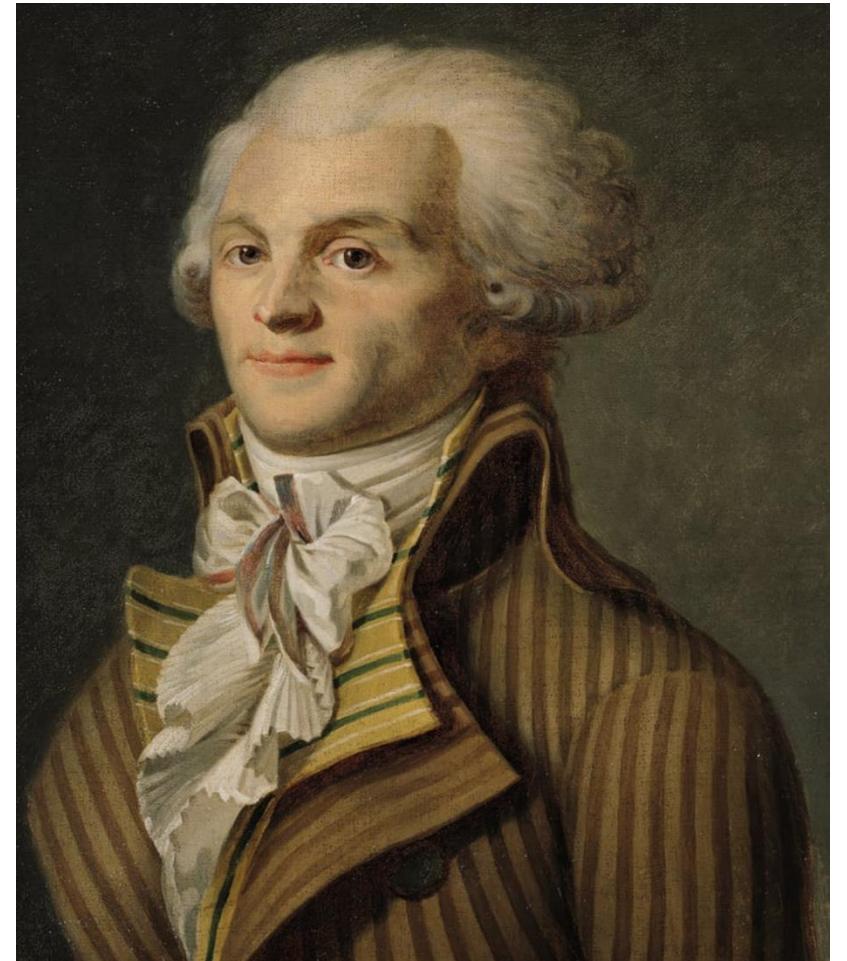


Reign of Terror

- “Terrorism” was coined during the French Revolution to describe the actions of the Jacobin Club which governed France following deposition of the monarchy

**“Terror is nothing other than justice,
prompt, severe, inflexible”**

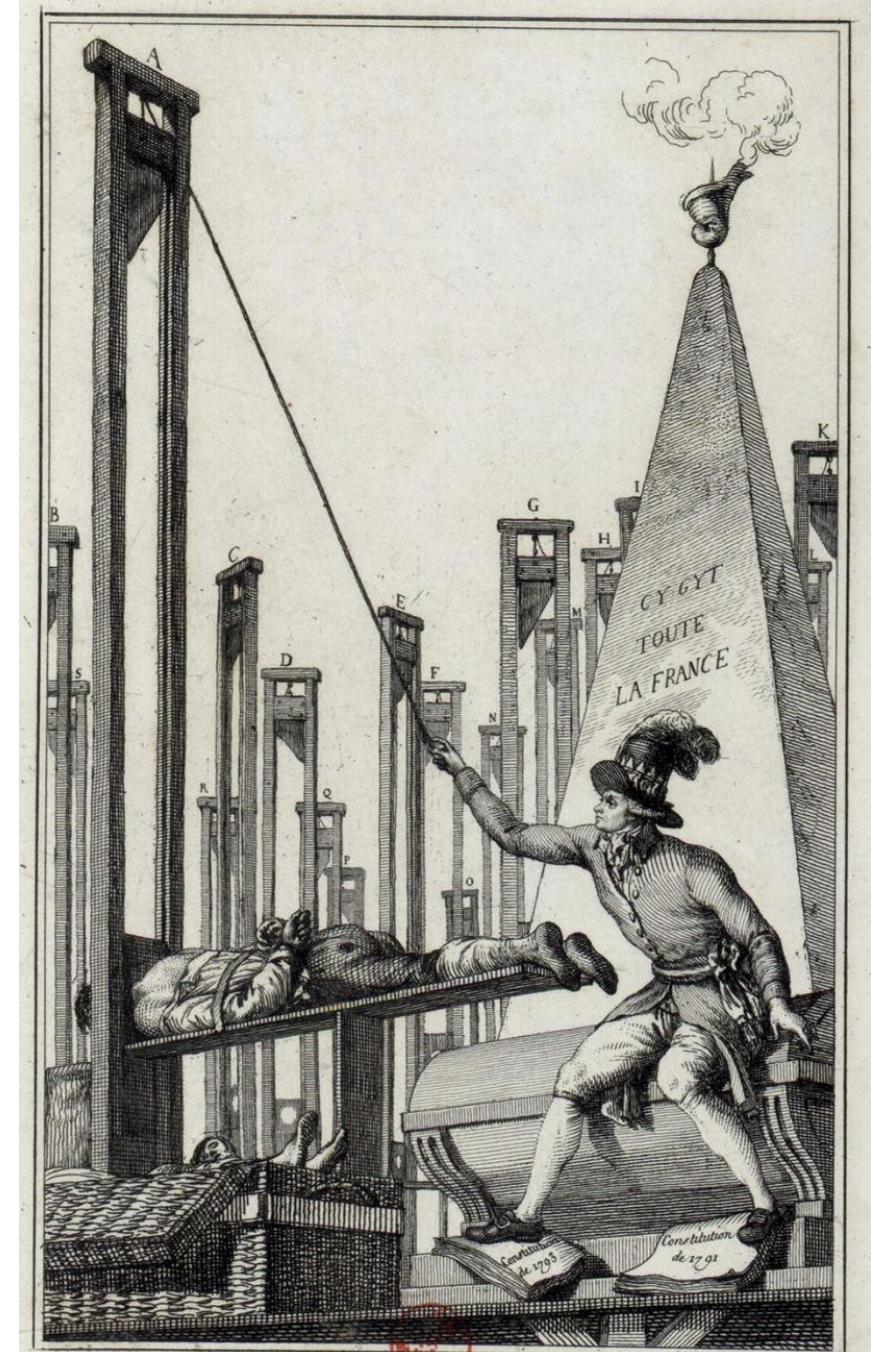
-Maximilien Robespierre



Reign of Terror

- “Terrorism” was coined during the French Revolution to describe the actions of the Jacobin Club which governed France following deposition of the monarchy

