


## Religion, War, and Terrorism



### Religion in War and Violence

- Ways religion has been implicated in war/violence
  - Violence toward and by religious people
    - Examples?
      - Romans against Christians
      - Christians against Pagan, Native American, Africans
      - Chinese against Tibetans



## Religion in War and Violence

- War/violence based on religious explanations
  - Crusades of the middle ages
  - Protestant/Catholic
  - Israel/Palestine



## Religion in War and Violence

- Theories Relating Religion and War
  - Religious only on surface
    - Real reasons are economic or political
  - Ayalos' Scarce Resource Theory
    - Religion creates scarce resources that are then fought over.
    - Examples?



## Religion and Terrorism

- What comes to mind when you hear the word terrorism?
- What are various ways that terrorism is acted out in the world?



## Religion and Terrorism

- Definition:
  - *“Premeditated, politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine state agents, normally intended to influence an audience”* --Recent definition of terrorism by the U.S. State Department
- Two main components
  - Violence against non-combatants
  - Intended to alter behavior of audience, not achieve a political goal per se



## Theories of Terrorism

- **Psychopathology**
  - Terrorist are mentally instable, “insane” or otherwise psychologically disturbed
- **Narcissism Theory**
  - Extreme narcissism and “narcissistic injury” lead to projection
  - The object of the injury becomes the target of terrorism
- **Identity Theory**
  - Based on Erikson’s model
  - Lack of identity development, creates vulnerability
  - More open to extremist groups who provide identity, social connection, purpose, and support



## Theories of Terrorism

- **Social Learning Theory**
  - Learn terrorist behaviors from others
  - Reinforcement, punishment, modeling, etc.
- **Rational Choice Theory**
  - Economy of terrorist activity
  - Low cost, highly effective means to get what one wants
- **Absolutist-Apocalyptic**
  - End of world theories
  - Fears of ingroup annihilation
  - Black/white thinking
  - Lead to denigration and violence against outgroup



## Theories of Terrorism

- Cognitive Theories
  - Cognitive Capacity
  - Cognitive Style
- Novelty Seeking
  - Normal tendency toward higher risk in younger people
  - In some environments this may be manipulated by others
- Humiliation-Revenge Theory
  - Revenge often follows humiliation
  - Terrorism may result from significant cultural humiliation



## Theories of Terrorism

- Group Process Theory
  - Ideological indoctrination
  - Repetitive training
  - Group/Social Pressure
  - Either exerting influence alone or in combination with other factors



## Religion and Terrorism

- Activity