



Citizens of the World, Crime & Terrorism

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TERRORISM, CRIME AND POLICING IN TWO GLOBAL CITIES

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Introduction

A Borderless World

Humanity's progress through the ages can be viewed by observing the rise of cities. To understand a city, one must look to what form its lifeblood – the people. Human beings are understood by looking through two different lenses, both of which highlight contrasting and complex intricacies. Humans see themselves as individuals with aspirations, and at the same time associate themselves with notions that unite them, as a people. Nationalism and regional identity have played a pivotal role in human history, and the idea of a boundary has been the spark for wars – whether borders are a physical barrier or perceived as a human construct, as discussed by Rosseau (1762). Throughout history, the trigger points of war and strife have traditionally been borders — the *methoria* between Argos and Sparta, the Rhine and Danube as the frontiers of Rome, and the powder keg of the Alsace-Lorraine region between France and Germany.

The modern world is characterized by blurred borders – lines on a map gradually fading away with the passage of time. A borderless world is no longer a fantastical reverie and is slowly inching towards becoming a reality. Globalization is the catalyst making the transcendence of borders possible.

Globalization facilitates the exchange of people, goods, and knowledge. However, it also opens the borders for the unsavory aspects of human society to seep across – transnational crime and terrorism. This essay explores this shadowy parallel consequence of globalization. It aims to understand the causality of changes in domestic crime rates, frequency of acts of terrorism, ease of transnational crime, and the resultant response of law enforcement policy and action.

Globalization

A Process of Human Connection

Globalization is defined as the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified the four fundamental aspects of globalization as trade and transactions, movement of capital and investment, migration and movement of people, and the dissemination of knowledge (IMF, 2000). This essay focuses on the movement of people caused by globalization, which results in the blending of cultures and, thus, social heterogeneity. Through the lens of global cities, this essay attempts to understand heterogeneity in the context of crime and policing, as the borders are opened to welcome the citizens of the world.

A force propelling the world into the future, globalization could very well be the gateway to worldwide solidarity – with global cities as the nexuses for human connections. Although both are distinct phenomena, trends in crime rates when studied in juxtaposition with acts of terrorism can yield incisive inferences as to what effects does

globalization and subsequent immigration has on these global cities – are the trends in crime and domestic terrorism increasing due to an influx of foreign immigrant population or have the trends decreased due to effective policing measures?

Global Cities

Nodes of the Global Network

In *The Global City: Place, Production, and the New Centrality*, Sassen coins the term ‘Global Cities’ by placing special emphasis on the role of three cities in the world economy. In this Information Age, the global cities of New York, London, and Tokyo now function as command points in the organization of the world economy (Sassen, 1995). It has now become entirely possible for one to think about these cities as global centers themselves, without feeling the need to associate them with their countries.

Information technology makes it possible for these cities to be the hub for the exchange of goods and services, making them the loci of unparalleled growth. Sassen discusses the intersection of globalization and a shift to services. The growing demand for services results in the formation of a new urban economic core of banking and service activities that has now replaced the older manufacturing-oriented core (Sassen, 1995). In *When the Center no longer holds: Cities as frontier zones*, Sassen describes these cities as new frontiers for global corporate capital. Thus, the intermixing of different skills is critical for sustaining this core. The need for a specialized workforce arises, and the citizens of the world respond by migrating to these new frontiers (Sassen, 2013).

NEW YORK

The Melting Pot

New York City, with a population of over 8 million, is the most populous city in the United States. Described as the cultural, financial, and media capital of the world, NYC exerts a significant influence on global commerce, technology, politics, education, art, and entertainment. New York is a global city, making it one of the primary nodes in the global economic network bound by links to other cities, having direct and tangible effects on the world’s socio-economic affairs (Sassen, 2006).

New York City is also one of the most diverse cities in the world – no single country or region of origin dominates its populace. Approximately 37% of the city's population is foreign-born, and more than half of all children are born to mothers who are immigrants (NYC DCP, 2013). The ten most significant sources of foreign-born individuals in the city as of 2011 were the Dominican Republic, China, Mexico, Guyana, Jamaica, Ecuador, Haiti, India, Russia, and Trinidad and Tobago (Semple, 2013).

However, the state reaps the costs and benefits of globalization unevenly – New York City and its suburbs reaping most of the rewards, while some regions across the state fail to adapt to the surge of stronger competition. Even within the city, most workers have fallen

behind as the wages of low-skilled jobs have not kept pace with the cost of living. New York City has a high degree of income disparity, as indicated by its Gini Coefficient of 0.5 for the city, (Glaeser, Resseger, & Tobio, 2008), while having the highest number of billionaires, as compared to any city of the world.