Illustration of Robespierre placing the executioner under the guillotine after having everyone else executed



Detour

- It is sometimes claimed that we cannot justifiably judge historical figures, especially those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed

Detour

- It is sometimes claimed that we cannot justifiably judge historical figures, especially those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed

I DISAGREE

Detour

- It is sometimes claimed that we cannot justifiably judge historical figures, especially those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed

I DISAGREE

- George Washington was by my reckoning **a great man**

Judgment

- It is sometimes claimed that we cannot justifiably judge historical figures, especially those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed

I DISAGREE

- George Washington was by my reckoning **a great man**

JUDGMENT

Detour

- It is sometimes claimed that we cannot justifiably judge historical figures, especially those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed

I DISAGREE

- George Washington was also a **slave owner**

Judgment

- It is sometimes claimed that we cannot justifiably judge historical figures, especially those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed

I DISAGREE

- George Washington was also a **slave owner**

JUDGMENT

Epistemic Situation

- We **can** justifiably judge historical figures, even those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed
- What we **should not** do, however, is impose our epistemic situation on them when judging

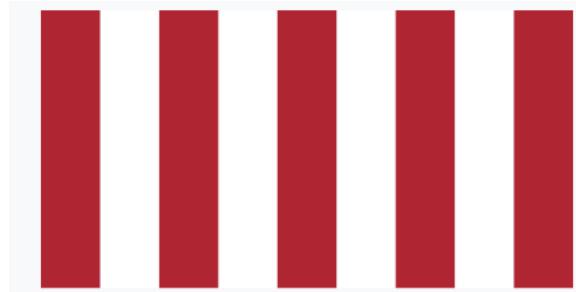
Epistemic Situation

- We **can** justifiably judge historical figures, even those from significantly distinct cultures, generations passed
- What we **should not** do, however, is impose our epistemic situation on them when judging

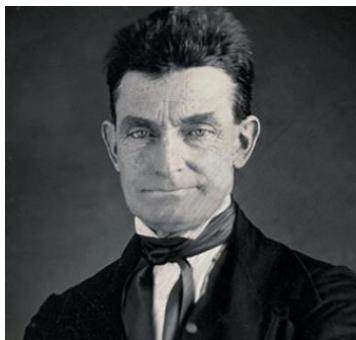
**ARE YOU SURE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ADVOCATED
TERROR?**

Order of the Centuries

- Sons of Liberty were instrumental in activities sparking rebellion in the 13 colonies in 1776



- Abolitionist John Brown organized armed opposition to slavery in 1859



Order of the Centuries

- Irish Republicans staged at insurrection in Ireland in 1916 during Easter week in opposition to British rule

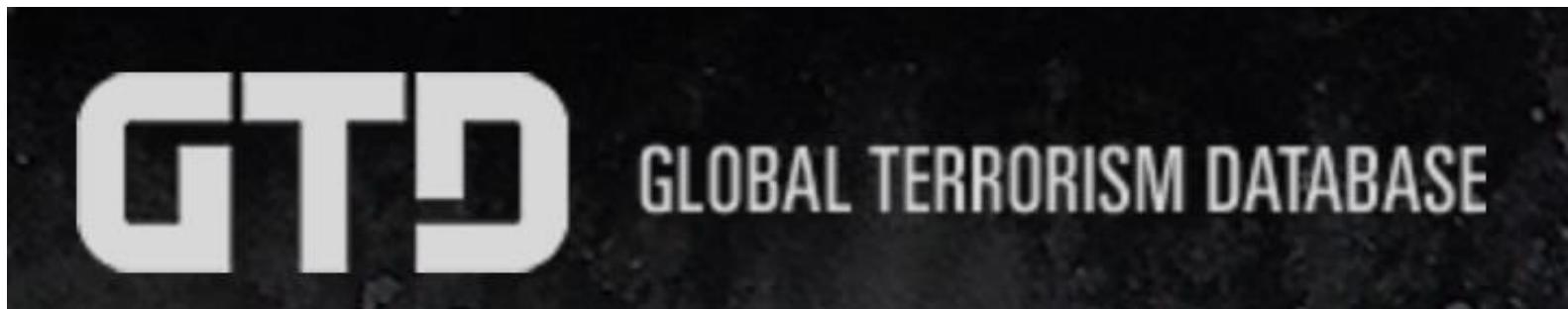


- Cuban revolution witnessed the overthrow of Batista's dictatorship in 1959



(In)famy

- These (in)famous examples have been arguably classified as terroristic or involving terrorist activities
- (In)famous cases are, however, **vastly outnumbered** by less well known examples
- Globally, about 1/2000 deaths were due to terrorism in 2019; that is a **considerable amount of data**



The Global Terrorism Database™ (GTD) is an open-source database including information on terrorist events around the world from 1970 through 2020 (with additional annual updates planned for the future). Unlike many other event databases, the GTD includes systematic data on domestic as well as transnational and international terrorist incidents that have occurred during this time period and now includes more than 200,000 cases. For each GTD incident, information is available on the date and location of the incident, the weapons used and nature of the target, the number of casualties, and--when identifiable--the group or individual responsible.

- Contains information on over 200,000 terrorist attacks
- Currently the most comprehensive unclassified database on terrorist attacks in the world
- Includes information on more than 88,000 bombings, 19,000 assassinations, and 11,000 kidnappings since 1970
- Includes information on at least 45 variables for each case, with more recent incidents including information on more than 120 variables
- More than 4,000,000 news articles and 25,000 news sources were reviewed to collect incident data from 1998 to 2017 alone

Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>

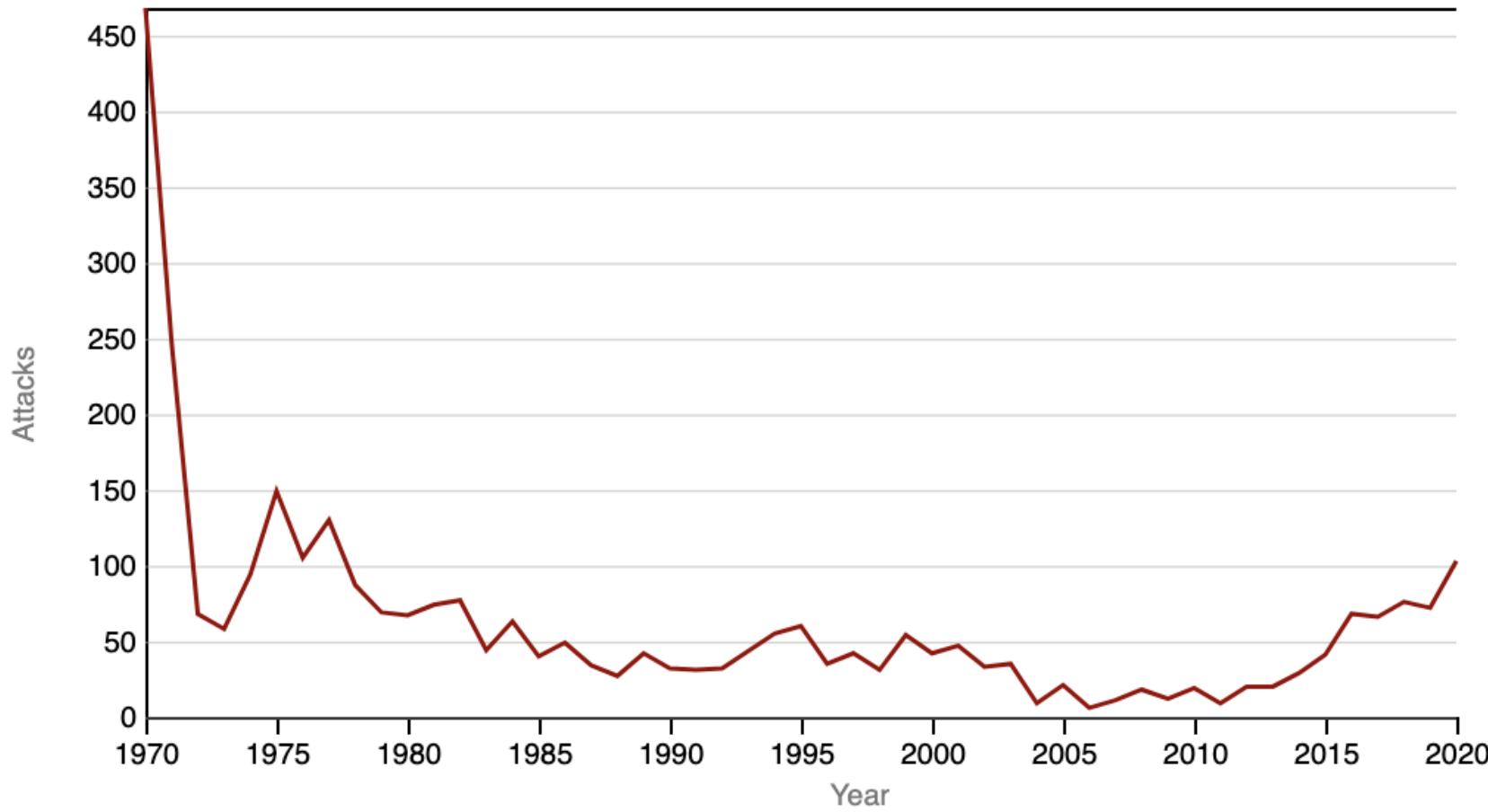
Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>

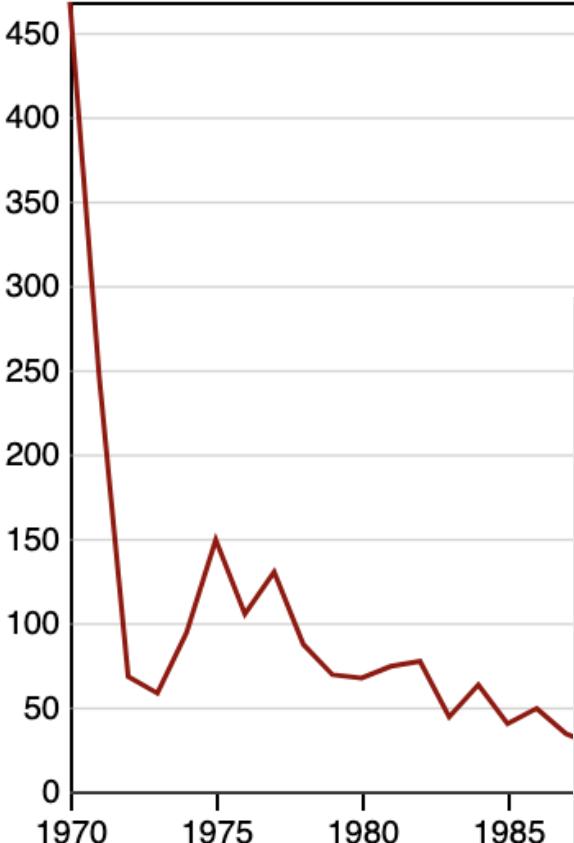
- Potential scope:
 - Domestic paramilitary organizations
 - International paramilitary groups
 - Kinetic and digital violence





● Attacks

Attacks



● Attacks

GTD ID	DATE	COUNTRY	CITY	PERPETRATOR GROUP	FATALITIES	INJURED	TARGET TYPE
202012280022	2020-12-28	United States	Springfield	White supremacists/nationalists	0	0	Religious Figures/Institutions
202012250003	2020-12-25	United States	Nashville	Conspiracy theory extremists	1	3	Business,Private Citizens & Property
202012150028	2020-12-15	United States	Springfield	White supremacists/nationalists	0	0	Religious Figures/Institutions
202012130044	2020-12-13	United States	New York City	Anti-globalization extremists	1	0	Religious Figures/Institutions
202012130030	2020-12-13	United States	Springfield	White supremacists/nationalists	0	0	Religious Figures/Institutions
202011150020	2020-11-15	United States	Brewster	Unknown	0	0	Religious Figures/Institutions
202011150019	2020-11-15	United States	Brewster	Unknown	0	0	Religious Figures/Institutions
202011110022	2020-11-11	United States	Washington county	Unknown	0	0	Police
202011080029	2020-11-08	United States	Seattle	Left-wing extremists (suspected)	0	1	Private Citizens & Property
202011080028	2020-11-08	United States	Seattle	Left-wing extremists (suspected)	0	0	Private Citizens & Property
202011050035	2020-11-05	United States	Philadelphia	Conspiracy theory extremists	0	0	Government (General)
202011030017	2020-11-03	United States	Willow Street	Unknown	0	0	Government (General)
202010300025	2020-10-30	United States	Wilmington	Unknown	0	0	Religious Figures/Institutions
202010250023	2020-10-25	United States	Boston	Unknown	0	0	Government (General)

GTD ID:
202012280022

WHEN:
2020-12-28

COUNTRY:
United States

INCIDENT SUMMARY:

12/28/2020: An assailant set fire to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Massachusetts, United States. There were no reported casualties in the attack, but the church sustained extensive damages. Dushko Vulchev, an unaffiliated individual, was arrested and later indicted for this and two other attacks on the same church in December 2020. Authorities stated that Vulchev had a history of expressing racial hatred towards Black people, including a message on his device stating "eliminate all N****s." His electronic devices also contained images of a "White Lives Matter" mural and an Adolf Hitler photo.

GTD ID:
202012250003

WHEN:
2020-12-25

COUNTRY:
United States

INCIDENT SUMMARY:

12/25/2020: A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden RV in front of an AT&T Inc. building in downtown Nashville, Tennessee, United States. The assailant was killed, three people were injured, and several buildings were damaged in the blast. No group claimed responsibility for the incident; however, authorities attributed the attack to Anthony Warner, an unaffiliated individual, who issued a warning minutes prior to the attack. Sources noted that Warner held anti-government views and believed in several conspiracy theories, but it is uncertain if these inspired the attack. According to a neighbor, Warner stated "Nashville and the world is never going to forget me" a week prior to the attack.

