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Hybrids: On the Crime-Terror Nexus

Abstract

Terrorist organizations may complement their military capability with functioning infrastructures and profitable activity in economic ventures as well as in crime. This leads many commentators to focus on the increasing overlap between terrorism and crime, including and particularly organized crime. The present paper is devoted to the analysis of this controversial overlap, and after providing a concise outline of definitions of organized crime and terrorism found in criminology, highlights similarities and differences between the two forms of criminality, along with the ambiguity of the very notion of 'crime-terror nexus'.

Introduction

The crime-terror nexus transpires in embryonic forms in some contributions of classical criminology. Such contributions do not describe clear overlaps between terrorism and organized crime, but simply allude to the proximity of some forms of political violence with conventional criminality. Sedition, for Beccaria, combines political as well as criminal elements, and being socially devastating, constitutes the only offence against which capital punishment is justified. Similar opinion is expressed by Bentham in respect of the crimes against the state. The latter, moreover, criticizes the Declaration of Human Rights approved by the French government after the Revolution because it is the fruit of an insurrection, therefore of terrorist violence and crime. Positivist analysis hints at a crime-terror nexus, when it detects in some forms of political violence the outcome of individual personalities that would be induced to violent criminality even without being inspired by a political idea. Functionalism, in its turn, links homicide with strong forms of binding with sets of moral values which may characterise political as well as criminal subcultures. Chicago sociologists, as we shall see, provide the most glaring example of how politics and organised crime groups can shape symbiotic alliances, while conflict theorists tend to argue that all forms of violent hostility originate from struggles between groups over material as well as political power. Symbolic interactionism, finally, is more interested in how institutional and anti-institutional violence affect each other.

  These contributions will be examined in some detail in the following pages, with the purpose of ascertaining to what extent they constitute premonitions of contemporary events. Such events have led observers to posit the existence of an overlap between terrorism and crime, particularly organised crime, as many terrorist organizations complement their military capability with functioning infrastructures and profitable activity in economic ventures as well as in crime. The validity of the notion of hybrids, namely of an undeniable crime-terror nexus, is advocated by some and contested by others, and the pages below will

provide the main arguments and the most relevant empirical material offered by the two parties. What will emerge is an analytical landscape indicating that the overlap between terrorism and organised crime is, at the very least, controversial and, at times, merely prompted by the strong disapproval or revulsion that both elicit. Similarities and differences between the two forms of criminality will be highlighted, as will the ambiguity of the very notion of 'crime-terror nexus'. In the last section of this paper such ambiguity will come to the fore with particular emphasis, when the relationships linking organised crime and terrorism respectively with the establishment will be focused upon. It may be helpful, however, to set off with a concise outline of definitions of organized crime and terrorism found in criminology.

Criminological definitions

The best-known definitions of organized crime found in the criminological tradition can be classified very succinctly as follows. Some hinge on strictly quantitative aspects: the number of individuals involved in a criminal group is said to determine the organizational degree of that group (Ferracuti, 1988; Johnson, 1962). Organized crime is also said to differ from conventional crime for the larger scale of its illegal activity (Moore, 1987). Other definitions focus mainly on a temporal variable, that is on the time-span during which illegal activities are conducted. The death or incarceration of a member of an organized crime group, therefore, does not stop the activities in which the group is involved.

   Criminologists who focus attention on its structural characteristics observe that organized crime operates by means of flexible and diversified groups. Such a structure is faced with peculiar necessities due to its condition of illegality. Firstly, the necessity, while remaining a 'secret' organization, to exert publicly its coercive and dissuasive strength. An equilibrium is therefore required between publicity and secrecy that only a complex structure is able to acquire. Secondly, the necessity to neutralize law enforcement through *omertà*, corruption and retaliation. Finally, the need to reconcile its internal order, through specific forms of conflict control, with its external legitimacy, through the provision of occupational and social opportunities (Cohen, 1977).