LONDON

The Modern Babylon

London is one of the most important global centers of the world, and like NYC, exerts considerable impact on world politics, trade and finance, arts and culture, as well as technology and innovation. Immortalized by the 2012 Julien Temple film, the sobriquet of 'Modern Babylon' suits the city perfectly. The film's portrayal of the city ranges in time from the last days of Victorian England to the arrival of new immigrants, and finally, the 2011 riots (Temple, 2012).

The 2011 census recorded over 36% of London's population to be foreign-born, making London home to the second-largest immigrant population, behind New York City (Kyambi, 2005). The city is in the middle of Brexit, and at the forefront of the refugee crisis in Europe and the Middle East, putting it in a complicated and unique position. A statement released by the Mayor of London conveys the duality of its position. It states that it is the government's foremost responsibility to negotiate a deal with the EU that protects jobs, ensures growth and living standards, and at the same time secure the fullest possible access to the single market and continue to attract the best talent from Europe and around the world (Greater London Authority, 2017).

Terrorism, Crime & Policing

Increasing Complexities

This essay carries out a comparative analysis of phenomena, trends, and policies to draw inferences on similarities or dissimilarities that may not manifest if the cities would have been studied in isolation. The two global cities are similar on the surface as idiosyncratic icons of the modern world. Nevertheless, both the cities are unique and distinctly different from each other in many aspects – apparent when one delves deeper. Thus, it is critical to understand the context of both cities in terms of past events and responsive policing capabilities and measures.

Both cities are divided into distinctive boroughs with New York City comprising of five boroughs and Inner London consisting of 32 boroughs. However, New York City is much more densely packed with a population density of 26,000 people per square mile as compared to 11,000 people per square mile in London. The New York Police Department has 36,000 police officers for a population of 8.3 million, amounting to close to 4 police personnel for 1,000 citizens (FBI, 2011). London's Metropolitan Police Service comprises of 31,000 police officers for the safekeeping of the 8 million inhabitants of the 32 boroughs.

The denizens of both New York City and London rely on the cities' public transportation system, and thus the police forces maintain a 'beat walk' routine, remaining vigilant of perilous situations. London particularly has a dark history of its public transportation system being the target of terrorist acts, for instance, the IRA's attack on the London Underground in 1993, and the 2005 train bombings by 'homegrown' domestic terrorists.

NEW YORK

Post 9/11, New York has seen a revamp of domestic security and defense infrastructure, partly observed as part of the broader overhaul implemented across the United States, which saw the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. However, New York has implemented its own special provisions of law enforcement policies and intelligence networks to prevent another tragedy. After 9/11, several terrorist attacks against civilian targets have been prevented by authorities, owing largely to the new policies and directives calling for increased vigilance on the part of citizens and law enforcement (O'Neill, 2019). The NYPD Intelligence Bureau was formed with the explicit purpose of preventing acts of terrorism in New York and has been allowed to operate covertly – with limited oversight. Former NYPD commissioner James O'Neill was quick to adopt and deploy vapor wake canines at various locations and transit hubs across the city, which has proven to be providing valuable real-time intelligence, to track explosive trails back to the perpetrators (Leshan, 2017). Isolated and coordinated attempts to disrupt the peace, such as the 2009 Bronx terrorism plot or the 2007 JFK International Airport attack plot, have all been foiled by New York's law enforcement agencies.

Violent crimes in New York City, not related to terrorist acts, have also been an issue of concern and protracted discourse. Crime rates in New York City did spike in the 1980s and early 1990s as the crack epidemic hit, but since 1991, a downward trend is observed, and, as of 2017, crime rates are among the lowest of major cities in the United States (The Economist, 2015). This evidence suggests that the paranoia towards globalization-induced immigration is not be justified, and perhaps not even entirely warranted as statistics clearly point to the contrary.

In *Transnational crime: globalization's shadowy stepchild*, David C. Morrison remarks on the increasing ease of criminal trafficking of contraband, arms, and humans – inadvertently channeled through globalization – threaten the world's globalized, cyber-linked economy (Morrison, 2010). Even so, the influence of organized crime in the state of New York has been on a decline as law enforcement cracks down on La Cosa Nostra (Jackman, 2019).