GTD ID:
202008290016

WHEN:
2020-08-29

COUNTRY:
United States

INCIDENT SUMMARY:

08/29/2020: An assailant opened fire and killed Aaron "Jay" Danielson, a supporter of the Patriot Prayer group, in Portland, Oregon, United States. Michael Forest Reinoehl, an Anti-Fascist activist, claimed responsibility for the incident, stating that he acted in self-defense. Reinoehl previously posted "I am 100% ANTIFA all the way!" and "We truly have an opportunity right now to fix everything. But it will be a fight like no other! It will be a war and like all wars there will be casualties" on social media.

Outline

- Order of the Day
- Defining Terrorism
- Ontology of Terrorism

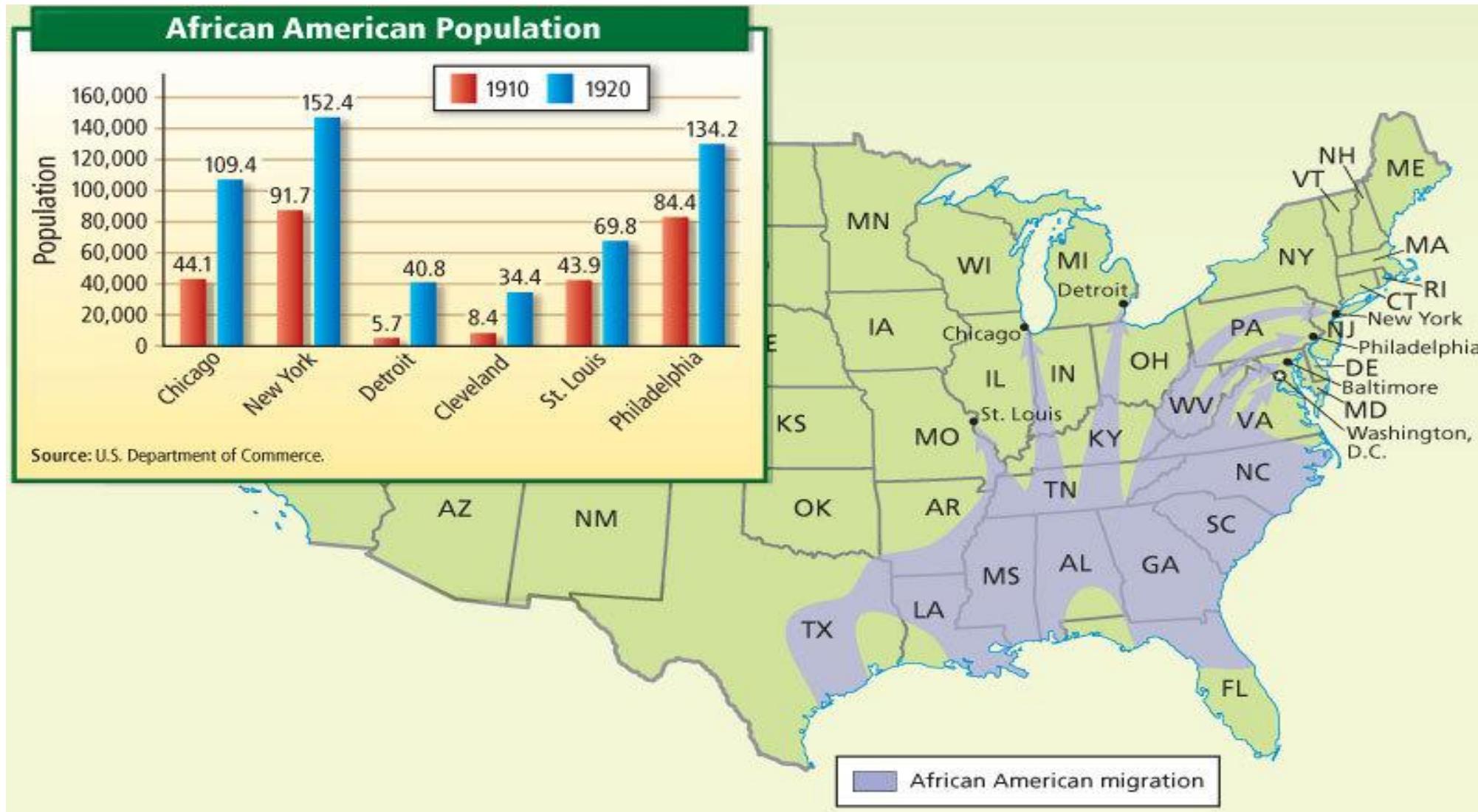
Domestic Terrorism

- Reconstruction Era circa 1863-1877
- Disenfranchisement Era circa 1877-1917
- *Plessy v Ferguson* (separate but equal doctrine) 1896
- Jim Crow Laws enforcing segregation, curtailing political power

Domestic Terrorism

- In 1900, 90% of black population still in Southern states
- Outbreak of WWI in 1914 led to shift in demographics
- “**The Great Migration**” between 1910-1930 saw black population in North increase by 40%