   Frequently, definitions of organized crime revolve around the concept of 'professionalism': its members, it is suggested, acquire skills and career advancement by virtue of their full-time involvement in illegality. The concept of professionalism, however, clashes with that of normalization, through which some observers describe the increasing flexibility of criminal markets, the constructed nature of the notion of organized crime, and the involvement of diverse actors in a domain where professional criminals once prevailed (Hobbs, 2013). Other authors prefer to concentrate on the collective clientele of organized crime. The latter is therefore identified with a structure involved in the public provision of goods and services which are officially deemed illegal. Organized crime groups, in this view, simply fill the inadequacy of institutional agencies, which are unable to provide those goods and services, or perhaps officially deny that demand exists for them. The contribution of McIntosh (1975) is to be located in this perspective. She notes that organized crime is informed by a particular relationship between offenders and victims. For example, even the

victims of extortion rackets often fail to report the offenders, less because they are terrified than 'because they see the extortionist as having more power in their parish than the agents of the state' (ibid: 50). It may be added that the victims may also recognize their 'protector' as an authority more able than its official counterpart to distribute resources and opportunities. Among the goods provided, trust and protection are singled out as paramount. These, which should be supplied by the state, may under certain circumstances become the preserve of private entrepreneurs, namely organized crime. Therefore, this type of crime is purported to be an industry for the supply of private protection and the distribution of trust to economic actors who would otherwise be unable to interact safely (Gambetta, 1992). In the case of the mafia, for example, its strength as an industry for the supply of protection and trust is deemed a consequence of traditional popular distrust of the official agencies, and of foreign domination before them. This line of analysis is partly endorsed by Varese (2010), who proposes to consider the organised crime phenomenon as part of the broader category of governance. His suggestion is that a crucial distinction should be drawn between producers of goods and services, and suppliers of forms of regulation, protection and governance. The form of governance alluded to here is one that usurps the functions of the state in societies where sovereign rule is inadequate, a form of governance from below which extends power beyond the state and into the realms of civil society (Edwards and Levi, 2008; Ruggiero, 2012; Sergi, 2017).

Moving on to violent conflict, this has been an object of study in criminology since the very inception of the discipline. Before the word 'terrorism' gained common use, early criminologists dealt with both institutional and anti-institutional violence. Classical criminology, particularly the work of Cesare Beccaria (1965) and Jeremy Bentham (1967), regarded political violence as a breach of the social contract binding citizens and authority together. The focus of Beccaria, for instance, was on 'state savagery' and, at the same time, on 'crimes of sedition'. He linked institutional violence (torture, capital punishment, assassinations and other forms of state violence) with violent outbursts directed against the state. From a contemporary perspective, we can summarize his thought as follows: excessive state violence provokes violent responses by non-state agents.

Positivist criminologists studied regicides, romantic murderers and violent anarchists and looked at the social and psychological causes of political violence. While in general they thought that violent action against the system retained an 'evolutive' character, in the sense that it accelerated social change, when faced with specific forms of terrorist acts they judged those acts as emanating from monomaniac individuals who would be violent even if not inspired by political beliefs. Their distinction between rebellion and revolution was, in this respect, crucial. The former, in their view, was conduct caused by insanity, moral madness, narcissistic martyrdom or suicidal drive. The latter was an evolutionary process which, without necessarily resorting to violence, aimed at social change and improved social justice. It is noteworthy that this school of thought formulated a notion of 'suicide missions' well before these became common currency in the present times, as they described anarchists who assassinated aristocrats in the middle of the streets as individuals whose principal aim was an 'honourable death' or 'indirect suicide' (Lombroso, 1894).