LONDON

London, as of 2019, is going through a tumultuous time as Brexit set into motion in early 2017. Many older sources of commentary posit three primary reasons for the isolationist move to be economic stability, sovereignty from the EU, and frustration with political elitism (Mauldin, 2016). However, more recent post-Brexit commentaries attribute 'immigration' as one of the primary selling points for the 'Leave' voters (EuropeNow, 2019). The global city of London, true to its moniker, remained the only region in England to vote in favor of remaining in the EU. However, the larger narrative of nationalist populism prevailed, and the UK chose to sit out the refugee crisis brewing in the Middle East (Greater London Authority, 2017).

Although no definitive consensus exists on the link between immigration and terrorism, London has been a major target of the IRA, middle-eastern terrorist groups, and Islamic extremism; as a result, the Home Office ascribes terrorism in the United Kingdom to be a significant threat to the state. Since 1970, there have been at least 3,395 deaths caused by terrorism in the UK – the highest in western Europe (Kirk, 2017). The Provisional IRA ceased its operations by 2005, following their surrender, while the Continuity IRA focuses its operations in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, with the exception of 2018-19, the number of terrorist incidents in the UK has steadily risen, albeit with fluctuating casualty rates (Global Terrorism Database, 2016). These statistics reinforce the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the UK as its proponents can paint a picture of a visible enemy – Islamic extremism. Regardless of the rhetoric, migrant movement due to the refugee crisis in the case of Europe and the UK has made it possible for terrorists to seep through the flood of refugees seeking to rebuild their lives in peace and safety away from the battlefield, which was once their homeland. This problem is compounded by failures to integrate the 'alien' population into society, which makes them prone to radicalization (Bove & Böhmelt, 2016).

Unlike the NYPD, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has regulated the use of lethal force and, as a result, must rely on authorized firearms officers (AFO) for armed response support. However, the policing policy in England and Wales has not been implemented without underlying logical reasons. The police in England and Wales are reported to have fired five fatal shots in the first three months of 2016 – American police forces killed 1092 people the same year. This remarkable policy is possible in the UK because fewer than four people in a hundred own a firearm, which is a far cry from the scenario in the USA, where almost every third person owns a gun (Smith, 2017).

MI5 conducted an analysis of “several hundred individuals known to be involved in, or closely associated with, violent extremist activity,” concluding that British Islamist terrorists “are a diverse collection of individuals, fitting no single demographic profile, nor do they all follow a typical pathway to violent extremism” (Travis, 2008).

Conclusion

In an increasingly globalized world, transnational crime and terrorism are on the rise. Utilizing their access to resources, political autonomy, and unique threat levels, New York City and London have internationalized their policing efforts to combat this unprecedented phenomenon. Police forces in these global cities have drastically reorganized and reoriented their routines and operations in response to heightened threats. The comparative study of New York City and London sheds light on the relationship between globalization and immigration, on the one hand, and crime and terrorism on the other.

Although New York City and London have been the targets of terrorism in the past two decades, empirical evidence shows that globalization-induced heterogeneity is not the causality for terrorism. By 2013, the population of foreign-born individuals living in New York City had increased to 3.07 million, and as a percentage of the total population, was the highest it had been in the past 100 years (HuffPost, 2017). Despite this, post 9/11, further acts of terrorism have been prevented primarily due to the efforts of the law enforcement agencies and vigilant civilians – and not due to a downward surge in immigration. Violent crime and property crime are on a downward trend and have been historically low, at a time when immigration influx is high. The NYPD's controversial 'Broken Windows' policy and its efficiency is a matter of debate. A study of crime trends in New York City shows that rates of both petty and serious crime fell significantly after Broken Windows and other such strategies were implemented. Furthermore, crime continued to decline in the following decade. These declines are suggestive of the success of the policy (Corman, 2002). Other studies do not find a distinct cause and effect relationship between the policy and the decreasing trends in the crime rate (Childress, 2016).

The context of London is different from that of New York City, despite it being a similar powerhouse city of an amalgamation of cultures and peoples. London, although separated from Europe by the English Channel, is still closer to the frontlines of the refugee crisis than the USA and is thus more open to terrorist attacks. Despite the best efforts of Security Services (MI5) and the Metropolitan Police Service, acts of terrorism have increased over the past decade. Crime rates have been declining over the years in London, followed by a period of stagnancy; it fails to show any indicative causation by immigration. This contextual analysis shows that London has made strides in combating crime but still faces arduous challenges when contrasted with the case of New York City, which has seen itself move towards a safer and more secure future – striving to be free from threats within and without.

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