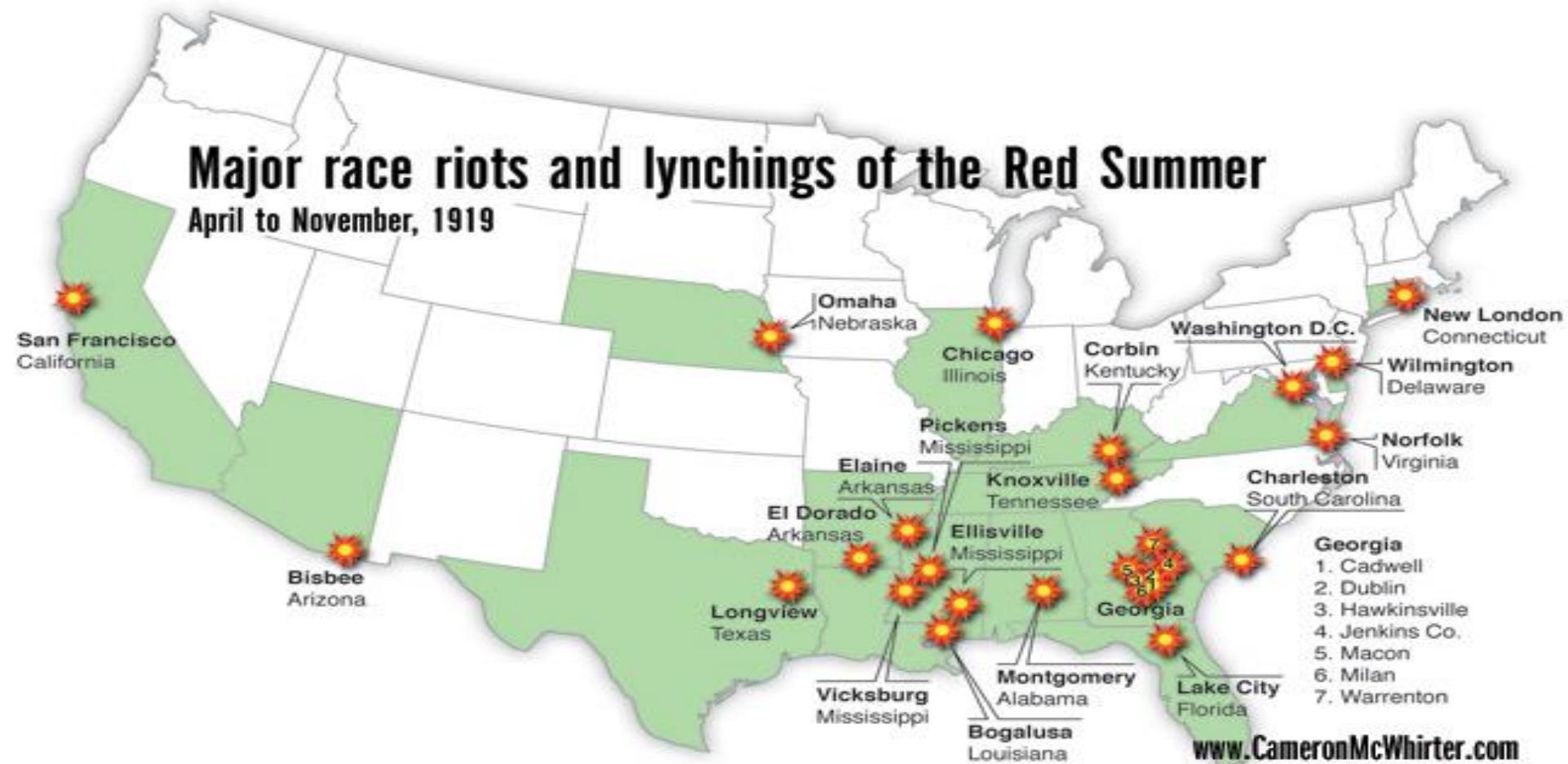
Great Migration Map



Domestic Terrorism

- WWI ended in 1918, troops returned to few jobs
- Black troops were respected in Europe, but returned to U.S. to experience discrimination despite fighting in the war
- Economic/Race tensions lead to riots in several major U.S. cities, e.g. “**The Red Summer**” of 1919

Red Summer of 1919

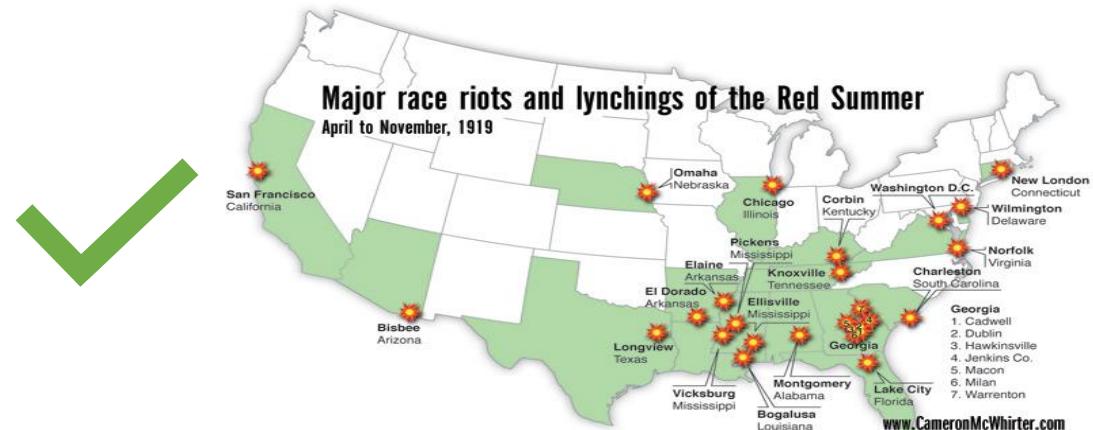


Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>

- Potential scope:
 - Domestic paramilitary organizations
 - International paramilitary groups
 - Kinetic and digital violence



...Making America Safe...