Within the functionalist tradition, Durkheim's seminal study of suicide and homicide offers tools and arguments that can be extended to the analysis of political violence and terrorism. Durkheim associates the rise of homicide with the growth of those collective sentiments whose interest obsessively resides in the group, the family, or the state. The feelings that lie at the base of the cult of such entities may be in themselves conducive to murder. When the family, the group, the state, or for that matter a political idea or a religious belief, appear to be the supreme good, their importance transcends the sympathy and compassion due to the individual or people in general. Like some forms of suicide, terrorism and political violence in general may be the result of excessive integration in a creed, an identity, or of a strong form of binding to a set of moral values (Durkheim, 1996).

Looking at the contributions of the Chicago School of sociology in the first decades of the twentieth century, we find a penetrating analysis that echoes aspects of the contemporary debate. The study of migrants' communities and excluded groups brought to light the connections between organized crime and political violence. Criminal organizations, while conducting their illicit business, acted as the violent arm of political parties, using terroristic forms of intimidation, particularly during electoral campaigns (Landesco, 1969). Rival candidates were attacked or kidnapped, in a climate that turned political competition into violent interpersonal conflict. Subsequent criminological analysis focuses, rather, on collective conflicts, describing societies as composed of competing groups and contrasting value systems. Political violence, from a conflict theory perspective, is interpreted as the outcome of struggles for the attainment of material and ideological power.

Finally, symbolic interactionism can be useful for the causative explanation of terrorism. This school of thought examines the relational dynamics that produce harmony or conflict, in other words, how interacting individuals and groups determine their mutual conduct. In this view, state and non-state entities engage in acts of terror when both feel that they have no space left for peaceful interaction.

From enterprise to network

It is worth supplementing the overview presented so far with some additional observations.

Some organized crime groups do not limit their activities to conventional offending. Successful organized crime, for example, manages to establish partnerships with the official world, particularly with business enclaves and political representatives. When unable to do so, criminal groups remain pariah organizations operating in the underworld, and are destined to exhaust their resources and energies within the restricted realm of illicit markets. Organizations leaping onto the 'overworld', by contrast, are required to adopt a business style, a conduct, a strategy and a 'vocabulary of meaning' helping them to blend in the environment receiving them. They may still 'commute' between legality and illegality, but their new status will force them to identify allies, sponsors, mentors and protectors. In brief, they will be required to develop the negotiation skills characterizing an economic consortium or a political party.

It is at this point that organizations develop the features of networks, and this process may be followed by conventional criminal groups as well as by terrorist groups. The difference, however, is that organized crime networks imply the alliance between highly heterogeneous groups and individuals, each with a distinctive cultural and ethnic background, who may establish common goals on an occasional or long-term basis. Actors operating in conventional criminal networks are socially 'fuzzy', in the sense that their exploits and careers overlap with those of others who are apparently radically different from them. Such networks shape grey areas where licit, semi-licit and overtly illicit economies overlap (Ruggiero, 2017). Terrorist networks, by contrast, require a substantial degree of homogeneity among participants, who may 'offer' what they can, from donations to logistical support. Of course, participants may also offer 'action' and their own life, when they engage in missions inspired by the terrorist group with which they ideologically identify. However, while conventional criminal networks imply a form of *collective behaviour*, terrorist networks show signs of *collective identity*. The latter, inevitably, brings to the fore a concept of social movement, of contentious politics, an idea of social change inscribed in a specific teleology or imagined finalism. Later, when more directly addressing hybrids, this aspect will receive some of the attention it deserves.

It seems that only after the events of 9/11 has criminology resumed any specific interest in political violence, at least in its variant commonly termed terrorism (random violence against civilians) (Freilich and LaFree, 2015). For example, there are scholars who advocate the application of criminological theories of 'common' violence to the analysis of political violence, arguing that both types of violence are directed to the achievement of goals. Both aim at extracting something from someone; moreover, at least by perpetrators, both are presented as the outcome of provocation by the victims (Ruggiero, 2006). From a different perspective, the suggestion has been made that the principles of situational crime prevention should also be applied to terrorism. According to this view, after identifying and removing the opportunities that violent groups exploit to mount their attacks, situational measures implemented through partnerships among a wide range of public and private agencies will assist with this task. In other contributions the point is put forward that conventional crime is characterized by tensions and dynamics that also underpin many forms of terrorism. Issues of shame, esteem, loss, and repressed anger, alongside the pursuit of pride and self or collective respect, which provide important tools to criminological analysis, may also help establish a taxonomy of terrorism.