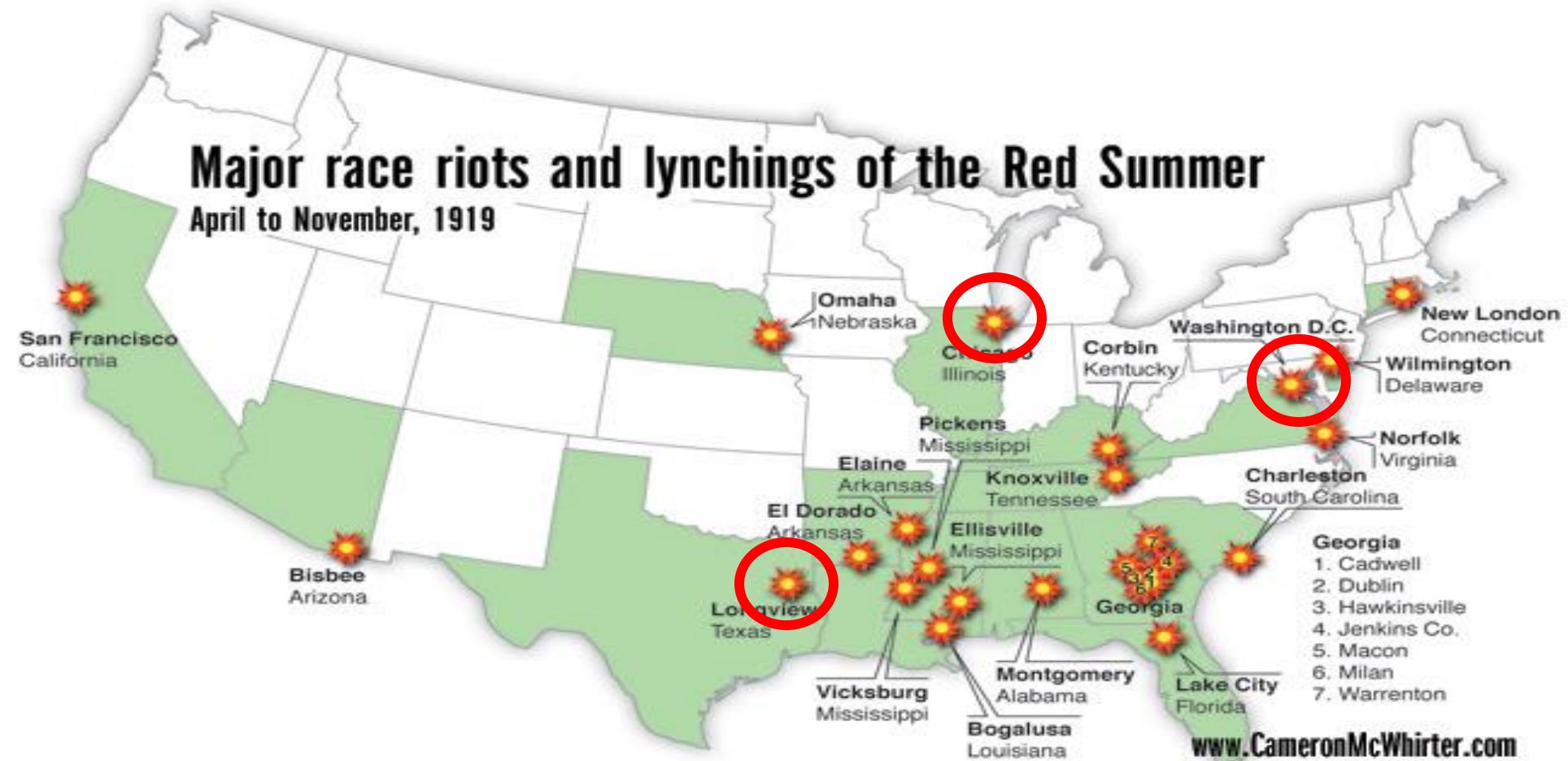


THE "NEW CROWD NEGRO" MAKING AMERICA SAFE FOR HIMSELF

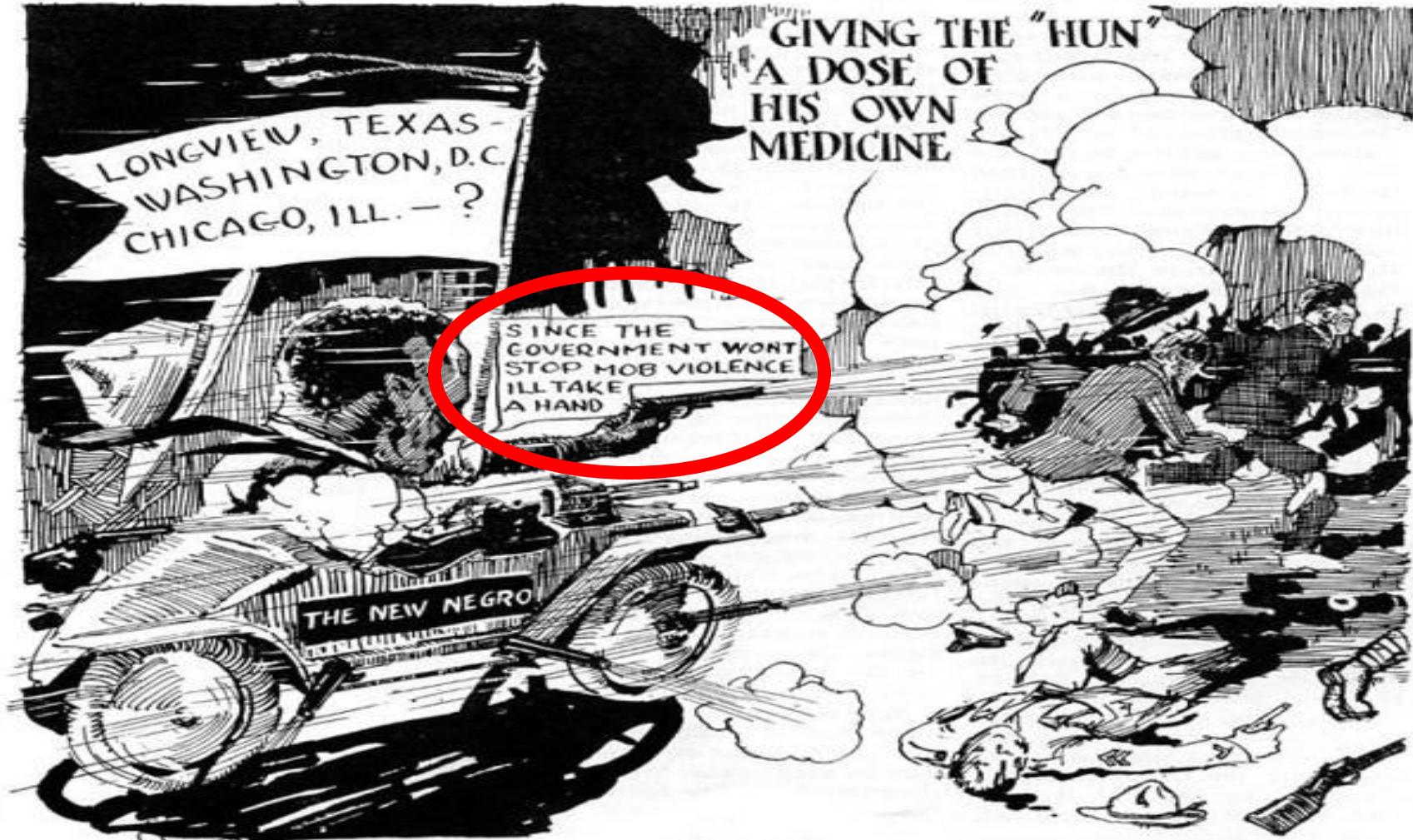
...Making America Safe...



Red Summer of 1919



...Making America Safe...



THE "NEW CROWD NEGRO" MAKING AMERICA SAFE FOR HIMSELF

Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>



Group Exercise

- Does unlawful rioting against perceived injustice itself count as terrorism according to the global database definition?

If so, should it?

If not, why not?

2017 Unite the Right

- Charlottesville, Virginia gathering of alt-right, neo-fascist, neo-nazi, etc. protesters
- Event was quickly met by incredulous counter-protesters and an alt-right protester driving his car through counter-protesters



Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>



Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>



GTD ID: 201708120052	INCIDENT SUMMARY: 08/12/2017: An assailant drove his vehicle into a crowd of counter-protesters at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, United States. One person, identified as Heather D. Heyer, was killed and 28 people were injured in the assault. James Alex Fields Jr., an unaffiliated individual, confessed to carrying out the attack and stated that he targeted the crowd "because of the actual and perceived race, color, national origin, and religion of its members." Sources noted that Fields had a history of expressing Neo-Nazi and white supremacist beliefs on social media, and that he encouraged violence against members of racial, ethnic, and religious groups that he deemed to be non-white.
WHEN: 2017-08-12	
COUNTRY: United States	

2017 Berkley Protests



lizzie johnson
@lizziejohnsonnn · [Follow](#)