Looking at the formation of terrorist networks, the point has been made that the invasion of a country may be followed by organized violent resistance, and that invasions may destabilize regimes and trigger sectarian attacks. It is estimated, incidentally, that over thirty per cent of the founders of ISIS are former members of the secret services of Iraq, who enact a form of revenge, responding to the invasion of their country with indiscriminate attacks (Gerges, 2015; Lynch, 2015). This imitative dynamic echoes aspects of symbolic interactionism mentioned above. In a similar vein, scholars have focused on criminalization, labeling processes and phobias which enhance rather than decelerate the radicalization of those who find themselves on the receiving end (Mythen and Walklate, 2006; Ahmed, 2015; Abbas and Awan, 2015; Khan, 2016).

An enduring distinction, however, connotes the criminological field. Organized crime appears to be motivated by the accumulation of wealth:

> 'Though the evasion or neutering of state control and the corruption of officials may assist in the criminal enterprise, the generation of profit and the control of illicit markets is the primary focus of organized crime rather than any grasping of power for political ends' (Campbell, 2014: 230).

Terrorism, on the other hand, remains characterized as violence motivated by political, ideological, or philosophical considerations, aimed at civilians to 'generate fear and cause damage, and to coerce a government to act in a particular manner' (ibid).

The following two sections gather, respectively, views positing a strong crime-terror nexus and views highlighting some tentative components of such nexus.

Hybrids and overarching etiologies

A notion of hybrid, combining conventional with political criminality, emerges in some etiologies focused on excluded and marginalized groups. For example, the processes leading to involvement in organized crime groups or/and in terrorist networks, from some analytical perspectives, appear to be very similar. Such processes are said to stem from severe forms of inequality or from the resentment and humiliation suffered by the young components of minority groups. While older settlers chose where to live and partly maintained the culture of their country of origin, the young distanced themselves from that culture without acquiring a new one: 'the danger that ruins life in the poor districts is not Islam or multiculturalism… it is deculturation' (Todorov, 2014: 168). 'Deculturation' is one of the characteristics of failed democracies, which are based on a winner-take-all logic whereby the losers are left with no place to occupy. Becoming involved in crime or in political extremism, in this situation, amounts to 'pure and simple regression that offers a mixture of sacrificial and criminal heroism' (Badiou, 2016: 56). Failed democracies, while wreaking destruction, encourage revenge, which is formalized through the mythology of tradition or the cult of the swaggering outlaw.

Overarching etiologies based on relative deprivation, however, neglect the substantial differences between terrorism and organized crime. Organized crime groups may use violence as a supplementary tool of negotiating their presence on markets, or with the system. Violent political groups, on the contrary, use violence as a signal of their unwillingness to negotiate with a system they would rather demolish. Their action transcends the immediate result they achieve, and prefigures, realistically or not, a different set of achievements which will be valued in a future, rather than in the current society.

Another overarching theory revolves around the techniques of neutralization identified in criminology research, and may well describe the ideological process whereby organized crime groups as well as violent political groups come to terms with the effects of their acts. The denial of the victim is operated through the perception of the victim as wrongdoer, the condemnation of the condemners through their association with immorality, and finally the appeal to higher

loyalties through the appropriation of the ideals and practices of one's subculture, one's political or religious creed. Techniques of neutralization, however, seem to belong to an ex post repertoire of motivations mobilized by offenders in order to fill the moral void they presumably experience. They are, in sum, a defensive device that may temper moral disorientation. In this sense, terrorism and conventional or organized crime display very similar characteristics, although such similarity may be insufficient to give rise to hybrids of the two.