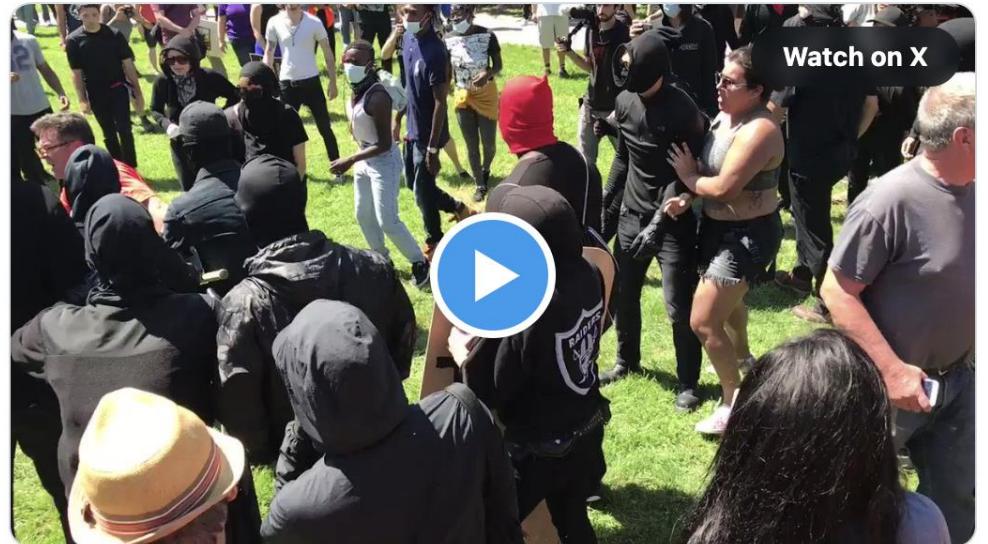
The #Berkeley police have stood down. A sea of black masks as far as I can see. This is what WAS NOT supposed to happen.



lizzie johnson
@lizziejohnsonnn · [Follow](#)



"Take his camera, take his phone," they are shouting at a journalist. [#berkeley](#)



James Queally
@JamesQueallyLAT · [Follow](#)



There is a complete mob mentality here. People are randomly accusing random people of being Nazis.

5:01 PM · Aug 27, 2017



Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

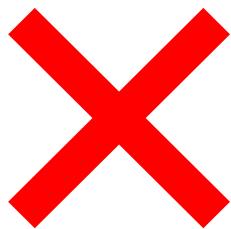
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>



Global Database Definition of Terrorism

- The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>



GTD ID	DATE	COUNTRY	CITY	PERPETRATOR GROUP	FATALITIES	INJURED	TARGET TYPE
198505150011	1985-05-15	United States	Berkeley	Anti-Technology extremists	0	1	Educational Institution

Group Exercise

- Does unlawful rioting against perceived injustice itself count as terrorism according to the global database definition?

If so, should it?

If not, why not?



Zeidan, 2004

There is no general consensus on the definition of terrorism. The difficulty of defining terrorism lies in the risk it entails of taking positions. The political value of the term currently prevails over its legal one. Left to its political meaning, terrorism easily falls prey to change that suits the interests of particular states at particular times. The Taliban and Osama bin Laden were once called freedom fighters (mujahideen) and backed by the CIA when they were resisting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Now they are on top of the international terrorist lists. Today, the United Nations views Palestinians as freedom fighters, struggling against the unlawful occupation of their land by Israel, and engaged in a long-established legitimate resistance, yet Israel regards them as terrorists [...] The repercussion of the current preponderance of the political over the legal value of terrorism is costly, leaving the war against terrorism selective, incomplete and ineffective.^[38]

Sample Political Definitions

- 1795 England: “Government **intimidation** during the Reign of Terror in France.”
- 1937 League of Nations: “All criminal acts directed against a 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.”

Sample Political Definitions

- **1987 Iran:** “Terrorism is an act carried out to achieve an inhuman and corrupt (*mufsid*) objective, and involving [a] **threat to security of any kind**, and violation of rights acknowledged by religion and mankind.”
- **1989 United States:** Premeditated, politically motivated **violence** perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents.

Sample Political Definitions

- **1994 UN General Assembly:** Criminal acts intended or calculated to **provoke a state of terror** in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them.

Sample Political Definitions

- **2016 Brazil:** Terrorism consists in the practice, by one or more individuals, of the acts listed in this article for reasons of xenophobia, discrimination or prejudice of race, color, ethnicity and religion, when committed with the **objective of provoking social or generalized terror**, exposing people, property, the public peace or the public safety.

Outline

- Order of the Day
- Defining Terrorism
- Ontology of Terrorism

Ontology of Terrorism

An adequate account of such *terrorism* will require at a minimum ontological characterizations of:

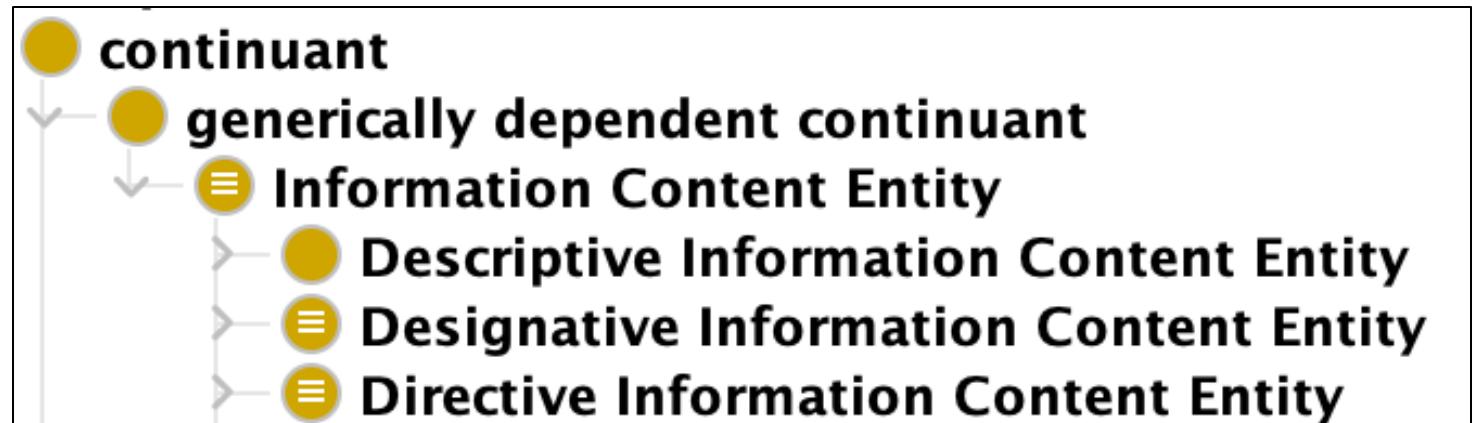
Ontology of Terrorism

An adequate account of such *terrorism* will require at a minimum ontological characterizations of:

COERCION

Terrorism

- A terrorist act is an act of communication, in particular a type of speech act involving violence and coercion
- A *speech act* involves intention to convey meaning performed by the act
- Example categories:
 - Assertion
 - Directive
 - Commissive
 - Expressive
 - Declaration



Terrorist Act

- By participating in *terrorist acts* agents:
 - Create fear in target population
 - Enforce authorities and responsibilities
 - Enforce memberships and exclusions
 - Impress message and mythos
- All of which are **coercive** social acts

Table 1. Statistical compositions of the overall classification of speech acts incorporating 15 individual speech acts identified in ISIS English-language videos.