Violent political groups, however, may pursue material gain as a means to reproduce and enhance their military apparatus and to acquire growing symbolic status, namely a capacity to step up their propaganda and hence their visibility. Along with offences aimed at the material reproduction of their organization, contemporary terrorists, who appear to ignore the ethical boundaries often respected by their counterparts of the 1970s and 1980s, are said to engage in crimes that their predecessors would find revolting: espionage, drug smuggling, gun running, money laundering, cell phone and credit card theft, immigration violations, extortion and prostitution (Hamm, 2007). Moreover, some contemporary perpetrators of terrorist acts are drawn from the offender population, although they do not consider themselves common criminals. Instead, they often see themselves as freedom fighters whose unlawful acts are motivated by a just cause and not by personal gain (Hoffman, 2006).

With the purpose of reproducing themselves, terrorist groups may acquire expertise in conventional criminality and through this pursue a form of 'empire-building' that transcends their original political goal. Violent political groups who cease their operations, moreover, may find at their disposal not only unlawful expertise and skills, but also arms and infrastructures, and after the dismissal of their organization may use what they possess to start a career in criminal markets. Looking at 'terrorism as crime' from a particular angle, organized forms of criminality have been described as 'lifeblood of terrorist groups', and include all forms of acquisitive offences that mafia-type organizations would perpetrate (Hamm, 2007).

The growing dimension of transnational crime activities is regarded as a contributing factor to the blurring of the two phenomena, expressed through the development of alliances, the sharing of methods, and ultimately the merging of groups (Makarenko, 2004). Some authors see the evidence in the European Union of linkages between crime and terror as immense, 'although the scholarly literature has shied away from these associations' (Makarenko and Mesquita, 2014: 259). Specific elements characterizing the crime-terror nexus are detected when criminals and terrorists engage in similar activity, or 'relate symbiotically, as when they exchange drugs for weapons' (Grabosky and Stohl, 2010). The two appear to have developed networked organizational forms and technological skills that enhance their capacity and resilience. The interface between organized crime groups and terrorism, as suggested by Grabosky and Stohl, reflects the need of the latter to support themselves and their operations, but also the politicization of ordinary criminals who eventually join terrorist groups. The reverse process is also possible, with individuals turning from fighters into criminals after the continuing exchange between the two parties of information, knowledge and assets for mutual benefit. Involvement in cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting by terrorist groups has been revealed (Shelley and Melzer, 2011;

Capparico, Irrera and Tupman, 2014), while hybrids have been detected in the Islamic Maghreb, where crime groups and terrorists respond to specific material and political demands from local populations (Rosato, 2016). Terrorist groups are also attributed the power to control large enterprises, such as the gas fields in Eastern Algeria, close to the Libyan border. The case prompts the conclusion that the 'interaction of crime, corruption, and terrorism is having a tremendous impact on both security and the global economy' (Shelley, 2014: 1). Among the victims of such hybrids, or entangled criminal entities, the following are listed: 'economic growth, employment, security, development, and the sustainability of the planet' (ibid: 4-5).

Analysts do emphasize that criminals are motivated by a broad spectrum of reasons, like personal enrichment, passion or revenge, while terrorists are led by what they believe is a higher cause (Foster, 2012). And yet, the separation of the two groups is sometimes deemed difficult. Of course, the presence of former criminals in terrorist groups is not unprecedented. But the phenomenon is now described as more pronounced and more visible. Research conducted by the ICSR (International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence) suggests that in many European countries, the majority of jihadist foreign fighters are former offenders. The findings of this study, however, do not confirm the merging of criminals and terrorists as organizations, but of their social networks and environments.

> 'Criminal and terrorist groups have come to recruit from the same pool of people, creating (often unintended) synergies and overlaps that have consequences for how individuals radicalize and operate. This is what we call the *new* crime-terror nexus' (ICSR, 2016: 3).

Whether new or old, the nexus is particularly emphasized by law enforcement agencies, which include within their remit the support of member states in preventing and combating all forms of serious international crime through the exchange of criminal intelligence. Perhaps the concern and focus on 'serious international crime', inevitably, leads agencies to adopt a joint approach to the two. The British National Crime Agency (NCA) follows the same route, providing a general definition that embraces a considerable range of groups and activities, some of which could be labeled organized crime groups while some others terrorist organizations. It is from the perspective of legal prosecution and law enforcement that the borders between terrorism and conventional and/or organized crime continue to be regarded as particularly blurred.

Other empirical studies do show that terrorist organizations may, when convenient, procure the services of criminal groups to further their political goals (Gallagher, 2016; Picarelli, 2006; Roth and Sever, 2006). In the recent past, among the hybrid organizations simultaneously pursuing material and political gain Colombian narco-terrorism appeared to be outstanding: 'The number of assassinations and bombings generated by the cartels was very substantial… [so that] a categorical exclusion of the criminal motivation from a definition of terrorism does not seem to be warranted' (Schmid, 2011: 66). Yet another case-study of narco-terrorism in Colombia by Bibes (2001) indicates that, over the past thirty years, leftist guerilla groups and right-wing paramilitaries have largely depended on drug cartels to help finance their political objectives. Bibes

also describes instances where cartel leaders have in turn hired terrorist groups to carry out violent acts to achieve their own goals. Similarly, a study of Mali's Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) proves that this terrorist organization, while principally aiming at disposing of the Mali government and establishing a caliphate, does act in conjunction with narco-traffickers (Boeke, 2016). Suggestions are also made that formerly politically motivated terrorist groups can develop conventional economically motivated organized crime syndicates (Hausken and Gupta, 2016). This development, however, is said to take place when terrorist organizations cease to be funded by benefactors and donors. Thus, following an end of hostilities with the state, members of the Colombian FARC and the provisional IRA, it is assumed, have turned into purely profit-seeking organizations, relying on their terrorist skills to accumulate wealth (Byrne, 2009).

   Ultimately, the crime-terror nexus is found in the shared skills that terrorists and criminals may have developed in outmaneuvering law enforcement and the techniques acquired in committing property offences.

> 'Jihadists not only condone the use of "ordinary" criminality to raise funds, they have argued that doing so is the ideologically correct way of waging jihad. Combined with large numbers of former criminals in their ranks, this will make financing attacks through crime not only possible and legitimate but, increasingly, their first choice' (ICSR, 2016: 4).

 It is time to bring more controversial aspects of the debate to the fore.

The ambiguity of joint analyses

While the word 'terrorism' is not even mentioned in the detailed index of a recent important handbook on organized crime (Paoli, 2014), the phrase 'organized crime' recurs in many contemporary contributions on political violence and terrorism. This may be because both forms of crime are analyzed against the variables offered by the sociology of organizations, which offers useful conceptualizations for the understanding of collective behaviour in delimited structures. Terrorism and organized crime, in this respect, may be similar because both deploy an organizational layout. An objection, in this respect, could be that any group of people acting in concert can be viewed as a social organization, therefore, it is not only organized crime and terrorism that lend themselves to a joint analysis, but also any couple of aggregations of individuals who perform collective action. As a way of overcoming this ambiguity, the following explanation referring to organized crime groups as opposed to terrorism has been offered: 'Their primary motivation is usually financial gain' (Holmes, 2016). However, if the focus is on illegal structures rather than illegal activities, the concern is how organizations relate to states.
   Attempts to influence state officials are commonly made by organized criminals, who mainly pursue impunity for their offences and, when engaged in the official economy, seek contracts to carry out some form of state-funded public work (Abadinsky, 2013) The goal is, in such cases, of an economic rather than a political nature. 'Commonly, the lack of political goals is seen as a defining

characteristic of organized crime that distinguishes it from ideologically and religiously motivated terrorist and insurgent groups' (von Lampe, 2016: 263).