Speech act	number of videos	percentage
Assertive	13	16.46%
Boasting	5	6.33%
Rebutting	4	5.06%
Claiming	1	1.27%
Ridiculing	1	1.27%
Informing	1	1.27%
Justifying	1	1.27%
Directive	40	50.63%
Threatening (D)	16	20.25%
Inviting	11	13.92%
Inciting	8	10.13%
Commanding	3	3.80%
Forbidding	2	2.53%
Expressive	19	24.05%
Condemning	15	18.99%
Praising	4	5.06%
Commissive	5	6.33%
Threatening (C)	5	6.33%
Declaration	2	2.53%
Pronouncing	1	1.27%
Declaring	1	1.27%

Terrorist Act

- By participating in *terrorist acts* agents:
 - Create fear in target population
 - Enforce authorities and responsibilities
 - Enforce memberships and exclusions
 - Impress message and mythos
- All of which are **coercive** social acts

Table 1. Statistical compositions of the overall classification of speech acts incorporating 15 individual speech acts identified in ISIS English-language videos.

Speech act	number of videos	percentage
Assertive	13	16.46%
Boasting	5	6.33%
Rebutting	4	5.06%
Claiming	1	1.27%
Ridiculing	1	1.27%
Informing	1	1.27%
Justifying	1	1.27%
Directive	40	50.63%
Threatening (D)	16	20.25%
Inviting	11	13.92%
Inciting	8	10.13%
Commanding	3	3.80%
Forbidding	2	2.53%
Expressive	19	24.05%
Condemning	15	18.99%
Praising	4	5.06%
Commissive	5	6.33%
Threatening (C)	5	6.33%
Declaration	2	2.53%
Pronouncing	1	1.27%
Declaring	1	1.27%

Coercion

- Agent S *coerces* S' just in case:
 1. S aims to prevent S' from performing action A
 2. S' is at least implicitly aware of (1)
 3. S' is at least implicitly aware if S' performs A then S will bring about some consequence that makes A-ing less desirable to S' than not A-ing
 4. S' does not perform A
 5. Part of why S' does not perform A is to decrease chances that S will bring about consequences in (3)
- Terrorist acts are **acts of coercion**

Definitions 101

- For any definition $\langle T, E \rangle$ there is a term defined – T – and the expression or expressions – E – defining that term
- Evaluating a definition then involves at least two steps:
 - Assume T is true of a domain, attempt to find a scenario in which E is not
 - Assume E is true of a domain, attempt to find a scenario in which T is not

Coercion

TRY TO FIND A
COUNTEREXAMPLE

- Agent S *coerces* S' just in case:
 1. S aims to prevent S' from performing action A
 2. S' is at least implicitly aware of (1)
 3. S' is at least implicitly aware if S' performs A then S will bring about some consequence that makes A-ing less desirable to S' than not A-ing
 4. S' does not perform A
 5. Part of why S' does not perform A is to decrease chances that S will bring about consequences in (3)
- Terrorist acts are **acts of coercion**

Ontology of Terrorism

An adequate account of such *terrorism* will require at a minimum ontological characterizations of:

COERCION

PROPAGANDA

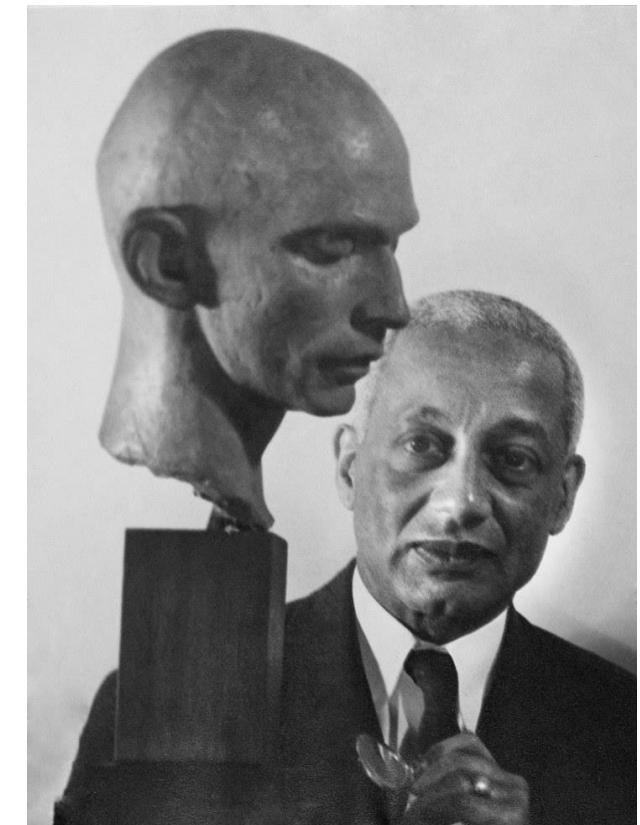
Propaganda

- A propaganda act is an act of communication designed to influence or persuade an audience in the interest of furthering an agenda
- Example techniques:
 - Media Manipulation
 - Psychological Impact
 - Rhetoric & Fallacies



Art for Art's Sake

- Prior to the Harlem Renaissance, art from black communities was often only reactive, illustrating counter-stereotypes
- Alain Locke claimed artistic expression breaks internalized prejudice and the need to react artistically to external prejudice, leading to better understanding and the demonstration of cultural value



Art for Art's Sake

- Given the heterogeneity of life during the renaissance, Locke saw the benefit of representing that life with various artistic methods
- ...not only ‘upper class’ aspects of this life, but all aspects

Which brought Locke in conflict with Du Bois...

Old vs New: Du Bois & Locke

- Du Bois was a supporter of art during the Harlem Renaissance, but insisted artists employ traditional mediums and write “respectable texts” to promote race pride
- He worried unflattering depictions of black life would only entrench existing stereotypes

Claimed “all art is propaganda” - *Criteria of Negro Art* in 1926

Du Bois on Art

- Part of the worry was that black artists would intentionally produce work reinforcing stereotypes, since that's what white readers would buy
- Most readers were white, as were the largest publishers
- This created pressure for black authors to write for white audiences

Du Bois on Art

- But more substantially, Du Bois suggests that since artists are enmeshed in networks of meaning-making and justice...
- Any self-understanding an artist has depends on navigating these networks...
- Implying artistic content is *always* in response to the public domain of ethical and political values

Du Bois on Art

- But more substantially, Du Bois suggests that since artists are enmeshed in networks of meaning-making and justice...
- Any self-understanding an artist has depends on navigating these networks...
- Implying artistic content is *always* in response to the public domain of ethical and political values

Hence, all art is propaganda

Group Exercise

- What side do you take between Locke and Du Bois regarding art?
- Is it the case that all art is ultimately propaganda, as Du Bois claimed, or is there a way to express oneself through art that does not result in propaganda?

Summary

- “Terrorism” is notoriously challenging to define as it often seems to require picking a side...
- Putting that aside, questions remain regarding definitions for “coercion” and “propaganda”, important aspects of modern terrorism
- A precise ontological characterization of terrorism **is still needed**

Readings

- An Ontological Framework for Understanding the Terror-Crime Nexus
- A Simple Ontology for the Analysis of Terrorist Attacks
- Ontology of Insider Threat Indicators