The controversy around motivation accompanies the debate on hybrids, with some authors underlining the divine or political command obeyed by terrorists as opposed to greed commanding organized crime groups. In an attempt to identify differences and similarities, the suggestion has been made that the association of terrorism with organized crime mitigates the hideous and noxious operations of the former and that, comparatively, the latter rank higher. Among the similarities, characteristics such as secrecy, ruthlessness, intimidation and the use of front organizations are mentioned. Among the differences, motivations, the nature of the relationship with governments and the media and the type of victimization are enumerated (Schmid, 1996, 2011).

There is, in sum, disagreement around the nexus between organized crime and terrorism, its nature and scope, with some commentators arguing that such nexus amounts to nothing more than temporary marriages of convenience. While generalizable statements are unhelpful, distinctions are identified that might clarify the issue. The proliferation of hybrids, it is felt, may be likely in certain contexts more than in others, for instance in areas experiencing armed conflicts. On the other hand, lack of trust between the two types of membership may hamper collaboration, which entails added risk to groups inured to avoiding risk. For this reason, new types of organizations, distinct from both organized crime groups and terrorist groups, may be springing which service both criminals and terrorists with illicit services. These new groups may well be sponsored by legitimate states. In other words, the explanatory power of the crime-terror nexus is questioned, as it is considered to be based on insufficient evidence (Carrapico, Irrera and Tupman, 2014). Rather than focusing on the linkages between organized crime and terrorist groups, which are regarded as sporadic and short-lived, some propose to reorient attention on the links between criminal organizations and the state. 'A research agenda that prioritizes the local dynamics of interactions between criminal networks, militant ideologies, society and the state is likely to produce more nuanced analyses than an over-reliance on these binary approaches' (Lewis, 2014: 337). A further distinction pertains to sovereign-bound groups as opposed to sovereign-free groups, the former 'defined by their goal of establishing a new and separate state' (Picarelli, 2006: 13), and the latter 'concerned with profits and authority in illicit markets rather than sovereignty and authority over neighbourhoods and regions' (ibid: 15).

Working closely with Islamic fundamentalists, Sageman (2017) gained an intimate understanding of the development and shape of their networks. Focusing on the global Salafi jihad, he refutes the explanation that factors such as poverty, trauma, madness or ignorance drive people to terrorism. He highlights, instead, the crucial role of social networks in the transformation of socially isolated individuals into warriors. Biographical data on some two hundred participants in jihad reveal that, for the vast majority, social bonds predated ideological commitment, and that these bonds inspired alienated young Muslim to join the jihad. Affiliation is shown to be a bottom-up process, with young people volunteering to join the organization, and friendship and kinship bonds emerge as key factors in shaping the networks. Sageman dismantles the view

that terrorist networks resemble mafia families and that the tactics used against organized crime will somehow work against terror.

There remains a feeling that the debate on hybrids belies an attempt to group under the same rubric all conducts most human beings would find repellent, hence the widespread attempts to carry out joint analyses of such conducts. In this respect Europol (2015), responding to hyperbolic depictions of the hybrid phenomenon, stresses that, at least in the EU, the nexus between organized crime and terrorism remains limited:

> 'In light of the available evidence, convergence between organized crime and terrorism in the EU seems a limited phenomenon. Terrorist and organized crime groups have learned to adapt to changing circumstances such as governmental interventions or changed environments. This makes their structure, activities and methods opportunistic in nature [...] Based on the cases available in the Europol databases, it can be concluded that convergence often consists of isolated incidents' (ibid: 9).

Whether hybrids are rare or frequent, it is the heuristic value of joint analyses of organized crime and terrorism that could be questioned. Terrorism, like other forms of political violence, combines defensive and offensive strategies, a combination without which action could hardly be triggered. Such strategies may include ways of overcoming a presumed moral disorientation, but must provide, at the same time, strong, unequivocal guidance for individuals and groups to act. This combination of strategies coalesce in the form of collective identity, which transcends pure role or group identity, in that it refers to shared self-definitions and common efforts towards the production of social change. Collective identity offers orientation in a moral space and gives rise to a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy; it also prompts what is worth doing and what is not in organizational terms, leading individuals to appreciate their capacity to change the surrounding environment. The cause pursued may not be 'higher', but it is certainly 'different'.

Political violence, therefore, is one of the outcomes of organized identity, and entails high degrees of subjectivity, so that some features of social life are no longer seen as part of misfortune, but of injustice. Along with techniques of neutralization, political violence needs to elaborate an interpretive 'frame alignment' with the activists it intends to mobilize. The potential recruits possess a coherent body of knowledge about past experiences that can be utilized for the interpretation of the present. This constitutes a schema or 'frame' with which terrorist groups must align in order to attract sympathizers and adherents (Snow et al, 1986; Ruggiero, 2010). Moreover, violent political groups draw on their specific repertoires of action accumulated through long periods of conflict. Such repertoires consist of a legacy, made of cultural and political resources: they contain sets of action and identity derived from shared understandings and meanings, they are cultural creations that take shape in social and political conflict.

Every expression of political violence seeks to represent a contentious political issue, and to speak not only to the authorities but to social movements from which it claims to emanate. It is this purported (and at times real) link with social discontent and 'anger' that makes terrorism a distinct violent

manifestation. It is also its righteousness, be that religious or secular, that makes it different from other expressions of criminality. Terrorists fight for what they think will be a future system, their justification is 'transcendental' and 'historical', in the sense that only history, in their view, will judge on the morality of their action. Terrorist violence is, in the view of those using it, a foundational force, that is expected to create a new system and designate a new authority. It is norm-oriented, in that it is meant to create new norms in the name of generalized beliefs.

   This has significant implications for prevention and institutional responses. Successful organised crime groups are normally emboldened by alliances with complicit or complacent establishment actors, while violent political groups normally rely on the supposed ideological advocacy of anti-establishment groups. When such groups distance themselves from those who, through the exercise of terror, claim to represent them, the perpetrators of terror start losing their imagined justification and find themselves fighting a private war, one that only exists in their head. Terrorist groups of the past have declined when social movements have radically severed the symbolic and material links on which such groups believed they could rely. Anti-establishment non-violent forces expressing contentious political views were (and still are) more effective in fighting terrorism than action emanating from the establishment. By contrast, the weakening of organised crime may occur when efforts are made to sever the links between crime groups and the actors of the establishment who are associated with them, whether due to subjective choice or by virtue of objective shared interests. Organised crime, in other words, may decline when the elite (politicians and business people) will distance themselves from it. In brief, prevention of terrorism has a possibility of success when it originates from relatively 'lower' strata of society, while prevention of organised crime may temper the phenomenon when the higher strata of the institutions are targeted. The difference is notable, and joint analyses of the two may hamper and meddle with the identification of potentially effective policies.

Conclusion

We have to 'collar' the crime, not the criminal, suggested a crucial analytical strategy referred to white collar crime, meaning that some offences may be committed by individuals of high rank and reputation, conventional criminals bereft of any reputation at all, and consortia formed by both. In this paper the suggestion has been made that, when dealing with terrorism and crime, we have to 'collar' the criminal instead. We have seen how criminological thought, while defining organized crime and political violence as two separate entities, offers some examples of hybrids incorporating the two. It does so, particularly, through etiologies that attribute to both types of criminality similar causations. The crime-terror nexus has emerged at times as strong and undeniable and at other times as tentative and ambiguous, depending on the work examined. The ambiguity of such nexus has been ascribed to the nature of political violence, its relationship with contentious politics, and its views of the law and the state. Lack of consensus still persists in this area, with the unfortunate consequence that prevention and enforcement strategies may prove contradictory and fallacious..

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